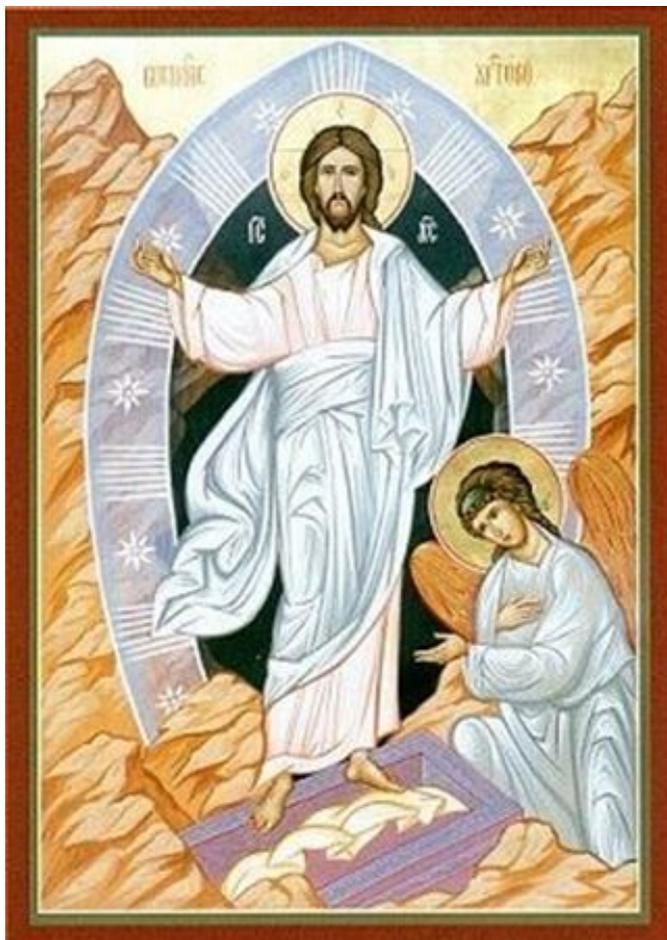


St Mary's  *Parish news*

Eastertide Edition 2018



The Resurrection Icon by Vladimir Krassovsky
This edition includes the Triduum Sermons by the Revd Marilyn Hope

From the Vicar

Easter has been a season of celebrations. In addition to the great service of the Vigil and Easter Day itself, we have had a series of baptisms over subsequent weeks, as well as confirmations, receptions and admissions to Holy Communion when Bishop Genieve Blackwell made a pastoral visit on 29 April. On that occasion the church was almost full: one needs to look back quite some way in the parish registers to find a similarly large service of



Christian initiation. Indeed, the number of baptisms in the register for this year already exceeds by some way the number for previous years, and most of those baptisms have come from within the regular worshipping community. This is a time for celebrations at the individual level of those who have made or renewed their commitments to Christ, but also corporately for this community of faith, which is demonstrably in a phase of growth. I attended a seminar

last week to discuss a report on diocesan statistics. In a chart plotting church attendances against historic patterns, St Mary's fell into the smallest group – parishes described as “leading”; which is to say that we are growing against the measure of our own statistics, and also against the wider measure of general diocesan statistics. All this is very heartening, but the key will be to ensure that that growth is sustained over the long term. Some years ago I asked what it might look like for St Mary's to have an average Sunday attendance in excess of 100 people. We are actually very close to the point where we might find out!

Blessings,

- Fr Craig.

Triduum Sermons 2018
The Revd Marilyn Hope

Maundy Thursday

One of the symbols of the deacon is the towel. At our ordination, deacons, distinctive deacons that is, are given a badge of the cross with a red towel draped across. So this gospel and the action of foot washing is very significant for us.

There are a few things about the foot washing that are important for all of us, though. It is messy, for a start, and if you're getting older, it can be difficult getting down on the floor to do the foot washing, and you pull up sore the next day. But that's part of it I think. The other part of the messiness is that we are washing feet, not our most attractive attribute for most of us. Again, as we get older, our feet may have bunions, or be gnarled, and maybe even a bit smelly. But I think when we start washing hands because it is more convenient, we miss the point. We also miss the point if we wash each other's hands.

I have been a novice in two religious communities, a long time ago now. In the first community, the novices were quite separate from the professed sisters, and so Mother washed the feet of the sisters, but not the novices. We missed out. But when I went to England, the first Lent I was a novice, and the Reverend Mother washed everyone's feet. So for the first time in my life, I had my feet not only washed, but kissed as well. It was so powerful I nearly wept. There is something important for both the leader and also the receivers, that it is the leader who does the humble thing and gets down on the floor and washes our feet. And it is okay for us, the receivers, to find this a little humiliating. The first disciples certainly did.

It's an important symbol for deacons, as I said, who are supposed to show the face of Christ to the world, according to one of the early church fathers. But deacons are a symbol in themselves, a symbol of what every Christian should be, that is to say, deacons are Christians writ large. So, we are all called to show the face of face, and that will mean we "also ought to wash one another's feet" (Jn 13:14).

In the discourse that follows on from Jesus washing the disciples' feet, He goes on to say, 'Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another' (Jn 13:34). Elsewhere we are told we should love others as ourself (Mk 12:31).

What does this mean for us? Well, it means more than just going online and making a donation to a charity of our choice. It means being aware of each other, and looking out for each other. St Benedict even goes so far as to ask the brothers to put the interests of the other above our own. That is a tall order, especially in our individualistic society, where our focus is more and more on the self. And usually, on that egotistical false self.

Our society and education is all about reaching our full potential, whatever that means, or personal happiness. But if that is our primary focus, it is very difficult to hold that alongside a regard for those around us.

I think this can also be a difficulty when we come to church to worship, and let's be honest, get a nice feeling for ourselves. We look for a nice warm feeling inside and a reassurance that we are good people, and are full of love for God and the world as we pray for it.

Our modern society might be full of people trying to reach their full potential, but at the same time, we can be very poor at self-awareness. Witness people walking down the street totally absorbed in their i-phone and oblivious to others. Or try catching a young person's eye on the tram in the hope that they will see you and offer you a seat. Being self-focused is not the same thing as being self-aware and knowing how we sit vis-à-vis other people.

I recently came across a wonderful homily on Jesus' Last Judgement story, in which the preacher pointed out that the people who did not recognise Christ were probably all good people, who would have given water or food if they had recognised Christ in the needy. But they were on their own self-focused journey to find God, and didn't recognise Jesus in the poor, even though they were aware of them. That is a terrible indictment of good people, but it can be an easy trap to fall into.

For myself, I know that when I was taking services in the hospital, I expected informality and didn't mind noise or interruptions. But when I am in a formal worship setting, if someone with, say, a mental health issue comes in and disrupts the beauty of the service, it can be really annoying, and for most of us, we go into silencing or removing mode. That is not exactly a foot-washing attitude, but one I am as guilty of as any other.

Obviously, we are not going to go around literally washing feet, but it is about an attitude of mind. How can we be available to serve others, how can we be more aware of other people and what they may need without being bothersome. Can we afford to take our eyes off the ball of self in order to look at and out for others? It's a risk, because you don't know what that might demand of you. It might require sacrificing something important to you, your time or energy, and not just a donation of money. This is to love as Christ loved, and it is only with his love that we can love others, we can't do it on our own.

St Basil, who was the Eastern Church's equivalent to our Western St Benedict, asked solitaries whose feet they were going to wash. For him, that was more important than being a hermit and given to prayer. We need to be aware and intentional about this attitude of whose feet we will wash. So, I ask you, Whose feet will you wash?

Good Friday

Today's liturgy may feel like all the concentration is on Jesus, on the Cross. But I want to start by looking at who the players are in the scenario on the Cross – not just the two men crucified on either side of Jesus, not just Mary and John the beloved disciple at the foot of the Cross, but who is actually on the Cross.

It is actually an event of the whole personhood of God, a Trinitarian event. Each of the persons within the community of God is always involved in whatever is happening to the others. We with our limited vision, tend to focus on just one person at a time. And certainly, we are only told about Jesus hanging there.

I was first introduced to this Trinitarian understanding by the German theologian, Jurgen Möltmann. In his book, *The Crucified God*, he writes about the Father being present in the giving up of his Son, the Son is very much present in the giving up of himself to this suffering, and the Holy Spirit is present in that terrible space between the abandoning Father and the abandoned Son as God's presence of possibility, and potential, which becomes new life for Jesus, and for us. And it is this place of death that we enter into at our baptism, the entering of the place of suffering and death, so that the Spirit of potential and new life can enter us. We tend to gloss over the fact that we are baptised into the death of Christ. And I think it is difficult for us to identify with Jesus's death because it is such a particular way of suffering and death, unknown in our modern times. We perhaps tend to psychologise our identification, our involvement in this process of Christ's suffering. We can get so used to seeing crosses and crucifixes around our churches, that we stop seeing them.

But as a way IN to staying with what is happening on the Cross, I would like to quote a poem of St Bonaventure, a thirteenth century Franciscan theologian. He wrote:
Christ on the cross bows his head,
Waiting for you,
That he may kiss you,
His arms outstretched,
That he may embrace you,

His hands are open,
That he may enrich you
His body spread out
That he may give himself totally,
His feet are nailed,
That he may stay there,
His side is open for you,
That he may let you enter there.

I am particularly struck by the lines, "His feet are nailed, that he may stay there," because we are actually the ones who don't stay there. This liturgy this morning is doing something for us in that it is actually nailing our feet to the floor, as it were, to keep us here, at least for a little while.

I'm sure you have all seen reproductions of the crucifix that St Francis first saw in the church he was called to repair. St Clare had it in the Sisters chapel, and Clare's advice about praying, was just to gaze upon that cross. She wrote to another Sister, Agnes of Prague: ...gaze on him, consider him, contemplate him, as you desire to imitate him. If you suffer with him, you will reign with him. If you weep with him, you shall rejoice with him; if you die with him on the cross of tribulation, you shall possess heavenly mansions.... Now the expressions she uses may seem quite foreign to us, but you get the idea of looking at or gazing on the cross, reflecting on it, and not moving on too quickly to the end of the story. "If you weep with him, you will rejoice with him."

This moving away from suffering or darkness or not knowing, is what we do in all of our lives, I think. We live in a society that encourages us not to suffer pain, to take Panadol or Nurifen, whatever our drug of choice might be. Or to have another drink so we don't focus too much on our emotional pain. And in our faith, to look for answers, when in fact the answer is unfathomable and unknowable. I'm sure this is part of the attraction of a more evangelical approach to faith, because they give answers, whereas we are also well served if we are given questions to sit with.

Part of the pain we need to sit with for a while, is highlighted in the Reproaches, which will be sung shortly in this liturgy. The

Reproaches are a reflection on God's lament, as we hear about all the ways that God showed us love, and we didn't respond.
I led you out of Egypt, from slavery to freedom,
But you led your Saviour to the cross.

For forty years I led you safely through the desert,
I fed you with manna from heaven, and brought you to a land of plenty;
But you led your Saviour to the cross.

I opened the sea before you, but you opened my side with a spear.
I led you on your way with a pillar of cloud,
But you led me to Pilate's court.

And then God's lament is interspersed with these pleading statements:

O my people, what have I done to you?
How have I offended you? Answer me!

And the gut-wrenching plea:
What more could I have done for you?

So I want us to stay with the dark reality of what humanity, what you and I have done to God in Christ. The ways we have either disregarded God, or actually denied God's reality in our lives. I want to encourage us to stay focused on this aspect of the Paschal mystery, and not start moving into resurrection until the Vigil. Stay with the dying, and our not-knowing anything about the time of Jesus' entombment. This is the only place that our faith can learn to hope – to hope in the potential of new life, new possibilities that arise from this awful space of suffering and darkness and death. We cannot skip over any of this pain and suffering if we really want to experience new life in ALL its fullness.

Easter Vigil

In our modern times, we experience very little dark during our waking hours of night. The cultural historian, Craig Koslofsky, has written about some of the changes that street lighting has created, beginning in the tenth century in Spain. It meant that people could safely venture out at night. Streets have been made more and more light over the centuries, and today, we can even hold street parties outside at night and see perfectly well. However, just because the streets are safer in terms of not falling over things, they have become less safe in terms of crime. More people out and about means more crime, apparently.

At home, we no longer have to huddle all together around candles to work or read, and in fact we tend more to end up in separate rooms, with each person lighting up a whole room. Well, why not, since we can do it quite easily.

We have just lit up the night from the Easter candle to symbolically show that the risen Christ is like light flooding into our world. Christ described himself as the Light of the world (Jn 8:12). Many of the references in Scripture refer to the ways God brings light into the world, beginning with the Genesis creation story when God said, "Let there be light and there was light", and "God saw that the light was good" (Gen 1:3-4). There was the pillar of fire to give the Israelites light during the exodus from Egypt. And throughout the Old Testament we have the equation of light with God and good, and darkness with evil. So for a baby to never see the light of day, for example, seems somehow worse than a baby dying when very young. And Christians have picked up this idea, with Paul, exhorting us to do good while we have the light of day, and Revelation ending up with the wonderful picture of the new Jerusalem not needing any lamps because Christ will be its light.

But just before we get too carried away with rejoicing in the light of Easter, I would like to take us back a little to the dark or shadows of Jesus' time in the tomb, or in Jesus' 'descent into hell' as the creed has it. While not a lot is made of it in scripture, nevertheless, there is another aspect to darkness, not least prior to creation and again prior to the resurrection and in our baptism.

We tend to just slide over Holy Saturday in our spiritual journey of Holy Week. We spend a lot of time liturgically from Palm Sunday up until Good Friday, and then...boom....here we are at the new fire and the Easter candle. The early church would have been in vigil all night, waiting for this, preparing, watching, and listening for the....being open to the....un-nameable, and unknowable.

And I think we miss out on a great deal by not sitting in that darkness watching and waiting. It almost becomes like a liturgical McDonald's fast food service. We don't have to prepare ourselves, clear a space in our lives for God to come and BE resurrection in our lives.

Things happen in the darkness. Before God actually created light on the first day of the week, "the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep" (Gen 1:2). We are told that a "wind from God swept over the waters", that is to say, the spirit of God was hovering, things were happening, it was not an empty void. The void and darkness are not necessarily bad in the sense of evil, but just not complete, not yet come to life, but maybe readying itself for this light and life. Similarly, in the Good Friday liturgy, I talked about the place of the Spirit in the agony between the Father and the Son on the Cross. That place of seeming death and defeat is the very place where things are happening, the Spirit is working, and that work is then shown to us in Christ's resurrection.

It is no accident that monastics have traditionally got out of bed in the dark for their prayers. Very few monastics say the office of vigils in the middle of the night any more, but even so, they would all get up very early while it was still dark for that first office of Vigils. I think too, every monastic without exception would say that the time before dawn was the best time of day for prayer. There are no visual or auditory distractions in the dark, and one can open oneself to the God who desires above all to come to us, and fill us with the Spirit of life. One of the psalms talks of God making his hiding place in the dark. I don't wish to suggest that without this sort of sitting and watching in the darkness and silence, God will not come to us, or fill us with resurrection life, but only that we will be open to receive and appreciate our gift of life. I think it is dangerous to skip this vigil aspect, because we can be quite blasé about the gifts of God and just

start to expect them as our right. They are never our right and we do not deserve them. They are always pure gift, pure grace, God's gift of God's self.

The baptism of new Christians who have been preparing all through Lent sits well with the theme of new life coming out of darkness. And we will renew our baptismal vows in this service. I am guessing that no one here, or only a few at the most, will have been baptised by immersion. I have only seen it done once in the Anglican church, and it was quite a business during the Easter Vigil, but also quite magnificent. If you are like me, and don't like putting your head under water, total emersion would be quite terrifying, and threatening. One can drown under water. And that is the link we are supposed to make, but we need to be reminded of it I think. I would like to quote from Paul, as he teases this out quite emphatically; Do you not know that all of us who have been baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. (Rom 6:3-5)

This paschal journey is what we have been doing liturgically over the last three days. And if we have journeyed with Christ as much as we can spiritually, and have sat with what it means in that seemingly empty space between death and new life, we will experience the resurrection like a lighting of new light in our lives.

We can fully express what that feels like as we go a little overboard with bells and singing and organ again in this service of celebration. But it is paradigmatic in the Christian faith that we need to experience and know the whole of the paschal journey; we cannot know resurrection without Good Friday. We cannot fully know either of these without that space and emptiness between the two. There is always in our lives a process between experiencing death in all its myriad manifestations in our lives, the process in that time of transition from the pain to the glory, that sitting with expectation and hope, experiencing the dark place of not knowing and doubting, before we can experience the certainty of the new life welling up within us.

And now, we here at St Mary's have been on this journey, and I am grateful that you have let me share in that with you. So let us go on and celebrate the new light and the fact that Christ has risen, in the Church and in our lives. Amen.

Occasional Series: Favourite Prayers

Our Last Awakening Prayer

John Donne (1571 – 1631)

Dean of St Paul's Cathedral London

Bring us, O Lord God, at our last awakening,
into the house and gate of heaven, to enter into that gate and dwell
in that house where there shall be no darkness or dazzling, but one
equal light;

no noise nor silence, but one equal music;

no fears nor hopes but one equal possession:

no ends nor beginnings, but one equal eternity;

in the habitations of Thy glory and dominion, world without end!

Amen

Prayer of the Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow

Grant me, O Lord, to greet the coming day in peace. Help me in all things to rely upon thy holy will. In every hour of the day, reveal thy will to me. Bless my dealings with all who surround me. The unforeseen events, let me not forget that all are sent by thee. Teach me to act firmly and wisely, without embittering or embarrassing others. In all my deeds and words, guide my thoughts and feeling. Direct my will; teach me to pray; pray thou thyself in me.

Amen

Stories and News from around the Parish

“ Now the green blade rises”

Christine Storey

Easter at St Mary's is always inspirational as we focus on the final dark days of Jesus' life and the triumph of His resurrection. The Reverend Dorothy Lee highlighted in her sermon on the second Sunday after Easter, that “matter matters to God”. How can we, in our supposedly so sophisticated 21st century business, live out our lives in the way that Jesus taught us?

Late last year an article written by Bernard Salt referred to our current generation of nonagenarians as the "greatest green generation" in his article "Who's the greenest of them all?" (Australian Weekend Magazine, Oct 14-15, 2017). This echoed our family eulogy for our recently deceased 94 year-old mother, who was described as a "greenie before her time". "Waste not, want not" was a way of life for her, not only of the material, but of life in the broad, including people and opportunities. Certainly the financial constraints of the 1930's Great Depression left an indelible mark, but actually if your family's bread winner still had a reasonable job, the material privations were not as great as those during the Second World War when rationing of food and goods affected everyone irrespective of social standing. Even if you had money to make purchases there were absolute shortages; consequently, food could not be wasted and goods had to be repaired and made to last. Today, if you have the money, the ability to purchase food and goods and to travel the world may seem limitless, and the concept of global warming, waste disposal and environmental degradation seem much less tangible than were the ration coupons of the WW2 era. Yet unfettered consumerism has clearly had its day if we are to preserve our planet, the first gift of our Creator God. How do businesses and Governments ensure that their bounty is sustainable and furthermore shared with justice and equity? The simple approach in business focusing on the financial bottom line (profit/loss), has clearly led to greed, environmental degradation and great inequity. Thankfully there is a “still, small voice” stirring amongst the economic community which is starting to recognize that

this approach doesn't even make long-term business sense. The economic theory of the "Triple Bottom Line (TBL)" accounting framework is developing, taking into account social, environmental and financial "bottom lines". With the ability of complex computer modelling, TBL accounting has never been more achievable, yet all the computer modelling known will not instill God's redeeming love as the overarching principle. The challenge for the contemporary global Christian church is to inspire all levels of business and Government to ensure an enduring healthy planet Earth and quality of life for our global village.

St Mary's Travels

A Voyage from Hong Kong to Singapore

Greg Reinhardt

As is my normal custom, I enjoy being at sea for Christmas and the New Year.

On 18 December 2017, I travelled to Hong Kong for two nights taking advantage of the sojourn there to visit Macau by Jet Foil so as to enjoy the wonderful colonial architecture of that city and to eat at what is one of the best Portuguese restaurants, namely, Fernando's on the Praia de Hac Sa about 10 minutes by road out of the city. A visit to Macau is a wonderful way to spend a day out of Hong Kong. Visitors to Macau will shortly be able to make the crossing of the Pearl River delta by a bridge between Hong Kong and Macau which has been built at great expense and which is a wonder of engineering.

I joined the Holland America ship 'Volendam' on 20 December for the cruise to Singapore. The first port of call was Halong Bay in Vietnam, one of the most scenic ports in the world. The landing can only be reached by tender and this is the stop off port for Hanoi. The journey to Hanoi takes some two hours depending on traffic which can be horrendous. Highlights in Hanoi include the old town with its markets, the French Quarter, including the very ornate opera house, the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum (the embalmed body of Uncle Ho rests in a cool chamber in the centre of the Mausoleum but protected from public gaze), the Hanoi Hilton, where allied prisoners were imprisoned during the Indo China War (mainly airmen, including US Senator John McCain) and wonderful Buddhist temples. To me Hanoi is a far more interesting and authentic Vietnamese city than Saigon (Ho Chi Minh City) and certainly a great deal of the French architecture and influence are preserved.

The next port was Da Nang with its beautiful beaches and which, with its proximity to the old imperial capital of Hue, is a popular tourist town. Da Nang was the centre for Australian troops during the Vietnam War (or, as the Vietnam call it, the American War), the

war which resulted from the American attempt to preserve a puppet non-Communist regime in the south of Vietnam after the expulsion of the French in 1954 with their defeat at Dien Bien Phu in the north west of the country. The French controlled the whole of Indo-China (or Cochin China) including Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos although the influence of French language is now confined to the older generation. I had some wonderful Phở in Vietnam, a noodle dish readily available in Melbourne (it is pronounced “phe” not ‘pho’. It’s all to do with the accent but if you ask wrongly, the request is for a prostitute!)

To Nha Trang and a tour of Hoi An which is a beautiful ancient town



in central Vietnam with wonderful and centuries old wooden houses susceptible to typhoons and floods from the Thu Bon River and where the furniture regularly has to be moved upstairs. The Japanese covered bridge is one of the highlights; this connected the

Chinese and Japanese parts of the town Many UNESCO heritage sites in the vicinity.

Phu My, the port for Saigon (Ho Chi Minh City), albeit a fair distance away. I had not been to Saigon for 10 years or so and it is now huge. The centre continues to have some of the old French and Vietnamese charm but this is greatly overshadowed by tall modern buildings which detract from the ambience of the city. Naturally, a visit to the US Embassy from the roof of which helicopters removed the defeated Americans and a wonderful museum on the war with a lot of propaganda not surprisingly (the type of thing seen in Cuba).

Finally, an observation on the Vietnamese countryside. Paddy fields everywhere. In the north there are two crops of rice a year and in the south, three, on account of the greater rain fall. There is much economic activity in Vietnam.

Next stop Sihanoukville in Cambodia, best forgotten, but the port for that country-stick to Siem Reap and Angkor Wat. One of the most God-forsaken ports of the world and like something from a Joseph Conrad novel!

A visit to two ports in Thailand, including Nathan on Koh Samui which has to be the most picturesque of the Thai resorts, although subject to a lot of rain, I think.

And so on to Singapore and a day with friends before the return to Melbourne.

The Volendam is highly recommended- a very good smaller to mid-size ship. So much did I enjoy it that I've booked another cruise for this December ex-Fort Lauderdale to the Dutch West Indies and Central America-Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Guatemala and Mexico.

SERVICES FOR THE DIARY

Thursday 10 May	Ascension Day 6.30pm Sung Eucharist
Sunday 13 May	Meditation 5pm
Sunday 20 May	Day of Pentecost
Sunday 27 May	Trinity Sunday 6pm Evensong

CHILDREN AT ST MARYS

Sunday 6 May	Light Up! 10am
Sunday 20 May	Messy St Mary's 10am

A Church for People who Think

**Sunday Lecture/study groups
11.30am-12.15pm**

Programme May-June 2018

13-20-27 May

The Wesleys for Anglicans

The Revd Prof Robert Gribben

10-17-24 June

The Wisdom of Jesus

Dr Geoff Jenkins

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Kerry Dehring

Regular Office Hours:

Monday 9.30am-3.30pm

Wednesday 9.30am-3.30pm

Thursday 9.30am-3.30pm

The church is open during the day.
Morning Prayer is at 8.30am Tuesday to Friday.
All are welcome, and for coffee afterwards.
Wednesday Eucharist is celebrated at
12.30pm in the Mary Chapel with Meditation at 1.00pm.

The clergy are happy to be contacted to discuss matters of faith with anyone, and to prepare people for the church's sacraments.
Any views and opinions expressed in this edition of the parish news are those of the individuals writing them and do not necessarily reflect parish policy or the views of the parish clergy.

This Edition of the Parish News has been printed in black & white to help save money. If you would like to view this edition of the Parish News in colour, please go to our website
www.stmarys.org.au

MISSION AND VISION STATEMENT

St Mary's Anglican Church, North Melbourne is an inner-city Christian community that strives to be faithful, inclusive and sacramental.

God inspires us to worship in daily celebration; to be caring, thoughtful and inviting.

In response to God's call, in the next three to five years we aim:

- *To grow substantially in faith and numbers*
- *To create an inter-generational culture that values all age groups - children and adults - equally*
- *To express our faith in active engagement within and beyond our own community*
- *To deploy our property and financial assets in strategic support of the ministry needs of the parish for the long term*
- *To become more open to change as we learn to grow*

