

*St Mary's*



*St Mary's Anglican Church, North Melbourne*

*AVE*

*Patronal Festival Edition  
August 2025*



*The Virgin and Child with St. Anne  
Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519)*

*Louvre Museum, Paris  
(see details on last page)*

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**Patronal Festival Edition of AVE August 2025**  
**St Mary's North Melbourne**

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**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 we 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 Mary's, the Anglican Church, or its members.*

**Ave is available for download via the St Mary's Parish Website  
(bottom LH corner of the home page):**

**<https://www.stmarys.org.au/>**

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*We celebrate our Patronal Festival 2025 for our patron saint  
on St Mary's Day, August 15th, and during the week surrounding it.*

*This year we celebrate particularly joyfully with our new priest  
Fr Stuart Soley who was recently inducted as vicar  
at our St Mary's Church North Melbourne*

*Here Father Stuart writes about his connection with our church, with  
Saint Mary herself, and finally about a very current situation which  
takes the attention of many in our community and demands ours too.*

## **FIRST IMPRESSIONS**

*Father Stuart Soley*

### **FIRST IMPRESSIONS**

I am very pleased to contribute this article for this edition of Ave, the first of many, I hope. I am grateful to our editor David for his patience and diligence in doing all the work 'behind the scenes' to bring it to publication.

It is almost a year since my first conversation about discerning the move to Saint Mary's and I thank God for drawing us together as priest and the people of God in this much loved and much-admired parish.

Saint Mary's, as you will know, was not unknown to me. I had worshipped here and had presided at liturgies here in the past. I have known every priest who has been parish priest here since 1960 and many people who have been formed and nurtured in the faith within this parish.

But when I came for my first interview in the church, I walked into the baptistry and stopped. I sighed as you do when you finally reach a destination where you feel entirely at home and being 'in the right place'. I was taken aback by my deep response to the building, its

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soaring arches and lovely balance in size and dimensions, architecturally. Its beauty and spaciousness speak of God – inviting us in, helping us lift our gaze, finding where we can fit within, on the side or front or somewhere in the middle. There are places in clear sight and others behind a pillar or further inside where the heartbeat of prayer takes place in chapels.

I share this personal and intimate reaction because it is our spiritual home. It is the spiritual home of many faithful parishioners, searchers, wanderers in, not to mention many generations of those who precede us. It is important to have a home in which we know we are accepted and loved by God and by the community of faith – at whatever point we are on our spiritual journey.

So, it is being matched by the living witness, welcome, insight, commitment, kindness, humour and goodwill of those who make up the faith community.

The first letter of Saint Peter comes to mind, of course. He writes that we are to be like ‘living stones’ and to be built up into a ‘spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.’ (1 Peter 2:5) This phrase oft quoted takes place in the context of seeing Jesus as the chief cornerstone. Our ‘living stone-ness’ only makes sense when our lives are situated in him. (1 Peter 2:4-6) He it is that gives us life, renews our life and nourishes our life.

Mind you, I rather like an interesting word play here. The church seems so solid and majestic in parts. But anyone who knows anything about buildings and materials is only too aware that the some of the stones and other materials of which it is made are also living and prone to wear and tear just like the human inhabitants.

So, we will always nourish our inner life and the life of this beautiful holy place – each support each other and point to God.

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## MARY AS OUR COMPANION

At my induction I spoke of my sense of the importance of this church being dedicated to Saint Mary, the Mother of the Lord. She is our patron – and how lucky we are to have her as our patron!

Many of us will have been on a journey about such things. It is easy to have our thoughts about the Mother of the Lord clouded by all the various emphases in theology and history which may make us downplay it. I have learnt to push aside the over-emphasis on her being the blessed virgin. She is much more than this. Her story is so important in telling the story of Jesus, Lord and Saviour.

Mary is our companion – not just a figure of history. She is the first disciple. She says yes to the angel. She bears him in her womb. She is our model of prayer, contemplation, of pointing to the Saviour, of social justice and shaking the world up, of faithfulness and joy, of hope and peace.

Think of these things she teaches us:

Her openness to God – the importance of awe and trust. (Lk 1:38; 1:45)

Her curiosity – what does this mean? (Lk 1:34)

Her contemplative spirit – pondering things in her heart. (Lk 1:29; 2:19)

Her being on the margins – unplanned pregnancy, unmarried mother, refugee. (Lk 1:34; Mt 1:19-21; Mt 2:13-15)

Her pointing to Jesus – ‘do whatever he tells you’. (Jn 2:5)

Her singing praise to God about the transformation of the world – the Magnificat. (Lk 1:46-55)

Last December at the beginning of the liturgy for the reopening of the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris just over five years since the

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conflagration which swept through its roof causing such shocking damage. The Archbishop of Paris, Laurent Ulrich, stood in front of the closed doors of the cathedral. He addressed the doors saying: “Notre Dame, open wide these doors with joy to the scattered children of God”.

This is our vocation.

Opening the doors to all people – the scattered children of God. Think of the many ways in which any one of us might think ourselves to be in a state of being scattered: away from home, stressed with too much on our plates or major issues to address, knocked about by ill health or disputes with loved ones or colleagues, the distress and disorientation about changes in the world around us over which we seem to have no control.

This church of Saint Mary is our home and the home that beckons others because Christ makes this our home and makes his home in us. Mary also beckons us because she knows what it is to travel the uncertain journey of faith.

I am grateful to be called to travel this journey of faith with you. I look forward to all the discoveries and ponderings we will have – not just in these pages but in our common life together in the praise of God in Christ.

## POINTS OF PAIN

Finally, at the time of writing (Sunday 3 August) between 100,000 and 300,000 people in Australia marched to call for the end to the war in Gaza. I want to share a moving piece written by Bishop Sophie Relf-Christopher who is the Assistant Bishop in the Diocese of Adelaide. She reminds us of the images we have seen of a mother holding a skeletal child affected by severe malnutrition in Gaza and its similarities to the picture of Mary holding the Christ child.

Bishop Sophie wrote this on 27 July 2025:

*The Holy Church of God reveres images of Mary, mother of our Lord, cradling the Christ child. The earthly Jesus was once a tiny, brown-skinned refugee in the arms of his veiled mother, escaping the threat of*



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*murder. These icons can be found across the Christian world and throughout Eastern and Western traditions.*

*This week, images from Gaza of veiled women holding emaciated infants have been everywhere. They are icons of unspeakable horror.*

*Anglicans the world over are disgusted by the unlawful killing of innocents. The Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell, has expressed his revulsion this week because every day “...the violence, starvation and dehumanisation being inflicted on the civilian population by the Government of Israel becomes more depraved and unconscionable”.*

*To claim this violence is Jewish is plainly antisemitic. This cruelty is Israeli policy, not Jewish policy. We must take care to articulate the difference as we call for an end to atrocities.*

*The deliberate starvation of a civilian population is always evil. Shooting innocents as they try to collect food and water is always evil. There is simply no other way to describe the wickedness that is allowing this situation to continue.*

*Doctors are too weak from hunger to operate on the wounded. Hospitals are without supplies. The civilian population is hopeless in the face of complicity and inaction from developed nations.*

*Please join in praying for Gaza and raising the cause of the innocent and unwilling participants in these modern icons of horror.*

**We remember that Jesus entered this life as a vulnerable child. He and his mother pray for us. He and his mother hold us and the untold numbers of suffering people of the world in their hearts before God who brings a peace that passes all understanding and for which we must all work.**

Peace to you,  
Stuart

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*This is the third and final instalment of  
Robert's articles on setting the date of Easter*

## **‘Do Everything Exactly at the Time’**

***Robert Gribben***

[The title is rule 10 of the twelve rules from  
John Wesley, *Twelve Rules for Helpers* ]

In my last two articles, at Advent and at Easter, I described the difficulties the Early Church had in agreeing to a common date on which they celebrated those two great doctrines of the faith: Incarnation and Cross/Resurrection/Spirit; and how changes in the world's calendars have broken any sense of unity since. It's not only Christian holydays which are divided up by these discrepancies, it's everybody's diary, personal and professional lives (think: Daylight Saving!).

And the Churches also act in inexplicably contradictory and divided ways, from the outside observer's perspective. Christians deceive ourselves if we think others don't notice; it's too easy just to leave things be because we've let them become familiar. To celebrate the festival of Pascha (Easter) in the shambolic way we currently do is simply foolish.

Here is the 1994 ecumenical call to action:

“Besides the work already done on baptism, eucharist and ministry, the churches need to address the renewal of preaching, the recovery of the meaning of Sunday and the search for a common celebration of Pascha as ecumenical theological concerns. This last is especially urgent, since an agreement on a common date for Easter – even an interim agreement – awaits further ecumenical developments. Such an agreement, which cannot depend on the idea of a “fixed date of Easter”, should respect the deepest meaning of the Christian Pascha, and the feelings of



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Christians throughout the world. We welcome all initiatives which offer the hope of progress in this important area.” [1]

Three years later, there was a further step forward in Aleppo, Syria, sponsored by the World- and the Middle Eastern– Councils of Churches. Their proposals are now before the churches. Things were happening at the world level, which is where it must be resolved and coincidence of dates in 2025 has sharpened the focus.

I wrote last time that there exists a definition of the date for Easter: “on the Sunday following the Full Moon after the vernal (or March) equinox”. Mentioning the month reminds us that it is also tied to the other hemisphere, and in fact also was faithful to the best scientific learning in the 4th Century, available at Alexandria (a major Christian city at the time).[2] Nicaea ruled that it must fall on a Sunday, more precisely meaning the day beginning at sunset Saturday and continuing as what we call Easter Day. The problem remains, the Gregorian reform not being entirely correct either.

The easiest option is for the secular world to choose a Sunday in March and make it Easter, a fixed date rather than a fixed Day so that the business world and schools know when their holidays fall. The churches almost without exception have not supported this, desiring to keep its link with Passover in our communal memory.

Is there an Alexandria in our time which allows the unity of decision achieved at Nicaea? No, knowledge for us is not the monopoly of one university observatory. The consultation thus hits upon a place of equal significance to Jews and Christians: Jerusalem. Why not base fresh calculations of the March equinox and the full moon from there, the city of Christ’s passion and resurrection and its promise of the renewal of all creation? (And the calculations were available!). These became the recommendations Aleppo placed before the world’s churches.

As one Aleppo delegate commented, “It preserves the link between the date of Pascha and the natural cycle and the symbolism associated with

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it (except in the South), as well as the link with the Jewish Passover. And the new calculations will be taken at the meridian at Jerusalem, our common holy city, not the ancient Alexandria”. The Report has the full reasoning.[3]

There are already predictable dissentients: the Russian Orthodox summarily reject both the calendar changes and the link with Passover, but they have a history of division over calendars,[4] whereas the Pope, the Ecumenical Patriarch, and many Oriental Orthodox and Protestant churches, for whom it is a question, are welcoming the change.

It is true that this northern hemisphere calculation still leaves the issue for us who live below the equator, so that for us the symbolism of nature waking up from its cold winter sleep and life bursting out everywhere is not the case during a March summer.

Down Under, we have a contrary view: in the face of nature dying, we proclaim new life. But there is still a blessing in the whole globe proclaiming that Christ is risen, with one voice on one date, Alleluia!

*[1] In 1994, I was part of a ground-breaking ecumenical consultation in England on “Towards koinonia in Worship” and this is from its report, see T.F. Best and D. Heller, eds., So We Believe, So We Pray: Towards Koinonia in Worship, Faith and Order Paper No. 171, WCC Publications, Geneva 1995, pp. 9-10.*

*[2] Alexandria was and is also the papal see of the Coptic Orthodox Church, and the calendar is still worked out from its meridian – except that in recent times the calculations have been done in Kensington (Melbourne) where one of the priests is a fine mathematician.*

*[3] Towards a Common Date for Easter | World Council of Churches*

*[4] The Patriarchate of Moscow split in the 17th century when “the Old Believers” refused to accept the calendrical changes proposed at the time, and they still exist as a small and eclectic dissident group.*

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*Rev Mthr Robyn Boyd has a close connection with St Mary's having been for periods an assistant priest and also locum priest. She writes here on some response to the recent Domestic Violence Sunday*

### **Reflections after “Domestic Violence Sunday”: Another Place** ***Robyn Boyd***

With a renewed focus, the Anglican Church in Australia is committed to confronting the ravages of family and domestic violence (FDV). The increasing rates of FDV were referred to as “a national crisis” by our Prime Minister in 2024. It's estimated that over 1 in 4 (27%) women and over 1 in 8 (12%) men have experienced FDV since the age of 15 (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2023). 12% of children have witnessed FDV.

A part of the Anglican Church's focus was “DV Sunday” in May this year. Further initiatives will include a major conference in August (in Melbourne), and training that will be rolled out to clergy and lay people within the church. This training is described as ‘biblically faithful, trauma-informed, and justice-seeking’.

In reflecting upon this violence in our own backyards I couldn't help but be taken back in memory to a number of different settings. Being on call to a large Sydney Hospital Sexual Assault Centre; in the early hours of the morning holding a woman's hand as she undergoes a forensic examination which she, and the police, hope will yield DNA and other evidence should her case come to court. Despite the care of the medical staff, the examination is like another assault; often only hours after the actual assault.

Training Anglican clergy and lay – and extending this into an interdenominational context – in the late 1980s caring for those affected by child sexual assault, producing a booklet, video, protocols and policies for churches and Anglican organisations. Managing a NSW wide community women's legal centre, which incorporated a state-wide DV advocacy centre, with associated First Nations groups working to reduce FDV in their communities. Along the way, becoming mindful

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and cautious about my own safety, and the safety of my children; and becoming ever more tuned in about the long-lasting effects of emotional violence and control.

And I am taken back to the Solomon Islands.

Twelve years ago, sitting under trees at the edge of the ocean just outside of Honiara (Solomon Islands), I watched small children frolic in the sea, whilst mothers quietly fished in an adjoining lagoon. Ten years before that, in the early 2000's, the compound behind where I sat existed only as a dream in the heart of some local Sisters of the Church: the Christian Care Centre, a refuge for women and child victims/survivors of family abuse.

The Solomons of 2003, 2004, was beginning to emerge from seven years of deadly ethnic tension. In the brutality of the conflict and with the ensuing social instability, familial insecurities and poverty, violence against women escalated. Many women and children looked to the Sisters of the Church for refuge. A safe place for abused women was clearly needed. With aid from different sources, the Christian Care Centre (CCC) opened in 2005.

It was needed – then and now. The Solomons still has one of the highest rates of family violence in the world: 64% of women who have been in relationships between the ages of 15-49 are reported to have experienced physical or sexual violence, or both, at the hands of an intimate partner.\*\*\*

Note that this is in a country that is very largely Christian – 90% identify as Christian, with 32% of the population identified as being Anglican. Anecdotally, 'bride prices' were often paid, and should a woman leave the marriage, a return to the parental home was not always welcome, as trouble could flare over the issue of bride price.

I was there in the Solomons as a consultant for ABM (Anglican Board of Mission) to provide training in family and sexual violence counselling skills and trauma awareness for the workers of the CCC. An overarching aim of the training was for the workers to be able to offer 'culture-based counselling' within a Christian family setting. I did not

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go in as a “first world expert” purporting to have all the answers and skills. I was there to share the knowledge and experience I had from years of working cross-culturally within Melanesian and other cultures, and with sexual and family violence in legal and welfare settings; but most of all I was there as priest, listening and shaping the training I had developed with them on a previous visit, and to prayerfully be an instrument aiding them in taking and adapting skills that may work for them in their very different cultural context.

With the Sisters, and Melanesian Bros and Franciscan Bros, we shared stories, worshipped together, and worked together in how to apply new knowledge and skills within the Melanesian culture and the context of the Centre, and in communities and homes across the nation. Underlying all this was the belief that violence in the family (or elsewhere) was not acceptable, socially or in the life of faith; with attitudes towards gender roles which undervalued women needing to be changed.



Sisters of the Church in the Solomon Islands

What change has there been in the Solomons since I was there? High rates of gender-based violence persist. A second refuge has now opened. International aid agencies are still in there with high priorities addressing this violence. There are acute economic challenges – poverty is endemic: two-thirds of the population live in conditions of vulnerable



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employment. About one-quarter of the population lives below the country's official poverty line. Most of the population works in subsistence agriculture. The nation is also vulnerable to the damaging impacts of climate change .

The Sisters still offer safety and listening hearts. The Anglican Church of Melanesia still condemns family violence. The world around them continues to change; families and communities are confronted not only by the damaging forces of poverty, but by the messy and challenging work of discerning wisdom in the face of cultural change and greater exposure to outside influences.

Yet, in the story of the Sisters of the Church building up a place of safety for women and children, we see a story of God with arms of love and healing, moving into the rubble of violence. This - from the vision of “little people” who had nothing but courage and conviction. Our prayers and support continue to be much needed.

As, indeed, here in our own communities, we offer our prayers and hands of love and care, with listening hearts and ears to those with traumatic stories and memories and triggers that might still disturb their lives. Without judgement, just the love of God-in-Christ.

<https://anglican.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/NAFVP-Top-Line-Results-Report-NCLS-Research.pdf>; <https://anglican.org.au/our-work/family-violence/>

*\*\*\*This type of violence often starts at a very young age, with 37% of women reporting having been sexually abused before the age of 15. [Sixty-three percent of men](#) believe it is acceptable to hit a woman in certain circumstances, with [a majority of women](#) similarly believing that a man is justified in hitting his wife over matters like infidelity and disobedience. In general, physical punishment as a way of ‘disciplining’ women who act outside of accepted gender norms is frequent. (<https://iwda.org.au/its-everybodys-business-addressing-gender-based-violence-in-solomon-islands/>)*

Information sources: <https://www.abmission.org/partners/melanesia/>  
<https://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/solomon-islands/development-assistance/development-assistance-in-solomon-islands>



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*Michael Golding has been a parishioner at St Mary's for a number of years. He has served on the Parish Council, and as a Warden.*

**Hotham Mission: a social welfare charity**

***Michael Golding***

*Hotham Mission is a social welfare and community development not-for-profit charity which operates in ecumenical partnership with some neighbouring churches, including St Mary's*

Earlier this year I joined the board of Hotham Mission as the representative of St Mary's, North Melbourne. Hotham Mission is the social justice outreach arm of the Uniting Church congregation of Mark the Evangelist, North Melbourne and provides support for disadvantaged, vulnerable and marginalised people in the local area: North and West Melbourne, Parkville, Flemington and Kensington. I hope this article will give a brief introduction to the work of the charity to those members of the St Mary's congregation who are not already familiar with it.

The Mission traces its origins to 1927 when it operated under the umbrella of the Methodist Church. On 22 June 1977 the Methodist Church of Australasia, the Presbyterian Church of Australia and the Congregational Union of Australia amalgamated under the Basis of Union and became the Uniting Church of Australia. The Uniting Church retains oversight of the Mission but welcomes the involvement of its ecumenical partners: St Mary's Anglican Church, North Melbourne; St George's Anglican Church, Travancore; and The West Melbourne Baptist Church in addition to working collaboratively with other partner organisations. Hotham Mission generously acknowledges St Mary's as a supporter and ecumenical partner on its website and letterhead.

The origin of the name "Hotham Mission" may not be obvious to everyone. When what is now known as North Melbourne separated from the City of Melbourne in 1859 it was first proclaimed as the Borough of Hotham, named after the State Governor of the time. The

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name “Hotham Mission” thus underlines the focus of the charity on its local community.

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Hotham Mission runs several programs which seek to alleviate disadvantage, provide improved access to education and address food insecurity in the local community:

### **Food for Thought**

The Mission provides weekly food supplies directly to schools and other organisations for distribution to young people experiencing food insecurity. It also provides food for breakfast clubs, subsidised lunchtime food vouchers and a cooking class encouraging young people to prepare healthy, low cost homemade meals.

### **Education Support**

The Mission runs a twice weekly homework club for primary students at the North Melbourne Community Centre where trained staff and volunteers help children to complete their homework and engage positively with education. Assistance is also provided to purchase educational items such as books, e-book bundles, school uniforms and travel passes and to contribute to the cost of electronic devices.

With the support of the St Andrews Foundation, the Mission is able to assist those with a refugee or asylum seeker background to continue their education by offering financial and other support at the start of a student’s course.

### **WomEmpower**

WomEmpower is a participant-led program that aims to increase social connections and opportunity in the local area. Meetings are held online via Zoom with occasional in-person activities.

## Asylum Seeker Support

The Mission supplies accommodation and other limited support to a small number of asylum seekers living lawfully in the community while their visa status is assessed. This is provided in conjunction with support from case managers in partner organisations.

**WOMEMPOWER**  
WomEmpower is a group for young women that aims to increase social connections and opportunity in inner north west Melbourne

**For:** Young women aged 15-25 connected to inner north west Melbourne

**When:** Wednesdays during term time from 5-7pm

**Where:** Online via Zoom with occasional in-person activities

**Join:** Please contact Kymie on 0409 869 754 or via [programs@hothammission.org.au](mailto:programs@hothammission.org.au) by Monday, May 23rd to join this term's program

**Cost:** FREE and all materials are provided prior to the first session

**HOTHAM MISSION HOMEWORK CLUB**  
**LEARNING SUPPORT**

**FOR ALL PRIMARY STUDENTS**  
**3:30-5PM**

**COST: FREE & HEALTHY SNACKS PROVIDED**

**NORTH MELBOURNE COMMUNITY CENTRE**

**Year 1-2: Fridays**  
**Year 3-6: Mondays**

**CONTACT:**  
[programs@hothammission.org.au](mailto:programs@hothammission.org.au)  
or call (03) 9326 8245

HOTHAM MISSION

I have been a part of Hotham Mission for only a few months. My involvement so far has been limited to preparing for and attending board meetings. I have not engaged in any operational matters such as the delivery of services. Even so I have had time to form a very favourable impression.

I like the fact that it is, quite openly, a faith-based mission, attempting to build God's Kingdom. In pursuing that mission it is prepared to work in partnership with people of goodwill and actively welcomes the support and involvement of its ecumenical partners, such as St Mary's. I particularly value its focus on the local community, of which St Mary's is a part, and that it seeks to help the disadvantaged and marginalized in our midst. Perhaps they are not always so obvious to us but they are certainly present. Anyone who wishes to support Hotham Mission by volunteering or donating can do so here:

<https://hothammission.org.au/support/>

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*The Reverend Uncle Glenn Loughrey is a Wiradjuri man, writer, artist and a priest in the Anglican Province of Victoria. He works tirelessly for Reconciliation, Aboriginal Recognition and Treaty.*

*We are privileged to have permission from the author to present one poem from his very recently published collection, details of which appear below. We thank our own Director of Music, Beverley Phillips, for suggesting and negotiating the opportunity to reproduce this extract.*

## **mothers repose**

**Glenn Loughrey**

earth sleeks out  
under trees on tiptoes  
toward the wandering waters  
still billabongs  
choruses of crows  
yawning gorges  
gaping gaps between  
the vibrancy of green  
brown and red  
its forever colours  
seasons announcing their arrival  
in the running of eels  
the burrowing wombat  
the swarming bogong  
kangaroos birthing  
the signs of the season to come  
dry riverbeds  
flooding plains  
burning scrub

mothers repose  
our sure foundation  
of waiting and being  
identity and belonging  
deep beyond deep  
encircling our standing  
walking resting sitting  
breathing and non-breathing  
stillness  
silence  
no thing  
yet  
moving  
speaking  
everything  
  
earth  
my mother  
my country

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*we are home when on country when at home we  
remember that we are the child of the earth that both is  
and holds country each step we take each breath we  
breathe and feel is courtesy of our mother this planet  
and in particular this patch of country which is us we are  
one with country our mother country remains regardless  
of us and what we do but we are asked to care for her  
aware that we live in a dependent relationship with her  
and all she holds this is no mystery nor is it defined by  
science and intellectual knowledge it just is we are not  
detached from her and she from us she is the one who  
gives life without limits mother relies on our connection  
to her to remain alive and free to give life to all she  
wishes to mothers have a way of being that gives a  
sense of security and safety even when threatened or  
under pressure a mothers repose*

a poem from

**‘birra-bina-birra yaryanbuwaliya yandu’**

**‘gentle whispers from the every’when’**

**by Glenn Loughrey**

Published in Australia by Coventry Press © Glenn Loughrey 2025



“Glenn Loughrey – poet and priest – offers his writings as a record and reflection of a lifetime’s struggle to express his spirituality and his belonging in ways that respect his Aboriginal inheritance within his Christian tradition.”

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*Geoff again leads us through the finding of wisdom of the Hebrew scriptures. In this case one verse from Book of Jeremiah reveals lessons about ways of communication, speech in particular, and teaches us about listening.*

**Three Ways of Hearing the Word of God**  
**– Listening to Jeremiah**  
*Geoff Jenkins*

Embedded in a beautifully-crafted Hebrew poem which occupies most of Jeremiah 18 is an extraneous sentence which seems not to belong to the poem at all. In fact on reflection it may be so radical in its thought that it is out of place in the Bible. Let's explore it together!

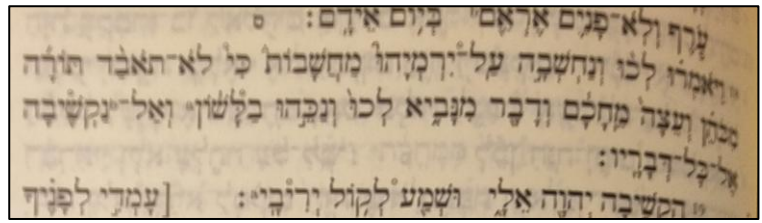
Jer 18:18 (JPS, Jewish Publication Society Hebrew Bible):

They said, "Come let us devise a plot against Jeremiah – for instruction shall not fail from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor oracle from the prophet. Come, let us strike him with the tongue, and we shall no longer have to listen to all those words of his."

The passage is all about words, and spoken words at that. This is perhaps even more true than at first meets the eye, for instruction, counsel and oracle are all spoken words, although with differing style and authority. We hope not to listen to Jeremiah's words, the opponents say. The Hebrew word for 'oracle' is *dabhar* (= 'word'), the text does not say "They plotted..", but "They said: Come let us devise....". Speech to left and right!



So this verse is all about speech, as we will see shortly, but first there is an intriguing problem of textual transmission to attend to, namely what does it mean to '**strike with the tongue**'.



Here it seems, as often it does by the way, that the Hebrew text as we know it has suffered slightly in transmission.

But here, also not infrequently, we have very early evidence for this, because the Syriac translation of Jeremiah, originally Jewish although transmitted into modern times by Christians, translates: 'strike him on account of his speech'.

This makes better sense and should strike us (!) as more natural. Jeremiah's opponents resort to physical violence (literally strike him, as the Hebrew verb really requires), in response to his speech.

It is interesting and important to reflect that Jeremiah's opponents do actually resort to violence, as some of the narrative portions of the book tell us. He is thrown into a well in the temple court, and though he survives, his enemies surely did not intend for him to do so. Note also that Jeremiah has his secretary Baruch record his words in a scroll, so there was a written version of these words produced.

Strikingly, Baruch reads the contents of the scroll out loud in the temple, so again the words are spoken. It is this scroll that the king cuts into pieces (columns!) as it is read to him, and burns in the brazier. None of this ends the story. There will have to be physical violence against Jeremiah to silence him.

We today live in a culture of free (and not so free) speech. Moreover, the expression of opinion is met with physical violence, and as Christians we are sometimes told that we should not have expressed, or at least not publicly expressed, our opinions on politics.

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Jeremiah is our inspiration here! Freedom of thought and expression are fundamental to the well-being of our societies. And Jeremiah inspires us to be as critical of religious institutions as we might be of secular ones. We wouldn't want to live in Putin's Russia, Trump's America or Zedekiah's Judaea.

But there is another important aspect of this for us to consider. Note the three offices and their activities to which Jeremiah is a supposed threat: instruction -- priest counsel -- wise oracle-prophet.

This is no random set of activities and offices!

The three types of activity correspond to three distinct aspects of the word of God to his people. No more, I think, but certainly no less! So the prophet speaks an oracle, an inspired message more or less directly from God. The priest commands an action, directed to the legal dimensions of society. Most importantly for us, the wise give advice.

This last of the three doesn't sound to our English ear as an office per se. A better translation would be "wisdom teacher", demonstrably an office in ancient Israel. Jeremiah's opponents were being quite purposeful and intentional here; they knew whom they meant.

Incidentally, of these three offices two of them were gender neutral in the Hebrew Bible. Priestesses have been written out of the text for various reasons having to do with aspects of the time, but prophets and wisdom teachers could be – and were – male or female.

See for example the wise woman of Tekoa mentioned in II Samuel. Note also that Jeremiah himself seems not to have been thought of as a prophet, but rather as a political agitator.

Think for a moment of the Hebrew scriptures, known in Judaism as "tanakh", an acronym for law, prophets and writings. Here are our three categories!

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But interestingly, Judaism has given pre-eminence to law (the whole Hebrew Bible is often called torah, law) whereas Christianity, when reading the Old Testament, has given pre-eminence to prophecy.

Both traditions have deprecated the writings of the wisdom teachers, and in the process forfeited a lot of insight and understanding. For example, the wisdom of ancient Israel was remarkably universal(istic), not a message which we hear from the Hebrew Bible very often.

And there is so much about ecology there too which we have harmed ourselves by ignoring. In fact one might consider that we live in a day when our preference for prophecy over wisdom is literally destroying us. Do we need more than prophecy? Well in fact it's only one third of the story. We cannot allow inspired speech to be the be-all-and-end-all of God's guidance to his people.

Where does this sit with us in contemporary times? I think we still need all three aspects of God's word to us. We need to be listening for direct speech from God, for contemporary prophets as it were. Take that the notion that prophecy has ceased sometime in the first century: it is a good example of how we constantly deprive ourselves of the word of God, deprive ourselves by not listening broadly enough, and deprive ourselves by not tuning in to all three of the available stations.

Put simply, God's word to us may be spoken, rather than written, more often than we realise.

And the channels of its communication may be more diverse – gender and reference included – than we sometimes think.

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*Among Tim Pilbrow's many interests and talents lies the annual baking of the Bulgarian Easter Bread known as Kozunak. We enjoyed the best one ever at the Easter supper earlier this year, and could not wait for another year before hearing more about it,*

**Why I bake Bulgarian Easter bread**  
***Tim Pilbrow***

If you've been coming to Easter at St Marys in recent years, you may have tasted the Bulgarian Easter bread, kozunak, that I've been baking every year. How I stumbled across kozunak is not a complicated story.

In the last few days before Easter, the bakeries in my neighbourhood in Sofia, Bulgaria, all had signs up advertising kozunak. The word was not familiar to me, but I figured it must be an Easter specialty. As I recall, I was out one day looking for ingredients for hot cross buns, which is an even longer-standing home baking tradition in our household, when I first saw the signs. While I had not yet experienced a Bulgarian Easter, I was familiar with other Slavic and East European Easter traditions, and straight away saw the resemblance of these loaves to Ukrainian paska. I bought a loaf and took it home. Ever since that day in 1996, kozunak has been a part of how our family celebrates Easter, a tradition we have extended to our St Mary's family since 2007.

In the summer of 1996, as we were packing up to return to New York, I took a last stroll through the city square that doubled as Sofia's primary book market. I had chanced upon this marvel on my first day in Sofia. On that first occasion I had bought a hefty dictionary and Bulgarian translations of Agatha Christie's *Hickory Dickory Dock* and P.G. Wodehouse's *Right Ho Jeeves*. My PhD supervisor had suggested reading detective novels as a way to prepare my mind for a year of ethnographic fieldwork. That was not quite the response I had expected to my request for last-minute methodological advice. Still, the idea of getting my mind into gear by working through the puzzle of a detective mystery had been growing on me. I had brought one or two detective

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novels with me (in English). So, when I chanced upon Agatha Christie in Bulgarian, I was delighted. I could get my mind in frame while improving my language skills.

I had never studied Bulgarian, and my research depended on gaining fluency quickly. Yet my budget didn't stretch to language lessons. Sure, it helped that I had learned Serbian a decade earlier by immersion, so I knew what I was in for, and had been getting by with a mix of Serbian and broken Bulgarian since arriving. It also helped that I had an undergraduate degree in comparative Slavic linguistics and had learned my first Slavic language (Russian) as a twelve-year-old. So, yes, I had quite a head start with Bulgarian. Still, reading a familiar book where I could implicitly understand the action would be an enormous help in learning the language. Then I saw the P.G. Wodehouse and couldn't help myself. That would stretch my vocabulary in useful ways, and I could do with some light entertainment and humour amidst the harsher realities of adjusting to life in a place where Varsha and I and two-year-old Anupama had arrived with almost no support network and a considerable language barrier.

A year later, there I was once again, leafing through the market stalls. This time I was looking for books I needed to continue my research once I returned to the USA—history texts, mostly—and I was also on the lookout for Bulgarian literary classics. Among the tables loaded with books I came across a recipe book. It was a thin, cheaply bound paperback focusing on national cuisine. It was arranged by season, with several options for starters, soups, salads, mains and desserts for each season. Some of them were dishes I knew and loved.

It wasn't until we were back in New York and hankering after some Bulgarian food that I stumbled across the kozunak recipe. I bookmarked it for Easter. Then when Easter came around, I rolled up my sleeves, floured the table, and got to work. Like most of the recipes in the book, this one assumed a lot of practical knowledge. There was little direction for oven temperature or baking time ('bake in a moderate oven until done'). Having been baking bread on and off since the age of nine, I figured I could roll with that. The proportions seemed to be about right, but I thought my dough had come out too wet, so I added more flour.

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The recipe seemed simple enough, as long as you knew how to tell when the dough had been kneaded enough.

The method is a little different to other bread recipes I know. You heat the flour and make a well in it, then pour in your frothy yeast and milk mixture and make a small patch of leavened dough with some of the flour. You leave that to rise a little before adding eggs, butter, sugar, milk and lemon zest and mixing in the remaining flour. You add a few raisins when kneading, then later top it off with almonds and egg or milk glaze when forming the loaves. There is another version where the dough is rolled with a poppy-seed or walnut filling. The version sold in bakeries is a little simpler, with a sprinkling of sugar on top.

At Easter 2025, for the first time I trusted the recipe proportions entirely and didn't add extra flour. I had gotten used to wetter bread doughs over the previous year. This gave me the courage to try with the dough as wet as recipe seemed to indicate—which is verging on liquid. I usually make a braided loaf, but this year decided on simple baking-tin loaves—which was how I first encountered it back in Sofia. Not surprisingly, the wetter dough made a much lighter loaf. It also helped that I had recently learned a lot more about stretching, folding and forming loaves. This new-found skill rounded out some of the gaps in the recipe's instructions ('form the dough into loaves or make a braid'). I also did all the rising stages at 35-40 degrees Celsius, partly to save time, but mostly to try and stay true to the traditional ways of baking.

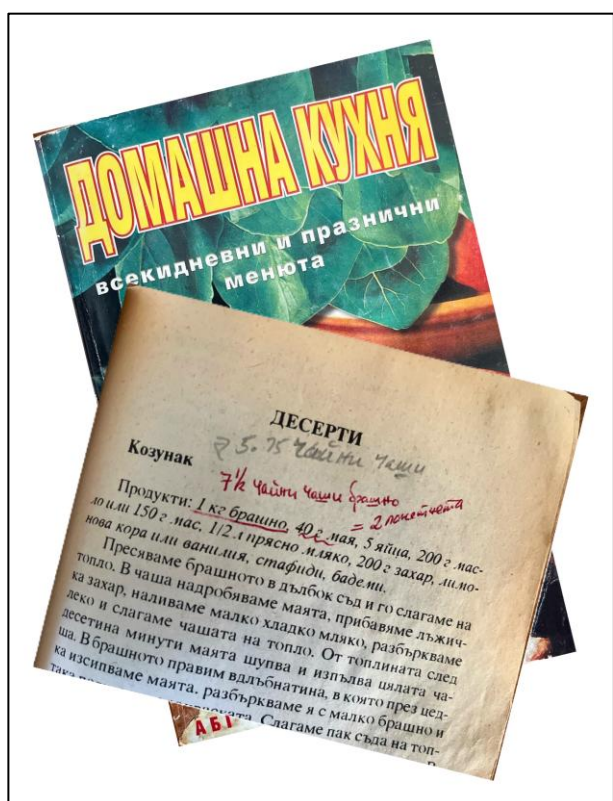
Traditional kitchens in houses in Bulgaria as elsewhere in Eastern and Central Europe used to be (and often still are) dominated by tiled wood stoves that would double as space heaters in the winter. I remember reading about 'grandmother sleeping on the stove' in one of the books we read for an undergraduate Ukrainian literature course. I couldn't quite visualise it, despite someone explaining. A year or two later, when I was studying in Yugoslavia in the late -1980s, I saw firsthand what this meant. I was staying with a friend at his grandmother's place in a small northern Serbian town in mid-winter. While I battled through the sub-zero night under a pile of blankets in an unheated bedroom, my friend's



grandmother made her bed on a tiled bench built into the side of the kitchen stove.

So, when the kozunak recipe instructs me to ‘put the dough on a warm surface to rise’, that stove is the kind of warm surface that I imagine. Room temperature, even in an unseasonably warm Melbourne April is just not warm enough.

If you were lucky enough to get a slice of my 2025 kozunak, you got a taste of my most authentic loaf yet. If not, look out for it next time.



I still don't know much about the cultural roots of kozunak. It is almost identical to Ukrainian paska and the Easter breads of other Orthodox communities. It is meant to be prepared only on Easter Saturday, to be eaten first thing on Easter morning, along with coloured eggs. A quick internet search suggests that there is no consensus on the origins of either the name (possibly Greek, or Turkish) or the bread (maybe pre-Christian, maybe not). If you are interested in learning more—and reading a recipe—this Bulgarian

magazine website\* gives a little of the history and context.

Till next Easter!

\*<https://vagabond.bg/not-everyday-easter-2266>

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*Elsdon and Christine Storey are long-standing members of the congregation at St Mary's. Over the years they have thrown themselves into many aspects of parish life. They have for instance made time alongside their distinguished medical careers to lend their voices as stalwart and expert members of our choir.*

*Here Christine reflects upon their block of land in the bush of Central Victoria, which they hoped could continue being at one with the nature of the area. In return the land has, Christine notes, been for them an "unexpected classroom"*

### **Our bush block in Lal Lal, Central Victoria** **Christine Storey**

About twenty years ago my husband Elsdon and I thought that it would be wonderful to buy a country property at which to spend our retirement. For a number of reasons we chose to look for a suitable property in the Ballarat region and purchased five acres of an undeveloped bush block. Our intension was to help support a bird corridor in this area, and to establish a fruit and vegetable garden. Over time we unexpectedly learnt so much more through this endeavor, about architecture, sustainability, the history of our Aboriginal peoples in this area, and the native flora and fauna.

Our block comprised predominantly regrowth stringy bark eucalypts, as the native, old growth forest in our area was largely felled for firewood, both for domestic heating and driving the myriad of steam engines involved in gold mining in the late nineteenth century. When we bought our block, it was around the end of the "millennial drought" and the undergrowth of our block was severely degraded by both this and locals that enjoyed the challenge of riding their dirt bikes on the steeper sections of our block. With the fencing of our property and the returning rains we had the joy of seeing native grasses, native orchids, Sundews (drosera) and various types of native peas return to the understory.

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As many remember, the millennial drought was followed by the “Black Saturday” bushfires. The plans for our house were just completed, yet our enthusiasm for our bush retreat was not dampened, although we made a very strict rule that we did not stay at our bush retreat on total fire ban days. Since the building of our house there have been two large bushfires within several kilometers of our property, and in both cases thanks to a critical wind change together with skilled fire fighting, our property escaped any fire damage.

The house that we built is made out of (relatively fire-resistant) spotted gum and was designed to blend in with its bush surroundings and be energy efficient. The lining of our living room used the timber felled to make space for the house, and this was then milled on site to produce the lining boards, which gives



the interior of the house a wonderful warm cosy feel as well as putting the felled timber to lasting use (otherwise this is usually discarded and burnt, adding to greenhouse gasses).

The first thing we learnt about the name of our area “Lal Lal” was that this was the ancient aboriginal name for the area surrounding the Lal Lal falls. These falls are situated on the lands of the Wadawurrung peoples, on a volcanic plain, and are a 30 – 34 metres high basalt column waterfall on the upper reaches of the Moorabool River, which then winds south through a deep and picturesque gorge. Lal Lal falls are culturally very sacred to most Victorian Aboriginal tribes, and are believed to be the earthly home of Bunjil (represented by an eagle) and the name means “dashing waters”. Following colonial settlement of Ballarat, the colonists enjoyed the area for picnics and in the late nineteenth century established a country race track adjacent to the falls which attracted thousands of people on Picnic Race Days.



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With growth of Ballarat water demands, the Moorabool River was then dammed upstream from the falls, consequently in modern times the falls are frequently dry. With the flooding rains that broke the drought, we were able to observe how the falls would have likely to have looked pre-colonisation. For the first time we witnessed the thundering sound of the falls before we could even see them, and from the viewing platform above the gorge we could see mists of water rising up from the falls, and were fortunate enough to see an eagle circling above the gorge. Personally this was a very powerful experience, as I then became profoundly aware of how much this sacred place must have meant to the local Aborigines, and could appreciate the devastation they were likely to have felt with the desecration of the falls and their surrounds with the influx of Picnic Day race goers, and more importantly the damming of the river.

This experience also gave me some insight years later into what the failed Voice Referendum must have meant to our Aboriginal people.



Returning to the native vegetation on our block, we discovered that we had extensive matted bush pea, which looks a little like well manicured grass from a distance, but unlike manicured lawns, it requires no

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mowing! In spring it then becomes a carpet of bright yellow flowers. Since the departure of the dirt bikes, we now have many small bushy native peas with golden yellow and red flowers, commonly referred to as “egg and bacon” flowers which also bloom in the spring, together with the native orchids appearing in flower, and we discovered how small and delicate these are compared with cultivars. Native orchids also have special significance to the Wadawurrung people who recognise 6 distinct seasons, including Orchid season around August which signals the start of spring.

As well as establishing a fruit and vegetable garden, which was an education in itself, we also wanted to plant out a native garden, mainly around the house. Before we bought our bush block, I must confess to being very ignorant about Australian native flora, beyond wattle and eucalypts. Yet even with wattles, we discovered there are over 1000 different species of wattle found in Australia, and I have had a great deal of enjoyment collecting as many different types of wattles as I can for our garden, although I have managed to plant only about eight different species, including one with red flowers! A prostrate species of wattle, snake wattle, and blackwoods grow wild on our block.

Lal Lal has a harsh climate with hot dry summers and cold frosty winters, and the soil on our block is heavy clay. But with a bit of building up of the soil and judicious choice of siting of where to plant our shrubs and trees, we have discovered that wistringias, eremophila, correas, hakeas and the native finger lime grow very happily. Visiting fauna include rosellas, kookaburras, currawongs, black wallabies and echidnas, with very occasional koala visitations.

Due to Elsdon’s Parkinson’s, retiring at Lal Lal is no longer practical and we realise that our time in our peaceful bushland retreat is coming to a close, as we prepare to sell the property later this year. Yet we remain so grateful for the enrichment of our lives this five acres has provided to us over the years.

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*St Mary's has property which is subject to heritage building planning.  
So we are fortunate to have the knowledge of Chips Sowerwine to keep  
us apprised of Planning and Heritage issues in general..*

**Plan for Victoria**  
***Charles Sowerwine***

At coffee this morning, Lindy Golding asked me how I judged the competing claims about the government's 'Plan for Victoria': the government claims that the Heritage Overlay will continue to protect heritage, while heritage advocates claim that the new planning zones and system will effectively override the Heritage Overlay.

The government is, so far as we know, correct that they are not proposing to eliminate the Heritage Overlay. But they are proposing to change the basic zone for most of Melbourne from the current Neighbourhood Residential Zone (NRZ) to the curiously named Housing Choice and Transport Zone (HCTZ), which will extend about 800 metres around every one of the planned 60 Activity Centres across Victoria. The zone and its aims count much more than any overlays. Whereas the NRZ includes a provision that the zone is intended to promote neighbourhood character and heritage as well as housing, the HCTZ promotes housing, full stop. And its preferred built form is six-storey apartments. So within the HCTZ and the Activity Centres, the responsible authority will be bound to favour development of housing over the Heritage Overlay where the two are in conflict.

In an unprecedented move, the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) joined the Royal Historical Society of Victoria in a joint statement calling on the government to revise its Plan for Victoria.



# National Trust of Australia (Victoria) and Royal Historical Society of Victoria

## Joint Statement on Victorian Planning Reforms

### More Housing and Heritage Must Go Hand in Hand

The National Trust of Australia (Victoria) and the Royal Historical Society of Victoria jointly call on the Victorian Government to ensure that the state's planning reforms deliver more housing without sacrificing the heritage, character, and green spaces that make our neighbourhoods liveable and loved.

We support the goal of increasing housing supply, particularly in areas close to jobs, services, and public transport. However, we are deeply concerned that the current approach—particularly the introduction of the new Housing Choice and Transport Zone (HCTZ)—risks undermining the very qualities that make Victoria's cities and towns desirable places to live.

The government's own expert panel has warned that the HCTZ **should not be applied** to areas covered by a Heritage Overlay or Neighbourhood Character Overlay because the new zones will override these protections, threatening the demolition of heritage buildings and the erosion of neighbourhood identity.

We reject the divisive rhetoric of NIMBY versus YIMBY. Instead, we advocate for **TIMBY – Thoughtfully In My Back Yard**: a balanced, inclusive approach that delivers more housing while respecting heritage, character, and community values.

### Our Four Key Recommendations

**1. Protect Heritage Areas from Blanket Rezoning** –Heritage Overlays must be **exempt** from the new Housing Choice and Transport Zone rezoning. These areas should remain within the Neighbourhood Residential Zone to prevent the loss of valued heritage places and neighbourhood character. In the 10 Centres where the HCTZ has already been gazetted, new mechanisms to ensure proper respect of the Heritage Overlay must be introduced.

**2. Embed Heritage Expertise in Planning** - The Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) must include **designated heritage professionals** to support local governments in assessing and managing heritage impacts within the planning system.

**3. Ensure Consistent Protection of Trees, Nature and Green Spaces** - Introduce **uniform** statewide **protections** for significant trees and green spaces to preserve the environmental and aesthetic values of local communities.

**4. Implementation Tools for Housing Development in Heritage Contexts** – Expedited planning approval programs must include specific guidance for developments in heritage areas, ensuring that new housing complements and enhances existing heritage fabric.

We urge the Victorian Government to adopt a thoughtful and inclusive approach to planning reform—one that recognises that heritage is not a barrier to housing, but a foundation for building vibrant, attractive, and enduring communities.

We believe that four key changes will save heritage and improve the quality of new housing. Removal of the new ‘Housing Choice and Transport Zone’ (HCTZ) from sites under the Heritage Overlay would greatly reduce the amount of heritage lost. Involving heritage professionals in Department of Transport and Planning planning decisions, protecting trees, and providing guidance for incorporating heritage in new housing developments would together ensure that the new housing we need has quality and character to attract residents.

The recent Legislative Council Inquiry on Victoria Planning Provisions Amendments exposed the problems with the Plan for Victoria. One moment captures the Legislative Council hearings. The Grattan Institute spokesman concluded by saying, ‘The important thing is that we roll out the reforms and we basically run the experiment’.<sup>1</sup> That caused an uproar. David Davis, MLC, asked, ‘Is the future of our city to be an experiment?’ He pointed out that such an experiment ‘was tried in Melbourne in the late 60s and early 70s, when they allowed a “let it rip” go’.

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<sup>1</sup> Transcript, Inquiry into Victoria Planning Provisions Amendments VC257, VC267 and VC274, Melbourne, Tuesday 29 April 2025, p. 62.

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With only eight days' notice, 272 of you used our link to send emails to MPs. The RHSV Submission was one of 299. The Boroondara Heritage Group, the National Trust (Vic) and the Heritage Council Victoria all made strong submissions. Nevertheless, the committee report, while critical, did not call for disallowance of the proposals and ultimately the cross-bench parties voted with the government not to disallow the new planning amendments, fearing that they would be accused of preventing housing construction.

The Inquiry, however, did good work. It uncovered clear evidence that Plan Victoria would pull the rug out from heritage protection. Under the new planning system, the Heritage Overlay would take the back seat in planning decisions in the 60 Major Activity Centres and in the new Housing Choice and Transport Zones (HCTZ, formerly the Walkable Catchment Zone or WCZ) which will surround the Activity Centres, replacing the Neighbourhood Residential Zone. These two zones together will account for more than half of greater Melbourne including most of its heritage neighbourhoods. The HCTZ calls for six-storey development likely to be aesthetically hostile to nearby lower-scale heritage.

Most important, thanks to the Inquiry the government's expert reports were made public after having been kept secret for six months. The government asked its standing expert panel for advice on the new regulations. The experts found that 'The WCZ should not be applied to areas that are within a Heritage Overlay or a Neighbourhood Character Overlay (NCO).'<sup>2</sup> Seven of the ten reports on specific Activity Centres made similar findings.<sup>3</sup> The government ignored this recommendation. This is what we are calling for. While implementing this recommendation would not resolve all the issues posed by Plan for Victoria, it would go a long way to ensuring that heritage would still be protected, so that the new neighbourhoods would be attractive enough to draw people to live there.

Charles Sowerwine, Chair, Heritage Committee, Royal Historical Society of Victoria

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<sup>2</sup> Activity Centres Standing Advisory Committee Report, Referral 1: Draft Built Form Overlay and draft Walkable Catchment Zone, Planning Panels Victoria, 12 November 2024, p. 11.

<sup>3</sup> Camberwell, Preston, Chadstone, Essendon, Moorabbin, Broadmeadows and Epping.

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*John Blanch, a St Mary's parishioner and member of parish council,  
spoke these touching words at the graveside funeral for Barbara, at  
which Fr Stuart officiated*

**Funeral of Barbara Taylor**  
***John Blanch***

*Barbara Helen Taylor, 4 May 1938 to 25 June 2025*

*Bunurong Memorial Park 15 July 2025, Fr Stuart Soley officiating*

*Words adapted from John Blanch's tribute spoken at the burial.*

I am pleased to give this tribute to Barbara Helen Taylor, a woman I have known since the 1980s when she brought legal issues to my former firm then known as Freehill Hollingdale and Page. These issues usually concerned property or lease matters and were usually resolved by one of the lawyers in my team. Barbara was always an engaging person, warm-hearted, generous and with a strong moral understanding of right and wrong. Through her employment at the Victorian Arts Centre, she helped many of us access to tickets for events. I think I took a particular liking to her since her Christian names are the same as my mother's.

In the mid-90s I set up my current law firm and Barbara became a fairly regular visitor with one issue or another. Her generous spirit, even though she was not well off, meant that she always arrived with gifts, usually CDs or DVDs that she had bought as bargains at an Op Shop.

Despite this spirit she had demons troubling her mind, and having an ability to imagine others around her doing things to harm her she had difficulty at times in seeing the true way forward.

I first met her daughter Louise in the 1990s when she was helping Barbara through a difficult time, and it was of concern to me some years later when taking instructions from Barbara for her Will that Barbara indicated she had cut her ties to Louise for reasons that I have never understood.

Nevertheless, time went on until about two years ago I received a call from St Vincent's Hospital Emergency Department that Barbara wanted to see me. I went to St Vs and saw her there. She was recovering from a serious fall at her home in Thornbury where the Police had had to

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force entry to her house to allow the ambulance to take her to hospital. Barbara was there for some time and then in re-hab in Kew before going to Heritage Northcote Nursing Home, now Aeralife.

She settled in there well and I was a regular visitor to bring her spending money and to discuss other issues. I frequently raised her separation from Louise, who had been in touch with me but the answer was always the same. Happily however, in Barbara's last weeks Louise was able to come to Melbourne and present herself to Barbara and the problems of old were gone. For me it is good that Louise, her husband Tony Sutton and children Christopher and Lizzy are here today.

As part of clearing up Barbara's home in Thornbury for sale, I collected papers that included some poems written by Barbara. I close these remarks with this poem which shows a soul perhaps more content than we imagined.

How warm I feel all over  
as I pause to rest tonight.

My heart is full and happy  
and all worries seem so slight.

I feel as though I've travelled  
for a long time through a storm,  
And reached a place to shelter  
with a log fire burning, warm.

I feel contentment in me  
that I've never felt before,

I feel that in my being  
I could never ask for more.

Tonight the birds in chorus  
sent their music to the sky,  
My heart sang every note with them,  
I felt that I could fly.

What is it God, that fills me  
with a peace I've never known  
That makes me feel so strongly  
I'm not standing on my own.



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*Jen shares with us three poems  
which lead us back from unquietness to quietness*

**Three small poems**  
***Jen Langmead***

1. Remembering Psalm 100

...that wintry afternoon  
I sat under the plane trees  
and watched the sun  
drop below the roof-line.

The birds above were raucous:  
parrots, lorikeets,  
the wattle birds.  
Who knows what others?

You couldn't even call it singing,  
but it was a joyful noise!

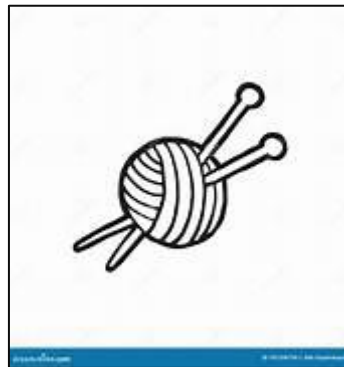
2. All afternoon  
I hear the sound  
of someone practicing  
basic chords  
on the ukelele.

That, and the calls  
from the football field  
behind my house.

Meanwhile,  
I sit still  
and silent,  
aware that the world  
as we have known it  
is passing away.

Then from somewhere  
I hear  
"I am here for you.  
Pay attention  
to how  
you listen".

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3. The jumper I am knitting  
is for my mother  
whose frail bones  
break easily,  
whose shrinking body  
is never warm.  
I am knitting contentment  
into every stitch  
- for her  
and for me -  
so that we learn  
to accept, more easily,  
where we are,  
right now.





**AVE information - Patronal Festival Edition August 2025**

**AVE, the name of our publication, is in allusion to the Ave Maria, the angelical salutation to our Patron Saint Mary.**

**Each edition contains a collection of articles written by parishioners and others who are associated with St Mary's.**

**There are usually three or so issues in a year each, typically near a major church festival. Our previous edition came out at Easter, and this one appears near our Patronal Festival, to mark St Mary's Day on August 15<sup>th</sup>.**

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

**Contributions for future editions are always welcome and can be sent via the office [office@stmarys.org.au](mailto:office@stmarys.org.au)**

**David Keuneman**

**. Cover picture details .**

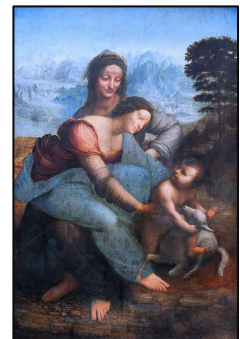
**The Virgin and Child with Saint Anne  
Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519)**

*Location: Louvre Museum, Paris*

*Oil paint on poplar wood board.*

*Height 168 cm Width 130 cm*

*The painting, incomplete (particularly the landscape) at the time of Leonardo's death in France in 1519, was one of his very last works*



*Depicted are St Mary with her own protective mother St Anne behind her (and in whose lap she almost sits); Mary gazes into the eyes of her somewhat independent child, gently to restrain and protect him; the infant Jesus in turn grapples with a symbolic lamb.*