

# St Mary's Parish News, Patronal Edition August 2020



**The Parish of St Mary's Anglican Church North Melbourne**

## Vicar's Letter

Fr Jan Joustra

Dear Friends,

Little did any of us really expect at the beginning of this year that the year would turn out as it has. First the terrible bushfires at New Years that heralded some of the worst this country has ever seen. This was then followed by the arrival of the Covid 19 virus. The relentless rise then dropping then escalating of numbers has for some brought their lives to a total stand-still and for others, particularly those in the medical field has seen them run off their feet. So far, our little community of St Mary's has fared well with only a couple of cases of which I am aware and thankfully no fatalities. We do however extend our condolences to Elaine Nkwoolo on the death of her husband Ikenna and to Heather Harper on the death of her son Mark.

Where to from here? That is the question on everyone's lips as we enter the second half of this year. Those of us who are baby-boomers and their children are the luckiest generation that has ever lived. New levels of health care and medical science has dropped infant mortality as never before. The average life expectancy is higher than ever before. Since WWII the world has been more at peace than in any other age, though it might not feel like it at times.

For many of us, this pandemic has been the first time our way of life has been threatened, which is very disconcerting for many. I really noticed this when for the first time in my life; the government has put in a curfew, restricting our movement after 8pm. None of us knows exactly how this will play out over the coming months and years.

One thing is certain, however, that family, friends and community have an important role to play in supporting each other and keeping up our mental health. If you are feeling isolated and lonely, please ring up a friend and chat, they are probably feeling just the same way. If you are feeling good, ring up a friend, because they might not be feeling good and you can possibly change their day by showing that you care.

Feel free to call me, if you need to talk to someone. My number is 0400-959-077. It is really important for ourselves and St Mary's community that we stay in touch. Another way is join in our Morning Prayer service at 9am Monday, Wednesday and Friday. This little group of people really help us all to feel connected.

We will get through this and hopefully we will emerge stronger and more resilient.

Fr Jan



## Passion, Creativity and Technology for a Remote Choir

**Beverley Phillips**

Had anyone put into my job description “ability to conduct a creative Zoom choir practice” I honestly think I would have run a mile. I recall one morning watching a tutorial online about a programme called “Reaper”. I pinged this off to Tim wondering whether perhaps the lonely hymn files I was sending to Sam might just have a few voices. Tim took this up with enormous energy and spirit and so began the journey the choristers describe, and is still evolving. So after this Sunday we are taking a ‘week off’ to allow an ‘in service’ ‘on-line’! (Oops is that grammatical?).

There are considerable technical restraints that we are constantly battling with, not least that the recording app/programme and inbuilt microphones constantly “smooth” voices and resonances and makes it very difficult to record a sensitive track. A bit like constantly fighting with that ‘predictive’ monitor we all now know. But the feedback, greatly appreciated, from parishioners was that hearing their choir and having that other colour to our liturgy on line was appreciated. Thank you for your support because it has meant a lot when things have got hard.

The experience has been heartening in that I now feel a little more needed as a conductor. The second learning is how to be extremely disciplined. Every track is recorded with a metronome clicking away in my ear to ensure I am strictly in time. I did try, not thinking clearly, a Wesley anthem with speed changes. Oops. Not only was I in trouble trying to ensure I kept returning to the initial tempo, I had choristers scrambling to ‘intuit’ speed changes. This obviously challenges possible sensitive changes in tempo to accommodate the composition.

The other thing I am learning - listening with care whilst watching a screen with either faces or intricate sound images and looking for the minutest changes. Both are critical. As with everyone in our community, the reality we live in and being a choir literally 1000’s of kilometre apart is hard. For all the time I have ever conducted choir rehearsals, it has been about blending, singing together, enjoying the other voice. Now it’s

all about 1 voice track. In that blending we become aware of the nuances of life as well. I am aware of much pastoral care 'off line' taking place.

None of this would really end up happening had Tim, David, Nancy and Sam not taken up the challenge and enthusiasm to make this succeed way beyond what any of us thought possible.

My challenge: we want to know that this coming Patronal Festival, you are singing all the responses and hymn at home. How about taking a selfie we could put up on our website of the Parish singing in our Festival.



## Reflections on a Quarantine Choir

Nancy Langham-Hooper

For many years, the choir of St Mary's gathered around the organ every Tuesday evening. The practice usually began with a shuffling of papers, a member or two coming in late, and Beverley relating the latest parish news. Diary dates were sorted, music passed out, questions answered. The singing usually began with the hymns for that week, as a warm up of sorts. Then the hard bits: anthems were worked through in detail, line by line, part by part. When it was all over, there was always lots of catching up and chatting as everyone packed up their music and made their way out the door.

These days, the choir continues to gather every Tuesday evening- on Zoom. Everyone says hello as each new face pops up, though if you come a bit late you might just get a quiet smile or a wave. Beverley begins by going through the parish news and RSCM announcements, usually related to the pandemic. Papers are shuffled, questions are answered. Music is passed out via the choir's Google Drive, and hymns are sung if the melody is unfamiliar. Tim updates everyone on the technical aspects of the new COVID choir- the new format requires a considerable amount of technology, as each choir member must record their part separately and upload it to a central drive. Beverley records the organ parts in advance, and everyone sings along to these. The individual parts are then mixed together by Tim, Nancy and David (all the way from New York!) The end result is a choir singing together, apart.

As difficult as the pandemic has been for the life of the church, the choir is discovering that a virtual format has its advantages. Geography, for one. David sings tenor from New York, Nancy contributes from the Dandenong Ranges, and Clare has rejoined the choir since moving to Adelaide. Beverley is able to organise everything from her property in the bush, sometimes sitting out on her back porch with gorgeous gum trees and birdsong as her backdrop.

Another advantage of the technology is how it has helped everyone develop as choristers. Singing by yourself lays bare all those little wobbles that would be covered over by singing in a group. Recording means you can have multiple tries to get something right, though no part is ever perfect!

But the best aspect of the Zoom choir practice is the catch ups. Choir members share their news and struggles under lockdown. Those choir members who are also healthcare workers give updates, and absent members are asked after. In this way, a Tuesday Zoom choir doesn't feel so different from an in-person choir practice. Just seeing everyone's face each week, hearing their news and listening to their voice has kept our little community together.

The following are reflections from various members about the new kind of choir, and a new kind of parish life, they have found during the pandemic.



### Andrea O'Donoghue

You can run but you can't hide!

Each week I practise and record an anthem and hymn, hearing via earphones Beverley's organ accompaniment. When I listen I am dismayed at my quavering breathy solo. Timing is tricky. I miss the clues that I normally receive from all the other vocal parts. I record again and again. Eventually I submit a satisfactory recording.

Sunday Surprise! I tune in to our YouTube service and we sound great! Thank you Choir Director Beverley, fellow choristers, and Techno choristers Tim, David and Nancy for your part in the choir's contribution to St Mary's COVID 19 worship.

I have taken responsibility for my part in this Brave New Choir World and worked with what I've been given. I am a team member. I'll be a much better chorister for all this.

### **Andrea Sherko**

Being able to contribute to the continuation of St Mary's choir under these trying circumstances has been a source of great comfort and satisfaction to me. I feel that I am still connected with this most important personal network while, at the same time, hopefully providing some comfort and pleasure to the broader St Mary's community. Initially, I found the technology challenging, but I am pleased that I have "mastered" these new skills. I am sure they will be useful in other contexts in addition to their current utility. My only dissatisfaction so far is having to listen to the sound of my voice on its own, un-camouflaged by other, nicer sounds! I am hoping to become accustomed to this horror! I do enjoy the choir's weekly Zoom meetings. It is lovely to actually see everyone in real time, rather than to only communicate via email/text etc. While I am sure that we all hope that this is a temporary arrangement, it is considerably better than having no choir at all.

### **Marina Connelly**

I don't think I ever hoped or expected we would be making music as we are at the moment, each recording our own voice tracks alone and them then being merged. It has to be a quite solitary process at one juncture - the point at which, in the quietest corner of the house, you press record and hope very much (in my case) that the Children's Hospital helicopter doesn't suddenly fly in earshot and ruin the sound file. But what I think is important for the St Mary's community to know is that the process is also just as collaborative as our ordinary music-making, if a little differently collaborative. We still meet for rehearsal on Tuesday evenings, just on Zoom, and there is the same time of sharing, gossip, gentle chaos and friendship. I still feel - and sing - as a member of a very cohesive choir. The music is as lovingly and worshipfully made as ever, and while I look forward to a time when we can sing together again in person, I'm proud of what we have managed.



### Elsdon Storey

Churchill said that "Democracy is the worst form of government except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time". This "least worst" sentiment is also applicable to the recording of church music, as it turns out. The recording system we are using at St Mary's does have some advantages: it is safe for choir and congregation; Bev is able to set and keep appropriate tempi; and other members of the congregation can join in the hymns from the on-line services, should they wish to do so. The downsides are considerable, though, and I must confess that I don't particularly enjoy Tuesday evening practices by Zoom. I find it impossible to blend in with the others with respect to pitch, tone and articulation of the word underlay, when I can't hear what I'm supposed to be blending into. A program such as Zoom, which screens out all but the loudest voice at any instant, may be suitable for conference calls but is antithetical to the requirements of choirs. That we manage to record a hymn or two and an anthem each week is a credit to Bev, and particularly to our more technically knowledgeable choir and ex-choir members - Tim, Nancy and David. (The latter is contributing from New York: one advantage of this technology.) All put in a great deal of time melding each single voice into the mix, to produce a recognisable and (I hope) acceptable whole. The extent to which the rest of us depend on their editorial ability and willingness to use it to blend the unpromising input of ten tentative single voices into a cohesive whole cannot be overstated.

Lastly, I have learnt a little humility (Still! Again!) from the process and results of recording my voice using a microphone. I have always divided singers into those who must use microphones and those - classically-trained - who do not, feeling slightly smug at belonging to the latter group. The current situation has given me a new appreciation of the craft of singing / recording into a microphone. It is harder than it looks, and I am reminded that only the truly talented make a difficult undertaking appear easy.

### Christine Rodda

"Let nothing ever grieve thee", a Brahms motet, was the last anthem we sang together at St Mary's on Sunday 15th March. At the time this particular motet seemed prophetic, many of us, particularly Bev,

suspected that this would indeed be the last Sunday that we would be singing together for a while. Bev's sense of things about to change unimaginably for our small choir I felt really showed in her incredibly sensitive accompaniment of this exquisite motet.

It is now almost 4 months since our last Sunday together as a choir, and Melbourne is once again in lock down, yet the haunting words and melody of this motet still returns to me from time to time. Yet we ask ourselves, nothing to grieve, when there is grief the world over with the COVID pandemic, souring death rates in many countries and a second wave in Melbourne, now worse than the first upon us? There are our personal griefs as well; not being able to have the joy of singing together shoulder to shoulder in a choir, not having the supportive hugs in our joys and sorrows shared with other choir members, grieving changes to family and social life, work life, our financial security.

Yet through all this I can truly be thankful for the knowledge that God remains with us all, through all these troubling times. Against this enveloping despair, fellowship and joy has grown from a source I would never have anticipated, the gift of the digital age in worship. Within a week or so of church closures, Sam has shared with us all his artistry in producing inspirational YouTube videos of the St Mary's services we know and love.

As a choir we met together for the first time sharing the RSCM Easter Evensong, which we were able to sing along to, supported by Church of England choirs throughout England and the choir from St Andrew's Cathedral Sydney. It was a time of deep sharing and fellowship with fellow Anglicans all experiencing the disruption of COVID. From that time, as choir members we have all up-skilled enormously, recording our single voice lines of set hymns and anthems every week, with the seemingly miraculous sound mixing by Tim, David and Nancy. For those of us who were still singing at St Mary's in early March, we very much miss St Mary's, yet because of being able to sing in a choir remotely we are able to have David still joining us from New York and Nancy from her home in the Dandenongs, a great joy!

For someone like me who feels like a "techno-Neanderthal" the early weeks of voice recording were trying indeed, and not helped by the continuous jack hammering through blue stone two doors away, that went on for weeks (David and Tim were very cleverly able to block this

out in the mixing). So Tuesday evening Zoom choir and individual voice recording with Bev's amazing online accompaniments has become our new normal, and personally I am beginning to find it most uplifting, in a different but still very Godly way. So the solace of Brahms's motet "Let nothing ever grieve thee" continues to comfort and strengthen me to be at peace with what is, and to be grateful for what we are able to do together as a choir sharing our faith in our loving and faithful God during these uncertain times.

### Mary Jonas

Choir during Covid-19 is close to sending this gal to the brink...the repeated sound recordings: the playback with all its flaws. But finally, when close enough to the Beverley test, relief and satisfaction if not a high. Well worth it 'till next time.

I am proud of the sound. And I'm inspired by the effort and imagination of other choristers who make it all happen.

### Tim Pilbrow

This has been a huge learning experience. I had never listened to myself sing. I'd never recorded my singing voice. It doesn't sound good when I listen to it on its own. I know everyone feels that way about their own voice. Yet, when we add the voices together in the editing software, it's like magic. The sound fills out, and all of a sudden we're a choir again. There are rough spots. It's hard to time the starts and ends of notes, and we do miss having Beverley, our choir director, out front conducting us. Apart from that, though, it's hard to tell that we're not all singing together in the flesh. Yes, it's been hard work, but I've been blown away by what we've achieved. We were never aiming for a professional sound. We wanted to sound like us. And we do. And it's good. As one of the people who took up the challenge of figuring out a process and learning the software to make this happen, I'm tremendously proud of what we've achieved. I'd never tried anything like this before. More than anything, I'm just wowed by the dedication and effort that the choir as a whole has put into this, and particularly Beverley, our director. We've made this together. We always make our music together, but this has been a very special togetherness.



## Morning Prayers from Durdidwarrah

Beverley Phillips

There has been one plus from our present circumstances. For the first time for about 15 years, I have been able to again participate in a Morning Prayer with others. Realising that I am in a privileged situation with space, bush, birds, wildlife (occasional roo etc.), I have set up my computer outside on the verandah either side of the house. Sometimes this has necessitated five layers of clothing and a discrete hot water bottle tucked away as temperatures have been down to around the two degree level. The little ravens and magpie family that nest close by often join in and there is the occasional chuckle from a kookaburra, parrot fly past with excited squeaks, wrens chatter, rattle of fantails trying to catch my attention and squark or mewling of cockatoos. The latter very distracting as the yellow tails, whilst gorgeous are horrific pruners of any blossom, in particular, the winter flowering hakea. It would take a sharp eye to note but often the local ewes in the paddock next door are doing their ritual of walking up and down the fence line, depending on the weather. North for rain, south for sunshine. I hear from some that being able to almost touch and feel the beauty of the natural world is something they enjoy. So I will continue to set up out there, and in return greatly appreciate the nurture of being together and praying together with everyone from my bush at Durdidwarrah.



## Joy in time of Covid Part 1: the Wider Church

Rhondda Fahey

When we were all much younger, I used to play a finger game with these words:

Here is the church  
And here is the steeple  
Open the doors  
And here's all the people.

Whoever would have thought then that there would no longer be people in the churches? I actually think I may have turned into a church groupie. I really like church. I like real church. I like the buildings, the smell of old incense, wax and flowers. I like worship in a familiar space with familiar words and familiar artefacts. I love the people, new as well as familiar faces. I love the singing and praying and the queuing for communion in community.

Whoever would have thought that this might stop?

These days I sit by myself, or possibly with the cat, with my iPad at the dining room table. Most services I watch on the iPad are streamed and are Matins without the comfort of making Eucharist together. Only at zoomed weekday morning prayer are there familiar faces. (Yes, Geoff, I know there's zoomed morning tea.).

Gradually the meaning of church expanded to a new way of church, a new kind of blessing. First there is Sunday Matins at St Mary's. Thank you so much, Fr Jan and Sam and those people who read. Thank you so much Beverley and the choir for all your efforts to recreate the familiar. After that, I may join Luke and Alice at St Martin's as they witness together at their Matins, to listen to Luke's take on the Gospel.

As my church world widened further I joined other friends to worship with them; Craig and Roxanne at CCSY as they offer the Eucharist with these words 'May the body of Christ keep us all in eternal life'. I often return to my old parish of St James' King Street to participate with friends there.

And then, thanks to a clip on Facebook, my daily world stretched to Canterbury. The video showed a tall, lanky, white-haired man reading Morning Prayer in the deanery garden, almost successfully ignoring the

cat purloining milk from the tea tray at his side. Robert Willis, Dean of Canterbury, says Morning Prayer in his garden daily. He remembers important events of the past in his homilies and prayers. Sometimes Tiger is there, sometimes an assortment of noisy chooks. The garden is beautiful in its summer abundance.

I was totally hooked when, on a Beatrix Potter anniversary, he not only prayed for those who nurture the land as Potter did but wove the escapades of Peter Rabbit into his homily. Further investigation of Dean Robert introduced me to his sermons and a lecture he gave in America some years ago called, 'Singing and Making Melody to the Lord' which explores the history of hymn singing. He played hymn tunes and recited words and ended with some of his own hymns, now published in the newly revised Hymns Ancient and Modern.

Who would have thought that this church groupie could have the time and the desire to participate in so many services in one day? Who would have known how much joy it would bring? Thanks be to God for all who open our hearts and minds to the possibilities of new communities of worship in the time of COVID.

## Were there Synagogues in Jerusalem?

Geoff Jenkins

If there were synagogues in Jerusalem when Jesus visited the city, it might change our understanding of how Jesus thought about it and interacted with it. However, we often think, according to some ancient principle, that a synagogue was only needed where the Temple was not accessible. That is not such a helpful model, I think, and we are justified in rethinking this important question as often as opportunity allows. Here in our St Mary's Newsletter for example?!

Actually, there can be little doubt that there was a large number of synagogues in Jerusalem when Jesus visited. In particular, we have the Theodotus Inscription, certainly dated before 70CE and probably, I think, to about 35CE, as well as the many references in the early chapters of Acts of the Apostles.



*The Theodotus Inscription*

I want here to add two references to synagogues to this discussion, but first a comment or two on the debate. This has been seen especially in the inclination of some scholars to date Theodotus much later than 70CE, usually closer to 300. Their argument, and more recently its rather definitive refutation, was set largely in terms of the archaeology, but might have been motivated by an antipathy to what we read in Acts.

If we may be confident that Theodotus is representative of pre-70CE Jerusalem, that would be significant. I mean by this not just to be *dated* then, but to be *typical* of what was going on in the city at that time. This



relates especially to pilgrimage, for it is clear that one purpose of the Theodotus Synagogue was to cater for pilgrims, presumably mostly diaspora Jews, who were visiting the city in large numbers for the festivals, Passover especially. They must have found somewhere to stay, presumably somewhere where their linguistic and cultural peculiarities were catered for. (The resonance with recent reflections on modern Melbourne is intended here).

This is not the moment to discuss Simon of Cyrene in detail, but he may illustrate this point, for the needs of diaspora Jews on pilgrimage were catered to by diaspora Jews living permanently in the city, through the institution of synagogues. Simon, who is said to have been "coming in from the field" as Jesus was led away to his crucifixion, and is one of the few "outsiders" named in the Gospels, ought not to be thought of as happening to arrive on pilgrimage at that moment. He would have been a diaspora Jew living permanently in Jerusalem, and the field would have been his fields, and likely as not he grew there produce to supply his and other synagogues. As such he would have been more a landholder than a peasant farmer. Whatever else, he was no pilgrim, as a note in Mark's Gospel makes clear.

Josephus is intriguing and instructive in this connection, for he gives us almost no direct evidence for synagogues in Jerusalem, though he wrote hundreds of pages about the events leading up to 70CE. Even so Josephus has any amount to say about pilgrims, but probably not much about permanently-dwelling diaspora Jews. In fact sometimes scholars have compared Josephus with Acts, contrasted them and preferred Josephus' (non-)picture. This is the more intriguing because Luke in Acts talks a lot about synagogues, but not much about pilgrims ("dwelling in Jerusalem" in Acts 2:5 should be thought of as "settled permanently", not camping for a week nearby!).

For whatever reason, probably because their purposes are different, these two sources are difficult to compare. Josephus doesn't seem to want to explain where his one million visitors to Jerusalem for the festival stayed the night, and Luke is interested in the synagogue connection to the church for which the permanently-dwelling devout Jews were the obvious focus.

Now to two other texts, both of which have been hiding in plain sight, though in quite different locations. The first to mention is Acts 24, where

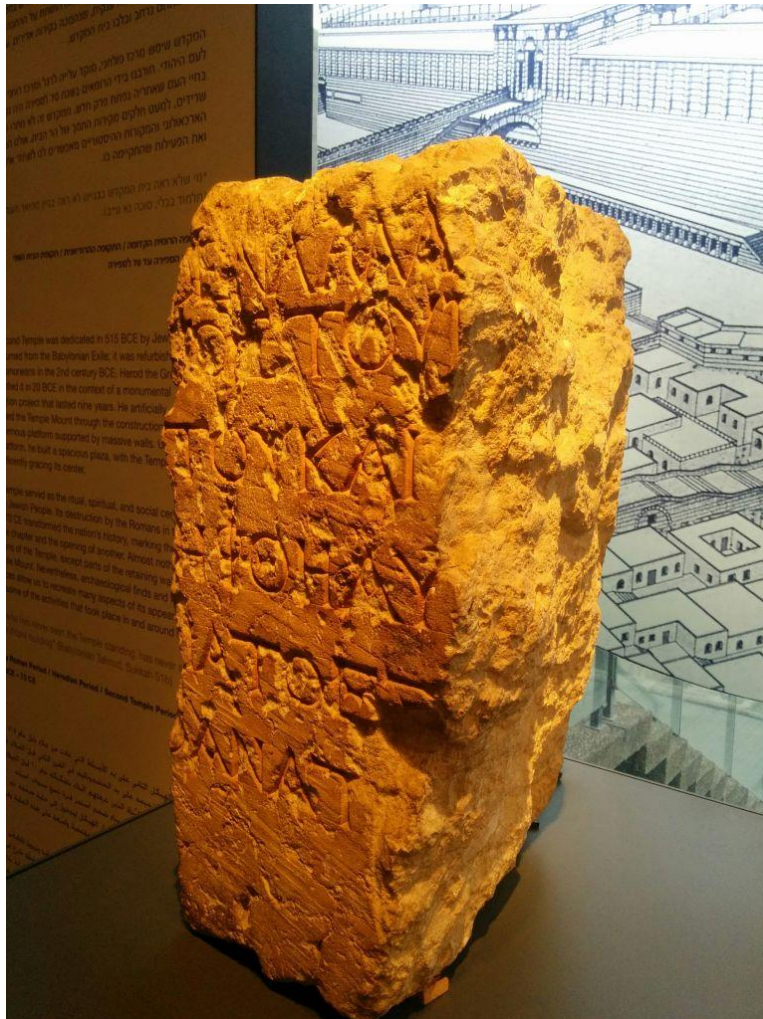
Paul defends himself before Felix in Caesarea against accusations of the Jews, saying that "it is not true that [my accusers] ever found me arguing with anyone or stirring up the mob, either in the Temple, in the synagogues, or about the town" (v12). This again is evidence from Acts, but it is presented so incidentally in Paul's speech as to be accepted as an accurate representation of his defence, and his understanding of the religious architecture of Jerusalem. If so, the construction is notable. Nowhere did Paul cause trouble, to wit not in the town, but neither in the Temple nor the synagogues.

This serves to contrast, or better to juxtapose, Temple and synagogues (plural), just as Luke seems to do by his mention of both in the early chapters of Acts. Paul might have argued in all the usual locations, but argued in none. He might have stirred up the mob with theological argument in any of these three locations. On reflection, it would have been surprising if synagogues were not mentioned here, for that is exactly the place to argue theology (compare Stephen) and Paul's opponents seem to have been (diaspora) Jews from Asia.

The second reference is in the Acts of Pilate. This is a second century apocryphon known to us in a fourth century and somewhat embellished form. It is a document with an intriguing history and pre-history, neither of which need delay our present purpose. What seems to be a kernel of the work is an official account of the trial of Jesus before Pilate. Remarkably, the accusers of Jesus, and perhaps also his defenders, seem to comprise a larger group than is envisaged in the Gospels, where the Jewish leaders (priests and elders) accuse Jesus. In the Acts of Pilate, it is also the archisynagogoi, the leaders of the synagogues, one of each, who also accuse Jesus, and in fact they seem to take prominence.

It might have seemed strange that, according to Acts, the synagogues were such vigorous opponents of the earliest church, but that they seem not to have had any interaction with Jesus, according to the Gospels, at least at his trial. But the Acts of Pilate opens up a new front in this discussion, for there the synagogue leaders play a pivotal role.

On another occasion, we might explore the most intriguing description in the Acts of Pilate of Pilate's wife as a God-Fearer. She is known to us from the Gospel of Matthew, in connection with the trial of Jesus (27:19), but the Acts of Pilate fill out this picture for us. Whatever else, it does seem that the picture we have of Jerusalem in the time of Jesus is not as complete as our sources, including some scriptural ones (!), provide us with.



## Garden Reflections in Isolation

Marion Poynter

*Gardeners have had a tremendous advantage in being able to escape the horrors of the pandemic and seek a calm refuge among their plants (and)... to fill each day with enriching moments. (Caroline Davies, Melbourne, President of the MGS, in Mediterranean Garden, No. 101, July 2020.)*

*Whatever else might be happening in this world, such as a pandemic, the garden is always there, carrying on in its unhurried and marvellous way, whether it be its bees, tender sprouts, or the business of spring blossoms, it is here, real and ever present. (Ann Semaan Beisch, Southern California, Mediterranean Garden, No. 101, July 2020)*

These two quotes are from articles by gardeners from different hemispheres, members of the international Mediterranean Garden Society (of which I am one) in their most recent quarterly journal. Dedicated gardeners from all around the world appreciate how fortunate we are to be able to garden and to nourish our lives at this time of forced home isolation. From England my Godson Charlie writes:

*I am sure your garden remains a great consolation, as it is for us – even if one cannot venture outside the front door, getting into the weather in the garden has been deeply restorative to our spirits.*

Even people who have in the past not been much devoted to their gardens are spending more time there. On my morning walk with our dogs around our nearby streets I notice lots of front gardens, till recently neglected and unloved, have been tidied up, re-shaped and re-planted. I stop, masked and at a distance, of course, to chat with a neighbour, a grey-haired middle aged man in gardening clothes, as I pass his well-tended garden. The small space is closely packed with lush pink and red alstroemerias, tall Green Goddess lilies, scented Daphnes, and other thriving plants:

*'How lovely your garden looks! Everything appears so lush and well-established. But you haven't been here so long, have you?'*

His face lights up.

*We've only been here for two years. I've had more time lately to put into it. It has come on well in the last few months.'*

He's obviously finding great pleasure spending time in his garden. We have never spoken before. In fact, till now, I'd never even seen him out there.

So many people forced to stay at home are becoming immersed in growing not only flowers and vegetables but raising chooks, even keeping bees. The world of the garden connects them to its vital existence—its sounds and scents. It is a calming experience amid the tumult outside in the city. There in my own in the garden, time passes unnoticed as I sow, and weed, pot up plants. Before I am aware a few minutes turn magically into an hour. I can't have visitors, but I can share some of the joys of my world. I take photos of little scenes I'm enjoying, and forward them with short messages or emails to friends elsewhere just to let them know I'm thinking of them at this unsettling time—embracing them like a hug and a kiss.

Serenaded by birdsong I plant out the seedlings that have sprouted from the seeds of the mesclun greens and the heritage purple sprouting broccoli I'd planted in early May. Finding that I have more little plants than I can fit in my vegetable patch, I share them with others. Packing them into little boxes I drop them around to neighbours. Meanwhile I note with satisfaction that the broad beans, the spinach, the spring onions and the special garlic that I had ordered from Digger's Seeds and planted a few weeks ago, are coming on apace.

Staying at home so much of the time gives me a chance to do more cooking, and to try out new recipes. Soup is great for lunch on these cold days. I come across in Rosey's Farm cookbook a recipe for pumpkin soup with barley and pumpkin that calls for the addition of green leaf vegetables. In our vegie patch I find these in the form of sorrel and silver beet leaves. They are perfect. Even John finds this soup good; the sorrel's slightly bitter flavour cuts down on the pumpkin's not-to-his-taste sweetness.

In a journal entry for August 4 I write:

*There are not too many flowers out in the garden just now. I went out today hoping to find enough to make a tiny bunch to drop around to an isolated friend. To my surprise I was able to produce a charming weeny posy made up of a few sweet smelling violets, some gorgeous double white hellaboeres tinged with green, coppery-hued wallflowers, pale lemon alstroemerias (still flowering over so many months), cornflower-blue rosemary, fragrant white daphne, and mint leaves, plus a lacey sprig of the silvery grey foliage of a plant called Dusty Miller (also known as silver ragwort). It gave such joy to Rhondda, confined in her tiny flat for the last five months as the virus has raged.*

And I photographed the posy and sent the picture to my friend Elizabeth sick in a hospital that will allow neither flowers nor visitors. I didn't stop there. It seemed a nice image to send, in an email, to old dear friends, living far away in Oxford, in Coburg in Germany and in Capetown. We hadn't seen most of them in years, but in these desperate times I felt an urge to be in touch again. We had shared such good times in Oxford for so many years in the past. How special to be sharing a token from our garden with them all! They all responded with joy.



In this last month of winter I see signs in our garden of nature's approaching spring awakening. Outside the door of our study new pink flowers have suddenly appeared on a potted blueberry bush. The green shoots of specially selected bulbs from Tessaler's catalogue that we had

planted in pots in the autumn are now pushing their way upwards through the soil.

There are bulbs of ornamental alliums (which will go on to produce striking purple pompom heads), Sir Winston Churchill daffodils (their large fragrant creamy blooms with saffron yellow hearts will follow), various bright tulips, and old-fashioned sweet-smelling freesias (*refracta alba*). In my mind's eye I see them all in glorious bloom in the months to come. It gives one hope and solace to look forward to better times ahead, beyond the present harrowing conditions; to know that whatever happens out there, beyond our boundaries, we are assured that here in our refuge spring will follow winter.

## Joy in time of Covid Part 2: Window Boxes

Rhondda Fahey

I've always loved window boxes, which is just as well as my apartment on Victoria Street has neither a garden nor a balcony. With colourful memories of boxes on so many London windows, one of my first but ultimately foolish questions to the body corporate concerned adding boxes to my five windows facing Victoria Street.

This innocent query taught me two lessons: that the body corporate always says no, and that it's better not to ask. And so new window boxes were added to the perfectly legitimate repairs to the sash windows and fly screens. Mission accomplished.

Red geraniums and white red impatiens flourished at my windows and trailed down the building. But then I acquired Tali, another action not fully blessed by the body corporate. Tali, though small, is extremely fast and can hear a window being opened while asleep under a blanket two rooms away. She rushes to help and I imagine her over jumping the sill and crashing to the pavement below. Windows were not opened as often and the window box flowers languished.

This year Robin Carr Boyd gave me three beautiful bulbs - two daffodils and a surprise. The gift was very special because, when I had a house with a garden, my sister always given bulbs at Easter to symbolise new life. With this memory and with new resolutions about proper care, they were planted in a bedroom window box.

The surprise has not yet flowered but the two daffodils are waving away, sharing their intense yellow with me and the street below. Not a host or a cloud but two daffodils blowing in the wind, their resilience and promise intervene between my locked-down apartment and the bleak view of closed shops on Victoria Street and grey sky.

Like Marion's thoughtful bouquet and Greg's recollections of French gardens, they bring memories and joy and hope of a return to a larger and more fully appreciated world sometime in the future.

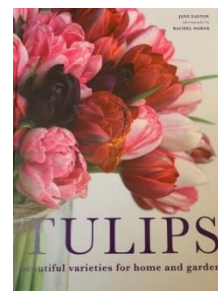


## Tulips and the Netherlands

Fr Jan Joustra

It probably did not come as a big shock to many in St Mary's that when their new Dutch-born priest arrived he quickly planted the front garden with tulips and as many flowers as could fit.

The Dutch have a long history in horticulture and even today the Dutch are the largest growers of not only tulips but lilliums and many other cut flowers most of which are grown under glass. In fact, the Netherlands is per head of population one of the world's largest exporters of food much of which is grown under glass. By 2010 it is said 40% of the arable land in the Netherlands was under glass. This has allowed the country to reduce pesticide use by 97% and to increase production levels so that it ranks 6th in the world after the USA, Germany, UK, China and France, all of which have significantly more land and people than the Netherlands.



The love story of the Dutch with the tulip that eventually led to so much of the country being given over to horticulture officially began in 1592, when the French botanist, Carolus Clusius (1526-1609) was invited to move from Vienna, where he had established gardens for Emperor Maximilian II, to Leiden, to establish gardens there. He brought with him seeds and bulbs of the tulip. Tulips had been seen earlier than this date in Amsterdam, but the official date of tulip culture in the Netherlands is 1592. The earlier story of tulips in Amsterdam may be the fabled bags of tulips bought as onion bulbs by a Dutch merchant in Turkey and found not to be edible upon arrival in the Netherlands.

Tulipmania spread quickly after the establishment of the Leiden gardens. Clusius was a man reluctant to trade or sell any of his bulbs. He remarked in 1594: 'This pursuit will in the end be cheapened ... because even merchants, artisans, and low-grade labourers are getting involved

in it. For they can see that rich men will sometimes hand out much money in order to buy some little plant that is recommended because it is so rare, so that they can boast to their friends that they own it.' Theft became a big problem for Clusius and other growers, so much so that people needed guard dogs to secure their blooms. By 1630, only 50 years after the official introduction of tulips to the Netherlands, tulips were the nation's fourth largest export.

The popularity of the tulip in many ways is closely related to the rapid growth of a new middleclass in the Netherlands during the Dutch Republic. The Dutch had established colonies around the world and the small nation had become immensely rich during this period, especially the merchants of Amsterdam which was the centre of Tulipmania. The mania reached its peak in the 1630s when in 1636, the prices of bulbs were doubling by the week. Speculation had taken over the trade and even more common varieties were reaching new peaks in price. In 1636 when an ordinary Switzer red and yellow mix bulb was selling for \$1400 per 500g in the autumn. The price rose to an incredible \$34,000 for the same quantity later in the season. But the mood rapidly changed leaving many broke, when in February 1667 at the bulb auctions the bulbs received no interest from buyer. The market had completely collapsed.

Despite this tumultuous fall from favour in the markets, the tulip was set to stay in the hearts and minds of the Dutch for centuries to come. The image of the tulip can be seen in paintings, wood carving, folk art, embroidery, ceramics and so much more. I grew up with them around me in one form or another. Shortly after I moved from Hobart to Melbourne in 1984 I bought an old low-boy at the local St Vinnies and painted it in traditional Dutch style with tulips being the most prominent flower. This cupboard is soon to be part of my country kitchen in Beechworth.



I also love having tulips in my garden, their distinctive form and enormous variety of colours makes them so attractive. I must admit however, I much prefer Monet's way of growing tulips amongst other flowers than the Dutch style of mass plantings, spectacular as it is.

I now wait in eager anticipation, like many other people and my Dutch ancestors before me for the beautiful buds of my tulips to open this coming spring.



## Some Thoughts on French Gardens

Greg Reinhardt

One of the delights of the lockdown (there are not many) are programmes new and repeated on television. As I write the wonderful six episode series of *Les Misérables* has just concluded with Dominic West capturing the essence of Jean Valjean. A truly remarkable adaptation of the Hugo novel. Memories for me of visits to the Victor Hugo house in the Place des Vosges which is a must see in Paris and, of course, the Place de la Bastille, with its July column, where the July 1830 revolution was principally centred. That revolution resulted in the deposition of the Bourbons by a cadet branch of the family, the House of Orléans (the July monarchy). It is so sad not to be able to travel to Paris and more generally to France where I had intended to be researching a doctorate on Comte de Puységur, who, like Talleyrand, survived all régime change to die in his bed at Rabastens in the south-west of France. He was a Minister under Louis XVI but seems to have fled south with the excesses of the Terror. Such was my mission after retirement at the end of March now sadly thwarted.

Many will have seen the three part series presented by Monty Don on French gardens (this was not marked as a repeat but appears to have been produced in 2012; although I had not seen it before (I know that his series on Japanese gardens has been shown). French gardens gave me a chance to reflect on my own experiences of French gardens and not without a tear in the eye. When will we see these things again?!

The first programme in the series was devoted to the great classical gardens of France, Vaux-le-Vicomte south east of Paris, the Tuileries Gardens in Paris, Versailles and Malmaison, about 30km south west of Paris.

Vaux-le-Vicomte was the first great Château which I visited early in my travels in France. It was built for Nicolas Fouquet, superintendent of finances to Louis XIV with gardens designed in the classical French design by the King's gardener at the Tuileries, André Le Nôtre. Don tells the story of the grand party held at the Château on 17 August 1661 to which the King was invited and Molière's *Les Fâcheux* was premiered. The King was so furious about the total extravagance of the evening and the Château that he had Fouquet arrested (although there is strong evidence that this had been planned earlier, in May. The Château and

gardens are just marvellous and well worth the 50km easy trip from Paris.



*Le Château de Vaux-Le-Vicomte, vu du ciel*

What can be said of Versailles? For those who have not seen the Château and gardens, true pleasure awaits. Easily approached from Paris by RER or bus. Don showed us the Hall of Mirrors which of course is magnificent, the Château and gardens one of the great legacies of the Sun King. The sheer grandeur of the place is beyond description and says much for the Bourbon view of life and the Divine Right of Kings!

I have had occasion to write in one of these newsletters of Malmaison built by the Empress Josephine during Napoleon's absence on the Egyptian campaign at great expense which incurred her husband's ire on his return. As Don explains, Josephine was a prolific gardener

perhaps inspired by her early life in Martinique. Napoleon assisted her in her collection of plants from all parts of the world. The British lifted the blockade of France to allow Josephine to bring her plants into France. Her particular interest was roses and she had a marvellous rose garden at Malmaison now sadly much depleted, although as Don points out, some of these have been propagated at a garden not far from Malmaison. Josephine died of quinsy as a result, it is said, of catching a chill whilst showing the Russian Emperor the garden. I love Malmaison, particularly the trees and as Don says, it was the first garden which was not set out in a classical or mathematical way.

The second programme in the French gardens series was devoted to potagers or kitchen gardens. I was intrigued to see one garden where vegetables were cultivated solely from the point of view of aesthetics and were never harvested. What a waste. The Versailles kitchen garden is still a working garden as it was in the time of the Bourbons. I was fascinated to see the harvest of white asparagus. We rarely see white asparagus in Australia. It is much loved in Europe and I prefer it to the green. I was intrigued by the cultivation of small fruit and vegetable gardens by ordinary French citizens, particularly the efforts made in relation to the growing of tomatoes.

Don's final programme was devoted to gardens associated with art and artists, particularly the garden of Paul Cézanne at Arles and for me, more significantly, Monet's garden at Giverny on the Seine near Vernon and not far from Rouen. I think I have written of it before. I have been in spring, summer and autumn. In spring one has the bulbs, summer, the perennials and nasturtiums and in late summer and autumn, the water lilies. All amazing, all cultivated by Monet to provide colour and light for his paintings. Don points out that the water lilies are not particularly wonderful in themselves, but with the water they provide amazing colour and reflection. And then there are the amazing water lily canvases in the Orangerie in Paris.

So, let us all think of France and hope that we may all return there in better days. Keep safe and well everyone.



*Monet's Garden at Giverny (1895)*

## Naming

John Poynter

In infancy I had more names to learn than your usual nuclear child. Both my parents had been married before, and widowed, and I was sixth and last, twenty-six years younger than my eldest half-sister.

Names are important, as those of us who can never remember them are forever guiltily aware. Names of places change with conquest, as in ancient Britain or modern Australia, or with changes of regime, as, so often, in France. Names of children, despite parental illusions of freedom of choice, are often determined by fashion, genealogy or simply habit. In both my father's family (English) and my mother's (Scottish) it was customary to name the eldest son after his father, and siblings by some other association.

In my mother's case this was with a ship: born at sea in 1887, when her parents were returning to their Victorian property from a visit to grandfather's native Scotland, the baby was named, at the Captain's request, after the ship, Valetta, a name which she tolerated, glad that she had not been born on the Great Western or the ill-fated Loch Ard. Growing up in Nareen, she became her father's housekeeper when her mother died unexpectedly in 1906. That was the year my father Robert Poynter, pharmacist and dentist in nearby Coleraine since 1899 and happily married in 1905, had the first of three children.

Coleraine had one inhabitant named in an entirely different tradition. In the 1860s one Emma Crouch, an Englishwoman with three half-Spanish orphans in her care, came from San Francisco to settle in Coleraine, in a house appropriately named Esperanza. There she set up a dames school—its most famous alumnus Helena Rubinstein—aided in due course by one of the orphans. Her name—inherited from her aristocratic but unreliable Spanish father, last heard of following yet another gold-rush out of San Francisco—was sonorous indeed: Eustacia Louisa Dolores Matilda Constanzia Teresa De Arroyave, conveniently shortened in everyday life (though never, for fear of forgery, on cheques) to Tia. Neither the long nor the short version quite chimed with her primly Anglican convictions, which in turn were some distance from grandfather Riddoch's dour Banffshire Presbyterianism. That did not prevent them marrying, in 1912, when the groom was sixty-five and the bride fifty-four.



Valetta's daughterly role was usurped by the imperious Tia, and with no desire to join them in Esperanza she took an unexpected opportunity to go to war. Enlisting in the Australian army as a nurse, she sailed in 1917, aged thirty, to serve in a British Hospital in Salonika. There she met a Scottish doctor, whom she married in Edinburgh in 1919. They had a daughter, but tragically the father died before the child was one. In 1925 Valetta returned to Coleraine, where she found that Robert Poynter was also widowed. In 1926 Robert and Valetta, the fifty-one-year-old widower and the thirty-nine-year old-widow, married. A daughter was born in 1927, and in 1929 I became my father's fifth child and my mother's third.

I suspect it was left to mother to name her only son. When she offered to name me Joseph Riddoch after her father, he demurred, disliking the name, and proposed John Riddoch, after the kinsman who had helped him and his brother establish themselves in Penola in the 1860s, before the laird of the South-East had planted the first vines at Coonawarra. Mother agreed, and so my birth was registered, but all was not yet certain; before I was baptised, in December 1930, grandfather Riddoch died, and Tia, even more formidable in the widow's weeds she was to wear for the rest of her long life, was an inescapable presence.

The ceremony was not in Coleraine, I suspect because my father was in conflict with the local vicar, as was their mutual wont, but in St Stephen's Anglican Church Portland, where the aged and nearly blind Canon Coop was an old personal friend (and where I was later to learn the demanding art of hand-pumping a pipe organ, the Canon having vetoed the introduction of an electric blower). Present though I was at my baptism, I must rely on hearsay: when the Canon requested the name of the child, father responded 'John' and Tia, rapping parasol on flagstone, firmly proclaimed 'Joseph'. The canon peered through his personal gloom for further guidance. Did my father pause before conceding the inclusion—but not the substitution—and adding the agreed 'Riddoch'? Did I myself express a view? I was certainly baptised with one more name than my birth certificate registers.

The very concept of identity has worried me ever since.



*Coleraine, 2009*

## Joy in the Time of COVID Part 3: Reading

Rhondda Fahey

There are so many books at my place, in bookcases, in cupboards, in boxes under the bed, and in storage spaces in the garage, old favourites and some unread, so many that I could face an even longer lockdown without running out. And, of course, new books, published every week, are calling out to be added.

In this time of COVID I have reread one favourite series after another. Between each series I read something new. A special joy is the daily conversation about what we are reading with my son on the other side of Melbourne. I really didn't know that he still reads so much and so widely or that he mostly reads during the night. One day he might mention Richard Flanagan's *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* and the next Du Maurier's *Rebecca*. He urges me to the realms of David Mitchell's fantasy realism and occasionally to one of my own favourites.

Thus I was inspired to reread Louise Penny's Inspector Gamache detective series, set in a small town in French speaking Canada, just across the border from Vermont. In this town, Three Pines, live a remarkable collection of talented and eccentric characters: Clara an artist, Myrna, the ex-psychologist book shop owner, two men who run the bistro and a B and, B, Gamache himself and his wife Reine Marie, and most eccentric of all the crazy Poet Ruth and her duck. Midway through the series Clara's reputation rises when she paints a portrait of Ruth as the elderly Virgin Mary, disillusioned but with a stroke-of-genius white spot in one eye signifying hope.

As a long-time devotee of detective novels I find Penny's novels both exciting and elegant. Against the background of small town, rural Canadian life and police procedures, the underlying themes are love, kindness, respect and self-control as well as justice. I'm waiting a bit impatiently for her next book,, coming out next month.

In the meantime I have been diverted by Pip Williams' *Dictionary of Lost Words*, whose backstory is the preparation of the original O. E. D.. Dr James Murray's team of lexicographers worked in a tin shed, the Scriptorium, behind his house, bringing together usage citations sent in from all Great Britain, even some from further away. I was at Macquarie University during the preparation of the first edition of the Big Mac (as it

was fondly called). Almost all the editors were academic staff and the whole department lived and breathed the stuff of words-etymologies, citations and definitions. I absolutely loved the dictionary detail in this book.

Extra dimensions come from the protagonist's understanding that many words, especially in women's everyday speech, will never make the Oxford's requirement for written citations. She begins her own collection, which leads her from the Oxford Covered Market to the Suffragist movement and to the First World War. This unputdownable book is a must read for anyone interested in history, feminism and, of course, words.

I've just started reading, also on Michael's recommendation, Tara June Winch's *The Yield*, this year's Stella Prize winner. Coincidentally this book also involves the making of a dictionary, here Gondiwindi words. Indigenous words and stories from two generations create an entirely different world view. Here are a few paragraphs to give the flavour of this book.

*I remember walking out on to the landing of the Boys' Home, standing under the sign that used to hang outside - Think White. Act White. Be White. I was looking at the blue sky and down again. When I looked down into the valley I saw a woman walk towards me and she walked right through the stock wire fencing that ringed the entire home.*

*I walked down on the grass to her and said, 'Good day.'*

*The spirit woman was empty-handed and showed me her hands, she looked like my mummy a little, and she said, 'wanga-dyung,'*

*'What's that mean?'*

*She said, 'It means lost, but not lost always.'*

*I sad okay and she told me to practise it. I recorded it as my first ever time-travel because the sky, when I turned to enter the home not ten paces, was grey and hung low.*

*The Yield, page 28.*

## Regression: a Dream

John Poynter

Tossing between wakefulness and troubled sleep, I looked again at the clock, though all I could see in the dark was its digital display: 3.40. But surely last time it had been 4.04? Suddenly 3.39 appeared, and then 3.38. Intrigued, I tried to reach out to it, and also to wake my sleeping wife, but found I could not move, or speak. A stroke? But I could feel, and see. The clock accelerated backwards into a blur; I felt lighter, and stronger, and sensed I was in a different room, no woman beside me. Soon I was alone in another bed, in an overheated room, but aware that outside was snow, and a foreign country. The room, and the bed, shrank, and began to roll and pitch. It stabilized, and I slept a little, waking in a narrow bed in a large room, a dormitory, smelling of badly washed boys. Then I was smaller, in a church, with a man in white splashing water on my forehead and saying my name. Then I was alone again, in a cot, crying, a woman leaning over me, grumpy but loving. There was no clock. I became tiny, and wet, a hand supporting me; and the last thing I heard before a woman screamed and a terrible tightness covered my ears and head was a calm voice: 'Well done. Sorry to disappoint you, but it's a boy.'

## St Mary's Travels: Grandchamp

Robert Gribben

Most Christians these days have heard of the French Community of Taizé, but few know that their origins lie in a community of women at Grandchamp in Switzerland. Following the disillusionment of the Great War, and the experience of chaplains in providing spiritual support for the soldiers in their care, many pastors were looking for ways of forming communities of prayer and work which would sustain their congregations and their villages. Part of the answer lay in the groups of catechumens (confirmands) who continued to meet. They became the basis for a movement founded by one Pastor, Wilfred Monod (1867-1943) called the *Veilleurs/Veilleuses*, the Watchers, who kept a simple rule of life: around noon each day they promised to read the Beatitudes; on Fridays they copied out a passage of Scripture 'as a homage to Jesus, the Head of the Church, on the day of his crucifixion'. They were to take part in Sunday public worship, and they renewed their catechumenal (confirmation) promises at the beginning of each year. (There had been similar Anglican explorations after the Oxford Movement, and the *Veilleurs* knew about them).

In the 1930s, a group of rather genteel and well-educated women began to meet for an annual retreat in an old house in the hamlet of Grandchamp, on the banks of the River Areuse near where it flows into Lac Neuchâtel. Three of them were pastors' wives. One, Madame Micheli (née de Beaumont) was a young widow (with three children), later *Mère Geneviève* (1883-1961), the mother foundress. They were all *Veilleuses*.

The village itself formed them because of a centuries-old tradition of communal life in service, prayer and hospitality. A Moravian group at the invitation of the seigneurial family had founded a home for the education of children; the family had set up an industry of cloth dyeing and took in the poor and the mentally-ill, involving them in the practical tasks. The long poles on which the cloth was hung to dry still stretch over the street; under each house a stream of water from the river Areuse flows to rinse the cloth (not easy to sleep near). There is a large two-storied barn, which they call '*l'Arche*', the Ark, the upper part gives a beautiful open space for their chapel. Here the *Veilleuses* came. They prayed, read the Bible and lived in the spirit of the Beatitudes. Soon

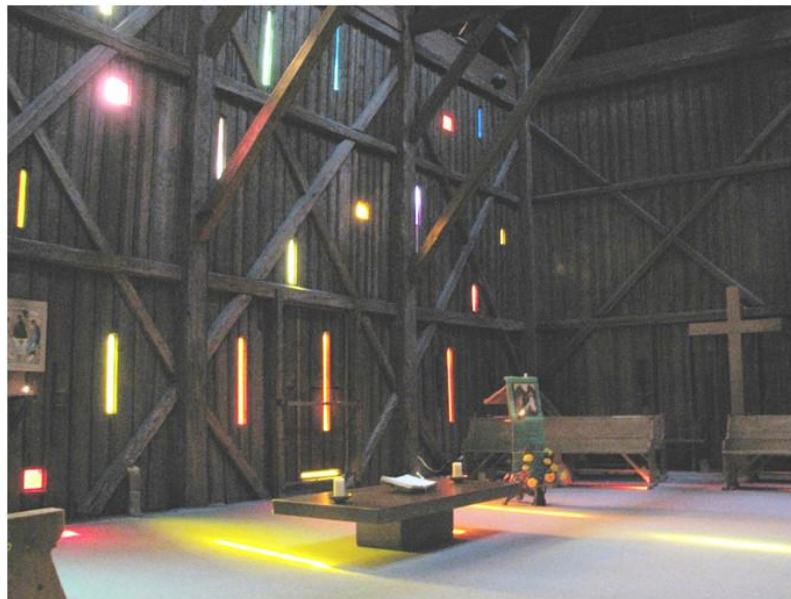
requests to join their retreats meant they occurred more often, until at last they decided to open the house all year. Fr Couturier, founder of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity was a friend and there was an ecumenical spirit from the start.



*The main street in Grandchamp. The fountain in the middle of the road is a sign that part of the River Areuse flows under the houses to serve the original cottage industry of cloth-dyeing.*

In the late 1930s, two theological students would come for retreat and prayer. Roger Schütz was studying theology at Lausanne, and Max Thurian at Geneva. Roger's interests (partly because of a small group within the SCM of which he was president) were already ecumenical and he was exploring forms of prayer long abandoned in Protestant Switzerland. Max was already interested in liturgical renewal and eucharistic theology. When war broke out, around 1940, they lived in a farmhouse which Roger had bought in a small village in Burgundy called Taizé, and helped refugees from nearby Vichy France, mostly Jews, to escape to freedom. They also kept their patterns of prayer. They had to escape themselves from German aggression, to Geneva and further study, and afterwards, to the farmhouse. Roger was ordained in 1943, and he and Max regularly visited the sisters at Grandchamp. The Rule of Taizé was published in 1953; the influence of the Veilleuses and of Pastor Monod is obvious. In 1952, the first sisters adopted the same Rule, took life vows, constituting a kind of 'double-community'. They also have a special relationship with the Little Sisters of Jesus and wear a similar simple habit.

I first encountered Grandchamp sisters in 1983-4 when two of them and I formed a team 'animating the prayers' for the WCC Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, near Lausanne. There was daily prayer and frequent eucharists in the chapel of the adjoining château. Soeur Heidi (Swiss!) was a phenomenon. A master of languages, a born musician and teacher, she taught us to join her – at a note – in responses in Greek, Russian, Romanian, Swahili, Xhosa, Indonesian, Urdu, as well as the three required languages (everybody had to have one, tutors two) of English, French and German. She also danced. Her companion, S. Christel, being Swiss (German), knew the European languages, but was more reserved. As a presbyter, approved by the cantonal church, I found myself presiding in multiple languages, only needing to glance at Heidi to add appropriate music, especially at the eucharist. It is a liturgical experience I will never forget. We included Roman Catholics and Orthodox as fully as we could; on the whole we abstained at each other's eucharist, but at the Vatican later, we received a joint ticking-off from Pope John-Paul who had been told of our occasional lapses.



*Inside 'L'Arche' (the Ark), the Community's chapel.  
Seating is on the floor, on prayer-stools. Music is a  
capella.*

The whole school visited both Grandchamp and Taizé, and met the remarkable prioress, S. Minke, a redoubtable Netherlander (co-founder of Bose), who was at the Canberra WCC Assembly in 1991. We stayed in the village as a family over one wintry Christmas. On several visits I used to walk to the nearby village of Boudry to visit an ancient professor of liturgy. Only later did I discover that my Swiss ancestors, who



emigrated to Geelong in 1844, were mayors and magistrates (Mâitre-bourgeois et Justicier) of that very village, for generations.

## St Mary's Travels: Spiritual Journey to Japan

Richard Hayward

In January this year, I took a family holiday to Japan with Tokyo as our primary destination. A feature of our journey was a trip on the bullet train to Nagano, site of the 1998 Winter Olympics. We followed a similar trail to many other Australian families who also left behind the summer warmth to seek out the slopes for snowsports.

In Tokyo, I chose the Shibuya commercial centre for our base. It's full of diverting attractions and surrounded by interesting suburbs. Nearby is the Meiji Shrine surrounded by 70 hectares of evergreen forest, which is delightful in winter. Along the walk to the shrine, we passed through the forest and walked under several magnificent gates. Each gate provides a moment to pause and reflect on your journey.



*Ema, wooden plaques for writing prayers.*

At the entrance to the shrine itself, there is a shelter with running water. A ladle is provided to wash your hands in a simple ritual of purification. Around the grounds there were various activities to engage in. There was a wedding underway, and visitors wore kimonos to celebrate their visit to the shrine. A small structure held wooden prayer boards (Ema), countless numbers of them, each one signed and hung there. Many were in English, and some we saw were prayers for the people suffering through the bushfires in Australia. At several counters, sewn lockets were available, each one focussing on a different aspect of life. I received

a matching set embroidered with chrysanthemums which encourages me to remember the value of a happy marriage.

On our return to Tokyo, we stayed at Ueno, where I was determined to see the peony display, also at another Shinto shrine. The Ueno shrine has survived numerous fires, wars and earthquakes since the seventeenth century. We enjoyed the delightful peonies, with each plant sheltered under a tiny thatched roof. Beside the shrine was a magnificent oak of over 600 years old. The surroundings contain over 200 stone and copper lanterns. I received a locket embroidered with a peony for happiness.

These lockets or amulets are called Omamori and make a delightful gift, and can serve as a reminder of things that are important or precious to us. Tradition asks us to keep them close by for a year, after which you should return to the shrine for a new locket. Returning to Tokyo seems a long way off for me, but it could be a destination on your post-pandemic bucket list.



*Peony gardens at the Ueno Shrine.*

## St Mary's Travels: Voyage to New Zealand

John Bishop

In 1977 I was asked to give a paper at a naval corrosion and antifouling conference in New Zealand. I was disappointed when the person responsible for coordinating arrangements told me that I would not be going to NZ because "Peter can read your paper for you". A member of my section made the brilliant suggestion that, if I couldn't go by myself, then we should ALL go. We had been carrying out short, coastal, oceanographic cruises. Deep water measurements were the logical next step.

The ship we had been using, HMAS Kimbla, was originally a boom defence vessel used to deploy heavy antisubmarine nets but converted for marine research while retaining her heavy lift capability. Scientists were accommodated in a cabin added to the upper deck known as "the boffin box". She was small by navy standards and reputed to be the slowest ship in the navy, top speed 12 knots with wind and tide assistance. She was one of only two remaining Australian ships powered by a triple expansion steam engine and prone to breakdowns. We were delighted to find that the ship felt equal to the task and had a suitable time slot. We obtained the necessary permissions from Canberra, our management in Melbourne and, of course, our wives. Our management claimed to have no travel money so we used the RAAF's fortnightly east coast courier flight for travel to the ship which was based in Sydney.

We sailed in cold, blustery weather and I was concerned when the newest member of our team told me that he was going to jump overboard and end the suffering because he was going to die anyway. However, he agreed to wait a while. On the second day disaster struck. Both ship's radios stopped working and, in accordance with standing orders, the ship had to return to port. Within half an hour of altering course, the crew was thrilled by the appearance of an Orion aircraft which made a number of low-flying passes overhead. A Commodore from Fleet Headquarters was waiting when the ship docked. He told the captain that he had commanded Kimbla and knew what she was like. Normally he would have waited a fortnight before looking for the ship but an Orion happened to be conducting exercises in the area at the time.

The ship's petty officers insisted that I came with them to their mess in HMAS Kuttabul, where they plied me with beer. They were anxious to know whether the oceanographic program was still possible despite the time lost. I told them that a revised program could be carried out, but it must surely be up to the captain whether we sailed again. "Nonsense", they said, "we are the ones who decide whether or not the ship sails" and they set to to make it happen.

Two radios were taken from a ship in dry dock and off we sailed again. The weather was much better and the newest member of the team had found his sea legs. Some team members filled in time by playing a board game called "Battle" against the ship's officers, but the captain decided that the officers were wasting too much time and threw the game overboard. The participants switched to a game called "Diplomacy" which involved very little board work but many whispered negotiations in out of the way corners. The captain asked me to find out what was going on, as he feared that a mutiny might be being planned. He was English on exchange from the Royal Navy and Kimbla was an unusual ship, so I sympathised. After a decent time interval I told him there was nothing to worry about - people were just filling in time talking. Because the ship was slow we were able to watch bottle-nosed dolphins play around the bows until they became bored and streaked far ahead.

The fuel pumps and generator started playing up. The engineers fixing them were exhausted at the end of their shifts, falling asleep on the open deck when they crawled out of the engine room, in which the temperature was over 50 degrees even on a cool day. I remarked to a crew member on their diligence. It was then that I learned that this was the ship's third attempt to sail to New Zealand and Fleet was offering odds of one hundred to one against the ship succeeding. Many of the crew were betting all they had on the outcome and the petty officers had been organising more than radios while we were in port!

Many of the crew were keen fishermen and when we were on station would throw "gash" from the galley into the water to attract fish. On station one fine, blustery, morning the member of our team attaching sampling bottles to the 4000 metres of "hydrowire" being paid out by the winch began shouting and waving his arms at the fishermen to stop. They told him enthusiastically to mind his own business. He, a large man with a temper to match, made attempts to leave the "hero

platform" (extended from the side of the ship to give access to the hydrowire) to sort them out.

These attempts were thwarted by a second member of the team, aptly nicknamed "the angry ant" by the crew, trying to get onto the platform to continue the bottle-loading sequence, and by the winch operator who was having trouble holding the hydrowire in position. A wave had swept the main deck, soaking the angry ant to the waist and tangling his legs in a coil of rope. I could see that he might end up dangling over the side of the ship by the ankles if he succeeded in getting up the platform steps, especially as he needed both hands to hold the sampling bottle he intended to attach to the hydrowire. The cause of all this excitement was a large shark, about 4 metres in length, floating peacefully on the surface among the smaller leaping fish near the hero platform and watching the antics of the occupant. When the ship rolled and the platform dipped down to the surface the shark was lifted on the adjacent swell so that the noses of the shark and the bottle loader were only a few metres apart, making the bottle loader apprehensive. I yelled that it was only curious and the sooner they finished their jobs the better, meanwhile keeping my fingers crossed and praying silently. Just as they were finishing the shark gave a twitch of its tail and headed for the horizon at impressive speed and we all relaxed.

The next day a rhythmic thumping on the hull alerted us to the sudden erratic behaviour of the "batfish", a hydrodynamically shaped underwater glider being used to tow an instrumentation package. The Officer-of-the-Watch wanted to cut it adrift because he was worried that it would foul the screw. This would have meant the loss of expensive sensors. Fortunately a sailor leapt onto the rail and, after telling the officer to get f-d when ordered to get down, skilfully recovered the batfish, which had had a 15 centimetre bite taken out of one of its wings and lost all stability.

The voyage continued in good weather until we were struck by a sudden storm off the northern tip of New Zealand. This laid the ship on her beam ends so that the captain, navigator and I were standing on the side rails in the lee of the Captain's cabin holding on to one another while I enthusiastically agreed that we should run for the shelter of the Bay of Islands and cancel the last station. The storm departed as suddenly as it had come and we anchored in sparkling blue waters surrounded by green islands. We had a wonderful cocktail party (the

cook on the Kimbla was renowned for his fine cooking) to celebrate the 21st anniversary of the ship's first commissioning. We then set to painting over all the rust and smartening up the ship before sailing down the coast to the Auckland naval base, HMNZ Philomel.

The base laid on a reception. Because the Kimbla only had 4 officers, the scientific team were made honorary officers for the occasion, with some NZ government scientists also attending to help us feel at home. The ship returned the favour by laying on a cocktail party and the NZ government gave the whole crew a day trip to Rotorua, a lovely place, although we arrived late because of the crew's insistence on stopping at every pub along the way. The ship was adopted by a NZ training vessel, similar in size to Kimbla, which had been campaigning to be allowed to sail to Sydney, but was only allowed out on day trips between the hours of 8 am and 4 pm.

The night before we were due to sail for Australia we arrived back on board at about 11.30 pm. The wardroom phone was ringing and I was surprised to find the call was for me. The Conference, which I had forgotten about, was half way through and one of the scientists I had met at the reception had noticed that I was the author of one of the papers. He said that NZ was annoyed and embarrassed that Australia had only sent one representative to the conference, while even the English had sent five. He had put together a proposal. If I stayed for the rest of the conference then, NZ knowing that Australia was too poor to pay for my attendance, I would be given free board in HMNZ Philomel. After the conference I would then be put on HMAS Vampire which was sailing for Australia from Wellington at the end of the week. He promised that no one would be told of this charitable arrangement, so Australia would not be embarrassed. I thanked him for his offer and explained that I was half way through running an oceanographic program and not able to take the offer up. The Captain said that I had made the right call - Vampire had sailed for Australia that morning and I could have been waiting for a considerable time for another ship going to Australia.

When I caught up with our sole conference representative, Peter, back in Melbourne he told me that he had had a hell of a time at the conference. He had been given a stack of over 20 papers with his airline ticket and told it was up to him to present them. He did not understand the contents of most of them and he had almost lost his voice by the third

day. The chairmen insisted on keeping to the timetable, with one hour devoted to each paper (twenty minutes for questions). There were calls for him to speak up, much noise and very pointed questions.

We had light breezes and smooth seas all the way back to Sydney, but we were hardly out of sight of land when the fuel pumps and generator started playing up and our progress became slower and slower. At about the third night out I was on the bridge at about 3 am with the captain. The voice pipe whistled and the captain answered, jerked upright suddenly and said "say again". After listening a second time he told me to take over while he had a word in the engine room and departed rapidly muttering something about standard English. When he had returned I went down to the wheel house to which all voice pipe messages came, the helmsman or lookout then relaying the message on to the bridge. The engine room had whistled up the wheel house and said "tell the f-ing captain that the f-ing generator is on the f-ing blink again". The helmsman's brain had been on autopilot and he had passed the message exactly as received and repeated it before he woke up and realised that he was speaking to the captain. About an hour later a white glow appeared on the horizon behind us which resolved itself into a large white cruise ship, brilliantly lit up. She was the "Princess of the Seas" which had left Auckland that morning and was having an end of cruise party before docking in Sydney in the morning, whereas it was going to be at least two days before we arrived!

For our last couple of days at sea the ship averaged only two knots, mostly thanks to a following breeze. However, she valiantly gave her last gasp and sailed up Sydney Harbour and docked perfectly (unusual because her single screw and awkward shape could make docking messy) greeted by a large and enthusiastic crowd. The Captain confided in me that he had several times been on the verge of calling for a tow. The ship was signed over to the Dockyard for immediate repairs so we had to pack our equipment and send it on its way to Melbourne the same day. We were two days late for the RAAF fortnightly courier flight so I gave our Chief Superintendent the choice between paying for our accommodation in Sydney for 10 days and providing us with airline tickets. He was very displeased with me, a fairly common occurrence, but we flew back to Melbourne that evening.





*RAAF Orion*



*HMAS Vampire, Australian National Maritime Museum,  
Darling Harbour*

**CONTACT ST MARY'S**

Post: 430 Queensberry Street, North Melbourne 3051

E-mail: [office@stmarys.org.au](mailto:office@stmarys.org.au)

Web: [www.stmarys.org.au](http://www.stmarys.org.au), Facebook, YouTube.



Vicar: Revd Canon Jan Joustra

[vicar@stmarys.org.au](mailto:vicar@stmarys.org.au)

Mob: 0400 959 077

Clergy: Revd Canon Prof. Dorothy Lee

[dlee@trinity.edu.au](mailto:dlee@trinity.edu.au)

Revd Prof. Mark Lindsay

[mlindsay@trinity.edu.au](mailto:mlindsay@trinity.edu.au)

Lay Ministers: Harriet Jenkins

Children and Family Ministry

[hjenkins@stmarys.org.au](mailto:hjenkins@stmarys.org.au)

John Silversides

Prison Chaplain

Director of Music: Beverley Phillips 5286 1179

[bevjp@westnet.com.au](mailto:bevjp@westnet.com.au)

Wardens: Anne Sunderland [annes@jenkinsau.net](mailto:annes@jenkinsau.net)

Michael Golding [m-golding@bigpond.com](mailto:m-golding@bigpond.com)

Sam Miller [samcmiller92@msn.com](mailto:samcmiller92@msn.com)

Parish Administrator Richard Hayward

**KOOYOORA**

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The Anglican Diocese in conjunction with St Mary's Anglican Church North Melbourne does not tolerate abuse, harassment or other misconduct within our communities. If any person has concerns about behavior of a church worker, past or present. The Diocese of Melbourne is committed to doing all that is possible to ensure that abuse does not occur. All complaints of abuse are taken very seriously, and we do all we can to lessen harm. We offer respect, pastoral care and ongoing long-term support to anyone who makes a complaint. St Mary's Statement of Commitment to Child Safety is on our noticeboard and can be downloaded from our website [www.stmarys.org.au](http://www.stmarys.org.au).

**PLEASE REPORT ABUSE CALL 1800 135 246**

## 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*

