

## Agincourt, Afghanistan, and Another way of being...



One of the best-known speeches written by William Shakespeare is found in his play, *Henry V*. In this, Henry is imagined to be rallying the English troops before they fought in the Battle of Agincourt:

“This story shall the good man teach his son; and Crispin Crispian shall ne’er go by, From this day to the ending the world, but we in it be remembered – **we few, we happy few, we band of brothers;** for he today that sheds his blood with me shall be my brother; be he ne’er so vile, this day shall gentle his condition; and gentlemen in England now-a-bed shall think themselves accursed they were not here, and hold their manhoods cheap while any speaks that fought with us upon Saint Crispin’s day...”

I remember hearing this uncritically as a young man. I found it easy to think that the young Henry actually spoke those words, and that inspired by them a vastly outnumbered English army defeated the French force. Interesting that in the dining hall of The Southport School the words “we few, we happy few, we band of brothers...” are engraved above the high table and that generations of young men have been formed by these words.

Easy to forget that the words were written by an English playwright in 1599, 184 years after the Battle of Agincourt – which happened on the 25 October 1415. So...Henry could not have said these words, but we like to think he did! We like the idea of an underdog triumphing against the odds, like David defeating Goliath, and forget the technology that enabled what happened. David used a slingshot to kill Goliath from a distance, and the English had their longbow who could rain death seamlessly on cavalry and infantry from a distance. For some years before this battle it was common practice, and

expected, that English men would practise with their bows for two hours each day after church so that they would be ready to use this skill if their country called them to arms.

Perhaps Shakespeare could have imagined other words in the mouth of Henry that day, “we few, we well prepared and well-armed few...we band of brothers...” But, the word “happy” makes it retrospectively sound like a joy-filled thing. That’s before the problematic language of men gloriously shedding their blood for king, country and reputation without reference to the heartache of women who became widows, children who became orphans, or mothers who never got to see their sons again. No mention of men becoming so injured – physically and psychologically – that they would never work again, and forever struggle in a society that had no welfare safety net.

Though we know all these things now, why is it that we still portray violent conflict as a glorious thing in movies and computer games?

When news of the Taliban’s triumph in Afghanistan became known I was uncomfortably reminded of this speech, thinking how those leaders could have offered variations over the years, in Dari or *Pashto*...“we few, we happy few, we band of brothers; for he today that sheds his blood with me shall be my brother...”

I guess we could imagine Jesus saying to his disciples, “we few, we happy few, we band of [sisters and] brothers...” because the odds were definitely against them. However, his vision and his way of being in the world seemed to consistently offer something different to violent pathways in conflict for we remember him saying, “Love your enemy and pray for those who persecute you...” (Matthew 5.44).

What would Shakespeare have made of that?

What do we?

## Hundreds gather at St Francis College to explore the arts, faith and justice



**A host of seven young Earth Guardians gathered to share what they want to see protected the most in God's good creation, with each angel representing one of the world's seven continents (On Earth Fest, 16 October 2021)**

Over 400 people gathered at the inaugural On Earth Fest at St Francis College on Saturday to celebrate the arts and faith, exploring how these intersect with justice, while raising over \$2,000 for Anglican Board of Mission programs.

The [packed festival program](#) included creative and interactive workshops, an eclectic line-up of performers, a Spirituality and Sustainability Forum, a stunning art exhibition, Tesla test drives and special kids' activities.

Workshop were held throughout the day, teaching festival goers practical skills, creative techniques and ancient knowledge.

These included Taizé contemplative singing, a sustainability-themed poetry workshop, vision boarding, First Nations dot painting, self-watering wicking bed demonstrations and a worm farming seminar.

Around half of festival participants, volunteers and attendees were children, youth and young adults, showing just how engaged our young people are in the Church.

Parish of Goodna community member Mamuor Kunpeter said that seeing his sons and other children so engaged made the day special for him.

"I was so pleased to see my kids interacting with other children," My Kunpeter said.

"My sons said they enjoyed painting, dressing as angels, meeting other kids and enjoying the music and food and drinks.

"I was also pleased to see South Sudanese Sunday School children from Yeronga Parish performing."

Baroona Farm volunteer and Christ Church, St Lucia parishioner Susan Carley dropped jaws with her extensive knowledge of 'worm tea' at the worm farm and composting workshop.

"Worm tea contains the enzyme chitinase, which, when applied as a foliage treatment, effectively repels soft-bodied insects," Ms Carley said.

"This is because the exoskeleton of these pests, such as lady bugs and grasshoppers, also contain chitinase and they instinctively know that worm tea will be harmful to their survival.

"It can dissolve an insect's exoskeleton, so once they detect it on a plant they move away.

"This offers gardeners a wonderful organic pesticide."



**Susan Carley from Baroona Farm and Christ Church, St Lucia has forgotten more about 'worm tea' than any other human being On Earth will ever know (On Earth Fest, 16 October 2021)**

Seven children, each representing one of the world's seven continents, shared about what part of God's good creation they want to see most protected and why.

Lirio, 7, said, "I love the Great Barrier Reef because it has coral and sea animals, but not everyone is looking after the ocean. Plastic is making the animals in the ocean that I care for sick."

Emily, 9, said, "It is important to look after our lakes because fish live in them and because water birds live near lakes."

Amelie, 5, said, "We need to look after flowers for our bees."

Young Community of The Way member Stacey McCowan, who volunteered all day at the festival, said that she was impressed by the turnout.

"I was stationed at a check-in counter and so I saw how many people came along to enjoy the festivities and learn," Ms McCowan said.

"The highlight of the day for me was listening to the music from the check-in counter, and I especially enjoyed Franz James' music, which created a relaxing vibe during the evening, and Dolby System, who have a cool sound."

Over \$2100 in ticket proceeds have been donated to the [Anglican Board of Mission](#)'s adult literacy and sustainability programs.

Chair of the Diocesan Anglican Board of Mission (ABM) Committee The Rev'd Eron Perry expressed gratitude to both festival organisers and participants.

"A huge thankyou to all those who came along to the festival or were involved in some capacity," The Rev'd Perry said.

"Besides being part of a brilliant event, your contribution towards the people we support in Melanesia will have significant impacts on their quality of life for years to come."

Stall holders, representing ministries of our Diocese and wider faith community groups, spoke to festival participants about their justice work, gaining the support of people willing to assist with financial aid or time.

Stall holders included ABM, the BRASS Network, the contemplative Pace community, Angligrreen, the Roscoe Library, the Franciscans, Common Grace and Tearfund, among many others.

Principal of St Francis College Bishop Jonathan Holland said he was impressed by the program's comprehensiveness and praised the dedicated festival organisers.

"There were a number of festival highlights for me," Bishop Holland said.

"Being taken for a Tesla test drive was super fun – I have now decided to buy a Tesla for my next car.

"I was very moved hearing the stories of the former refugees who spoke about their stories seeking safety.

"I congratulate Peter Branjerdporn from the Justice Unit and the volunteers who assisted him for the terrific event, which was good for energising us about sustainability, good for the Romero Centre's Refugee Art Group members who raised money for the centre by selling their work, good for St Francis College and good for the Anglican Church Southern Queensland."

**Features • Monday 18 October 2021 • By The Rev'd Hanna Dally**

## **Post from a Palestinian priest (and St Francis Theological College alumnus)**



**"We named our son Ghassan after the Ghassan tribe. People from this group of tribes were present at the birth of the Church at Pentecost. So, we Christians in Galilee are among the original Christians, and remain the continuing people of the area" (The Rev'd Hanna Dally, pictured with Ghassan in Reineh, 2021)**

One of my favourite memories of my time studying for the priesthood at St Francis Theological College in Brisbane in the mid-1990s was sitting on the steps drinking a XXXX beer (pronounced "four ex" for any non-Aussies reading this) while listening to Palestinian music on CD and looking up at the stars.

I received a scholarship to study theology at the college, arriving in 1994 and graduating in 1996. My name was inscribed on the brass plate of the "Best Preacher" trophy in 1995, which meant a lot to me as English is my third language – after Arabic and Hebrew.

I still dream at night about my time in Brisbane as it was a beautiful period in my life. A number of people I studied with at the college have visited me in Palestine. As I did not have family in Brisbane, I was warmly embraced as a brother by my fellow students.

I love the Aussie people – they are open, loving, accepting, generally think the best of others and work hard. I have been to many places around the world and my travels have shown me that Australians show their love through their care.

During St Francis Theological College study breaks I used to go to Point Pearce in South Australia, a small village about 200 kilometres north of Adelaide near the ocean. I stayed with Aboriginal people there. I felt the pain that they bear – the pain of being dispossessed from ancestral and Indigenous homelands.

I was given a large painting by an Aboriginal man in Point Pearce. At the top of the painting are a number of separate circle shapes created by dots. The circles represent different Aboriginal peoples because there have always been distinct Aboriginal nations.

I was born in the Palestinian village of Kafr Yasif, in western Galilee, in the early 1970s. As it's an Arab village, Kafr Yasif has a mix of Christian and Muslim Palestinians. There are also a number of refugees from other parts of Palestine who have sought safety among us and whom we have welcomed as members of our village.

In 1948 the British Mandate expired and the state of Israel commenced. Consequently, Palestine was occupied and the ethnic cleansing of my people began, leading to 700,000 Palestinians being evicted or forced to flee from their ancestral homelands.

When I was living in Australia and people asked me where I was from, I would explain that I am an Arab Christian from Galilee in Israel. Many people found this confusing, as they thought that all Arabs were Muslim and that all people living in Israel were Jewish. So, I explained that Arabs are a mix of religions.

In [Acts 2.1-13](#), which tells the story of Pentecost and the birth of the Church, Arabs were among those present who were filled with the Holy Spirit. The first Christian Arabs were the Ghassan, a group of Arab tribes who lived in the Reineh area, where I minister. We named our son Ghassan after the Ghassan tribe. People from this group of tribes were present at the birth of the Church at Pentecost. So, we Christians in Galilee are among the original Christians, and remain the continuing people of the area.

Palestinian Galilee came under Israel's control in 1948 during the start of the ongoing *Nakba* ("catastrophe"). While many maps have Galilee located in Israel, Palestinians and those who understand our history of dispossession, still regard Galilee as Arab land.

I currently serve as the Director of the Holy Family Episcopal Church in the small village of Reineh, between Nazareth and Cana. Because Reineh has the only spring between Nazareth and Cana, Jesus of Nazareth would have passed through Reineh when travelling to Cana.

There are 18,000 people in Reineh now. Of these, 3,000 are Christian and 250 of these are Anglican. While we are a minority, Anglicans live with other Palestinian Christians and Muslims in harmony.

The Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem has 26 parishes and many more ministries, including 36 institutes, such as schools, hospitals, medical centres, aged care homes, ecumenical programs and projects for youth and women. Through these ministries, we are being Jesus' hands to the people in need.

When I came to Reineh eight years ago, I said that I am a priest for the whole village. As a parish priest, I minister to all my people and so I care for both Anglicans and people of other faith backgrounds. We hold many activities in the church hall for all community members.

This week I am planning a meeting with the village elders. They like to play a game similar to chess called *shaish baish*. The game is popular among older people here, and is commonly played on people's verandahs. At my invitation, men gather in the church to play *shaish baish* and enjoy each other's company.

My church and I are very keen to partner with parishes in the Anglican Church Southern Queensland and other parts of Australia so we can be supported through prayer. We already have prayer partners in Scotland and would very much like Australian Anglican churches to partner with us as well. If you are an Anglican Church Southern Queensland clergyperson or lay leader and you are interested in your church becoming a prayer partner with our church, please email the *anglican focus* Editor Michelle McDonald via [focus@anglicanchurchsq.org.au](mailto:focus@anglicanchurchsq.org.au) and she will put you in contact with me.

**Reflections • Monday 18 October 2021 • By Dr Stephen Harrison**

## What might church look like beyond...?



**"Ninety per cent of post-Synod survey respondents reported that open space improved their Synod experience and engagement. People valued the opportunity to have a say without judgement; the collaborative nature of the conversations; and the passion people showed for making a difference" (Dr Stephen Harrison)**

Twenty-five of us sat in a circle in an airy and bright classroom at Churchie one Saturday morning in 2019. We gathered in the room to explore ideas for growing the Church. There was an uplifting energy in the room, with people hopeful and eager to share. In another room nearby a larger group of 55 was discussing, "What might Christian communities look like beyond the parish model?" In fact, there were 20 groups of varying size simultaneously gathered across the campus excitedly sharing their thoughts and ideas in an exercise called "open space" dialogue. This wonderfully innovative addition to Synod proceedings saw all kinds of topics discussed.

The Synod community loved the open space experience. Ninety per cent of post-Synod survey respondents reported that open space improved their Synod experience and engagement. People valued the opportunity to have a say without judgement; the collaborative nature of the

conversations; and the passion people showed for making a difference. The beauty and genius of open space are that it gives everyone a chance to provide input and only those who want to participate are present.

“Open space”, simply put, is a way of listening to each other and engaging with each other more carefully, more intentionally, more actively and more deeply than usual. It is a process for bringing people together to dialogue about and discern things that matter to them. You can learn more about [open space](#) in this very brief introductory video.

Synod’s open space dialogues in 2019 served to start important conversations about the future of the Church. Within our Diocesan community, groups are continuing to use innovative approaches to dialogue, such as open space and talking circles, to explore important topics. Last year a talking circle was hosted to follow up some of the Synod open space action items around inclusion and respect.

The Synod group who explored “What might Christian communities look like beyond the parish model?” desired to go further. In 2020 plans for further work was slowed by COVID-19. It is time now time to take the next step.

On 6 November The Rev’d Bronwyn Pagram and The Rev’d Gillian Moses, in collaboration with the Parishes and Other Mission Agencies Commission (PMC), are running an open space dialogue exploring the topic, “What might church look like beyond...?”

The question is provocative and deliberately open. The open space gathering will enable people to bring their own focuses to the dialogue. Do you wonder what ‘church’ might look like if there were alternatives to parishes, or if we gathered more frequently outside buildings, or if we worked in entirely different ways.

This free event is a great opportunity to share your own ideas, help others build on their ideas, and to explore together how and where the Holy Spirit is calling us. Morning tea and lunch will be provided so we can also enjoy fellowship time together.

**The “[Open Space dialogue: What might church look like beyond...?](#)” event will be held on Saturday 6 November from 9 am – 2 pm at St Aidan’s Anglican Girls’ School (11 Ruthven Street, Corinda). Register by Wednesday 3 November via [eventbrite](#).**

## Youth Representative reflects on Synod with pride



**"Throughout the recent Synod weekend, I learnt more about the decisions and structure of the Church than ever before. The debates and discussions were both engaging and intellectually stimulating" (Ewan Beach, Northern Region Youth Synod Representative)**

Having previously attended 2019 Synod as an observer, I had the opportunity to formally contribute to 2021's Synod as the Youth Representative for the Northern Region. Needless to say, I was slightly intimidated by the shift from observer to Youth Representative and from open space to parliamentary-style dialogue. Nonetheless, I am grateful for the incredibly unique experience I received by engaging with Brisbane Synod in this way.

I enjoyed the formalities and dynamics of Synod, which allowed me to better understand the ways in which important decisions are made at Synod-level in our Diocese. Furthermore, having a background in high school debating gave me an appreciation for Synod standing orders (the rules governing how Synod conducts its business) and the way that they provide all participants with the opportunity to express themselves and their arguments for and against motions. This creates a very inclusive environment, balancing the formality of procedures and the opportunity to share personal perspectives.

I felt that Synod's formal/personal balance was further exemplified by my interactions outside of Synod sessions. During the breaks over the weekend, I found everybody to be approachable and more than willing to introduce themselves, have a conversation and invite a new face into their discussions. This made it very easy to meet people from other parishes who were interested in the same areas of the Church as myself, particularly in retaining young people in the Church as they become young adults. I look forward to catching up with these friendly faces in the future and I am grateful for the opportunity to expand my network within the Anglican Church Southern Queensland.

Throughout the recent Synod weekend, I learnt more about the decisions and structure of the Church than ever before. The debates and discussions were both engaging and intellectually stimulating, and I often ended up asking myself more questions than I posed to others. I also always felt as though my perspective was valued and it was heartening that everyone had an interest in making sure others felt genuinely heard.

I feel proud to be part of, and to contribute to, a community with such a diverse array of perspectives and opinions. It is also a testament to the inclusive nature of the Church that we are unified under the goal of comprehensive Anglicanism by seeking to listen to everybody's views in decision making. It is especially rewarding when Synod reaches consensus on an original motion or an amendment.

2021 Synod showed me the power of working together to understand each other and to build a Church that we can all be proud of. It is rare to find a community with such dedication towards inclusive and positive change and I look forward to engaging with Synod in the future.

**Reflections • Monday 18 October 2021 • By Margaret Humphries**

## **Girls' Friendly Society: history, origins and now**



**GFS – An Anglican Ministry Office Administrator, Margaret Humphries, in her working space at St Francis College, where she enjoys "the happy and spirited culture"**

GFS – An Anglican Ministry (formerly known as Girls' Friendly Society, nationally) was founded in England in 1875 within the Anglican Church by Mary Elizabeth Townsend, an Irish clergyperson's daughter. She started GFS out of concern for the welfare of young women and girls from the country who moved to the cities for work. These young women and girls were vulnerable to exploitation as they usually had no family or other networks in the cities to support them. GFS helped connect them to women 'associates' who offered spiritual, practical and housing support.

The first Australian branch was launched in 1879 in Adelaide. The first Brisbane branch was launched in 1882 and other branches were established throughout the nation by 1901. In the early days,

branches offered accommodation through hostels and spiritual guidance to members. GFS activities then broadened to include camps and leadership courses.

Last year, Diocesan Archivist Michael Rogers wrote an interesting feature about dedicated local Anglican [Eliza Tritton OBE](#), who started GFS in the Parish of Clayfield in 1907:

“Eliza established the parish branch of the Girls’ Friendly Society (GFS) where she encouraged the learning and development of the young members through social events and lending them books from her own library. The indefatigable Eliza regularly organised fetes and dances with the other ladies of St Colomb’s, Clayfield and other members of the GFS.”

In the 1990s GFS commenced KidsPlus+™ to accommodate both boys and girls attending branches. Then, in the early 2000s, the name changed from Girl’s Friendly Society to GFS – Anglican Ministry in Australia. The GFS Australian President is Suzanne Claire and the Brisbane Diocesan Chair is Lesley Briggs.

There are currently 20 branches in the Anglican Church nationally. There are two children’s branches in our Diocese – KidsPlus+ in the Parish of Bundaberg and GFS and KidsPlus+ in the Parish of Clayfield. There are also two Townsend (adult) branches in our Diocese, with Headquarter Fellowship Branch meeting monthly in a Chermside café and South Side Townsend, consisting of women and men, meeting every two months in different members’ homes. There are other members who do not belong to a branch. GFS Brisbane also supports a children’s branch in another Diocese.



**GFS – An Anglican Ministry met at St Francis College on 17 October 2021**

The children’s branches run arts and crafts, games, singing, drama, cooking, sleepovers, spiritual development, church parades, outings, camps and parent evenings. The Townsend branches are fellowship groups, with many long-term members, including three women who have been GFS

members for 80 years, these being Iris Dean (who is a current branch member), Ailsa Skippen and Gwen Mullins.

We also have two outreach groups that meet twice a year. One of these is a social event of past and present members and the other is the GFS World Day of Prayer on (or around) 29 September, to coincide with the Feast Day of St Michael and All Angels, at a local parish. Services are prepared by GFS countries worldwide. Following the service those attending enjoy lunch and fellowship. GFS – An Anglican Ministry will be celebrating 140 years next year in our Diocese.

On 29 September this year the GFS World Day of Prayer was held at St Augustine's, Hamilton. The service was followed by lunch at the Hamilton Hotel. The service was prepared by GFS Sierra Leone. GFS Brisbane Chaplain Emeritus The Rev'd Kaye Pitman led the service, with 27 past and present members in attendance. A number of 14-year, 21-year and 50-year badges were awarded and one member received an 80-year membership certificate.

Fourteen members attended a personal development and reunion event with past and present Toowoomba members on the weekend of 8-10 October. The theme for the weekend was "Women of the Word". The event was capably led by Diocesan Chair Lesley Briggs and Leader Training Officer Chris Rooney. Rachel Jimma, with husband Bishop Daniel Abot in support, was our guest speaker. She spoke of her life and faith journey and joined members at a superb lunch provided by the St James' Toowoomba catering team. In the afternoon members visited the local parks to admire the spring flowers, returning later to St James' for a liturgy before dinner. Most members attended St James' for the 7.30 am service on Sunday before returning home.

GFS – Anglican Ministry in our Diocese supports a range of initiatives, locally and internationally, by providing grants for parishes; bursaries for St Francis College students; financial support for Ichthus Camps; and funding for a Chaplain one day a week at Queensland Children's Hospital.

GFS Papua New Guinea receives Leader Training support from The Rev'd Canon Cheryl Selvage (GFS Brisbane Chaplain) and The Rev'd Sue Wilson when travel permits. Townsend members also support the work of Anglicare, donating toiletries and cleaning products.

GFS is worldwide and the current GFS World President is Thembeke Pama from South Africa. GFS Brisbane/Australia supports the WORLD PROJECT 2021 – 2023 (GFS Skills Acquisition For Disadvantaged Young Women In Cameroon). The Travel Fund assists one delegate from majority world (developing) countries without adequate funds to attend World Council every three years. We also support the World Emergency Fund, which has strict guidelines ensured by the World President, with monies approved by the Archbishop of the GFS country which suffers an emergency situation. This was, for example, used by GFS Japan following the 2011 Tsunami.

The GFS Motto is to: "Bear one another's burdens and so fulfil the Law of Christ" (Galatians 6.2).

GFS is a not-for-profit organisation made up of people belonging to a Christian community locally, nationally and globally.

**Editor's note: If you would like to join GFS – Anglican Ministry, please contact the office administrator Margaret Humphries via [gfsbrisbane@hotmail.com](mailto:gfsbrisbane@hotmail.com). For more information, please visit the [GFS Brisbane website](#).**

## Q&A with St John's College UQ journalism student, All Saints' graduate, Duke of Ed expedition staff member and anglican focus reporter, Fenlan Miller



**Hard working UQ journalism student Fenlan Miller is currently completing a work placement with anglican focus, writing news stories and media releases. His news stories have been published in anglican focus and The Melbourne Anglican**

Fenlan Miller is a former All Saints' Anglican School student who lives at St John's College within the University of Queensland. He is a talented journalism student who is currently completing a work placement with *anglican focus*.

### **Where do you currently live and what are your current Anglican Church Southern Queensland roles?**

I am currently residing at St John's College within the University of Queensland, where I moved after graduating from All Saints' Anglican School on the Gold Coast. I am also doing a work placement with *anglican focus*.

### **What projects and activities are you currently engaged in as a member of our Diocesan community?**

I am currently working with the St John's College marketing and communications team to contribute to social media, college publications and college events. As I am currently studying a Bachelor of Journalism and Arts at UQ this has been a fantastic opportunity to gain some industry experience at the College.

I also continue to work closely with the All Saints' Anglican School's Duke of Edinburgh's Award program as an expedition staff member. I am working towards my own Gold Award.

I have also been doing a work placement with *anglican focus* since early September. In this role I am reporting on key events for media releases and the *anglican focus* news site, as well as learning how to work in a multifaceted organisation over a large geographical area.



**St John's College UQ student Fenlan Miller meeting with the Justice Unit's Peter Branjerdporn, *anglican focus* Editor Michelle McDonald and Justice Unit work placement student Sayesha Dhal in September 2021 to plan media activities for the On Earth Festival**

### **What has been the highlight of your involvement at St John's College so far?**

This year's St John's College family night is the highlight for me so far. At the event, I met with Old Johnians whose children now reside at the College with me. It was fantastic to see the intergenerational legacy of the College community.

### **This year's Diocesan theme is 'Being Together: Nurturing Relationships'. What are some practical ways that we can communicate with each other when we are not in conflict and build trust so we have strong foundations when inevitable differences arise?**

A very real and practical way to facilitate open and respectful communication is to not only accept but to embrace diversity in how we think and behave in a team. As part of this, I think it is crucial to understand our own strengths and weaknesses and to respect those who think and feel differently to us.

Having worked with many groups in the All Saints' Duke of Edinburgh community, I believe that embracing a diversity of thinking styles and ideas is what helps teams in tough times, such as during expeditions.

### **What person of faith inspires you the most and why?**

Sir Edward 'Weary' Dunlop, who was raised in a Christian home and was awarded Australian of the Year in 1977. During World War II whilst posted on Java as an army surgeon, instead of taking the opportunity to escape capture before Java was occupied by the Japanese forces, he chose to be captured and imprisoned as a POW so he could continue to provide medical treatment to injured and sick soldiers. What I find particularly incredible about Dunlop was his ability to maintain his humanity and compassion in the direst of circumstances. Dunlop was a hero to the prisoners.

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

My great-granddad, who passed away when I six years old, left a family pocket knife to me with instructions for my father to give it to me when I was older. He was a farmer in Inverell and he used the pocket knife in his work. I treasure it.

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

The best piece of advice I have ever received was passed on to me from my dad. It comes from Rudyard Kipling's poem 'If':

"If you can fill the unforgiving minute  
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,  
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,  
And—which is more—you'll be a Man, my son!"

This poem really helped to keep me grounded in my adolescent years.

### **If you found yourself on a deserted island, what three things would you choose to have with you?**

A satellite phone to call for help. A flint and steel for fire. A pot to boil water in.

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

"Don't panic" because I think this is good advice regardless of the situation you are in.

### **Where do you do your best thinking?**

In my head.

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

I enjoy running because it clears my head.

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

Fortuitously breaking down on the motor way while I was on the way to a dinner with the extended family.

## What makes you nostalgic and why?

Very oddly, the *Back To the Future* series. Even though I wasn't alive when the movies were released, I have always loved the character of Marty McFly.

## What is your secret skill?

I could always guess which shaped window the *Play School* story would be told through.

Features • Friday 15 October 2021 • By Dr Marie-Louise Craig

# There is nothing new under the sun, and Mother God still loves us



**"As part of his discussion on the character of "our Father in heaven", Gansfort showed that two Hebrew words describing God's love in Psalm 25.6 prove that God's love is both maternal and paternal" (Dr Marie-Louise Craig, St Francis College, October 2021)**

Sometimes in the 21st century we can arrogantly or naively believe we are inventing new ways of thinking about God, but, to use the words of an ancient preacher, "There is nothing new under the sun" ([Ecclesiastes 1.9](#)).

In early September, I was researching the extent of Hebrew scholarship among Christians in the 15th century and a quote from early humanist and theologian Wessel Gansfort (1419-1489) caught my attention. The quote comes from his reappraisal of the Lord's Prayer.

As part of his discussion on the character of “our Father in heaven”, Gansfort showed that two Hebrew words describing God’s love in [Psalm 25.6](#) prove that God’s love is both maternal and paternal.

[Gansfort said](#):

“Here, instead of compassion, the Hebrew has *rechem*, which we have said signifies a mother’s affection from the womb, and, instead of mercy, *chesed*, which signifies a father’s affection for children (p.69).”

After more discussion, he concluded that we are to pray to God as mother and as father. And, so he enlarges the scope of the two words, “our Father,” with which the Lord’s Prayer begins.

The two Hebrew words Gansfort was discussing are *rechem* (רַחֵם) and *chesed* (חֶסֶד), the first normally translated as “compassion” or “mercy” and the second as “steadfast love” or “loving kindness”. He argues that the first can also mean “womb” in Hebrew, thus representing maternal love.

The fact that *rechem* can also mean “womb” has always fascinated me when reading [Psalm 25.6](#) in Hebrew. I connect the concept of this word to the idea of a mother’s love for those children of whom people sometimes say, “Only a mother could love them.” I love the idea that God’s love is maternal. God loves me even when I am not lovable by any but Her.

In my arrogance or naivety, I thought I was discovering something new that no one had seen before. Clearly, this was not so. Sometime in the last half of the 15th century, Gansfort had a similar thought and he wrote it down.

There is nothing new under the sun, and Mother God still loves us.

**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.**

## Tips for reducing clothing waste



"We cleared out all the excess stock of unsold old uniforms and asked students to bring their old school uniforms (not shoes...yet) to school. We packed up these uniforms into over 10 boxes and sent them off to Worn Up. From there, the textiles are sorted, cleaned, processed, and then remanufactured into purposeful items such as desks, dog beds and cushion inserts" (Ella Zeeman, Hillbrook Anglican School student)

Hillbrook is extremely well progressed in terms of contributions to sustainable community actions. We have undertaken many projects that have resulted in notable positive environmental changes and I'm so grateful to have the chance to be a part of this. We've also won the [Brisbane City Council WasteSMART Schools Award](#) for the last two years in a row.

Some of the projects undertaken at Hillbrook so far include:

- A four-bin system, consisting of the conventional landfill and recycling bin, as well as bins for compost and soft plastics – these hubs are in place all over the school.
- Most of our energy being solar-sourced – we currently have 496KW of solar panels.
- A fully compostable packaging tuckshop.
- Conducting regular bin audits.
- Regular creek clean-ups.
- Our most recent substantial addition of creating an outlet for students to [recycle their old uniforms](#) through an organisation called Worn Up.

Together with another student, I participated in the [Lord Mayor's Young Environment Leadership Network \(SELN\) Project](#). Through this project I learned some mind-boggling facts about clothing waste in Australia, and the world.

Did you know that on average, Australians purchase 27kg of clothing and subsequently dispose 23kg of this into landfill every year? As students, our most commonly worn and used items of clothing are our school uniforms. With the demand for new uniforms or new components of the uniform each year, we end up with a lot of clothing waste as a side-product. Hillbrook acknowledged this problem and we decided to take action and come up with a circular solution.

We cleared out all the excess stock of unsold old uniforms and asked students to bring their old school uniforms (not shoes...yet) to school. We packed up these uniforms into over 10 boxes and sent them off to Worn Up. From there, the textiles are sorted, cleaned, processed, and then remanufactured into purposeful items such as desks, dog beds and cushion inserts.

This process of clothing disposal is in alignment with concepts of a circular economy, opposing the conventional, linear method of textile use and disposal –buy, wear (or not, really) and then throw away.

We now have a bright yellow “Worn Up” collection box in our Uniform Shop and students are encouraged to keep bringing in their old uniforms so they don’t end up in landfill.

Participating in this thrilling program has helped Hillbrook progress even further in terms of achieving sustainability goals and engagement.

From here, Hillbrook still has much to do and we will continue to pursue new ideas, projects and challenges with excitement and enthusiasm. We know that what we are doing now, and will do in the future, is contributing greatly to the circular economy and the environment, even in ways we may not be able to see directly right now.

Our next projects include the addition of shoe recycling and working towards sourcing our uniform’s materials through non-virgin materials (those with a previous life or that have been recycled).

I am always looking for ways I can introduce circularity into my own life.

### **Here are my top tips for reducing clothing waste:**

1. Purchase clothing from sustainable brands where possible.
2. Buy less and keep your clothing for longer – it’s simple – buy what you will wear! Buy things of quality that you know you will wear and keep for a while. Quality over quantity!
3. Purchase second-hand clothes – you never know what you might find in a thrift store. It’s cheap, it’s sustainable and it’s funky...give it a go!
4. Be creative with your ‘unwearable’ or old clothes – got a hole in your jeans? Sew them up or make them into something new – a cushion, a skirt, a bag, a headband, anything!
5. Practise dropping old clothes to clothing bin recycling points (such as at H&M, Zara, goodwill/second-hand shops, etc.).

## Faith groups: the climate game plan must be for 2030



An inter-faith group, including The Very Rev'd Dr Peter Catt, kept vigil outside Trevor Evans' Albion electoral office on Monday 18 October, calling for Australia to take stronger climate policies to the United Nations climate summit in Glasgow, especially for a stronger 2030 target

Faith communities across Australia held vigils yesterday outside the offices of Members of Parliament, including that of the Prime Minister.

Their unified call was for Australia to take stronger climate policies to the United Nations climate summit in Glasgow later this month, especially for a stronger 2030 target.

A group of 50 people, including a dozen clergy of various faiths and Catholic sisters, rang bells and held a liturgy outside the office of Prime Minister Scott Morrison.

Groups from various faiths also held vigils outside the offices of other MPs, some Coalition and some Labor. They included Nationals Leader Barnaby Joyce, Trevor Evans in the seat of Brisbane and Envoy for the Great Barrier Reef, Warren Entsch.

The Very Rev'd Dr Peter Catt, Cathedral Dean of Brisbane, was among those who kept vigil outside Trevor Evans' Albion electoral office.

Dr Catt said that he encourages all people of faith to do what they can to reverse damage to the climate.

"Firstly, given that it is a systemic problem, lobby your MP so that we get the policy settings correct; secondly, look at your own lifestyle and [live the change](#); thirdly, share your concern with family and friends,

“People of faith understand that the planet is a gift and so to be cared for.

“They also seek to advocate for people who are poor and vulnerable, the people who will pay the heaviest price for inaction.

“Solidarity builds hope.”

Part of a global multi-faith “day of action”, over 440 multi-faith events were held in 43 countries. With a unified message about protecting the earth, they were held in places as different from each other as New York and Nairobi, Lilongwe in Malawi and London.

Over 120 diverse faith communities across Australia were involved, hanging banners on their places of worship or holding special events, calling on Scott Morrison to set much bolder climate targets for 2030. As the Government considers a target of net zero emissions by 2050, faith communities say that only an ambitious near-term goal would make that goal meaningful

Venerable Bhante Sujato, Buddhist monk of Sutta Central, who attended the vigil outside Scott Morrison’s office, said, “We are distressed that the Coalition’s internal debate is about a 2050 target when the main game is slashing pollution this decade. We need targets closer to those of our partners the United States, the United Kingdom and the European Union. Indeed, the world needs reductions now.”

In Melbourne, Pentecostal Pastor Rob Buckingham of Bayside Church, said, “Our prayers are for the Morrison Government, that they will take the bold action needed to protect the integrity of God’s creation.”

In Perth, people from across the religious spectrum held a vigil outside the office of outgoing MP, Steve Irons.

Ann Zubrick, Presiding Clerk of Quakers Australia, said, “Mr Irons is in the same prayer group as the Prime Minister. We are asking him to let Mr Morrison know that we’re all praying that fossil fuels are not simply replaced by fossil fuels.

“...we need public investment in large-scale renewable energy, which would create more jobs and be better for our farmers, water security, our health and the climate.”

In Cairns a ceremony was held at the local Anglican church, attended by Buddhists, Quakers, Christians and people from other local groups. They then crossed the road to the office of Warren Entsch, who has been an outspoken critic of National Party colleagues over their opposition to setting an emissions target.

Spokesperson for the Anglican Diocese of North Queensland, Father Neil Forgie, said, “We support Mr Entsch in his calls for stronger climate action, but we want to encourage him to speak up even more strongly. He must tell the Prime Minister that the time for half-measures is over – we must drastically reduce emissions this decade.”

In Australia, actions were organised under the auspices of the Australian Religious Response to Climate Change (ARRCC), a founding partner of GreenFaith International.

## Retired, really?



**The Rev'd Stephanie Frances leading the St Francis Day pet blessing service in the grounds of St Alban's, Maryvale in 2020**

The parish office in Warwick got a call leading up to Synod about the need for a funeral to be taken at All Saints' Anglican Church in Texas. The grieving family could only gather on the Friday of Synod. This made it difficult for our four full-time 'local' clergy, as they were heading east for Synod, and Texas is a 300 kilometre round-trip west from Warwick.

Warwick has been blessed with its retired clergy, but this year we've come to a point where we can no longer ask our retired clergy to do services that require all that preparation and such a lengthy drive. The Texas Anglican community has some amazing laypeople, but equally we don't want to ask ministry of them that they don't feel comfortable about doing.

I was able to meet with the family in Warwick to do initial preparations for the service. However, as I started to become quite anxious about what priest could preside, I thought of The Rev'd David Snape. David is retired, but like many retired clergy in the Western Region he is quick to step in and help when it's needed. He is currently serving as a locum at the Oakey and Millmerran parishes, is on roster at St James', Toowoomba and helps out at Airbus Australia. In some desperation, I contacted David about the funeral, and David – who was planning on attending Synod – changed his plans, drove from his home in Toowoomba to Texas, stayed overnight and led the funeral. Funerals in the county are serious work that require the gift of time and David stepped up and generously gave. And, then he attended Synod!

Up until just a few short months ago, a good many Anglican funerals in Texas have been taken by our retired deacon, The Rev'd Julie Simpson. Julie has been an inspiration to many through her funeral ministry. She is pastorally excellent – kind, warm and sincere. She is truly present in what she does – there's nothing rushed or rote about it. She always prepares a homily for each different family and at

her last funeral in Texas – I was her driver due to some back problems she'd been experiencing – Julie assisted the family in choosing readings that reflected their mum's love of nature and gardening and then preached weaving these loves and the journey of faith together. Julie turned 80 a couple of years ago and "retired" – but she's continued to offer so much, especially in the area of funerals and aged care ministry. The woman is a legend!



**The Rev'd Julie Simpson, The Ven. Lizzie Gaitskell and The Rev'd Barbara Diery in the grounds of St Mark's, Warwick in 2021**

Similarly, The Rev'd Barbara Diery, from the Parish of Warwick, also offers wonderful ministry. On Synod Sunday she celebrated Eucharist and baptised four (very active) little boys! She is on roster when she can be, and she is the local Mothers Union chaplain and a spiritual mentor for many. She produced a huge volume of PowerPoint services as resources for our aged care facilities, changing the way we offer services there and included planned sets of hymn favourites. She also began projects like Warwick's Christmas Down Under ministry for kids in the local shopping centre.

The Rev'd Rosemary Peterson – a Killarney local – is another beloved figure, not just in our Diocese, but also over the border in the Diocese of Grafton (COVID-19 permitting). Rosemary was reminiscing the other day about the "Women of the West" events that she once hosted at her beautiful property at The Head – on the eastern side of the Condamine Gorge. Rosemary's devoted pastoral ministry and her many connections to local groups are well known. There are very few people in Killarney and the surrounds who Rosemary doesn't know and her faithful and hospitable heart is a real gift to the community.

The Rev'd Stephanie Frances and my own darling dad, The Rev'd John Pryce-Davies, also help out in differing ways as often as they can around Warwick, as did The Rev'd Val Graydon until she 'moved east' a few months ago. Each of these clergy gives generously of their time and abilities and continues to sense God's call in their lives.

The Archdeaconry of Cunningham is about 400 or so kilometres, stretching from Booval, Ipswich to Talwood, west of Goondiwindi. It covers Brisbane Valley and Boonah, Allora-Clifton, Stanthorpe, the Lockyer Valley, Ipswich, the Border Ranges and Southern Downs. As I write there are just three full-time priests remaining in the large western swathe that makes up the Southern Downs Deanery. Big challenges don't just lie ahead – they're with us right now. I am also incredibly grateful for creative, committed lay ministry – to the many folk who show up in their centres Sunday by Sunday and truly make liturgy "the work of the people". We are richly blessed.

PS: I got in touch with The Rev'd David Snape again the other day, he was on the road to a funeral in Cunnamulla!

**Editor's note 19/10/2021: Additional image of The Rev'd Julie Simpson, The Ven Lizzie Gaitskell and The Rev'd Barbara Diery added.**

**Features • Tuesday 19 October 2021 • By Michael Kucera**

## October is National Safe Work Month



**Joanne Rose, from the Bishops' Office and PMC, writing on the safety wall during National Safe Work Month in October 2021**

October is [National Safe Work Month](#) – a time to remind all workers to continue their commitment towards building safe and healthy workplaces.

The Anglican Church Southern Queensland is asking all workers (clergy, volunteers, employees and contractors) along with parishioners and others, to share in this commitment of safe and healthy parishes and workplaces across our Diocesan community.

Being safe and healthy means being free from physical and psychological harm. Every activity should be safe and no death or injury is acceptable. A safe and healthy parish or other workplace benefits everyone.

The theme for National Safe Work Month this year is “think safe. work safe. be safe.”

This October “think safe. work safe. be safe.” at your parish or other workplace by participating in a range of Diocesan activities.

Last week, ACSQ community members attended the [National Mental Health Week Service](#) at St John’s Cathedral. National Mental Health Week is an annual national event that aims to improve community awareness and interest in mental health and wellbeing.

Diocesan community members also attended online Annual Safety Management Training.

### **Individual parishes can get involved by:**

- Holding health and safety focus group sessions during the month of October.\*
- Using the month to catch up on annual [health and safety inductions](#) for new workers or an annual refresher for existing workers.\*
- Completing fire drills and other annual health and safety compliance requirements.\*
- Coming along to Annual Safety Management Training (face to face) ([register online](#)).

### **Cathedral Precinct and St Francis College clergy and staff can get involved by:**

- Individual work areas setting up a health and safety wall using butcher’s paper (or equivalent) and then encouraging clergy and staff to contribute to it during the month. The health and safety wall allows staff to record their thoughts to specific health and safety questions:
  1. Why is health and safety important to you?
  2. What would you like to see implemented in your working environment towards health and safety over the next 12 months?
- Completing their annual health and safety inductions.
- Participating in fire drills.

**\*For more information, please email Work Health and Safety Advisor, Michael Kucera on [mkucera@anglicanchurchsq.org.au](mailto:mkucera@anglicanchurchsq.org.au)**

## St Margaret's STEM students give the gift of light



**St Margaret's Year 4 students Araminta Rombola and Penny Copping assembling solar lights on International Day of the Girl Child in October 2021 for children in majority world countries so they can read and study after dusk**

On International Day of the Girl Child recently, St Margaret's Anglican Girls School STEM students were encouraged to consider the challenges girls face around the globe and be inspired to make a difference by assembling solar-powered lights.

789 million around the world live in extreme energy poverty. Without access to clean energy they depend on primitive forms such as charcoal and firewood to ignite their way through the night. These alternatives have devastating impacts in communities, affecting health, the environment, economic stability and educational outcomes.

Through the Australian charity [SolarBuddy program](#), St Margaret's primary STEM students have given the gift of solar-powered lights that will help improve the lives of over 2000 children living in energy poverty in majority world (developing) countries so that they can read and study after dusk and brighten their future.

Head of Primary Angela Drysdale said the program combined STEM learning with global citizenship and philanthropy.

"The SolarBuddy activity was the ideal opportunity for students to make a tangible difference in the lives of others while also learning about renewable energy and innovative design solutions," Angela said.

“The process highlighted to students how others around the world live while also giving them the opportunity to make a global contribution. Providing the gift of light will positively impact lives by increasing study hours after dark, offsetting carbon emissions and reducing kerosene expenditure.

“The activity also gave students the chance to learn about solar technology and to consider how innovative design solutions can solve some of the world’s most complex problems and transform lives.”

AWS, Trend Micro, and Mantel Group donated the solar powered lights and representatives from each organisation spoke to the students, encouraging the girls to consider a career in technology.

Year 4 student Araminta Rombola said the highlight of the activity for her was creating something to help someone in need.

“My highlight was having fun making the solar light and knowing that it was going to help someone who doesn’t have electricity,” Araminta said.

“Celebrating the International Day of the Girl is important because it reminds everybody that girls all over the world deserve to go to school and have better lives”

Penny Copping, also in Year 4, appreciated the fact that her solar light donation would help someone to do their homework at night.

After assembling the solar powered lights, each of the students wrote a message to the recipient of their gift, both of which will be distributed by SolarBuddy to children living in energy poverty.

**News • Thursday 7 October 2021 • By Philippe Coquerand**

## **Hundreds of people attend NAIDOC Week celebrations**



“I was very impressed with the turnout. NAIDOC Week is about being with my mob and celebrating who we are. It has been our day to just be us and to be around our mob and to share it with other people”  
(Olly Yasso, Anglicare Southern Queensland)

Hundreds of people attended the NAIDOC Week celebrations at the Briggs Road Sporting complex last Thursday in Ipswich.

With more than 75 stalls, including our Thread Together van and staff from Anglicare's Mental Health and Family Wellbeing team, the community enjoyed a free family and cultural celebration with artists, crafts people, and essential community service providers to Flinders View.

Live music, entertainment, dancing, activities for the whole family, as well as activities provided by stallholders, children's rides, refreshments, food, and an Elders' area were all available on the day.

Anglicare Southern Queensland's Cultural Capability Facilitator Olivene (Olly) Yasso said the event was a huge success.

"The day was really good. The day was beautiful and there was lots of fun for the kids and just catching up with everyone from different stalls and families," Olly said.

"I was very impressed with the turnout. NAIDOC Week is about being with my mob and celebrating who we are. It has been our day to just be us and to be around our mob and to share it with other people.

"I was brought up here and lived at the house, near the Sporting Complex, and I even brought my grandson down and it's keeping connected to community and catching up with family."

Olly recommends everyone to join in on the NAIDOC Week celebrations as "you get to experience Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, lots of goodies, artwork and to immerse yourself in our day."

The event was originally scheduled to coincide with national NAIDOC Week in July, but was postponed due to COVID-19 restrictions.

You can have a look at some of the photos taken on the [day here](#).

**First published on the [Anglicare Southern Queensland website](#) on 28 September 2021.**

## Desmond Tutu turns 90 with an outpouring of love from the world



**Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, one of South Africa's most famous persons, has turned 90 with a Eucharist service celebration at Cape Town's St George's Cathedral, receiving an outpouring of love from around the world. Tutu made a rare public appearance on 7 October at the iconic Cape Town cathedral, the site of prayers and protests during the apartheid era, where he attended a special thanksgiving service.**

The 1984 Nobel Peace Prize laureate who won the award for his role against the racist apartheid system and worked for healing, arrived in a wheelchair with his wife, Nomalizo Leah Tutu.

Also, among the family members at the service were two of the couple's daughters, The Rev'd Mpho Andrea Tutu van Furth and Naomi Nontombi Tutu, the *Daily Maverick* reported.

It was an intimate midday service, with limited attendance due to COVID-19 regulations in South Africa and began with 'Happy Birthday' sung by the assembly.

Tutu was frail and unable to stand up from his wheelchair, but he applauded reverently in the front row, South Africa's *Daily Maverick Newspaper* reported.

## **'Always given us hope'**

One of Tutu's fellow anti-apartheid activists, The Rev'd Allan Boesak, who was once president of the former World Alliance of Reformed Churches, led the service for his "friend and brother," saying that the archbishop, despite "seeing it all... has always given us hope."

"Your leadership of the South African Council of Churches was a wake-up call to the church, as it was an alarm bell ringing for the apartheid regime.

"After the vicious repressions of the 1960s, after the Sharpeville massacre, they thought they had silenced the church, but God had other plans, and you came, and you woke up the church, you shook the church up," said Boesak.

From 1978 to 1985, Tutu was general secretary of the South African Council of Churches, which was at the forefront of the struggle against apartheid and was a thorn in the authorities' side.

Tutu was also co-chair of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission set up by the democratically elected government in 1995 to help heal and reconcile the country after the end of apartheid and is seen as Nelson Mandela as a critical person is shaping the new South Africa.

The former general secretary of the World Council of Churches (WCC) and now presiding bishop of the church of Norway, The Rev'd Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, wrote about Tutu on this Facebook page.

"A life in ministry for justice, reconciliation, unity through a pastoral leadership in prayer, dialogue and prophetic witness. He is a great man. I was honoured to meet him at my visit to South Africa in 2016," Tveit said.

## **Message from Sweden**

The Most Rev'd Dr Antje Jackelén, Archbishop of Uppsala, also sent Tutu a birthday message on behalf of the Church of Sweden.

"Courage, comfort, transformation, justice and forgiveness are some of the nourishing fruits that have grown out of your service to our common humanity. Those in power were confronted with their accountability and responsibility. Those deprived of their voices were empowered and listened to," Dr Jackelén said.

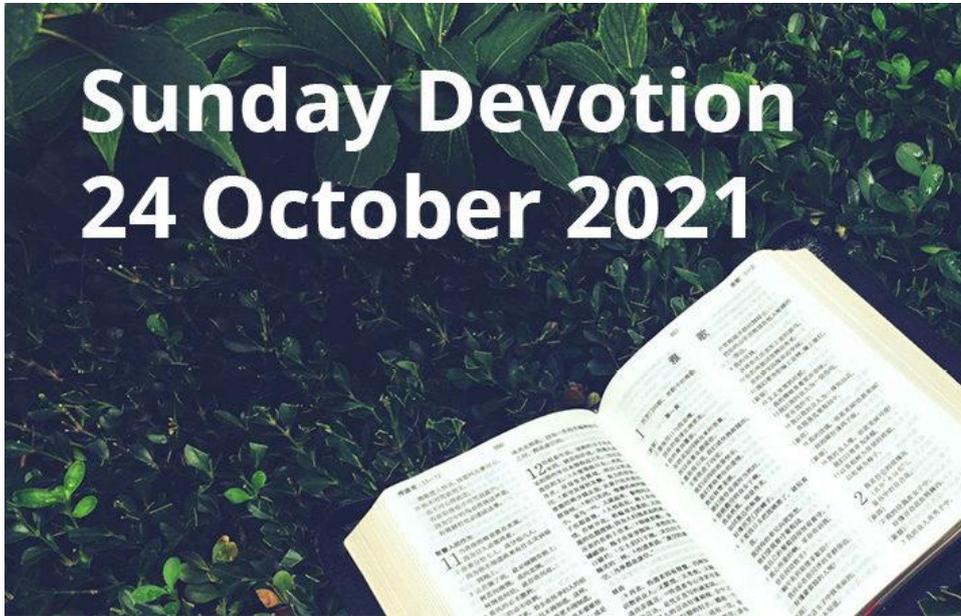
After the service, Tutu's daughter Mpho said she was "incredibly grateful" to spend the day with her father on his 90th birthday.

"We're so incredibly grateful for the love and the prayerful support that my father has had for his life, his work, his ministry. He couldn't have done all he had without the love, support, and prayers of so many people," she said.

**First published on the [World Council of Churches website](#) on 12 October 2021.**

## Sunday Devotion: 24 October 2021, Twenty-Second Sunday after Pentecost

With truth's bitterness comes blessing



**Main Readings:** [Job 42.1-6, 10-17](#); [Psalm 34.1-8 \(19-22\)](#); [Hebrews 7.21-28](#); [Mark 10.46-52](#); [Jeremiah 31.7-9](#); [Psalm 126](#)

**Supplementary Readings:** [Psalm 110](#); [Mark 12.28-37](#); [Job 42.7-9](#); [Psalm 126](#); [Hebrews 8.1-6](#)

“The Lord blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning” ([Job 42.12](#))

When I was growing up the only man in my village in South Sudan who believed in Jesus was my uncle, Paul Majak, as everyone else worshipped the local gods. In a single year, my uncle lost five children who were killed at different times in bomb explosions, in childbirth and while fighting in the war. He also lost his wife in the same year while she was giving birth.

Villagers made fun of him, asking him in a teasing way where his God was now as he had lost his wife and all of his children, except one daughter, within 10 months. Despite losing so much, he remained obedient to God like Job and continued to praise him. The courage he showed through his affliction eventually inspired other villagers to worship Jesus as the true God. Now, there is a big church in my village. Many years later, I spoke to him on the phone and he told me that he had been blessed like Job in his later years, as God had blessed him with more children.

Both my uncle and the story of Job have taught me that the most important things are faith and trust in God. If we have faith and trust in God, we can leave the rest to God.

The trials of the righteous are often so many, but with obedience, faith and trust God will set us free from our affliction.