

Reflections • Monday 3 December 2018 • By Bishop Cam Venables

Poems! Pilgrimage! And, Petition!



Bishop Cam 'on pilgrimage' climbing Mt Ossa in Tasmania

I think any lyrics written by the English hymn writer Brian Wren are worth exploring and reflecting upon, and the Anglican hymn book *Together in Song* has a good number of these. In Hymn 653, Wren affirms that, 'This is a day of new beginnings, time to remember, and move on, time to believe what love is bringing, laying to rest the pain that's gone.' I think it's a great hymn to sing in the season of Advent, as we look forward to celebrating the new beginning of Immanuel – God with us.

Last weekend thirteen people in our Diocese were Ordained at St John's Cathedral, and through this they have been commissioned into new chapters of life and ministry. Susan, Erika, Danni, Rick, Scott and Beryl began the service as lay people, but left as deacons. While,

Deb, Zoe, Rosemary, Peter, Stephen, Timothy, and Bronwyn began the service as deacons, but left as priests.

But it's not only those who have been Ordained who experience new beginnings in life and ministry. Surely each day is a new beginning! As the sun comes up, and the night comes to an end, there is an invitation for us to be thankful and participate in what we believe to be the God-given gift of a new day. Similarly, we can think of each year as a gift and wonder how best to live the next twelve months.

Most of us at some stage would have made New Year resolutions, with the thought that if we follow these our lives will become healthier and more fulfilling. We might resolve to walk for half an hour each day, and read a new book each fortnight. We might set up a space for prayer and use that space at the beginning or end of each day. We might get involved with some voluntary work, so that for a couple of hours a week we're helping another person, without the thought of being paid. We might resolve to learn a new language, or start playing a musical instrument...the possibilities are huge.

I wonder if part of the gift of Advent – this short season before Christmas – is an opportunity to prayerfully look back at the previous twelve months, glean some wisdom, and seek guidance from God about what could helpfully give focus next year

So, in the midst of our preparations for Christmas – the Christmas cards being written, the gifts being bought and wrapped, the menus being planned, and the invitations to family and friends...can there also be time to think about some things that will intentionally give shape to our lives next year?

I offer you where I'm currently at in responding to the challenge of this, as an invitation for you to consider what might be helpful in preparing for your 2019 journey.

Over the last year, my family and I have experienced some significant milestones: Kate and I celebrated our twentieth wedding anniversary; our youngest child graduated from high school; and...my dad died after a short time of illness.

I've thought about these, and other things, in the prayerful reflection space of travelling. Out of this, three themes have emerged that will intentionally give shape to life and ministry for me next year. They are: 'Poems! Pilgrimage! And, Petition!'

I think 'Poems' because I find that poems and song lyrics often express important things about experience and faith, and with an economy of words. We use words to express meaning and I want to attend more carefully to the words I read, and the words I write.

I'm drawn to the experience and language of 'Pilgrimage' because there is something enormously life giving about recognising the presence and activity of God as we journey. God present with us while watching a sunrise on the beach, and present with us as we work our way through household chores. God with us while hiking in the mountains, and with us while waiting for the bus to Brisbane!

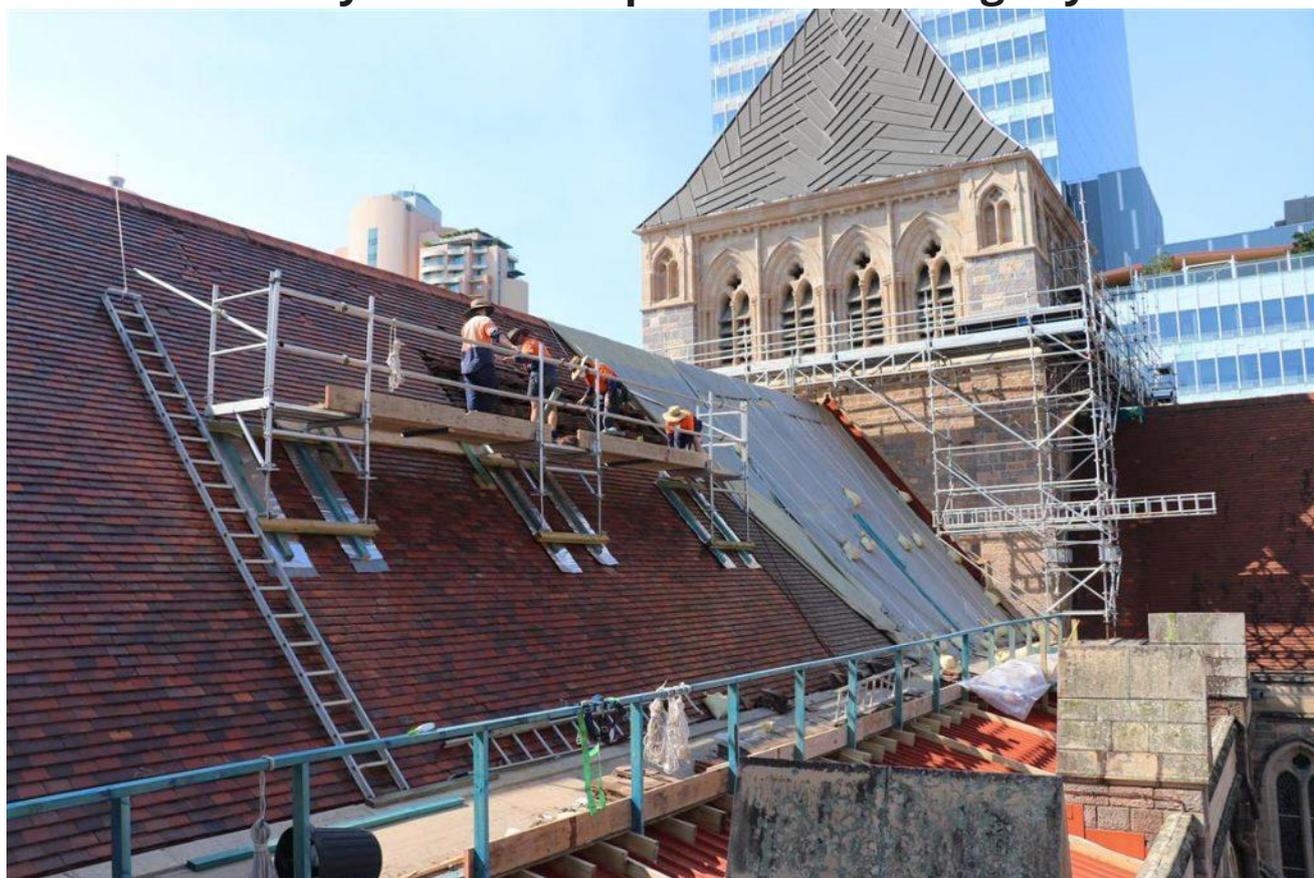
And, 'Petition' because...I've got a reasonable sense of how to journey with people and give support, but I need to better understand what has caused them to need that support. I think some significant decision makers in our society have lost sight of the Gospel understanding that everybody matters...and I have lost sight of the importance of advocacy. So, a year of 'Petition' focus will helpfully recalibrate things.

Inevitably the silent 'P' weaving these three themes together is 'prayer'. Some prayers end up being poems, and some poems become prayers. Inevitably pilgrimage engages with God through prayer, and in the journey we travel, there will be nudges from the Spirit to become part of the struggle to make the world more just.

So, these themes suggest where I sense God is leading me to give focus next year – what about you? If you had to name three helpful themes that would give focus for you next year, what would they be? If you're happy to share them – I'd love to hear what they are! Facebook: @Cam Venables

News • Thursday 29 November 2018 • By Ian Eckersley

Cathedral finally restored to post-2014 storm glory



Workers repairing the heavily damaged Cathedral roof

Four years to the day after a thumping, catastrophic storm ripped through Brisbane, Dean of St John's Cathedral The Very Rev'd Dr Peter Catt and Precinct Manager Gerard Finn can be

forgiven for looking anxiously to the skies any time dark and ominous clouds loom over the city skyline this summer.

On 27 November 2014, the ferocious hailstorm caused chaos and carnage to the Cathedral and church precinct – as well as to large parts of Brisbane in what was the worst natural disaster to befall the city since the 2011 floods.

Fast forward four years and the Cathedral is finally having the last repair work done, in what has been a mammoth test of patience, skill, resources, relationship management and good old-fashioned hard work.

Dr Catt said that he and Mr Finn watched in shock and awe from their office as hail stones the size of oranges smashed into the entire precinct and torrential rain poured into the Cathedral and other buildings – gutters and building spitters clogging with ice, leaving the water no other escape route.

“I stood in my office watching the massive, jagged hail stones pounding the building and the Bishops’ cars. The hailstones shattered into smaller projectiles, each doing more damage,” Dr Catt said.

“The cars were deeply dented and the windows of the Cathedral were smashed. Huge volumes of water accompanied the hail stones. The building was awash inside, as the hail stones had clogged the gutters and the water just flooded in.

“Water was pouring through the stone vaulting and flowing out of the pipe organ inside the Cathedral. I noticed that a few of the stained glass windows had sustained damage and I was grateful that somehow there had not been more damage to the windows.

“The poor pipe organ received a fair bit of water damage, which affected its reliability and it limited its dynamic range for a long while there until it was fully repaired.”

On that fateful afternoon, it was all hands to the pumps, rubbish bins and wheelie bins as water was captured from leaking rooves and scooped up from flooded floors by every staff member available in the Cathedral, St Martin’s House and Webber House.

The damage to all of the precinct buildings was extraordinary – especially the 130-year-old church. Across the Anglican Diocese of Brisbane, 38 buildings were damaged, with many Anglican Church Southern Queensland cars receiving hail damage and broken windows.

The lead turret of St Martin’s House was damaged and the building sustained extensive water damage. It required major roof repairs, including new ceiling tiles, carpet tiles, painting and electrical repairs.

In the Cathedral, roof tiles were destroyed as were 100 individual leadlights, along with damage to the copper sheeting on the front spires and the southern and eastern sides of the bell tower.

Restoration repairs commenced in early June 2015 with a methodology plan agreed to and materials sourced. The problems were multiple and complex, with replacement material difficult to source.

NPS Commercial was appointed as the principle building contractor to undertake insurance repairs and began emergency safety works.

More than 100 individual leadlight window sections were damaged in the storm event, all of which were repaired individually by hand. Insurance covered all of the damage, with the repair bill in the end topping \$7.5 million.

NPS Managing Director, Mark Paterson sourced approximately 37,500 tiles from France for St John's Cathedral and 22,000 tiles were sourced from Belgium for St Martin's House and Church House (using 80,000 copper nails which all had to be hand-nailed).

The massive scope of repair works had to be done in stages, with the Cathedral, which had only been finally completed in 2009, taking priority in the precinct.

It took all of Mr Finn's decades of organisational and project management skills to coordinate and oversee the team of around 50 tradespeople who occupied the site at varying levels, for the best part of the following four years.

Mr Finn worked seven days a week for almost three years, juggling the project management role with his 'day job' of managing everyday precinct and Cathedral matters, including managing the momentum and logistics of the Cathedral's weekly schedule of services, weddings and other functions.

Dr Catt said Mr Finn showed extraordinary dedication and commitment to the project and the heritage values of the church.

"Gerard was an excellent project manager and has a broad skill set with a great passion for the integrity, history and sacred status of the Cathedral," he said.

"He has deep respect and appreciation for the building per se, as well as what it represents and he has been fiercely determined to safeguard it especially through that challenging repair period where we had to closely supervise vast numbers of tradespeople."

The final piece of repair work has been signed off by the insurers and final restoration to the ceiling vestals will soon be done, marking the end of an extraordinary and challenging period in the history of the Cathedral.

Mr Finn regards his role as manager and 'custodian' of its heritage as a privilege.

"It was a massive challenge to keep the Cathedral and the entire precinct fully operational for the last four years, especially in the first 18 months after the storm when we had cranes, scaffolding and workers everywhere," Mr Finn said.

"We had tarpaulins on the Cathedral roof for 18 months, but it was still business as usual for church services although the number of weddings was diminished, as many couples weren't keen to have a church covered by tarps as the backdrop for the photos of their special day.

"It's only in the past year when we've started to get the wedding business back to pre-storm numbers.

"It's satisfying and rewarding to see the Cathedral back to its full glory – although now that we've entered summer and storm season again, the Dean and I get a bit nervous on those days when you can feel a storm building and you receive the text warnings from the Bureau of Meteorology.

"People don't realise how busy the Cathedral is on a daily and weekly basis – and not only as a place of worship. We have to promote and get the word out there that it's also available as a venue for events, functions and performances to keep paying the maintenance and compliance bills and upkeep.

"Aside from organ recitals and our annual Loaves and Fishes event, it is a multi-purpose creative space and has been used for everything from a Missy Higgins concert to the Mercedes Benz Fashion festival this year."

Reflections • Monday 26 November 2018 • By The Rev'd Jazz Dow

Pilgrimage to Wontulp-Bi-Buya (WBB) College



Wontulp-Bi-Buya students from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities leading worship

"One of the things that has become an important part of our culture in the Torres Strait Islands is the notion of 'Good Pasin'*. Good Pasin is about welcoming someone into our community. It is to open up our community to a person who is a stranger to us. Good Pasin

extends to more than just a welcoming, it is to invite the person to come into our homes, invite the person into our community and culture. To invite the person to come and sit at the table where we eat...to be a part of our cultural celebrations...showing that despite the injustice, that despite the trauma of not having ownership of land, or the island that we come from, the trauma of seeing our seas being polluted, we're still welcoming the stranger to our communities...still showing compassion." (The Rev'd Victor Joseph, Principal, Wontulp-Bi-Buya College at the Abundant Justice Conference 2018)

At the Abundant Justice Conference in July 2018, The Rev'd Victor Joseph, Principal of Wontulp-Bi-Buya College, said Indigenous communities don't need colonial missionaries sent from the church – the church in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is growing and it is these churches that will be missionaries to the Anglican Church of Australia. The Anglican Church has a lot to learn from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander churches, cultures, practices, wisdom and customs, and the above quote from Victor Joseph makes this abundantly clear.

St Francis College is committed to listening to and learning from the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, particularly through theological education partnerships. With the assistance of the Anglican Board of Mission (ABM), St Francis College is strengthening a partnership with Wontulp-Bi-Buya College (WBB).

The mission of Wontulp-Bi-Buya College is to support the development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander church and community leaders through study programs leading to awards in theology, suicide prevention, addictions management and community development. Students travel to Cairns from communities around Australia for two-week intensive blocks throughout the year.

In 2017, one of our theology students, Juliana Bate, attended an ABM pilgrimage to WBB in order to:

- Listen to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander theological and social perspectives, and to learn from these perspectives to gain a more holistic Australian theological perspective on theology and ministry.
- Explore what mission means in a 21st Century post-colonial church.
- Worship and pray together.
- Build relationships to enhance mutual ministry and theological learning.
- Increase cultural awareness and the challenges faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander theological students and their churches and communities.

This pilgrimage, as part of St Francis' ongoing relationship building with Wontulp-Bi-Buya College, helps to uphold the Diocese Reconciliation Action Plan's goals to partner with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations for a specific initiative and to foster understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories.

This pilgrimage will be taking place again in 2019 and it is our intention at St Francis College to send more students. We are also hoping to develop an opportunity for students from Wontulp-Bi-Buya College to visit St Francis College. These opportunities allow for increased cultural awareness, cross-cultural theological collaboration, relationship building, and the breaking down of generalisations and stereotypes that are often used to label and exclude.

The pilgrimage to Wontulp-Bi-Buya College is open to all young church leaders, both present and emerging. Please email The Rev'd Jazz Dow, Mission Chaplain, St Francis College via JDow@ministryeducation.org.au for more information.

News • Wednesday 28 November 2018 • By Scott Malcolmson

Extraordinary stained glass window to honour the Anzacs



A scene from the stained glass window, commemorating Anzac Day

On 16 December 2018 at St Barnabas Church, Red Hill Archbishop Phillip Aspinall will be dedicating a very special stained glass window.

The window depicts artwork from the front cover of the first Anzac Day order of service, which was held in Brisbane in 1916.

The Parish of Ithaca-Red Hill is the grateful recipient of funding by the Queensland Government's Queensland Anzac Centenary grants program.

The Parish takes great pride in its role in the history of Anzac Day.

It was from the vestry of St Barnabas Church that Canon David Garland led his campaign to make Anzac Day a key day of remembrance, not only for Queensland but also Australia. He was an important architect and originator of Anzac Day ceremonies and rituals, and he was

described in 1924 by acting premier WN Gillies as the 'life and soul' of the Anzac Day Commemoration Committee.

Garland initiated the Anzac Day march, the returned soldiers' luncheon, the two minutes silence, the wreath-laying ceremonies at memorials and the special church services. He also began a trust to use money raised from Anzac Day badges for the care of soldiers' graves at home and abroad. The royal blue silk badges devised by Garland include the winged lion of St Mark, because St Mark's Day coincided with Anzac Day. The badge and ceremonies, vigorously backed by Garland, were taken up in other states and territories, and to a very large extent in New Zealand and Great Britain.

In 1916 Brisbane held its first Anzac Day service in the evening at the Brisbane Exhibition Grounds. A march through the centre of Brisbane had taken place earlier in the day. Canon Garland was the Secretary of the planning committee and helped plan the order of service. He saw it as a civilian and non-denominational service.

The 1916 service was chaired by the Mayor of Brisbane and addresses were made by the Governor, the Premier, a returned Gallipoli chaplain and the Anglican and Roman Catholic Archbishops. The hymns were non-Trinitarian, so all religious denominations could sing them.

A copy of the original order of service is held in the State Library of Queensland.

The front cover of the 1916 order of service unusually depicts not only an Anzac soldier, but also representatives of the Royal Navy and Royal Australian Navy, the Army of the Republic of France, a Maori soldier and an Indian soldier.

These last three depictions are important, as this window will be one of the few memorials that commemorate the service of these troops alongside the British and Anzac forces. Also, in a multicultural Australia, we now share the story of Anzac with descendants of these troops who have come to our shores since 1918.

Also depicted in the window are two lions of St Mark, later to be included in the Anzac Day badge.

The design and manufacture of the window was done by Julian Podmore of Leadlight Craftsman at Newmarket.

Archbishop Phillip Aspinall will be dedicating the window on Sunday 16 December 2018, commencing at 6.30pm at St Barnabas Church, St Barnabas Place, Red Hill.

For those wishing to attend, please RSVP to heroesofanzacwindow@gmail.com by 9 December 2018.

Q&A with The Rev'd Jazz Dow



Jazz, Samuel and their girls Amelie and Ellie at Ellie's baptism at the Chapel of the Holy Spirit, St Francis College in July this year

The Rev'd Jazz Dow is Mission Chaplain for Community of the Way, based at St Francis College, Milton. She also works part time for Anglican Board of Mission and is a mother to two young daughters.

How long have you been involved in the Anglican Church and in what roles?

I began attending an Anglican church in my childhood. I was ordained 10 years ago and did two curacies in Grafton and Ballina. After my curacies, my husband Samuel and I moved to Melbourne where I worked at Trinity College Theological School. We joined the Diocese of Brisbane in June 2018, where I am Mission Chaplain at St Francis College.

What does your role as Mission Chaplain involve?

I am responsible for facilitating the building of an intentional community of young people, Community Of The Way, which will commence next year. The community will be a place for young people aged 18-30 to spend time together in prayer, theological enquiry and serving the community while they go about their day-to-day lives.

What projects and activities are you currently working on?

We are looking at creating a community hub here at St Francis for young people. So, we are going to revamp a common room for them with young people from around the Diocese, which they can use for social events and Bible studies. Community of the Way will also be a part of this hub, and the intentional community members will host the space.

What have been the highlights of your role so far?

Definitely meeting young people from around the Diocese and being the spiritual director for the Senior Ichthus Camp in July. It was a courageous move for the church to start the Community of the Way and it has been a highlight for me to be involved in that, especially the Campfire nights where people gather in a relaxed fashion to share the faith story and how it connects with our own stories.

What are your plans and goals for the next 12 months?

One of the big goals is to build relationship within the inner city suburban area community to find out what the local community needs and what skills we as an intentional community have to address those needs. We want to partner with local community groups to foster community and help bridge gaps.

In order to help grow community, we are planning on having weekly Campfires next year on Tuesday nights that are open to everyone. People can come after work or study and gather around the campfire to discuss scripture, chat and pray, so they can enjoy some stillness in a busy week.

We are also planning on having regular community engagement workshops, which will be open to the broader community, covering Reconciliation, media engagement, nonviolent direct action, mental health first aid training, and campaigning and political lobbying for social justice.

Community of the Way will host the community building, community engagement training and the Campfire nights.

Can you tell us a little about your faith journey?

I started going to Church when I was young and I wanted to be ordained from the age of 12. My priest, Fr Gary, had a strong heart for social justice and a gift for storytelling and he inspired me. I participated in Ichthus Camps in the Grafton Diocese. When I was 18, I wanted to study theology, but I was told that I was too young. I was not in a hurry to be ordained, but I really wanted to study theology. When I was 20, I moved to Canberra to study theology, as my mentor told me that my stubbornness had prevailed and to just go. In Canberra, my faith and passion for justice were opened wider and my mind and heart were stretched in the Canberran triangle of politics, military and commerce, so it was an interesting juxtaposition to study theology, especially justice issues, in this context.

At the end of my Bachelor's degree, I applied for the Beatrice Robbins Scholarship. I used the scholarship proceeds to explore Liberation Theology in Chile, Palestine and Israel. I also explored eco-church projects in the Church of Scotland and spent time in a Catholic intentional community, The Chemin Neuf Community. This period was pivotal in my life and led me to study a Master of Theology in Canberra. I met my husband, Samuel, in Canberra, and during our curacies we married and later moved to Melbourne.

How does your faith inspire you and shape your outlook, life choices and character?

My faith inspires me because I realise that God's 'Kingdom' is so much bigger and more spacious than the empires of this world. Because of the spaciousness of God's Kingdom we are connected to the earth and all of humanity in a kinship sense. There is an interconnectedness with the earth and all who dwell within. When Jesus asks us to love our neighbourhood, 'neighbour' is a very broad concept.

I endeavour to live into this, but being human I do at times fail. Relationships are really important to me and I am very much a people person. As a mother, I want my kids to grow up knowing that community is bigger than our family and that they belong to this interconnected whole.

What is your favourite scripture and why?

My favourite scripture is 'I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly (John 10:10b)' because this scripture encapsulates what God is about: abundance, generosity, people and earth flourishing.

What person of faith inspires you the most and why?

Oscar Romero because he was courageously willing to change his view. He started off as a person of the 'institution', but let his views change when encountering injustice. Shiphrah and Puah, the midwives who used their daily context to bravely challenge the order of the day and they bucked the system to do what they believed to be right. Most of all, I am inspired by my children, as they inspire me to live in the present and notice the extraordinary in the ordinary.

What are the primary strengths of the church and what is the best way to make the most of these for the benefit of our communities?

Ideally, the primary strength of the church is as gatherer of a diverse group of people in order to foster supporting and loving community.

What are the primary challenges currently encountered by the Church and what is the best way to overcome these for the benefit of our communities?

A major challenge I think is fear for survival, which can often keep us from living radically. I

am not denying that this is a complex challenge to overcome in current times, but we need to explore what the theological concept of death and resurrection mean for institutions.

What do you do in your free time to recharge and relax?

I dance in the kitchen with my kids. I spend time at Southbank. I watch Netflix.

What is your favourite book and why?

My favourite non-fiction genre is Middle Eastern fiction because most often it tells the story of people whose stories are usually overlooked.

What is your favourite movie and why?

It's not necessarily my favourite film, but I really enjoyed the French film *Amelie* as it is about valuing the small things and noticing life's details, for example the beauty of a raspberry. This film inspired the choice of our eldest daughter's name, Amelie.

What place are you travelling to next?

My husband, kids and I are heading to Wontulp-Bi-Buya in Cairns, an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education college.

Visit www.communityoftheway.org.au for more information or to apply.

Reflections • Wednesday 28 November 2018 • By The Rev'd Canon Linda McWilliam

Staying awake this Advent season

As children we had an amazing sense of wonder; we were fascinated by the world and all of its creation. The world was full of mystery and awe. Somehow, as we grew older the natural gift of wonder God gave us as children grew tired with the busyness and anxieties of life. We have somehow managed to let wonder go to sleep.

Jesus tells us to, 'Stay awake (Matthew 24:42).' Advent says, 'Wake up and realise the gifts of love you have received.' Spirituality says, 'Wake up' and 'withdraw from the busyness of daily life, and to wake up to the spiritual depths of ourselves and the God who loves us.'

Christmas is not merely the recollection of the event that took place 2000 years ago. It is actually about the reality of the power of God taking on the frailty of a tiny baby. The mystery of the Holy Night must be lived as a spiritual event. The Word who found a dwelling in Mary's womb comes to knock on the heart of every person this Christmas.

The feast of St Nicholas comes at the beginning of Advent and the beginning of the shopping season. St Nicholas says, 'Keep it simple!' 'Keep it simple enough to fit in a shoe or a stocking.' Perhaps our gift cards this year might read: 'The gift I give to you is half an hour of quality

conversation each night right after the dishes are done.' Or, 'The gift I give to you is one Saturday a month to be with you and do whatever you want to do.'

The festive season is a time of celebration, but for many Australians the festivities also mean extra pressures, like buying gifts and attending many social gatherings. Holiday periods have been associated with higher levels of depression, and one study found that suicide rates increased on the days following holidays. Another reported a 40% increase in suicides in the days following Christmas.

Christmas is about opening our hearts generously, facing our fears and starting all over again. When things are at their worst, someone up there holds us with love in the palm of His hand, giving us comfort no words can even describe. Christmas is about giving and sharing our blessings. It is about thanking people for the smile they brought into our life. It is about love, forgiveness and second chances. It is about renewing our hopes, dreams and faith. The simplicity of the birth of Jesus has given Christians pause to realise that God chose to communicate the great mystery of His love and mercy by sending us the least threatening divine presence we can imagine — a small child totally dependent on His parents.

Christmas reminds us that power is borne of weakness and strength of humility, and that the meek ultimately can inherit the earth. So, in the midst of all our Christmas preparations, can we take time to realise who is born on Christmas Day? Can we reflect that Christmas is a time when God in His humility shows us, if not who we are, at least what we can strive to be?

The incarnation of Jesus is a grace we get to experience over and over. Here is the hope that we need to be able to overcome the many challenges life throws at us. That hope is ours in Christ. Jesus comes into our world with every prayer we breathe. The celebrations do end, and the decorations get put away, but the life of the party remains.

May the light of Jesus shine within us and illuminate the lives of those around us. May we experience the goodness of God's grace reborn in every kind work and every helping hand, not just today, but every day. May the light, the hope and the joy of Christmas remain with us always. In that spirit, we can extend ourselves in yearlong gift-giving, not offering immense gifts, but in providing little things that, one by one, make our neighbour's lives holier, healthier and happier.

News • Monday 3 December 2018 • By Michelle McDonald

How to ensure your Christmas gifts and food are slavery-free

Australia's first federal Modern Slavery Act was passed on Thursday, establishing requirements for businesses with an annual consolidated revenue of \$100 million or more to report on slavery risks in their supply chains.

The Act, which is estimated to affect more than 40 million people trapped in modern slavery world-wide, is the result of years of advocacy by organisations, including the Anglican Church Southern Queensland, which is part of the Stop The Traffik coalition.

With Australians predicted to spend more than \$50 billion this Christmas period, ACSQ Justice Enabler Peter Branjerdporn said that our consumer choices can have a big impact on the lives of the people who grow the food and make the gifts we buy this Christmas.

“As Christians, we are called to love our neighbour,” Mr Branjerdporn said.

“Christmas is a good time to reflect on who grows the food and makes the gifts we buy, as hospitality and gift-giving should come from a place of love.

“By buying fairly-traded or otherwise ethically-certified food and gifts, we are caring for the people we are buying for, but more importantly for the people who work in supply chains, many of who are at risk of modern slavery or other forms of labour exploitation.”

Chocolate is a popular food stuff to serve and gift to give at Christmas; however, the international chocolate industry is notorious for slavery and labour exploitation, including that of children.

Stop The Traffik encourages consumers to purchase Fairtrade and other certified slavery-free chocolate to help eradicate child trafficking in the chocolate industry.

It is estimated that over 2.1 million children labour on West African cocoa plantations, where 70% of the world’s cocoa is produced before being sold to well-known confectionary brands found on the shelves of local supermarkets.

Many of these children are trafficked and trapped in debt bondage, as they carry out hazardous work in hot climates using chain saws and machetes while exposed to toxic agricultural chemicals.

Mr Branjerdporn said that there are a number of ways we can ensure that our food and gift purchases are ethically minded this Christmas.

“My top three tips for ethical shopping this Christmas are to donate to a charity in lieu of a gift, buy locally produced goods that are made from ingredients or materials that are locally sourced, or to buy fairly-traded or otherwise ethically-certified items, including prawns, coffee, tea, chocolate, sugar, fashion, sports balls, cosmetics, and jewellery,” he said.

Films & TV • Monday 3 December 2018 • By Jonathan Sargeant

Widows

Sometimes you watch a trailer, then see the film and realise you saw all the best bits already. Sometimes watching the film reveals so much more than the two-minute advertisement. Steve McQueen’s new film, *Widows*, is just such a film.

With a screenplay by *Gone Girl* writer Gillian Flynn and the director, *Widows* teases ostensibly as a heist story. Viola Davis plays Veronica Rawlings, whose husband, Liam Neeson’s Harry,

has just died during a robbery gone wrong. And wrong it does go, with an exploding van incinerating the team of criminals and the two million dollars. Veronica's grieving is interrupted by local gangster Jamal Manning, now running for office. The stolen money was to be a donation to him to fund his campaign and he is less than happy. He gives Veronica a month to pay him back. That Veronica barely knew of her husband's nefarious career and has no skills in the criminal arts is of no concern to Manning. Using Harry's notebook with the plans for one last heist, she decides to pull together the widows left behind by her husband's failed job to get the money and restart their lives.

So far, so good. You may even remember a British miniseries back in 1983 made from the source novel. But Flynn and McQueen manage to take the original Lynda La Plante text and reset the context for the film in a very urban Chicago. This serves to ground the actions of each character in a desperate struggle to survive in a city that has gone very wrong. McQueen paints the landscape as a harsh place that looks hauntingly beautiful, yet remains compellingly threatening. His success in achieving this reminds the viewer that at times, crime takes place for reasons other than greed.

Beyond subverting the economic motivations for criminality, *Widows* firmly locates the story in a patriarchal setting where escape from domination, domestic violence and dishonesty through lawbreaking seems eminently justifiable. This is where a film like *Widows* excels. This year's similarly pitched *Ocean's Eight* featured a great cast but reduced the theme of sisterhood to sharing interest in particular shoes. Yes, shoes are great, but *Widows* does a much better job of exposing the world that creates the need for the escapism of fashion and much worse.

Fortunately, McQueen tempers the thematic nature of *Widows* by drawing terrific performances from an ensemble cast. Viola Davis has made a career playing grim characters on the verge of nervous breakdown. Here she does not disappoint in that respect, but there is an extra edge of world-weary resignation kept at bay by her ticking-clock circumstance. Australian actress Elizabeth Debicki also shines as another member of the crew, Alice, finding her centre as she gradually escapes passivity. Michelle Rodriguez is good too. A very frail looking Robert Duvall cameos, still capable of an explosive monologue. Colin Farrell as a political rival is not given much to do, but always remains charismatic. Some wry humour sprinkled throughout the script leavens the dark tones, too.

So what looked initially like just another heist film has delivered much more. Some genuinely unexpected twists in the film's second half also propel the narrative beyond typical genre tropes. Director McQueen is on top form; whilst the term 'widow' is defined by the absence of a male partner, *Widows* stand very much on their own feet.

Widows, MA, is directed by Steve McQueen.