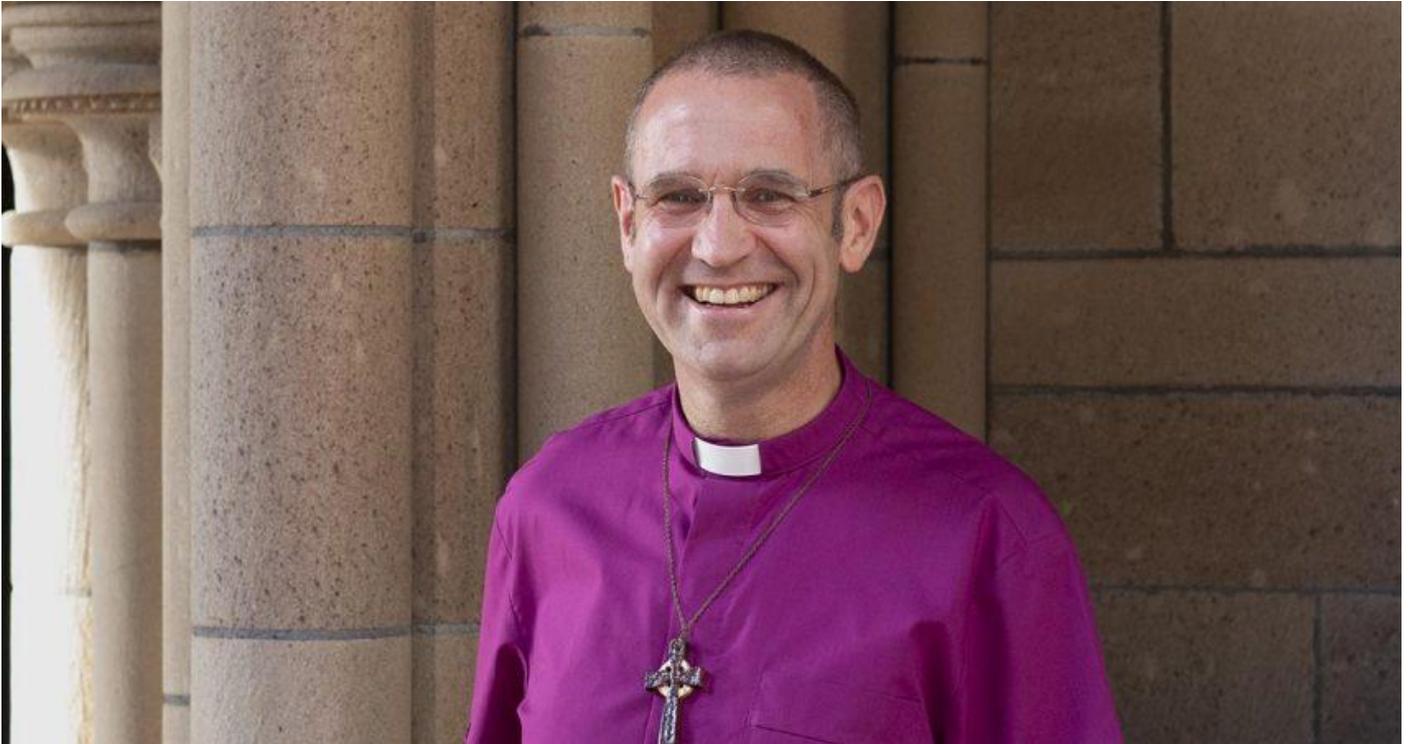


Abide with me, fast falls the eventide



As a curate in northern England 28 years ago, it was common to preside over two funerals a week. Such was the frequency of funerals that there was a shorthand phrase for the two most common hymns that were played during these services: 'Crimond', the name of the tune for the setting of Psalm 23, '[The Lord is my shepherd](#)', and '[Abide with me, fast falls the eventide](#)'. The shorthand was to say that the funeral was a "C&A funeral". This was somewhat cheeky, as C&A was a clothing retail chain, which in the early 90s was a fast-fashion brand in the UK, and so a "C&A funeral" was a kind of off-the-shelf service.

Just to relate that memory of funerals past takes so much explaining these days. Even if you were reading this in the UK, I doubt the references would work now. So much has changed in those intervening years. I doubt many parishes do funerals at that same rate, and I doubt that you could describe a funeral with a simple three-character initialism, when these days we have videos, PowerPoint presentations, recorded music, and so on.

Over time much has changed, almost without it being noticed.

Bill Gates, the American philanthropist and former CEO of Microsoft, is attributed with saying:

"We always overestimate the change that will occur in the next two years and underestimate the change that will occur in the next ten. Don't let yourself be lulled into inaction."

I sometimes feel he could be speaking about the Church. At times we are impatient to see things change and at other times we are impatient to see things not change. And yet, we also sometimes underestimate (or feel shocked) by the change that has taken place over the last 10 years or more.

I think the Bill's quote offers me two challenges. Firstly, to identify the things that are changing and those that are abiding. Secondly, to not be lulled into inaction by the tides that are swirling around us – to take some sense of reassurance that some things do abide.

'Abide with me, fast falls the eventide', itself has these stirring words:

"Change and decay in all around I see
O Thou who changest not, abide with me"

This year a new hymn was released for the Thy Kingdom Come initiative – a global movement started by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York to encourage Christians to pray from Ascension to Pentecost that more people come to know Jesus.

This new hymn uses the same tune as 'Abide with me, fast falls the eventide', but changes the lyrics to a more missional direction. You can [download](#) the video (with lyrics), chord sheets, backing track and more.

['We Seek Your Kingdom'](#) by Noel Robinson, Andy Flannagan, and Graham Hunter

We seek Your Kingdom throughout every sphere
We long for Heaven's demonstration here
Jesus, Your light shines bright for all to see
Transform, revive, and heal society

Before all things, in Him all things were made
Inspiring culture, media, and trade
May all our work serve Your economy
Transform, revive, and heal society

Peace, truth, and justice reigning everywhere
With us be present in our public square
Fill all who lead with Your integrity
Transform, revive, and heal society

Forgive us, Lord, when we have not engaged
Failing to scribe Your heart on history's page
Make us again what we were made to be
Transform, revive, and heal society

Faithful to govern ever may we be
Selfless in service, loving constantly
In everything may Your authority
Transform, revive, and heal society
Transform, revive, and heal society

With so much change taking place in the world all around us, it is perhaps easy to be lulled into inaction, but we are still called to seek the Kingdom and to transform, revive and heal society and to worship that one that truly abides.

Features • Tuesday 5 October 2021 • By The Rev'd Gillian Moses

ACSQ Synod: committing to safety, committing to change



Chair of the ACSQ Domestic and Family Violence Working Group The Rev'd Gillian Moses speaking at the 2021 Diocesan Synod

The recent Diocesan Synod achieved a significant piece of work in passing a resolution in response to the [National Anglican Family Violence Project reports](#) that were released earlier this year. 2021 Diocesan Synod's Resolution 7 acknowledged the pain and grief experienced by all Anglicans whose lives are affected by domestic violence and abuse, and also committed itself to responding to the Project actively and broadly.

Synod committed to working through the [Ten Commitments for Prevention and Response to Domestic and Family Violence in the Anglican Church of Australia](#) (listed below), and has asked for Diocesan Council to report on progress with these Commitments at future Synods.

The Ten Commitments also invite the ACSQ to review our progress regularly as part of the national church's review process. This will ensure that our work reflects the most recent thinking and practice in the sector.

In recent meetings with the General Synod Family Violence Working Group and other Dioceses, representatives from ACSQ explored the concept of a national Family Violence Network to facilitate the sharing of resources and ideas across the Anglican Church of Australia.

Most importantly, the Ten Commitments challenge us to engage with our own Church culture. We need to interrogate those parts of our common life, our traditions and sometimes even our beliefs, which have contributed to a lack of gender equity in the Church. Which of our teachings might have

prioritised the sanctity and indissolubility of marriage, at the expense of the safety of women and children? Do our traditions encourage models of male headship, where the male spouse is the head of the household and the female spouse is subservient? Might our ingrained socialised tendencies to politeness and civility or to putting our head in the sand mean that we are inadvertently enabling the abuse of women and children in their homes?

Acknowledging the seriousness and extent of the work required by the Ten Commitments, Synod also resolved to encourage Diocesan Council to find ways to finance a full-time Domestic Violence Prevention Officer who will oversee this work within the ACSQ. Presently, the work of training, education and engaging with the DVA sector is undertaken solely by the ACSQ Domestic and Family Violence Working Group, whose members work on a voluntary basis. Financing a full-time staff member to coordinate the work of volunteers demonstrates the commitment of the ACSQ to addressing this issue. Finding the money to fund such a position will be challenging. Budgets are tight and many causes are worthy.

However, making the necessary changes within our Church's culture will be even harder, as we may be asked to let go of ideas and traditions that have been dear to us. In the words of the Ordinal, "*May God who has given [us] the will to do these things give [us] the grace and power to perform them. Amen.*"

[The Ten Commitments for Prevention and Response to Domestic and Family Violence in the Anglican Church of Australia](#) are:

1. Our Church acknowledges and laments the violence which has been suffered by some of our members and repents of the part we have played in allowing an environment where violence went unaddressed.
2. Our Church leaders commit to ensure conditions that support the prevention of violence, a church culture that promotes equality, and support for those who experience violence.
3. Our Church consistently teaches about equality, freedom from violence, respectful relationships and the honour/value of every person.
4. Our Church affirms that human relationships are to be based on respect and mutuality.
5. Our Church acknowledges the different experiences of all people and that these have played a part in whether they have been treated with respect and equality.
6. Our Church actions are directed by the gospel of love, peace and justice, and are informed and engaged with local, state and national government initiatives as appropriate.
7. Our church supports cultural change in our communities by communicating effectively to our members.
8. Our Church trains our leaders, pastoral staff and parish councils to understand and be equipped to respond in ways that prevent and address domestic and family violence.
9. Our leaders and pastoral staff hold themselves to account and are guided by the Anglican Church's Code of Conduct: Faithfulness in Service.
10. These commitments are regularly reviewed and improved.

Author's note: The Anglican Church Southern Queensland (ACSQ) is committed to promoting and supporting a safe environment for all. Domestic and family violence is unacceptable. We offer pastoral care to victims of domestic and family abuse. The ACSQ is part of the Queensland Churches Together [Joint Churches Domestic Violence Prevention Project \(JCDVPP\)](#), which publishes resources for clergy and lay people.

If you are in immediate danger, call 000 for police or ambulance help. For a list of helplines and websites available to women, children and men, visit this page on the [Queensland Government website](#).

Features • Tuesday 5 October 2021 • By The Rev'd Dr Geoff Broughton

Professional supervision: a brave, safe space



"Professional/pastoral supervision is the brave, safe space where clergy (and other ministry workers) reflect on their ministry practice in a regular, planned supervision session" (The Rev'd Dr Geoff Broughton)

Professional/pastoral supervision is the brave, safe space where clergy (and other ministry workers) reflect on their ministry practice in a regular, planned supervision session.

I am writing this feature straight after a session with one of my regular supervisees, which provides an immediate example of what supervision looks like. My supervisee is an ordained Anglican, ministering on the east coast of Australia, and was called to the scene of a traumatic incident. My supervisee nominated this issue, setting aside two other pressing matters, as the focus for the session.

Sensing the incident may involve many and complex detail – some of which would be highly confidential – I guided my supervisee away from merely recounting what had happened with the following question: "If this incident were to be written as a case study for students training at a college, what title would you give it?"

A long pause followed. The supervisee first offered a pithy title for what had transpired. We agreed it was an *accurate* title for the incident, but wondered if there was a more *creative* title for what students could discover by reflecting on my supervisee's reflection on what had happened? The supervisee's second response provided a focussed centre of gravity for our time together and the rest of the supervision session flowed from this clear focus (even though we were only a few minutes into

our session). The supervisee began exploring the incident with a succinct phrase, “doing *what* I can, *where* I can...”

My own practice of pastoral supervision is indebted to Scottish scholar-priest Michael Paterson who has been the main pioneer in the United Kingdom. Dr Paterson lays out clearly how he sees pastoral supervision differing from supervision as it is used in other professions. Paterson highlights the focus as being on the *vision* and the *vocation* to which God has called the supervisee. He does not set out to reinvent supervision but instead to look at how the practices of supervision can be used to serve the aim of attending to the Christian call in the supervisee’s life.

One of the great strengths of Paterson’s pioneering work is the broad range of different approaches to supervision, abundantly clear that supervision is more than about thinking. Good supervision, in the tradition of wise oversight, pays attention to what is not said as much as what is said, and understands the place of the story being told in supervision within the framework of the Christian story. The national Anglican Church is responding to recommendations in the final report of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, so that clergy and ministry workers understand that compulsory supervision is not being introduced because they have been naughty, weak or stupid.

Towards the end of the supervision session noted in this feature, my supervisee found himself saying the following words about his work, “It was profoundly spiritual”. My supervisee now realised his ministry – doing *what* he could, *where* he could – gave the people impacted ‘words they could borrow’ (a reference to a Psalm read and set prayers offered). I wondered if this was the holy ground of his vocation, but my supervisee countered with an even better suggestion: “It’s my sweet spot”.

Three functions of pastoral supervision can be identified from the session I describe here: supervision is relational; supervision is about reflecting, not reporting; and, supervision cultivates rightness. The relational function is theologically understood to encompass all relationships (with God, self and others). The reflecting function is theological reflection that is centred on the wisdom of the cross. Thirdly – and crucially – rightness is both relational and cruciform. For professional/pastoral supervision, that’s the sweetest spot of all.

For more on this theme, see:

Geoff Broughton, ‘Pastoral Supervision for Safe Churches’ in *Journal of Anglican Studies* (13 September 2021).

Geoff Broughton, *A Practical Christology for Pastoral Supervision*. Routledge, 2021.

Jane Leach and Michael Paterson, *Pastoral Supervision: A Handbook*. SCM Press, 2015.

2021 Diocesan Synod reflections: highlights and learnings



"My favourite parts of Synod were giving the prayers in Friday night's Eucharistic service in the Cathedral and standing up on Sunday to ask a question about South Sudanese youth who are connected to the Anglican community who are traumatised and acting out" (Gabriel Deng, Parish of Goodna)

Four clergy and lay people from across our Regions share their Synod highlights, including Gabriel Deng from the Parish of Goodna, The Ven. Keith Dean-Jones from the Parish of Bundaberg, The Rev'd Selina McMahon from the Parish of Ipswich and Dylan Katthagen from the Parish of North Lakes.

Gabriel Deng – Synod Representative, Parish of Goodna

My favourite parts of Synod were giving the prayers in Friday night's Eucharistic service in the Cathedral and standing up on Sunday to ask a question about South Sudanese youth connected to the Anglican community who are traumatised and acting out because of war, losing parents and mental illness.

My priest The Rev'd Bronwyn Pagram asked me on the Monday before Synod to read the prayers during the service. Two months before Synod started, I decided to get up during the question time and ask how the Anglican Church can help South Sudanese children and young adults. As a South Sudanese church leader, it is part of my role to stand up and represent my community. Being able to stand up and read prayers and ask questions make me feel part of the Anglican community, as well as the Australian community.

I didn't want to sit at Synod for two to three days and do nothing and then return to my community without participating and contributing to the Synod. I will get up and speak at Synod again if I get a chance. I encourage other South Sudanese people to go to Synod to see how things are done and to volunteer as Synod Reps for their parishes or churches. By volunteering as Synod Reps and in other

Church roles we are more integrated into the Australian community, which is important because it's not good to be isolated. We need to share both our gifts and our problems so we can be integrated.

The Ven. Keith Dean-Jones OGS – Rector, Parish of Bundaberg and Archdeacon of Burnett

There were many good things about Synod 2021. I especially appreciated the contribution of the Archbishop as President: he encouraged participation, he kept Synod 'on track' with gentleness and humour and, despite the many issues that were scheduled for debate, he succeeded in expediting discussion.

The Anglican Church Southern Queensland is not a 'one party state'. Although the 'Catholic' group has been historically dominant in representation, there are significant numbers of Evangelicals and liberal progressives. There are also many clergy and lay leaders who cannot be easily categorised. I think that our relationships ought not to be expressed in terms of 'party politics'. I also think that attempts at 'peace at any price' fail to satisfy. The Archbishop affirms the importance of comprehensive Anglicanism. This is the recognition that truth is greater than individual or 'party' perceptions, and that we need one another as we seek the mind of Christ. Jesus taught that "the truth will set you free" (John 8.32). If we enter into dialogue with grace and loving kindness all sorts of wonderful things will happen.

I also think that we might be a humbler Church. Child sexual abuse and family violence have reminded us that we have failed in our relationships. We have not always protected the vulnerable. Coronavirus lockdowns have affected numerical strength to some degree and the 'glory days' of full churches on Sunday mornings are in the past. But, a renewed perception that we are to be a humbler Church, serving our communities and caring for people who are poor, lonely and vulnerable, has brought us closer to the ministry of Jesus.

The Rev'd Selina McMahon – Rector, St Paul's, Ipswich

So, Synod has come and gone. The implications of the motions passed are still to be felt, but the overall impressions of Synod are primarily ones of constructive discussion and debate. However, the camaraderie that is normally present at Synod was sadly muted somewhat this year, primarily due to the restrictions that were necessarily required as a result of COVID-19. It is difficult to have a conversation when masked and I missed the Saturday evening meal and the chance to establish new connections and renew old friendships.

This Synod was the first at which I have actually made a speech to second a motion and it was a lot less nerve-racking than I imagined. No longer does the Yorkshire adage "see all, hear all, say nowt," apply. Sorry folks, but now that the genie has been let out of the bottle there is little chance of getting her back in!

This is the first Synod since my transition, and it was wonderful to see the way others (some of whom have deeply held beliefs that a transitioned priest should not be in charge of a parish) were able to still have open, honest and polite conversations with me. I think it is in the spirit of this dialogue that saw two different positions on the subject of same-sex blessings come together and produce a united motion to dialogue the way forward.

Dylan Katthagen – Synod Representative, The Lakes Anglican Church

This newcomer to Synod was particularly impressed by the level of graciousness, humility and respect demonstrated by our Episcopal leaders. There was a time when a Regional Bishop tried to move a motion forward, only for his request to be rejected by the Synod. There were occasions when the Archbishop, as President, mispronounced a name or a title, and was subsequently corrected. And, there were instances when those responding on the floor, possibly out of nervousness, went off on a tangent or told a long story instead of directly and concisely addressing the matter at hand.

And yet, our Episcopal leaders refrained from engaging in any backchat or eye rolling. Instead, they kept their hearts and ears open, consistently demonstrating generosity, understanding and support. This commitment to dialogue and good conduct helped to keep Synod's conversations constructive, creating space for healthy debate and sustaining a peaceful and productive environment.

As one entering into formation next year, I am encouraged and inspired by the examples of our Archbishop and Regional Bishops. I am reminded that as I grow in the areas of academia and Anglican ministry, there is always a need to "be quick to listen, slow to speak" (James 1.19). It takes wisdom grounded in experience to be able to direct and lead others forward, while at the same time being patient and humble. At Synod, our Episcopal leaders set the standard and then consistently followed through. I hope to be able reflect that behaviour as I move forward into formation.

Features • Friday 1 October 2021 • By The Rev'd Canon Dr Marian Free

William Tyndale: the most dangerous man in Tudor England



William Tyndale of Tindale (c1494-1536), English translator of the Bible, on the morning of his death, giving his jailer a packet for John Rogers (pseudonym of Thomas Mather) thought to have contained his work on the Old Testament (late 19th century wood engraving)

As a student of the Bible, I am fascinated by the history of translation, in particular the translation of the Bible into English and the fact that such an endeavour was once considered heretical and punishable by death. In a world in which a variety of translations (and transliterations) are readily available, it is almost impossible to comprehend that for centuries the Bible itself was incomprehensible to anyone who was not proficient in Latin.

Reformer, translator and martyr William Tyndale (c.1494-1536) was utterly convinced that everyone, great and small, should have access to the scriptures, and though it was dangerous to do so, he was not afraid of speaking his mind. On one occasion [he reportedly said](#): "I defy the Pope and all his laws. If God spare my life ere many years, I will cause the boy that drives the plough to know more of the scriptures than you!"

It is hard to say when I first encountered William Tyndale. I feel that as long as I have known that the Bible was not written in the language of King James' England, I have known that the first translation into English was made by Tyndale. His work of translation forms the background of much Reformation history and was carried out at a time when an English translation was considered to be a threat both to the Church and state. In popular culture, you might remember a character in a recent movie or tele-movie in which a major character (possibly Thomas Cromwell) is depicted as pushing his copy of Tyndale out of view when representatives of the king come to visit. Having a Tyndale Bible in one's own possession was punishable by the death sentence.

The years leading up to the Reformation were a time of intellectual foment and turmoil. Long held traditions and practices were being questioned, as was the authority of the Church. At the same time, a number of Greek intellectuals who had fled Constantinople when it fell to the Ottoman Empire, brought with them copies of the Greek Bible. For the first time in centuries, the Bible could be translated from its original language rather than from the later Latin versions. Tyndale read Erasmus' Greek text and discovered, as had many reformers, the principle of justification by faith and came to believe that the theology of the Latin was seriously in error.

This put him into direct conflict with the Church, which emphasised the sinfulness of humanity and the need for confession (and purgatory) as a means to salvation. It was a theology that threatened the authority of the Church, which was why it was considered so dangerous.

By all accounts Tyndale had an extraordinary intellect and was extremely proficient at languages. By the time that he was 22 he was fluent in eight languages, including Greek. He was filled with a passion to make an English translation available to all his fellow citizens, so that everyone from the lowest to the highest could read the Bible for themselves.

To this end he applied to the Bishop of London for a grant. When the grant was refused Tyndale found backing in the form of a wealthy cloth merchant. He moved to Europe in 1524 in the hope of finding a more welcome environment in which to continue his work. He fled to modern-day Germany – first to Cologne and when he was discovered there he moved to Worms. In 1525 his first edition of an English translation was published. Copies were smuggled into England in bales of cotton where they could be bought for the equivalent of a week's wages. The invention of the printing press ensured that numerous copies could be made at one time and at very little cost.

His translation caused such offence that lawyer [Thomas More \(1478-1535\) said](#): "it is not worthy to be called Christ's testament, but either Tyndale's own testament or the testament of his master Antichrist."

Such was the anxiety about Tyndale's translation that King Henry VIII bought 3,000 copies and had them burnt. However, this was to Tyndale's advantage – for while the books were destroyed, he still received the proceeds of the sale! Having completed his translation of the New Testament, Tyndale began working on a translation of the Old Testament from the original Hebrew.

Tyndale's translations were considered to be such a threat to Church and state that even in Europe he was not safe. He was sought by representatives of both the English King and the Pope. For a time, Tyndale managed to evade the authorities and occupied himself not only with the work of translating and writing, but with pastoral work among his fellow countrymen and women who had also fled religious persecution in England: "on Saturdays he walked Antwerp's streets seeking to minister to the poor ([Christianity Today](#))."

Eventually he was betrayed by one Henry Phillips who had managed to gain his trust. Phillips lured him into a trap. Tyndale was accused of heresy and imprisoned in the Castle of Vilvoorde. He was examined by representatives of the Holy Roman Empire and finally condemned, stripped of his office and "handed over to the secular authorities for punishment ([Christianity Today](#))." On 6 October 1536 at the age of 42, he was strangled before the pyre on which he stood was torched. Apparently [his last words were](#): "Lord, open the King of England's eyes!"

Within four years of his death, four English translations of the Bible were published in England, including Henry the Eighth's Great Bible.

Tyndale's legacy continues today. Though [only three copies](#) of his original translation exist, so good was his translation that more than 80 per cent (some say 90 per cent) of the King James version is derived from Tyndale's translation.

Furthermore, many phrases that we use today came from his pen, including "The spirit is willing", "Eat, drink and be merry" and "Fight the good fight". On occasions when there was no equivalent in English for the Greek word, Tyndale supplied one. Words that he invented include "scapegoat", "atonement" and "Passover."

In the face of death, Tyndale remained committed to his goal and all these centuries later we are the richer for it.



The plaque on the Tyndale Monument in Gloucestershire reads: ERECTED A.D. 1866 IN GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE OF WILLIAM TYNDALE TRANSLATOR OF THE ENGLISH BIBLE WHO FIRST CAUSED THE NEW TESTAMENT TO BE PRINTED IN THE MOTHER TONGUE OF HIS COUNTRYMEN BORN NEAR THIS SPOT HE SUFFERED MARTYRDOM AT VILVORDE IN FLANDERS ON OCT 6TH 1536

How to write prayers of intercession



"When I moved to the city for university, I joined an Anglican church and fell in love with the beauty and brevity of A Prayer Book for Australia (APBA) prayers" (The Rev'd Dr Margaret Wesley)

I grew up in a small denomination where written prayers were thought to restrict the Holy Spirit. Intercessions were, therefore, long and rambling. I was irreverent enough to time them one Sunday – they took over 20 minutes!

When I moved to the city for university, I joined an Anglican church and fell in love with the beauty and brevity of A Prayer Book for Australia (APBA) prayers. I joined the intercession roster and began to model my public intercessions on those beautiful prayers from our tradition.

"Intercession" is a word from the Latin for "between" and "go". An intercessor is a go-between: someone who holds one hand towards the love, grace and power of God, and the other towards the suffering, brokenness and beauty of all creation. The word "intercession" takes my mind back to those moments in the wilderness when Moses stood between God and God's people and begged for mercy. When we lead our congregations in intercession, we stand in the space between God's love and the congregation's need, and we build a bridge there with our words.

Without that bridge of intercession, a congregation can be left without hope. In August, when we were all devastated by images from Afghanistan, I heard many people cry from their hearts, "I wish there was something I could do!" There is *always* something we can do. Like many churches, St Paul's organised a vigil where we could stand in that go-between space. We wept with the people of Afghanistan, named and protested their mistreatment, and remembered together that God has always loved and rescued just such vulnerable, oppressed people.

My children used to tease me that the only time I ever read the news was when I was rostered on for intercessions at church. Life is overwhelmingly busy sometimes, yet the holy space we inhabit when

we lead a congregation in intercession makes it just as important to immerse ourselves in the needs of our world, community and congregation as it is to name and appeal to the character of God. My kids' teasing challenged me to stand in that place of intercession every day, not just once a month when I was on the roster.

I hope the following ideas will help you prepare your intercessions.

Top 10 tips for preparing intercessions

1. Read the lectionary passages and collect (prayer of the day). What aspects of God's character will be dwelt on through the service? Focus on these in your prayers.
2. Call and response keeps the congregation involved. Simple is best. Use one they are familiar with, like "Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer**" or use the aspect of God's character that is your focus: for example, "Compassionate God, **comfort and heal.**"
3. Be aware of any significance to the day or season. At least mention this, and possibly shape the whole prayer around it.
4. Inform yourself about the needs of your church, community, country, and world. Include one or two concerns from each of these areas.
5. Allow yourself to feel the sadness, anger and joy around you. Cry, shout or dance as appropriate (nobody needs to see this bit!). Then your prayers will come from your heart and body, as well as your head.
6. Prayer is not a personal platform. Ask yourself, "Can all God's people gathered here today say 'Amen' to this?" If the answer is "no", generalise it. At election time it is not usually appropriate to pray publicly for your party to win, but you can pray for a government that will give justice to people who are poor and vulnerable.
7. You needn't start from scratch. The APBA is a valuable resource (see pages 172-217 for outlines and examples of intercessions.) Try expanding each phrase of The Lord's Prayer, or another favourite prayer.
8. Collect prayers you like so you can find language to borrow when needed.
9. Read your intercessions aloud at home so you can hear how they sound.
10. Read or show your intercessions to someone who can give you feedback.

For the past 18 months I have been writing and sharing prayers in response to COVID-19 and have collected them into a book. Please let me know via email to priest@stpaulsashgrove.org.au if you would like a copy for around \$20.

After the challenges of these last two years, I look forward to the "[Where do we go from here?](#)" retreat on 1-5 November at Santa Teresa Spirituality Centre, where I will lead clergy in listening for where God might be calling us now.

Young Brisbane sisters set multiple records singing 193 national anthems in over 100 languages to mark the UN International Day of Peace



True to their surname, Brisbane sisters Agnes, 18, and Teresa, 21, Joy delighted in setting multiple world records singing the world's 193 national anthems in over 100 languages on cue at St John's Anglican Cathedral on Tuesday 21 September 2021

Two young Brisbane sisters were the first to sing all 193 national anthems in one day on Tuesday, having learnt the anthems on cue in over 100 languages to promote international peace and climate action.

Since 2012 the Joy sisters, Agnes, 18, and Teresa, 21, have memorised and researched the world's anthems and can now sing all 193 acapella, by heart.

The sisters' "Salute the Nations" recital, one of several UN International Day of Peace events hosted at St John's Anglican Cathedral on Tuesday, sought to promote world peace and advocate for climate action.

Agnes and Teresa wake up at 5 o'clock and spend the first two hours of their day studying and singing the anthems before Agnes goes to school and Teresa attends university.

Before commencing their world record triumph in the morning, the sisters told the media that their anthem endeavour is about fostering a common humanity and peace.

"We hope that our project demonstrates that the humanity of the world has not been lost and that we are doing our best to restore world peace," Teresa and Agnes said.

“When we, as individuals, sing these national anthems...a unique atmosphere of oneness is created that, in turn, creates a common platform conducive to world peace and a heightened sense of humanity.”

The sisters’ feat was observed by five official judges representing three world record organisations, which stipulated that the sisters had to sing continuously, with only three 10-minute breaks permitted throughout their recital.

The sisters completed their marathon-worthy performance 45 minutes faster than expected, starting at 9.30am with Afghanistan’s national anthem and finishing at 3.15pm with Zimbabwe’s.

Former Queensland senator and president of the United Nations Association of Australia (UNAA) Queensland Division Claire Moore said that she was honoured to be a judge and impressed by the sisters’ tenacity.

“I am in awe of their dedication and commitment...to ensuring that there is international peace and climate change awareness,” Ms Moore said.

Ngugi Elder Uncle Bob Anderson OAM gave a heart-warming Acknowledgement of Country before the sisters’ anthem recital, speaking from the perspective of a “father, grandfather and great-grandfather”.

“The matter of peace is important for me – to involve myself continuously in that process, and it is my responsibility and joy to ensure a peaceful land,” Uncle Bob said.



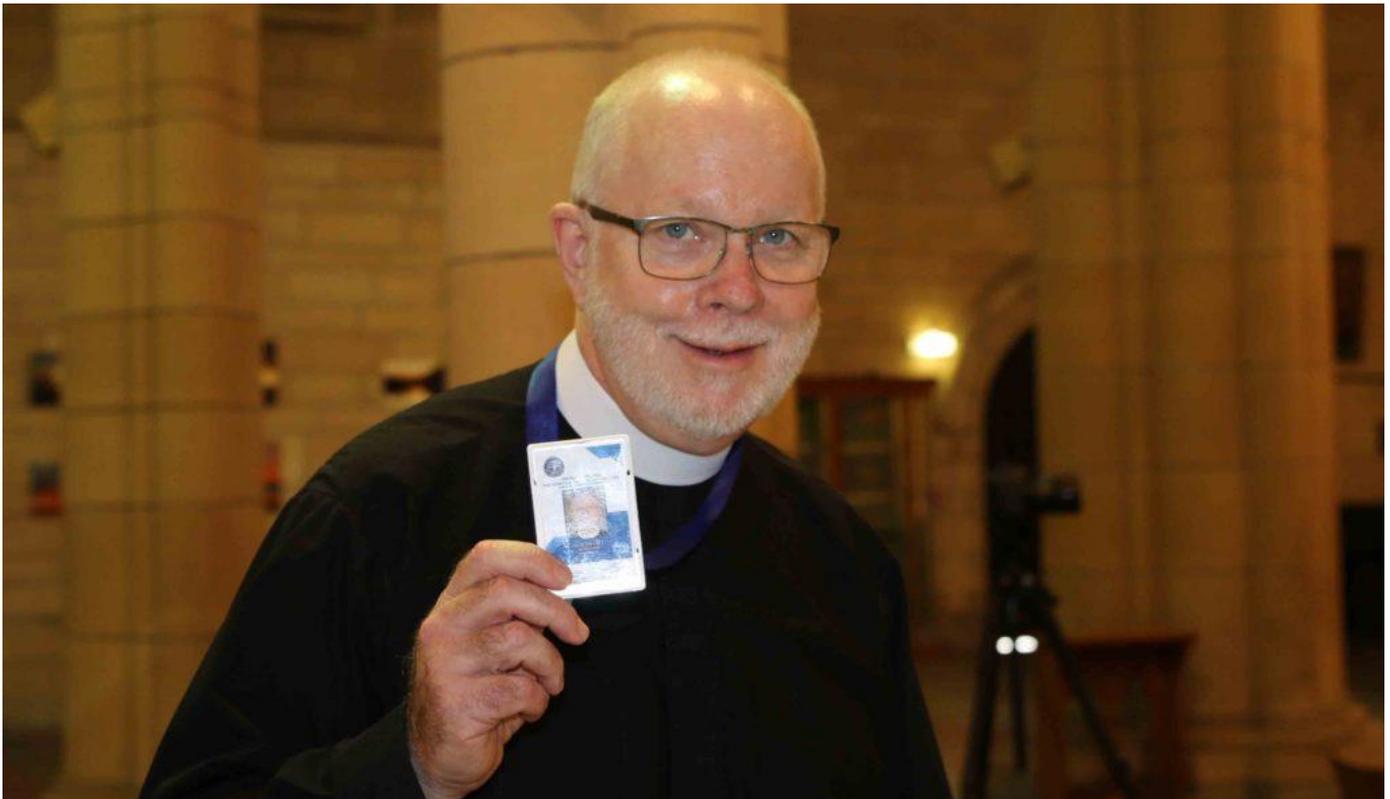
Brisbane’s Teresa and Agnes Joy shared a special moment with Ngugi Elder Uncle Bob Anderson OAM, who gave the Acknowledgement of Country before the sisters’ record-setting recital commenced

At the end of their seminal singing feat, the sisters were presented with certificates from The Australian Book of Records, the Universal Record Book and the Universal Records Forum.

“Salute the Nations” project coordinator and past president of the UNAA Queensland Division Clem Campbell OAM said that the sisters are future leaders who are already inspiring change for the better.

“Young global citizens like Augnes and Teresa give hope to us all,” Mr Campbell said.

Augnes and Teresa said that they have been invited by Qatar’s government and Rotary Clubs in the United Arab Emirates and the United States of America to sing the world’s 193 national anthems on cue.



Cathedral Dean, The Very Rev'd Dr Peter Catt, added yet another string to his bow by officiating as a judge at the Joy sisters' record-setting triumph, representing the Universal Records Forum on 21 September 2021

The Cathedral's Peace Day proceedings also comprised an evening program, including the tenth annual Brisbane Peace Lecture, which was given by former Defence Force chief Chris Barrie AC.

In a pre-recorded lecture, the retired admiral, who is currently honorary professor at the Australian National University's Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, addressed the 2021 UN International Day of Peace theme, “Recovering better for an equitable and sustainable world”.

Professor Barrie particularly focused on how we can collectively navigate “the two critical existential threats to life on planet earth”, nuclear war and damage to the climate.

“We cannot solve problems with the current pandemic in each nation or state alone...That is why we must pull together,” Professor Barrie said.

“Similarly in solving problems posed by the two existential threats, the involvement of human beings on the planet is essential since the consequences of those threats will involve everybody.

“For good collaboration to occur we need trust, openness, confidence building and the ability to resolve differences through inspired negotiation, rather than damaging adversarial relationships.”

In the spirit of the day’s proceedings, Professor Barrie also emphasised the vital role of young people.

“I believe now we have reached the point actively to pass on to a new generation of leaders the responsibilities and accountabilities for the management of their future,” he said.

Prior to Professor Barrie’s lecture, the University of Queensland’s Rotary Peace Centre presented the two annual Local Agents of Peace Awards.

This year’s recipients are long-term social justice activist and member of the Peace Pilgrims Margaret Pestorius and president of the Independent and Peaceful Australia Network (IPAN) and co-founder of Just Peace Annette Brownlie.

While introducing the awards, founding Director of the Rotary Peace Centre Marianne Hanson spoke about the importance of recognising the often unacknowledged work local people undertake in their communities.

“This year has seen many tragedies and sometimes it seems that peace is hard to find – we recall the plight of the people in Afghanistan facing a brutal regime, the children suffering amidst the military coup in Myanmar, all those being killed by weapons in Yemen,” Professor Hanson said.

“It’s important to celebrate and thank those who, in their everyday activities, uphold the ideals behind the International Day of Peace, usually without any recognition or fanfare.

Editor’s note: The Cathedral’s International Day of Peace events can be viewed on the St John’s Cathedral Brisbane YouTube channel: Annual UN International Day of Peace “[Brisbane Peace Lecture](#)” (and Local Agents of Peace Awards) and Augnes and Teresa’s world-record-setting “[Salute the Nations](#)” recital.

People of faith to explore bringing heaven on earth in Brisbane's heart while raising money for Melanesian literacy and sustainability projects



Kuku Yalanji Traditional Owner and artist Lania Tusa, who will be hosting a First Nations art workshop and speaking at the Spirituality and Sustainability Forum, said she hopes On Earth festival participants will gain greater respect for First Nations cultures

The Brisbane "On Earth" festival will be a unique opportunity for community members to connect and learn about how we can bring about heaven on Earth, while raising funds for critical Anglican Board of Mission programs in Melanesia.

The festival will be hosted on the serene grounds of St Francis Theological College, an oasis in the centre of Milton, on Saturday 16 October between 12 noon and 9pm.

Throughout this unique festival, Southern Queenslanders will take the opportunity to deepen their faith and strengthen their connection to our shared Earth by engaging with a variety of activities.

Workshops will be held throughout the day, with a diverse range of local singer-songwriters and artists also performing.

The festival's key themes of spirituality, sustainability, justice and reflection will be explored by the performers through their art.

Kuku Yalanji Traditional Owner and artist Lalania Tusa, who will be hosting a First Nations art workshop and speaking at the Spirituality and Sustainability Forum, said she hopes festival participants will gain greater respect for First Nations cultures.

“The ‘On Earth’ festival will engage people...through the arts, spirituality, justice and First Nations culture to showcase the diversity of our community,” Ms Tusa said.

“We can inspire one another to walk hand in hand to create a deeper level of change, respect and justice for the world.

“People who attend the workshops will leave with a better understanding of the traditions, stories, art and cultural practices that are being passed down from generation to generation.”

Ticket proceeds will go to the [Anglican Board of Mission](#), whose current programs include initiatives with a Melanesian focus, such as a PNG Adult Literacy Program; a Solomon Islands Climate Change and Disaster Management Project; a Solomon Islands Positive Parenting Program; and, a Vanuatu Integrated Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Project.

October’s On Earth festival will be an enriching opportunity for community members to explore their faith, spirituality and connection to our Earth alongside the talented line-up of performers.

Famed performance poet Boy Renaissance will also feature at the On Earth festival.

Having been dubbed “the most exciting performance poet in Australia”, Boy Renaissance has received international recognition for their work, winning the Bellingen Reader Writer’s Festival Slam, among other achievements.

Boy Renaissance is looking forward to reflecting on connection to Earth and different approaches to faith with festival participants.

“I am interested in deepening my relationship with the environment and want to expand my understanding of what faith and spirituality can mean,” Boy Renaissance said.

“I want people to join me in reflection, as we all, without judgement, come together to deepen our relationship with the Earth and our own definition of faith.”

The festival program has been intentionally crafted to allow all members of the community to enjoy the beautiful St Francis Theological College campus and engage with the diverse and exciting range of activities on offer, including performances; workshops on First Nations art, composting and self-watering wicking bed gardening, and vision boarding; a Spirituality and Sustainability Forum; a Franciscan Talk ‘n’ Walk; a refugee art exhibition; a labyrinth walk; Tesla test-riding; and, a kids’ corner.

Editor’s note: check out the [On Earth Festival website](#) and follow On Earth on [Facebook](#). Book online via [eventbrite](#): general admission tickets are \$20; concession and under 18 tickets are \$10; and, children 12 and under are free. The festival will be held at St Francis Theological College at 233 Milton Rd in Milton on Saturday 16 October between 12 noon and 9pm.

How to run a church community market



All Saints', Chermside gardening guru Anthea and rector The Rev'd Daniel Jayaraj getting ready for the parish's 2021 Christmas Market

Our parish's annual Christmas Market, to be held on Saturday 20 November this year, is a joyous and busy day for our parish. Whilst our parish's community market provides useful revenue for our ministries, it is much more about engaging our local community and giving our creative people the opportunity to sell their goods. There is an increasing number of artisans in our church and the wider community who love the opportunity to showcase and sell their creations.

Our choir sings Christmas carols during the afternoon, which really adds to the sense that Christmas is just around the corner, especially for visitors.

We advertise the market months before the day and offer stall tables for hire to the wider community. This way we end up with a wide range of goods for sale, including the expected Christmas crafts, as well as a wide range of extraordinary and unique craft items, freshly-baked goodies, preserves, beauty products, jewellery and much more. We claim to have the largest giant plant stall in our Diocese, which is very popular! And, of course, we have refreshments for sale.

The Parish of Chermside is in a very busy metropolitan area, so we have a lot of interaction with the local community through our ongoing food pantry and soup kitchen. Our market day is a special occasion when the wider community can come and see the parish in action and buy very reasonably priced quality items and just enjoy the atmosphere.

This year we are also offering an online marketplace for some of our artisans in the period running up to market day (check out the [parish website](#) and [Facebook page](#) to see the catalogue). The additional online option is a backup in the case there is a COVID-19 lockdown in November.

Top 10 tips for running a successful community market:

1. Keep your stall table hire pricing reasonable.
2. Look at your space and calculate a stall table layout that provides plenty of room for everyone, as many marketers bring a lot of items to sell.
3. Ensure you leave additional space for last minute additions from the parish.
4. If possible, supply the tables and let your hirers know exactly how much space they have.
5. Use an online booking site (we use trybooking.com) so that stall tables can be booked and paid for prior to the market – that way you don't have to handle money or chase up payments. It also lets you know exactly how many are booked and enables you to record hirer details so that you can keep in touch with them year after year and build relationship with them.
6. Advertise the booking site widely in order to reach as many local artisans as possible.
7. Offer an online option (via a catalogue) in the case of a COVID-19 lockdown or stormy weather.
8. Run your market for a partial day only. There are only a couple of peak sale hours, so plan for four or five hours at most. If people know it is only going to run for four hours, they will come then and save you waiting around for those last few sales.
9. Provide good refreshments for sale, including morning/afternoon teas, a sausage sizzle, drinks, etc.
10. Ensure that any workplace health and safety and volunteer requirements are complied with.

News • Tuesday 5 October 2021 • By Annie Pappalardo

Hillbrook Anglican School gives 90 backpacks to the Anglicare Backpack Project



Year 11 Hillbrook student Mikayla Daley, Anglicare's Tiffany Berg, Year 11 Hillbrook student Emily Said and Chaplain David Adams with some of the 90 backpacks that Hillbrook students donated to the Anglicare Backpack Project for children in out-of-home care in September 2021

Students and Early Learning Centre children from Hillbrook Anglican School recently participated in the Anglicare Back Pack Project, providing 90 backpacks filled with essential items for children going into emergency care.

Hillbrook Chaplain David Adams, who led the school's project, said that he was inspired by the anecdotes he heard about the students' participation.

"The response from our community was fabulous. I especially loved the stories I heard from our students who organised shopping trips, used money from their savings and got their whole family involved," Chaplain David said.

Year 7 student Halle Traves wanted to get involved in the backpack project after finding out there are kids out there, just like her, who aren't treated the same way she is treated.

"I wanted to help those people going through their troubles in any way I could and I hope by receiving a backpack they'll know they are not alone and there are people who care for them," Halle said.

"Getting involved in this project made me realise there are a lot of children that don't go to school, get bullied by their own family when we are going to school and happy with our lives. In other words, not everyone is treated fairly around the world."

Year 9 student Euan Murray said that he will think about his project participation in the future so he is prompted to keep contributing.

"I really learnt what it meant to help someone with something that can change their life. I will always remember this experience and will keep giving to my community," Euan said.

Many of the students worked together in groups to plan their backpacks.

"When making the list for the backpack, my group and I really put our feet into someone else's shoes to try and think about what would bring the most comfort and calmness in a situation like the one we were told about," Year 9 student Emme Davies said.

"We thought if this were us we would want something warm and safe to hold on to or a book to relax into. We really hope whoever gets our backpack finds comfort and safety in the belongings."

Year 7 student Charli Gillard knew if she was in a position of needing to go into care, she would hope someone would do the same for her.

"I hope that my involvement in this project makes another person feel that there are still people out there in the world that care, and that they are still worth something, no matter what," Charli said.

"I hope that they will feel like they are not forgotten and that they still, and will always, have a place in this world, no matter what."

This project also taught Charli the value of what she currently has.

"I learnt to cherish everything that I own and treat it with utmost respect and never take anything for granted because if I were in that situation, and if I had barely anything, I would be grateful for every little thing that came my way," she said.

The families from our Early Learning Centre (ELC) were involved and the ELC children helped sort the clothing items, books and toys into age categories and began to imagine children just like them receiving the backpacks.

ELC Director Maria Russell said that the children were inquisitive about the project.

“The children continued to talk about the backpack project throughout the day and, even better, asked a lot of questions about the children who would be receiving the backpacks,” Ms Russell said.

Hands-on projects like the Anglicare Backpack Project help to connect students with the people they are helping.

Hearing stories about the children who receive these backpacks left a lasting impression on many students as they tried to imagine being taken from their homes with nothing but the clothes on their back.

Year 7 student Ava Cherry said that she feels content when caring for others.

“I wanted to get involved in the Backpack Project as I have always found joy in helping others,” Ava said.

“Making something easier for someone when they really need it, giving them some comfort or something to escape to when they feel lonely – I like knowing that I have helped a child, who without the backpack would have no immediate constant or ownership in their lives.”

It was a heartfelt community initiative for our students to provide 90 backpacks filled with essential items for children going into emergency care and the experience is summed up perfectly by Year 9 student Emma Ralston.

“The backpack project made such a big difference in our school and in our community and I enjoyed how everyone came together to help and contribute something small to make something big, together.”

What is the human being?



Peter Kline, St Francis College Academic Dean, will be teaching 'THL245 God and Humanity' in intensive form over summer

What makes human beings – human beings? How or where do we locate the humanity of human existence? One answer is that the very asking of this question is what marks the site of humanity. That is, the human being is that creature whose existence is essentially *questionable*, in the sense of being able to be a question for itself.

Human existence shows itself as questionable also in the sense of being problematic, or a conundrum, or a site of difficulty. On this account, powerfully articulated in the 20th century by the German philosopher Martin Heidegger, humanity has no “essence” that underlies its finitude. Stretched precariously between birth and death, human existence is essentially inessential, a passing, momentary event. Where we might wish to find a definitive answer to the question, “What is the human being?”, what we find instead is ourselves driven to a repetition and intensification of the question, “What IS the human being?” Or perhaps more personally, “Who AM I?” What this inability to answer definitively the question about what we are shows us is that the humanity of human beings is our exposure to ourselves and to the world as an unfinishable task. Human being is the search for the meaning of our being, a search that we will never exhaust.

No doubt the life of other creatures is also an unfinishable task. Being a mountain is an unfinishable task, as is being a galaxy or a jellyfish or a social media network. And yet that thing – or no-thing – in everything that makes all things unfinished is for the human being the source of unique difficulties and possibilities. We human beings are uniquely *driven* by our unfinishedness. It drives us toward immense creativity and openness to what might be, while also driving us toward denials of and defences against our incompleteness, usually at the expense of others. Negotiating the tension of these drives is, depending on one’s perspective, either the burden or the gift of being human. Perhaps it is both.

Christian theology has its own ways of affirming the openness and incompleteness of human existence, as well as its own ways of defending against it. The Christian notion of “being made in the image of God,” which is how Christians most typically mark what is unique about humanity, works in both directions. On the one hand, if God is infinite mystery, as Christians often affirm, then the image of that mystery is also a mystery, unable to be captured or limited by direct definitions or accomplished identities. Moreover, if the goal of human existence is union with God, as Christians often affirm, then “human being” cannot be defined ahead of the fullness of time. We do not yet know what we will be, or what we will have been, so perhaps it’s best to avoid setting up limiting or constricting parameters in the meantime. For instance, the Early Church father Gregory of Nyssa thought that resurrected bodies in heaven would be androgenous, neither male nor female. If this is the goal of human existence, a transformation beyond bounded gender identities, then perhaps it’s best that we avoid investing too much in those identities in our earthly lives. Paul makes a similar point in 1 Corinthians 7 with his declaration that “the present form of this world is passing away.” Because none of our identities or positions in the world is ultimately what God is making of us, we should live “as if” those identities and positions are nothing. This does not mean that we ought to destroy or deny them, but that we ought to wear them loosely, with humility and humour.

On the other hand, Christians have often given constricting parameters to the idea of being made in the image of God. Augustine and Aquinas, two hugely influential theologians, both affirm that only men fully bear the image of God, while women bear it in a lesser manner. Women display God’s image only as they fulfill their subordinate, supportive role in relation to men. The implication of this line of thought is that full human maturity is available only to a particular genre of human beings, namely, Christian men.

Over the course of the last 500 years, this idea that full human maturity is the purview of a limited slice of humanity has had far reaching and devastating consequences for the entire globe. As Christian mission and European colonial endeavours joined forces over this stretch of history, leading to the colonisation and missionisation of roughly 85 per cent of earth’s lands, what slowly but surely emerged was a universal ideal of human maturity centred around the European, Christian, male body – the white body. It was 16th century Spanish missionaries who first designated themselves as “white,” initially simply to designate their difference from the Indigenous peoples they were encountering in foreign lands.

However, what “white” came to signify was not simply a benign difference of pigmentation, but the fullness of human maturity toward which all peoples on the earth ought to be drawn. This vision of human maturity outgrew its initial Christian origins as the centuries went by, but the ideal of whiteness still holds for us even today the aura of salvation and the promise of the divinised human being. At the heart of the maturity that is whiteness is the image of the self-sufficient man, an owner of people and property, a shrewd investor, a manager of resources, a master of the earth.

This summer I will teach a subject at St Francis College called ‘THL245 God and Humanity’. We will look at the legacy of Christian theology through lenses of four topics that are of vital contemporary concern: sex and gender, disability, race and ecological crisis. What I want myself and my students to wrestle with is this dual legacy of the Christian approach to the humanity of human beings. Christian theology has offered postures of reverent unknowing in relation to human beings, and it has also offered postures of violent categorisation and segregation. And most often, these postures come entangled within each other so it is not a simple matter of choosing the good Christianity over the bad Christianity.

The work of theology that I want to invite my students into is the work of sorting through the entangled, complicated legacy of thinking about human beings that we have inherited so that together we can find ways of recognising and embracing the humanity of ourselves and our neighbours as an unfinishable task. What I hope my students walk away with is not a definitive answer to the question, "What is the human being?" but a sense of wonder in the face of the mystery of humanity that we must learn to bear as both gift and burden.

Peter Kline is the academic dean and lecturer in systematic theology at St Francis College. 'THL245 God and Humanity' will be taught in intensive form over summer on 4 and 18 December and on 22 and 29 January. For more information contact Peter at pkline@ministryeducation.org.au.

Editor's note: If you found this feature fascinating and you would like to know more about studying theology, come to the St Francis College Open Day and find out about our wide range of study options. Visit the [St Francis College website](#) to register or for more information. The Virtual Open Day will be held on Tuesday 2 November at 7 – 8.30 pm and the On-campus Open Day will be held on Thursday 4 November at 12 noon – 2 pm and 5 – 7 pm.

News • Wednesday 29 September 2021 • By Philippe Coquerand

Playgroup bridging the gap between children and elderly on the Gold Coast



Anglicare Southern Queensland client Joyce with Starting Strong children Freya (back) and Synthia with Miss Kelly Slattery at Paradise Point in September 2021

Babies and Boomers playgroup is bridging the intergenerational gap and providing benefits for kids, their parents and the elderly.

The playgroup is hosted across multiple venues on the Gold Coast between Starting Strong and Anglicare Southern Queensland clients every six weeks, where children, parents, and residents take part in craft activities, story time, music and morning tea.

Michael Grant and his wife Pamela have been married for 57 years, and together for 61 years, and they both love attending Wednesdays out and about each week.

“We have these outings once a week and Anglicare finds different places to bring us each week – we get together as a group and have morning tea and lunch,” Mr Grant said.



Pamela and Michael enjoy their weekly playgroup Wednesday outing with Anglicare on the Gold Coast

“It’s generally a socialising day. My wife is with me and we have both been enjoying it since joining about 18 months ago.

“The kids have been good. They were dancing and painting and singing and socialised with all the adults here.”

Michael and Pamela moved from NSW to Miami where they love catching up with their family on the Gold Coast.

Anglicare Southern Queensland Robina Lifestyle and Wellbeing Program Team Leader Rachelle Montgomery said these programs were vital to help bridge the gap between the different generations and was a way of improving mental health.

“It was great to see both our clients and children from Starting Strong enjoy themselves and their company at Paradise Point,” she said.

“Thank you to Starting Strong for allowing the children to have these playgroups with our clients every six weeks. We look forward to continuing our partnership next term.

“If there are any other kindies who are interested in joining the program, please reach out to us at Anglicare.”

Starting Strong is a non-profit outdoor early learning program which runs sessions for all ages, but mainly for children under five years old.

“We do sessions for all ages but mainly under-fives, including everything you learn in a day care or early learning centre, but it’s all outside and in all weather conditions,” Director Mandy Potter said.

“Everything they need to learn for pre-school or school, they’ll learn but underneath the trees.

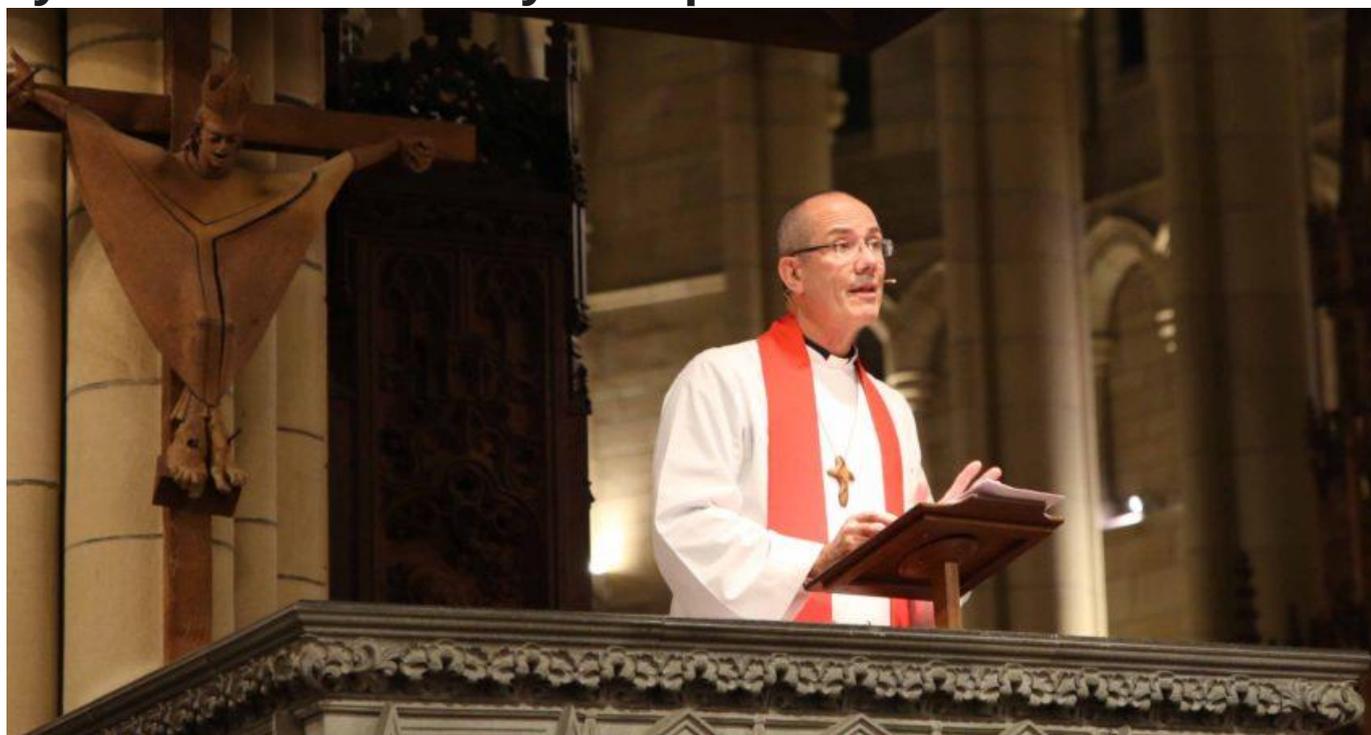
“I’ve just seen the intergenerational connections are growing and I approached Anglicare and they thought it would be a great idea and we decided to wait for the right time when things were a bit safer in the community to start it up.

“I think the children get so excited, they know when they’re coming and we talk about it a lot in class and they know the day when the nannas and granddads come and I think they like showing off their activities that they do.”

The next intergenerational playgroup will commence next month.

Homilies & Addresses • Monday 27 September 2021 • By Bishop Cam Venables

Synod sermon – Friday 24 September 2021



Bishop for the Western Region Cam Venables giving the sermon at the Eucharistic service that opened the 80th Synod of the Diocese of Brisbane on Friday 24 September 2021 in St John's Cathedral

In the name of our loving liberating and life-giving God, + Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Sisters and brothers, we gather this evening on holy ground in this Cathedral, and we come representing Anglican Parishes, Anglican Schools, and the community service ministries of Anglicare. We have come from the holiday meccas of the southern region, the retirement villages of the north, and the farming communities of the west! Of course, there are other things that happen in these regions, but I thought I'd start with these!

Some of us are young, and some not so young! Some were born in Australia and speak only English, while others were born in other countries and speak more than one language. Some have previously been to Diocesan Synods, while for others this is your first...and, if this is your first Synod – please know you are among friends.

It is good to be gathered here: to pray, sing, and break bread together before the intensive times of discussion and decision making that will shape our weekend.

Whenever we gather for Anglican worship we listen to readings from the Bible, trusting that God's Spirit will speak to us through them – so the responsibility of the preacher is significant! Whether to a small congregation, or a large celebration like this, a preacher is called to offer something that is, in God's grace, life-giving and I pray that this be so now.

So, let's start with that poignant question from this evening's Psalm, *'How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?'* Before bringing our own experiences of *'Lord's song'* and *'strange land'* I think it will be helpful to touch base with the context that inspired these words of longing and to do this this we need to go back two and half thousand years.

King Nebuchadnezzar, who created the famous hanging gardens of Babylon, brutally crushed a Jewish rebellion in 586 BCE. He destroyed the Temple in Jerusalem, blinded King Zedekiah, and forcibly took the majority of surviving Jews into exile. He took the most educated and wealthy, those who were community leaders in business and religion, and left behind in Jerusalem only the poorest people.

'How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?' is the question asked in the midst of lament. How can we be followers of God when the Temple in Jerusalem has been destroyed, and we struggle to speak the language of our captors? This may sound like an experience of oppression from long ago but we are blessed to have in our congregations, and in our communities, people who have been similarly forced to leave the lands of their birth in fear of their lives. People who have had to negotiate the tough journey of learning another language and adapting to the laws and cultural expectations of their adopted country. I think particularly of diaspora Anglicans who have come from South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Burundi, and Syria.

We understand that seventy years after the Jerusalem Temple was destroyed, King Cyrus of Persia defeated Babylon and invited the Jews of that city to return to Jerusalem... but surprisingly, the great majority chose to stay. American Rabbi Joseph Telushkin suggests that the best Jewish minds stayed in Babylon and sent money to help with the rebuilding of Jerusalem (2001, p.82). He also notes that most Jewish scholars regard the Babylonian Talmud as being richer and more comprehensive than the later Jerusalem Talmud (2001, pp.151-152). So, the Jewish diaspora in Babylon helped to finance the rebuilding of Jerusalem from a distance and continued to excel in scholarship for centuries.

We can conclude from this that they had learnt to sing the Lord's song in what had been a strange land but was strange no longer. I think it's helpful for us to bear this in mind as we consider our own

experiences of 'strange land': the Jews in Babylon learnt a new language, adapted to life in a new culture; they flourished, and enabled others to flourish.

As we gather for this Synod I wonder what 'strange land' you live in? As individual people, things happen in life that can cause us to feel lost, and in a strange land, and they include the experiences of love, grief, injury, disease, ageing, and unemployment...But collectively, as a denomination of Christian faith, I think there are at least three elements of 'strange' in the 'land' we currently live in:

1. The first is that for quite some years our membership, on the whole, has been declining. We can no longer assume that people will come to church on a Sunday, because people now find community in other places. Together with this there is an understandable wariness about religious institutions, and of those perceived to be in authority. So, how do we sing 'the Lord's song' in an increasingly secular society that is wary, and sees little value in what we offer?
2. In March last year we entered another 'strange land' shaped by COVID-19 infection and restriction. We were not allowed to physically meet for months, and when we were allowed to meet again the smell of hand-sanitiser, the experience of singing while wearing a mask, and the demand to physically distance...has changed our experience of worship. Most people here have not been able to taste wine in communion for the last year and a half; we have not been able to grieve at funerals in the way we used to; and we have not been free to travel. We have learnt the new language of 'liminal spaces', 'pivoting', and 'hybrid church' and have found that ZOOM is a meeting place as well as a verb! 'Though strange, exhausting, and stressful...and 'though there is a long way to go before we discover what the new normal will be...the last eighteen months have also been a time of great innovation. Many have developed greater competence in digital communication so we now gather for worship and teaching online – offer pastoral care and prayer online – and have effective governance meetings online. Indeed, we have communication tools that previous generations did not have, and we're learning to use them more effectively.
3. The third aspect of 'strange land' I want to name is not the social distancing caused by COVID-19, but the theological distancing that polarises our National Church. I wonder if you identify with a particular theological tribe, and if you do what you think of those in the other tribe? Sadly, this theological distance and difference can cause us to think less of those we consider 'other' because they name their understanding of faith differently to the way we do.

This is not a new thing in religious faith and was clearly evident in the Judaism that Jesus grew up in and was formed by. There were the Sadducees who thought that faith was all about sacrificial worship in the Temple, and the Pharisees who thought that faith was all about following a particular interpretation of the law.

Both Sadducees and Pharisees defined who was in and who was out; what was acceptable and what was unacceptable...and frustratingly for both of these leading groups Jesus reached out to those they deemed unworthy, while affirming them to be known, and deeply loved by God.

How do we sing 'the Lord's song' in the 'strange land' created by theological difference and division? It is quite possible that each theological tribe names 'the Lord's song' – the Good News – in different ways and this is significant. So how might we touch base with that naming?

'Who do you say that I am?' Jesus asked his disciples in Luke's Gospel. It is a brilliant question, and how we respond to it will shape our understanding of what 'the Lord's song' is. We have a good sense of how Peter responded, but how would we respond if asked that question? What words would we use?

In our informal conversations this Synod, both masked and unmasked, could we helpfully ask each other a variation of the question – ‘What does Jesus mean for you?’ and then respectfully listen to the response. Really listen to each other! Not asking the question to score points but rather, to better understand ‘the other’ and perhaps pray for God’s blessing upon them.

The vibrant church in First Century Corinth was clearly a theologically divided community. One group who spoke in tongues had concluded that they were better than the rest because they had a particular spiritual gift, and that consequently they were closer to God! One can only imagine Paul shaking his head as he addressed the conflict in a letter affirming that we can have all spiritual gifts and be as generous as it is possible to be...but, if we don’t live with love it means nothing.

Then he went on to describe love, in words that we often limit to a wedding ceremony. Paul was writing to the whole church in Corinth and in many ways to the Church through the ages to this time. He suggested that love is patient, and kind; it is not envious, boastful, arrogant, or rude. That love does not insist on its own way and is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrong-doing but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things...and never ends.

What love will we offer each other this weekend as we listen, and debate, and make decisions? And what part does God’s love play in our understanding of ‘the Lord’s song’ and our offering of that song to a hurting world? For the three aspects of strangeness I have described are significant for us as we look inwards at ourselves as a Church, but what do we recognise to be ‘strange’ as we look out at the wider community in which we live?

For surely, we are called to sing ‘the Lord’s song’, and we do our best to sing it, in a country where there continues to be systemic disadvantage for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people? Where all the sociological indicators suggest that ‘the gap’ is not closing but getting wider. In our Diocese the little community of Cherbourg this week made public their grief at the 10 suicides within that community over the last year; and of the more than one thousand children cared for by our Anglicare staff tonight more than four hundred are from Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander families. In this complex and ‘strange land’ who is best singing the Lord’s song of hope and reconciliation...and how can we learn from them?

And...in a society where one in three Australian women have experienced physical or sexual violence, and an average of one woman each week is killed by a current or former partner. How determined are we in singing ‘the Lord’s song’ of liberation, peace-making, and cultural transformation?

And...in high schools where at least one in four students live with a diagnosed or undiagnosed mental illness; and in our communities where we are told there is an ‘epidemic of loneliness’...How imaginatively are we singing ‘the Lord’s song’ of hope, healing, and care?

And...in the lived reality where so many are homeless, and where housing is increasingly less available and affordable: How generously are we singing ‘the Lord’s song’ of justice, shelter, and care?

And...in a political environment where refugees and people seeking asylum are too often abandoned, incarcerated, and misrepresented: How courageously are we singing ‘the Lord’s song’ of welcome, love, and friendship?

And...finally, in a world increasingly impacted by climate change and extreme weather events: ‘How wisely are we singing ‘the Lord’s song’ of faithful stewardship and love of neighbour?’

In God's grace...this weekend:
May we hear 'the Lord's song' in our time together,
and may the love of Christ be the melody between us;
May the Spirit of God inspire both rhythm, and lyric,
and may we recognise new opportunities for harmony;
May we sing together,
and even...
dance!

Amen

Joseph Telushkin, 2001, *Jewish Literacy*, William Morrow and Company Inc: Toronto, Canada.

News • Tuesday 5 October 2021 • By World Council of Churches

City street in Geneva will be named after former WCC president Annie Jiagge



Annie Jiagge at the WCC 6th Assembly in Vancouver in 1983 (Photo: Peter Williams/WCC)

The city of Geneva is planning to rename a street for Annie Jiagge (1918-1996), who was the first African woman to be a World Council of Churches (WCC) president (1975-83). She was also moderator of the WCC's commission on the Programme to Combat Racism.

She attended WCC assemblies at Evanston (1954), Uppsala (1968), Nairobi (1975), Vancouver (1983) and Canberra (1991). In 1968 she represented the WCC at the Roman Catholic laity conference in Rome. At home in Ghana, she served as counsellor for the Christian council and as chair of the commission on the churches' participation in development.

The street-naming initiative in Geneva is highlighting women who contributed to the history of Geneva at different periods.

Annie Jiagge was the daughter of Robert Domingo Baeta, an assembly clerk of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ghana. She became interested in the ecumenical movement when she attended a world conference of Christian youth in Oslo in 1947.

After studies in law at the London School of Economics, she practised law in Ghana and went on to become a magistrate, circuit court judge and high court judge.

She served the YWCA at various capacities at home and abroad, including as vice chairperson of the World YWCA from 1958-62. As president of the UN Commission on the Status of Women from 1962-72, she was the author of the basic draft of the UN Declaration of the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

For her numerous contributions to the nations and the world, she received the Grand Medal of Ghana in 1969.

The decision of the City of Geneva to rename a street for Annie Jiagge proceeds to the Canton level to be approved by the Conseil d'État.

First published on the [World Council of Churches website](#) on 30 September 2021.

News • Tuesday 5 October 2021 • By Anglican Communion News Service

Anglican Church of Ceylon calls for urgent action from UN Human Rights Council

The Anglican Church of Ceylon, with support from the Anglican Communion Office at the United Nations, is calling on urgent action from the Human Rights Council.

The Anglican Church of Ceylon is increasingly concerned by the deterioration of human rights in Sri Lanka. They have highlighted the polarisation of institutions and society, the politicisation of the vaccination efforts, the militarisation of politics and other institutions, and government crackdowns on peaceful protestors.

Their case is being presented to the 48th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council by the Anglican Communion's Permanent Representative to the UN, Jack Palmer-White. The Anglican Communion Office at the UN [submitted a report](#) to the Council with specific recommendations for the government of Sri Lanka based upon the concerns of the Church of Ceylon.

The report looked at ethno-nationalistic sentiments that favour the majoritarian ethnicity and religion and calls out the politicisation of COVID vaccination efforts. The report said that: "the government has done little to address the false accusations on social media that Muslims were deliberately spreading the virus and corresponding calls to boycott Muslim businesses."

It recommended that the government continue the process of constitutional reforms, "including consideration of a new Bill of Rights that will, amongst others, guarantee the right to life and the right to non-discrimination on any ground".

It also highlighted concerns over military personnel continuing to be appointed to government posts, and the lack of accountability from the ruling party, particularly in the investigation of the Easter Sunday attacks of 2019. The report recommends an end military involvement in civilian functions.

The report said: “the cornerstone of any democracy must be the ability to entertain opposing views. The current approach of the government does not reflect values that contribute to a society built on universal equality and dignity. From the perspective of the Church, which is apolitical and aims to be a source of integration, this approach directly conflicts with its presence and ministry in this diverse country.”

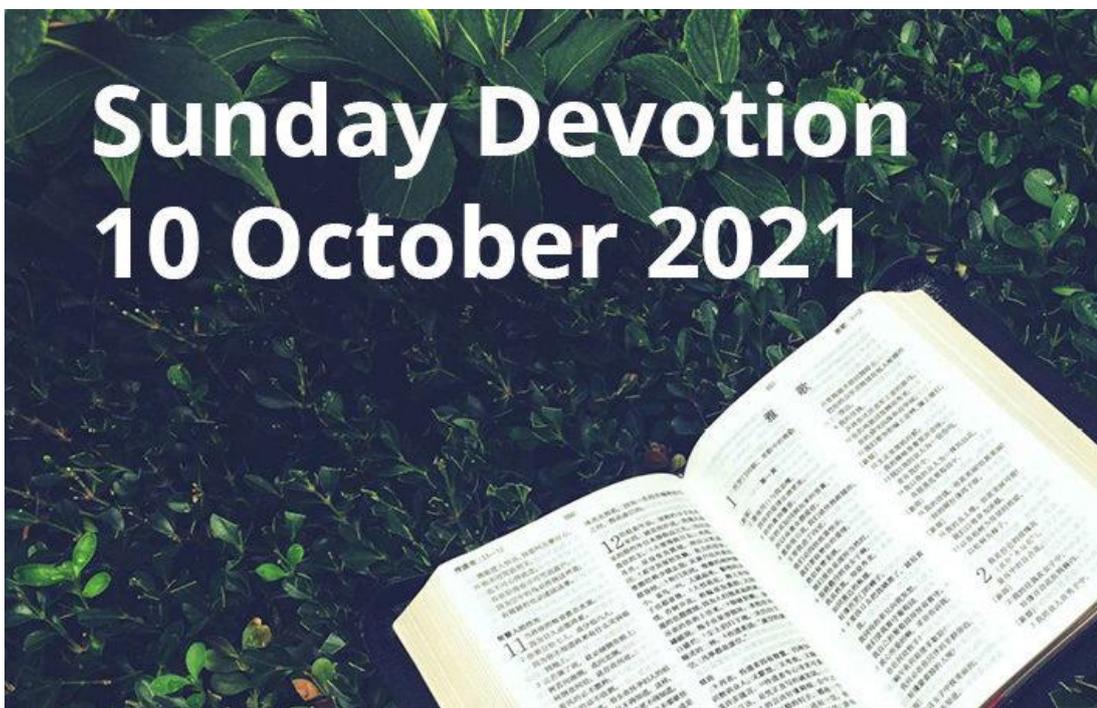
The Human Rights Council is an inter-governmental body within the United Nations system made up of 47 States. The Council is responsible for the promotion and protection of human rights around the globe. The 48th session of the Human Rights Council began on 13 September and continues to 8 October.

First published on the [Anglican Communion News Service website](#) on 24 September 2021.

Sunday Devotions • Monday 4 October 2021 • By The Rev'd Eleanor Mancini

Sunday Devotion: 10 October 2021, Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost

Living out our faith



Main Readings: [Job 23.1-9, 16-17](#); [Psalm 22.1-15](#); [Hebrews 4.12-16](#); [Mark 10.17-31](#) [[Amos 5.6-7,10-15](#); [Psalm 90.12-17](#)]

Supplementary Readings: [Psalm 101](#); [Mark 12.13-17](#); [Job 28.12-28](#); [Psalm 90.12-17](#); [Hebrews 4.1-11](#)

Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, "You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me" ([Mark 10.21](#)).

I grew up in a big family with not enough food to eat. My dad had a poor stipend. We ate from our garden and from the sea. We did not have a car or bike, so we walked to and from school and church. We did not celebrate birthdays. Mum sewed a new dress for me for Christmas. We lived in a vicarage with two rooms, where the children slept on the floor. The family was very close together for we lived out our faith.

The rich man in this Gospel story knows the commandments and what is required, and yet he asks Jesus for advice. Sadly, the rich man could not follow Jesus' advice and left, feeling shocked.

God loves us no matter where we are on our journey of faith. He calls us to live out our faith in loving and bringing hope to others. This love connects us into relationships that lead us to action. The Holy Spirit is always with us to help us to go beyond ourselves to assist others in the wider community and in the world.

Faith without action is dead.