



‘ORA ET LABORA’

Greetings in Christ

Am I possessed?

I suppose that it seems somewhat trite to observe that our culture has a significant preoccupation with the ownership and consumption and material possessions. Indeed, these days consumer capitalism seems to display more of the features of a religion in the marketplace than does Christianity. In evidence, much of the popular media seems to reflect views such that it is acceptable to be critical of religion, morality and social responsibility; but it is less acceptable to be critical of material affluence, the desire for profit, individual freedom, property prices and tax avoidance. As I think about consumerism and the desire to possess goods, people and services, it causes me to wonder if these things sometimes possess us rather than the other way around.

The word ‘possession’ refers to the exercise of control over property or persons. Indeed, the word has a wide range of technical meanings pertaining to the law, grammar and society. In Biblical terms, it often refers to ‘demonic possession’ whereby an individual is controlled by evil spirits or the devil.

In ancient times, unexplained illnesses and erratic behaviour were sometimes attributed to ‘possession’, however this understanding developed in a time when there was little scientific knowledge of the nature of disease and illness. The Gospels and Book of Acts have numerous accounts of people ‘being possessed’ by demons and of the subsequent healing of such persons through the ministry of Jesus or the Apostles. These healings are usually understood to be ‘signs of the kingdom’; that is, they reveal something of the nature of God’s world – a world where healing may occur and in which there is freedom from the control of illness and disease.

While science has helped us to understand the nature of disease and provided an effective means for healing, the question remains: can people be ‘possessed’ today, and is there any need for deliverance from things that control us?

Possessed by Possessions

One aspect of the radical life of the early church was to hold property ‘in common’, as described in the Acts of the Apostles: “*All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and*



distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need” (Acts 2:44-45).

While this behaviour is not required of all the church, it is nevertheless an indicator of how some people viewed themselves, their goods and the community of faith. An essential aspect of the Christian faith for these people involved being not bound to their possessions.

The next chapter of Acts affirms this with the healing of a lame beggar. Upon being asked for money, Peter said to him: “*I have no silver or gold, but what I have I give you; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, stand up and walk” (Acts 3:6).* What the beggar, in fact, needed was healing rather than money.

Genesis chapter 2 describes the creation of Adam and Eve and their role as stewards of the Garden of Eden. The two creation stories argue that the world was designed to be good and that human beings were created by God to live in harmony with nature and each other – a state in which there is no domination, ownership or control. In this way the created order is understood as a gift from

God, not to be possessed but rather to be cared for and enjoyed. The fall of humanity (a result of the sin of Adam and Eve) brings disharmony, possessiveness, destruction and pain.

Jesus' preaching about the Kingdom of God, and his subsequent resurrection, reverses this situation and provides a way for humanity to re-enter a life of harmony with God, each other and creation. The culmination of this 'new creation' is described in vivid terms in Revelation 21 as "*a new heaven and a new earth...where death shall be no more*" (Revelation 21 1-4).

The challenge for us then is to consider what place possessions and possessiveness has in our lives. The accumulation of possessions is seen as a sign of wealth and a way of distinguishing ourselves over-and-against others.

A contrary approach is to see possessions (and people) as things that belong to God rather than individuals, given for the benefit of all. To be controlled by possessiveness, therefore is to live an unredeemed life and a denial of the Kingdom of God.

Possessed by Ideas

Physical objects and people are not the only things that can control our lives. Ideas also have a huge influence over the human psyche, for it is normal for people to want to 'understand' the world and 'make sense' of human existence. Indeed, much of the Christian faith explores these matters. It is therefore a good and proper desire to seek enlightenment, or can we be possessed by our ideas?

For good or ill, the great philosophical and political

movements down through history are indicators of the power of ideas to create and shape society. The ideas of Monarchy, Liberal Democracy, Marxism and National Socialism have all demonstrated their power to define and control community life. The many religious traditions have had a similar effect.

In the twentieth century alone, the experience of two world wars, global terrorism, sectarianism, racism and genocide should be enough evidence for the power of ideas in the life of community. Indeed, it has been quite a chilling experience in our own time to witness people ending their lives, as well as those around them, through vicious terrorist acts because of ideology, and current political ideologies justify much of what in other circumstances would be seen as unjustifiable.

Yet there are also many positive ideas that are life enhancing. *Martin Luther King Jr's* dream of an end to racism in the USA, *Nelson Mandela's* call for an end to apartheid in South Africa, and *Mahatma Gandhi's* vision of a peaceful Indian independence are but a few examples. Writing during the Cold War, and in the twilight of the Second World War, noted twentieth century philosopher, *Sir Isaiah Berlin*, stated; "*...when ideas are neglected by those who ought to attend to them ... they sometimes acquire unchecked momentum and an irresistible power over multitudes of men that may grow too violent to be affected by rational criticism.*" (Two Concepts of Liberty, 1958)

Berlin goes on to explore what part the idea of 'freedom' plays in our lives and conversely the role of 'coercion' in society. He concludes by calling for the exercise of moderation of human

convictions that, if left unchallenged, allow an individual (or society) to justify its activities because of the ideal it seeks to achieve in the end – in other words, '*the end justifies the means*'.

Ideas have power and therefore the potential to dominate and control large groups of people. An uncritical servitude to ideas can lead people into evil intent and behaviour on the one hand, and to ignorant complicity on the other. However, *St Paul* encourages the Christians in Rome to seek godliness in all aspects of life, including their ideas, writing: "***Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God - what is good and acceptable and perfect***". (Romans 12:2)

Our task then is to reflect critically upon what shapes our ideas and ideals, and the impact that our ensuing actions may have on those around us. Do our ideas bring hope, healing and goodness to others, or are they the cause of pain, negativity and destruction?

Possessed by Self-image

Ancient Greek mythology tells the story of *Narcissus*, who fell in love with his reflection in a pool of water. He became so engrossed with his image that he could not leave the pool and so died. The story, and his name, has been given to a psychological condition called '*Narcissism*', which manifests itself through an inflated sense of self-importance and excessive self-preoccupation.

People with Narcissistic Personality Disorder often react to criticism with rage; they also tend to use other people to achieve their goals, and are inclined to exaggerate their achievements and talents.

Narcissists also need constant attention and admiration, often denigrating others in an effort to promote their own agendas. This is one dramatic example of being **possessed** by one's self-image!

The advertising industry makes much of the significance of self-image and status, which is a temptation to us all. The desire for status can often cause us to neglect or devalue the relationships that exist around us, (even in the absence of Narcissism). However, *Jesus* teaches us **'to love others as we love ourselves'** (Matthew 22:39), and *Timothy* is warned against associating with those who **'love themselves and money, and who are proud, arrogant and abusive'** (2 Timothy 3:1-5)

As Christians, we are called to 'take up our cross and follow Christ' and thereby live a life that is self-sacrificing, focused on the needs and well-being of others. This is no easy thing to do, but it remains our calling nonetheless. It is a matter of dying to one's own needs and living for God.

As recorded in the Gospel of Luke: **Jesus said, "For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will save it. What does it profit them if they gain the whole world, but lose or forfeit themselves?"** (Luke 9:24-25)

It is too easy to be self-possessed, and our culture will generally sustain us in such an endeavour. It is therefore truly radical to be motivated by a desire to serve others; but we need help if we are to be counter-cultural in this way. Christians seek God's grace (or unconditional love) in this regard; which is both a sign of God's presence and a means of strengthening us for what we are called to do.

Possessed by God

If we are to be possessed by anything, the Bible suggests that **we should be possessed by God;** as in the First Letter of Peter: *"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation,*

God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy" (1 Peter 2:9-10).

Thinking that we can have control over our worldly circumstances is a deception that usually leads to despair. This is yet another mystery of the Christian faith and the counter-cultural world of the Kingdom of God.

As attributed to **St Francis of Assisi:**

"For it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life"

(Prayer of St Francis)

Andrew Sempell
Rector, St James', King Street, Sydney
President, Anglicans Together



NEW ANGLICAN ARCHBISHOPS APPOINTED IN THE PACIFIC ISLANDS AND IN SOUTH EAST ASIA

THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF MELANESIA

has appointed a new Archbishop and Primate. He is *George Takeli*, the Bishop of Temotu.



Bishop Takeli will be enthroned at *Saint Barnabas Provincial Cathedral, Honiara, Solomon Islands* on April 17.

George Takeli (56) was born on Ulawa Island and

ordained to the priesthood in 1995 serving as a priest in the Province of Melanesia for 16 years before being made the fourth **Bishop of Temotu** in August 2009.

THE NEW ARCHBISHOP OF SOUTH EAST ASIA, the Most Revd Ng Moon Hing, was installed in

February 2016 during a Service in Saint Mary's Anglican Cathedral, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.



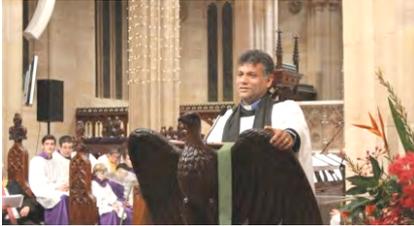
It was an appointment that could never have been anticipated when he was born into a family of Buddhist Taoists. He was aged 20

when he discovered Christ - becoming the first person of his family to convert to Christianity.

After theological training, at the age of 30, he was ordained priest. He served his curacy at *St Peter's Church, Ipoh, Malaysia* and remained there for 20 years, when in 2007 he was appointed **Bishop of West Malaysia.**

First non-European Dean of St Andrew's

The Reverend Kanishka de Silva Raffel was installed at a Service in St Andrew's Cathedral, Sydney on Thursday, 4th February 2016.



From a Sri Lankan family *Dean Raffel* was born in England and raised a Buddhist. His family emigrated to Australia, via Canada, in the 1970s.

The Dean reflected that in those days "there was one spice shop in Sydney where all the Sri Lankan community would go on the weekend to buy their spices. At the school I went to in Carlingford, I am pretty sure. I was the only non-European background student for the whole time I was there."

"Now, Sydney has become a very multi-cultural society and it would be strange if the Church didn't reflect that because we have a message of God's love for all people - Jesus is for everybody."

The *Dean Raffel*, appointed by the Archbishop, with the concurrence of the Cathedral Chapter, was presented at the service by long-serving Cathedral chapter member *John Bishop* and the Archdeacon for Women, *Kara Hartley*.

In the congregation were family, friends, a contingent from *Dean Raffel's* previous church, St Matthew's, Shenton Park, Western Australia, as well as Deans from eight other Cathedrals around Australia, including Perth.

The new Dean said:
"That mercy of God I first

encountered thirty years ago It didn't make me less Sri Lankan any more than it made me more Australian. I encountered Jesus as I read Scripture. He spoke to me from the pages of the Bible; he made himself known in his Gospel. I came to the Living Stone and he made me one of his people by his mercy."

Dean Raffel also mused on the uses of a Cathedral.

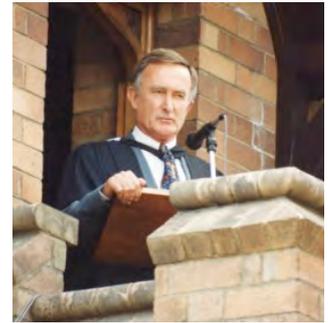
"Cathedrals are expensive to maintain, impossible to heat; home to rats and pigeons and despite being affectionately referred to as a glorified rain shelter, this Cathedral leaks!"
"But we're glad to be here....And we are here, to proclaim to anyone and everyone the excellencies of the Saviour, and to call on them to know and trust his love."

"This Cathedral is committed to making disciples of young and old, men and women, the lowly and the high-born. We are glad to offer hospitality and hope to refugees, street people, those struggling with addictions; these soaring spaces are regularly filled with song to extol the glories of God and we welcome those who come to hear; we are privileged and grateful to be a place where the people of this city and State gather to mourn, to remember, to pray, to give thanks, to offer the comfort and hope of the gospel of Jesus to one another.



The new Dean and his wife, Cailey, leaving St Andrew's Cathedral

RODERICK IAN WEST 1933–2016



Rod West is remembered in Sydney as the outstanding Headmaster of Trinity Grammar School Summer Hill.

Roderick Ian West was born in the harbour-side suburb of Balmain on June 29, 1933 - the youngest of six children of *Harry West*, (chandler and sail-maker) and his wife *Margery* (nee *Fraser*).

His early schooling was at the local Nicholson Street Public School, then Drummoyne Intermediate School and Sydney Grammar his final two years.

After completing his degree at Sydney University, *Rod* started a teaching career in 1954 at Cootamundra High School. In 1956, after participating in the Olympic torch relay, he moved to Fort Street.

In 1960, *Rod* and *Janet Conti* married and went to England, where *Rod* taught for a few years. In 1966, he began teaching at Timbertop, Geelong. However, in 1967 he moved to The King's School, Parramatta, to become Classics Master,

West, at the age of 39, was appointed Headmaster of Trinity Grammar School in 1975. There he became 'one of the country's great headmasters'. Academic standards soared. From 1978, Trinity was rarely out of the top 10 schools in the state HSC exams.

Rod West was evangelical in terms of doctrine, but had a open breadth of vision. For very many years he was a member of the Sydney Anglican Synod.

When *Rod West* retired in 1996, 3000 people attended his farewell at the Opera House.

His was a true life of Christian witness and dedication.

AN INCLUSIVE CHURCH ?

Reflections by the Reverend Dr John Bunyan

“I believe in ...the holy Catholic Church”. “Catholic”, a richer word than “universal”, among other things means inclusive. There are areas, I think, where *overall* in our Diocese we could be *more* inclusive, more Catholic. I give some examples: - inclusion of **poorer parishes** and **poorer people**, those **not online**, or those who, like myself, as they get older, find **technology** increasingly difficult.

1. OUTSIDE THE CHURCH

Do we *include* in the **parish**, – those who still identify as Church of England or Anglican ? Our notice boards once usually said simply, e.g. St N’s **Parish Church**, for a *community* church, not what *sometimes* seems today “a *gated* community”.

Martyn Percy of Christ Church, Oxford, in a recent, hard-hitting criticism of *Reform and Renewal in the Church of England*, has written that “fresh expressions” of church (important as I think they can be) cannot match “good, broad parish ministry” with its “extensive impact, connecting widely with communities”.

2. **OUTSIDE THE CHURCH** Do we *include* the **sick and elderly** in homes, hostels, and hospitals, and the **house-bound** and **lonely**, especially former church-goers ? In my experience, too often we do not.

3. **OUTSIDE THE CHURCH** Do we *include* the passer-by through using intelligible signs ? What do outsiders make of “Eucharist”, “Lord’s Supper”, or “Matins”? Holy Communion is a more *catholic* name for the whole Sacrament.

4. **GOING INTO CHURCH** Do we *include* those less mobile and those who find steps difficult, with

directions to any alternative means of entry and accessible toilets ?

5. **IN CHURCH** On Sundays and weekdays, do we *include* those whose vision, hearing, or intellect is impaired, but also those who seek quietness and reverence in what the Homily calls “**the house of God**” and “**the temple of the Lord**” ? And those who find it difficult to stand on one spot for any length of time (e.g. during the whole Prayer of Thanksgiving) ? And the small number who temperamentally find “the Peace” intrusive or who avoid it because of arthritic hands or for the sake of hygiene. A simple “Asian” greeting of one another; one’s head bowed, one’s hands clasped, could mean much more,

6. **IN CHURCH** Do we *include* and allow for historic devotional traditions, especially **kneeling**, after the (not invariable) example of **our Lord** himself, and his followers (Luke 22.41, Acts 9.40, Acts 21.5). Matins every day begins with the Venite’s call : “*O come, let us worship and fall down and kneel before the Lord our Maker*”.

Kneeling of course needs something to kneel against, and here **pews** are better, though not poorly designed, uncomfortable pews. A good alternative can be chairs with arms, firmly based, able to be firmly linked together, the backs enabling one to get up or down with ease. (Old St Paul’s, Edinburgh has small arm-less chairs, and on an over-polished floor, not long ago, attempting there to kneel and leaning against the chair in front, I toppled sideways onto the floor.)

Carolyn (Cally) Hammond, Dean of Gonville and Caius, Cambridge, in her recent wise and gentle book, ‘*The Sound of the Liturgy*’, questions some of our

contemporary customs and seeks a balance.

For pews and suitable chairs, practically designed kneelers are important. St John’s, Canberra and St Paul’s, Manuka both have beautiful sets and people of St Paul’s, Burwood are making kneelers, of various sizes and designs. Bravo Burwood !

7. **IN OUR CHURCH** Do we graciously *include* provision for those preferring more traditional BCP based language and liturgy, not only for those old enough to have known the richness of **the Book of Common Prayer** but also to provide BCP services for those who would or *should* experience them ? Are copies of the book available - still the “standard” of worship for our Church with which every minister should be familiar? (AAPB and APBA are lawful alternatives, but not the Sydney book, like Bathurst’s “Red Book”, constitutionally

In our CBD on Sunday mornings, Book of Common Prayer services are only available at 8.30 am - too early for those who live far out, or some elderly. In Newcastle Cathedral, the BCP Communion is even earlier, at 7 am. St John’s, Canberra, while providing (as does St Paul’s, Manuka) a 7 am Book of Common Prayer Communion, also provides a BCP Choral Communion or Choral Matins every Sunday at 11.15 am. Enrolled there, I try to attend the latter every month or so.

8. **Do we include services for those neither conservative evangelical nor anglo-catholic ?** In the mid- 20th century, one third of Sydney’s parishes were “middle of the road” (and even most “evangelical” churches were liturgical - loyal to the Prayer Book). Today, few such parishes remain.

Most, have been greatly changed (freely or by clerical manipulation) joining too many churches hardly Anglican - neo-puritan, dogmatic and didactic, and if strong in numbers, that partly because they seem to me *sociologically* little different to the also *numerically* “successful” Mormons, JW’s, and other sects, and the now mostly narrow Presbyterian Church, or culturally little different from Hillsong (even if avoiding Brian Houston’s “gospel” of success). (St Matthew 4.8). As a result, some now attend a Uniting Church, others a Roman Catholic. Too many good Anglicans I know have ceased to go to church at all.

Many do find blessings in conservative evangelical and catholic *Anglican* churches, in and outside our Diocese, and **we all need the best riches of our Church’s evangelical and catholic traditions**. (I encounter genuine, winsome **devotion** in some Christians of all kinds, whether their beliefs are weird or wonderful.) But, I think, not many “outsiders” who identify as C. of E. or Anglican will ever attend very conservative evangelical or very anglo-catholic churches.

In my book *Morning Prayer Matters* and my booklet *Morning Prayer Dayspring*, I argued, with reference to a variety of present-day scholars, for an imaginative, flexible, simple **Morning Prayer** (in addition to the central Holy Communion Service) - still liturgically grounded in Anglican worship tradition. This could provide for those now not *included* people “on the fringe”, half-believers, enquirers, seekers, agnostics, fellow-travellers, occasional attendees, those *not* attracted by rich ceremony, didactic dogma, or one-sided sermons, those not sacramentally-minded or who prefer to receive Communion less frequently though no less reverently; those who want an intelligent faith, taking into account

Biblical scholarship, new scientific insights, and their own experience; those whose faith is concerned more with the ministry and teaching of Jesus, and the “kingdom of heaven on earth” than narrowly with His death and resurrection. These will not find a home in many of our churches.

In our present fearful times, with dangers of deadly conflict; scientific advances bringing both blessing and bane; and what I see as much cultural, social, moral, aesthetic, and educational decay, it is understandable that many people in Christian and other religions, (especially their leaders), have tended to become more polarised and partisan, calling for a return to one “orthodoxy” or another. Inside and outside our Diocese some zealously “plant” contemporary conventicles to “save the lost”. In our Church some decry (if they even know of them) great liberal scholars such as *G.W.H.Lampe*, in our own Church or *James Mackey* and *Hans Küng* in the Roman. Far too many “Bible Christian” leaders, while almost worshipping the Scriptures, seem unfamiliar with even basic facts about the development of the Biblical canon(s), the ways in which the Scriptures have been transmitted, the diversity of manuscripts, and the problems of translation.

9. Our Church needs to include ordained and lay ministers of all kinds (1 Corinthians 12) - not only “evangelists” and “teachers”. Certainly more “**pastors**” - with a *continuing* good general education and Biblical, theological, and pastoral understanding, even if (probably like our Lord) they know no Greek, or (like our Lord and St Paul) they are single!

10. We should include and indeed welcome a diversity of views where Anglicans believe they have reasonable, Scriptural and scientific grounds for their positions. Yet one particular understanding of the Atonement (to me un-biblical and

immoral) is sometimes now seen as “*the* gospel” - acceptance of it the only door to “salvation”, a dogma that will exclude not only anyone who disagrees from our Church school Councils, but from “heaven” the vast majority of humankind, past and present! Very different from earlier Sydney Anglicanism (but not confined to Sydney). Martyn Percy notes that even in the Church of England critical voices are being distanced or silenced, and that episcopal ranks include few “intellectuals, prophets and poets”.

For many years I have been barred from any participation in services at St Peter’s Church, Campbelltown, ostensibly for protesting publicly against bullying, (threatened in writing with pulpit denunciation if I took the matter to the diocesan professional standards unit) but really because I did not see the Cross in that way! A traumatic and sad but not unique experience, though I still have “joy in my heart” for many blessings! In fairness, I must add that St Peter’s and other churches are supporting **Scripture in some tough local high schools and ministry among students**.

Of course, my views could be thought unorthodox in other ways. My recent ‘*Four Score Deodatus : an autobiographical anthology of prose and verse*’ makes this clear! (Available: PO Box N109, Campbelltown North, 2560: bunyanj@tpg.com.au).

I do not think those views go beyond what can and should be *included* in our Church. The questions I raise there, and the conclusions to which I have come, on the basis of reason, study of the Scriptures and modern scientific insights, deserve consideration.

Foolish ‘fundamentalism’ apart, for me *some* conservative evangelical and patristic positions need better foundations than I have found.

In the meantime, as *John Wesley* asked, in a sermon ‘**On A Catholic Spirit**’, “**though we cannot think alike, may we not love alike?**”

HOLY SATURDAY

The End of the Road or ‘an In-between Place’

“Now there was a garden in the place where he was crucified, and in the garden there was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid. And so, because it was the Jewish day of Preparation, and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.” (John 19:41-42, NRSV)

Places and the boundaries or edges which define them are important. Today travellers wanting to enter a country must stop at its border crossing. We in Australia, as an island nation, have the choice of turning back the boats of asylum seekers approaching our coastal border, or providing a bridge of compassion for those fleeing from terror. In some continents one can stand in two countries at once, straddling a border. You are then in a liminal in-between place. Of course, if the boundary is a high wall or locked gate, this is impossible! **The border becomes a barrier and you are stuck on one side. It is the end of the road if you cannot go back and cannot move forwards.**

The few disciples who watched *Jesus* hanging on the cross on Good Friday, heard his cry of desolation and saw him die. They had enthusiastically followed their leader along the roads of Palestine expecting a great future, but now he was dead. **They were at the end of the road. They stumbled off, grieving and despairing.**

For *Judas* and *Peter*, *Jesus*’ death on the cross was a barrier of shame and guilt they were unable to traverse.

Judas betrayed *Jesus* and in despair he killed himself. For him it was the only option. *Peter* denied knowing *Jesus*, but, in spite of his shame and aware he had let down his friends, he sought support from them.

The disciples who had fled in fear in the garden, huddled together in their guilt and grief. **They were all at the end of the road.**

Surprisingly one man, *Joseph of Arimathea*, still found room to move. Although not a relative, he dared to approach *Pilate* and ask for the dead body of *Jesus*. *Joseph* and his friend *Nicodemus* were not close disciples of *Jesus*, but secret followers lurking on the edges. They decided to save *Jesus*’ body from being torn to pieces by vultures, and give it the respect and reverence they thought was right. They washed the body, covered it with myrrh and aloes, and wrapped it in linen cloths before placing it in a tomb, secured with a stone.

What they did could be judged pointless and risky, publicly identifying them with a failed seditious movement. Then they, too, came to the end of the road. And the Sabbath was about to begin.

There can be times in our lives



when we feel that our burden of shame, guilt, terror or grief is so great, we just want to hide.

We come to the end of the road.
We might say that we have come

to a *Holy Saturday* place.

Each Sunday we recite in the creed, “..he suffered death and was buried”. There is a certain finality with the words “and was buried”. They end with a full stop. They come between words describing *Jesus*’ death and those announcing his resurrection.

We are invited to pause and reflect on this Sabbath day, at the end of the road, in an edgy liminal space in-between Good Friday and Easter Day.

God is dead, interred in a tomb. This is what the incarnation means. God became a human being and experienced all that we experience. We now know that there is nowhere in life or death that God is not present.

The end of the road, which seems so final, can become a liminal place for us as individuals and for us as members of the church. Holy Saturday is an in-between mysterious place, often uncomfortable and unstable, where the presence of God’s merciful all-embracing love brings the possibility of new life through death for both victims and perpetrators.

The love that drove *Joseph of Arimathea* and *Nicodemus* to place the body of *Jesus* in a tomb, two days later enabled the women to visit the tomb to anoint *Jesus*’ body and unexpectedly to be witnesses of his resurrection.

The accepting love the disciples offered to *Peter* gave him life.

Today the church in Australia, the body of Christ, can look irrelevant, dead, in a tomb, at the end of the road. Leaders have been found guilty of child sexual abuse or failing to protect the victims.

The church occupies a marginal position in Australian society, a place Jesus of Nazareth often inhabited when he ate with tax-collectors and sinners (Luke 7:34), had no place to lay his head (Matthew 11:19) and was crucified outside a city.

Christians who gather each week for worship know failure and shame, and sometimes find it difficult to reach out to unpopular needy neighbours, or are reluctant

The Archbishop of Sydney, Dr Glenn Davies, says



Anglicans and other Christians in Sydney are concerned by the prospect of 91 asylum seeker children being returned to Nauru following the recent High Court ruling and has repeated his view that the situation of children in detention 'should concern every Australian'. (sydneyanglicans.net/news)

THE ASH WEDNESDAY CLIMATE CHANGE FORUM - Melbourne

The Forum heard first-hand accounts of the impact of climate change on local communities around the world. *Rose Elu* from the Torres Strait Islands and *Tagolyn Kabekabe* from the Solomon Islands explained how their communities are responding. *Ncumisa Magadla* described the work being done by *Green Anglicans* – the Anglican Church of Southern Africa's **Environmental**

to protest against social injustices.

If we are willing to spend time resting in the tomb with Jesus' dead body, we notice that something is happening. The love of God is painfully and gently rolling back the stone of our shame and guilt, and raising us *through* death to life. By looking both ways, towards Good Friday and Easter Day, from an in-between Holy Saturday place, and finding Jesus in both, things start to make sense. Amazingly, God accepts and chooses to use evil and death to achieve God's work of forgiveness, redemption and resurrection. Only when we are in places of shame, guilt, suffering, despair, foolishness, failure or terror

Network, including its 'Carbon Fast for Lent'.

A spokesman for ABM, one of the Forum organizers said "*the forum addressed what the Anglican Church in Australia should do in response to the challenge of climate change. There was a consensus that it was a key priority for the church in our time.*"

Suggested responses included use of solar panels, divestment from fossil fuels, planting gardens, as well the need for education, teaching and advocacy, and a better understanding of the connection between climate change and poverty

Celia Kemp, the education officer for ABM, said after the event that "praying, listening and talking to people from vastly different circumstances, who share a deep love for God's creation and are acting to care for it brought hope into an area where there is often nothing but a sense of futility and despair."

The Reverend Andy Bowerman, co-director of the world-wide Anglican Alliance, facilitated the Forum and will take back the results of the discussions to the **Anglican Consultative Council** when it meets in Lusaka, Zambia in April.

can we, with Jesus, experience the power of God's love, healing us and raising us to new life.

When we hold together the horror of Good Friday and the joy of Easter Day, we are in an in-between liminal place of change, able to share God's love with those, both inside and outside the church, who have come to the end of the road.

Together we can walk on in hope and find new life in Christ.

*Sr Dr Helen CSC
Kempsey NSW*

Dreaming makes the depths of the ocean?

Can they be taken out, like waves and its water's pacing?
Or polished like shellfish?

Can you look through a glass, or shine it?

Looking for the other side, a vortex to find escape

while those standing at the masthead, masking an embrace, desiring to throw anger away

and lose every umbrella. Stung by the wasp,
what makes the stringing of our knees in prayer?

Where is thou, as you hold your hips at my tea?

For its cup, and beyond trusting all virtues, washing a saucer in sunshine;

beyond the fence line, ready to become a bird's spring,
or our decoy, while learning to laugh again.
© Noel Jeffs 2015

WHATS ON IN SYDNEY?
The "events" page on the **ANGLICANS TOGETHER** website is updated weekly - reporting on upcoming events in Sydney in the next couple of months. Make it a favourite on your toolbar.
<http://www.anglicanstogether.org>
and click on "events".

A Christian Response to Climate Change

Sister Doctor Helen, CSC, Kempsey NSW

Death and life, fear and love, difference and similarity are all present when we consider the issue of climate change.

It is a problem particular to our own time and context; a global problem with an Australian face. Today humans have the power to destroy much life on planet earth. It can be through the use of nuclear energy in warfare or accidents, or by allowing global warming to take the world to a place described by *Tim Flannery* as “between a tipping point and a point of no return”, *(Flannery, 2008, p.25). Such a place will engender wars with desperate people fighting for food, water and land. Future life in Australia will need to adapt to a harsh climate and probably an increase in refugees.

It is tempting for ordinary Australians to consider the problem of climate change as too large and complex to address, and better left to scientists to solve and politicians to make the necessary decisions on our behalf. In this situation nature can become a political tool, an object that is used. Instead, I suggest, that nature, a creation of God like us, should be treated as a respected change and valued subject that is necessary for maintaining our life.

Many farmers and others recognise how the climate has changed rapidly in recent years, and that a different relationship to our environment is required. We need to understand nature better, appreciate something of its mystery and work *with* it rather than against it.

From a postcolonial perspective, #*Mark G. Brett* suggests that, “Rather than subduing the earth, we need to cultivate new habits of *making space* for the natural order” (Brett, 2008, p.183). Nature has rights which can conflict with human and economic rights. Each new permit granted for mining exploration can threaten nature’s place.

Recent studies of the coral reefs



has shown that curtailing over-fishing, water pollution and habitat destruction is enabling some reef species to recover. Farmers who work with nature to increase the yield of their land are at the same time able to remove carbon from the atmosphere *(Flannery, 2008, p.48).

Christians can identify earth as not only a co-creator with God as in *Genesis 1:25*, but as a co-redeemer with humans and a Christ embodied in all creation.

All humans need to make sacrifices to allow nature the room and strength to heal if we are all to live. Basic to Christianity is the command to love God and neighbour. The story in *Luke 10:29-36*, told by Jesus to illustrate loving our neighbour, describes the Good Samaritan, an outcast, being a ‘neighbour’ to a suffering victim

who has been robbed and left to die. The success of the caring action of the Good Samaritan depended on oil, wine, a cooperative donkey and a willing inn-keeper. Humans and nature working together.

Alternatively, the ‘victim’, seen as nature, can be considered the ‘neighbour’ damaged by the actions of humans and relying on other humans for assistance.

In *Matthew 25:35-36*, Jesus identifies himself with the hungry, the thirsty, the sick, strangers and prisoners, in fact all who suffer. This means that all suffering must be of concern to Christians. If we think of nature as abused and oppressed, Christ becomes recognised in polluted waters and animals becoming extinct from the destruction of their habitats by rising temperatures.

When we identify ourselves as belonging to Christ and incarnating Christ in our lives, then we are wounding and crucifying our own bodies whenever our actions damage others, human or non-human.

On the other hand, we are being restored to health and life when we take the time and make the effort to work with nature for its healing.

References:

#**Brett, Mark G.** (2008). *Decolonizing God: The Bible in the tides of the Empire*. Sheffield, Sheffield Phoenix Press.

***Flannery, Tim.** (2008). Now or never: A sustainable future for Australia? *Quarterly Essay*, 31, 1-66.

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CONSIDER the BIRDS: A PROVOCATIVE GUIDE TO BIRDS of the BIBLE

by **DEBBIE BLUE** (Abingdon Press, Nashville)

REVIEWED by **Philip Bradford**

You don't have to be a bird lover to enjoy this book. *Debbie Blue* is a very engaging writer. In this book she takes us on a fascinating avian journey through the Bible, highlighting ten birds that are depicted in the Scriptures. Along the way she tells us interesting facts about the birds but more importantly **she uses them to reflect on important Biblical themes such as sacrifice, salvation, power and desire.**

Debbie Blue challenges our cosy assumptions and persuades the reader to re-examine some cherished ideas. To illustrate, did you know that the Hebrew word '*neshar*' usually translated as *eagle* can also be translated as '*griffon vulture*' and many scholars think this is a more fitting translation. We think of vultures as ugly, ungainly birds which spend their days eating dead animals and urinating on their feet (it helps keep their feet clean). But

in the ancient world they were often revered. Most birds fly below five hundred feet: vultures cruise effortlessly on thermals at ten thousand feet. **In 1973 a griffon vulture collided with a commercial airliner at 37,900 feet, the highest recorded altitude for a bird.**

Blue reflects on some of the familiar Bible passages that mention eagles and the difference in perspective gained by replacing vulture for eagle. She writes, "*The eagle is a favourite emblem of empires. It's an excellent hunter and killer. Militaries the world over love to use it on their badges and banners. We've read these verses, imagining that bird but what might it be like to be carried on the wings of a vulture, the great protective mother bird?*" She tells us that vultures, unlike us humans rarely ever hurt a living thing. With rare exceptions, their food has either

died or been killed by some other animal. Vultures take care of rotting remains that could otherwise spread disease. In her words "*they are remarkable purifying machines*", which is why the Mayans called vultures, death eaters. She then imagines, "*Maybe God is something like that – not so much a fierce warrior god swooping in for the rescue or the kill, but a God who can take everything and make it clean – a God who can make even death non toxic.*"

As well as **vultures** and **eagles**, *Debbie Blue* makes us reflect on the role of **the pigeon, the pelican, the quail, the ostrich, the sparrow, the cock, the hen** and **the raven**. This book will not only educate you about birds, it will get you thinking about your faith and you may never read your Bible in the same way again! Highly recommended.

THE ANCHORESS

by **ROBYN CADWALLER** (FOURTH ESTATE, Harper Collins Publishers 2015)

Set in medieval England - 1255 - this is the story of seventeen year old *Sarah*, who feels she is called to be an anchoress. This minutely researched historical novel is one in which the author takes us, not only back over seven centuries, into another period, but introduces us to the 'mind set' of a period that is almost beyond our 21st century understanding.

The story starts when *Sarah* is led by the Bishop to her tiny cell on the dark sunless side of the church and the door is closed and nailed behind her.

The reader is with *Sarah* throughout her story. We are kept in suspense though, as the parts of her previous life, which led her to choose to become an anchoress, are revealed only little by little. What

was her relationship with *Sir Thomas*, now Lord of the Manor. We live beside *Sarah* in her dark, dank, sunless cell. Through her, we meet *Ranaulf*, her confessor; through her eyes, experience that world into which she is born.

It is thirteen century life in an English midlands village with the overwhelming twin influences of 'the Manor' and 'the Abbey' on the intimate lives of ordinary people.

Through *Sarah's* eyes, the reader becomes acquainted with the people of the village that surrounds the Church, and the total influence of the authority of Manor and Church.

For the 21st century reader, we are confronted by the way of life which is both alien and, in some aspects, repulsive.

REVIEWED by **Moya Holle**

The novel has mystery, suspense and also raises questions of the place of the Church in the everyday life of Christian believers - in particular, the Church's attitude and influence on women's lives.

Cadwaller vividly creates the physical atmosphere— "*the autumn rain fell, chill and unceasing.*" She also takes us into "the emotional, spiritual and mental life" of the anchoress. As she says in the 'Afterword', "*I went inside the cell. My central question was always: what was her experience.?*"

In 'The Anchoress', *Cadwaller* leads us into her answer to the question. This is a compelling, often uncomfortable, story, that opens our eyes to another time, another mind-set, yet posing timeless questions.

FUTURE EVENTS



EREMOS
EXPLORING SPIRITUALITY IN AUSTRALIA

**EXPLORING THE
RELIGIOUS CONFLICTS IN
SYRIA AND IRAQ
LECTURE & DISCUSSIONS
WITH DR JULIAN DROOGAN
AND IMAM AFROZ ALI**

Dr Julian Droogan is a Senior Lecturer at the Centre for Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism (PICT), Macquarie University



Imam Afroz Ali asks:

“Is there a faith based perspective that can inform what our response might be?”



Eremos hosts this Forum to better understand current Middle Eastern conflicts.

SUNDAY APRIL 3

2-4:15 pm Pitt Street Uniting Church, 264 Pitt Street, Sydney (Nr Town Hall Station)

Register via: <http://www.tryooking.com/KHLY>

Online advance booking before April 1 – \$20

EREMOS members \$5 Less
Entry at door \$30

www.eremos.org.au/news

**MEDITATIO SEMINAR WITH
LAURENCE FREEMAN**



‘Meditation and the Environment’

Father Laurence Freeman

Benedictine monk and the spiritual guide and Director of The World Community for Christian Meditation will be the **Keynote Speaker at the MEDITATIO SEMINAR**

‘Relationship between ecology, economy and the human contemplative dimension.’

Friday 22 - Sunday 24 April

Kincoppal-Rose Bay School of the Sacred Heart, New South Head Road, Rose Bay.

Contributors will include:

Bishop George Browning, former Bishop of Canberra/Goulburn whose PhD thesis titled ‘Sabbath and the Common Good: Prospects for a new humanity’ will provide background for his contribution.

Reverend Linda Chapman, Rector of the Anglican Parish of Moruya, Spiritual Director, Oblate of the World Christian Meditation Community. She established ‘Open Sanctuary’, Tilba Tilba, NSW

Professor David Tacey Emeritus Professor of Humanities La Trobe University, Melb. Research Professor, the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture, Canberra.

Dr Susan Murphy Zen Roshi, former academic, writer, screenwriter, film maker, radio features producer, widely published in film and social ecology

Associate. Professor Mark Diesendorf, Interdisciplinary Environmental Studies at UNSW, known for his work in sustainable development and renewable energy, Founding Director, Institute for Sustainable Futures UTS.

Jacqui Remond National Director of Catholic Earthcare Australia,

Donna Mulhearn Journalist, Masters Graduate University of Sydney Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, a human shield during the war in Iraq.

UNDERSTANDING OUR HERITAGE:

The evangelical and catholic revivals in 18th & 19th century Anglicanism

Assoc. Prof Michael Horsburgh AM
SUNDAY APRIL 10 2-4.30pm
THURSDAYS 14 & 21 APRIL 1.00pm to 2.00pm

St James’ Hall, 169 Phillip St Sydney

PILGRIMAGE:

**Return to the Labyrinth
A Guided Walk at Sydney’s
Centennial Park Labyrinth**
conducted by **Fr Martin Davies**

SATURDAY 14 MAY
9.00am to 11.00 am

**VIKINGS (BOATS)
TRAINS & KLOSTERS**

Hosts: Abbot General, Fr Michael Kelly OSB of the Sylvestrine Benedictines; The Reverend Martin Davies, Director of the St James’ Institute, Sydney

COMMENCE IN NORWAY (Kirkness) JUNE 8
CONCLUDE JUNE 22

Highlights include: Cruise Lynenfjord; Midnight Concert Arctic Cathedral; Tour of Trondheim; Munkeby Monastery, the Stone Church of Alstadhaug; the Falstad Museum & Tautra Monastery; Oslo Cathedral (1697), Bergen; Hanseatic Quarter; Fantoft Stave Church.

Cost from \$8,950.00 pp Share

More details -

Contact Westminster Tours:

Johanne –

Phone: 02 9232 1711

email:

<johanne@etravel.com.au>

ANGLICAN COMMUNION

ARCHBISHOP FREIER
APPOINTED TO PRIMATES'
STANDING COMMITTEE



The Most Reverend Dr Philip Freier has been appointed to the Primates' Standing Committee

part of the Anglican Consultative Council.

He was one of five Primates voted, by regions, on to the Committee at a special meeting at Canterbury, England called by the **Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby**, of the world's 38 Anglican Primates.

Archbishop Freier was elected by the Primates of the Asia Pacific – Korea, Japan, Hong Kong, Myanmar, South-East Asia, Papua New Guinea, Melanesia, and Aoteroroa NZ and Polynesia. **Archbishop Stephen Than**, from Myanmar, is the alternative representative for the Asia Pacific region of the Anglican Communion if **Dr Freier** cannot attend meetings.

Other primates elected were **Archbishop John Holder** from the Caribbean for the Americas, **Archbishop Thabo Makgoba** from South Africa for Africa, **Archbishop Richard Clarke** from Ireland for Europe, and **Archbishop Mouneer Anis** from Egypt and the Middle East for Asia.

The world-wide Anglican Communion claims 85 million members in 165 countries - the world's third largest Christian group after the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches.

Dr Freier will attend the Anglican Consultative Council meeting in Lusaka, Zambia, in April and the ACC Standing Committee meeting in September in London.

ANGLICAN CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL - 2016.

Anglican Bishops, priests and laity from across the world will gather in **Lusaka, ZAMBIA** next month for the 16th meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council. Members will discuss a range of issues around the theme "**Intentional Discipleship in a World of Difference**" – how Christians can be faithful to the Gospel in all aspects of their lives in the different cultures and situations in which Anglicans find themselves?



We welcome all to our community for fellowship, learning, spiritual reflection and transformation in the Land of the Holy One.

PALESTINE OF JESUS is the most popular course offered by St George's College, Jerusalem and offered several times each year. The program combines the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

A typical 14 day **Palestine of Jesus** course will include 4 days in Galilee, based in Nazareth; visits to Bethlehem, Jericho, Masada and Qumran, as well as the pilgrimage sites in Jerusalem.



Visit our website for program details:
<https://www.saintgeorgescollegejerusalem.com>

FIJI - CYCLONE WINSTON APPEAL

Australian Anglicans responded generously to help the people of the Fijian islands. **ABM** looked to raise \$10,000 and well exceeded the target. The money is sent to the Anglican Church in Fiji.

Sydney Anglicans and supporters of Anglican Aid (Sydney) helped in getting food and basic aid to the tiny village of Maniava, where Sydney Youthworks Year 13 mission team has spent time.

THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY,

in an address to the New Wine Leadership Conference in Harrogate, Yorkshire, said "**We are living in a time of uncertainty**".

He spoke of economic and political uncertainty; of secularism; a society that says there are no absolutes; the rise of powerful figures, claiming to make their nation great again.

Then he said:

"I know, there is only one certainty in the world and that is Jesus Christ. There is no one else who is certain. If we put our hope in princes or elections or whatever, we will be betrayed. It's because people are human."

At the end of March we celebrate the great Christian Festival of the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

*Christ is risen! Raise your spirits from the caverns of despair.
Walk with gladness in the morning.
See what love can do and dare.
Drink the wine of resurrection, not a servant, but a friend.
Jesus is our strong companion.
Joy and peace shall never end.*

Brian Arthur Wren
From **Together in Song**