

St Mary's



Ave Patronal Edition

August 2023



This banner, commissioned by the Brotherhood of St Lawrence at St Paul's Cathedral to advocate the Voice, has been hanging on the west front of St Paul's since July 29. The words are by Rev. Canon Helen Dwyer, a Ngarrindjiri woman, and the background painting by Rev. Canon Glenn Loughrey, a Wiradjuri man, both members of the Cathedral Chapter and of the indigenous Anglican body set up to advise the church in the manner of the anticipated Voice to the Parliament.

Photo courtesy of the Cathedral website.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

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

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

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Mary's Call Narrative

It would be easy to assume that the Bible presents no call narratives that involve women. In the biblical world, we read the call stories of Moses (Exod 3–4), Isaiah (Isa 6), Jeremiah (Jer 1), Peter (Luke 5), Matthew (Matt 9), Paul (Acts 9), and even a child: Samuel (1 Sam 3). But they are all male. Are there no call stories, therefore, about women in the Bible?

There are of course implied callings of women: like Deborah, who is judge and warrior (Judg 4–5) or Mary Magdalene, the apostle of the apostles, or Phoebe, the deacon and bearer of the Epistle to the Romans (Rom 16). These female characters and their actions imply that women are also called by God to minister among the people of God. All the same, there are very few actual call narratives for women in Scripture.

Call stories in the Bible have a distinctive narrative pattern which runs across them, despite the often-intriguing differences between them. Usually, these stories concern someone who is given some kind of prophetic or apostolic calling by God. There are six basic elements to this form in this or similar order:

1. A heavenly vision or epiphany
2. An introductory word from heaven
3. An objection or statement of inadequacy
4. The commission from God
5. A sign may be given.
6. A positive assent to the commission.

If we look at Moses' story, we find all these elements present: Moses is in the wilderness guarding his father-in-law's flock, sees the burning bush and hears God speaking from within it; is given his commission to lead God's people out of Egypt but objects in a long, complaining dialogue that no-one will believe him and that he's no good anyway; God shows him several miraculous signs, including a staff with which to perform miracles, and finally (if reluctantly) Moses accepts his commission and returns to Egypt staff in hand.

The same is true for Peter in a narrative that is only found in Luke's Gospel (within Jesus' earthly ministry): Peter has been fishing all night unsuccessfully and is washing the nets when Jesus tells him to go out again and lower the nets for a catch; Peter obeys somewhat reluctantly but to his astonishment catches a huge quantity of fish, at which he falls on his knees and begs Jesus to depart because he is sinful; the sign given is the miraculous catch of fish; Jesus reassures him and gives him his commission to 'catch people' and Peter assents, leaving everything and following Jesus, along with three of his companions.

It might be worth having a quick glance at the only child call narrative in the Bible. God calls Samuel's name in the middle of the night but Samuel assumes it's the priest Eli calling him; when he eventually realises that it's the Lord's voice he responds: 'Speak, for your servant is

listening’ (a simple and uncomplicated assent rarely apparent in the adult narratives); he is given a difficult commission and is afraid at first to reveal God’s message but, encouraged by Eli, he does so and eventually becomes one of Israel’s greatest prophets.

Although all these accepted calls are addressed to males, there is one call narrative in the Bible addressed to a woman that has many of these characteristics: that of Mary of Nazareth in Luke 1. This is also an annunciation story and has much in common with Zechariah’s annunciation earlier in the same chapter. Mary’s story, however, also works as a call narrative, with the same six elements noted above:

1. Epiphany. Mary, a young woman (teenager) recently betrothed, receives a heavenly visit from the angel Gabriel (1:26), one of the seven archangels closest to God in Jewish tradition.
2. Introductory word. She is greeted in solemn terms as one especially favoured by God (1:28): not ‘full of grace’ in the sense of being without sin (as is sometimes thought) but rather full of divine grace and favour: in other words, especially chosen by God.
3. Commission. When Mary reacts to the greeting with bewilderment (1:29), the archangel reinforces the greeting and reassures her (1:30), outlining her commission: she is to bear God’s Son, the Messiah, the Child who will bring in God’s unending kingdom, as promised of old to the people of Israel (1:31–33). Mary is commissioned, in other words, to bear in her body God’s own self. She will be the *Theotokos*, as later tradition rightly called her: the God-bearer, Mother of God.
4. Objection. Mary objects on the basis that she is still unmarried and a virgin and cannot give birth to a child (1:34). In her case, the objection is treated as a genuine question, suggesting that her bewilderment at Gabriel’s greeting has, if anything, intensified. By contrast, when Zechariah receives the message of the birth of John the Baptist, he objects on the basis that he and his wife are too old and beyond childbearing age, but, unlike Mary’s, his objection is treated as a statement of doubt and unbelief (1:18–20). Her question therefore is answered graciously by Gabriel, and not with annoyance, with the promise of the overshadowing Spirit who will create life in her (1:35).
5. Sign. The sign given to Mary is the pregnancy of her relative, Elizabeth (1:36), mother of John the Baptist, who is at the end of her second trimester. Gabriel emphasises that the lesser miracle, that of Elizabeth’s pregnancy in old age, points forward to the greater miracle, the pregnancy of Mary as a virgin. This sign acts as a reassurance for Mary of the truth of what Gabriel has said, indicating that (literally) ‘no word will be impossible for God’ (1:37). What is impossible for human beings with their limited and finite understanding is well within the gracious power of God to achieve.
6. Assent. Mary assents to the commission without further comment or question. She believes the word of Gabriel and shows immense faith in the promise and power of God. Her assent is not passive or yielding, as it is sometimes presented in art, but rather strong and resilient. Like that of Moses or the child Samuel, the commission she is given, to be the mother of the Messiah, is not an easy one. It will expose her to shame and moral judgement in a world where a woman’s reputation is all-too-easily lost —

and lost forever. Simeon later prophesies that a sword will pierce Mary's soul (2:35). Her confident assent is extraordinary coming from this child-woman who will have to bear the world's disgrace and who will live to see her Son crucified.

The story of the annunciation is thus also — and, indeed, primarily — Mary's call narrative. She stands in the tradition of Old Testament prophets and leaders who play key roles in the self-revelation of God and the salvation of God's people. That hers is more than a physical calling is made clear later in Luke's Gospel where a woman gushes to Jesus over her motherhood: 'Blessed is the womb that bore and the breast that suckled you!' (11:27). His response widens the beatitude to include all who 'hear the word of God and guard it' (11:28). Mary, in fact, does both: she is not only the physical mother of Jesus but also an exemplary woman of faith, the first Christian in the Gospel of Luke.

That is how Elizabeth greets her in the next scene, the Visitation. Both women are prophets in this scene, filled with the Holy Spirit. Elizabeth is socially superior to Mary in every way: age as well as status (she is the wife of a priest). Yet she defers to her young relative and



experiences Mary's presence as conferring honour on her in a society where honour and shame were key values. Mary is for her (as for us all), 'the mother of my Lord' (1:43). She confirms not only Mary's commission but also her strength of faith which places Mary among the 'blessed' (1:45).

Finally, Mary's prophetic gift and her extraordinary depth of faith are made apparent in the Magnificat (1:46–55) which outlines the shape and tenor of God's sovereign rule in overturning the world's structures and establishes God's reign of goodness and mercy. Mary bears God in her body and in her words, in her insight and her conviction that God's truth and justice will finally prevail, through the birth of the one who is her son and God's Son, Jesus.

Lucca, *Hodegetria* ('she who points the way'), c. 1230

Dorothy Lee

Churches called St Mary's:

St Mary's by the Sea, Port Douglas, Queensland

How many Uniting Churches feature statues of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and his mother, Our Lady of Lourdes? How many have a reredos pierced by a picture window that looks on to a palm-fringed bay? How many were moved to their present location by a group of friendly builders who saved the Restoration Society \$10,000 by agreeing to do the job for a carton of beer? I know of only one: St Mary's by the Sea, Port Douglas, Queensland, a bright, shining jewel of a church in an idyllic seaside setting.

The explanation as to how all this came to be is bound up with the civil and religious history of Port Douglas. Some background might be helpful.

History

Like many Australian stories it begins with gold. The rapid growth of the Hodgkinson goldfield led to the founding of Port Douglas in 1877 as a port to service and supply it. A Roman Catholic chapel soon followed and, in 1881, came a church, the first St Mary's.



For a time, Port Douglas raced ahead of its local rival, Cairns, but faltered with the opening of the Cairns to Mareeba railway in 1893 and its extension to Mount Molloy in 1908. Port Douglas lost its mining trade but continued in a much smaller way of business as a sugar port. On 16 March 1911 though, disaster struck when a severe cyclone levelled most of the town reducing the first St Mary's to a pile of debris.

In 1914 the Catholics completed the construction of a second St Mary's, the church now known as St Mary's by the Sea. *The Cairns Post* described it at the time as "a handsome structure and a stable one" and praised the energy of the parish priest who had the vision to raise funds for its construction by a local builder, H.A.Neilsen.

Yet the slow decline of Port Douglas continued. In the 1920s the administrative centre of Douglas

Shire moved to nearby Mossman and in 1932 the Catholic parish HQ moved there too. In 1958 the last shipment left the town's Sugar Wharf. By the 1960s and 70s Port Douglas was

a quiet fishing and holiday town. The second St Mary's was not well maintained and fell in to disrepair.

Then in the 1980s Port Douglas boomed again as developers transformed it into a major international tourist centre with the luxurious Sheraton Mirage Resort close to rainforest, reef and the picturesque Four Mile Beach. As the population grew the Catholic church built itself a third St Mary's more suited to the needs of its congregation and the fate of the second St Mary's hung in the balance, with rumours of demolition as a real possibility.

The Port Douglas Restoration Society

At this point a group of local activists intervened. One of them, Ms Ginni Donovan, takes over the story: "we, a group of ladies, turned around and said, 'you can't take 100 years of history to the dump'". She approached the Catholic Diocese who, by Ms Donovan's account, told her "you'd better get yourselves organised and become a proper society". Thus, the Port Douglas Restoration Society was born and through cake stalls, resort balls and jazz nights it raised the money to fund the restoration and relocation of the church. The Council provided a site by the shoreline near the old Sugar Wharf. The Diocese donated the building for free with the stipulation that it continue to be used for Christian purposes. Many local people provided their services free of charge. When a power company advised that it would cost \$10,000 to move power cables to enable the church to be relocated to its new home a local builder came up with a cheaper solution: in return for a carton of beer he and "his boys" would cut the church in half, transport it and put it back together on the new site. The restored church was reopened in November 1989.



The Church Building

I hope that the editor can find space for some of the photographs that I have taken of the church because a picture really is worth a thousand words. *[We have! Ed.]* A quick google search will turn up more and I shall include some links below to the best sites that I have found.

St Mary's by the Sea is a small, timber church in the Gothic style, painted a shimmering white both inside and out. In plan it is essentially a rectangle with a small porch to the front and a smaller vestry to one side, above which is a single bell. Its roof is of corrugated iron and steeply pitched, as are the gable roofs of the porch and vestry. There are



lancet windows on all sides, a mix of plain glass and (modern) stained glass, which flood the church with light.

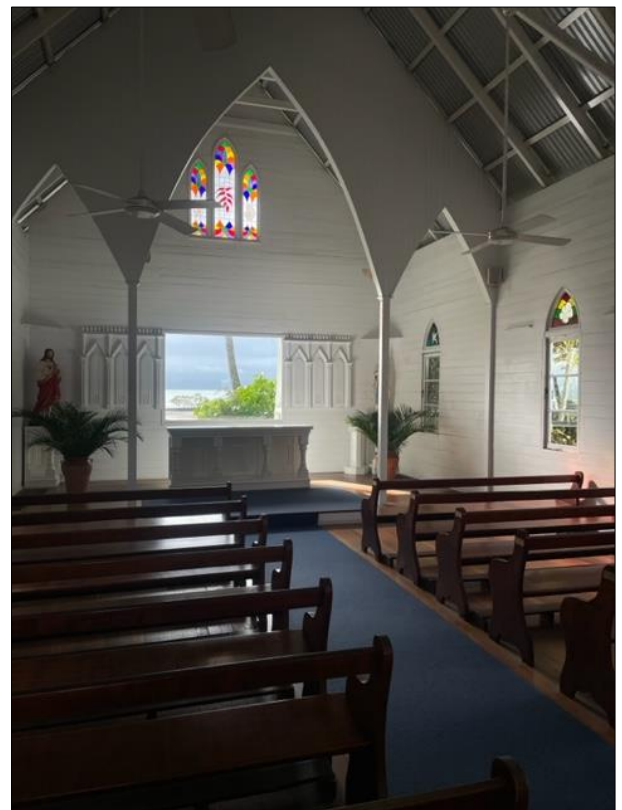
Inside, the nave contains two rows of simple wooden pews and is divided from the sanctuary by three lancet shaped arches. The ceiling is unlined. The altar is flanked by two statues, one of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the other Our Lady of Lourdes, both of which adorned the church during its days as a Catholic church, the second St Mary's.

The reredos has been pierced by a picture window which gives a superb view of palm trees, beach and Coral Sea. It is this which catches the eye of worshippers (it caught my eye at least) but I would not call this view a distraction from worship but rather part of it. It reminds me a little of an episode of *The Vicar of Dibley* in which a storm destroys a stained-glass window which must be replaced.

Eventually funds are raised (although a parish cookbook "100 Exciting Things to do with Root Vegetables" is not a best seller). Plans change and the funds are allocated for humanitarian purposes with stained glass being replaced by simple plain through which worshippers may view the beauty of God's Creation, in that case the Dibley countryside.

The Church Today

Today the church is non-denominational and may be hired for weddings, both civil and religious, with the option of a reception at the old sugar wharf nearby. There is a regular worship service at 11.00 am every Sunday conducted by the Uniting Church of Mossman. I have worshipped there several times. Each service begins with every member of the congregation being given an opportunity to say something about themselves and most do. I suppose there have been between 30 and 50 people there during my visits and while a handful are locals most are tourists, including a fair number from Melbourne seeking some winter sun. The church is set just to one side of the Port Douglas Sunday Market (which I strongly



recommend) and I suspect that quite a few worshippers start off at the Market and find their way to the service.

The service itself is rather different from what we are used to at St Mary's, North Melbourne but I always find it an enriching experience. Perhaps people are a bit more relaxed and open on holiday. There is a simple structure of hymns, worship songs, prayers and a sermon. The musical accompaniment is usually a guitar. I did feel sorry for the organisers on the day the technology failed. (It was probably my fault; technology often malfunctions when I am close to it.) At any rate they could not display the words of the hymns and so, we were told, had chosen hymns that we would all know. Alas, when a show of hands was asked for very few of us knew the chosen hymns, indicative perhaps of our different traditions. We got along well enough though by being taught a chorus which we could join in responsorially as the worship leader sang the verses.

As important as the words is the stillness. After the service ends some stay behind for private prayer or reflection. The noise of the market fades and one is free to contemplate the glory of Creation in this beautiful church and place.

Sources:

St Mary's of Port Douglas as it came to pass by Barry M. Craig.

Queensland Heritage Register: <https://apps.des.qld.gov.au/heritage-register/detail/?id=600464>

ABC Local: How St Mary's church came to be by the sea:

<https://www.abc.net.au/local/photos/2014/11/13/4127756.htm>

St Mary's by the Sea website: <http://www.stmarysbythesea.com.au>

The Port Douglas Restoration Society: <http://portdouglasrestorations.com>

Michael Golding

Mary's Song: A Voice from the Heart

When Mary was a teenager, when the angel Gabriel called her, when she accepted God's call, she was a female without a voice in a male-dominated society (as women have been to our own time), her people were subservient to Roman rule, conquered by Roman armies. Her people, the Jews, had been expecting a new Jewish leader who would rise to defeat the Romans and drive them from the land.

When Mary visited her cousin, Elizabeth, already pregnant, she answered her greeting with a glorious song, now called the Magnificat, a song of praise and prophecy. In the Magnificat, as so many times in the topsy-turvy world of Luke's gospel, Mary finds the voice society denied her, justice is restored and the ways of the world are replaced by God's ways (see Isaiah 55:8-9). In the Magnificat, Mary tells Elizabeth her vision, God's plan:

He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.
He has brought down the powerful from their thrones;
and lifted up the lowly;
he has filled the hungry with good things,
and sent the rich away empty.¹

Who are 'the proud in the thoughts of their hearts'? Who are the powerful? Who are the rich? The answers will of course depend on the context. In Mary's time, the Romans certainly counted. So did those who were rich but ignored the poor and less powerful. In the context of modern Australia, the rich, the proud, the powerful are easily identified as are the poor, the hungry and the lowly; the dispossessed, the homeless, the hungry, those who fall through the gaps in our society. The largest group must be indigenous.

A character on my television set, endlessly repeating old British detective programs, has just commented, 'You are a critic of the society you're living in but you yourself belong in it'. So it is not only the business magnates or the politicians who make up the rich, the powerful, the proud but everyone of us, the haves as opposed to the have nots. Even though our own ancestors may not have invaded Australia; even though they may not have come preaching a white and apparently racist God, or terra nullius; even though our ancestors may not personally have stolen their land or murdered their ancestors or denied them basic rights, these things happened. These and other deprivations occurred. Our First Nations suffered terrible losses: the buildings we live, work and worship in are all built on First Nations land, never ceded.

¹ Luke 1:51-55

Those who sing Mary's song in this context must accept the gracious offer in the Uluru Statement, to have a Voice in decisions that affect them, a Voice enshrined in the constitution. For some there is confusion, often deliberately created, about what this means. Here are the words of Noel Pearson:

Mary's song of praise and prophecy speaks powerfully for a Yes vote in this year's referendum. It will be a vote for God's way, for the coming of God's kingdom. It will be a vote for justice for First Nations people. It will be an act of repentance. Moreover, it is unbearable to contemplate the effect of the insult on rejection on First Nations people if this referendum is lost.

'Those who have ears to hear, let them hear.'²

Rhondda Fahey

² Matthew 11:15

Wisdom and ecology

The following reflection was produced for the Wisdom series of Delta studies in 2022 and it was kindly suggested that it should find its way into AVE. It reflects on ecological matters through the Book of Job, centred on the chapters that convey the voice of God.

I am indebted to Geoff Jenkins who invited me to speak and provided some very apt and useful source material, and some essays by Norman Habel, whose incisive analyses helped to inform the content of the study. Special thanks also to Helen McCallum who most beautifully read the text excerpts as the voice of God on the day. It may be helpful to find your own distinct way of voicing these excerpts as you read on.

The theme here is, on the face of it, not directly related to our Parish's patron but perhaps we can find a link in the way we respond to God's voice in our own lives, a way that was most faithfully and physically embodied in Mary's.

Wisdom and Ecology in the Book of Job

The Book of Job presents us with a confronting problem, and the nature of this problem is explored in the opening chapters. Here we learn that Job is a blameless and upright man. He is also greatly blessed with children and servants and worldly wealth. He is considered to be a great man.

He then suffers a number of disasters. His wealth is stolen or destroyed, his servants are beaten or killed, his children all die together in a tragic accident, he contracts a loathsome skin disease and he becomes estranged from his wife. He is reduced to sitting under a tree scraping at his skin with a potsherd.

Job does not understand why these things have happened to him but we, as readers of the text, understand that God has permitted this to happen essentially because Job is a blameless and upright man, of great integrity.

This a very confronting scenario. Job has lost his family, his wealth and his health because he is a good man. All he has left are his life and the integrity derived from his faith. I'd suggest that we instinctively have great sympathy for Job in his predicament and perhaps our sense of justice is affronted by it as well.

Job takes time to reflect on his fate when his friends come to visit him. They sit together in silence for seven days and nights. (Perhaps this seems extreme but we can note that this is a traditional Jewish period of mourning for someone who has died ...)

When Job eventually breaks the silence, he curses the day that he was born. Job no longer values his life, he thinks that death would bring relief, but he hangs on to his integrity. He knows that he is blameless in his previous life and he cannot understand why he has been visited with such suffering. What is the purpose of living according to God's precepts if this is the result? He reasons that God is ultimately accountable for his situation and calls on God for an answer.

What then follows is a long debate between Job and his friends regarding his predicament. His friends argue that he surely must have sinned in some way. They also suggest that it is, at the very least, unwise to challenge God directly in the way he is doing. Can any good come of it?

But Job for his part is unconvinced by their arguments and angered by the implication that he is not speaking the truth. He debates strongly with them and maintains that he is innocent of any wrongdoing. If he speaks rashly, it is because of his unwarranted suffering and he persists in his appeals to God.

When Job's debate with his friends has played itself out, God comes to answer Job but perhaps not in the way that he, or we as readers, expected. And so we hear in chapter 38;

38 Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind:

²“Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?

³ Gird up your loins like a man;

I will question you, and you shall declare to me.

⁴“Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?

Tell me, if you have understanding.

⁵ Who determined its measurements—surely you know!

Or who stretched the line upon it?

⁶ On what were its bases sunk,

or who laid its cornerstone

⁷ when the morning stars sang together

and all the heavenly beings^[a] shouted for joy?

God comes in power and does not accede to Job's question of whether his suffering is just but rather questions Job's knowledge of the nature of created things, their true nature and purpose. God speaks of the architecture of creation, the heavens and the earth. This is something that Job cannot possibly know about. God goes on to speak of the sea and the clouds, of the morning and the dawn, of light and darkness, of snow and hail, and wind and rain. In verse 25 we hear;

- ²⁵ “Who has cut a channel for the torrents of rain
and a way for the thunderbolt,
²⁶ to bring rain on a land where no one lives,
on the desert, which is empty of human life,
²⁷ to satisfy the waste and desolate land,
and to make the ground put forth grass?

We hear of rain in the desert that brings forth grass. God is providing for desolate places where humans do not dwell. The words are taking Job beyond human concerns, beyond Job's concern for himself, and painting a much bigger picture. God's concern, God's accountability, is not just for humans but for all created things.

The discourse then moves on from natural phenomena to living creatures; lions, ravens, mountain goats, deer, wild ass, wild ox, ostrich, war horse, hawk and eagle. In verse 39 of chapter 38 we hear;

- ³⁹ “Can you hunt the prey for the lion
or satisfy the appetite of the young lions,
⁴⁰ when they crouch in their dens
or lie in wait in their covert?
⁴¹ Who provides for the raven its prey,
when its young ones cry to God
and wander about for lack of food?
39 “Do you know when the mountain goats give birth?
Do you observe the calving of the deer?
² Can you number the months that they fulfill,
and do you know the time when they give birth,
³ when they crouch to give birth to their offspring
and are delivered of their young?
⁴ Their young ones become strong; they grow up in the open;
they go forth and do not return to them.

Here we are given a more intimate picture of creation, of God providing for all living creatures. Providing food, providing for reproduction, and sustainability. The creatures described are all wild or powerful, they almost all live in wild, natural environments. They live apart from human society but they are not forgotten or neglected by God. People are not actually mentioned at all, it seems that we are deliberately excluded, but we can readily see the parallels here for our own lives as living creatures and the ways that God provides for us. Job, and we the readers, are being encouraged to think more broadly about our relationship as fellow creatures, under God.

Well, I imagine that Job was probably wanting to find somewhere to hide at this point in the story and perhaps we are in the same boat as the discourse raises some questions for us too.

Are we humans the ‘high point’ of creation, dominating the scene as if by right, or are we simply fellow creatures among others?

Are we acting rightly if our focus is predominantly on the welfare of people, or do we need to think more broadly about the common-wealth of ecology, Earth and creation itself?

Once when questioned about what’s most important in politics, former US President Bill Clinton said, “it’s the economy, stupid!” Is God’s answer to Job then, “it’s creation, it’s ecology, it’s Earth”?

Is this the true household, the true economy that we need to prioritise?

And if so, what might this mean for us?

I think that the writer of Job is suggesting that we need to take on God’s perspective. Here, it is a much more inclusive perspective than we might generally imagine, embracing humanity alongside all other living creatures, alongside wind and weather, and the fabric of Earth, even the whole universe. Creation belongs to God and we share in it.

We might consider this perspective to be particularly wise today when we think about the human-induced problems of climate change and global heating, of unrestrained destruction of natural habitats and the extinction of native wildlife by introduced feral species. The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and our own recently tabled Australian report on the State of the Environment speak authoritatively and persuasively about these matters. How they threaten not just plants and wild animals but our own future survival as a species as well. Our Christian metropolitans and primates also urge us toward this perspective, not least because those who will be most affected will be those least able to respond. In this sense it is a simple matter of justice and mercy.

How then should we respond? Perhaps Job gives us a clue when he responds to God in chapter 42;

- ² “I know that you can do all things
and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.
³ ‘Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?’
Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand,
things too wonderful for me that I did not know.
⁴ ‘Hear, and I will speak;
I will question you, and you declare to me.’
⁵ I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear,
but now my eye sees you;
⁶ therefore I despise myself
and repent in dust and ashes.”

And in verse 10;

- ¹⁰ And the LORD restored the fortunes of Job when he had prayed for his friends, and the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before.

The wisdom explored by the book of Job seems to be encouraging us to a more inclusive view of creation and Earth. In this view, humankind does not have the required knowledge to assume a dominant position but should rather seek to understand God’s broader perspective. The ecological problems of 2022 might indicate to us that we are still lacking in this knowledge. The keys to discerning how we should act lie in repentance, obedience and prayer, especially perhaps in matters of suffering, justice, and our ecological fortunes.

Michael Noble

Notes about our Baptismal Font

As parishioners will know, St Mary's has a splendid baptismal font of carved stone, housed in a prominent position in the baptistery area at the back western end of the church. However this has not always been the font from which baptisms have taken place at our church.

We were reminded of this recently, in an indirect fashion, when we had a clear-up operation of the under-stage area in the church hall. The area beneath the raised stage, with a height of around a metre or so, had been used for some time to store many things. Among these were unwanted or damaged furniture, timber from demolitions and restorations, excess ceramic tiles, and many other items gathering dust. After church a few Sundays ago, when administrator Darrell ordered a large disposal skip, several willing participants set about clearing out this under-stage area, and then hauling to the skip all that was regarded either as unusable or as recyclable.

However a few other items of interest were also found down there, and these were rescued. One of them was a collection of shaped and carved timbers which were identified (by Fr Jan, I believe) as part of the surrounds of a St Mary's font previous to the current one.

Here then are a few notes on the circumstances behind the font replacement in the church. There is surely a fuller and more documented story to be told, but one which is left to the church historians. For the moment however, here is some background – so far as I understand it; it very possible deserves some serious fact-checking.

The original font in St Mary's stood on a relatively slender supporting pillar which was in some way fixed into or onto the church floor. This pillar was encased in more substantial carved timbers; these were the slightly damaged timbers which we retrieved from under the stage. The stone bowl of the original font, which once sat on top of that pillar and timbers, has since been re-purposed as the holy-water stoup which now sits in a niche in the wall, just to one's right when entering through the double-doors from the main narthex into the church.

That original font was replaced by the current one some decades ago, as has been confirmed in a telephone conversation with Fr Jim Brady who was the priest at the time of the change-over. The acquisition of the current font, in which Fr Jim had a strong hand, is an interesting story.

This present font of ours started off life in a different Melbourne church altogether, another bluestone church not much more than a kilometre away from us in a straight line, at the other (eastern) end of our own Queensberry Street. This other church building is still there, very much intact, at 61 Queensberry, not far from the Exhibition Gardens. It was built a couple of decades or so after ours, on one of a few land allocations in that area which were made in the mid nineteenth century to (mostly non-conformist) congregations.

This particular allocation was made to the Catholic Apostolic Church (CAC), a strong, prosperous, and serious-minded group originating in Britain (and particularly from Scotland) in the nineteenth century. They built this church whose interior was set up in a way which would not be at all unfamiliar to Anglicans. The liturgy of the CAC was set up by consciously taking what was seen to be the best parts of many churches, Catholic, Anglican and non-conformist among them. It incorporated fine choirs and organ music, and also serious biblical study. One of the principal missions of the church was to quietly inform and prepare people for the second coming.

The Catholic Apostolic Church world-wide was set up with twelve Apostles, persons who in turn appointed Prophets and Angels who would ordain Pastors to its churches. The last of these nineteenth century Apostles died shortly into the twentieth century, and from then on there could be no new Angels appointed. Eventually, with the death of the last Angel in an area, no new Pastors could be ordained.

The CAC had very consciously planned for its own end. It considered that when the line ran out and this happened, then its work would essentially be done. The churches continued for a while with the existing ordained pastors and with deacons but eventually, in the decade or two after the second world war, they disbanded around the world in an orderly fashion. This occurred in Melbourne also, and the resources of the church were ceded in trust to the Anglicans.

Fr Brady was one of the administrators for a while, and got to know the church and its fittings. Some several decades later the former CAC church buildings were made available to its now tenants, the Romanian Orthodox Church. The Romanians have named it the Church of St Peter and St Paul, and have transformed the interior (but not the exterior) of the building with elaborate eastern orthodox decoration, including frescoes.

By this time Fr Jim had become the priest at our St Mary's. Knowing of the renovations, and on his hearing that the Romanians were installing a new font of their own (one large enough to allow total immersion of a baptised babe), negotiations took place. An appropriate modest price was struck, accepted and paid for the font which they no longer required. This original font travelled from 61 Queensberry Street to where it now stands proudly with us at 430 Queensberry Street.



The font presently in the baptistery area of St Mary's



The surround timbers of the old font, precariously reassembled, in front of an access door to the under-stage area from which they were retrieved.



Our current holy-water stoup, which once was the top bowl of the previous font.

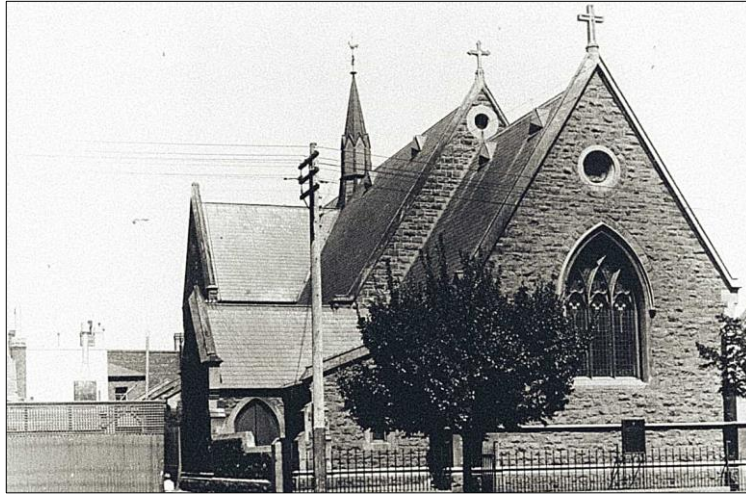
Photographs courtesy Darrell Pitt

Epilogue: a personal connection

My dear wife, our Helen McCallum, was brought up in a family who were strong members of the Catholic Apostolic Church. In the years before the church was dissolved, the McCallum family would drive into the city from Mitcham each Sunday for services in Queensberry Street.

On designated Sunday afternoons, after having returned home the children who were preparing for confirmation would then catch the train back into the city, where they would attend catechism classes. Older and younger cousins joined the train at Mont Albert. Together they would delight in the fact that the walk from Flinders Street to the church could be made to pass by the flamboyant Darrell Lea sweet shop. Helen also recalls that delicious Butter Menthol sweets would be left in the choir stalls for choristers who developed a catch in the throat during the morning service. The afternoon catechism classes took place in the same seats, and remaining packets of those lollies could be surreptitiously consumed.

The Catholic Apostolic families were encouraged, after the winding up of the church, to join other denominations. Many, but not all, joined Anglican churches.



*Catholic Apostolic Church at 61 Queensberry St Carlton
Historic photograph (1920s) courtesy Fr Jim Brady*

Upon my discovering the history of our present St Mary's font, it gave me pleasure to muse upon the strong likelihood of it being the very same font from which Helen herself would have been baptised at the other end of the street.

David Keuneman

Reflection on the Role of Friendship in Chaplaincy- Aged Care and Disability care

10 minute Speech 26th March 2023

Friendship is one way a Chaplain can minister to those of God's church, dispersed. Friendship can help address individual spiritual needs and build spiritual support through community.

John Swinton (Swinton, John: "Resurrecting the Person," Abingdon Press, 2000 Nashville TN.) suggests that it is not unreasonable to define discipleship as Jesus did in John 15:13-15. Here Jesus teaches the disciples that they are his friends when they follow His commands. The disciples were no longer servants responding in unknowing, but Jesus' friends acting in the full revelation of who He is.

I have found that, in Chaplaincy, respectful meaningful friendships can bring people from different denominational, or sometimes different religious, affiliations together, to support one another unconditionally in faith. Simple acts of leadership to gather small groups together can get church like networks working.

Friendship is a relationship that cuts across boundaries that may otherwise divide us. In pastoral care for the disabled and aging, friendship is the basis on which a relationship of spiritual support can grow, allowing a deeper ministry to those otherwise marginalised to flourish.

Friendship is established through opening doors, through visitation, through demonstrating deep listening and caring responses, as well as respecting privacy and confidentiality. In these ways people understand that they are valued and important. Through friendship people can begin to find wholeness in the experience of their brokenness.

Friendship can counter wider interpersonal and social forces, for example, such as during lockdowns under covid. Such experiences act to isolate, stigmatise, alienate, suppress and exclude the afflicted. Pastoral visits at such times are deeply intimate and commit one to encompass people in their fullness, regardless.

Many novels and poems have been written about friendships: friendships, good and bad, those that are sustained and true and those that dissolve out of broken trust and even betrayal, as well as potential friendships that are stymied through prejudice. The Bible is full of such stories.

Within a framework of a friendship of trust, a Chaplain can visit others from different backgrounds, spiritual and cultural, to show them care, saving them from isolation, loneliness

and angst, bridging a gap otherwise uncrossed. When friendship is truly the basis of the pastoral care, we can spiritually minister to all faiths and those with none.

True friendship is the vehicle through which people can thrive together in community and within which small daily miracles of forgiveness and care can be experienced: a disabled man bending from his wheelchair to pick up the service booklet of a 100 year old woman sitting next to him in “church,” at the community I work in, is announced as an everyday miracle by the recipient of this extraordinarily kind act.

People can thrive in community together, can feel secure and be given purpose and meaning- a community of the disparate, not a club of sameness with membership rules that seek to exclude some on account of perceived difference or inadequacy. Inclusive friendship requires us to suspend judgement; to walk beside the other, to live in their shoes.

Being a friend may require acts of selflessness, acts of service you otherwise would not feel were a part of your “job description.” Friendship can require patience and deep compassion build the community of God’s people; the glue by which the body of Christ is held together.

In my ministry as a chaplain in aged and disability care, I understand that one person excluded on account of indifference to their need and desire to be included, means that the gathering or body of Christ gathering that day is incomplete; less fulfilled, no longer whole, they are certainly missed and will miss the group.

Some people I meet, aged, sick, disabled, from different cultural and spiritual backgrounds, have described to me that since they have been unable to attend church or temple for a long time, that they are no longer “practising” their faith. In such cases people survive spiritually on past spiritual knowledge, experience and practice- they survive in a sort of “bubble”, to hang in there!

At a time of crisis or transition in life, the individual pastoral approach may not continue to sustain some spiritually. Community church experience can be powerfully healing, even an essential element of the journey, or as one woman undergoing Transition care with RMH at our facility told me the other day, “Oh you’re not coming next week... but we really need you!”

In these times, a lot of people seem to follow reality shows where people tell all. Such shows might help bridge the gap between personal isolation and true community experience. If chaplains can, they do well to build opportunities for spiritual community; opportunities for friendship are one way we can witness to each other, sharing life’s joys and lows, demonstrating the healing of love and forgiveness, to all.

If I had a theology for this ministry of friendship then it would be the Trinitarian understanding of the Christian God, and mankind created Imago Dei.

The incarnational Jesus brings healing grace through the holy spirit, repairing both our vertical relationship to God and horizontal to all humankind. This truth is the cornerstone to true ecumenical friendships in faith.

The Chaplain in aged and disability care is called to spiritually lead and inspire people through the ministry of friendship for individuals and to build spiritual community opportunities for the body dispersed. The process of re-imagining church community and what it means to the residents in care is ongoing. The Chaplain, through focus on inclusive friendship, can image in small community church-like groups, the healthy heartbeat of the body of Christ.

Questions for Reflection:

1. I invite you to share about the role of friendship in the various different fields of ministry that you engage in.
2. Do you see any impediments to the contribution of inclusive friendship in your areas of ministry?

Josephine Snowdon

Going to War 1939-1945

Living in a Country Town in South Australia

These are my personal recollections from the years of the Second World War; I was nine when it started in 1939 and fifteen when it ended in August 1945. In 1939 we moved from Victoria to Mt Gambier where my father, Jim Austin, had obtained a position as manager of the local wool spinning mill, while my mother's interests centered on her home and family. As I was 9 years of age, I attended the Mount Gambier Primary school with my brother Ken, who was 7 and two grades below me.

My introduction to the Primary school in Wehl St was not smooth. During spelling tests any words with lower-case r, or t were constantly marked wrong because the script shape of these two letters as taught in South Australian schools was totally different to that of Victoria. Become a quick learner became my immediate policy.

Our grade 5 teacher turned out to be a gem. She taught us how to sing old English melodies. I do think this encouraged my lifelong love of music. The school had a fife and drum band. Joining this I can remember spending my play times walking about the playground practicing the tunes, no written music, you only copied the tune played, in practice, by the teacher on the piano. On special occasions we dressed in a green and gold uniform with forage cap. One boy, Wattie Case, who excelled in every sport, was the drummer. His performance was exceptional and helped maintain our military bearing.

At this late primary school stage, the realities of war were introduced to Mt Gambier. Flying activity increased at the No 2 Air Observers School which had been built on the site of the aerodrome. Avro Anson and Airspeed Oxford aircraft crossed the town while training future aircrew.

Next the Americans (The Yanks) arrived. As part of their equipment, they brought a flight of Bell Airacobra fighter planes to be based at the aerodrome. They immediately commandeered a local tyre-dealer's warehouse and soon filled it with trucks and supplies. As kids, we hung around the front door and one chap gave me a stick of cinnamon flavoured chewing gum. I made this last 4 days by sticking it on my bed post each night. I expect the recipients of far more valuable gifts like nylon stockings were the pretty girls around town but that subject was way above my pay scale.

When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbour in 1941, the Education Board ordered protective Slit trenches be provided for the school children. Specifications were included and the schools were left to organize the construction. These trenches were about one and a half metres deep, and zig zagged right across our dirt playground. Who dug these trenches? the big boys, Grades 6 and 7. We were equipped with spades and digging mattocks, no picks, these would be far too dangerous. We were detailed to dig at specific times. The playground was hard packed volcanic soil, so you had to first chip the soil loose with an adze and then, with the spade, throw the spoil up above the trench to form a blast barrier running parallel to the trench.

Shortly after completion of these trenches, a practice air raid was actioned. The air-raid siren sounded throughout the town, and we filed into the trenches, crouched down low and some with prepared Dilly Bags removed a cork and placed it between their teeth to protect them from blast damage. Now we were prepared for anything.

The pilots from the aerodrome had a field day beating up our town as “enemy” bombers. Many school kids were employed with their bikes as couriers for the Red Cross, the local defence depot and sundry other “important” groups. We others entertained ourselves in the trench, writing the aircraft identification numbers on the soles of our shoes.

My love of learning, encouraged in grade 5, abruptly ended with my elevation to grade six. Here, I had an older male teacher who had recently retired but been called back to teach. For me, it was all down-hill from there, and I had this teacher for two long years.

Just two of his traits set the scene. The first was his brutality which was not curbed, as corporal punishment was allowed in South Australian schools until 1991. At any observed lesson failure, we were lined up across the front of the room with arms outstretched and received a heavy impact on our hand with a one metre long cane, wielded with enthusiasm. Another example was when the entire class was tested on poetry memory. In turn each student had to recite a line from the poem. The resultant failures would result in a line of students, usually consisting of half the class, putting our hands forward for the cane. We returned to our seat and placed our hands under our bottoms on the colder wooden seat to try and stop the stinging sensation; this is still very clear in my memory. In later life I wondered why we didn’t complain to our parents, but lacking parent teacher meetings, what happened at school stayed at school.

Our teacher’s laziness came to the fore when preparing lessons for arithmetic (maths.) It was his procedure, at each lesson, to leave the answer book open on his table. What a gift for enterprising scholars, to copy the answers and work your sums backwards. His procedure ultimately saw us entering high school at the end of grade 7, having missed many basic principles of mathematics

Highlights of High School

It was only when moving from primary to high school we noticed the shortage of teachers. Class sizes were very large, because both male and female teachers had volunteered for the forces. Retirees were called back and even trainee teachers direct from Adelaide Teachers College were required to teach at High School standard. My class teacher took us for maths. and I later departed high school still having no understanding of quadratic equations. Of necessity, our teacher taught the subject at the approved rate but had no additional capacity for individual tuition, so you caught up where you could. This was the general pattern; however, we cannot blame the teachers, just the War.

Starting our first year of high school we discovered it was vastly different to primary. We appreciated the boys and girls bike sheds with individual racks. Of less appreciation, was the discovery that digging the slit trenches had just commenced. We felt like veterans, back to the tools.

There were new procedures to learn, such as changing rooms for different subjects. In Chemistry practical experiments with acids and Bunsen burners created an “itch” which just had to be scratched. Marginally correct advice was passed on from one year to the next.

We were told that putting a copper coin in acid cleaned the surfaces. You then rubbed a drop of mercury on both sides, which stuck. Magic! You can turn a half penny coin into a one shilling look alike. Done. Next Saturday afternoon this coin was presented at the ticket box of the Capitol picture theatre for admission. With only slight body shakes we waited to be passed a theatre ticket and three penny coin change, I now guess the attendant in the box had seen this all before but, being a sport, she played along.

From this type of further education, I’m afraid the teenager’s enquiring mind gains momentum, not in the dis-honesty stakes, but in the search for information and adventure.

I do not recollect any announcement or comment on the declaration of the war. I was too young although we children gradually experienced the change when shortages were discussed. Butter, sugar and other groceries were included in restrictions legislated by the Government and controlled by a system of ration books, which were issued to every person. Soon food control was followed by clothing coupons. Petrol coupons were then issued, this restricted the travel for our family outings and adventures.

In late 1940, elements of the war began to catch up with the Mount. We observed the increase of blue Airforce uniforms in our town. The aerodrome was only five miles north so we could ride our bikes out to monitor the aircraft activity. I must add one bike story here. Later in the war as the training base increased in both size and the number of occupants, we in town experienced the occasional theft of our bicycles. Apparently if Airmen missed the last bus for the base at night, a bike was commandeered by them to get back to the guard post at the Aerodrome gate. It became a regular weekly requirement for the Police to take a truck to the gate site and recover our bikes which were left on the side of the road or in the ditches; Thursday was the day to regain possession of your missing bike.

A favourite leisure activity of the Air Force youth, both airmen and women of the Women’s Auxiliary Australian Airforce. (WAAFS), was Saturday night dancing at the “Barn” in Yahl. This was a short bus ride from the Mount and in 1945 my friend Tony and I would travel with the Airforce. Well, we were fifteen. The bus was run, not on petrol, but on illegal kerosene, so the exhaust fumes almost smothered us. On reaching the hall some seven miles from town, Tony and I learnt to dance by copying the steps of the older male dancers.

Adjacent to the aerodrome were farms growing flax used by the Government to make tents and other coarse fabric requirements for the Army. Audrey’s mother joined the volunteers harvesting these crops.

With the war activity increasing, plans became available for family slit trenches and air raid shelters. Many dads began digging a square hole in their backyard to be covered with galvanized iron, usually formed into a half circle and covered with soil and weeds for camouflage. During the daylight hours, the Town was often “beaten up” by the low flying American fighter planes. We did not have the same noisy intrusion with the Anson and Oxford training aircraft of the RAAF.

Australia began appealing for War funds. To attract donors there were projects organised to gather people for the appeal. One such attraction, in 1943, was an Australia wide tour of a Lancaster bomber flown by an Australian air ace Peter Isaacson. It landed at any country town, where the Council could construct a paddock long enough for the aircraft to take off. In Mt Gambier they removed fences on some paddocks opposite the airport and we cycled out to see our Lancaster arrive.

he next tour was some years later. Japanese midget submarines had appeared in Sydney Harbour and sunk a ferry, but our navy damaged the sub, recovered the wreckage, then arranged this damaged wreck onto trucks and showed it around Australia. I bought a souvenir piece of a battery plate to take home. This has been lost in the past 75 years,

Due to the stress of a 24- hour job my father developed ulcers. The only treatment for these was very basic. Time in hospital then sent home to continue the treatment of an all-dairy diet. His long-established concern for all mill employees gave him “dairy product” privileges. Many of the women he worked with had cows they milked, and Jim was given presents of fresh cream and homemade butter.

A mill store- man offered Jim the use of his beach house to recover. This worked wonders. On occasional weekends we would drive down and stay at Bungalow Bay. Here we noted the absence of professional fishermen who had fished the bay with nets. Apparently, they were Italians and because of Government policy were considered aliens and had been interned for the duration of the conflict. When we arrived the fish stocks had recovered and were plentiful. Another incident at this fishing spot brought the war right to our doorstep. Blackout regulations were introduced because of the dangers of air attacks. On a fishing trip one night we had run our net around a sandy spot on the beach and filled the net with Tommy Rough fish. Their fins made them difficult to release from the mesh of the net so, every now and then Dad would switch on his torch to see the mesh. Suddenly, a flare went high in the sky further out to sea; this frightened the hell out of us. We piled the net into the boat, rowed ashore and drove back the thirty kms to the Mount where Dad immediately contacted the Police Station. The Air Force station sent personnel with maps to our house to pinpoint the flare position. Next morning Avro Anson aircraft from the local base were sent out to find any submarine. It was thought that German submarines came ashore at night for fresh water which is plentiful in this limestone country. No Submarines were found, but we were banned from using our torch when night fishing.

A Voluntary Defence Corps (VDC) was formed in the Mount and my father was a member. Perhaps you may have seen Dad’s army on TV. They were not very professional. The Commanding Officer appointed was the most unlikely soldier to wear uniform; his only qualification was serving in his boarding school Cadet force. Dad was detailed to instruct on the Lewis gun having fired this in the National Service just after the First World War.

FOR the VDC issue of weapons, each member was given a .310 rifle; these were sixty-year-old and had come from the Boar war in Africa. The guns came complete with bandoleers to wear across your shoulder to carry ammunition. Pockets in these leather pouches still contained bullets which had turned green with verdigris due to aging. We kids removed the sharp bullet from the bullet body with pliers, and extracted the cordite sticks which were the

explosive. We lay these sticks in rows on the ground and lit them with matches; they lit and fizzed like firecrackers. Our mothers knew nothing of this.

Later when Dad had cleaned his gun, zeroed it to make the sights accurate and obtaining new bullets, he practiced his accuracy by shooting rabbits for our Crayfish pots. He taught us “Gun law”; and how to shoot rabbits for Cray bait, we also learnt to scan ahead to avoid snakes and to put the gun under a fence before climbing through. Related to this shooting I found a good earner, skinning the rabbits and selling the skins to a stock agent. the rabbit skins were needed for soldier’s hats so, stretching the skin on wire frames we dried them in the sun. Although they were very light in weight, we took them down to the agent who paid a good price according to the weight of the bundle.

Because the fishermen were locked up and unable to fish, at the Bay we sometimes caught a surplus of fish and crays. These were always welcome in the Mount, as food was restricted by rationing. We sold these fish to local fish shops.

Through the schools we were also encouraged to track down wastepaper and metal which could contribute to the war effort. An award system, called the Schools Patriotic Fund (SPF), was instituted to recognize our efforts- you first gained an award badge and then extra bars were added for additional collections. The aluminum was used for aeroplanes but I do not know how they used the rest.

At the rear of the Woollen Mill there was a large area which was taken over by the Government for the installation of a satellite munitions factory. A mass of machinery was installed and the manufacture of small brass components for shells and bombs began. This again increased the workload of my father.

As the Woollen Mill was a vital part of the Defence supply, Jim as manager was regularly called to Melbourne for procedural conferences. Government control was very bureaucratic. As Mum’s sisters lived in Melbourne, she insisted on accompanying him. His only option was to drive the entire family to Melbourne and return. The number of petrol coupons was insufficient for this journey, so Dad had the engineers at the mill construct a small sealed petrol tank from the car toolbox which is located under the bonnet. The next step was to obtain from his farming friends, power kerosene which they bought for their farm equipment and transferred to our main petrol tank. The fuel system was simple; the car was started on the petrol from the converted toolbox. When the engine was hot enough, he changed over to the kerosene from the main tank. You could only use the kerosene if it was was hot enough to burn in the engine. From the original fuel tank at the back of the car, a copper fuel pipe was wrapped many times around the exhaust pipe, and then fed to the carburetor. Only with this heated fuel could the engine run on Kerosene

There was one occasion when the illegal use of this fuel could be easily detected. Leaving the city to return to the Mount, we were held up at an intersection in Flemington due to the racecourse traffic. The exhaust pipe had cooled, and the kerosene was not hot enough to burn properly so, when we were cleared by the policeman to proceed, we left the policeman in a cloud of white kero. smoke. Petrol coupons were finally withdrawn 4 years after the war ended and the car was returned to normal. Some owners even used Shellite for fuel. This had no power, so you helped it up a hill by pushing at the back of the car

Clothes rationing eventually ceased in 1948. The ladies went wild with their wardrobes. A “new look” fashion took hold, with dresses well below the knee and ultra-full skirts.

After the war there was a shortage of motor cars. By 1947 new English cars were arriving in Australia, partly assembled, and dispatched in large timber crates. On arrival, the wheels, bumper bars and other accessories were attached by the agents before the preservative coating was washed from the body. Secondhand cars were very scarce. Some families had left their cars up on blocks in their garage because of the shortages. These cars returned to the market and we eighteen-year olds were delighted to find classic sports cars among the offerings.

One cobbler of mine bought a boat- tailed Alvis with a supercharger. I ventured further by purchasing a 1926 Brescia Bugatti without an engine. This came with the engine parts unassembled, in six boxes on the back seat. The dealer selling this car assured me all the engine parts were included. We towed it home and I spent months building the engine and was finally able to use it as my transport. Later I sold this to an enthusiast to race in Ballarat.

War’s end. VE day, (Victory in Europe) was a very big day. It seemed we had been holding our breath for such a long time. Early in the evening spontaneous celebrations arose in Commercial St, the main shopping area.

Local bands were playing, there was dancing in the street, lots of shouts, whistles and good-natured interchange between the people crowding the street and footpath. As we were 15 and very aware of the significance of this event we stayed long after our normal bedtime. The ultimate surrender of the Japanese on VJ Day (Victory in Japan) was, by comparison, a much more subdued event. Possibly because the end of our war was so traumatic for the Japanese civilians.

Following the war things slowly began returning to normal. The service men returned home and displaced the women, who had carried the load of general production for years. These women liked their jobs and had gained great satisfaction from their efforts. After working for years as team members fighting the war, we all quickly reverted to individual management of our own lifestyle.

This is only the story of one young lad; every individual would have different tales to tell. It is unfortunate that we still fight wars.

Ron Austin

Monique

Over my years of ministry I have met some really fascinating people, particularly my three years in Monte Carlo. It was in Monte Carlo I met one of the most interesting though tragic of people. She was a person who always thought she should be in the limelight but always just seemed to be just off stage waiting for her name to be called. Her name was Monique Baylin-Kaye.

Monique Baylin was the daughter of Russian emigré parents, her mother was a great beauty and danced with Bolshoi before the revolution and her father a grain merchant. Monique always described her mother as. ‘Bolshoi Bellerina’ though she never made the first ranks of that troupe, the Revolution cut short any hope of that. Like many other wealthy Russians the Baylin Family fled to China to escape the Russian Revolution as they would almost certainly would have ended up in a gulag in Siberia.

Monique was born in Tianjin in Northern China and her first language was Mandarin. Her mother, a very conceited and aloof woman wasn’t really interested in Monique as she was a short dumpy child and would never be the beautiful daughter she wanted. Monique was brought up by her Chinese Amah until she was sent off to an Anglican girls boarding school in Shanghai. She was there when the Japanese invaded but fortunately being a Russian the Japanese left her and her family alone. After the war she and her mother, who by this time had separated from her father moved to Hong Kong for a time, where they lived with other emigre family members.

In reality, Monique and her mother Vera were stateless, but after WWII this was not an unusual situation for many people. Mother and child then moved around Europe, to Switzerland, to England, where Monique said they were staying in a hotel with Agatha Christie and became characters in one of her novels.

It was in Rome that Vera met Chester Fritz an entrepreneurial American who had spent many years in China and had made a fortune trading in commodities. This meant a move to the United States. It was here that young Monique mixed with the Pebble Beach set. She once told me she was proposed to by Bing Crosby, who had quite a reputation with young women. She also became good friends with the Rubenstein family and letters between Monique and Aniela Rubenstein are now part of Cervantes Library Virtual Collection.

Chester Fritz never liked his step-daughter and was determined that she would not inherit his wealth. He was a generous benefactor to his alma mater the North Dakota University which has its library in his name. Upon retirement Chester and Vera moved to Monte Carlo and lived in great style, lunching regularly with the rich and titled of Europe.

In the meantime Monique had married and with her English husband ran an antique business. It was at this time they became friends with the Darwins, who she arranged for me to visit in Kensington one evening. In fact, I could never travel anywhere and she did not know significant people there. On my first visit to Florence she was determined that I go and visit some of her Florentine aristocratic friends which I declined much to her disgust.

At times Monique would visit her mother in Monte Carlo, probably when Chester was away. She loved being picked up in the white rolls by the tall handsome Ghanaian driver of whom she was very fond. When I visited her apartment the Roll was sitting covered in grime in the garage, as Vera who by that time was 98 was bedridden and incapable of anything.

Once when visiting Baroness Magurite de Reuter, I mentioned her friendship with Vera and she said in her thick Swiss-German accent, 'Oh vee don't have anything to do with her now.' She went on to tell me that she and some other wealthy and titled women had had lunch with Vera at the Monaco Yacht Club after which she called for her chauffeur, got into her white Rolls Royce and drove off, leaving them to find their own way home. (Marguerite de Reuter actually only lived a few hundred metres from the Yacht Club).

Monique's life was not a happy one, after her divorce she moved to the Algarve in Portugal where she painted and lived off the pension that her mother sent her. This continued well into her seventies. In many ways this sounds like an idyllic life and would have been for most people, but Monique always felt she was entitled to more.

She was a very gifted person, very charming, she drew and painted beautifully she spoke many languages, including Mandarin, French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese as well as Russian. In fact, she told me she was a Russian translator at the UN when Khrushchev made his famous visit in the 1960s. While I sometimes doubted Monique's claims they often turned out to be true.

I first met Monique at the front door of St Paul's Monte Carlo where I was chaplain. She was swathed in one of her mother's many fur coats. She knew I had come from Hong Kong and said her first language was Mandarin as she was born in northern China and she learned to speak from her Chinese amah. I suggested that she go to the library and surprise Linda, my then wife who is Chinese, and ask for coffee in Mandarin. This began an intense, sometimes difficult friendship.

We soon learned that she had come over from Portugal to look after her bedridden mother. However there was a significant problem. Her stepfather had appointed a financial advisor to care for her mother's affairs once he was dead. That same person had complete control over all her affairs and tried to stop Monique from even visiting. Monique realised that things were not right and that a lot of things were missing, such as an apartment in Switzerland that had been sold, cars that had been sold. The financial advisor had said this was to pay for her mother's 24 hour care. She then found out that the 6 million euro apartment in Monaco had been sold to her accountant through a Jersey Island company.

This began years of legal battles, first for Monique to be able to stay with her mother, then to have control of her mother's care, then to get back all that had been stolen. There were many

days when Monique would eat with us because she had no money for food which seemed ridiculous as she was living in a luxurious apartment, cupboards filled with the finest designer clothes, but no money to buy anything as all the money was still being held by the financial advisor. On one visit to the apartment, Monique took us downstairs to the so called laundry room. This was an industrial scale facility. Lining all the walls of the laundry were wardrobes filled with designer gowns, suits and dresses from the 1960s-1980s, unimaginable wealth a collection worth of a museum. Unfortunately Monique never grew into the elegant ballet dancer her mother was and none of these clothes fitted her, only the collection 12 fur, mostly mink coats and the vast selection of Hermes and other scarves and handbags. One of Monique's greatest joys was putting these on and going to the Hermes and Valentino shops near her apartment and pretending she still was rich.

Finally, several years after the death of her mother at 99 Monique did win the court battles but sadly died of heart disease intestate. A search was held to find any relatives, even going back to Russia which her parents had left 90 years before. I know one of her cousins was in the House of Lords in London, but I think he was a step relative and not entitled to her fortune. In many ways it seems this fortune only brought sadness and heartache for Monique.

One of the most important things I learned living in Monaco is that vast wealth does not make you happy.

Fr Jan Joustra

Governing with Integrity

The inertia on the part of previous Federal Governments to establish a national anti-corruption agency/national integrity commission was a major election issue in the 2022 Federal election. Few would argue that democratically elected governments need to be trustworthy and accountable. Their role in the most simplistic terms, is provision of infrastructure and law making, and these are funded through taxation, and either personal or party politics and philosophy inform the economic decisions made. Furthermore, increased government spending leads to increased taxes, however is this such a bad thing – even Jesus recognised the importance of paying taxes to the Romans!

Traditionally most Australians have believed in a “fair go”, and that everyone who wanted to work should be able to do so at fair rates, sufficient to support food, clothing, housing to share with a family. Providing a universal “fair go” informed both individual actions to support “the underdog” and government legislation. Well brought up children were taught at home and at school, to share and not be greedy. Yet in more recent years, health and wealth are perceived as a reward for personal achievement, and poor health and poverty as self-inflicted. Furthermore, for some extremely wealthy individuals, they believe that this duly reflects their value as a person and thus they feel that they are entitled to their hard earned, extreme wealth.

There has been much in the media in recent months about the “big 4” consulting firms, and it is coming to public attention, that over time the Federal public service, within government departments who understand tertiary education, health and public housing for example, has been progressively eroded, and consulting firms have been called in to fill this gap to advise on strategy, productivity, risk and quality. What are the goals of these big 4 consultancy firms? Indubitably they are in business to make money, and clearly they are multibillion dollar concerns. Recently a partner of one of these consultancy firms was asked by a senate enquiry whether he was worth his annual salary of seven times that of the Prime Minister of Australia, and his answer was that he felt “incredibly privileged” to receive such a salary. Does this mean that this partner is seven times more important than the Prime Minister of Australia or works seven times harder? In short, the business of these “big 4” reflects the pervasive philosophy that the goal of business is to maximise profits.

Productivity in an industrial sense is measured in terms of “widgets”, which is defined by an amount of product produced by that industry in a given amount of time. Profitability increases when production increases and/or costs decreases. My view is that these consultancy firms struggle to understand service industries such health, education and social welfare. What is the “widget” in this setting and how do you define the quality of outcomes? Productivity could notionally increase with seeing more patients or teaching more students, but if staff/student or staff/patient ratios remain the same, then profitability remains the same. In the service industries “risk” is often defined as staff entitlements such as sick leave and annual leave for example, so changing appointments from permanent employment to casual

appointments is more profitable. Increasing class sizes or seeing more patients in less time would also increase profitability, but what is the effect on quality of teaching and healthcare as a result, or is even “quality” itself assessed in terms of profitability? A revealing article by retired Professor Tim Moore in “The Saturday Paper” on 17th June 2023, outlined the detrimental impact of engagement of consultancy firms on Australia’s Universities, and one of the examples that he cited was that in 2022 the University of Melbourne had spent \$38 million on consultancies, an amount almost equal to that of unpaid salaries to their increasingly casualised academic workforce!

Jesus tells us that “No one can serve 2 masters.....You cannot serve God and mammon” Matthew 6: 24. This verse has been familiar to me since I was a child, yet it is only recently I have looked up the actual meaning of the word “mammon”. According to the Oxford Dictionary, “mammon” is an Aramaic word for riches or wealth regarded in terms of an idol or evil influence, but today may be considered to mean greed or avarice. Yet is wealth in itself a bad thing? Jesus also tells us “To whom much is given much will be required”. Luke 12: 48, so that wealth can also arguably lead to generosity and support for others less fortunate than those with much.

Contemporary Australia is multicultural, comprising numerous ethnic groups and religious faiths, including those with no faith at all. Capitalists would argue that the majority of our day to day activities self-regulate due to “market forces”, and to minimise taxes nationally, infrastructure such as roads and public transport, and defence should be the main federal priorities. Yet as a voting public we have called for integrity in Federal Government. The word “integrity” is derived from the Latin adjective “integer” meaning whole or complete, and from “integer” also derives words such as “integral”, “integrate”. The meaning of integrity is far broader than being honest and trustworthy, and extends to all facets of Government policy being true to the whole population, equitably. It is of note that only recently the words “young and free” in our National Anthem were changed to “one and free”. What makes Australians one? I would like to think that it is partly because we believe in “a fair go” for all, but also that we have universal respect for law abiding citizens irrespective of their colour, ethnicity, sexuality or beliefs, and that we all uphold the “common good” which balances profits, people, and our precious and fragile planet.

Jesus teaching about not being able to serve 2 masters is as true today as it was 2000 years ago when He said it. The recent Federal Government focus on data supporting a “well being index” of Australians was a good start, although clearly the methodologies used to reflect this are genuinely still a work in progress. The key to “well being” for all is surely for all organisations including our Federal Government committing to the “common good” for all, rather than purely focussing on “free market” financial profitability.

Christine Storey

Saint Peter and his Scripture

In the early chapters of the Book of Acts, where the origins of the Jerusalem Church are described, something really intriguing is found. We are so familiar with these stories that we do not always notice the features that are of particular interest. It is especially important that we try to read these narratives against the background of Judaism in First Century Jerusalem.

But here we need to acknowledge a conundrum. In many respects our best knowledge of First Century Jerusalem actually comes from the book of Acts! This is one of the reasons why we have not always been able to locate the Acts in their best context. A good example would be the Stoa (Portico) of Solomon, mentioned three times in the New Testament, twice in Acts and once in John's Gospel, but otherwise not known. We have no reason to imagine that Luke made this up. It was a real thing, which no one else happens to mention.

Not that we should necessarily be emphasizing 'the church' for this period and place, for there is a reasonable argument that there was no such thing as a church distinct from the Jewish institutions of the time (schools, Temple and synagogues). There seems to be a small group of apostles and their associates, but whether we should call that a church is another question. For example, Stephen did not encounter the synagogue mob who stoned him by accident. Rather he was a member of the synagogue which violently turned against him, not liking his contributions.

Actually Luke does not really 'happen to mention' the Stoa of Solomon. Rather it seems to have been a place well known to the earliest Christians, and likely as not Luke himself went there when he visited Jerusalem with Paul in the 50s CE. We might imagine that Josephus knew of it too, for he mentions the porticoes of the Temple often, but usually in the context of the war with the Romans, when there was hand-to-hand combat above and below the porticoes which he describes in considerable, and somewhat grisly, detail. So no reason to name the porticoes, but in any case we do not think that Josephus mixed socially in the porticoes and their philosophical schools. He came after all from Jerusalem's Jewish elite.

But I digress. Let's return to those earliest Christians, Peter especially, and their use of Scripture, after one more short digression on scripture in First Century Judaism.

The Jewish Scriptures aggregated into a single corpus (we call the result the Hebrew Bible; it contains 22 books, and its broadest scope was already defined by the turn of the era). Almost the entire text was originally written in Hebrew and was then and is now transmitted in Hebrew, though a few chapters and a stray verse or two are now come down to us in Aramaic.

Clearly the Hebrew Scriptures comprise some early aggregations, or subsets. Books were not added to the whole corpus one at a time, but rather they became part of subsets which were

then joined to comprise the whole. This turns out to be more important for Peter than might at first seem to be the case.

The modern Hebrew name for the Bible reflects this ancient process of aggregation. So Tanak, Bible, is a Hebrew acronym for tora-nviim-ktuvim or law-prophets-writings. Already in the Second Century BCE writers such as the translator of Ben Sira into Greek make reference to this construction of three subsets.

Torah was always regarded as the foundation, or nucleus, of the whole, and still is. So in modern synagogues the first five books are read in their present sequence end-to-end and round again in a cycle. Nothing is omitted, and nothing included from outside the Torah. I find this a quite dramatic demonstration that the first and primary subset of Hebrew Scripture was the five books of Moses, sometimes called the Pentateuch, known within Judaism as the Torah.

One way to see that this primacy existed in the First Century is the clear indication that the first translation into Greek (called the Septuagint) seems clearly to have comprised just the five books of Moses, and translations of these books of what we call The Old Testament were added to the collection later. One indication of this is that the so-called Alexandrian canon of the Bible in Greek comprised some additional books which were originally written in Greek, not Hebrew (eg the Wisdom of Solomon), but this corpus began life as a translation of the Pentateuch. In other words, it is remarkable that the Torah section is primary in both Greek and Hebrew, suggesting that this structure existed from the beginning.

We had a Torah collection of five books of Moses before we had a Hebrew Bible, just like we seem to have had a collection of four gospels as the nucleus of the New Testament, to which were added collections of the Pauline epistles and some odds and ends. We might think that we are fortunate to have Acts, then, and indeed we are, but its shared authorship with the Gospel of Luke presumably gave it standing. Though not of course directly beside the Gospel in order, because of the four.

One way that this is obvious is that the Greek Pentateuch has the same linguistic look and feel, all the books are as reliably transmitted as each other, there is no part that seems to have been carelessly transmitted or more profoundly corrected. There is a whole convention about how to translate Hebrew into Greek, both in terms of matching vocabulary and in terms of how to render certain Hebrew constructions. We get the impression that there was a focussed enterprise involved here, applied to the entire Pentateuch, even if we don't subscribe to the view that 72 translators working on the same day in Alexandria produced it!

So let's think about Peter the fisherman and other disciples of Jesus. Indications are that Peter could speak and read Greek, and perhaps even write it tolerably well. Even so, there is no indication that he or any other of the original disciples was a bible scholar. In this respect he contrasts clearly with Saul/Paul, whose deep study of the Greek scriptures leaps off every page.

Incidentally on Paul, reading Romans and Galatians shows that the recipients of those epistles of Paul were deeply schooled in the Pentateuch. The same can be said of Paul's synagogue sermons as described in Acts. Our overall impression is that Paul, by personal preference and experience and by virtue of his audience, began his thinking in the Pentateuch. As did Jesus himself, as a quick reference to the texts mentioned in the gospels will demonstrate.

We are coming to the crux of this argument with respect to Peter, but just before we do I should mention the community at Qumran, which made a special contribution to these developments, probably to be ascribed to the original thinking of the Teacher of Righteousness who was closely involved with the foundations of that community and largely responsible for its longevity (200 years!) I think it was his focus on the minor prophets, which he designed a way to interpret for the current time in the so-called Peshar commentaries, which was crucial for the life of that community.

So we have enough context to be surprised at what Acts tells us about Peter's first sermons. They have a demonstrable focus not on the Pentateuch but on the prophetic book of Joel. In this respect Peter sounds more like the Teacher of Righteousness than Jesus or Paul. If we were to guess why, the suggestion lies near at hand that he was struck by the immediacy of such texts. They spoke to him directly, they helped him to understand what was taking place around him at the time.

Intriguingly, Peter does not seem to have sought an understanding of the earliest communities' Gentile problem from scripture. Though he preaches a sermon of sorts to Cornelius, a sermon that deserves to be so much better known than it is, he is so much more influenced from his vision of the sheet lowered from heaven and his interpretation of it. This led to Peter's radical rethink as reported by Luke in Acts: If anyone is a God-fearer and performs acts of charity, they are acceptable to God!

Perhaps this subject of Peter's use of Scripture is more complex than we usually imagine? Whatever might be the case, Acts 6 seems like a suitable place to complete our reflection for the moment. There is a disagreement among the Christians (or perhaps it is among the Jews and God-fearers/proselytes of Jerusalem?) concerning welfare distribution. The apostles respond firmly that theirs is a ministry of the word, not one of adjudication upon such issues. In this respect I think they are affirming that for them and their emerging communities Scripture was alive and vibrant, rather than a source of legal codes.

Which is rather like how Peter reads Joel, and should be the way we might seek to read Scripture for ourselves. There is otherwise so much there that we will miss, much of it with the potential to speak to our own days and times. The appropriate sequel to which will be our upcoming DELTA reflections on Joel and the environmental crisis.

Geoff Jenkins

Sunday School

Winsome Roberts' evocative essay in the previous (Pentecost 2023) edition of AVE, *Memories of Sunday School Days in a Small Country Town . . .*, prompted recollections of my own parallel experience in the 1930s. I too learned to sing 'Jesus wants me for a sunbeam', but was scarcely as joyful a recruit in my first few months.

I had an excuse, though scarcely a justification. Winsome Roberts tells how she lived in isolation, on a farm on the Wheatbelt, with only *Kindergarten of the Air* for company, and Sunday School introduced her to 'live action with real teachers and real children' . . . to society in fact'. I grew up in Coleraine, a long-settled small town in Victoria's Western District, with both the State School and the Sunday School on adjacent corners across the road. Her Sunday School was Methodist, and weather-board, mine Presbyterian and boldly brick. My reluctance to spend Sunday afternoons in attendance might have sprung in part from having spent the mornings with my mother in the adjacent Church, listening to long, if learned, Presbyterian sermons.

One Sunday, aged about five, I protested more vehemently than usual, but was obliged to attend Sunday School. A few minutes into proceedings, my two-years-older-sister chose a quiet moment to announce, loudly enough for the whole school to hear, that 'John didn't want to come today. He cried'. I was on my feet and out the door with unusual speed; what I did not expect was that every other boy in the quite large Junior Class followed me, shouting 'Don't worry Miss we'll bring him back!' Up the hill we ran, past my home, my pursuers deliberately not catching up until we were out of sight around a corner. After an hour or so catching yabbies in a nearby dam we returned, confident that Sunday School would be over.

During the following week my schoolfellows made it clear to me that I must repeat the procedure the next Sunday, or suffer severe retribution. We were all frustrated: Miss Cameron, skilled pianist and able Sunday School teacher, kept me beside her even while she played, and we sang, 'Hear the pennies dropping'.

Miss Cameron's skilled teaching soon made me a loyal and interested follower, reliable enough to be trusted to collect the pennies. My good behavior continued in the more demanding Upper Class, conducted by the Head of the School, the serious and strict Mr Punshon, writer, editor, owner and printer of the local weekly newspaper. The *Coleraine Albion* gave a meticulously accurate detailed account of such local events as Shire Council meetings, weddings and funerals, but humour was as absent as colour from the pages produced by clanking press in the old weatherboard building in the main street. Mr Punshon's Presbyterianism was strict, and so was his adherence to another cause he led, Temperance.

Temperance was a powerful movement in 1930s Australia. While it had not achieved the total Prohibition of the sale of alcoholic liquors by law as in the United States until 1933,

Temperance Hotels and ‘Coffee Palaces’ persisted from the nineteenth century, ‘Six O’clock Closing’ applied in Victorian hotels after the War, and the sale of alcohol was prohibited in several localities, for example Camberwell. But not Coleraine: late-afternoon business was brisk in the town’s three hotels, and the noisy ‘six-o’clock swill’ had a quiet later continuation behind locked doors (allegedly serving only ‘bona fide travellers’, legally entitled to refreshment after at least twenty-five miles on the road).

Mr Punshon, champion of Temperance, could easily denounce such practices, and in the Sunday School he required all eleven-year-olds to ‘Sign the Pledge’ to abstain from alcoholic liquor for life. Sign we did, but were scarcely complaisant: when Mr Punshon organized a singing night with parents and others, and after various worthy numbers asked what we would like to sing next, we all shouted for the then-popular drinking song ‘Roll out the Barrel’. Never bested, the champion of Temperance agreed with enthusiasm: ‘Let’s roll out the barrel, out of our lives, out of the town, out of the country . . .’ He did not live to see it roll back on him.

At the age of thirteen I left Coleraine for an Anglican boarding school in Melbourne. Daily before-breakfast chapel services and in-school divinity classes replaced Sunday School, while weekly church attendance introduced a very different liturgy. I was told by a chaplain that a promise to avoid alcohol signed at age eleven was not morally binding, though he advised me not to try it yet. Anglicanism, the faith of my father, proved congenial and enlightening; and my closest friend, son of a Tasmanian Archdeacon, was already committed to eventual ordination.

After we both matriculated and became resident in Trinity College, my involvement with my friend’s theological student colleagues was no doubt inevitable. Though not, perhaps my brief commitment to teaching in Sunday School, at Christ Church Brunswick, then still a largely working-class suburb. My class was small, but included one highly articulate and generally restless boy. After a couple of Sundays he announced that he was not coming to Sunday School the following Sunday: God had told him not to. When I tried to mount a counter-argument he interrupted me: ‘God always tells me what to do. Doesn’t he talk to you too?’. The term soon ended, and I retreated to easier debates in University tutorials, he (I like to surmise) to a political career.

Decades later, over many years at St Mary’s, I have admired the skill and devotion with which children have been brought within our weekly worship. The importance of this ministry is stressed in Winsome Roberts’ final paragraph, where she concludes that the influence of her Sunday School lessons ‘lasted well beyond childhood, laying the foundation for my later understanding and experience of life as it unfolded over the years’. So too, I realise, did mine.

12.7.23

John Poynter

On being tourists – and Christian

Australia's story with Bali, and vice versa, is not a happy one. Our minder/driver there, Nyoman, said that he was actually afraid of young drunken Australian tourists. He appreciated others who respected local custom, religious sensitivities, sacred places and who showed an interest in the culture – Bali is unique in Southeast Asia in its dominant local form of Hinduism. Of course, the Big Question was: should we go at all? I remember reading as a student and SCM-er, New Zealand's late Alan Brash's articles about the corrupting influences of international tourism – then in its infancy. The issues are even more stark now, as the number of articles on the economic, ecological and other impacts of modern tourism on the internet demonstrate. My own carbon footprint is huge, thanks to my years as an ecumenical officer for the World Methodist Council when I visited churches on every continent except Antarctica. My privilege was that I was in each place as guest and indeed as a Methodist 'brother' (a very special status); despite all human differences, we recognized our unity in Christ. When at the Last Judgement I am faced with these charges, I hope my ministry will weigh on the other side of the balance (an inadequate image!). Anyway, we sinned boldly and went.

Our ten days were spent in two locations, one near the sea and a (relatively) quiet beach at Sanur and the other, at the top of a deep ravine at the confluence of two rivers in the thin ribbon of jungle left at Ubud, with surrounding rice-fields. For the first days, we both slept, discovering how exhausted we were – and both recovering from nasty 'colds'. We enjoyed Balinese food (and western food in Balinese style). My intake of fruit went through the roof. At Sanur, we spent a day out on the lagoon in a glass-bottomed boat and at a turtle farm (with caged birds and animals, alas). In the sky there were locally made kites soaring in the blue. We visited a collection of a Belgian-born artist Adrian Le Mayeur (1880-1958), whose European skills were combined with an appreciation of the Balinese people and their own art. The pity of it all was the depredations of the tropical climate on canvas, paper and painting. After these quieter days, we had a bit more energy. Nyoman took us to a village theatre to see a classic dance, the *Barong*, originating in Ubud and based on a well-known morality tale – which perfectly expressed the eternal battle of Good and Evil, with neither side winning (and so the Circle of life continues). The costumes were brilliant, the dancing agile, and the popular jokes funny. We had no sense that this precious culture was exploited – yet who among the visitors understood the story, let alone compared it with the one they lived by? More crass was the batik-manufactory with its brief introduction to the art and its vast array of products for purchase. Truly precious skills and gifts were turned into relatively cheap -trinkets likely to appeal to strangers (try beach shirts), yet alongside these were exquisite hand-printed and loom-woven fabric for sarongs and scarves – which were extremely expensive.

At Ubud we visited a different art collection each day and were rewarded by seeing two modern galleries where the art was in excellent condition. The work – from breathtaking examples of carved local wood to contemporary oil painting - could find its place in any exhibition in the west. The interesting thing to me was that it was expatriate European artists, like Mayeur and the Dutch-born Arie Smit (1916-2016), who had opened the eyes of both Balinese and visitors to the heritage which was ‘hidden’ in the island. They consciously shared their skills with artists and schoolchildren, encouraging them to use new materials and fresh approaches especially to landscape. There are parallels at home in the inspiration of the schoolteacher who invented ‘dot art’ in the 1970s, transforming Indigenous art.



My guess is that two-thirds of all Bali’s streets are occupied by temples, large and small; the gaps are filled with places to eat and places to buy, everything from chic to kitsch. There are temples and shrines for communities, for businesses and for families, some very elaborate. Each temple had an ornate main door (*left*, Pura Saraswati, Ubud), firmly closed to strangers, to those whose eyes could not ‘see’ the sacred treasures within. After a while, we began to recognize what kind of carved stone figure might be on either side of that door, and what characters from the ancient tales of the Ramayana and Mahabharata might be depicted. Nyoman privately took us to a village temple (18th C) where we were allowed to wander freely inside the walls, and where we could ask our questions. Perhaps the most

offensive scenario the tourists regularly exhibited was a semi-naked western body being photographed in front of those holy doors, or beside the carved gods and ancient figures – often in mock-oriental postures of prayer or yoga. Their behaviour was truly blasphemous. Of course, Christians places of worship and prayer are similarly exploited in Europe and the



Middle East by liberated westerners. Semi-naked tourists in cathedrals are no more acceptable but tourists (as distinct from pilgrims) claim their ‘right’ to enter.

Hinduism in its unique Balinese form (close to basic animism) is the majority religion (87%) and is everywhere evident in small offerings of flowers and food on every level surface. The rest of Indonesia is, of course Muslim, and there are mosques and an Islamic presence (only 10%) on Bali. There is one Buddhist temple, but many local shrines. There is an assumption of mutual respect and there is much real harmony during local festivals.

‘Christianity’, said Nyoman, ‘is only found in the city, in Denpasar’. The majority is Roman Catholic (he had some humbling ideas of what Protestants believe – basically, that anything goes in faith and morals). Pentecostalism and evangelical ‘new’ churches are present, including two from Hillsong, some English-speaking. There is a Protestant Church (GKPB) formed by the Dutch Reformed Church in the 1950s, a member of the World Council of Churches. There is an Anglican congregation in Kuta which worships above a Mexican restaurant. We were nowhere near any of these.

So, what to do with our two Sundays? We are eucharistic Christians, but communion was not possible, so we could only enjoy the simple beauty of the land of the people – and be thankful. The only time we saw a cross was chalked on a wall, which Nyoman identified as a form of the swastika, the ancient Vedic sign of auspiciousness and good fortune; written in reverse, it also symbolizes darkness: Christians read the cross both as death and life (but differently!). The signs of Christ’s presence in our Australian society are diminishing too as churches close and our buildings ‘re-purposed’. Our visit reminded us of the blessings Christians receive from each other’s presence in our landscape – even in the context of increasing opposition, rejection, and ignorance of what we stand for. It’s another call for us to be able to ‘give an account of the hope within us’ (1 Peter 3:15) and draw strength from all that unites us.

Robert Gribben

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*

