



Saints Alive

How does Good King
Wenceslaus like his pizzas?
Deep-pan, crisp and even.

What carol is heard in the
desert?
O camel, ye faithful.

What do you get if you eat
a Christmas decoration?
Tinselitis.

A little girl climbed on
Santa's lap. 'What would
you like for Christmas?' he
asked. There was a pause
while the child stared in
surprise: 'Didn't you get
my email?'

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Northcote
Parish of South Darebin

Volume 2 Number 11

Advent—the coming of the Son of Man

The Venerable Andrew Oddy

The Church's season of Advent is the beginning of our year. It is a penitential season leading up to the celebration of Christmas. Its focus is on the return or 'second' coming of Christ. Our Sunday readings introduce the season to us with a reading from the thirteenth Chapter of the Gospel according to Mark.

The chapter contains a 'farewell address' to the disciples, looking beyond his own death to the future awaiting his disciples, foreseeing their troubles and temptations and offering warnings and encouragement. The chapter is in two parts. The first part, scholars believe, deals with the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple which took place in at the hands of the Roman emperor, Titus, in 70 CE. For the readers of Mark, this event was happening and they were hearing about it (verse 7). As cataclysmic as this event was, the question was how were the believers to respond to it in a world where life seemed to be going on in much the same way?

The second part of the chapter (verses 24–37) takes up the time following the destruction of the Temple. That time will culminate when they will see 'the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory' (verse 26). No details are given as to the timing of this culmination, 'But about that day or hour, no one knows' (verse 32).

Mark's readers will be familiar with the title, *Son of Man*. It first occurs in chapter 2 where Jesus heals the paralysed man, who has been lowered down to him through the roof of the house, with the words, 'your sins are forgiven.' To objectors, he replies, 'the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins' (verse 10). In the same chapter, Jesus is

criticised by the Pharisees as he walks on the Sabbath, plucking and eating grain from the fields, and he responds, 'The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath' (verse 28). Most prominently the title is used in the three predictions of the Passion occurring in the second half of Mark's Gospel. 'The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed and after three days rise again' (8:32, 9:31, 10:33). Finally the title is proclaimed by Jesus at his trial before the High Priest. To the question, 'Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?' Jesus responds, 'I am, and you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power and coming with the clouds of heaven' (14:62).



A Greek icon from 1700 shows Jesus enthroned in glory among the saints and angels, with paradise below

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Icon_second_coming.jpg

Saints Alive

“Advent—the coming of the Son of Man” —continued from page 1

“In times when we have witnessed great failures in the Church...this is an assurance to us who are called to live as the recipients of the knowledge that Mark’s gospel presents”

The title occurs in the Book of Daniel. In the second part of that book, Daniel receives visions in dreams. They are in lurid images of beasts which contest with and destroy each other in great violence. (Students of the book see these as references to the major world powers at the time of the writing of the book.) These visions conclude with this passage:

...and behold with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man and he came to the Ancient of days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and kingdom that all nations and peoples and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

Mark’s Gospel claims this ultimate accolade, the centre of God’s action, determining the world and its nations and politics, and applying it to Jesus who lived, suffered, died and was raised for us. This is very much the centre of our thinking at Advent.

Mark’s Chapter 13 goes on to describe the church in the meantime. Jesus gives an illustration of a man going on a journey, leaving his servants, especially the doorkeeper, to be about their duties until he returns. ‘Watch therefore,’ he says, ‘for you do not know the hour when the master of the house will come, in the evening, at midnight, at cock-crow or in the morning — lest he come suddenly and find you asleep (verses 35,37). The story has echoes of the account of Jesus’ Passion which will follow in Chapter 14. The Last Supper will oc-

cur in the evening when one of the disciples will determine to betray Jesus. The events in the garden of Gethsemane, when the disciple will indeed fall asleep, the arrest and the trial, occur in the middle of the night. The betrayal of Jesus by Peter will occur at cock-crow. The Roman trial will take place in the morning. At each of these times, the disciples will fail in their calling.

Francis Maloney, a noted Melbourne scholar, sees this as a word of encouragement to the faithful. He writes: ‘the possibility of failure does not lessen Jesus’ insistence that the disciples be what they were appointed to be: his chosen ones who do what he has done. Mark is concerned with the whole demeanour of the whole Church that must await the future God will bring.’

In times when we have witnessed great failures in the Church and when we are living in a Church which has been buffeted by enormous changes in our lifetime, this is an assurance to us who are called to live, as the recipients of the knowledge that Mark’s gospel presents: the one who suffered, died and rose for us holds the answer not just to our peace but to the peace of the whole of God’s creation. Jesus says: ‘then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory.’

In case Advent gets swallowed up in hectic preparations for Christmas, I offer this reflection from the Gospel which we will read throughout 2018.



The Brotherhood works to give asylum seekers a chance

Given the Chance for Asylum Seekers is a Brotherhood of St Laurence employment program for asylum seekers with bridging visas living in Melbourne.

Supported by a private philanthropist, the program aims to assist asylum seekers to get into (and stay in) the workforce. The program also works with employers to procure jobs and training opportunities, while advocating for changes to government policies.

The Given the Chance for Asylum Seekers program has had success in getting many individual asylum seekers into their first jobs. However, it stands out as an exception in a landscape of constrained service access and

restrictive visas. Advocacy efforts continue to address the government policies and employer practices that prevent others from achieving sustainable employment and economic security.

This is one of many programs the Brotherhood of St Laurence supports and promotes, as one of our most effective social justice organisations. Keep donating to our own Brotherhood Store, and don’t forget to shop there.

The Brotherhood appreciates the donation of quality furniture and whitegoods and will collect them from you. To have large items picked up, phone 1300DONATE (1300 366 283)

The Island State

Jenifer Watson recalls her experience of touring Tasmania

After boarding 'The Spirit of Tasmania' at Port Melbourne and settling into my cabin, I spent most of the evening out on deck watching the lights of Melbourne glide past and disappear into the distance as the boat crept down the bay and through the heads, and across the rip and into Bass Strait.

Suddenly I realised I had stayed on deck too long! It was after 11 pm when I went below deck. We were late leaving Port Melbourne owing to the amount of traffic in the shipping lane.

'The Spirit' was also late getting into Devonport in the morning. I used the extra time to again go out on deck, with others, and watch Tasmania approaching. I met several Tasmanians returning home, and they pointed things out to me, such as the two streams of smoke drifting upwards in the distance. No need to worry. It is not a bushfire: it is coming from the timber mills, and is controlled. The first view of Tasmania from Bass Strait is predominantly one of mountains.

We disembarked in Devonport, collected our luggage and headed for the waiting tour bus, which left immediately for Launceston and Deloraine.

The farming area around the Mersey River looks green and lush at first glance, but wait! The smoke of industry still wafts through. Also, this is an opium growing area! The producer of the best opium crop each year wins a Mercedes Benz car from DHA.

We pass apple orchards and a pine plantation. A sign by the road reads: 'Quiet. Trees Growing.' After pine has been harvested, the replanting is of bluegum, but there are still a few Radiata pine from seeds of the previous crop. The bus takes a nose-dive down a very steep hill, and we are in Launceston, first settled by Paterson in 1804. We headed for the gorge.



"This was pure magic, drifting through the rhododendrons, high above the gorge"



The scenic chairlift at Launceston, Tasmania

Photos by Jenifer Watson

I wish I had time to walk the area but, sadly, our time is limited and can only accommodate a return trip to the chairlift across the gorge. This was pure magic, drifting through the rhododendrons, high above the gorge with the chair swaying as it swung past a variety of other trees and shrubs, whose perfumes permeated the valley.

We were greeted by some beautiful peacocks at our brief stop on the other side of the gorge, then, after the flight back, we landed near our bus and came back to earth.

Saints Alive

Over the rainbow—reflections on the Postal Survey

Fr Ken Cahill

Following the passing of the legislation to amend the definitions in the Marriage Act last week, I have had a variety of reactions to the whole process.

“Maybe there was some value in putting us through all that uncertainty and exposing some of our people to such hatred, fear and intolerance.”

Many of my friends were outraged at the whole notion that the Australian public was being asked to decide about whether a portion of our citizens should have the same rights as other adult people with respect to being able to marry. They were outraged at several different levels and some seriously considered not participating in the poll at all. From the start, the strong push came that no matter what people believed that all should be encouraged to record their vote. It appeared that the government was passing on its responsibility over this issue in a way that has never been done in our political life before. We are required to vote on changes to the Constitution via a referendum, we must elect members of parliament into office (by attending a local sausage sizzle) but we have never before been asked for our opinion on an issue via an informal, non-compulsory postal survey.

Perhaps the stronger part of the outrage was directed to the notion that we could deny to a percentage of our nation that right to be treated equally with regard to who could be married simply based on a person's sexual identity. Additional concern came from the comments made in the early part of the campaign that irrespective of how the public vote went, a number of MPs would vote against the legislation anyway, making it look as if the \$120 million opinion poll could be an expensive exercise in futility.

No matter how much the Prime Minister hoped for and urged a reasonable and respectful dialogue during the campaign, many lesbian and gay people were shocked and traumatised by the level of vehemence and ignorance from some of those on the NO side, especially from the Australian Christian Lobby. The most disappointing aspect of the campaign was not that some people would vote NO but that the reasons given for that NO very often had nothing to do with marriage and were simply a reaction to fear mongering and blatant misinformation.

I woke one morning while on a boat in Ha Long Bay in Vietnam and looked at the rush of postings on my Facebook page that the poll

had succeeded with over 61% voting YES. Many postings recorded relief and personal gratitude to friends, families and all those who supported their right to be able to marry. Many GLBTI people suddenly felt included and valued in Australian society. There were many public celebrations that night in our major cities.

Of course it was not until last week that the parliament passed the appropriate legislation to make this a reality. The action taking place on the floor of the House of Representatives was wonderfully and joyfully overtaken by the response in the visitor's gallery upstairs with spontaneous song. This highlighted the significance of the impact of this legislative change for many in the GLBTI community. For many there was great relief and the feeling that their relationships finally were being validated.

I later heard the PM's response that this was a vote that had involved the whole of Australia. I was taken aback at first and reflected that maybe there is some truth and significance in it. I wondered what would have happened if the parliament had acted a year ago and just passed the legislation without having conducted the opinion poll. Would there have been a continuing undercurrent and undermining from those who opposed the notion of marriage equality that the opinion poll has now put to rest?

Maybe there was some value in putting us through all that uncertainty and exposing some of our people to such hatred, fear and intolerance. Maybe the process brought out into the open light and exposed some of the underlying fears and hateful words that some hold and use about lesbian and gay people.

While in many places Christian people were able to show love, acceptance and their willingness to embrace and include, there was also that hard-faced opposition in some areas which was willing even to spend a million dollars to fund the NO campaign and to exclude and show great intolerance.

From all accounts the public discussion about marriage may have caused an increase in the number of people, who previously had not thought about being married, now deciding to marry. Every cloud can have a silver lining.

We live in hope.

Diocesan Synod 2017

Laura Tsakmakis

The Synod had one major theme this year – responding to child sexual abuse, and making sure it never happens again. In fact, there was so much work to get through that we sat for an extra day. The picture painted was both positive, in terms of a willingness to prevent wrongdoing, and of some concern at the same time. The Synod overwhelmingly accepted the reforms put to it, but this may result in extra financial and administrative burdens for parishes. The Archbishop noted in his President's Address that an increasing level of professional standards administration and compliance is the 'new normal'. He also flagged that in order to meet projected annual redress payments to victims, there may be sales of land and a possible levy or additional charge on parish assessments.

Legislation made up most of the agenda, with 17 Bills for consideration. As the General Synod had finished sitting just weeks before the Melbourne Synod started, we were presented with the task of deciding whether to adopt all the legislation that had been agreed to by the General Synod, made up of representatives from across the whole of Australia.

There were two Bills passed that amend the Constitution of the Anglican Church of Australia – one extending the jurisdiction of the Special Tribunal, and one relating to how provinces and dioceses are formed. However, these changes must be accepted by a majority of dioceses in Australia, including all metropolitan dioceses, before they come into effect.

Canons are passed by the General Synod and, if they affect the order and good government of a diocese, must be adopted by the individual dioceses before they commence in that jurisdiction. We accepted what had been agreed to at General Synod on the following matters:

- Episcopal Standards (Child Protection)
- Offences
- Holy Orders (Removal of Exercise of Ministry)
- Safe Ministry to Children
- Confessions
- Limitation Periods for the Special Tribunal
- Canon concerning services.

The Child Protection Canon arose as a result of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, which couldn't understand why there wasn't just one set of standards across Australia. This canon creates additional classes of examinable conduct and includes former, as well as current, Diocesan bishops, and enhances the procedures by which those matters are handled. It also creates a uniform approach across the national church.

The Safe Ministry to Children Canon will commence on or before 1 July 2018. The commencement has been

delayed to allow the diocese and parishes time to implement. This is where there will be an increase in the administrative burden for parishes. It will require screening of lay volunteers who work with children and two character references for each. Parishes need to comply with the Child Safe Standards and there will be a reportable conduct scheme. In introducing this legislation, it is a sign that the church wants to go above and beyond what the law requires.

One of the greatest divisions during the session came during debate of the amendment to the Confessions Canon. This Canon allows an ordained minister to report the commission of a criminal act involving child abuse that is reported to them in confession. Many clergy felt that the confidentiality of the confessional should remain absolute, and also queried why the change only extends to child abuse (and not, for example, murder). However, the amendment passed as most people agreed that child abuse must be acted upon.

Closer to home, the Synod passed a Bill to prevent both members of a marriage or domestic partnership being part of a Parish Council at the same time. This Bill created significant debate for a number of reasons and people felt strongly on both ends of the spectrum – some thought it didn't go far enough, and should extend to all family members, and others thought it an insult that the Church does not consider them capable of thinking and acting independently of their spouse. It was noted that this is another hurdle for some smaller parishes who might not have many people willing or able to be part of the Parish Council, but fortunately the Archbishop in Council can grant exemptions.

Of the business other than legislation, the Synod carried a motion to support greater access to palliative care in place of the assisted dying legislation that was passed by the Victorian Parliament almost as we were debating it. It was an eye opener to learn that in some countries that have legalised euthanasia, most requests stem from psychological reasons rather than physical pain. We agreed on the need to keep hope, value every life, and never let people feel they have become a burden to their family, friends or society.

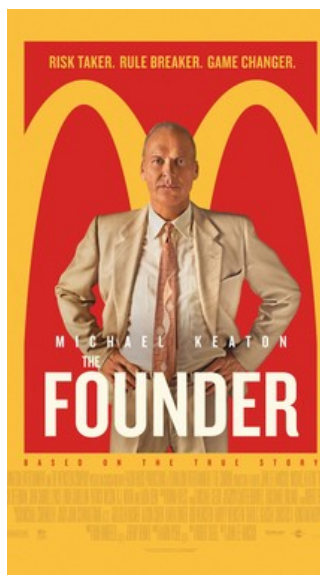
Synod was once again a very intense few days, but definitely worth the late nights to engage in such an important forum. This report only includes a small summary of the vast quantity of detail that we discussed, but is intended to cover what I felt were the most important details. I am always happy to discuss these matters further with anyone who might be interested.

Saints Alive

BRUCE
CLEZY'S FILM
REVIEW



"McDonald's can be the new American church. Feeding bodies and feeding souls, and it ain't just open on Sundays, boys."



Michael Keaton as 'the founder'. Directed by John Lee Hancock, released in 2016 by The Weinstein Company

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

On capitalism and Christianity—*The Founder* (2016)

On first viewing, *The Founder* does not seem to be a particularly religious movie. It's a simple tale, the story of one man and his desire to make a small, family-owned business go national. It's a biographical film, an origin myth, one based on a true story. Yet at its heart lie some deeply disturbing home truths; truths worth contemplating at this time of year.

The Founder tells a story of the beginnings of McDonalds, that quintessential American restaurant chain, and it's not so charismatic founder, Ray Kroc. The film opens in 1950s America, and Kroc (Michael Keaton) is a struggling gadget seller, trying to make his fortune by selling milkshake makers door to door. Kroc's luck changes when he suddenly receives an order for multiple machines from 'McDonalds', a small hamburger stand in San Bernadino, California. The restaurant is run by two folksy brothers named Dick and Mac McDonald (Nick Offerman and John Carroll Lynch) who have designed a system of food preparation where by increasing supply they effectively stimulate demand. There is no table service. Plates and cutlery have all been replaced by disposable cups and bags. The burgers and fries are all made with a repetition and precision that would make Henry Ford proud.

What follows is Kroc's tale of how he turns this small hamburger stand into the global behemoth that we all know today. Along the way, Kroc essentially swindles the McDonald brothers, dumps his first wife (Laura Dern), steals his second and, by the end of the movie, comes to realise that he is not in the business of selling burgers but rather in the business of selling real estate. Not quite your average rags to riches story that we have come to expect from a Hollywood movie.

Critically, *The Founder* has received mixed reviews. Simran Hans writing in *The Guardian*, for example, calls the movie a 'bland fast food' biopic that offers a 'sanitized and sympathetic take on the burger chain's beginnings'. Peter Bradshaw, also writing in *The Guardian*, calls the movie 'absorbing and unexpectedly' subtle, noting the movie's skilful manipulation of the viewer who, at first, is encouraged to identify with a hero who ultimately turns out to be so overwhelming distasteful. This, as Tim Lott points out, is quite a radical step for a Hollywood movie where traditional narrative structures have dictated, almost since time began, that we must empathise with heroes and not dismiss them.

For me, however, what is so exciting about this movie is not the position of the central character, but rather how the movie carefully articulates the insidious links between Christianity and consumerism in late twentieth-century capitalism. In a significant monologue towards *The Founder's* beginning, for example, Kroc sets out his vision of the burger chain to its present owners and creators, the McDonald brothers:

I drove through a lot of towns...A lot of small towns... And they all had two things in common... They had a courthouse and they had a church. On top of the church you got a cross; and on top of the courthouse they'd have a flag. Flags, crosses; crosses, flags. Driving around I just cannot stop thinking about this tremendous restaurant. Now at the risk of sounding blasphemous...forgive me... those arches have a lot in common with those buildings. Now a building with a cross on top...what is that? It's a gathering place where decent, wholesome people come together and they, they share values, protected by that American flag. It could be said that, that beautiful building flanked by those arches...signifies more or less the same thing. It doesn't just say 'Delicious hamburgers inside!' They signify family. It signifies community. It's a place where Americans come together to break bread. I am telling you...McDonald's can be the new American church. Feeding bodies and feeding souls, and it ain't just open on Sundays boys. It's open seven days a week. Crosses...flags...arches.

This is truly an astounding proposition for a Hollywood movie to be propounding. For what *The Founder* suggests is that Christianity, just like the law and the state, is a driving force for consumption and corporate greed.

Kroc's thesis would seem to make a lot of sense. Christmas and Easter, two major Christian events of the calendar year, drive retail sales throughout most of the western world. Indeed even 'the calendar year' is a force for retail gorging, with New Year's Day (essentially another Christian festival) heralding the advent of 'January Sales'. Christianity, at least in its modern utterance, drives consumption. We are its pump-house. So in this time of giving, of 'Joy to the World' and of festive cheer, it is worth remembering that our Christmas traditions are not quite as wholesome and innocent as we might like to believe. Unfortunately, they have been co-opted by a much more sinister and darker project, one that we might like to challenge if we truly wish to see 'Peace on Earth'.

What does Christmas mean to me?

Rob Lane

Christmas was always a bothersome event for me from around the time of my ninth birthday. As the years went on I had no care for what it stood for. Indeed, Christmas 1986 I had all to myself. Not interested in its true meaning, I indulged in an occasion of total aloofness. Well, here I am thirty-one years later and I await eagerly the Season of Advent, with the joyous culmination of Christmas Day, the celebration of the birth of our Saviour. And it is a celebration. Take the word 'Christmas', or Christ-mas. The Mass or celebrated recognition of the birth of Christ.

So what does Christmas mean to me now in 2017? It means that there is a real hope of Joy and Love through Christ, and as I write this I feel that Joy. However, I see a world that has yet to experience the real Joy of Christmas. I urge all of you who read this to pray at Christmas that everyone can come to know the true meaning of the Joy of Christmas. From the bare bones of just giving hope to one another, and accepting the love of each other, of moments of togetherness with family and friends, and moments of solitude with Christ. These are the special moments of Christmas. Christmas to me is all these things, and my real hope is through Christ that more people can find these moments the most important part of Christmas.



<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Giotto>

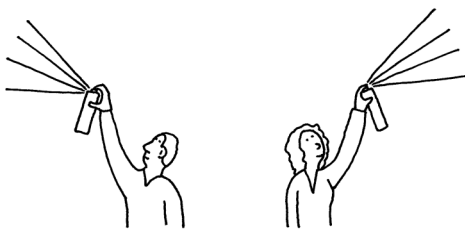
So I don't mind receiving gifts at Christmas (and who does?) the food, tinsel, carols and so on. Christmas Day is always looked forward to by me. But the celebration, the acknowledgement of the birth of our Saviour, is the very crux of this day. May it be for you also, as we all ponder Christ, and rest in his presence, with love hope and peace.

Lord, I have given up my pride and turned away from my arrogance. I am not concerned with great matters or with subjects too difficult for me. Instead, I am content and at peace as a child lies quietly in its mother's arms. So my heart is quiet within me. Psalm 13:1-2

May we all share that peace at Christmas. May you all have a joyous and peaceful Christmas, and may the Lord be with you all.

CHURCH CLEANING

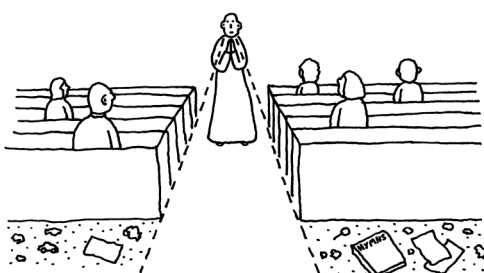
HOW TO MAKE IT SEEM AS IF YOU HAVE DONE A GOOD JOB



SPRAY SOME POLISH IN THE AIR TO
GIVE THE REQUIRED AROMA



MAKE FULL USE OF LOOSE CARPETS



DO THE BITS THE VICAR CAN SEE



IF IN DOUBT: PUT IT IN THE VESTRY

Cartoon by Dave Walker
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1860 — 2017

*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 157 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. In practising our faith here, we acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which the church is built, and respect their spiritual connection to country.

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. We look for opportunities to support reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians and activity oppose racism, sexism and another forms of discrimination.

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 active participants in ecumenical exchange and inter-faith activity. We value our relationship with St Philip's Collingwood and St Mark's Fitzroy. We view our partnership with the Brotherhood of St Laurence as an essential part of our mission. We seek to reduce our environmental footprint through energy conservation and sustainable practices.

allsaintsnorthcote.org.au

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

Gardening God's Way

Plant three rows of peas:

Peace of mind
Peace of heart
Peace of soul



Plant four rows of lettuce:

Lettuce be faithful
Lettuce be kind
Lettuce be patient
Lettuce really love on another



Plant four rows of squash:

Squash gossip
Squash indifference
Squash grumbling
Squash selfishness



No garden is without turnips:

Turnip for meetings
Turnip for service
Turnip to help one another



Finally, our garden must have thyme:

Thyme for each other
Thyme for family
Thyme for friends



Water freely with patience and cultivate with love. There is much fruit in your garden because you reap what you sow.

Contributed by Aileen, author unknown

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