Reflections • Tuesday 21 July 2020 • By Bishop Jeremy Greaves

Pictures, parables and perspectives

“As a child I was captivated by optical illusions. My Year 5 teacher Mr McGowan introduced me to the work of famous graphic artist M.C. Escher and I pored over his images in a school library book trying to make sense of the drawings” (Bishop Jeremy Greaves)

As a child I was captivated by optical illusions. My Year 5 teacher Mr McGowan introduced me to the work of famous graphic artist M.C. Escher and I pored over his images in a school library book trying to make sense of the drawings. There were staircases that wound around and around always going up but never getting anywhere. A hand drawing a hand drawing a hand where the beginning and the end seemed interchangeable. Pictures of fish that became birds where it was never quite clear when the transformation took place.

A few years on I was introduced to Magic Eye books – those infuriating pictures that looked like one thing until you managed to focus (or unfocus) your gaze just right and suddenly a hidden image was revealed…and once you had seen the hidden image that was often all you could see from then on.

Sometimes just a small shift in perspective can completely change our understanding of something and from then on, we can never go back.

I recently read a short reflection on the parable of the widow and the judge (Luke 18.1-8). While Luke suggests that the parable is a teaching on prayer and the importance of persistence in prayer, commentators have always struggled to make sense of it, since scholars would argue that the explanation is a later addition – a piece of early commentary much like the explanation of the parable of the sower in Matthew 13.18-23. In the reflection I read, six words transformed my understanding of the parable and changed the way I have read it for 30 years. “What if the widow is God?” It was not a...
question I had ever even considered asking and having asked the question, I will never read the parable the same way again.

In his Easter sermon this year, recorded at his kitchen table, the Archbishop of Canterbury invited us to imagine a different future. He said, “After so much suffering, so much heroism from key workers and the NHS, so much effort, once this epidemic is conquered here and round the world, we cannot be content to go back to what was before as if all is normal. There needs to be a resurrection of our common life, something that links to the old, but is different and more beautiful. We must dream it because it is the gift of God. Then we must build it in partnership with God.”

The past few months have given us all a change in perspective. We have seen and experienced God’s church in ways we might never have imagined before. In some places, old arguments about service times have been made meaningless by online worship. In some places people have discovered new ways of praying, new ways of being the church. Whatever it is that we have learnt from this time, there is no going back, and the challenge issued by the Archbishop of Canterbury is a clarion call to action as we emerge into whatever future we imagine: “Something that links to the old, but is different and more beautiful. We must dream it... then we must build it...”

Writing in The New York Times this week, Lutheran Pastor Emily Scott, offers this challenge in slightly different terms, “Shaken from our routines, many are asking new questions. Do we really need to spend hours commuting? Should work be such a priority when our parents won't be around forever? Why not make that change we’ve dreamed of now? Societally, there's sudden clarity as well. We see the perilous failures of a health care system that leaves so many to fend for themselves, an economy that leaves so little margin for disaster. We can see the vast liabilities of the old life...Instead of clamoring to go “back”, we can turn, and face into a future that is uncertain, but rife with possibilities.”

News • Thursday 16 July 2020 • By Ian Eckersley

Defence Force chaplain praised for work in Operation Bushfire Assist

Parish of Wishart community chaplain Michelle Philp responded to the call in what was the largest deployment of defence reservists since WWII (January 2020)
They are the stories and emotions of a destructive and traumatic bushfire season that will stay with Air Force reservist and chaplain Michelle Philp forever.

There was the farmer who lost everything in the South Australian summer bushfires just days after starting chemotherapy treatment. Another landowner suffered significant damage to his property. He was upset that the Australian flag at the front of his house was consumed by fire, but delighted to wake up one day to find a new flag erected by Australian Defence Force (ADF) reservists in time for Australia Day.

Other property owners, aged in their 70s and 80s, told stories of spending 30 years building up their farms as they stood amidst the wreckage of their properties bluntly saying, “I don’t have another 30 years.”

Like most Australians, Chaplain Philp spent the Christmas and New Year period praying as bushfires ravaged our country. She could see our nation hurting and wanted so badly to help.

So, when the call came through to the Air Force reservist and community chaplain on 10 January to ask if St John’s Anglican Church, Wishart would release her to assist with the bushfire recovery operation, she welcomed the chance to serve people in traumatised and shocked communities.

“The response of St John’s, Wishart to the request was amazing. They wanted to help and were glad their community chaplain could go on their behalf,” Chaplain Philp said.

“I was sent out with their prayers and blessing. Three days after receiving the call, I was on a plane to Adelaide and that night I was at my first community recovery meeting in the Adelaide Hills.

“For the next six weeks I worked alongside the local Army ‘padre’, caring for our hardworking Australian Defence Forces teams, helping them to deal with the grief and devastation they experienced every day with fire-affected locals, as well as dealing directly with property owners, their families and townspeople who were living through a national disaster.”

Chaplain Philp said that in the early weeks of her deployment, the land was black, eerie and silent immediately after the fires and that people were generally still numb from shock and wondering where to start.

The challenge was how to rebuild their lives and communities when fire had taken everything – not only their material possessions, but also the safe places where they came home from work and relaxed.

“Many people asked where God was in the midst of this devastation,” she said.

“When I attended community meetings, especially in the first week there was such a mix of emotions on display among locals – shock, trauma, anger and feelings of being overwhelmed, but the most important thing I could do was to be quiet and calm and to listen.

“Two scriptures stayed close to me over those weeks. The first was Psalm 46.1 with the reminder that “God is our refuge and strength; a very present help in trouble.” Despite the enormous trials around me, I could be assured that God was not only still in control, but that he was giving strength, refuge and help.
“I was to ‘be still and know that he is God’. In the midst of a crisis, that is one of the best things Christians have to offer: a calm certainty that God is at work and an ability to be the still, quiet and listening ear for the person who is in a time of trouble.

“The second scripture became my prayer for the fire-affected people of the Adelaide Hills: “Come to me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11.28). The burdens of recovery are enormous. The to-do list of starting again seems never ending. It was my prayer that these weary and burdened people would come to Jesus and find their rest in him.”

But she said the teamwork, camaraderie and generous spirit among the local community and the ADF recovery teams made it such a privilege to be part of the recovery effort.

By the end of her six-week deployment, hope had begun to return. Rain caused black fields to turn green. Burnt trees grew bright fuzzy shoots and birds began to sing on their branches again. Teams had cleared the rubble, built fences and removed tonnes of dead and fallen trees.

Just last month her work was recognised by the Department of Defence with a letter of appreciation to our Diocese for “your support of Operation Bushfire Assist 2019-2020” which was the “largest call out of the ADF Reserve since World War II.”

Chaplain Philp said she could not have served and met the challenges without the support of her local church.

“St John’s not only released me, they also sent me regular messages of prayer and encouragement as they partnered with me in what I was doing. I am so grateful to be part of such a caring community,” she said.

Features • Friday 24 July 2020 • By The Rev’d Dr Hugh Begbie

William Wilberforce: evangelical abolitionist

Portrait of William Wilberforce (1821)
In the history of the Church there have been periods of significant, and sometimes rapid, change. The first five centuries were seminal in the confirmation of the authority of scripture, in defining through debate, councils and creeds the key doctrines and boundaries of the faith and the setting in place of many of the characteristics of the Church we are familiar with today. The Reformation was another key period of change; a reaction to the perceived corruption of the medieval church and its failure to reflect the teachings of Jesus, particularly in relation to the place of faith, grace and scripture. A third great period of ferment was the Evangelical Revival in the United Kingdom in the 18th century. The key figures in this revival were George Whitefield and John and Charles Wesley. We still sing many of Charles’ hymns today.

My first true exploration of this latter period of our history began when I was studying for ministry in 1973. The complexities and consequences of this seminal period of which, however, I have only discovered through experience, time and study.

The Evangelical Revival of the 18th century was, like the Reformation, a reaction to the corruption of the day. The industrial revolution was well underway and, while there was growing wealth, the spiritual life of the community in the United Kingdom was in a bad way. Thomas Carlyle, an historian of the period, described the country’s condition as “stomach well alive, soul extinct”. The dominant religious belief was deism, that is, a belief in God, but a god who is remote, who got the world going (the ‘Great Architect’) but now leaves it and us to do our thing having little, if any, influence over our daily lives. Morally, society was decadent. Child labour was rampant, there were huge problems with gambling and drunkenness and many unwanted babies were conceived. Ninety-seven per cent of ‘workhouse’ babies died. What is more, public executions had become a form of theatre and slavery was considered an economic necessity. The ‘Bloody Code’ of the 18th Century (which led to the transportation of many convicts to this country) tired the populace with its oppressiveness and inflexibility. As for the Church, it had become for many a social and formal institution in which preaching had become empty and meaningless.

William Wilberforce was born under the influence of this revival, 20 years after John Wesley’s conversion. He was born into a wealthy family, who were merchants by trade, and his early life was, in his own words, “idle”, but eventually he decided to enter politics. In 1786 he had a conversion experience. William was closely linked with friends and family, many of who became part of ‘The Clapham Sect’. A sect it was not. Nor was it a club, and not all its members lived in Clapham. The name was a journalistic tag for a group of friends and relatives motivated by the same evangelical faith with a common commitment to spiritual and social causes. William was also close friends with William Pitt the Younger who became prime minister. Other key influences for William Wilberforce were his aunt and uncle, Hannah and William Wilberforce, clergyman and abolitionist John Newton, Thomas Scott his local church priest, and most importantly Thomas Clarkson whose opposition to the slave trade deeply moved William and inspired him into action.

Under Clarkson’s influence Wilberforce began a campaign to end the Transatlantic trade in which British ships were carrying slaves, in terrible conditions, from Africa to the West Indies and the Americas where they were sold. Over a period of 18 years Wilberforce regularly introduced anti-slavery motions in parliament while others of his friends supported his efforts with pamphlets, books, rallies and petitions. In 1807 the Transatlantic slave trade was finally abolished when the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act was passed, but this did not include the liberation of those already slaves. It was not until just after Wilberforce’s death in 1833 that the Slavery Abolition Act, giving freedom to all slaves in the British Empire was passed.
The key to understanding Wilberforce is that his faith was both spiritual and practical. Firstly, William’s faith was spiritual. That is to say, he was influenced by the pietism and the call to prayer that was characteristic of the Wesleyan revival and he was deeply committed to the study of scripture and the call to mission. Secondly, William’s faith was practical. He was driven by the need to make life better for people and the world a better place. He is best known for his fight to see the abolition of the slave trade, but he also supported 69 philanthropic causes; gave a quarter of his income to people who were poor; and, fought on behalf of chimney sweeps, single mothers, orphans and young people in trouble with the law during punitive times. He was also a primary founder of the Church Missionary Society, the British and Foreign Bible Society, the Society for Bettering the Condition and Increasing the Comforts of the Poor and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA).

I grew up in a church influenced by this revivalist movement and there is much in its commitment to scripture and active spirituality that I deeply appreciate. However, while Wilberforce took on a dominant structural evil in his society, I am not sure that the churches I grew up in were as willing to do so. Care for individuals and the aged and involvement in health have always been strong, but I often wonder as a Church whether we are as willing to address such ingrained un-Godly social issues. For example, how well have we explored the ethical issues surrounding the way our economy works, particularly the impossible idea of endless economic growth which contributes to modern-day slavery? I cannot help wondering if I am caught up in ways of doing things that do not reflect the will of God, but which I do not oppose and perhaps cannot even see.

Many of us know little of Wilberforce, but his attitude to faith and life is deeply relevant for us today. There are two mistakes we can and often do make. We can emphasise the social responsibilities of the Church, but neglect Wilberforce’s deep commitment to scripture and prayer. Or we can emphasise scripture and prayer, but fail in our social responsibilities. Truth and action must go together. This is a lesson Wilberforce’s work teaches me.

William Wilberforce did not experience great health during his life, but he was spiritually motivated and deeply determined to do what was right – whatever the cost. His life was not easy, but he remains for us today a remarkable example of works motivated by deep Biblical faith.

Editor’s note: If you would like to stay up to date on modern day slavery and trafficking campaigns and developments, please visit the Be Slavery Free website. The Anglican Church Southern Queensland is a member of Be Slavery Free (formerly StopTheTraffik).
Let's talk about racism: five people, five stories

"The colleague turned to me and said, 'Oh, I'm sorry, didn't mean anything by it, but I thought that you being Aboriginal, you wouldn't have morals or principles!' I was conflicted on whether I should stay, as I so loved working with my Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, but unbelievably offended and hurt, I resigned" (Aunty Sandra King OAM, who was awarded a prestigious Australia Day Honours award for service to the Indigenous community in 2020)

Racism and cultural prejudice have been increasingly discussed in the media and among the broader community recently. In this year of ‘Being Together: Practising Peacemaking’, five men and women of faith share about their personal experiences of racism and cultural prejudice, or of witnessing racism, in a range of settings. Their unique stories tell us that racism is real and that we all have a role to play in ‘practising peacemaking’ when we encounter racism and cultural prejudice.

Racism in the workplace – Sandra King OAM, ACSQ Reconciliation Action Plan Coordinator, businesswoman and mother

Recently, the ABC reported that, “A Hunter Valley high school is under fire for not suspending a teacher who allegedly made racist comments about Indigenous Australians to a classroom full of students.” Even though there were a number of Aboriginal students reportedly present, I was not surprised that the teacher did not get suspended, as, in my experience, racist complaints by First Nation Peoples tend to favour the non-Indigenous worker.

Over 10 years ago, I was working for a high school and the following incidents led to my resignation.

A colleague told me that another staff member had seen my BMW parked outside and asked her, ‘Who has the Beamer?’ She said she replied with, ‘The ATS1 Teacher Aide’ and he responded laughing, ‘Did she steal it?’ To my horror, my colleague had laughed and ‘corrected him’ by saying, “No! She
married a rich Greek guy!” I initially stood in total disbelief and then I was fuming. I angrily replied, “What? We started with nothing. My husband Jim had a second job and I was working part-time in a factory! We did it hard to have what we have now. That’s just a totally insulting comment.”

Not long after, during a lunch break with my co-workers, one arrived back from a department store with a new kitchen appliance. We all admired it. However, seeing where it was manufactured, I commented “Oh, it was made in France.” My colleagues looked surprised and asked what was wrong with that. I replied politely, “I stopped buying products that are made in France, including perfume and fashion in the early 80s. This is just my personal protest of their nuclear bomb testing in the Pacific Ocean.” One of the colleagues asked in a surprised tone, “Do you have morals?” The other ladies laughed until they saw the look of shock on my face. The colleague turned to me and said, “Oh, I’m sorry, didn’t mean anything by it, but I thought that you being Aboriginal, you wouldn’t have morals or principles!”

I was conflicted on whether I should stay, as I so loved working with my Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, but unbelievably offended and hurt, I resigned.

“I was born in Melbourne to Thai immigrants and grew up in Bangkok. We came back to Australia when I was 15. Whilst I have never experienced racism in the form of physical violence or the threat of it, I am no stranger to ‘casual’ racism, including right here in Brisbane” (Peter Branjerdporn)

Racism in casual conversations – Peter Branjerdporn, ACSQ Justice Unit staff member and pharmacist

I was born in Melbourne to Thai immigrants and grew up in Bangkok. We came back to Australia when I was 15. Whilst I have never experienced racism in the form of physical violence or the threat of it, I am no stranger to ‘casual’ racism, including right here in Brisbane. I was automatically lumped in with a group called the ‘Chinese Students’, along with any other students from Asia, at high school and
university. Without my church and evangelical student friends, I probably would have felt a lot less supported and much more alienated.

A few years ago, an older colleague at a former workplace started ranting about “Asian students coming here to study and never returning home” and “taking our jobs” all morning. In order to make a point without being confrontational, I drily commented that we want their money to fund our universities, but don’t they dare make a life for themselves here. Getting the drift, my colleague replied, “Oh, but not you – you’re an Aussie to me. You’re one of us.” I was stunned and so angry that I had to leave work early that day.

Even though my colleague texted later that day to apologise, I never explained to him why I was offended. In hindsight, I should have tried explaining in a loving way how racism toward people of colour, especially those of Asian heritage, is also racism toward me. Racism affects all of us because we are all brothers and sisters in God’s family.

I realise now that the insecure nature of my colleague’s work, along with his fear of losing his job to a younger generation of professionals in multi-cultural Australia, likely fueled his racism.

We all need to confront our own fears and challenge our assumptions about people from other cultural backgrounds so all people feel safe and welcome.

“The racism I experience tends to be intertwined with chauvinism. If a racist white male sees a female Muslim, he often feels that he has the right to say and do whatever he wants to her. But if a Muslim male is with me, I do not experience such encounters. This is really awful because it’s another way of making me feel disempowered” (Salam El-merebi)
Racism in big cities – Salam El-merebi, social worker, art psychotherapist, human rights advocate and mother

I am a visible Muslim woman who wears a head scarf and I have experienced a lot of discrimination and racism as a result. No witness has ever come to intervene. Bystanders just stand there watching or acting as if they did not see anything.

A few years ago I was assaulted physically by a young white man, who also made racist slurs to me about my head scarf. This happened in daylight hours on a suburban street on Brisbane’s south side. Other men and women watched, but nobody came to my aid.

It’s common for this kind of thing to happen to Muslim women when they are either alone or with other Muslim women. This kind of thing never happens when I am with my husband.

The last incident happened at a local Bunnings when I was five months pregnant with my baby son. This time my husband was with me; however, he was a bit further from me, so it looked as though I was alone. A white 35- to 40-year-old man walked passed me and said in an aggressive tone, “There are a lot of you bloody mozzies.” In response, I said, “Excuse me, did you just say what I heard?” And he replied, “Well there is a lot of you.” I normally just deal with it and stand up for myself, but this time I asked my husband to step in. The guy freaked out and could not handle the fact that there was a male with me. My husband got the Bunnings manager involved and made such a scene that around five horrified families came to us to say, “We are not all racist.” We also had an Aboriginal man come up to my husband in a spirit of solidarity and say, “Thank you brother. Good on you.”

Thus, the racism I experience tends to be intertwined with chauvinism. If a racist white male sees a female Muslim, he often feels that he has the right to say and do whatever he wants to her. But if a Muslim male is with me, I do not experience such encounters. This is really awful because it’s another way of making me feel disempowered. I can take care of myself and I should not need a Muslim male, like my husband, with me to be safe.
“While these days I am determined to do more when I witness such acts of racism, there are days when I am not brave enough, or I’m in a hurry, or I tell myself “It’s not that bad”...and then I remember Syd and all the stories I’ve heard from other First Nations people since and I’m motivated to do better,” (Bishop Jeremy Greaves)

Racism in small towns – The Right Rev’d Jeremy Greaves, Bishop and father

Sometimes ‘casual’ or unconscious racism can be the most insidious.

I vividly remember arriving in a small town, which not long before had been proclaimed “Australia’s most racist town” by a major metropolitan newspaper, to begin work as parish priest. I was keen to make a good impression and not make too many waves. I arrived full of idealism, energy and passion.

“Just wait ‘till you’ve had to put up with them for a while,” I was told at dinner a few days after we’d settled in. Then, “Don’t let the darkies get at your orange tree,” advised a neighbour. In both instances no one flinched, and I didn’t want to make a fuss by saying anything.

The following week I walked into one of the local shops. When I arrived, there were already four people waiting at the counter, so I hung back prepared to wait. The person behind the counter looked straight through the four Aboriginal women already waiting and asked me what I wanted to order. I remembered my friend Syd Graham, a Kaurna man, who was ordained priest alongside me, who made a point of wearing his clergy shirt and collar whenever he went shopping because “for the first time in my life, I don’t get served last.”

I motioned towards the women ahead of me in the shop and said, “I think these women were next.” The shop attendant tutted and raised her eyebrows in disdain and then made a show of spraying air-freshener around behind the counter before demanding of the women, “Whadda ya want?!”

I felt ashamed and embarrassed and could feel my cheeks reddening as I stood in silence. I paid for my drink and left.
I still feel shamed by that encounter, and while these days I am determined to do more when I witness such acts of racism, there are days when I am not brave enough, or I'm in a hurry, or I tell myself “It's not that bad”...and then I remember Syd and all the stories I've heard from other First Nations people since and I'm motivated to do better.

"One of the most disturbing incidents happened three years ago. My son – who'd just started at a school - asked me what ‘nigger’ meant. I was shocked! I asked where he heard it and he said innocently, ‘My friends at school call me that.’” (Anglicare SQ staff member)

Racism in schools – Anglicare Southern Queensland staff member and mother

I was born in Rwanda and I have called Australia home since 2003. Coming from a country with a colonial past, the seeds of hate and division were not new concepts to me. I survived genocide and came to Australia as a refugee.

During my first few years in Australia, I generally felt welcomed and included, but there were occasions where unpleasant remarks or glances were made. For example, there were times I felt that my rental applications were unfairly denied.

One of the most disturbing incidents happened three years ago. My son – who'd just started at a school – asked me what 'nigger' meant. I was shocked! I asked where he heard it and he said innocently, “My friends at school call me that.” I was outraged!
As a parent, your first instinct is always to protect your child. I told him that those children were using a bad word and that he needed to tell them his name. I told him about the strength of his Biblical name. I also told him that if it happens again, he needed to tell his teacher immediately. I thought about changing schools but soon realised that it was no guarantee from a similar incident occurring. I decided to talk to his teacher and luckily she listened and took action. I also increased my involvement in the school and thankfully, I did not hear such revolting racist slurs again.

When we moved house, my son changed schools and has now made better friends. Unfortunately, he still gets picked on by a few for being different, and it breaks my heart. But I am now confident that he has built resilience to handle such tricky situations. I also have good lines of communication with his school. I can only hope and pray that the next generation will not inherit such past racist bigotry and hatred.

We all need to stand against racist language and ideologies within our circle of friends and relatives and workplaces and the wider community. Only then will we create a more harmonious world to live in for all of our children.

Australian Human Rights Commission

The Australian Human Rights Commission website says that:

“Many people want to stand against racism but aren’t sure how. We’ve all been a bystander at one time or another. It can be uncomfortable. Often people don’t respond because they don’t want to be a target of abuse themselves. Standing up to racism can be a powerful sign of support. It can also make the perpetrator think twice about their actions. When responding, always assess the situation and never put yourself at risk. Your actions don’t need to involve confrontation.”

Visit the Australian Human Rights Commission website for suggestions on how to address racism in public, online, in the workplace and in education settings.

News • Wednesday 22 July 2020 • By Australian Churches Refugee Taskforce, National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA)

Churches taskforce seeks assurances to reduce detention centre health risks

In an urgent letter to the Acting Chief Medical Officer Professor Paul Kelly and the Minister for Health The Hon. Greg Hunt the Australian Churches Refugee Taskforce of the National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA) has sought urgent assurances from the responsible government public health authorities that the people at detention centres in Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney have safe accommodation during the continuing pandemic, as social distancing is not possible in the common areas of current facilities and where bathrooms and bedrooms are shared.

The Churches Taskforce appeals for guaranteed access to COVID-19 testing when any symptoms are present in immigration detention centres and an assurance that people moving in and out of these locations in a staff role are both trained and monitored with regard to the highest standards of infection control and prevention.
Mr Rob Floyd, Chair of the Australian Churches Refugee Taskforce said that “With the recent infections of staff assigned to the Mantra Hotel at Preston in Melbourne’s COVID-19 lockdown area, and Villawood Detention Centre in Sydney, we believe that the public health risks mean that those moving freely in and out of these centres pose the highest public health risk at this time.”

“In seeking these assurances, we must reiterate that our preferred position is that refugees and people seeking asylum in crowded immigration detention locations in Melbourne, Brisbane and Sydney are safely transferred into community housing as a public health benefit for all. We are some of the groups that have offered to help with housing,” Mr Floyd said.

“Our church members, chaplains and ministers, including religious sisters and brothers, who have previously undertaken visits and maintain life-giving and at times life-saving relationships with immigration detainees in Australia, have conveyed to us their utmost concern about the public health risks associated with the living conditions of refugees and people seeking asylum in hotels and detention centres during the COVID-19 pandemic – specifically at Preston VIC, Kangaroo Point QLD and Villawood NSW,” said Ms Liz Stone, General Secretary of the NCCA, in the urgent letter.

Last week workers assigned to working with people detained at the Mantra Hotel at Preston and at Villawood Detention Centre in Sydney have tested positive for COVID-19.

This was a scenario feared by one thousand medical professionals in April, who asked the Government to release refugees and people seeking asylum from detention into safe housing, as part of a responsible public health approach to this pandemic.

News • Friday 17 July 2020 • By Michelle McDonald

Anglican leaders call for men detained in a Kangaroo Point hotel to be released into the community

The Rev’d Canon Gary Harch (second from right), The Very Rev’d Dr Peter Catt (third from left) and Queensland Community Alliance staff member Elise Ganley (first from left) joined other faith leaders and community members at a prayer vigil at the Kangaroo Point cliffs on Friday 12 June 2020 for the men being detained at the Kangaroo Point Central Hotel
Anglicans recently gathered with other people of faith at the Kangaroo Point cliffs to pray for the more than 100 men, sent to Brisbane from Manus and Nauru, who are being indefinitely detained in a Kangaroo Point hotel.

The majority of the men held in the Kangaroo Point Central Hotel came to Brisbane under medevac laws and have been detained there since last year following almost seven years in offshore detention.

Over 80 per cent of the men detained in the Kangaroo Point hotel have been found to be refugees, while a number of others have requested that their claims for asylum be processed onshore.

St Mary’s Anglican Church, Kangaroo Point parish priest The Rev’d Canon Gary Harch, who attended the vigil last month, has called upon Federal Government representatives to ensure fairness and transparency and release the men into community detention.

“The Federal Government’s current policy prevents refugees from Manus or Nauru from rebuilding their lives in our communities despite the fact that seeking asylum is legal,” Canon Harch said.

“So, they continue to be detained after spending seven years trapped on Manus and Nauru instead of being released into community detention.

“The great majority of the men from Manus and Nauru in the Kangaroo Point hotel have been found to be refugees, so as leaders we have to ask, ‘Why are these men being detained indefinitely?’

“Given this, one might make the assumption that these men are being used as political footballs to win votes.

“Rightly, the Federal Government recently announced new visa arrangements for Hong Kong passport holders to remain here, with pathways to permanent residency.

“Thus, one has to ask, ‘Why can't the men in the Kangaroo Point hotel be extended the same compassion?’

“As leaders, we must hold the Morrison Government to account and ensure all people who need protection are treated with fairness and consistency.”

A number of local Anglican community members have been actively advocating for these men by writing letters to and phoning their elected representatives, including St Andrew's Anglican Church, South Brisbane parish council member Erica Lloyd-Smith.

Ms Lloyd-Smith said that as a Christian she is compelled to respond to the Biblical calls to assist refugees and love our neighbour.

“Throughout the Old and New Testaments, we are exhorted to help widows, orphans and refugees,” she said.

“The greatest commandment Christ himself gave us is to love the Lord our God and to love our neighbour as ourselves.

“Surely in the world we are living in, this most emphatically includes those who are seeking asylum.”
The Friday 12 June prayer vigil was organised by the Queensland Community Alliance, which the Anglican Church Southern Queensland’s Social Responsibilities Committee is a member of.

A number of other Christian faith leaders and lay people joined local Anglicans at the prayer vigil, including from Catholic and Uniting churches, with people from other faith backgrounds also joining in the prayers.

Canon Harch said that Christians are called to advocate for these men and to pray for both the men and our elected representatives.

“As Christians, we are called to love our neighbour and to treat others as we would like to be treated,” he said.

“So, as Christians, we can each ask ourselves, ‘How would I want to be treated if I had been detained for over seven years on an island and in a Kangaroo Point hotel by a government who was breaching my right to live in peace and safety with my family?’

“Some of these men have families living locally and yet they are not allowed to read their children a story or hug their wives.

“The prophetic nature of the Christian life is that we advocate for their right to safety and freedom and for the right of their family members to live in peace with their fathers and husbands.

“We must also pray for the men in detention and pray for all of our elected representatives, many of who declare to be Christians, that they ensure justice, transparency and fairness for these men.”

Features • Thursday 23 July 2020 • By Bettrys Lowe, Amy Norman

How to run an effective and engaging Sunday children’s ministry
Since 2014, the St Bart’s Kids ministry has grown from seven children to an average of 81 children participating in Sunday children’s programmes.

The effectiveness of St Bart’s Sunday children’s ministry largely relies upon an intentional approach to teaching the Bible, so children of all ages can read, understand and grow in their love of God.

At the start of every week, we sit down with the rest of the ministry team to read the forthcoming Sunday’s scripture and discuss the direction of the preaching. This conversation involves unpacking the tricky parts of the text, identifying the key theological themes and clarifying the Biblical context. This assists us to identify the core message of the teaching for all people. From there, the St Bart’s Kids team meets separately to discuss how to shape the teaching for children, and simplify the scripture in a way that is accessible to children aged from one to 12 years old.

It is important that the pedagogy is approached with different ages in mind. For example, at St Bart’s, we break down the scripture in a way that is suitable for different age brackets, these being Early Childhood (Crèche and Pre-school children up to four years of age); Lower Primary (Kindy and Prep-aged children); Middle Primary (Years 1-4); and, Upper Primary (Years 5-6).

We find it easier to break down the scripture in descending order of age, starting with adults (along with the wider ministry team) followed by the Upper Primary, Middle Primary, Lower Primary, and Early Childhood age brackets.

As we get to know the children, the activities are chosen based on both the age bracket and the kinds of activities they like. For example, the activities for the Early Childhood group are very simple and sensory, such as water play, gross motor movements, or play dough. The Lower Primary group enjoys colouring-in, in-house developed jigsaw puzzles and hands-on group learning. While, the Middle Primary group prefers more active activities involving gross motor skills, including competitive team-based pursuits.

One thing the children do have in common is their love of routine and rhythm, so we follow a particular ‘formula’ (as per this sample run sheet) each Sunday regarding what we do and where we do it, with different activities week to week giving the necessary variety. This routine is even more important for kids with special needs.

For example, we begin with a brief three- to five-minute Kids’ Talk, which is given with the broader church present and usually involves drama and dressing up.

From there, the children move into their allocated rooms (either crèche, preschool, or the hall for Sunday School). Within these rooms, we give what we call the ‘all in teaching’, which is more targeted and extended, with bigger concepts unpacked. During this period we often show a video, such as from the Saddleback Kids YouTube channel. There are a lot of great Biblical resources available that can be used for any number of children. We find that the addition of multi-media content helps bring that week's scripture passage to life, keeping the children engaged and interested.

Within Sunday School, our Kindy and Prep kids head off to join in a simple game or physical activity that helps reinforce the main point or aid in teaching more about that week's topic. Our Middle and Upper Primary children remain together to engage in more fast-paced, team-oriented games that either focus on a particular scripture verse or concept linked to that day's reading.
After our games time, the children break up into small groups (based on their school age) to read the Bible together, discuss it using Small Group questions prepared, complete a related activity, and pray together. This is a fun time going deeper with their peers.

These groups are led by a team of dedicated small group leaders. The same core leaders for a given year-group rotate week to week so the children are discipled by the same three to four leaders across the year, while also allowing the leaders to stay in the 9.30 am service on the Sundays they are not rostered on. This format enables intentional discipleship across generations.

Each year level has a designated space within the hall and they sit around different coloured mats, with each mat colour representing a different year level.

At the end of each St Bart's Kids session, we pray together. Sometimes we use aids, such as prayer dice which have illustrated prayer prompts on each side, to help guide the groups' prayer time.

We put considerable time into selecting existing online or print resources and creating original resources. For example, we find The NIRV Adventure Bible a great resource for our upper primary aged children, modifying it to make it more accessible for kids under 10 years of age.

The resources we create ‘from scratch’ usually contain simple and engaging original illustrations that are designed with free apps like Adobe Fresco and Adobe Draw. We tend to design vector-based illustrations, meaning they are created with lines rather than pixels, enabling the illustrations to be used in both small sizes (e.g. on cards) and large sizes (e.g. posters or slides on the projector).

Illustrations are used to draw attention to the main themes or characters, rather than to tell an entire narrative. The illustrations are especially helpful when reading Bible stories to very young children, as we often point to the illustrations when saying key words so children can learn word association and symbolism (for example, that a dove symbolises the Holy Spirit). The drawings are used in a wide variety of activities, including jigsaws, snap card games, word search puzzles, crosswords, spot-the-difference sheets, match activities, craft, with all the illustrations at the end of a given Biblical series used in the ever-popular bingo game.

To help connect weekdays to Sundays, we create additional resources, including videos, activities and, most recently, one- to two-minute scripture e-books. The e-books adapt Old and New Testament scriptures for young children, with simple messaging and bright illustrations. The e-books are designed to encourage children to read the Bible more at home and to aid parents in story telling at bedtime. We create the e-books using Apple's Keynote (which is similar to Microsoft PowerPoint), copying and pasting text from Apple Pages (similar to Microsoft Word) and inserting illustrations (as PNG files) and a recorded voiceover directly into Keynote. The completed e-book is then uploaded as a video file to Vimeo.

Importantly, we are also very intentional in the recruitment and training of children's ministry leaders, setting expectations from the start. We, of course, adhere to legislated ‘Blue Card’ and safe ministry checks, and all children's ministry leaders undergo child protection training. Parishioners interested in joining the St Bart's Kids team complete an expression of interest form and are then provided with a position description for each role. We then chat with the prospective leader to chat about their motivations, experience and the age group they are interested in leading. They are then provided with a letter, explaining the role and any formal requirements. All children's ministry team members are asked to wear a team shirt when serving, comprising of a bright blue t-shirt with 'St Bart's Kids' on the
front and 'Team' on the back. St Bart's Kids Team lanyards are also worn to identify which room or space they are serving (e.g. 'Year 4' or 'crèche').

All St Bart's Kids team leaders are given easy-to-follow instructions for each session, along with suggested answers to the discussion questions so they are informed and feel supported.

On our Team Wall near the entrance of the hall, the children's ministry team members' photos and short 'bios' are featured along with other St Bart's team members. This helps to build camaraderie and a sense of being part of a bigger picture. The older children also love reading the team leaders’ bios and finding out what work they do and what hobbies they enjoy. We are so thankful to have a team from a range of ages and backgrounds who serve and love the children of St Bart's.

By Thursday of each week, we upload all of the forthcoming Sunday's St Bart's Kids resources on to our [website](#). As a Resource Church, we are very happy for other parishes to download and use our resources (and accompanying instructions). We are also very happy to provide churches with all of the resources for any of the previously taught series at St Bart’s. If you would like access to any material that you cannot find on our website, please email us via amy@stbarts.com.au or bettrys@stbarts.com.au.

**Top 10 tips for running an effective and engaging Sunday children's ministry**

1. Keep the Bible as the focus. All activities, songs, games, and craft should support engaging Biblical teaching.
2. Match your children's programme with what is being preached that week. Having children learn the same stories and content as their parents is vital for building a culture of discipleship within families.
3. Consider the age and development needs for your context. You might think about modifying one game four ways, or if you have a large number of children in your church, group the children into similar ages.
4. Include a variety of activities including Bible reading, active games, creative activities, worship, and prayer. Ensure all activities are age appropriate, so children stay engaged and safe.
5. Include a teaching spot for children in the Sunday worship service. This increases the presence of children's ministry to the Parish, models how to engage children with the Bible and demonstrates commitment to intergenerational discipleship.
6. Create a routine and rhythm so children know what will happen and where, providing variety via different activities week to week.
7. Look at Pinterest for ideas and inspiration for creative ways to teach the selected Bible passage. Feel free to skip craft and focus on hands-on learning opportunities instead. Maybe a treasure hunt for key words instead?
8. Use and adapt what other places have created. There are great worship videos (with actions) for children that are easy to use for any number of children for both teaching and worship. You are welcome to use anything developed from St Bart's Kids too.
9. Make the space children use inviting and safe. Team shirts help children (and adults) identify who are safe adults to talk to. Bright colours and posters designating age group sections can help with routine.
10. Where appropriate, invite a range of people to be involved in children's ministry. This enables intergenerational discipleship and is such a joy to point children to Jesus and learn from their questions and faith. Support your team with clear instructions and prepared resources.
Q&A with Chaplaincy Services Manager, former Scientologist and North Pine parishioner, Andrea Colledge

Andrea Colledge is the new ACSQ Chaplaincy Services Manager within the Parishes and Other Mission Agencies Commission. She supports hospital, prison and police chaplains in their vital work. She was born and raised in Canada, but now calls Australia home and *The Castle* her favourite movie.

**Where do you currently live and where do you worship?**

I live in Dayboro in the Northern Region of our Diocese and I worship at The Parish of North Pine.

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

I have been a part of the Anglican Church for roughly 20 years ago in my hometown of Toronto. I studied at Wycliffe College Seminary at the University of Toronto before moving to the Anglican Church Southern Queensland and am settling in as a parishioner at St Aidan’s Anglican Church, Dayboro (Parish of North Pine).

**What is your current role, including any voluntary roles, and what does your role involve?**

I am now part of the Parishes and Other Mission Agencies Commission (PMC) as the Manager of Chaplaincy Services for our Diocese. I work with the hospital, prison and police chaplains to facilitate their work in the various ministries they have been called to, and to ensure everything runs smoothly and effectively at an administrative and governance level.
What projects and activities are you currently working on?

Currently I divide my time between ensuring all proper administrative functions run smoothly and effectively and developing strong relationships with the chaplains I support. I provide technical assistance and pastoral care to our chaplains and I make sure I am always looking to the future to map out ways in which this ministry can grow, shine and contribute to the Church’s work in the community.

What have been the highlights of your roles so far?

Definitely the best memories I have had since I started in the role earlier this year have been of getting to know the awesome people that work in the area of chaplaincy – their stories, their callings and their experiences on the job. I am blessed to work with an amazing team of people, too, here at the PMC. I remember once a colleague of mine repeated a cheeky line from my favourite Australian movie, *The Castle*, then immediately and profusely apologised fearing I might not understand the context and become offended. I just looked her in the eye and recited the punchline of the joke to her, which was perhaps even cheekier. We had a great laugh as my Aussie credentials were firmly established.

What have been the key challenges of your roles so far and how have you worked through these?

I think one of the key challenges has been getting the word out there about the great work that chaplains do, the way in which they affect peoples’ lives and the way they carry the Church out there to the most vulnerable in our society. I’d like to say I’ve worked through those, but the work continues!

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

During the next year I would really like to get the word out about chaplaincy and how it is an excellent way to ‘work out your faith’. I’m hoping we can get lots of people interested in exploring what volunteering in the chaplaincy space might mean to them.

Can you tell us a little about your personal faith journey?

I was born Jewish and decided to become a rabbi at the age of seven. Failing that, I fell into a large variety of ‘religions’ including Wicca, Buddhism and even Scientology before learning the Truth about Jesus Christ. I gave my life to Him at the Feast of the Epiphany. I studied towards the priesthood in Toronto before marrying a handsome Aussie and moving to Brisbane. Since then, my journey has been all about chaplaincy – I was a primary school chaplain with Scripture Union, then I took over the growth and development of the chaplaincy at the University of Queensland, and now I am here working in our Diocese.

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

My faith reminds me that the Good Lord has a tremendous sense of humour, and He teaches me to take my faith very seriously, but to never take myself too seriously. As an example, I have been known to pray “Dearest Lord, I thank you for your Creation and all that it encompasses; but were green ants strictly necessary?”
What is your favourite scripture and why?

Matthew 5.16: “In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good works and give glorify to your Father in heaven.” I have always tried to live my Christian life in this fashion, firm in the conviction that every good thing I do is a testament to my Creator.

What person of faith inspires you the most and why?

While not a Catholic, I greatly admire St Mary MacKillop and her commitment to education. I especially try to live by her words, “Never see a need without doing something about it.” They are dangerous words to embrace, but worth the challenge.

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?

I think the greatest strength of the Church is that the Church is us, led by God. I believe that if we truly listened to Him and walked faithfully along His path, there is nothing we couldn't do to benefit every creature on the planet.

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?

To me, the greatest challenge facing the Church is the increasing way the world is separating itself from God. For example, I believe that climate change is a challenge we can only meet if we listen closely to God's creation.

What is the kindest gesture you have ever received or witnessed?

Oh, my goodness; I've been privileged to be a witness to so many. But it's the little things I think stick with you – like my mother continuing to visit a much-disliked old relative in her last days (an aunt who hated my mother, by the way) simply because this aunt had no-one else that cared about her.

What is the best piece of advice you have ever received and who gave you this advice?

“You don't have to warm others by lighting yourself on fire”. It was a great piece of advice that covered centring yourself in God's strength, knowing your limits and humility.

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

I am a hopeless fanatic of Australian comedy. I love Kath & Kim, The Castle, and anything by Working Dog Productions.

If you could have a billboard with any text on it, what would it say and why?

“Jesus is Coming. Call Jim”. This was an actual billboard in Toronto which my family found endlessly funny. I still want to meet Jim.
What book have you given away most as a gift and why?

I think that book would be *A Canticle for Liebowitz* by Walter M. Miller Jr. As the book is made up of what were once three separate stories, it's difficult to summarise, but it is a seminal work which touches on my three favourite themes – religion, science fiction, and scathing social commentary.

Where do you do your best thinking?

“In the pool room and out the back.”

What’s your best childhood memory?

Late Autumn in Toronto, where I grew up: the nip in the air, early nights, the smell of leaf mulch mixed with fermenting crab apples and the scent of woodsmoke hanging over everything...

If you are having a bad day, what do you do to cheer yourself up?

Watch *The Castle* (see above).

What is the funniest thing that has happened to you recently?

True story. I woke up one morning in a panic as my alarm hadn't gone off. I fired off a very quick text to my boss apologising for being late but reassuring her that I was on my way. I showered and dressed and stopped for petrol on my way in to work, driving amongst a group of bikies clearly having a lazy morning. Frustrated, I drove stressed out down the road, past the local Sunday Markets and... realised it was Sunday. My boss thought it was hilarious.

What makes you nostalgic and why?

The smell of plaster and dental wax. My grandfather was a retired dentist and did some denture work on the side. Those are the smells I associate only with him.

What day would you like to re-live and why?

The day I auditioned for the international touring production of *Annie*. I was seven and I made the cut. My little sister didn't and my mother told me it wasn't fair if only I got to do it, so I withdrew. I'd like to revisit that decision please, Lord.

What's your unanswerable question – the question you are always asking yourself?

'What on earth did I come into this room for?'
A man’s best friend

It was 11am on Saturday 1 April 1916. Bush Brothers J Cyril Flood and Felix Albert Fernau had joined each other in the library of Brotherhood House, the All Saints’ rectory in Charleville for a cup of tea. Brother Fernau was about to head off to Cheepie, on the road to Quilpie, the next day to hold services. Suddenly, both men smelled smoke, and it wasn’t long before they realised that the smoke was coming from Brother Fernau’s bedroom. The subsequent tragic events ended the extraordinary life of Belgium born Felix Fernau, a man of courage and an adventurous spirit.

Brother Flood sprang into action, warning the housekeeper about the blaze and ringing the fire brigade. He had lost sight of Brother Fernau at that point. It was then he heard the church’s own fire alarm being rung. He assumed that this was Brother Fernau, only to be met with the horrific image of his fellow Bush Brother staggering into the library with smouldering clothes and glowing embers upon him. It seemed that he had attempted to gain access to the fire, but had been unsuccessful. Brother Flood helped extinguish his friend’s clothes and then set about moving furniture and documents outside to escape the blaze. Again, he lost sight of Brother Fernau.

In the May 1916 Bush Notes Brother Flood gives a detailed account of what happened on that fateful day. He was so preoccupied with moving furniture, registers, and accounts outside, that he had no idea that Brother Fernau had decided to, once again, go into the flames. It was a decision that Brother Flood could not fathom:

“What happened to Mr Fernau subsequently it is difficult to say, as he was seen later coming out of the front door in flames and terribly burnt; it can only be conjectured that he went back as far as the dining room and was driven out on to the front veranda by the smoke and flames.”
Exactly why Brother Fernau went back into the flames is somewhat of a mystery. He was taken to the Charleville Hospital and newspaper reports across Australia spoke of the hope that he would recover, as well as the sad destruction of the Bush Brother's rectory. If the reason for his going back into the flames was conjectured, it was usually with the notion that he was trying to reach some personal property. It was only in the writing of this *anglican focus* story that a more substantial reason may have been uncovered. He lasted for a few more days, but succumbed to his burns on 6 April 1916, at the age of 43.

To say that Felix Albert Fernau led an exciting life is very much an understatement. He was born in Belgium, of both Belgian and English heritage, and had received his education at University College London. He had always had bad health, indeed the Bush Brothers had to wait for his arrival in Charleville as he had been delayed with a bout of malaria. His weak disposition led him to travel to Morocco as a young man – one of his brothers owned a business there, and he lived and worked in the warmer climate happily for a short while.

However, the need to keep moving quickly kicked in, and Fernau decided to travel across the world and become what in Australia would be called a ‘Jackaroo’ on a sheep farm in Buenos Aires. While there, he took up a vocation for teaching, giving English lessons in South America, before continuing in this pursuit in France, Belgium, and back in England. It was only then that he felt he could no longer ignore the call to ministry he had been feeling and went to St Aidan’s College, Birkenhead for clerical training. He was ordained by the Bishop of North Queensland, The Right Rev’d Christopher Barlow, who was in London at the time. This was perhaps a signpost to his future travels.

He took on the role of Chaplain on an immigrant ship to Australia. During the voyage most of the 500 passengers, and the ship’s doctor, suffered an epidemic of illness. In what could be seen as the first instance of his stepping in to aid in a crisis, Fernau took verbal instructions from the doctor and helped the passengers get to their destination. Once in Australia he went to Charters Towers before taking up missionary work in New Guinea. He is said to have circumnavigated New Guinea in a 14-ton schooner, before heading off for his next adventure, this time in Tasmania.

It was in Launceston, as a curate at St John’s Church, that Fernau, once again, faced an epidemic, this time smallpox. His willingness to aid the afflicted was much admired and he was named by many as being one of the heroes of that period of sickness. Perhaps it was this capacity to serve in such circumstances that led Fernau to his next post, back to Queensland, not as a priest, however, but as the superintendent of the Peel Island Lazaret, a quarantined hospital off the coast for those suffering from leprosy. It was now 1912, and before long Fernau found his way to our Diocese. Archbishop Donaldson accepted him and appointed him first as a Mission Chaplain, and then as the Rector of Childers until 1915. It was then he asked to be moved into the Bush Brotherhood, where, at Charleville, he would meet his untimely fate.

So why did Felix Fernau rush back into the fire for a second time on that April day in 1916? As we have seen, he certainly was a brave man, and perhaps his courage got the better of him. Or, as some press coverage claimed, perhaps he was trying to rescue some personal property. An alternative answer to this riddle, however, may have been discovered in the course of researching this article. In seeking an image of Felix Fernau, we contacted the Bush Brothers Heritage Centre, associated with the Brotherhood of the Good Shepherd in Dubbo, and which serves as a repository for many of the various Bush Brotherhoods that have existed in Australia. We asked Austin Jupp at the Heritage Centre if he had any images of Brother Fernau. He had one. When it arrived in the email Inbox, it
showed an image of a shy looking bespectacled priest with a shaggy canine sitting beside him. The caption of the photograph stated:

“Brother J A Fernau (Burnt to death in Brotherhood House trying to rescue his dog)”

While we can’t know for certain the full details, there is no date for the photograph, and no name of the dog written, it is perhaps nice to think that the story of this rescue attempt, of what was likely Fernau’s best friend, was handed down from Brother to Brother and has made its way to us today. This mystery serves as yet another reminder that, while he met a tragic end, in the 43 years that Brother Felix Fernau lived, he led an extraordinary life.

Reflections • Monday 27 July 2020 • By The Rev'd Max Lambourne

My pub call to the priesthood

The Rev'd Max Lambourne, with wife Kyrsten and children, on the day of Max's priesting at Hereford Cathedral

The call to priesthood came quite out of the blue and at a very unexpected time – in the Kings Arms pub, in Cleobury Mortimer of all places. I was chatting with the then curate of my local about possibly being more involved in church on a Sunday morning. I was thinking of maybe doing a reading or leading the prayers of intercession, something along those lines, when he suddenly commented that I should consider ordained ministry. Such was my shock at the suggestion, that I forcibly ejected my beer (which was incidentally, a Twisted Spire from Hobsons Brewery – well worth trying if you enjoy beer!) and apologised to the bar staff before swiftly cleaning up.

I am a cradle Anglican, brought up in the Church of England at St Chad's Church in Kidderminster, where I went to church on Sunday regularly with my family. I wandered away for a time in my late teens and early 20s, preferring to play football. But even then, I never lost complete contact with the Church. Through friends and family and engagement with Home Group, I stayed connected to the parish community.
My faith has, I guess, always been there. Not dramatic or flashy, just a slow burn in the background, like one of those slow matches with the tapers used for lighting fireworks that burn for hours without extinguishing.

I don't have a tale of a life-changing encounter, a significant moment of conversion, an epiphany – a ‘road to Damascus' moment. This, I suspect, is true for many people of faith. I never had any intention of becoming a priest. I wanted to be a stunt man or a school Geography teacher – I enjoyed geography and have a particular love of jumpers with elbow patches. Perhaps, in a way, as a priest I am part stunt man and part school teacher!

It is amazing how God is able to work through the very ordinary, like a pub chat between two mates, to bring about the most extraordinary situations. Fourteen months after that initial pub conversation, I was sitting in a Bishop's Advisory Panel, and another four months later I was beginning theological college at Ripon College, Cuddesdon.

I was not convinced that I should become a priest, but others seemed much less surprised at the suggestion than me, and so, guided and encouraged by them, I continued to follow the path of ‘discernment', always thinking that at some point a door would close and I could say, “well I tried, but it clearly wasn't meant to be”. That never happened! Doors flew open, obstacles were overcome, and potential difficulties disappeared into the background.

Even my place at theological college came rather more swiftly than anticipated. Having elected to train at Cuddesdon, I became aware that there were no available places for the upcoming intake, meaning I would have to wait until the following year. Resigned to that fact, I started considering other options. My wife, Kyrsten, is Australian and we had discussed the possibility of moving to Australia temporarily to work, as the weather and lifestyle are great and the rates of pay are better, meaning we could live off one salary and save the other for a house deposit. A great plan, until I received an unexpected call from the principal of Cuddesdon, offering me a place that had become vacant after a student dropped out. Following a brief consultation with Kyrsten, I accepted.

I trained at Cuddesdon, supported pastorally, practically and financially throughout by Hereford Diocese. I was ordained deacon and priest in Hereford Cathedral, serving my curacy in the Parish of St George's, in the small Shropshire village of Pontesbury. Curacy places are usually appointed quite swiftly in your final year as an ordinand, often by Christmas or early in the New Year. My curacy was not decided until late April and so we moved hurriedly in mid-June. Stressful, yes, but as with so many other elements of my story, it was right and blessed and guided by God in His time.

I am now Priest-in-Charge of St Alban's Anglican Church, Wilston. The move to Brisbane was, I believe, led by the Spirit. I have found myself welcomed, embraced and supported by my new Diocese. I serve in a Diocese that seeks to explore how our multicultural context, story and heritage can enrich our faith and our expressions of Anglicanism, and how the Church can continue to serve and be relevant to the communities it encounters.

I am excited to see how God calls me to serve in a Diocese that is as geographically diverse, with its beaches, rainforests, hinterlands and deserts, as its people. People here say, “You know when you are in Brisbane because passengers always thank the bus driver and motorists always let you in on the roads.” Brisbane is a big city with the heart of a country town, which makes it a wonderful place to serve in ministry and to make the transition from rural Shropshire to urban Queensland.
I want this tale to be one of encouragement for those exploring vocation, those in training, and those who are trying to discern the next move.

God is faithful and wise and if we have ears to hear and a heart to follow, He leads us not only to where we need to be, but also where He needs us to be.

For all those discerning their vocation, do not be limited by your own horizon. Be confident to step out in faith and trust in the capacity of God to use your gifts and skills, in the right place at the right time:

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.” (Proverbs 3.5-6)

15 July to 15 August is Vocations Month. It’s a great time to think about the call of God on our lives. We are calling on Anglicans around Southern Queensland to think about their own vocation. If you would like to explore a vocation as an Anglican Church deacon or priest, please contact The Rev’d Canon Sarah Plowman, Diocesan Director of Ordinands and Vocations on (07) 3835 2267 or via email DDOV@anglicanchurchsq.org.au.

Reflections • Friday 24 July 2020 • By Dr Peter Kline

Painting’s blessing: a mysticism of sight

“But sight is not sovereign. The world’s coming to appearance is never fully comprehended. No one could ever say comprehensively what a sunset means, or what the face of a child means, or what the colour blue means” (Peter Kline)

“And so it is not the painting that ‘speaks’. A painting does not mean (to say) anything. Were speaking in fact its aim, it would certainty be inferior to speech and would need to be ‘sublated’ by language to
receive meaning, and a clearly communicable meaning at that. Between the figurative order of the painting and the discursive order of language there exists a gap that nothing can bridge.”

— Sarah Kofman, ‘The Melancholy of Art’

“What you’re looking at is a combination of my efforts to say something and what the painting is saying independent of me. It’s saying more than me now. So, I can just listen, you know?”

— Chris Ofili, ‘Interview’

“What guides the graphic point, the quill, pencil, or scalpel, is the respectful observance of a commandment, the acknowledgement before knowledge, the gratitude of the receiving before seeing, the blessing before knowledge.”

— Jacques Derrida, Memoirs of the Blind

Somewhere among the connections, disconnections, and resonances between these lines from Sarah Kofman, Chris Ofili, and Jacques Derrida is where I locate the connections, disconnections, and resonances between my ‘art’ and my ‘faith’. Somewhere among them is what could be called a mysticism of sight. Not a mysticism of the invisible but of the visible. Not a mysticism of incarnation but of carnation. A mysticism of the intensity and wonder of the world’s appearing that painting receives and blesses.

Kofman denies that a painting has anything to say, otherwise why not just speak instead of paint? There is a gap between painting and language that cannot be overcome, and it is within this gap that painting offers its ‘truth’. Ofili thinks painting does speak, but it speaks as the combination of an artist’s efforts to communicate and the ‘more’ that a painting communicates beyond the artist’s (and perhaps also the viewer’s) intention. Surely both are right, even if they cannot be neatly reconciled.

If Ofili’s ‘more’ overlaps with Kofman’s ‘gap’, perhaps what comes undone between them is any notion of a sovereign, all-seeing ‘I’, or ‘eye’. There is, for both Kofman and Ofili, something about painting that confronts us with the unsovereignty of sight, with the world’s excessive appearing that overflows our ability to translate seeing into saying, or seeing into knowing. If sight were sovereign, if it could fully comprehend the world’s appearing, painting would be redundant, a mere reproduction or representation of what is known and grasped ‘immediately’ by vision’s power to receive the world as intelligible, or within the bounds of ‘discursive order’.

But sight is not sovereign. The world’s coming to appearance is never fully comprehended. No one could ever say comprehensively what a sunset means, or what the face of a child means, or what the colour blue means. Each are events or bursts of sense that are never metabolised fully within language. Painting responds to and plays with this excess. It does not represent the world; it presents its excessive appearing, becomes its appearing, supplementing and carrying it further. Painting stages, within unending difference and variation, the wonder of existing in a world where what is visible is not a closed set of known forms but an infinitely open passage and variation of sense, never reducible to our systems of knowledge. Which is why what is visible must be shown or presented rather than accounted for or explained – every art form does this in its own way. Painting invites us to ‘listen’ to the fact that we see a world that goes far beyond any ‘discursive order’. It lets us acknowledge, as Derrida puts it, a receiving and a blessing that come before knowledge, before seeing. It opens the unsovereignty of sight.
Painting, then, might itself be understood as an act of faith – if faith is understood as entrusting oneself to and engaging oneself with a world that goes beyond our ability to master it, a world that goes beyond itself. A world that did not go beyond itself toward what religions call ‘God’, or toward what might be called the sacred or the divine, a world that did not open beyond itself beneath a sky that illuminates it from beyond, a world collapsed on itself, perfectly at one with itself, given, completed, finalised, could not be painted – nor could it be sung or danced or filmed or narrated.

Painting, like faith, risks itself within a world that is there not as a given to be reproduced, but as a blessing to be offered, shared, and formed. Painting opens for sight the opening that the world is. It gathers and intensifies the world's visuality, like making love gathers and intensifies the body's touch, like singing gathers and intensifies breath and language. Sight becomes no longer functional or useful. It tips over into pleasure, into joy.

When I paint, I never think of it as representing the content of my faith, even when I'm painting something religious. Perhaps this is because faith, for me, is not synonymous with belief, with having something to say about God. But painting is for me an act of faith, a way of staying faithful, perhaps to God, or to the open wonder of existence. Faithful to the gift and joy of the world, its carnation. Painting passes on the blessing.

Reflections • Friday 24 July 2020 • By The Ven. Keith Dean-Jones OGS

The clergy call to prayer and compassion

A priest is entrusted with four main responsibilities – to gather the people of God, to proclaim the Good News of salvation, to offer the Eucharist, and to send people into the world empowered as ministers of God's healing and reconciliation. The four responsibilities are founded on Christ's authority to bless and to forgive, and they are expressed in lives alert to the presence of Jesus and alert to the needs of people.

COVID-19 has created a situation that we have not faced for a century. Since March, we have necessarily been exploring other ways of worshipping and growing in our faith. We have been like our spiritual ancestors who were taken in exile from Jerusalem to Babylon in the sixth century B.C. and, with them, there have been times that we have cried out; “How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?” (Psalm 137.4). In the strange land of the ever-shifting COVID-19 environment we have needed to ask, “How can we minister in the name of our Lord?”

A priest represents our Lord Jesus Christ to the people of God. This is primarily a matter of his/her ‘being' or ‘character', and not merely a statement of ‘function'. Even when a priest cannot be seen or heard, he/she maintains the role of representing our Lord Jesus Christ to both the Church and the world. Words and actions are important, but they are secondary to the importance of priestly character. Character must be kept healthy, and the life of prayer helps us to remain strong in the Holy Spirit in challenging and disruptive times.

I have also continued to find strength in the prayer of silence, sometimes termed ‘mental prayer', since March. When one prays in silence, three things happen.

First, we recognise that the ‘work' of prayer is the activity of the Holy Spirit of God. The apostle Paul rightly stated that, “we do not pray as we ought but the Spirit himself intercedes for us the with sighs too deep for words...for the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God (Romans 8. 26-
This means that, regardless of our distractions and questionings, the Holy Spirit will unite our petitions to the prayer of the risen Lord. Even when we feel that our time in prayer has been wasted, when our minds have been like ‘a tree full of monkeys’, we ought not to be discouraged. It is Jesus who has been doing all the work, not us.

Secondly, in order to pray we need to listen. It is in a holy listening to Jesus who speaks to us in the Bible, in the events of the world and in our own hearts that we are guided in our prayer. We are challenged to see ourselves as we really are, ‘warts and all’, and, in listening to the Gospel, we recognise our failure to love God and neighbour and the declaration of his forgiveness. Prayer is like swimming, and just as we learn to swim by jumping in the water and propelling our bodies with our arms and legs, so we learn to pray by immersing ourselves in the love of God. And, like swimming, prayer is joyful, invigorating and cleansing.

Thirdly, our prayer is only meaningful if we act with compassion. This is evident in the way that our clergy have maintained close links with people in alternative ways in the COVID-19 environment. Telephone calls, emails, mailed letters and care packages and live streaming of services and events have made a world of difference to people who have felt anxious, isolated or lonely.

Through prayer we are connected to our Lord Jesus Christ and to one another as members of his Body. And, as COVID-19 restrictions continue to ease and face-to-face gatherings become more relaxed, we increasingly look forward to ‘being together’ and praying with each other in person again.

News • Friday 24 July 2020

Musical talent hits the right notes

(L-R): Glennie School students Gabby Kleidon, Hannah Waterfall, Emily Lawrence, Lauren Lester and Celine Dixon are primed for their AHEP and SHEP experience (absent: Kartia Chin)

After nine years’ commitment to playing the saxophone and, most recently, the tenor saxophone, Year 12 Glennie School student Emily Lawrence is ecstatic about the opportunity to perform with
Australia’s best musicians at the Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University’s Australian Honours Ensemble Program (AHEP).

Under the leadership of a team of internationally eminent Australian conductors, Emily will extend her musical skills during a series of masterclasses in an intensive environment of musical excellence. With this experience under her belt, Emily’s musical aspiration of completing a music degree at university and gaining entry into the Australian Defence Force Reserve Band is looking a lot brighter.

Emily’s audition required her to submit a repertoire of two personally chosen and performed pieces via video, along with set excerpts from the band repertoire decided by the Conservatorium. For other student musicians looking to secure a similar placement, Emily's advice is to “make use of the saxophone's versatility and participate in lots of bands, play different genres of music and practise hard.”

Year 12 student Celine Dixon, Year 11 students Gabby Kleidon, Hannah Waterfall, Kartia Chin and Year 10 student Lauren Lester are also celebrating their acceptance to the State Honours Ensemble Program (SHEP).

After an introduction to the family karaoke machine at seven years of age, and eight years of formal singing lessons, Celine has become an accomplished vocalist. Celine is no stranger to the stage at Glennie, as a regular choralist, lunchtime concert performer and school musical lead cast member.

“Singing is very popular, if you love it, simply believe in yourself,” Celine said.

Gabby has played the oboe for six years and admits she has come a long way since her initial tunes sounding like a duck.

“Perseverance and a positive attitude helped me to get to my current skill and performance level playing the oboe,” Gabby said.

Since being handed the French horn in Year 5, Hannah has revelled in the seven-years of playing this intricate instrument. Her tutelage at Glennie has been a positive experience, leading Hannah to think about a career as a music teacher and play semi-professionally.

“At SHEP, I will collaborate with other orchestral members to produce a wonderful program of music, and of course, have a great time,” Hannah said.

“I chose to play tenor saxophone at Year 5 Music Camp after a Year 12 student spent time with me as a tutor,” Kartia said.

Since then, Kartia has been a valuable member of String Quartet and Big Band at Glennie and is considering studying music as a second major at university.

Lauren has played the clarinet for six years and is working towards getting her Associate in Music (AMusA) qualification by the time she graduates.
World’s Greatest Shave and Ponytail Project event held at Canterbury

Eighteen Secondary School students and eight staff got hair shaved, waxed or chopped at Canterbury College recently – all in the name of two great causes.

As a feature event during the College's Interhouse Athletics Carnival, the male students and staff had either their heads shaved or legs waxed for the World’s Greatest Shave, in support of the Leukemia Foundation, while the female students and staff supported the Queensland Cancer Council by chopping off their long hair in the Ponytail Project.

The students, from Years 8-12, all had very personal reasons for participating, many with close family, neighbours or friends being affected by, even dying, from cancer.

Year 12 students and Ponytail Project leaders Kyarna Bousen and Emily Meek did not hesitate to participate.

“It is only hair, it will grow back. As Social Justice Captain this year I felt it was a great initiative to lead and not much of a sacrifice for us to make at all,” Waterford student Kyarna said.

“I have a family history of cancer, I felt I had to do something,” Boronia Heights student Emily Meek said.

Emmerson Manning from Waterford will miss her very long hair, but for her, finding out a close friend's mum received a final stage cancer diagnosis recently was her drive to cut her hair.
“I raised almost $1000 by asking my family and neighbours to donate,” the Year 9 student said.

College Captain Christian Almario jumped at the chance to get involved in the World's Greatest Shave.

“Shaving my head was daunting, but it is nothing to what cancer patients go through,” Eagleby student Christian said.

“We can each of us change the world, one little action at a time,” said Year 11 student Anderson Som, from Jimboomba.

Director of Student Development Mr Chris Nield was the staff coordinator of the event, and he also volunteered to lose his trademark beard for the cause. He said initial discussions with the students saw them decide they would be able to raise $5000-$6000.

“Then we raised the goal to what we thought was a challenging $10,000, and now to have more than $17,000 raised, is just a fantastic outcome for our first major fundraiser event for the school,” Mr Nield said.

The chopped-off ponytails are also not destined for the rubbish bin, with the College donating the hair to make wigs for cancer patients.

Reflections • Friday 24 July 2020 • By Father Daniel Hobbs

Contemplative prayer: the value of taking time out

Contemplative spirituality is an ancient practice approached from many traditions. Common to all, is the inner experience of a universal awareness beyond the material world. Such spiritual practices enables a sense of connectedness and oneness with the creative and life-sustaining power of the universe, the mystery Christians call ‘God’. This connection creates a sense of identity, relationship, meaning and purpose. It brings peace through the recognition that all is one and one is all. Everything belongs. For Anglicans, and Christians of many other denominations, the sacrament of Holy Communion embodies this reconciled wholeness between Creator and creation. It is in such moments of encounter we are called to a place of rest for our spirit and union with God, as we are embraced by Divine love.

Spirituality is experiential – it’s something we experience in practice. Spirituality moves beyond belief in specific religious doctrine, enabling the practitioner to experience the Creator and thus the nature of all creation and one's place within it. It’s through this understanding some identify with the phrase “I am spiritual, but not religious.”

Depth in authentic spirituality requires a shift in consciousness – a shift from the dualistic mind to the contemplative heart. The discipline of psychology tells us that the human brain is hard-wired to perceive the world dualistically and that Western culture perpetuates this construct. However, in God’s Kingdom, seen through the eyes of spiritual wholeness, there is no ‘us versus them’. In contrast, the contemplative heart, seeking a measure of universal awareness, seeks to emulate the reconciled oneness of the universe – healing, uniting and holding as one all that is seen and unseen. This is a lifelong journey of encounter and practice. This vision was cast clear by the cross, one divine event drawing “all to himself” (John 12.32). To contemplate then is to go deep in search of the Divine, to gaze with the eyes of the heart, to seek out and mirror the Holy Spirit within.
Contemplative spirituality was once called ‘mysticism’. The word ‘mysticism’ attempted to convey the sense that humanity cannot fully know the divine, as the divine is universal ‘mystery’. Over time, the term ‘contemplative spirituality’ emerged incorporating a depth and breadth of practices transcending any one tradition. Both ‘mysticism’ and ‘contemplative spirituality’ portray an experiential rather than an intellectual spirituality.

Contemplative spirituality is a way of life, not a system of belief. To contemplate is to be aware of the Divine presence, “to live and move and have our being” in God (Acts 17.28). While it engages all the senses and faculties, it draws most from the inner centre of being Judeo-Christians call ‘the heart’. As St Bonaventure wrote so beautifully in The Soul’s Journey into God (1259):

“By praying in this way, we receive light to discern the steps of ascent into God. In relation to our position in creation, the universe itself is a ladder by which we can ascend into God. Some created things are vestiges, others images; some are material, others spiritual; some are temporal, others everlasting; some are outside us, others within us. In order to contemplate the First Principle [God], who is most spiritual, eternal and above us, we must pass through these vestiges, which are material, temporal and outside us. This means to be led in the path of God. We must also enter into our soul, which is God's image, everlasting, spiritual and within us.”

Pace (pronounced ‘par chay’) is Italian for ‘peace’. Our new Pace Community seeks to help bring peace to those who yearn for it – whether churched or unchurched for we are all seekers and searchers. Our community is seeking to find a deep, abiding union with God and with each other by experiencing God in stillness, silence and solitude, whether on retreat, on pilgrimage or in prayer at home.

We hope to share our journey into God with you.

News • Wednesday 22 July 2020

JobSeeker announcement takes away people's hope

“Changes to JobSeeker will push Australians into poverty just as they need to be getting on their feet,” said Anglicare Australia Acting Executive Director Imogen Ebsworth.

“Some 1.6 million people are locked out of work. Many have lost their jobs and their livelihoods. Thousands were locked out of work and living in poverty long before that.

“If the Government phases in these cuts, it will plunge hundreds of thousands of these Australians – and their children – into poverty as the world heads into a deep recession.”

Ms Ebsworth called on the Government to keep the JobSeeker rate above the poverty line permanently.

“People will be recovering from this pandemic for months and years to come. They need certainty. That means a permanent increase – not a delayed cut-off.

“Instead of helping people plan for their future, these changes will simply ‘phase in’ poverty.”

Ms Ebsworth said there was still time to avoid the mistakes of the past.
“The old rate of JobSeeker was frozen for almost three decades. It became a poverty trap, locking people out of work and forcing them to turn to agencies like ours just to get by.

“When Prime Minister Morrison lifted JobSeeker he righted that wrong, and gave hundreds of thousands of Australians a path out of poverty. Now is not the time to take that hope away.

“They must know that their new slashed rate is well below the poverty line. They are building a new trap.

“The Government can still choose to give people a pathway out of poverty, and stop children from being trapped in years hardship.

“It’s time for the Government to raise the rate for good and end the poverty trap, instead of leaving people behind,” Ms Ebsworth said.

Features • Friday 24 July 2020 • By Roscoe Howell

Why care about slavery?

(Image courtesy of the ILO Work in Freedom programme)

Readers of Anglican Focus will know something about human trafficking because the Anglican Church Southern Queensland has made a commitment to help end this practice.

This article is about slavery, which contaminates whole economies. Slavery was suppressed in Europe and the Americas in the 1800s, but continues in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region. Whereas trafficking involves the movement of a person who is deceived, a slave can be trapped where he or she lives. Slavery happens when a person is treated as if owned. Slavery is a serious international crime and in some settings a crime against humanity. In parts of Asia, there are slave-making systems where whole groups or classes of people who are vulnerable can be harvested as slaves, often with impunity –
people of the ‘wrong’ tribe, the ‘wrong’ religion, the ‘wrong’ caste, the ‘wrong’ colour, women and people with a disability can be swept up by forces outside their control.

Why care about slavery?

Why care about slavery? Experience shows that slavery contaminates our lives, communities and businesses. There have been cases of slavery in this country (see below). Australians are also exposed through tourism and trade with countries where many millions are trapped into forced labour, servitude and slavery. In 2005, the academic and campaigner Kevin Bales estimated that between 18 million and 22 million people were trapped in South Asia (Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka). Such people seem to be hidden in local communities. At the Kennedy School of Government, Siddharth Kara showed that their work can find its way into exports to other countries in the region.

In Australia and other developed economies, slavery can taint our trade with some countries, large and small. ‘Taint’ is a term from the law. It refers to proceeds of crime. This happens, perhaps unwittingly, through the lure of prices that seem to be cheap, but carry hidden costs of forced labour or worse.

Much of Australia's trade is with countries in the Indo-Asia Pacific region. Australians who travel in the region as tourists or when doing business will have seen evidence of slave-making systems that persist into the present time. These ancient systems of servitude are defined in the United Nations’ anti-slavery Supplementary Convention 1956, which Australia ratified. They include child trading, debt bondage or serfdom. Slave-making systems have been able to persist into the present time in some parts of the Indo-Asia Pacific region because slavery can compromise the institutions of justice, law enforcement, business and other institutions that every citizen depends on.

Slavery undermines the Australian economy and basic labour rights

Compromises made by our Asian trading partners can harm Australia, too. The lure of artificially cheap prices can damage legitimate businesses in this country. Australian businesses are required by law to pay a living wage and ensure worker health and safety.

Australia’s strengths can be undermined when a trading partner permits unfair and unjust practices to keep costs artificially low. In 2013, the Senate investigated this problem with an Inquiry into the Fair Trade (Workers’ Rights) Bill. For reasons that are not understood, Australia still enters into Free Trade Agreements that do not protect basic labour rights or standards of employment.

There have been cases of slavery in Australia

Slavery can come into our lives through crime, as well as trade. There have been cases where people who came to Australia as free persons were enslaved in this country by Australians in full view of other Australians who did not recognise what was happening and who did nothing. Two landmark cases were heard in 2008.

- The case of R v Kovacs [2008] QCA 417 went to the Queensland Supreme Court (Court of Appeal). It concerned a Filipina, a woman who came to Queensland in good faith in 2002. She was trapped in Weipa, working in Kovacs' shop during the day and in the Kovacs' house at night. The daughter of the perpetrators found her, rescued her and took her to authorities who assisted.
• The case of *R v Wei Tang* (2008) 237 CLR 1 went from Victoria to the High Court of Australia. Wei Tang “was convicted of five offences of intentionally possessing a slave, and five offences of intentionally exercising over a slave a power attaching to the right of ownership…” (Para 1 of the written leading judgment.)

The High Court might seem remote or imbued with legal theory, but Tang’s Case shows the Court’s humanity. Para 28 of the written judgment identified eleven tests or *indicia* of slavery which illustrate the extreme forms of over-control that amount (in effect) to exercise of the powers of ownership. These *indicia* of slavery are:

- control of movement
- control of physical environment
- psychological control
- measures taken to prevent or deter escape
- force
- threat of force or coercion
- duration
- assertion of exclusivity
- subjection to cruel treatment and abuse
- control of sexuality
- forced labour.

In Australia, slavery is not defined by physical chains, but rather by extreme forms of over-control that may be obscure or hard-to-recognise.

**Australian governments care about slavery**

Slavery is an official concern of the Queensland Government, the Commonwealth and the United Nations. Slavery is a serious international crime which is defined in treaties of the United Nations. Slavery is defined in Australia’s *Criminal Code*. Section 18 of Queensland’s *Human Rights Act 2019* also refers to slavery. It affirms:

**Freedom from forced work**

(1) A person must not be held in slavery or servitude.

(2) A person must not be made to perform forced or compulsory labour.
(Exceptions are made for labour that is required by a sentence of a court, or labour required in an emergency or as a civic duty.)

The Act is relevant to slavery in another way. In 2008 Tang’s Case and Kovacs’ Case illustrated that some Australians did not recognise slavery. The *Human Rights Act 2019* intends to build a culture in the Queensland public sector that respects and promotes human rights. It also encourages a dialogue about the nature, meaning and scope of human rights.

**30 July is a day for remembering slavery and human trafficking**

At the United Nations, 30 July is the [World Day Against Trafficking in Persons](https://www.un.org/en/events/world-day-against-trafficking-in-persons/). In Australia, the *Criminal Code* is written in a way that makes a strong connection between slavery and the different but related phenomenon of human trafficking. The *Code* identifies specific circumstances where a person who
has been trafficked may become subject to slavery or a slavery-like practice. The World Day therefore encourages Australians to attend to criminals, survivors and also ourselves. The Day is intended to reaffirm our roles in civil society, to stop criminals from ruthlessly exploiting people for profit, and to help survivors rebuild their lives.

In the Church of England and in Australia, 30 July recognises the people who worked to bring an end to the Atlantic slave trade 200 years ago. William Wilberforce, Thomas Clarkson and a number of other British abolitionists were Anglicans. Several were ordained, including John Newton, who is credited with the Hymn ‘Amazing Grace’. A few were bishops, including Beilby Porteous who was Bishop of London, a slave-trading port. Several other notables were the sons of Anglican clergy. Thomas Clarkson travelled 35,000 miles around England by carriage and on horseback in a campaign of education and evidence gathering, which touched three generations during his lifetime. The British campaign to end Atlantic slavery ran from the 1770s to 1833, when the institution of slavery was banned in British territories, in places like the West Indies, but not Asia or the Pacific. That is another reason why it is necessary for modern Australians to address slavery as it persists in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region.

**Actions you can take**

These anniversaries encourage Queenslanders to stand against trafficking and slavery. How can one do that?

1. As an individual, one can buy products that carry a ‘fair trade’ certification label. Fair trade certification, such as Fairtrade Australia New Zealand, carries an assurance of justice back through the supply chain for goods such as chocolate, coffee, tea and spices. There are ‘fair trade’ systems for hand-made rugs (RugMark, for example) and clothing (such as the Ethical Trade Initiative). You will likely pay more for a certified ‘fair trade’ product, but that is the price of keeping the supply chain free of child labour, forced labour or worse.

2. As an Australian consumer it will soon be possible for you to refer to reports from Australian entities under the Modern Slavery Act 2018. This Commonwealth Act applies to large entities including businesses, universities, large charities and government entities. The Act encourages large entities to search their supply chains for signs of slavery, human trafficking, or the worst forms of child labour, each of which has a legal meaning. The Act encourages entities to report on steps being taken to clean up the supply chains. Entities will report to a public Register. Implementation of the public Register has been delayed due to the Coronavirus, but is expected soon. For information about the Modern Slavery Register, visit the Australian Government Department of Home Affairs website.

3. If you have a particular concern about slavery (strictly defined) in Australia, and want to learn more about some of the actions that have been taken over the past decade to encourage governments to suppress slavery, visit the website of Slavery Links Australia Inc.

**References**

Sunday Devotions • Monday 27 July 2020 • By Gwen Amankwah-Toa

Sunday Devotion: 2 August 2020, Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

We are challenged to give abundantly

**Main Readings:** Genesis 32.22-31; Psalm 17.1-7; Romans 9.1-8 (9-16); Matthew 14.13-21; [Isaiah 55.1-5; Psalm 145.8-9, 14-21]

**Supplementary Readings:** Psalm 78.1-15; Matthew 15.1-9; Genesis 31.43a, 44-32.2; Psalm 145.14-21; Romans 10.17-11.6

“Jesus replied, ‘They do not need to go away; you give them something to eat.’” (Matthew 14.16)

I have been blessed throughout life to have had so many people express love and generosity towards me in ways I never thought possible. I recall in high school in Vanuatu where I originally come from, I had an English teacher who believed in my ability to succeed and so mentored, guided and supported me in my study and then helped me with my application for an Australian Government scholarship to come and study at university in Australia. With her help, my application was successful, and I landed in Australia in January 1990. With the love and support from another generous person during my tertiary studies, I graduated with my degree.

When Jesus directed His disciples to “give them something to eat”, we were challenged to bring forth what we have to provide for others. This passage demonstrates the love and generosity of God through Jesus’ words and actions. We are called to emulate Jesus’ generous love by providing for others’ physical, emotional and spiritual needs.

We are challenged to get out of our ‘box’ and see things through the prism of others – to share our time, our gifts and our love with all people. When we do this, we bear Christ to others.

The challenge for us is to listen to the call for help from others and to step up in love without fear and trust in Him.