

# The Gippsland Anglican

Volume 117, Number 6, July 2020

Published in Gippsland Diocese since 1904

## “Telling the true history”

### BLM protests spark Gippsland monument debate

Sally Woollett

As Black Lives Matter protests rage in many parts of the world, a monumental conversation has played out close to home.

At a virtual council meeting in Wellington Shire in mid-June, councillors Carolyn Crossley and Darren McCubbin moved a motion to “address the long-standing issue of the inappropriateness of the McMillan cairns and in the spirit of genuine reconciliation, that Council move forward in partnership with the Gunai Kurnai people in a truth telling process of place, people and history.” Cairns were erected in the 1920s to mark the routes of the chief explorations of Angus McMillan and Paul Edmund de Strzelecki in Gippsland in 1839 and 1840. A *Gippsland Times* article of 4 April 1927 announced that the series of cairns would ‘perpetuate the memory’ of McMillan.

The council motion proposed removing the two McMillan cairns managed by the Wellington Shire (in Sale and Stratford) and seeking approval from the Victorian Government to remove seven others in Gippsland. They also proposed “devising an appropriate way of recognising our shared history” and considering the appropriateness of public reserves in McMillan’s name.

Defacement, destruction and removal of similarly controversial monuments by protestors has been happening worldwide, including in Gippsland.

Rob Hudson from Bairnsdale, Gunai Kurnai man and Manager of the Keeping Place at Bairnsdale, presented at the council meeting as a member of the public. He spoke in support of the removal of the monuments.

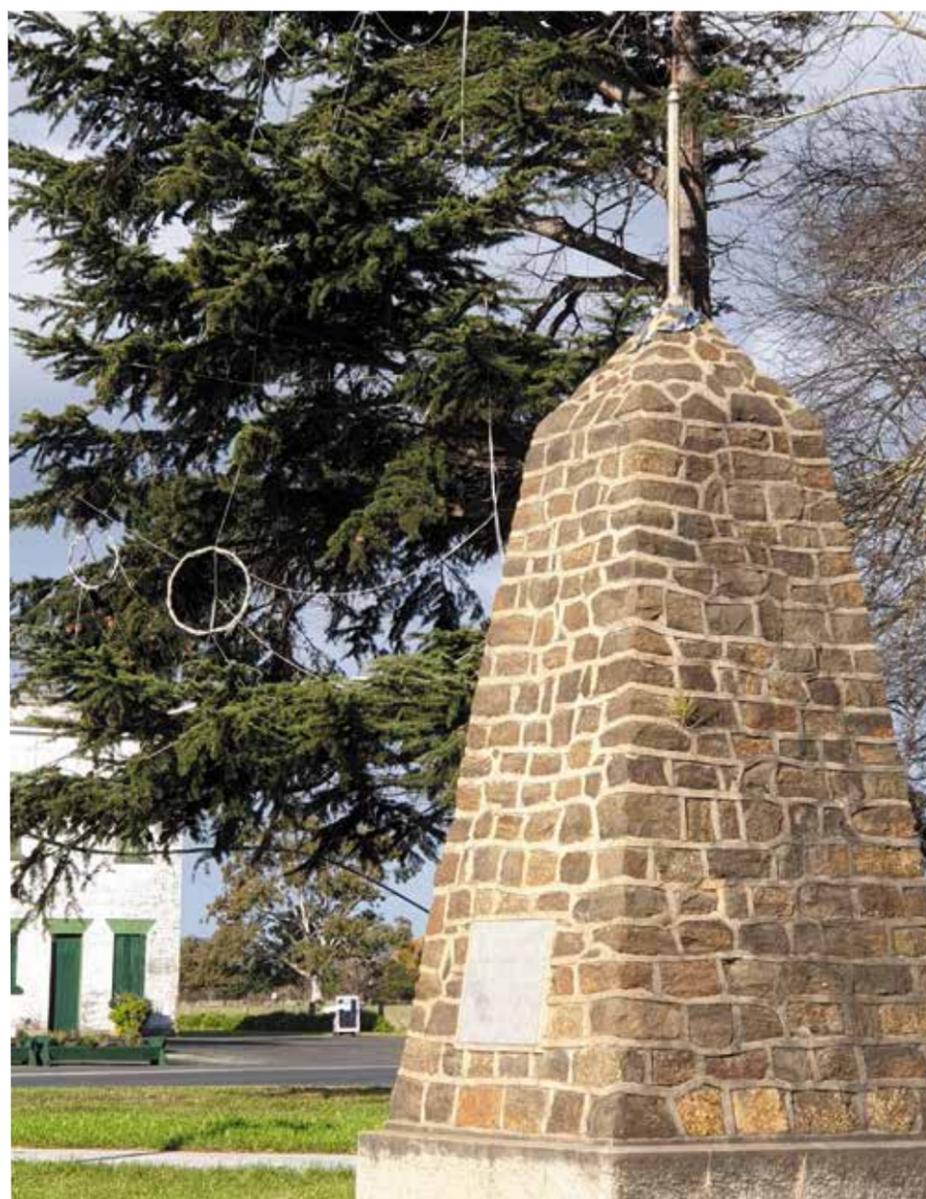
As a child, he was told by his mob of the “horrendous” massacres led by McMillan against the Gunai Kurnai, but was taught nothing of this during history lessons at school. Referring to the Gippsland cairns, he said, “if you want to put up a decent monument, tell people what happened there.”

Gunai Kurnai woman Lidia Thorpe, Senator-Elect for Victoria and former Greens MP, spoke to the *Sydney Morning Herald* a few days before the council meeting. She said “we need to start telling the true history of this country.” However, she does not support the monument removal, saying that would be “removing the capacity for informed awareness of what has happened in the past.”

The motion was opposed with a vote of 5–4. Most public participants spoke in favour of the motion, and most of those who spoke against were in support of replacing the cairn plaques.

“What should we Christians do?” asked Rt Rev’d Chris McLeod, National Aboriginal Bishop, in a statement on 4 June, at the end of the Week of Prayer for Reconciliation. He was referring to ‘The Aboriginal Deaths in Custody’ report, of which only a few of the 339 recommendations have been enacted and “have not addressed the core issues.” He continued:

*For my part, Jesus provides the model. Jesus showed solidarity with the poor, the outcast, the marginalized, and rejected (Luke 4: 18-21). Surely, in our context, that is the First Nations peoples, and other people of colour. As Christians we should be some of the strongest advocates for justice for First Nations peoples, and work tirelessly and prayerfully to see the end of the senseless deaths in custody.*



The McMillan cairn in Rosedale

## Black Lives Matter reflection

The Ministry Development Committee of the Diocese of Ballarat, chaired by Rev’d Robyn Shackell, released a statement on Black Lives Matter to encourage reflection on their diocesan theme (full statement at [ballaratanglican.org.au/statementblm](http://ballaratanglican.org.au/statementblm)):

*The theme for 2020 in the Diocese of Ballarat is to challenge violence, injustice & oppression, and work for peace and reconciliation. We can do this by examining our attitudes towards those who are different from us and by seeking to change our attitudes; by rising above any form of ‘othering’, whether in thought, speech or deed; and to sincerely love the other, to wish for their good, to see their humanity and dignity and to respect it.*

*We can use our agency, our voice, to speak up for and challenge those around us when they fail to recognise the dignity of another because they are unable to see beyond the colour of skin.*

*All lives will matter when we recognise that black lives matter.*

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GIPPSLAND DIOCESE VACANCIES

Wonthaggi-Inverloch

The Gippsland Anglican

Member of Australasian Religious Press Association

Registered by Australia Post  
Print Post Number 34352/00018

The Gippsland Anglican is the official newspaper of and is published by The Anglican Diocese of Gippsland, 453 Raymond Street, Sale, Victoria, 3850. www.gippsanglican.org.au

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Layout by Devine Design

Printed by Rural Press

The editor reserves the right of final choice and format of material included in each issue. The Gippsland Anglican and the editor cannot necessarily verify any material used in this publication. Views contained in submitted material are those of contributors.

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# Taking a knee

The expression ‘take a knee’, like many idioms, has its own evolutionary history of meaning. In both sporting and military circles it has been in use for decades as a directive to pause for prayer, or for instruction – a moment of watchful rest.

More recently, it has become a symbol of peaceful, silent protest. In 2016, Colin Kaepernick, quarterback for the San Francisco 49ers, knelt on one knee during the national anthem, in protest against police brutality toward African Americans in the US. A free agent at the end of that season, Kaepernick has been without a contract ever since.

Since the death of George Floyd in police custody on 25 May, Kaepernick’s symbolic gesture has been adopted by many protesters, police officers and athletes – including players in round 2 of the recently resumed 2020 AFL season – as a sign of solidarity and respect.

The tragic irony inherent in the action (in that George Floyd died because someone was kneeling on his neck) is part of its power. Like most symbols, its capacity to admit several different meanings – its ‘polyvalency’, to use a technical term – is what makes it so effective.

Kneeling can indicate submission, surrender or defeat; it can suggest pleading, entreaty or contrition. It can signify humiliation or humility, related words with very different connotations according to whether the ‘humbling’ is inflicted or chosen.

Humility before God is what it is intended to communicate, and engender, as a liturgical stance (although many would argue that the preferred posture for prayer is standing, as in Judaism, where one stands in recognition that one is in God’s presence).

Humility has often been scarce in the public domain. Perhaps our collective vulnerability and relative powerlessness in the face of COVID-19 has prompted some. In the absence of a vaccine we have had to acknowledge and accept our limitations – figuratively and literally.

Perhaps being confronted – again, and still – by such entrenched, systemic and structural inequalities as the ‘take a knee’ movement is calling out also summons humility. A recognition of our own complicity in a society where people of colour are more likely to come to the attention of law

enforcement, more likely to be arrested, more likely to enter the justice system, more likely to be imprisoned, and more likely to die in custody.

There’s a sense of helplessness, perhaps, in the face of cultural forces – including religious ones – that defy the will for change, whereby a Bible might be waved at a camera by someone in power, who would champion a national anthem over the kingdom values of its pages, not least humility. Even shame or remorse at the fact that our own First Nations people are the most disproportionately incarcerated on earth.

All good reasons, faced with such a mirror, to ‘take a knee’.

People of faith might also do so in an attitude of prayer. Not prayer as asking God to do something about what ails us; rather, prayer as a lamp: shining a light on the changes needed in us in order for things to be different.

The most common Hebrew biblical word for prayer is a reflexive form of the verb ‘to judge’, that is ‘to judge oneself’. Prayer transforms us: it shapes our will, teaching us to see ourselves as God sees us, and to see others as God sees them.

So it is we may learn to read symbols of humiliation as unlikely instruments of transformation. Kneeling at the foot of the cross – hearing the last suffocated words of



Bishop Richard Treloar

the one who humbled himself, even to dying in custody – we find seeds of hope and reconciliation: hope that demands justice rather than vengeance; reconciliation that moves us beyond fear and contempt (see Esau McAulley, *Reading While Black: African American Biblical Interpretation as an Exercise in Hope*).

For those baptised into Christ’s death and resurrection, to ‘take a knee’ is to submit to the power of God to raise us up as agents of change in our world.

Let us kneel with and for those who are structurally disadvantaged in our society; with and for those who make and administer our laws. Let us kneel in humility with the humiliated, and judge ourselves, praying – in a moment of watchful rest – that God would grant us the courage and integrity to speak up, and to stand up and act.

+RM

## Prayer Diary: around the parishes

“That we may be mutually encouraged by each other’s faith...” (ROMANS 1:12)

MORWELL WESTERN REGION

St Mary, Morwell  
Rector: The Rev’d David Head

Loving God we pray for our parish of St Mary’s at this time of crisis; we pray for our prayer life as we worship apart.

We give thanks to our Bishop and to Dean Susanna for the online services available to us. We pray for our country as we fight the threat of infection by COVID-19, and for our confirmation candidates, their preparation interrupted.

We pray for the confirmation service hopefully to be held in August with Bishop Richard.

We pray for our Mission Project, the Newton Theological College in PNG.

We pray for the Rev’d David, our Vestry and Parish Wardens.

We pray for our op shop, Fossick and Find, giving thanks for their generosity.

NAR NAR GOON AND PAKENHAM EAST (EPISCOPAL DISTRICT) WESTERN REGION

St John, Nar Nar Goon Cornerstone, Cardinia Lakes  
Rector: The Rev’d Chris McAleer

St John’s has a child-friendly family service at 10.00 am on Sundays. Cornerstone Anglican Church meets in the rectory at Cardinia Lakes, in Pakenham East, for Bible study and prayer at 7.30 pm on Tuesdays. The opportunity shop is in our community parish centre next door to St John’s on Main Street.

Prayer points: for more young families to discover our Family Service and Sunday School at St John’s, resumption of the Men’s Breakfast, continued involvement with community groups in Cardinia Lakes and Nar Nar Goon, and boldness to joyfully keep sharing the good news as we grow together in faith.

NEERIM SOUTH WESTERN DISTRICT

Cooperating churches of: St John, Neerim South St James, Buln Buln St Andrew, Noojee Locum Priest: The Rev’d Dr Jim Connelly

Give thanks for the faithfulness of our parishioners and the warm feelings of goodwill

that exist between our Uniting Church and Anglican members; the volunteers at our op shop who work so hard, offer hospitality and a warm greeting to all who come in; and the positive impact that this has had on parish finances. Also give thanks for the good fellowship and energy we experience as we emerge from the lockdown of the COVID-19 pandemic and begin to put our parish programs back into action; the youth group, many of whom have no connection with the church; and the continuing strong connection of the parish with many aspects of local community life.

Please pray for the recent parish visioning process, that as we look to implement that vision, God would bless our endeavours; and more leaders for our youth group.

# Mansfield rises to challenges of COVID-19

Jan Freemantle



Bell-ringers Evie and James Vasey at St John's Mansfield

Over the past months, the community of the Mansfield Anglican Parish have been enthusiastically embracing the challenges that COVID-19 has placed upon us.

We have decided to ring the church bells at noon every day during the time in which we cannot physically meet together as a congregation. Rev'd Dr Paul Dalzell, our locum priest, explained in his weekly 'Reflection':

*When we ring the bells of the Church tower, here in Mansfield, we are saying "It is time to remember that although we cannot meet together as a Church ... we are still 'making a noise'." ... We are also saying ... "Do not forget us! We are still here!"*

And so the parish community has been enthusiastically engaged in implementing a roster to ensure the bell is rung every day at noon. As we have always done, we have been ringing the bell at 9.25 on the Sunday in the 'call to church'. Our rosters have involved many members of our congregation and our bell-ringers have included younger members of our congregation.

Our parish community have not let COVID-19 deter us from our regular worship and we have taken to 'zooming' our Sunday services. We have been delighted with the response to this initiative and have welcomed on average 48 'Sunday service zoomers'.

We have also welcomed worshippers from outside our parish community, including interstate relatives who have been missing their own regular Sunday service. We have been particularly pleased to welcome our Bishop, the Rt Rev'd Clarence, to our services.

While we look forward to the day when we can all meet as one in our parish churches, St John's Mansfield, Christ Church Bonnie Doon and St Peter's Jamieson, we have been really blessed, in the interim, to have been able to continue to meet and worship on a Sunday via technology.

The Mansfield Anglican Parish is a vibrant, energetic and committed rural community who have more than risen to the task of exploring new and innovative ways to continue our worship and ministry. We have been very blessed with the ministry and pastoral guidance provided by Rev'd Paul and with the counsel and dedication of our parish council. As we face the 'new' normal, whatever that might be, we will continue grow our faith and expand our ministry being assured of God's presence in our lives.

*Assoc. Prof. Jane Freemantle OAM is Vicar's Warden, Mansfield Anglican Parish. Article courtesy Diocese of Wangaratta. Read the full version in the June issue of The Advocate at [wangeratta-anglican.org.au](http://wangeratta-anglican.org.au)*

## Rural Aid support for rural communities

Drought, fires, floods and now the impact of COVID-19 restrictions have meant farmers and rural communities are experiencing a cascade of unforeseen events over the past six months and, unfortunately for some, a mix of all.

Rural Aid CEO, John Warlters, says there is a greater need for services than ever before. "Through

digital and workforce enablement initiatives our team has found unique ways to stay connected with rural communities. Our counsellors are in regular phone contact and we're also conducting online webinars including our Community Builders Webinars Series," John said.

"While it has been fantastic to see the onset of rain in many areas, the drought is not over – far from it," John

said. "In the past six weeks, we've delivered 6894 bales of hay to 459 farmers in 95 locations, trucked 936,000 litres of domestic drinking water; as well as providing over \$1.2 million dollars in financial assistance that includes Visa gift cards to almost 1500 farmers. Of course, our counsellors continue to support farmers and their families too, conducting 124 counselling sessions and reaching out to 597 farmers by phone."

Livestock loss across New South Wales as a result of the fires exceeded

13,000, with over 16,000 landholders estimated to have been impacted by the fires. Southern New South Wales had the greatest losses with more than 12,000 head of livestock dying as a result of the fires. As of 28 January 2020, the fires in NSW had burnt 5.3 million hectares.

In Victoria's north-east and east Gippsland areas, livestock and agricultural loss for the fires in late December and early January were significant. Over 7000 livestock – including cattle, sheep and beehives – were

lost. Over 53,000 hectares of pasture, field crops and softwood plantations were destroyed by fire. There was also significant fencing and farm infrastructure damage, such as fodder reserves, machinery and hay sheds.

As at 1 May 2020 in Queensland, over 67% of the land area of Queensland was drought declared.

*Courtesy Rural Aid. Register at [www.ruralaid.org.au/towns/webinars](http://www.ruralaid.org.au/towns/webinars) to be part of the Community Builders Webinars Series and to access past episodes.*

# ‘Liv It Up’ – fundraising for Very Special Kids

Janet Wallis

Living it up has been a bit difficult during the time of lockdown restrictions, but we were encouraged to get out and do some exercise. In the Parish of Maffra, Jean Heasley took on a special exercise challenge with a family in our

community who are trying to make a difference.

Liv, the 12-year-old daughter of Tanya and Kevin Read, and sister of Montanna, is one of Maffra’s Very Special Kids. Liv is developmentally delayed and has epilepsy. She is non-verbal, but she has the most brilliant smile and love for her family.

Liv enjoys her time at Very Special Kids House in Malvern, one of only two children’s hospices in Australia. The house supports children with life-threatening conditions and their siblings. Each year, the charity’s major fundraiser is a 24-hour treadmill challenge, held in teams. It was not possible this year due to COVID-19 restrictions, so a 24-day exercise challenge was planned instead.

Jean Heasley completed the exercise challenge in the Parish of Maffra on behalf of us all. She walked each day from 1 May to 24 May. She was an inspiration to us. Jean said she particularly enjoyed walking when someone else in the parish went with her.

Jean was wonderfully supported by people in the parish and the wider community. Through Jean’s tremendous efforts and the generosity of many, we were able to donate \$1000 to Very Special Kids.

Jean commented, “I thought perhaps I’d raise \$100.” She was blown away by such a positive response.

The Read family met with Jean at St John’s in Maffra and had a great catch-up. Tanya was in Jean’s guide group years ago, so it was a meeting of old friends.



Jean Heasley, Liv Read and her parents outside St John’s Parish Centre in Maffra

# Arrival of baby Luci Perryman



The Perryman family are very pleased to announce the safe arrival of Luciana Mary Perryman, born 2 June at 11.25 am.

Both Mum and Luci are travelling well. We offer our deep gratitude to our diocesan family for their thoughts, prayers and love expressed in many ways to us in this joyous time.

# Anglicare Victoria appoints Indigenous cultural advisers

Cathrine Muston

Anglicare Victoria is committed to inclusivity, so it was with great pleasure that Anglicare Victoria CEO Paul McDonald announced the establishment of the Anglicare Victoria Aboriginal Staff Network.



This network, currently comprising approximately 12 Indigenous employees, will provide mentorship and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, under the guidance

of Indigenous cultural advisers Uncle Ian Goolagong and Auntie Kellie Hunter.

Anglicare Victoria in Gippsland has a number of Aboriginal staff and clients, so Uncle Ian and Auntie Kellie will be a welcome support in providing guidance for cultural safety and mentorship.

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# Journey to Pentecost at Holy Trinity Yarram

Glenda Amos

At Holy Trinity Yarram, the story of the road to Emmaus was used as a reflection each week on our journey with God through this time

of isolation. Each week, Rev'd Jenny Ramage added to the display (pictured) and adjusted the figures to show the journey from Easter day to Pentecost. Symbols were added to reflect the weekly readings, finishing on Trinity Sunday.



Display at Holy Trinity Yarram



Newborough's Magdalene Centre window with a Winnie the Pooh theme, window-dressed by retired interior designer Ann Sampson

# Churches and op shops open in Moe-Newborough

Julie Bruce

During COVID lockdown, Moe-Newborough parishioners were keeping in touch online and by communications placed on porches and in letterboxes. Of course, we missed the face-to face contact of our worship services and get-togethers. We are now able to hold shortened services,

initially with three Sunday morning services of 10 people and then with two services of 20 each. We miss the singing, but we have enjoyed the music supplied by our organist, Russell Savige, before, during and after each service. A dedicated group has been cleaning vigorously to ensure that we can continue to meet safely.

With op shops opening on 15 June, there has been a lot of activity to ensure that they comply with COVID-safe recommendations. We are hoping that soon the virus will be contained and that our corporate, pastoral and community activities can be resumed with confidence. We praise God for His protection, enabling and support during this challenging time.

# New Pentecost banner for St Mary's

Carolyn Raymond

Jan Dagleish, a member of St Mary's Morwell, has had a dream for some time of making a Pentecost banner for our parish. The COVID restrictions provided her time to bring this dream into reality. Isolated at home, she spent time researching a design and finding the materials she wanted to use – many of which came from her daughter. Jan adapted a stained glass window design

to bring the theme of Pentecost to glorious reality. Sheena Jones, another member of our congregation, assisted Jan to make the small design into a size for a banner. The design shows the cross standing on rocky hills. Around the cross is the brilliant red flame of Pentecost, reaching to the sky.

Jan spent many hours creating this stunning banner. She has given it to all of us at St Mary's. The banner was formally dedicated to

the parish during the first service we were able to hold since the shutdown. This was a meaningful way to look back on the shared celebration of Pentecost that we missed and to appreciate coming together to worship.

Jan hopes to create small banners for each of the seasons of the Christian year, to hang on the lectern. We all look forward to this, although we don't want another pandemic for it to be possible!



Jan Dagleish (left) and Carolyn Raymond with the beautiful Pentecost banner that Jan created and gave to St Mary's Morwell



Photo: Ross Jacka

Abbey Chapter members and invited guests at the Chapel of St Barnabas

## 30 years for Abbey's Chapel of St Barnabas

Eddie Ashley

On 16 June 1990, the Church of St Barnabas from Bundalaguah, in the Parish of Maffra, was dedicated as the Chapel of St Barnabas for the A'Beckett Park campsite on Raymond Island. Today, it is hard to think of the Abbey without the Chapel of St Barnabas at its heart.

Members of the Abbey Chapter arrived in good time to mark the 30th anniversary, along with the invited guests. Abbey Chapter members Bishop Richard, Richard Connelly, June Treadwell, Ann Miller, Very Rev'd Susanna Pain, Robert Fordham, Ven Sue Jacka, Ian Maxfield and I attended; along with guests Rev'd Canon Dr Jim Connelly and Anne Connelly, Peter and Margaret

Down, Bishop Jeffrey Driver and Ross Jacka with his grand-daughter, Evelyn.

Our remembrances and celebration began in the Chapel of St Barnabas. The readings were in line with the feast of St Barnabas. The events of 30 years ago were recalled, we said some prayers and shared the Eucharist.

Jim reminded us that the original St Barnabas Church was built in 1909, opened in 1910 and consecrated in 1911. The church building will be 110 years old next year.

For its first 80 years at Bundalaguah, St Barnabas Church was 'a continuing and comforting presence' in the lives of the people who formed its congregation, said Jim. By 1987, with ease of transport and changing demographics, the previously thriving

congregation comprised six dedicated regular attendees.

It was this group of people who thought it time to close the church at Bundalaguah. The mystery, according to Jim, was who thought of moving the wonderful St Barnabas Church building to Raymond Island.

Peter Down admitted to being part of the group of people who came up with the idea. He worked on logistics to bring the church, in two pieces, along the back routes. "The SEC and telephone authorities had to be organised to raise the wires at certain critical points," said Jim, and Peter told of a journey "full of character."

St Barnabas Church was brought across on the old Raymond Island ferry, located on site and put back together. Peter remembers the team of people – local Raymond Islanders and others from across the Diocese working together to set the church in its new position as the Chapel of St Barnabas.

For the people of faith whose lives are entwined in the walls and space of the Church and Chapel of St Barnabas, we give thanks to God. For the gift of the Chapel of St Barnabas at the heart of the Abbey, we give thanks to God.

As part of our 30 years celebration here at the Abbey, we are grateful to June Treadwell, who organised lunch for the Chapter and visitors during this time of restrictions, and to Richard Connelly, who filmed the service for all to enjoy.

## Facelift for St Philip's Cowes

Kath Kent

In February, we celebrated 150 years since the consecration of St Philip's Cowes by the then Dean of Melbourne the Very Rev'd Hussey Burgh McCartney. Now, in our 150th year and because of a number of generous bequests from past parishioners, we have been able to undertake some much-needed repairs to the inside of St Philip's. This coincided with the installation of six beautiful Georgian windows and the repainting of the outside of the church. All of these activities will be acknowledged at a thanksgiving service to be held soon.

The enforced closure of church due to COVID-19 presented us with an opportunity to empty the church, ready for the loving care and skill of volunteers and local tradespeople. The sanctuary was fully restored by a member of the St Philip's congregation, David Moody.

The original panelling, which had been covered by masonite for many years, has been restored to its former glory. Rector's Warden Ann Prideaux polished the vestry linen chest until it shone and the vestry cupboards were repainted by Verger Ken White. Local tradespeople Rosie and Neil repainted the interior, worn carpet was replaced and the new Georgian windows installed by Ash and Jack. The 1970s orange glass in the east window was replaced with something more contemporary and all windows were cleaned and polished by Tom, ready for our first services since lockdown.

These people did more than their contracted jobs – they 'loved' this church back to beauty and elegance. Hours of unseen work have been spent by many people to bring this transformation to life, and the thanks of the whole parish is extended to them.



Rev'd Jo White holding a service at the newly restored St Philip's Cowes

### The Gippsland Anglican

Q: Is there a faith question you're afraid to ask?



A: Chances are others have that question too!

Send your question to the editor at [gippsanglican.org.au](http://gippsanglican.org.au) or 0407 614 661 and we will publish an answer from a clergy person. (Your details won't be shared or published.)

### Why do we call some priests 'Father'?

Here is a question of custom, not faith, but an excellent question. My response is personal and there will be other viewpoints.

The use of 'Father' to denote spiritual leadership has roots in Jewish practice as well as Christian. In the Hebrew scriptures, those who have shaped and nurtured the faith of the people are called 'the fathers'. So Elisha, the apprentice, calls the prophet Elijah his 'father'.

The Christian scriptures continue the practice, for example "Father Abraham" (Acts 7:2) and "Father Isaac" (Romans 9:10). Jesus follows the Hebrew practice and speaks of "your fathers" (John 7:22) and "Father Abraham" (Luke 16:24).

Matthew records Jesus as saying "Call no man your father ..." (Matthew 23:9) as a challenge to the Pharisees and their strong sense of self-importance. To take these verses literally, we would never use titles at all – no 'doctor', no 'professor', no 'pastor' and no 'prime minister'.

Early Christians called their bishops 'fathers of the church' but by the fourth century this was used in a more restricted sense – for those great teachers of the faith who laid the foundations of Christian doctrine.

Also, there are 'the Desert Fathers' and 'the Desert Mothers' – ascetics who drew back from the church structures when Constantine made it a part of the Empire (fourth century). They lived and taught a faith that was personal and communal, and from their communities on the edge of empire flowered the great religious families of men and women who made up the monasteries and nunneries of the Middle Ages, where 'fathers' and 'mothers', 'sisters' and 'brothers' were to be found in multitudes.

In Post-Reformation Anglicanism, the priest was called 'parson', expressing an ideal that he would be the 'person' for the whole community, not just a chaplain to a holy huddle. Later, 'Vicar' and 'Rector' became general and this usage transferred to Australia.

These days we are a colony of the USA, favouring 'Reverend' and 'Pastor'. 'Reverend' is just an adjective and means little. 'Pastor', with echoes of the Good Shepherd, is powerful, but too American.

Does it matter? Titles are out of fashion. Even the prime minister of Australia is referred to by his nickname in the media.

It's worth a conversation. I am never happy being the 'vicar' because it means 'stand-in'. I am not good at being the 'rector', which means 'ruler'. In an age when clergy are seen as managers of a business, it's good to remember that in essence the church is family gathered at a table, so I am happy to be 'Father' and I am all for the rediscovery of the title 'Mother' for our women priests.

The title echoes for me the great parable of the Generous Father in Luke, where forgiveness and abundant generosity startle us into new life (Luke 15). That's not a bad motif!

The Rev'd Ken Parker is Priest-in-Charge at Bunyip.



Religions for Peace  
Australia

## “Courage and honesty” in our climate challenge

Chris Parnell

Religions for Peace Australia is one of the 125 member nations of Religions for Peace International, the world’s largest interfaith organisation, with its headquarters in New York and one of the 21 member nations of the Asian Conference of Religions for Peace, with its headquarters in Tokyo.

An important focus for us during the past year has been care for the environment and responding to our local needs for climate change.

Australia remains highly exposed to the increased intensity and frequency of extreme events that are the hallmark of a changing climate. It is in our nation’s best interest to heed the lessons of our recent devastating bushfires, floods, hailstorms and droughts and to accept the need to address root causes.

As religious and interfaith leaders, we seek that those who govern and represent our community tackle Australia’s role in the global climate challenge with courage and honesty.

Climate change is evident in the Asia-Pacific region, with particularly

destructive impacts on small Pacific Island nation states such as Kiribati and Tuvalu and South-East Asian countries of the Mekong Delta, with recent major floods in Kerala, India as well as Iran, floods and heatwaves in Japan, cyclones impacting on the frontline Pacific Ocean state of the Philippines and drought and bushfires in Australia.

Our relatively low population on a vast continent with relatively uncongested cities has provided Australia with a natural advantage in combatting the spread of COVID-19, aided by swift government action and a compliant community moving with alacrity, collaboration and generosity to adhere to social distancing and other precautionary guidelines. Considerable effort has gone into protecting all members of our community, including the provision of health information translated into many languages.

This pandemic has shown us how effective our actions can be when led by the science in partnership with our governments, our businesses and our people. This is a powerful lesson. Yet this time of lockdown has also revealed serious weaknesses in our supply chains, our domestic

manufacturing capacity, and our capacity to accurately identify and care for vulnerable population segments in our midst (including but not only international students, workers on temporary protection visas, the isolated elderly and those in remote/underprivileged Aboriginal communities/populations).

“Our present economic, social and international arrangements are based, in large measure, upon organised lovelessness. We begin by lacking charity towards Nature, so instead of trying to co-operate ... we try to dominate and exploit, we waste the earth’s mineral resources, ruin its soil, ravage its forests, pour filth into its rivers and poisonous fumes into its air.” (Aldous Huxley, 1947)

Stimulus funding needs to prioritise investment in ecosystem resilience and nature-based solutions by encouraging climate-ready agriculture, revegetation and restoration of carbon rich biodiversity habitat.

We need to acknowledge and act upon the water issues unfolding across our country. If atmospheric temperatures continue to rise, a proportion of agricultural production may cease or diminish. In 2019, for the first time, allocation of water was prioritised to meet critical human needs in several major rural towns (Stanthorpe, Bathurst and Armidale). Respected scientists now call for declaration of a water emergency and propose principles for a new national water dialogue.

Despite recent good rains, the Murray–Darling Basin remains in drought with rain needed over widespread areas to provide relief from the impact of sustained below-average rainfall. The rural community of the Basin “are labouring under a great weight of reform fatigue” – across 77,000 km of rivers, 2.6 million people, 40 Aboriginal nations, 120 species of water birds – and all are in trouble. Long-term water

security requires better protection and management of both surface and groundwater.

Australia is facing more intense and longer bushfire seasons and more severe heat waves. 2019 was the warmest December on record Australia-wide for all mainland states except Victoria, while large areas had their highest accumulated Forest Fire Danger Index based on records that date back to 1950.

Evidence before the Bushfire Royal Commission reveals Australia’s ecological vulnerability to climate change. During our recent fires, 114 threatened species lost over 50% of their range (some over 90%), while other species previously considered secure are now ‘imperilled’ in a list that includes plants, mammals, reptiles, fish and invertebrates.

Aboriginal traditional knowledge can help us look after this vast land. In his book *Fire Country: How Indigenous Fire Management Could Help Save Australia*, Indigenous land management expert Victor Steffenson says:

*If we are going to make changes to deal with the environmental challenges that lie ahead, we need to involve the children in the solution, learn how we can play our own diverse roles that contribute to the solutions of looking after the planet. Fire management becomes harder when the rivers are not healthy and the water has been taken away. Sorting out the water issues is key to sorting out our fire problems. No doubt the droughts play a harsh role in wildfires, but we could be smarter and better prepared.*

*The Rev’d Chris Parnell is an Interfaith Minister in Shepparton and webmaster at Religions of Peace Australia.*

### *Why do we call some priests ‘Father’?*

The question is about calling clergy ‘Father’, or presumably ‘Mother’ if female, as forms of address.

For authoritative guidance we look firstly to the words of Jesus, who in Matthew 23:9 forbids ‘Father’ as a form of address. In this verse he is addressing “the crowds and his disciples” (23:1) about the errors of the scribes and Pharisees, who were sometimes guilty of big-noting themselves. He is saying that in the new community of those following him we are “brothers (and sisters).” Therefore “call no one on earth Father” and no-one “Rabbi or Teacher”. We must take the Lord seriously here and not just dismiss his words as being too outrageous for him possibly to have meant them. Within the new covenant community of Christ there is to be a radical egalitarianism,

reflected in the ways we address each other. Jesus seems to consider that if we allow such forms of address as ‘Father’ or ‘Teacher’ some might be in danger of “exalting themselves.” If we take the words of Jesus seriously in regard to ‘Father’, we need to be as careful about avoiding calling people ‘Teacher’. This seems easy enough until we realise that the title ‘Doctor’ originally meant ‘teacher’! Increasingly in Christian community we no longer address people in these terms, even if they are so entitled in the professional world. We are given ‘Christian names’ at Baptism and from that point on we should surely be free to call each other by our Christian names.

There is a long tradition within the Church of referring to spiritual mentors – whether clergy or lay – as ‘fathers’: as for example ‘early church fathers’ and ‘desert fathers’. This is a different thing

from addressing individuals as ‘Father’, or even giving them the title of Father. To some extent it is a biblical tradition. Acts 7:2, for example, refers to “our father Abraham” (NIV), and Romans 9:10 to “our father Isaac” (NIV). In each case the original Greek says “the father of us,” but the Anglican-preferred NRSV wisely avoids the danger of confusion here by in each case translating the phrase as “our ancestor.” Referring to ‘Abraham’ in Luke 16:19ff, Jesus himself calls Abraham simply Abraham, though the obsequious rich man in the story calls him Father Abraham.

What then is a respectful form of address for a clergy person whom you might feel uneasy about calling by their Christian name? The traditional forms of Mr or Ms seem unnecessarily formal in a culture where even primary school children now often address their

teachers by their first names. Free church and Pentecostal people sometimes call their ministers ‘Pastor’, which is gender inclusive, but it is not a term Anglicans have generally embraced except – as in the New Testament – as a description of function. Once upon a time, Anglican clergy might have been addressed as ‘Vicar’ or ‘Rector’ but I cannot remember hearing this since the early 1960s. As brothers and sisters in Christ we ought surely be able to use Christian names, either first names or church nicknames (as ‘Peter’ and arguably ‘Paul’ originally were). But if using Christian names for clergy still doesn’t sit right with you, why not call them simply ‘Brother’ or ‘Sister’?

*The Rev’d Canon Philip Muston is Priest-in-Charge at Lakes Entrance-Metung.*



Image: Google Cultural Institute

William Holman Hunt, *The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple*. Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery

# Jesus the kid

Christa Bedwin

With plenty of parents having had their kids home more than they're used to this year, this story of Luke seems particularly interesting right now.

In the story (Luke 2: 41-52), we learn about how Jesus is in Jerusalem with his parents when he's 12, and they wander off without noticing (for a whole day) that their son was fascinated by the teachings at the temple and had stayed there.

We shouldn't blame the parents for not noticing – one academic source postulates that Jesus was the oldest child in his family, and had at least four brothers and three sisters. People travelled in herds back then, thank goodness, so there would be extra adults around. But naturally, with a flock of younger kids, Jesus' parents would have assumed the 12 year old would be managing himself responsibly, or that someone else was minding him.

When Jesus' parents realise that he's missing, they backtrack the one day

that they've travelled, while they weren't noticing, to Jerusalem. They look for him for three days, and find him at the temple (where he says that he had told them he'd be, but they hadn't understood his communication somehow – you know how parents are). He's hanging out with the old dudes there, listening to what they have to say and asking them questions.

“ True leaders seek knowledge, and are always learning – whether it's from children, tradespeople, world leaders or their own experience. ”

So. That's what it says in the Bible story as it was written down by Luke back in the day. I looked up what others have to say about this reading. One source said:

**“Gosh, parenting is hard in all eras.”**

Parenting teens is difficult, but how does wallowing in difficulty and commiserating with each other inspire us? While we all need some commiseration, I think we should be inspired at church – find our better selves.

When children shine (and, clearly, Jesus had star qualities), parents can enable that brilliance. They can help them get the education they seek and facilitate it by seeking the influence of other smart, capable and interesting adults. They can help kids to be involved with doing things in the community with other adults – helpful things, not just pleasurable ones. Parents can also facilitate their children's opportunities for adventure and travel. How else can young people begin to flex their muscles as leaders?

Another suggested reading (Colossians 3:12) reminds us of the Christian way of life:

*Put on ... hearts of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering.*

People with these qualities spoken of in Colossians don't sit around and complain about how “kids aren't like they used to be” or paper their children over with false ideas and expectations.

Jesus the kid went and sought knowledge, and the temple guys allowed that. In fact, they were probably delighted, if they were wise and smart enough to learn from kids, which we hope many of them were.

Maybe they were even intimidated. Was this God coming to check up on them?

I found another reflection on this reading that said:

**“Why would Jesus, as God's son, have anything to learn?”**

The person who wrote this seems to want a God who is all-knowing, all-powerful, and can be blamed for anything and everything that happens in life.

Who would want a leader who thought they were too good to learn? Not me.

I don't believe in a Jesus or a God who would be so arrogant or dumb. I think it makes a lot more sense to believe in a leader who listens, and who is humble enough and clever enough to learn. True leaders seek knowledge, and are always learning – whether it's from children, tradespeople, world leaders or their own experience.

Were Jesus' parents worried? Of course! Did they make him fall right back in line? Yes. For family convenience, according to the reading, they decided they needed him to be obedient to the family, above all things.

What was the result of them forcing his obedience

and yelling at him for getting lost? Let's remember what he did soon after that: he left his family and went wandering with his gang of disciples.

Rather than blind obedience to some other human's ideas – at church or anywhere else – let's think about what our reactions tell us about ourselves.

My favourite reflection about this reading is:

**“Today's teenagers seek to learn from the sages of our time.”**

Jesus sought guidance from adults other than his parents, and teenagers these days do, too. At least, the lucky ones will – those who can access adults who will spend time with them.

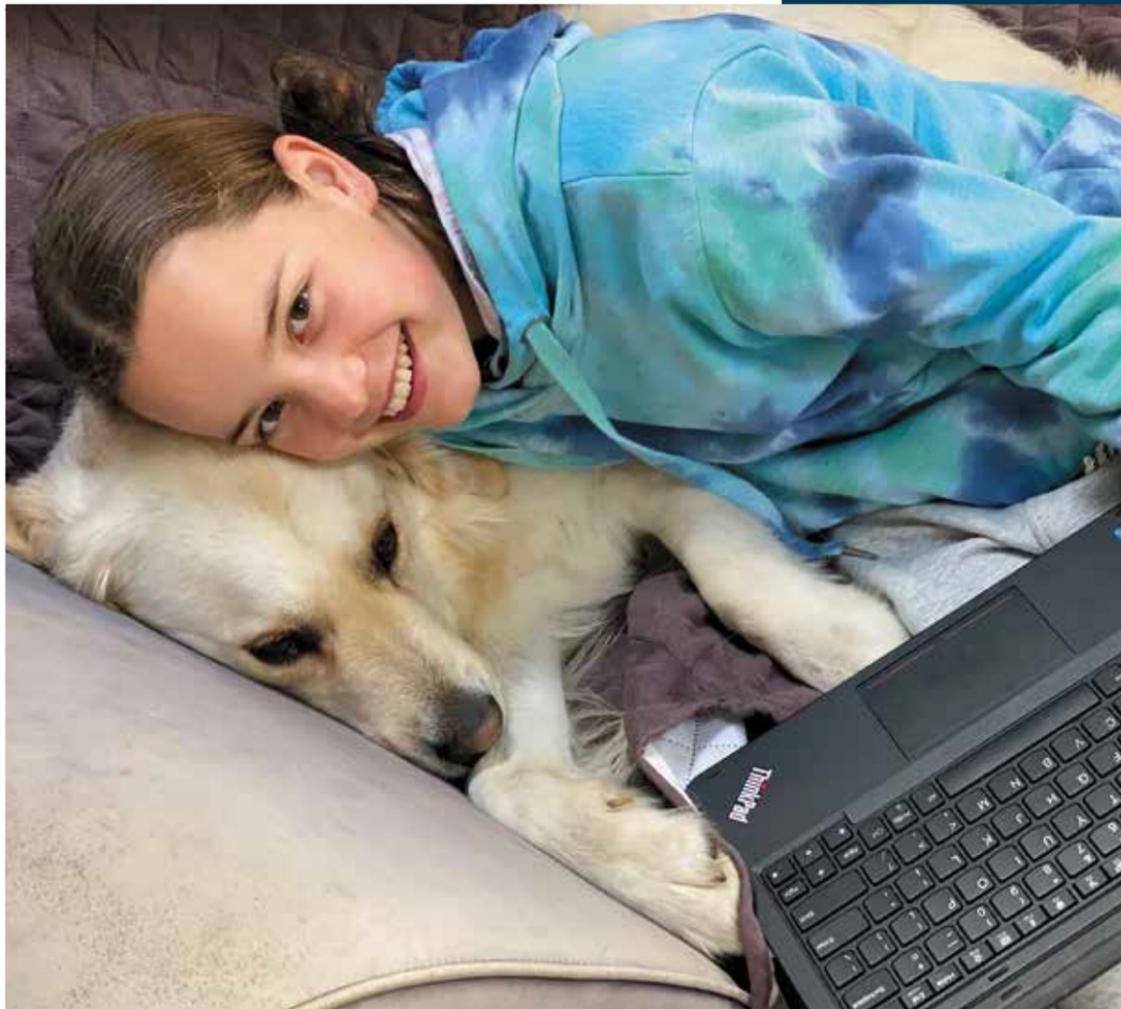
This sage advice is based on my own experience. When I was living in Alberta, Canada, a tradesperson named BJ visited to do a home repair. He offered to share a lesson with me about how to do this repair, and we waited for my 12-year-old son to come home for lunch so that he could also learn this skill.

BJ didn't just give my son a lesson in DIY. He gave him the confidence of knowing that BJ thought he was worth the lesson – that he judged him smart enough to learn, and worth teaching. It is so very powerful when adults who are not related take an interest in children and teens. It's a huge, esteem-boosting compliment.

Be a sage. Share your gifts and wisdom. Do not ignore the kids or the people around you. Know that the light you share with them helps their own light grow.

Jesus was amazing, a marvel, an extraordinary human being by all accounts. Maybe your kid is, too. And what about the people around you? Look for the inner light that makes them shine, and figure out what your part might be in helping them stoke their own inner fire.

*This article is a revision of a guest sermon the author delivered in Banff, Canada.*



Gippsland Grammar Year 7 student Emma Best with her family's golden retriever, Mack, during Learn@Home

## School of fishing teaches life lessons

Learning at Gippsland Grammar is diverse to say the least, especially when a campus is situated on the banks of the beautiful Mitchell River.

Celebrating the remarkable work junior students had put in during their remote learning, Year 6 teacher Todd Cook and some students went fishing.

Gippsland Grammar Bairnsdale Junior Campus Year 6 student Adam Thayer caught a 44 cm bream and his classmate Xander Borisenko was

rewarded with one a tad smaller. This was a first-time achievement for both students.

Mr Cook said the experience was valuable: "Fishing can teach us some of life's greatest lessons."

"It can certainly teach us patience and helps us problem solve but most importantly, I think, it helps us be present and in the moment. Enjoying nature in the here and now and absorbing the experience as it comes, is one of the greatest gifts we can give children."



Gippsland Grammar Year 6 student Xander Borisenko enjoying his fishing reward

## Blessing ISO companions at Gippsland Grammar

As part of one of its recent weekly chapel services, Gippsland Grammar held a pet blessing. Gippsland Grammar chaplains, Jackie Belot and Nikolai Blaskow, took the opportunity to recognise all pets, our 'ISO companions', the ones who love us, do not judge but support us

unconditionally. The service was delivered via video-conferencing.

Gippsland Grammar led the way during the pandemic by moving to a remote learning model before the end of Term 1, ensuring the safety of all of its students from Early Learning to Year 12.

Teaching and learning were uninterrupted, which ensured students continued to flourish while learning from home.

Gippsland Grammar Principal, Leisa Harper, was impressed with the way teachers and students demonstrated adaptability and resilience in a time of such unknown.



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The Church, over the years, has been blessed with the generosity of Anglicans and others in support of its mission. One way you can support this ideal in a relatively easy way, is to make a gift through your will. In the first instance, of course, you will consider carefully the needs of your immediate family and friends before proceeding with a bequest to the church.

We offer a way of helping you to carry out your wishes. Your gift, through your bequest, will be very much appreciated. You may wish to support the Diocese of Gippsland as a whole, or your own parish, or for a particular purpose.

Making your bequest in your Will is a simple procedure, although in preparing or amending your Will you should always consult a solicitor. The Registrar of the Diocese of Gippsland has information to assist you in making a bequest, including the form of words you and your solicitor might want to use.

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# All lives matter, but racism must be challenged

Cathrine Muston

In 2016, Roshaun Watson, a young Martu/Njamal woman from the eastern Pilbara region of Western Australia, came to live with us while she completed her education at St Paul's Anglican Grammar School. People who met Roshaun always asked her, "How did you come to get here?" She never knew how to

answer because it was a long, circuitous route of connections between various people and Roshaun's desire to get an education. I always told people that God sent Roshaun to live with me for my education.

When Roshaun first came to live with us, I would never have thought I was racist; however, I was soon confronted by my own racist assumptions made simply because I was a white,

educated woman and had no lived experience of racism myself. My first encounter was in the way in which well-meaning people would exclaim that I was 'so good' for having Roshaun to live with me. This would make me very angry. No one ever seemed to assume that Roshaun might have significant adjustments to make in living with me. And yet I witnessed incredible grace from Roshaun as she

quietly showed me another way of seeing. It also implied that it took a special sort of person to host a young Aboriginal woman and thereby let others off the hook from having to make such a commitment themselves. There was also an expectation that Roshaun would be a 'leader for her people'. "Hang on," I would say, "why can't she just get an education as is the right of every other kid in Australia, without the expectation that she will have to lift 'her' people?" And why are they 'her' people; doesn't this paint Aboriginal people as 'other'?

We believe in a God for whom all lives matter, but when we have a group among us that experiences such enormous disadvantage and for whom racism is a series

of daily paper cuts, then we need to concentrate on restoration, healing and inclusion. Our efforts need to concentrate on our kinship with them. Our voices need to join with theirs, not override them. Aboriginal people are not a 'problem' to be solved, but are our brothers and sisters, who deserve better.

This is why black lives matter. Because the centuries of ground down dispossession and trauma that our First Nations people have experienced is real and has consequences for those living with it today. Their specific and real grievances against the racism that is inherent in our systems and in daily interactions need to be acknowledged and addressed. Now.

## The Blue Desert (an extract)

Roshaun Watson

Later, after watching everyone enjoying their football match, I walked home and watched the sunset 'jintu' changing its luminous colours; daylight pastels moving deeper into dark blue and fading with purple. This was always my favourite time of day in the country, as the light was very beautiful. I could sit and watch for hours just enjoying every bit. A lot of chattering flowed through my ears as my mum had agreed to get a photo in front of the last bit of sunset. I was very excited about the idea. Megan, the photographer who had visited us previously, placed her cameras on a rock, ready to take our shot. I held my mother's hands and looked towards the sunset. I did not want to turn away. Looking down, my toes dug through the red sand, as it was very cold, but perfect. I was listening to the noise in the surrounding area of birds humming in a ghostly gum tree. The tree had drippings of red syrup and looked as if it was bleeding and the aging bark was about to drop off soon. Nature was unique, which was why our people loved the land so much.

That evening after supper, I laid on the outside bunk looking at the amazing stars glittering above like diamonds. It was almost 9 o'clock so we all gathered around the fires for warmth. Flames lifted up like bright blazing flares right in front of us. I sat directly across from my grandfather, although I

wanted to sit right next to him. I just loved watching him speak above the fire. It was very important to listen closely.

After two years, we had nearly forgotten, but then the photos arrived in a book. The title was *Conversations with the Mob*. Everyone stood amongst each other squashing and bumping, desperately wanting to see their pictures on the pages. My name was shouted by a friend, 'It's you, look!' I had a quick peek, a glimpse; just a snippet, and then I felt a sudden rush of joy. The photo was of my mum looking toward the sunset, holding my hand as I stood behind her.

I ran towards my mother, happy and excited to deliver the news. There was a picture of us in the book. There we were, in the sunset once again. I suddenly realised

what the photo was all about. Megan had wanted to capture the memory that we had, celebrating the bond between mother and daughter. Megan had wanted to connect to us and learn about the Aboriginal culture. This is what I saw in the photo. She had come with cameras hoping to spread to the outside world that our culture was more than their stereotypes – that we were open and wise, and could easily be connected to the world around us. And it meant a lot to me.

*Roshaun Watson graduated from St Paul's Anglican Grammar School in Warragul at the end of 2019, one of the first in her family to achieve this level of education.*

*Extract first published in The Grammarian, newsletter of St Paul's Anglican Grammar school. Reused with permission of Roshaun Watson.*

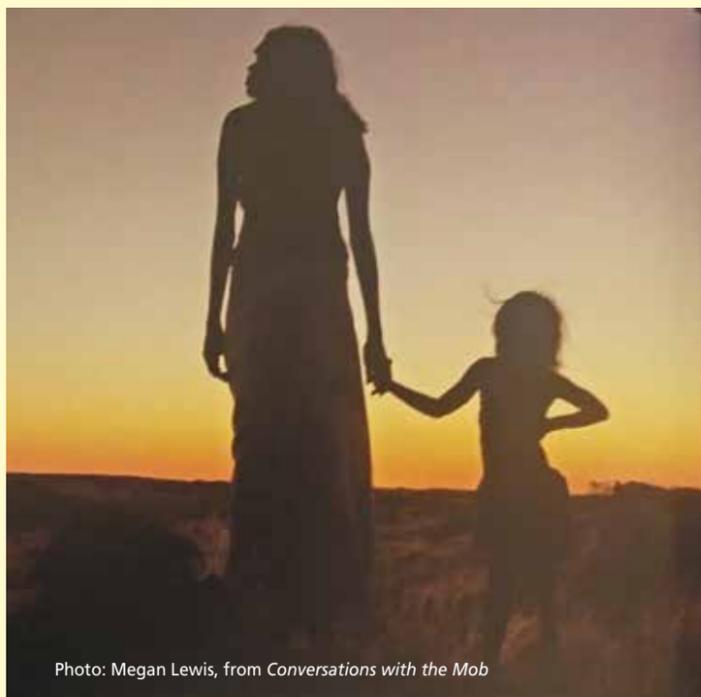


Photo: Megan Lewis, from *Conversations with the Mob*

*Roshaun and her mother in Western Australia*

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# Film screening at Anglicare for National Reconciliation Week



Courtesy Closer Productions

Themes and issues raised by the story of Dajuan (pictured) made for a lively discussion of *In My Blood It Runs* via Zoom

film provides Dajuan with a platform to advocate for change. Now 12 years old, Dajuan is the youngest person to have addressed the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva, where he presented a clear outline of what he sees as the issues facing Aboriginal children like him. He calls for Aboriginal teachers to be employed in his school, people who can understand him and his culture. He calls for the age of criminal responsibility to be raised from 10 years, and he wants a future out on Country with his family where culture and language are able to thrive. "Stop sending 10 year olds to prison," he told them.

The key impact of a documentary such as this is to highlight that Aboriginal people live daily with embedded racism that non-Indigenous people don't, can't or won't see because they have not experienced it.

*In My Blood It Runs* gives us an insight into how embedded exclusion impacts our First Nations people. Aboriginal people have solutions, they have knowledge systems and culture that are alive and well. Dajuan himself has solutions. He says, "When you go out bush every week you learn how to control your anger, and you learn how to control your life."

Anglicare Victoria's education and care programs, among others, help us to stand with children like Dajuan to listen to his story and work to ensure better tomorrows for him and his family.

*In My Blood It Runs* will be broadcast on ABC television on 5 July.

## Cathrine Muston

To mark National Reconciliation Week (27 May to 3 June), Anglicare Victoria staff in Gippsland participated in a virtual screening of the documentary film *In My Blood It Runs*.

*In My Blood It Runs* tells the story of Dajuan Hoosan, a 10-year-old Arrente and Garwa boy with a healing gift and a lively intelligence. Dajuan lives in

Hidden Valley town camp in Alice Springs with his mother, grandmother and siblings. Even at his young age, Dajuan is alert to the disparity between his community and those who live in the neighbouring valley, where all the houses have swimming pools. He is frustrated in school, where he is 'failing', and often in trouble – in fact, he is at risk of being imprisoned and he is all too aware of what that would mean.

After watching the film, staff were invited to a forum via Zoom to discuss the themes and issues that the film raises. Many found the film moving and inspiring, as well as challenging. One staff member said, "what a fascinating young fella Dajuan is, though loved and well supported by his mother and nan, he appeared so lost and out of his depth within the culture of the white education system."

The impact campaign for the



## Broken

by Jimmy McGovern  
stan.com.au

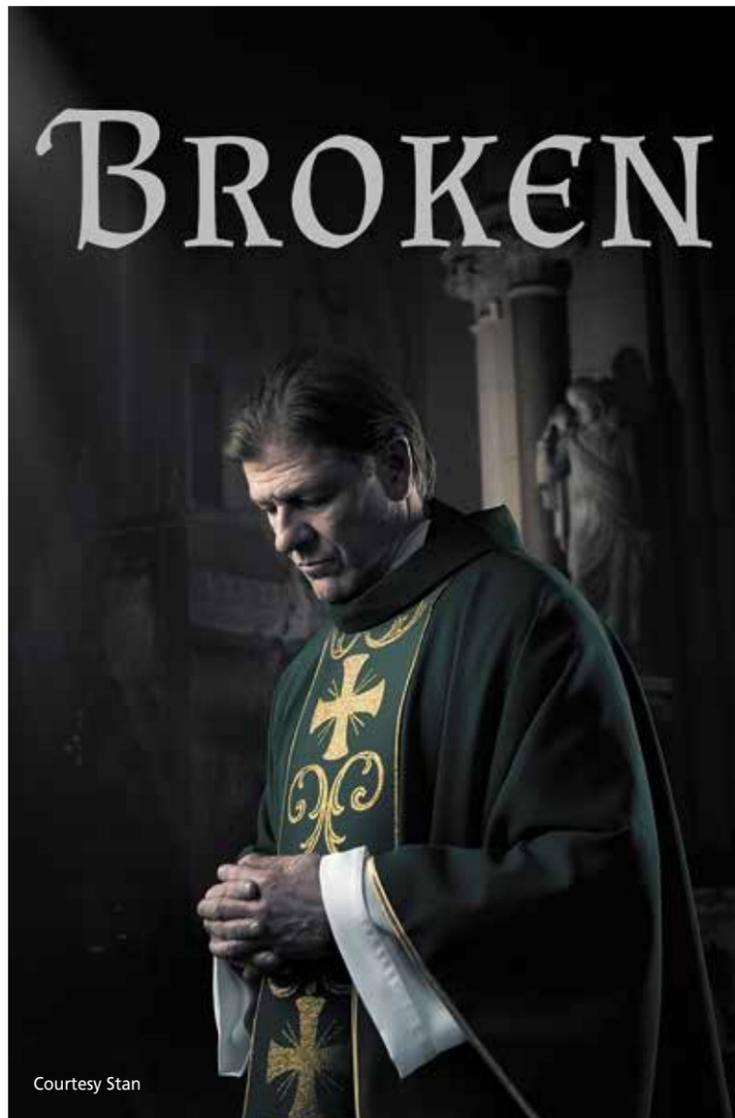
(first aired BBC One, 2017)

Cathrine Muston

**B**roken is the newest series of life among the poor and marginalised from Jimmy McGovern (*Redfern Now*, *Cracker*, *Hillsborough*). Set in England's north but filmed in Liverpool, the backdrop is gritty poverty. Yet the stories woven throughout the six episodes are complex, real and engaging.

The series focuses on local Catholic priest Michael Kerrigan (Sean Bean) who, now in his 50s, is wondering what his life has been worth. Abused as a boy by a Catholic priest, Michael in turn treated others badly until a significant encounter led him to ordination. Now, with his mother slowly dying, he is having flashbacks and feeling shame for past behaviour and unworthy of his calling.

Jimmy McGovern says that he does not make his characters cry if he doesn't cry while he is writing the scene. And there are tears. The dilemmas faced by humble people in straitened circumstances, and by Michael as he skirts the edges of his own sense of unworthiness, give pause for thought that our human condition is contradictory and complex.



The pain is everywhere, but the human connection holds it in a way that is bearable, not bleak. There is beauty even in the industrial landscape so beautifully shot by Joel Devlin, which serves to show the broader context for the lives of the characters.

Performances from the cast are, without exception, excellent. Single mother Christina (Anna Friels), who in desperation covers up her mother's death in order to claim her pension, and Helen Oyenusi (Muna Otaru), whose troubled son Vernon is killed by police, are particularly outstanding.

Then there is Roz (Paula Malcomson), who can't face the shame of a gambling addiction and comes to Michael to confess her intent to kill herself, and PC Andrew Powell (Mark Stanley), who wrestles with a dilemma that could derail his career and alienate his family.

There is terrible pain and distress in Michael's parish, but there is also joy, community and connection. There are people on the edges of faith and those for whom the church has been a source of pain and is abhorrent. The candle Michael lights to remind those present that Christ is among them is a welcome symbol of the hope and comfort that is available to all.

Watching Father Michael going about his work day by day as priest, friend, brother and son is a reminder that we are called to be a priesthood of all believers, and to see Jesus as incarnate in everyone and everything. In this we can experience healing and joy for ourselves. *Broken* is for those who are encouraged by stories of the incarnational work of Christ and are willing to join Him in that work.

"But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light." (1 Peter 2:9)

Cathrine Muston is  
Anglicare Development  
Officer, Parish Partnerships.

## Phosphorescence

On Awe, Wonder & Things That Sustain  
You When the World Goes Dark

by Julia Baird

HarperCollins, 2020

Richard Prideaux

When I read Julia Baird's book I could not help noticing some similarities to the approach taken by Jordan Peterson in his recent bestseller *Twelve Rules for Life*. Both authors are inspired by underwater creatures, they both have practical and significant rules for life, both of their books are footnoted with extensive and precise accuracy, both have been through very serious medical crises and both communicate an edgy Christian faith.

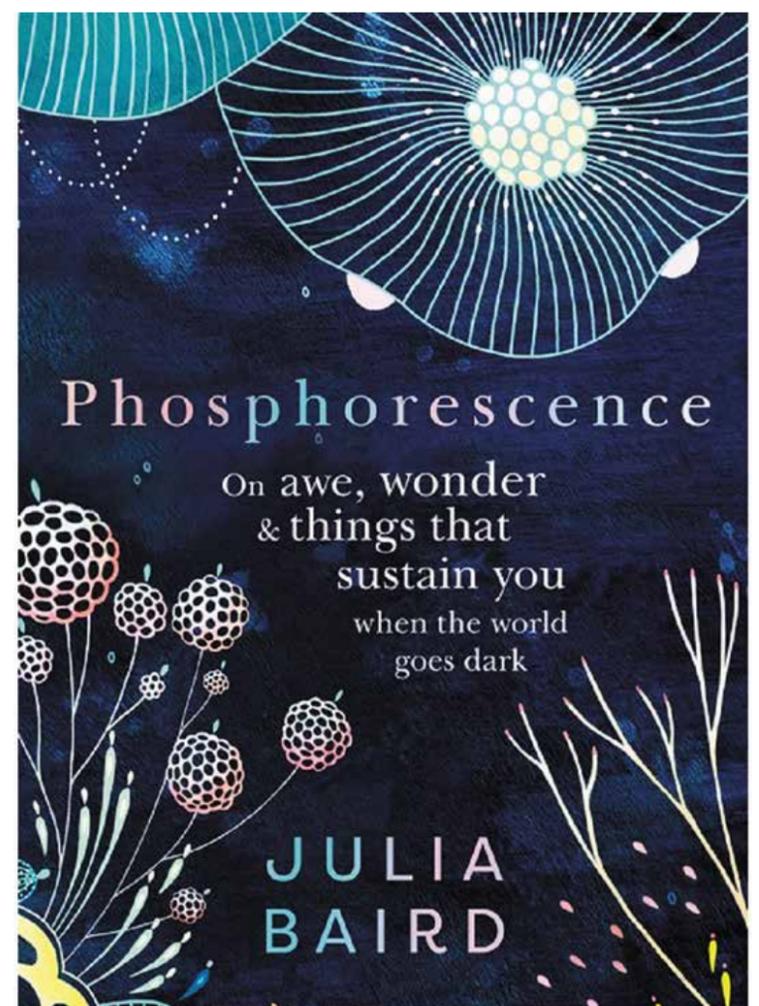
Julia Baird, co-anchor of ABC's *The Drum*, is a writer of no mean credentials. She has a law degree and PhD in history from the University of Sydney, was columnist and senior editor of New York's *Newsweek* for ten years, and has authored several books including her recent highly regarded and meticulously researched *Victoria the Queen*. Somehow or other, whilst achieving these things she seems to have spent a large amount of her life

either dancing or being underwater, as well as raising two children.

*Phosphorescence* is in some ways a response to the very dark places in which Julia has been in, following three separate and desperate bouts of an invasive but non-lethal cancer illness. In a nutshell the book is a call to us all to *regarde!* and pay attention in our lives and to seek awe in the ordinary and at the edge; to live kindly and deliberately. This advice emerges strongly in two separate amazing letters, one each to her son and her daughter, which repay reading again and again.

Julia's desire in this book is that we should desire and look for phosphorescence in our lives. It can be found if we seek it in cuttlefish with their three hearts, in silence, longstanding friendships, forest bathing, massive storms, space and the beauty of the universe. It is present when we are celebrating the temporary,

Continued on page 13



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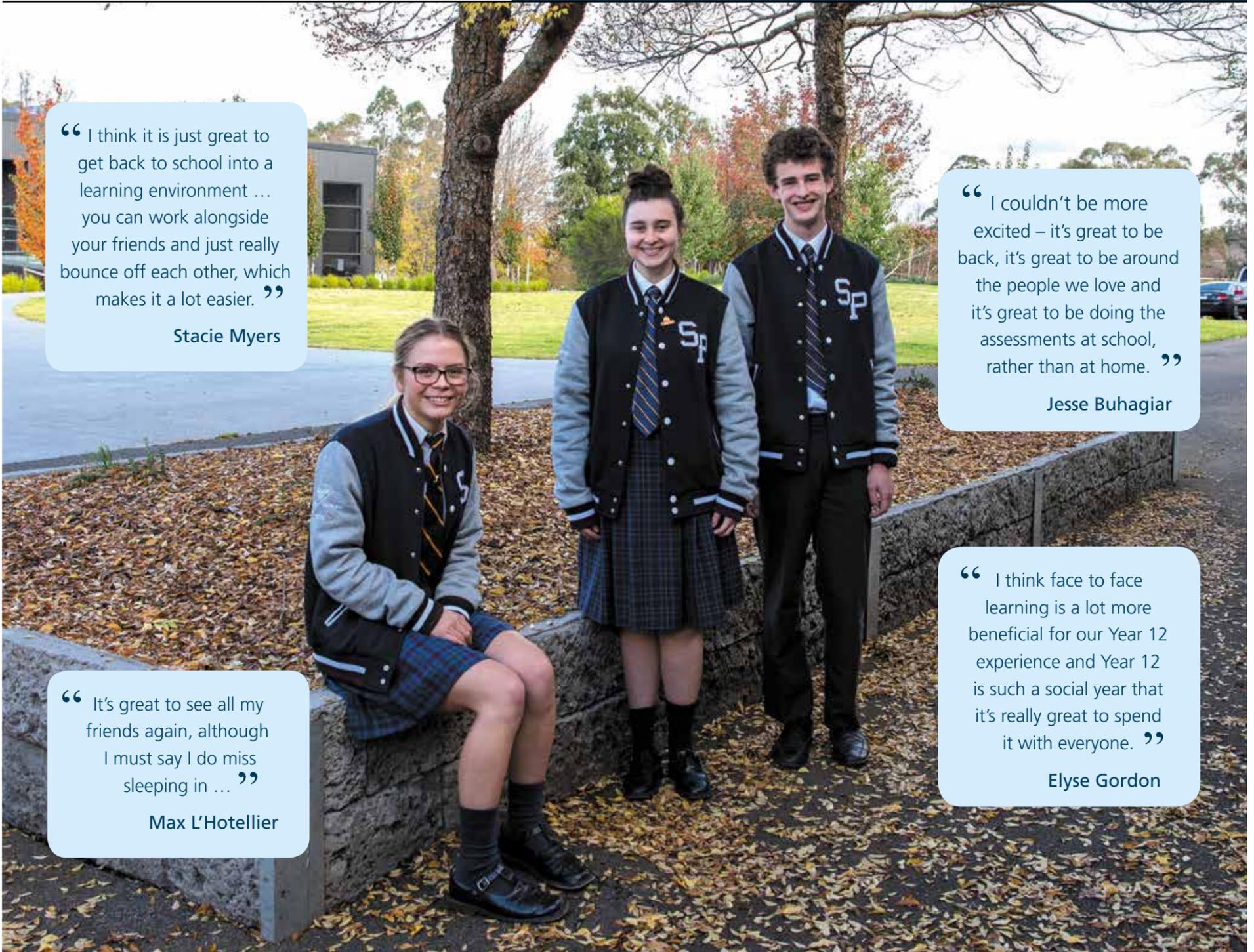
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“ I think it is just great to get back to school into a learning environment ... you can work alongside your friends and just really bounce off each other, which makes it a lot easier. ”

Stacie Myers

“ I couldn't be more excited – it's great to be back, it's great to be around the people we love and it's great to be doing the assessments at school, rather than at home. ”

Jesse Buhagiar

“ I think face to face learning is a lot more beneficial for our Year 12 experience and Year 12 is such a social year that it's really great to spend it with everyone. ”

Elyse Gordon

“ It's great to see all my friends again, although I must say I do miss sleeping in ... ”

Max L'Hotellier

St Paul's Year 12 students happy to be back to face-to-face learning: L-R Stacie Myers, Sophie Kovac and Max L'Hotellier

# Happy to be back at St Paul's

After weeks of remote learning from home, students at St Paul's Anglican Grammar School are grateful for and enjoying the face-to-face contact with friends and teachers.

## Phosphorescence

Continued from page 12

accepting imperfection, letting ourselves go, finding our own voice, in practising freudenfreude instead of schadenfreude (being glad, not sad, about the success of others), neurotic and loyal dogs, and by having a sense of purpose in life, art and creativity, savouring, hope and embracing doubt, along with many other things.

Along the way, Baird introduces us to a host of poets, philosophers, writers, survivors, scientists, spacemen and women, business tycoons and novelists. All my favourites

are here, including R.M. Rilke, D.H. Lawrence, Helen Garner, Tim Winton and Simone Weil, but there are many others. I am looking forward to reading more works of the lesser known poets she quotes, who provide an opening to *Phosphorescence* through their liminal writing.

The two final chapters, focusing on the church (especially Julia's own Sydney Anglican Church), will repay careful reading. I was especially touched by her tribute to her close friend the late Bishop John McIntyre and his work in both Redfern and Gippsland. Baird encourages

us to be less judgemental and more willing to shut up and listen to the hurts, needs and searching of those outside our comfortable churches. A member of General Synod during the ordination of women debate, Baird provides a thoughtful and challenging reflection on a defeat that clearly still rankles with many Sydney laywomen.

If you can cope with one more book as you emerge from COVID lockdown, I recommend this one.

*Richard Prideaux is Chaplain at Newhaven College and Diocesan Lay Reader in the Gippsland Diocese.*



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# Gifts in troubled times

Ken Parker

I reckon we have rediscovered the tradition of **Sabbath** over these past months – the concept of keeping a day of reverence, a day of stillness. How good have been the quiet streets and the slowing down of life. How do we rebuild this learning into our lives that we might find a healthier balance? This strange time has been a gift to humanity and to the earth as well.



**The environment** has surely gained from these quiet months.

The poor, stressed earth has found some balance too. How do we work better for the earth's wellbeing? Can we cut back our consuming, our excessive use of cars and plane travel? Do we have a choice?



**Spirituality** has surfaced as an important aspect of our impoverished western world. The incredible popularity of Julia Baird's book *Phosphorescence* is an indicator of this. This ABC presenter has written wisely about "awe, wonder and things that sustain you when the world goes dark." Can we maintain an awareness of the things of the spirit as the material world moves in on us again?

## The privilege of 80 years

Clem Watts

A friend recently asked me how I was going, to which I replied, "I'm doing fine except for a few aches and pains of the ageing process." He immediately said, "Clem, there are many people who don't have the opportunity of the ageing process, so be grateful." Which, of course, I am. To reach the age of 80 years is a privilege. I am reminded of the verse in Psalm 90:10, "Seventy years are given to us! Some even live to eighty. But even the best years are filled with pain and trouble; soon they disappear, and we fly away." (NLT)

I want to mention here that

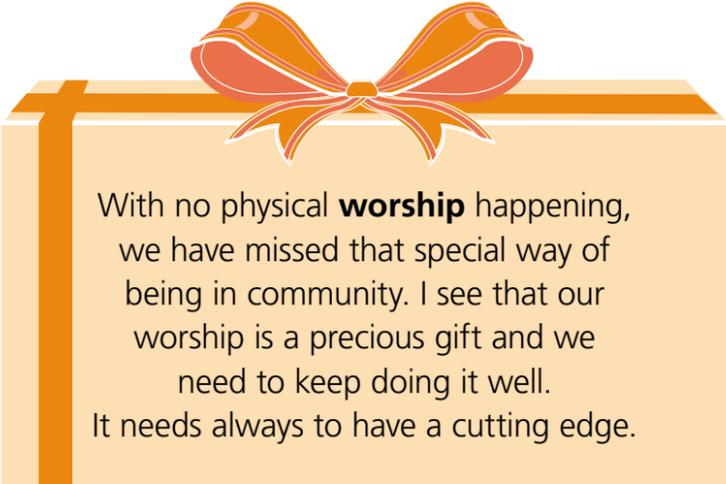
I am one of five 'oldies' in the Diocese who were all born within a few weeks of each other, back in 1940, and who recently celebrated their 80th birthdays. Since we all turned 70, Annabel Gibson, Heather Baker, Laurie Baker, Allan Huggins and I have met every year for a lunch together.

I now often find myself silently singing lovely old hymns, one of which is *It Is Well with My Soul*. I made that title a comment at my birthday celebration with my family on 14 June.

The story of the hymn is significant. It tells the story of Horatio Spafford (1828–1888) who as a young man established a most successful legal practice in Chicago. He was described



I have learnt much about our little **community of faith** over this time: we have communicated well and cared well. I know that I am enriched by my experience and I wonder how we can maintain this quality of life.



With no physical **worship** happening, we have missed that special way of being in community. I see that our worship is a precious gift and we need to keep doing it well. It needs always to have a cutting edge.



At the same time we have learnt again to **pray** at home, something our Jewish and Catholic friends have often done so well. Good learning!



**Staying home** has given me opportunity to catch up on all sorts of tasks, and to catch up with myself. Again I am reminded of English philosopher Sir Thomas Browne, who said, "We carry within us the wonders we seek outside."



Perhaps the greatest gift of these times has been a **rekindling of the imagination**. Thanks be to God!

*Ken Parker is Priest-in-Charge at St Thomas' Bunyip. See page 12 for a review of Phosphorescence.*



*Clem and his wife, Val, and their four children at Clem's 80th birthday celebration*

by Gospel musician George Stebbins as "a man of unusual intelligence and refinement, deeply spiritual, and a devoted student of the Scriptures."

Some months prior to the Chicago fire of 1871, Spafford had made significant real estate investments on Lake Michigan, but the disaster

ruined them. Just before this he had experienced the death of his son. Desiring a rest for his wife and four daughters, Spafford planned a European trip for his family in 1873. In November of that year, due to unexpected business, he had to remain in Chicago, but he sent his wife and four daughters ahead as scheduled

on the *SS Ville du Havre*. He expected to follow in a few days. On 22 November, the ship collided with an English vessel and sank within 12 minutes. Several days later, the survivors were finally landed in Cardiff, Wales, and Mrs Spafford cabled her husband: "Saved alone."

Shortly afterwards, Spafford left by ship to join his bereaved wife. It is speculated that on the sea near the area where it was thought his four daughters had drowned, Spafford penned the text for the hymn, including words for his own grief: "When sorrows like sea billows roll ...". It is amazing that one could experience such personal tragedies and sorrows as did Horatio Spafford and still be able to say, "It is well with my soul."

# Christ and the Maries

## In the eyes of the beholder



Ary Scheffer. *Christ and the Maries (The Entombment)* 1854. Oil on wood panel. 55.4 × 45.6 cm. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Gift of Henry Wagner, 1925

### Nikolai Blaskow

I found the commentary of philosopher Iris Murdoch on the practice of art (*Sovereignty of Good*) irresistible in approaching Ary Scheffer's *Christ and the Maries*.

She speaks of a "natural" selfishness that inhabits the human consciousness, which prevents human beings from seeing things as they are. That this consciousness,

far from being "a transparent glass" through which life is viewed, is more like "a cloud of more or less fantastic reverie designed to protect the psyche from pain." That, as humans, we tend to seek consolation, almost at any price, through an "imagined inflation of self, or through fictions of a theological nature." Indeed, her pessimism regarding the state of that ego-consciousness goes so far as to conclude that this "fat relentless ego" is forever getting in the way

of truthful perception of reality, and that the only way to circumvent it is through the effort of a "moral imagination."

Murdoch is convinced that art's Achilles heel is to be found in its almost "irresistible tendency to seek consolation in fantasy, and also of the effort to resist this and the vision of reality which comes with success." She concludes that almost "all art is a form of fantasy-consolation and few artists achieve the vision of the real,"

and that "good art" "shows how difficult it is to be objective" and "transcend selfish and obsessive limitations of personality." (pp 52, 64, 86–87).

This raises the question of whether Scheffer's *Christ and the Maries* measures up to Murdoch's criteria for "good art," and indeed whether it needs to.

To what extent is the work just about Scheffer's ego? Is it more about his desire for the consolation and fantasy of a theological nature? And, perhaps most importantly of all, is there a strength of moral perception in this work that takes us to the heart of the reality of the Maries and Christ?

Contemporary reviewers of Scheffer's works have not always been kind, but are they fair? One review described his art as "philosophical" and "sentimental," and yet defended him against the criticism of a "lack of power in colour" and against the charge that the peculiarity of his "tone of feeling" damaged his claimed reputation as "one of the commanding artistic spirits of the world." Yet, it was admitted that his emotionally charged images struck a chord with the public which declared him as one of the most popular artists of the day.

Does such popularity discount his worth as an artist? Do the clarity of composition, the directness of his approach to the narrative of Italian painting before 1500 and the recognisable expressions or gestures that made him so popular redeem him from censure? Are these questions of "those few minds adapted to the task" of minds gifted with "a wide knowledge of symbolism" and "an appreciative nature" even relevant for a modern, uninformed viewing public, especially as "critics with such qualifications are rare"? (Facts and thoughts about Ary Scheffer, *The Crayon*, Nov. 1859, vol. 6, no. 11, pp 340–345)

In the end, when we see Scheffer's *Christ and the Maries* 'live', we cannot help but leave our 'reviews' behind and see his work in its naked state.

As I gazed on *Christ and the Maries* for the first time, I saw grief in its various guises. I heard a dreadful silence. I felt the despair of the loss of something beautiful and precious.

I wonder what your response will be.

*The Rev'd Nikolai Blaskow is a PhD candidate in Philosophy and Religion, Bangor University, Wales. He is part of the ministry team at St Paul's in Sale.*

**GET TESTED**  
**IF YOU'VE GOT**  
**THESE SYMPTOMS**



Fever



Runny nose



Sore throat



Cough



Chills  
or sweats



Shortness  
of breath



Loss of sense  
of smell or taste

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**APART** | **KEEPS**  
**US** | **TOGETHER**

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Authorised and published by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne

