

In the news

‘The increasing use of technology in churches may sound the death knell for hymn books. Church of England estimates show about 4000 of its 16,000 parish churches now use an iTunes app and big screens to bring hands-free worship to their flock.’ *Sydney Morning Herald*

‘Every Sunday for the past three years, Petra the dog has walked 26 kilometres on her own to attend church. During Mass, the Portuguese dog stands and sits as required, then either walks home or catches a lift.’ *The Age*

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Saints Alive

Newsletter of All Saints Anglican Church
Northcote
Parish of South Darebin

Volume 2 Number 1

The Gospel of Matthew

The Venerable Andrew Oddy

Since the late 1960s it has been the practice of the Church to read from one only of the first three Gospels, known as the Synoptic Gospels, in any one year. Matthew, Mark and Luke are called “Synoptic” because it had become clear that they included many of the same incidents, with little variation, and could be viewed, as it were, “with one eye”, in columns, side by side, to see the variations to each account the particular author had made. The Gospel of John does not fit this pattern. However the relationship of dependence between the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke is very clear.

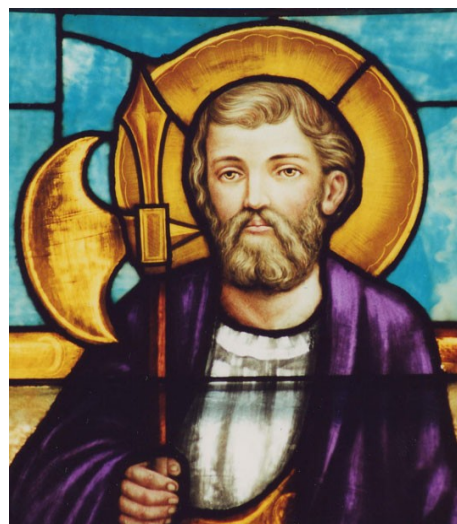
In 2015 we will read mainly from the Gospel of Matthew and I want to give some of the characteristics of that Gospel which we will encounter this year.

Matthew’s Gospel was written some fifteen years after the Gospel of Mark. Many features of Matthew’s unique story of Jesus indicate that it came to be finally produced in a largely Jewish-Christian community.

A period of turbulence amongst the people and misgovernment by Roman procurators after the Jewish revolt of 66 CE led to the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple. This caused a profound change in the way Israel worshipped. There could no longer be sacrifices offered. Israel had to reconstitute itself. Although before the Jewish War there were Sadducees, Pharisees, Essenes, Zealots and perhaps other ways of being a follower of the Law of Moses, the great survivors of the war were the Pharisees. Their way of life, centred on the Synagogue and attempting to make God relevant to every aspect of life through the Law and its application, was the basis of the Judaism that rose from the chaos of so much destruction.

The Gospel of Matthew came into existence in this historical and religious setting. It is the result of the Christian experience and reflection of a community that had begun its life in close association with traditional Israel. Tension and confusion were growing between Matthew’s community and ‘the Synagogue across the street’. Ultimately, the Matthean community’s belief that Jesus was the Christ forced them to move away from that old and comfortable world that they loved so much, into the Gentile mission. This was not an easy passage.

Both Matthew and his community seem to look back to their roots with respect. A tension between the mission to ‘the lost sheep of Israel’ (10:6; 15:24) and ‘all nations’ (28:19) is present throughout the whole of the Gospel. Nowhere is this tension more keenly felt than in Jesus’ words “For truly I say to you till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished.”



St Matthew the Evangelist
catholicotdish.com

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The Gospel of Matthew...

“The Gospel of Matthew is...the result of the Christian experience and reflection of a community”

Does this not conflict with Jesus’ earlier teaching? The answer depends on a correct understanding of the use of terms that indicate some future moment, beyond which the tiniest details of the Law would not bind. The Law would have to be lived in its perfection “till heaven and earth pass away . . . until all is accomplished” (5:18). Just when might that time be? At the death and resurrection of Jesus, heaven and earth pass away. Matthew understands this moment as the time when all has been accomplished. The stage is set for a new mission: to ‘make disciples of all nations’.

The early chapters of the Gospel paint Jesus as a new Israel coming out of Egypt and giving a new Law as Moses had done. Matthew quotes directly from the Old Testament far more than other Gospel writers. There are parallels with the Old Testament between Jesus and the baby Moses. Also, the Church, a name not found in

the other Gospels, is founded in the revelation given to Peter at Caesarea Philippi and it has an important role to play.

On the other hand, the tension between Synagogue and the Church give this Gospel an anti-Jewish character and modern Jewish writers warn us that a very careful reading of the texts is needed and the background of the writing needs to be explained.

Matthew’s Gospel will be the focus of the preaching in this year and I hope these comments are helpful as we approach the Gospel together.

From the churchwardens

Bruce Clezy and Betty Reay

Here is a brief summary of some of the projects currently underway.

- The major electrical re-wiring of the meeting hall is progressing well. The work on the hall and kitchen has now been completed. We are waiting for the electricity company to connect this new circuits externally and for the relevant inspectors to sign off on the project. In the meantime the church will get new power boards and the project should be complete within two weeks.
- The wardens are seeking to replace the chairs in the meeting room. Replacements will need to be strong, comfortable and completely stackable. We are looking for models both with arm rests and without (although in the same style) to allow for our congregation’s mobility needs.
- Health and safety: the Diocese has a new infection control policy, intended to reduce any risk associated with use of a common cup at the Eucharist. In line with this, hand sanitiser has been placed on each side of the communion rails. If you have a cold, or plan to dip the host into the chalice, please

sanitise your hands before taking communion. This will help keep everyone well, especially during the winter months.

• Many thanks to Arnaud and other volunteers for the upkeep of the grounds. The garden forms an important reminder to the broader community as to the life of the church. Through Arnaud and the team’s excellent work we demonstrate how much we love our church and care for its heritage.

If you would like to volunteer your time to assist in any task, or in any aspect in the life and upkeep of our church, please let either of us know. In particular we are looking for people who may have a few hours available to help with cleaning the church each week.

We note that some people are travelling soon – we wish all those who are venturing forth a happy and safe journey with a peaceful return.



**Good at cleaning?
The church needs YOU!**

Synod news

Alma Ryrie-Jones

The Archbishop has called a special session of the Melbourne Diocesan Synod to seek support for the proposed establishment of the Diocese as a company—a not for profit legal entity. This will involve setting up a governing body, which would in practice be partly or wholly composed of members of the existing Diocesan Council. Why is this being proposed? There are two pressing reasons: first, the Victorian WorkCover authority has indicated that it holds bishops personally accountable for claims by clergy against their ‘employer,’ since there is no other employing authority which accepts accountability. This puts clergy and bishops in a risky position when events occur which, for other employees in the community, would be covered by

WorkCover. The new company would accept accountability as the employer for this purpose. Secondly, incorporating would mean that the Diocese would become an entity that can be sued at law. In this way the church would make clear to all that it does not wish to have access to the so-called ‘Ellis defence’, a technicality whereby a church can avoid accountability for crimes and misdemeanours committed by clergy. This new legislation would offer an avenue for legal redress for victims of abuse, and this would cover clerical offences from the past as well as the present.

For both of these reasons, without being aware of any serious disadvantages, I am generally in favour of the proposal. I am happy to provide Synod papers or other details to anyone interested in them.



A special session of Synod has been called for mid-June, to consider creating the Melbourne Anglican Diocese Ltd, to be known as MADCorp

Homes under threat

Fiona Ross

As spokesperson for a group of public housing tenants ‘Friends of Public Housing’ I alert you to the ongoing concerns tenants have about the previous government’s plans to transfer the ownership of public housing into the hands of private housing associations, property developers in partnership with not for profit organisations, without any proper protection for the rights of existing tenants and with no guarantee of an increase in affordable rental properties available to the disadvantaged and those on low incomes. In fact, such transfers and rebuilding projects have resulted in LESS housing being available to poorer people. It is not yet clear what the current government plans to do, but it has not announced any wind-back of the previous government’s plans, and tenants are left in the dark about their future, in fear of losing their homes and being moved to unknown locations or being evicted altogether. This is under the banner of ‘social and community’ housing—which is quite different from public housing.

And this is happening while the crisis in affordable housing gets worse every day, as research by Anglicare has shown, and more than 34,000 Victorian households are still on the waiting list for public housing. This means we need MORE public housing, not less. As most of us realise, homelessness, constant rental stress

(having to pay more than a third of your income just to keep a roof over your head) and insecure housing have far-reaching consequences—it only takes a short time for the impact to be felt, in terms of mental illness, disconnectedness and financial and social collapse.

Making sure everyone has decent shelter and somewhere to call home is a core Christian issue. In this context I worked with Alma to prepare a paper for the Social Responsibility Committee of the Diocese, and a submission to the Federal Senate. My thanks go to others at All Saints who have expressed their support.

What can you do to help?

Please take the trouble to inform yourself about this issue as we need all the support we can get. I can send you a copy of ‘Homes Under Threat’, which covers the main points.

To add your voice to the attempts of public tenants to be heard by the government, consider writing to your local member or other people of influence who need to know about this. Again, I can give you notes on the main points.

Talk to me at church, or I can be contacted at: housing.humanrights@gmail.com

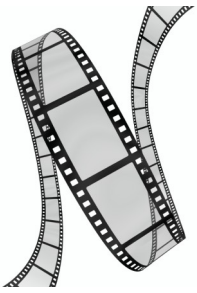


‘We need MORE public housing, not less’, says Fiona Ross

Saints Alive

Revisiting *The Truman Show*

FILM REVIEW



“...in a world devoid of meaning, media and technology all become like gods.”

Bruce Clezy

The Truman Show is approaching twenty years of age but as a film it has still not lost its impact. Made in 1998, the movie tells the story of Truman Burbank (played by Jim Carrey), a man whose life plays out on television 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. As a boy, Truman was ‘the first child adopted by a corporation’. Raised on television and within full view of the public gaze, his life is now a totally staged managed production, although this has been kept secret from him. Truman’s world is ‘reality television’, complete with actors, special effects, and a never-ending stream of product placements of which he is pitifully unaware.

When I first saw the movie I really enjoyed its dark commentary on the role of the media, technology and consumerism. On a recent viewing, however, I was struck by the number of religious images within the movie. Truman undergoes a kind of crucifixion towards the end of the film. When realising his predicament, he tries to escape by boat, sailing across the fake but nevertheless lifelike ocean. Furious, the callous director of the show Christof (played by Ed Harris) tries to punish him, and raises a terrible storm that leaves Truman half dead. In one scene we see Truman, bound in rope almost Christ like, arms splayed as if dying on the cross. The son, the ‘True-man’, has been killed off by the media father, only to be reborn in a new life to which he escapes. Even the director’s name points to the Passion, he is a kind of an anti-Christ, a ‘Christ Off’.

Intrigued by this I had a quick look on the internet to see what film critics had made of these biblical references. To my delight they were confirmed and further illuminated. Truman’s boat, for example, is numbered 139 after Psalm 139 which the final few lines of the movie seem to paraphrase:

O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me.

Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off.

Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways.

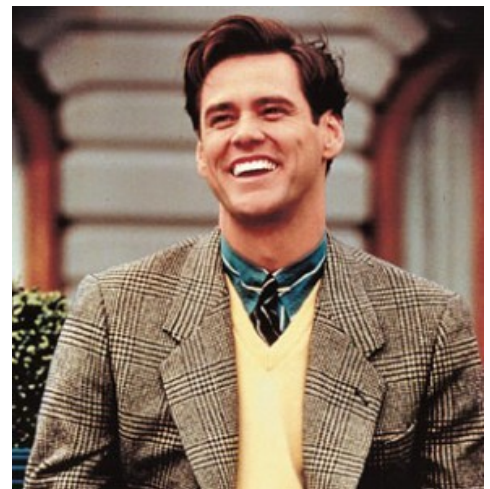
For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether.

Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.

The Truman Show was one of a number of movies produced towards the end of last century that explored the encroaching role of media and technology into everyday life. The power of the movie was its uncanny ability to predict how these technologies would become so prevalent that they would begin to shape people’s lives and provide meaning. (It is important to remember that when the film was released the internet had barely just hit our shores; there was no Big Brother and no Facebook.) Indeed on reading the first few lines of the psalm as printed above, one could be easily be mistaken in thinking that the verses refer to the internet and ‘big data’ and not to the Lord sitting on high. *The Truman Show* foresaw that in a world devoid of meaning, media and technology all become like gods.

Jim Carrey starred as Truman in the 1998 film, written by Andrew Niccol and directed by Australian Peter Weir



Parish partnership

When the Brotherhood Shop is doing well, All Saints benefits. It is a genuine partnership which allows us to contribute to the work of a major Anglican agency, and at the same time to derive some income to help meet the practical needs of maintaining the church and its role in the Northcote community.

Every contribution you make, either in the form of a donation or by becoming a regular customer of the shop, benefits both partners and expresses your support for the Brotherhood's vision—the idea of Australia free of poverty and the social evils that go along with it. The Brotherhood seeks not only to relieve suffering but to tackle the sources of inequality, injustice and disadvantage.

DONATE • BUY • PROMOTE • VOLUNTEER

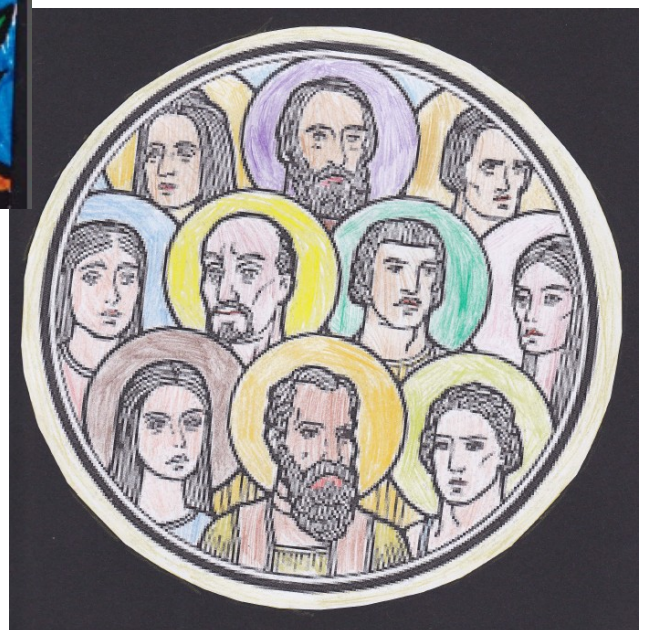


smAll Saints



**'The Good Shepherd' and
'All Saints Day'**

**Sunday School work at All
Saints**





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Welcome!

We seek to share with others our experience of God and to make of All Saints Northcote a place of permanent welcome, a refuge and anchor for the human spirit.

Welcome the Lord – worship

Reverence for liturgy and joy in music are central to our worship. The observance of season and feast has continued in unbroken service in this place for 155 years. We seek to be close to God in the celebration of Baptism and in the breaking of the bread, and to draw others into a sense of the sacred. We hold to a middle way, resisting extremes, allowing for difference and listening to new ideas, but always anchored in prayer book and hymnal, in parish and Diocese, and in the great Anglican tradition.

Welcome the stranger – relationship

The defining spiritual features of our community are love, tolerance, warmth and inclusiveness. We are less concerned about numbers, money, appearances, power or status than about hospitality, participation, and the gifts each person brings, regardless of their age or abilities or sexual orientation or any other personal characteristic. We love children and young people. We treat outcasts and fringe dwellers compassionately and support church agencies of social action.

Welcome the friend – partnership

We are enriched by our connection with St Paul's Fairfield and St James the Great Thornbury as part of a united parish, and we respect the different identities of each community. We value our connection with the Brotherhood of St Laurence and are willing participants in ecumenical exchange and inter-faith activity.

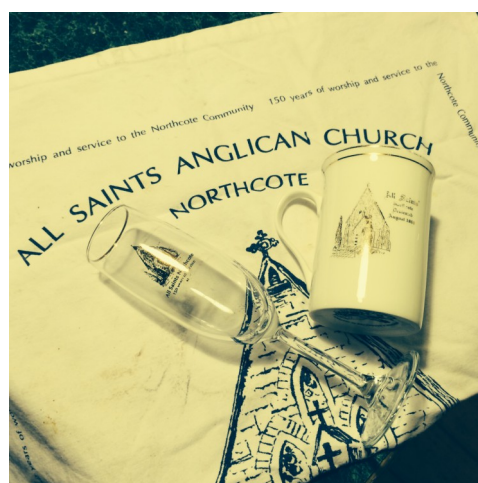
Saints Alive is published on our website along with other information about All Saints

allsaintsnorthcote.org.au

Don't miss the great August 'merch' sale

All Saints has been the site of continuous worship since 1860, first as a Church of England and then as part of the Australian Anglican Church. In August we will celebrate our 155th birthday, which makes us as old, and at least as important, as the Melbourne Cup.

Tea towels, mugs and a limited number of champagne flutes left over from our 150 anniversary celebrations will be available for sale at discount prices. All proceeds will go towards the purchase of new chairs for the meeting room.



1860 — 2015