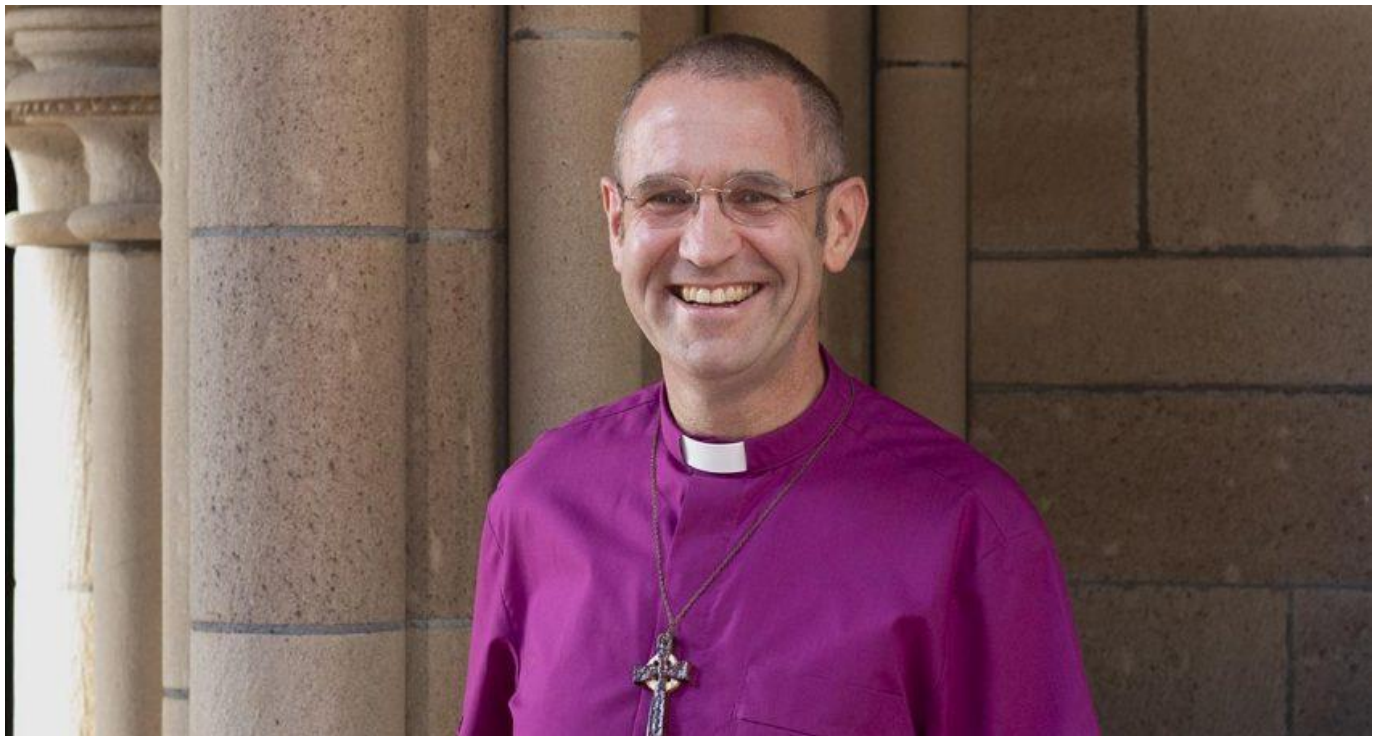


## Relic on a Mars mission



Sometime in mid-April a helicopter will take off for its maiden flight. Nothing unusual there, other than the flight will be on Mars! As part of the [Perseverance Rover Mars Mission](#), NASA has taken a small electrically driven helicopter to Mars. The helicopter has the name Ingenuity and wrapped around one of the cables in the helicopter is a piece of fabric from another craft; one of the first planes that ever flew, the Wright brothers' 'Wright Flyer'.

This extraordinary relic has survived on its 470-million-km journey from Earth to Mars and then the extraordinary seven minutes of nail-biting suspense as the main craft rapidly slowed down and then descended to the Martian surface.

There is so much to celebrate in the Mars Perseverance Mission. There is so much to be in awe about a tiny helicopter (it only measures about 1.2 m across) flying above another planet. Not least of the awesome aspects of all this is that one of Perseverance's goals is to find evidence that there was once life on Mars. The day when that evidence comes, if it does, will be one for humanity to pause as we realise that life is not isolated to us here on Earth. And, if it does not find evidence that, too, will be remarkable.

Yet I am struck by the image of this helicopter carrying a tiny relic of that other flight. Relics are nothing new to Christians, though at times we scorn them. They can act as powerful reminders of the connection that exists between us and the past of the relic, just as is being done on the Ingenuity.

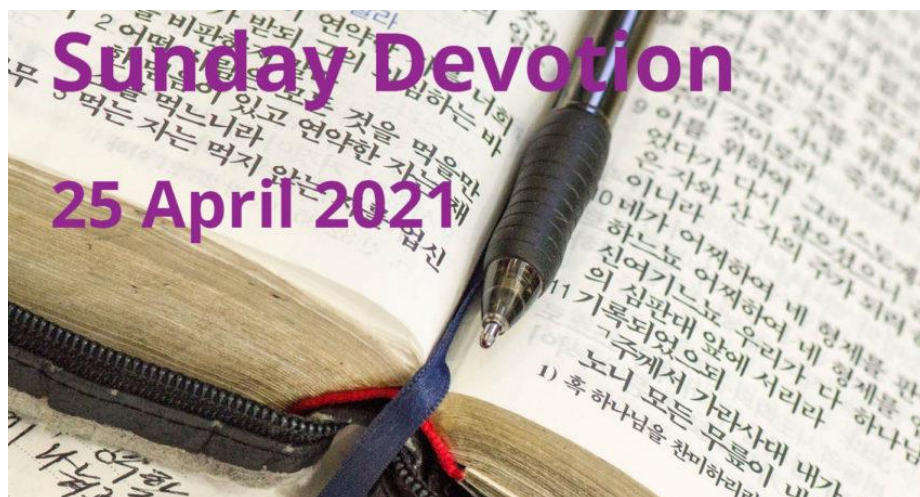
They can also remind us of just how much can and has changed in that period of time. In the case of the Wright brothers' relic, just over 100 years has seen humanity going from being stuck on the ground to being able to control a helicopter on another planet.

This all might seem far removed from the Jesus of the New Testament, yet thinking about relics reminds me that they are present, not to simply prompt us about the past, but to motivate us into the future. NASA can rejoice in all that has happened in flight in just over 100 years. The Church has even more to rejoice in what has taken place over the last 2,000 years. We, like NASA, have much to look forward to. Easter on Mars anyone?

**Sunday Devotions • Monday 19 April 2021 • By Andrew Hawkins**

## **Sunday Devotion: 25 April 2021, Fourth Sunday of Easter**

Jesus, our blue print for life



**Main Readings:** [Acts 4. 5-12](#); [Psalm 23](#); [1 John 3.16-24](#); [John 10.11-18](#)

**Supplementary Readings:** [Psalm 95](#); [John 8.1-11](#); [Ezekiel 34.1-10, 25-31](#); [Psalm 100](#); [Hebrews 13.7-19](#)

“the stone that was rejected by you, the builders; it has become the cornerstone.” ([Acts 4.11](#))

I was recently on our Prep School Campus when I walked past some Year 5 boys saying some unpleasant things to a younger boy. Of the three boys standing in the group that was speaking to the younger boy, I overheard one of the Year 5 boys say to his friend, “Leave him alone” and then steer the name caller away by gently taking his arm and ushering him in another direction. The boys could not see me and did not know I was within earshot. Unfortunately, as boys age, it is rare to see a teenager break the social stronghold and sacrifice their comfortable status, avoiding the spotlight, by showing conviction and standing up for the truth amongst their peers. However, on occasion, a light will shine in this space and at risk of being rejected by those around them, the young person embraces and absorbs the short-term pain for the long-term goal of highlighting the truth and justice of a situation.

In the Acts of the Apostles when Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit, he proudly exclaims Jesus’ act of sacrifice as the cornerstone for our faith, and for our values, morals and motivations. Jesus’ direct act of selfless love and conviction to make things right and new through the crucifixion, just like the boy’s profound act of courage among peers, is for the betterment of others.

Changing a culture takes time, whether it be on a large scale within wider society or within a friendship group at school. Shifting a toxic culture often requires us to lay down our lives for each other, as Jesus did for us. His example gives us the courage to tap into our convictions, especially when our conscience is Christ-like.

The good shepherd is our ‘blue print’ and as the courageous young school student lays down their reputation and risks scorn and ridicule, we see support of the meek and lowly mirroring Christ’s sacrifice on Calvary.