

Quotable quotes

“The Christian ideal has not been tried and found wanting. It has been found difficult and left untried.”

GK Chesterton

‘If I had been the Virgin Mary, I would have said “No”.’

Stevie Smith

‘I am a gentleman. I live by robbing the poor.’

A line from a GB Shaw play

‘Anyone who thinks sitting in church can make you a Christian must also think that sitting in a garage can make you a car.’

Garrison Keillor

Inside this issue:

The Vicar on The Nicene Creed	1
Volunteer with the BSL	2
Daisy and Ruby 1887	3
Letter from Indonesia	4
‘Pura Pura’	4
From the Wardens	5
smAll Saints	5
Long live Democracy	6

Saints Alive

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Northcote
Parish of South Darebin

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The Nicene Creed

The Venerable Andrew Oddy

At All Saints, the Nicene Creed is recited at every celebration of the Eucharist, as it is in every Anglican, Roman Catholic and Orthodox celebration throughout the world. It forms part of the acknowledged belief of all Christians. It is named after the city of Nicaea (now Iznik in Northern Turkey) which in the reign of the Emperor Constantine was a large and prosperous city and an administrative and military centre.

Constantine became sole ruler of the Roman Empire in 324 CE. His experience of the church in the west (Latin speakers) was one of a divided and quarrelling church. As he focused his attention on establishing a capital at Constantinople, at Byzantium (now Istanbul), he found the eastern or Greek churches in sharp dissension. It started with a local quarrel between the Alexandrian Bishop, Alexander, and a priest in his diocese called Arius. In brief, Arius believed that the Son of God was not eternal but was created before the ages by the Father as an instrument for the making of the world. In many now abstruse formulae, Arius admitted great honour to Jesus as the Christ but in a famous expression ‘there was a time when the Son was not’, denied the divinity of Christ.

What followed this local quarrel was that Arius garnered support from surrounding local bishops. In time the Greek episcopate was split into two parties with feelings running high. What was involved was the movement of the shift from a Hebrew faith and a Greek and Roman world. One party to the dispute wanted an entirely biblical based faith and Scripture contains many references which speak of the Son as subordinate to the Father.

This caused such alarm to Constantine that he personally intervened in a process of reconciliation and summoned a Council at Nicaea called ecumenical or world council be-



Icon depicting the Emperor Constantine, accompanied by the bishops of the First Council of Nicaea (325), holding the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed of 381.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicene_Creed

cause of the range of representation. At a solemn opening on 20 May 325, the emperor urged all the bishops to achieve unity and peace. The creed that emerged was sharply anti-Arian. It affirmed that the Son was ‘of the same substance with’ (that is “substantially the same as”) the Father. In our translation we find the words: ‘eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten not made, of one being with the Father.’ The Creed was overwhelmingly supported at the Council, by a vote of 218 out of 220 bishops.

This was not the end of the matter. The term which we translate as ‘of one being with the Father’ was never entirely popular and is not a biblical expression. A number of bishops after Nicea withdrew support for the creed, deposing their opponents. Constantine’s successor as Emperor in 337 sided with the Arian heresy.

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About the Nicene Creed

“The Son cannot be a bridge between God and humanity if the bridge doesn’t fully reach both ends.”

‘For many, the idea that Jesus is to be regarded as divine...is a stumbling block.’

In all of this, Alexander’s successor as Bishop of Alexandria, Athanasius, was a fierce defender of the Nicene Creed. My teachers in theological college described Athanasius as a churchman who at all costs defended the ‘holiness of the Church and her sacraments. What use was it to belong to the Body of Christ if Christ was less than God? Why eat of the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ if it were less than holy food?’

What was at stake? One writer put it this way: ‘God did not send a creature in order to show us how we could bridge the gap between heaven and earth by learning how to follow a wonderful example. Both the human predicament and the divine solution are far more profound than that. It is the difference between a religion which simply says to us, ‘try harder’ and a belief that God is the one who has done what it takes to deliver us through the incarnation and the Cross. The Son cannot be a bridge between God and humanity if the bridge doesn’t fully reach both ends.

‘Secondly Christ offers us not second hand, indirect knowledge of but the direct experience of relationship with the eternal God. If Arius was right, the love we find in Christ is really external to that of God. If Christ does not fully know God, can we fully trust him to deliver us?’

‘Thirdly, why should we want to emulate, much less to praise the God of Arius? This God does not give of himself, but sends a lesser creature, a created being, to show kindness. Such a God remains an isolated ruler who cannot involve himself immediately with his creation.’

Eventually the Church settled into the Creed of Nicaea which in nine years celebrates its 1600th anniversary. Its teaching is not found in scripture but is necessary to understand it.

For many, the idea that Jesus is to be regarded as divine, the same with God the Father, is a stumbling block. A fine teacher, a good man, a humanitarian hero is one thing, but God? Certainly the Church cannot fall back on formulas, words of the early centuries of her history and, pointing to them, demand allegiance. It belongs to each generation to explain what it means to assert the divinity of Jesus Christ.

The writer I referred to earlier puts it this way, ‘I think the best defence against Arianism is real, personal encounter with the risen Christ, and attentive participation in a worshipping community. Meeting Jesus and reflecting together with others on what he has accomplished for us makes us want to worship him. It is hard to worship a mere man. In Christ, God has come to do for me what I could never do for myself. He fully bridges the chasm that separated us, died to deal with my sins and brought me back to himself. My natural instinct was to praise him, and to worship him in the company of others from whom I could learn. I found as a result that I had no problem with the deity of Christ. I can’t pretend that I can get my mind fully around the doctrine. But I believe it.’

One prayer of St Athanasius has found its way into A Prayer Book for Australia (p. 408): *Almighty God, who wonderfully created us in your own image and yet more wonderfully restored us in your Son, Jesus Christ, mercifully grant that, as he came to share our humanity, so we may be partakers in his divine glory...*

I Quash, B & Ward, M eds. (2007) *Heresies and how to avoid them: why it matters what Christians believe*, SPCK.



Let the Brotherhood of St Laurence find a place for your skills and energy in one of their many programs.

Volunteer with the Brotherhood of St Laurence

The Brotherhood of St Laurence provides a lot of services that need the contribution of volunteers, not just helping out in community stores. Volunteers are needed to support young people and families, to contribute to the lives of the elderly or those with special needs, to work with refugees and others from culturally different backgrounds, or help with advocacy or research.

You don’t need to work out exactly what is needed – they will match your skills to suitable

volunteer roles. Volunteers are protected by the Brotherhood’s procedures and safe workplace practices.

So if you’d like to get involved and do more but are not sure how you can help, give them a call on **9483 1390** or view current volunteer opportunities, at

www.bsl.org.au/volunteer

+ Daisy and Ruby + 1887

Jenifer Watson shares another extract from the diaries of her grandmother, Ethel Moodie Heddle.

My mother and our new little brother, Jack, were sent off to Mentone for a "change of air". for some unknown reason I [Ethel] was allowed to go with them.

When mother, little Jack and I were all basking on the beach we were startled to see cousin George. He was, as usual, dressed in his city black coat and striped trousers and bowler hat, always so neat and trim. He walked towards us, looking very grave. My mother at once panicked. "Oh George! Is anything wrong?" Dear old George tried to comfort her. "There, there, Mary. Maybe nothing to worry about, but one of your little girls is sick. Edward is staying with her, so I offered to come for you. We knew you would like to be home."

Hastily we left. When almost home, poor Mother, in a dither of worry, said, "Tell me, George, what is it?" "Now, Mary, everything is going to be all right. Edward has the doctor there, and everything is being taken care of. Just in case it is something infectious Sophie has taken the other children to your home."

Only afterwards did we realise to the full the goodness of George and Sophie. My poor little sister, Daisy, died that night. Ruby had been with her, and she and I were sent to Lilydale, to Auntie's care. Unfortunately both Ruby and I developed the then deadly diphtheria and Ruby died, two such lovely little girls. My father adored them and called them his "Heavenly twins". A little silver child's spoon engraved "Ruby" is still treasured by the family to the present day.

And from Jenifer

The Baby Health Centre was a room at the back of the courthouse in our country town. My earliest memory of it is the day our parents took us there for diphtheria immunisation. It was pure bedlam, with dozens of toddlers running around screaming, the nurse and the mothers running around after them. My parents had evidently predicted this, as they had contrived methods of controlling our

behaviour. Mum promised us Eskimo Pies if we were "good". Dad took us into the court (not in session) and pointed out the mysteries of the stiff and formal room.

A few years later, when I was at primary school, a little girl I knew was away from school. I heard the neighbours talking. "It" was very serious and little Evelyn had "it" now. I heard no more of little Evelyn and she never returned to school.

There are now parents refusing their children God's life-saving gift of immunisation. Do they have a valid reason? When it is a matter of life or possible death who should have the final word? The parents or the community? A person I asked that of said "The parents. Otherwise you have a communist state where nobody has freedom." But when there was a search for a missing child by the Darebin Creek that same person said "Someone should have intervened the first time an ambulance was called to the home."

How do we, as a community, preserve lives without taking away parental rights? And are vaccines safe?

'How do we, as a community, preserve lives without taking away parental rights?'



<http://www.catholictradition.org/Angels/guardians-feast.htm>

Prayer for a sick child

Lord Jesus Christ, Good Shepherd of the sheep, you gather the lambs in your arms and carry them in your bosom: We commend to your loving care this child. Relieve *his(her)* pain, guard *him* from all danger, restore to *him* your gifts of gladness and strength, and raise *him* up to a life of service to you. Hear us, we pray, for your dear Name's sake. *Amen.*

The Book of Common Prayer



At the hospital for sick children, Melbourne in the late nineteenth century

Alamy.com/

Saints Alive

Letter from Indonesia

Our regular film reviewer, Bruce Clezy, was not able to send a review for this issue, but sends this letter instead



Hello All Saints,
Greetings from Jakarta where I am living and working for eight months. I have been posted here to work as a palliative care nurse and I am working with marginal communities throughout the city. The work is challenging but deeply rewarding because palliative care does not exist here as yet. People are scared of death, and even more scared of pain medications. This is an unfortunate legacy of Indonesia's war on drugs. Thousands of people are needlessly dying in pain, all over Indonesia, everyday. It is good to be working with an organisation which is trying to change this.

I will talk more about my work next issue, but the big news is that Evan, my son, visited last week for a quick visit. He was returning home after two months in Europe where he lived in Berlin and London. As you can imagine we were just thrilled to see each other and spent the four days, laughing, sight-seeing, and catching up on all our news. He is very well and had a great time. He is now only 19 but maturing very quickly. So that he could see my workplace, last Monday we made a cake together and took it into work. (No-bake Mango and Lime Cheesecake). In the photo you can see us both along with my colleagues: such a passionate and young team of nurses. I think of you all often and look forward to seeing you again next year, Love, Bruce.

There is a tiny still-standing but long closed railway station on the lonely plains of western Victoria south of Ararat. Rob passed through there on a Railfan trip one afternoon in 2013 and was struck by the remoteness of the area.

Pura Pura

In quiet solitude here on the plain
Struck by wind and western rain
On the barrenness of endless waving grass
Pura Pura stands with time to pass.
With mountains distant and plains all round
Of noisy joyous birdlife, and at times nary a sound
With chilling stillness of the fog at dawn
Then bursting sunlight glows further in the morn.
Of distant trains with headlights bright
That rush along past in full flight
Of receding sounds and silence coming back to fall
Pura Pura has been there and seen it all



Pura Pura Railway station

Photograph by Adam Serena www.flickr.com/photos

—Rob Lane

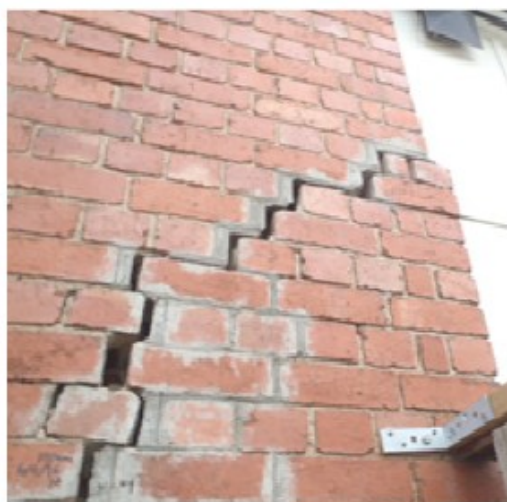
From the Wardens

Betty Reay, Arnaud Gallois, Alma Ryrie-Jones

You will have noticed a few improvements around, including the long-overdue replacement of old linoleum flooring in the meeting room kitchen. Before changing the flooring we were careful to check the old linoleum for asbestos backing but there was none present. Unfortunately asbestos backing was detected in the workroom and office of the BSL Community Store, so we have had to remove the flooring and install new carpet in these areas, to ensure a safe working environment for all. The shop building is showing its age, and with the guidance of a structural engineer we will shortly need to carry out works to demolish and rebuild the north eastern corner of the shop, where the bluestone foundations have moved, leading to cracks in the brick structure. Although this and other works will be expensive and will lead to some disruption to the shop's business, they are necessary and will be well worth it in the longer term. Investing in the maintenance and safety of this building is important to our partnership with the Brotherhood of St Laurence.

We are also commissioning a full review of drainage on the site, both sewerage and stormwater, to get at the underlying causes of any subsidence or other building movement, and will then need to address any issues.

We have received letters of thanks from Anglicare Victoria for our regular contributions to their food cupboard in Preston, and for our donation of food and groceries from Harvest Festival day. As part of its advocacy for the poor and disadvantaged, Anglicare conducts research each year on housing affordability – an essential measure of disadvantage, because a lack of housing makes it very difficult for people to gain employment, to look after their health and nutrition, to keep clean and to maintain mental stability. The Anglicare research this year shows that the percentage of Melbourne rentals suitable for households on income support has reached *ZERO per cent*, and that an inflatable mattress on a lounge room floor shared with up to six others, now commands a rent of up to \$170 per week! We ask everyone to increase their contributions to the food basket in the Narthex each week.

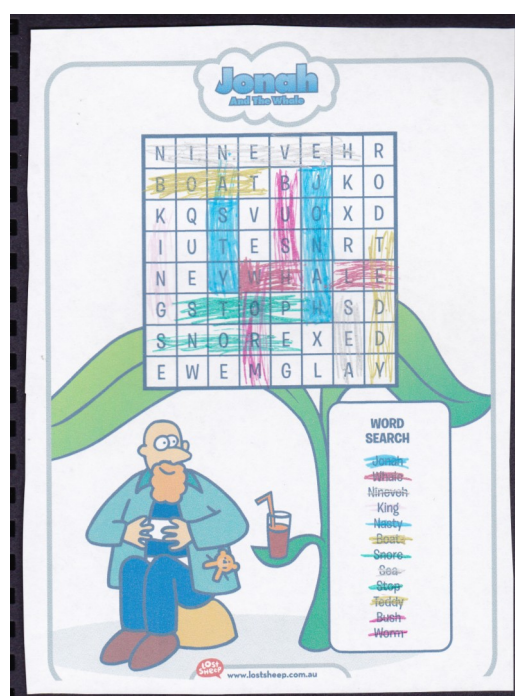
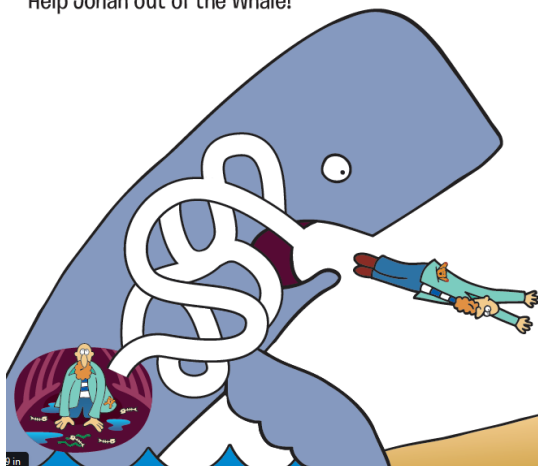


Showing its age: the north east corner of the BSL building

smAll Saints

In the children's group, we enjoyed the story of Jonah, who not only survived a journey inside a whale, but managed to hang on to his teddy bear through the whole ordeal. Those who remember Claire Wildish will be delighted to know that Claire's name appears as a contributing artist to the Lost Sheep publications we are using.

Help Jonah out of the Whale!





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1860 — 2015

*We acknowledge the
Wurundjeri people as the
traditional owners of the land
on which our church was built,
and pay our respects to their
Elders, past and present.*

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 156 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 are developing our relationship with St Philip's Collingwood and St Mark's Fitzroy. We value our partnership 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

Long live democracy

As everybody knows, 'democracy' derives from the Greek word *demos*, meaning the people, with the suffix *-cracy*, meaning 'sausages'. Once again, the people came out for the sausages on federal election day. Those hard working church members who put up the gazebo, fired the barbecue to sizzling point, prepared lots of sandwiches and drinks, wept over the mountain of sliced onions and kept the sausages coming all day, earned for All Saints a profit of more than \$1,100. Unfortunately, the word 'plebiscite' comes from the Latin for 'the common people' and 'uncertain method of voting', so we are not sure when our sausages will next be needed to keep the country running.



Joan and Pamela supporting the democratic principle of 'one man, one vote, one sausage'