

Accepting the challenge



Funeral eulogies often give insight into the life and character of the person who has died and there are potential gifts for all who are willing to listen. This was certainly true at the recent funeral of Fr Ross Cameron held at St Andrew's, Toogoolawah, in the Parish of Brisbane Valley, on Tuesday 20 July. The eulogy was prepared and read by Jocelyn Cameron, his wife of 50 years.

Jocelyn explained that Ross grew up in rural Queensland and imbibed there "the values which have made Australia great: love and loyalty to family, respect for all, hard work, self-sacrifice, thrift, with respect for education and religion."

He went to Boarding School at Southport and won a scholarship to study at the University of Queensland. With a Bachelor of Agricultural Science he went to Central Queensland and worked with the Department of Primary Industries at Biloela and Theodore and while there had a strong sense that God was calling him out of agriculture and into ordained ministry.

Apparently, "Ross did not particularly want to leave the agricultural work which he loved...but he accepted the challenge...something Ross had always done when he believed that God wanted him to do something."

God called Ross from a well-paid role in agriculture to a poorly paid role in the Church...and he accepted the challenge. In comparison ordained ministers are paid well these days, but there is still something deeply vocational about our role. It demands much of us and will take us to places that are physically, psychologically, and emotionally challenging.

Jocelyn affirmed that Ross "accepted the challenge" given to him by God...and I found myself wondering how many others God would call to take on similar challenge in our time and how we recognise this?

Ross studied, was ordained, got married and had two children. He did not serve in many parishes but gifted the parishes he served in with years: eight years in Longreach, seven years in Clayfield, 12 years in Oakey, and, if you include retirement, 19 years in Brisbane Valley.

I likened Ross and Jocelyn to Gidyea trees (*Acacia cambagei*) who endured through difficult seasons while providing others with shade! I hope God will call others, who love God and rural life, to come and serve for similarly long seasons in Western Region parishes.

In her conclusion, Jocelyn affirmed that "Ross answered Jesus' call and found power to live the life God planned for him as a priest, believing others could do the same in their lives and vocations. He spent his life willingly, joyfully and wholeheartedly sharing that Good News with as many people as he could." Ross leaves, I think, a rich legacy.

The Western Region has opportunities for clergy to serve in Charleville/Cunnamulla (BMF supported), Leichhardt/Chinchilla (BMF supported), Quilpie/Diamantina (BMF supported), St George, Kingaroy, Highfields and Pittsworth. If you have a sense that God may be calling you to serve in any of these communities please get in touch so we can discuss that and pray together.

Please pray for all rural and remote communities in our Western Region, particularly those who are supported in some way by the BMF. If you, like me, are already supporting the BMF, please keep giving...in the knowledge that this is used by God to bless the lives of others. But, if you are not yet supporting and would like to find out more, please call Helen Briffa at the Western Region Office on (07) 4639 1875 or email her via hbriffa@anglicanchurchsq.org.au

Sunday Devotions • Monday 26 July 2021 • By Peter Branjerdporn

Sunday Devotion: 1 August 2021, Tenth Sunday after Pentecost

Transformed people transform people



Main Readings: [2 Samuel 11.26 – 12.13a](#); [Psalm 51.1-12](#); [Ephesians 4.1-16](#); [John 6.24-35](#) [[Exodus 16.2-4, 9-15](#); [Psalm 78.22-28](#)]

Supplementary Readings: [Psalm 147.1-11](#); [Acts 15.4-12](#); [2 Samuel 12.13-24](#); [Psalm 78.15-30](#); [Ephesians 4.17-24](#)

“(God) did not discriminate between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith.” ([Acts 15.9](#))

I used to find it hard to forgive others. As a good kid I hated when the bad ones could ‘get away with murder’ when they said “sorry”. It wasn’t until I myself made a big mistake, repented, and got a taste of what it was like to be forgiven, that I started being less harsh on others.

In today’s passage the Apostle Peter responded to Jewish followers of Jesus who demanded that non-Jewish believers should practise all their laws also. He emphatically reminds the early Christians to remember that God loves everyone, including the Gentiles, not because of how good any of them are, but because of how good God is. God “made a choice” to accept all of us as we are without discrimination.

No one can follow the law perfectly. And, that’s the point of God’s love: while we were still ‘Gentiles’ God loved us first. It is only through Grace that any of us can know and be transformed by God. (v. 11) So when we seek to force upon others, especially those who are considered to be on the outside (such as people seeking asylum, people from the LGBTIQ+ community, First Nations peoples, the list goes on) the way we want them to live, are we not like those in Acts who fall into the trap of thinking that the law is what makes us God’s chosen people?

Lord, help us to be merciful and inclusive. May we extend the same grace shown to us in Christ Jesus to *all* others, Amen.