



"Dear Santa, Please text my Dad. He has my whole list."

"Dear Santa, Sorry for what I did in the past, and thanks for the Christmas letter, I really like it. But what I want for Christmas is 53 billion dollars."

"Dear Santa, How are you? I'm good. Here is what I want for Christmas: http://www.amazon.com/dp/B0032HF66M/ref=sr_1_1=UTF8&qid=141027"

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Saints Alive

Newsletter of All Saints Anglican Church
Northcote
Parish of South Darebin

Volume 2 Number 14

Vicar's message at Christmas

The Venerable Andrew Oddy

Let me commence by extending to you the best wishes for a great celebration of Christmas in 2018. As you will be aware, I must be away from the churches this Christmas following surgery in early December. My thoughts will be with you nonetheless.

I have always been struck by the introduction to the Service of Lessons and Carols which takes place in our churches and is telecast from King's College, Cambridge University each year. The introduction concludes with an encouragement to pray in these terms:

...and because this of all things would rejoice his heart, let us remember in his name the poor and helpless, the cold, the hungry and the oppressed, the sick and those that mourn, the aged and the little children...

It seems such a strong statement, reciting, as it were, the thoughts of God himself. It picks up the themes which surround the narratives of the birth of Jesus, especially as they are found in the Gospel of Luke. In Luke's account are found three songs (canticles) which used to be familiar to Anglicans. as they occurred in the regular Sunday services of Morning and Evening Prayer. They are the Song of Zechariah (Benedictus) (Lk 1:68-79), the Song of Mary (Magnificat) (Lk 1:47-55) and the Song of Simeon (Nunc dimittis) (Lk 2:29-35).

Each of these songs is found in the mouths of the poor and faithful and each speaks of the dawning of a new time when God would



Pope Francis welcomes the unemployed and poor to dine with him at the Vatican, November 2017
tribuneindia.com

recognise their faithfulness over those who held them in poverty and powerlessness. The Magnificat includes the lines:

[God] has regarded the lowliness of his handmaiden, ...He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts, ...He has put down the mighty from their thrones and exalted the humble and meek.

The Benedictus includes the lines:

That we, being delivered out of the hands of those our enemies might serve him without fear... Through the tender mercy of our God, whereby the dayspring from on high has visited us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and guide our feet into the way of peace

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Vicar's message — continued from page 1

“...an emphasis on the poor,...the lonely and unloved,...always has a place in any celebration of Christmas.”

These songs have been the subject of much study over the centuries. For much of this time they were regarded as the composition of those to whom they are attributed in the narrative. However, it is now seen as unlikely that such finished poetry could be composed on the spot by ordinary people. In addition, the *Song of Mary* was seen by scholars to be more relevant to the situation of Elizabeth who was blessed with a child after the many years she was barren, until the Pontifical Biblical Commission declared it to be Mary's Song in 1912!

The most detailed work on the birth narratives is a massive work entitled *The Birth of the Messiah*, by Raymond Brown, an American Catholic scholar (Double Day, NY, 1977). Brown traces the Songs of the early chapters in Luke's Gospel to a community which had its origins in the period 200 BCE to 100 CE. This group grew up in relation to the disputes surrounding the conquest of the Holy Land by the Greek rulers following the reign of Alexander the Great. The group was fiercely loyal to the Temple and resistant to any suggestion of the appointment of the High Priest by the governing Greek authorities. The group insisted on complete dependence on God for victory. Known by the term *Anawim* which means 'the poor ones', Brown suggests that some converts from this group were amongst the earliest disciples of Jesus. The term *Anawim* came to refer to those who could not trust in their

own strength but had to rely on utter confidence in God.

For this group, those to whom the Songs are attributed embodied the piety of the *Anawim*. Mary was the handmaid of the Lord, obedient to his word, believing in the fulfilment of that word to fill her womb with the presence of the Messiah and make her blessed among women. Zechariah was an upright Temple priest who, along with his wife, blamelessly observed all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord. Their disgrace consisted in the barrenness of Elizabeth and a childless old age, yet the Lord took away this disgrace and gave them a new son. Simeon was upright and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel; this consolation came to him when he saw the Lord's Messiah brought into the Temple court.

Brown suggests that there is evidence that these 'poor ones' belonged to the Christian Community in Jerusalem when, in its earliest times, possessions were sold so that funds could be given to the needy (Acts 2:43–47). Luke records the early worshippers as being frequent attenders at the Temple also.

It is through the influence of such a group that an emphasis on the poor, needy, helpless, cold, hungry, oppressed, those who mourn, the lonely and unloved, the aged and the little children, always has a place in any celebration of Christmas.



The Brotherhood's David Scott School

The Brotherhood of St Laurence operates the David Scott School, a new school in Frankston set up to offer support and specialist assistance for disadvantaged kids who need help in completing school and gaining skills to help them make the transition to work or further study. The school is connected to other youth services operated by the Brotherhood, including vocational guidance, vocational programs, work experience opportunities, supportive mentors and the local community. The school is experiencing high demand for places and is achieving outstanding completion

rates. Small class sizes, extra support workers, workplacements and counsellors are all part of helping students overcome barriers that have held them back in the past and caused them to disengage from school or miss out on essential learning. This is just one of many aspects of the Brotherhood's work, and we continue to support this work through the All Saints Community Store.

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)

This shall be a sign

In November we held a community barbeque at the Walker Street Housing Estate in support of our neighbours, and to celebrate the unveiling of our new signs about public housing. One of the faces on our sign belongs to our friend and neighbour Eileen, whose story is presented below.



EILEEN ARTMANN

By Vishnu Hazell, Darebin Community Friends of Public Housing

Eileen grew up in the small rural Victorian town of St Arnaud and it was here she first became aware of public housing. Eileen is a resident now at the Walker Street Public Housing estate in Northcote, which has been her home for forty years.

In July 1976, her marriage failed and she had to move to a private rental flat with her two children. One was in Kindergarten and the other in Primary School. After a couple of years, a change of landlord, and re-sale of the block, the rent was increased substantially, making it unaffordable. It was then she had to apply for public housing. Eileen moved into public housing in October 1978.

When applying for public housing she was working part-time which meant she would have to pay rent at a higher rate, but she says "Working allowed me to stay in touch with the world, and importantly, grow with my children. Public housing gave us security." In the early days Eileen recalls living week by week, "I would often empty my purse of a few brown coins, each payday. I would say with



Photo: Brett Scapin Photography

relief, I made it." Eileen spent over fifteen years working in a metal trades business in Alphington. A change of management saw her move on to work with a home nursing service in Brunswick, and later an Aged Care Hostel in Hawthorn until retirement.

Though times were tough financially and bringing up the children alone had its challenges there were many benefits to living in public housing that sustained Eileen. She sees one of the biggest benefits as the sense of community that grows between people living in close proximity to one another for long periods of time. She has felt extremely safe and secure.

Public housing gave Eileen the agency to raise her kids knowing they would have a secure and supportive upbringing and promising futures. Her daughter has worked for almost 24 years at the University of Melbourne and her son is on a five year contract with RMIT University. "I take pride in the fact that I was able to see my children educated and, on their own terms, go on to University. They are now living, and standing on their own two feet in the wider world. I made it!" she exclaims. "Public housing made this possible. It was, and still is, a vital need for me."

"Working allowed me to stay in touch with the world, and importantly, grow with my children. Public housing gave us security."

Saints Alive

The emerald isle

Jenifer Watson recalls the ups and downs of a visit to Ireland

*"In return for risking
their lives in this way
they are reputed to
receive the gift of
eloquence. I weighed up
the pros and cons..."*

I spent a few days in London with my English friend Tilley, after which she and her cab-driver neighbor took me to Heathrow airport, where I boarded a plane to Dublin. When checking in my luggage, the attendant said 'Is this all your luggage, or do you have any more bags?' I replied, 'This is all. She's not coming with me.' By the reaction around me, I knew this could not be passed off as some obscure nuance of the English language as used in Australia.

The airport was very busy and the plane had to wait in a queue, so much so that I thought we were going to run into the big plane in front.

However, we reached Dublin safely and I was picked up by a taxi. The driver obligingly pointed out landmarks such as the Liffey River, which he said was 'a miserable little stream'. The spire of Dublin, M2, is also known as 'the Stiletto in the Ghetto'. I saw where they play 'poor man's polo' – on bicycles. I learned a little of the Irish language: *Shawnsha* = Cheers. Sometimes the plural seems unrelated to the singular in Irish: *Bhean* is 'lady', singular, but *mban* is plural. *Fear* is plural of 'far' and *floy* = men. I learned that the state harp faces in the opposite direction to the Guinness harp, and that *Hibernia* means 'the land of perpetual winter'.

On Sunday I went to find the Church of Ireland, 'England' being a dirty word in Eire. The large 'Christ Church' near the hotel where I was staying was Bulgarian Orthodox. I went there and asked, but the old woman at the door, with her begging cup, was shouting out blessings and curses (mostly curses), and that was all I got there. I saw some ladies walking past and asked them. They were going to the Methodist Church and invited me to join them, which I did. There were Church of Ireland ('Anglican' to us) people there who told me they could not keep up the cost of maintaining the two very large churches in Dublin, but they still owned them and both were rented out to Orthodox communities.

On Tuesday I went to the Irish National Stud and saw some top racehorses, including a Melbourne Cup winner, now retired, and then went on to Kilkenny. *Kil* in front of a word means 'church' (in Scotland the same word is *kirk*).

I travelled through very green country to Dungarvin, and took photos of the marvellous mountains standing out against a very blue sky, in the best sunny weather they have ever had. I passed through Cork (or *Corque*) and Youghal, with its quaint old buildings, and on to Blarney Castle, where I climbed up the tiny, narrow, tapering stairs of the circular stairway to the top of the castle, where people were being lowered precariously down to kiss the Blarney Stone. In return for risking their lives in this way they are reputed to receive the gift of eloquence.

I weighed up the pros and cons, thinking:

- Most of the people I have spoken to in Ireland are already fairly eloquent.
- Do people actually survive a fall here?
- There is a good chance of picking up an infection from the Blarney Stone.
- Maybe I don't want eloquence. Perhaps the pen is mightier than the word.

Suddenly I found I had a cold sore on my lip (sent by St Patrick?), so I did not kiss the Blarney Stone, and did not pass it on.

I learned a lot about Irish culture and local history. *Slane* is a three-sided spade used in the past to cut peat. Killorgan has a festival honouring billy-goats, which warned the town of the approach of Cromwell. At Sneem I wandered off to the river and saw evidence of volcanic eruption some time in the far distant past, but visible forever where it has eaten into the hard rock, streamlets reaching out like fingers towards the river.

I was interested to see the O'Brien family's beautiful green farmland. My first-fleet ancestor was Thomas O'Brien. He was not a convict but a marine. His name is now being used by a brewery in its advertising.



Celtic symbols

This design from a scarf Jenny brought back from Ireland is typical of Celtic symbolism for eternity

The emerald isle—continued

I saw a stone plaque to Charles de Gaulle, who used to come to Ireland for rest and recreation. It is the only place in the Ireland with a gallstone. I experienced the scenic 'Ring of Kerry', where the mountain range drops down to far distant valleys. I found it rather frightening being in a large bus, whizzing around a narrow winding road, with a long drop beside me, and lakes at the faraway bottom. We stopped at a very green rest area where there were buskers trying to earn a living on the roadside. They were playing harps and other Irish instruments. We passed Shannon airport, from which the US Army transported troops to Iraq, but which they were not allowed to use for transporting prisoners of war.

As the longest day of the year bloomed, we passed from Eire to Northern Ireland at the city of Derry-stroke-Londonderry. The patriotic Irish believe it should be 'Derry', as it was long ago. Those of English heritage prefer 'Londonderry'. The road signs have both names, with a stroke in between. Derry gives the impression of being a quaint old town, with very old buildings. One of the first things you notice are the walls – yes, Londonderry hides behind its walls. The town is fairly peaceful now, unlike Belfast, but obviously it has not always been so.

The day after I left Derry, I took the bus to the Giant's Causeway, passing through Coleraine. If you go to Ireland, the Giant's Causeway is the 'must do', the absolute highlight in the whole of Ireland. It is the remains of an ancient petrified forest. There are local myths about the giant who lived there long ago, in prehistoric mythic time. This massive giant used the causeway to cross from Ireland to Scotland, according to legend.

I spent the night after exploring the area at the seventeenth-century Ballygally Castle, in one of the turret rooms. It was rumoured to be haunted, although if it was I think it may have been by the thousands of spiders that have been breeding there for all those centuries. Next day I headed for Larne, and onto a ferry for Scotland, avoiding Belfast altogether.

Some small things I noticed repeated all around Ireland were blocks of flats and terraces built to exactly the same plan, with each door painted in a different, bright colour. I was told this was so the husbands could find their way home after an evening at the pub. After centuries of poverty, things changed. A few years back Irish workers began to earn a livable wage. They started building large houses in country areas. The economic decline following the 'Celtic Tiger' boom period means that many of these houses are now standing empty because workers are unable to travel that far to work.



Above: Jenny is dwarfed by the Giant's Causeway, and underwhelmed by a museum which she mistook for a public convenience

Saints Alive

Bruce's letter home

Bruce Clezy writes again from Indonesia, where he is working as a volunteer for the United Nations Programme on AIDS

Hello everyone at dear All Saints, I hope you are all well. The recent events in Central Sulawesi have thrown me headlong into helping plan an emergency HIV response. This is an edited version of an email I sent home to friends and family in the first week of October. Thought you might want to read it too:

From our positions of privilege in the west, the threat of the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) to world health has simply been forgotten. HIV is now largely seen as a chronic disease. While not curable, it is treatable, with people with the disease living to a ripe old age! We now have drugs such as antiretroviral treatment (ARVs), post-exposure prophylaxis (PeP), and pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) that can reduce the viral load of an individual so that even if they did have unprotected sex, the virus is not transmitted. This however has bred a certain degree of complacency. We have forgotten what the threat of HIV meant to blood supplies. We have forgotten what it meant for mother to child transmission. We have forgotten what it meant in terms of stigma and discrimination. Can you remember what it was like back in the 1990s?

The continuing threat of HIV and AIDS to global health can clearly be seen when you look at a place like Palu, Tongala and Sigi; the three cities in Central Sulawesi where the disaster hit. Our data shows that there are 1,913 people living with HIV in the area. Roughly 1300 of those have HIV, and 600 of those have AIDS. These are relatively small numbers but what is important to understand is that here, only 320 people are registered as being on antiretroviral treatment. There may well be more. This is extremely poor coverage.

This means that there is a significant part of the population walking around who are

currently infectious, which in turn is of huge significance when a natural disaster strikes. It is significant in terms of infection control (both for health workers and the general population); transfusion supplies (where are you going to get safe blood from to treat all the trauma, pregnancies etc.); for people living with HIV (where do they get their medications from when everything has been swept away?) but also for women and children. In two weeks' time, when all the international media have gone and people are living in camps, this is also when the unsafe sex, gender-based violence, and human trafficking begins. In these conditions, HIV spreads like wildfire.

What's important to remember is that this last issue (internal displaced person camps) is currently the situation in the island of Lombok, which we have all now forgotten about. Exactly three months ago there were multiple, huge earthquakes on the island. There are now over 400,000 people displaced there, with 2,700 displaced person camps. This problem has not gone away, and the government still has to deal with this as it faces the disaster in Palu. Because so many of us are now blasé about HIV and AIDS (even health professionals and health systems), it is vital that preventing HIV becomes an integrated part of the overall emergency response. Health workers need to be reminded that uncontrolled HIV is prevalent in the region; personal protective equipment needs to be distributed (The next time you look at a picture of people being buried count how many people are not wearing gloves!) Transfusion supplies need to be monitored and secured. Condoms need to be distributed, and the rights of people living with HIV need to be protected. The list goes on.

On Wednesday 3 October as the situation became clearer, I had to write a document entitled *Proposed Emergency HIV (Minimum) Response for Palu, Donggala and Sigi, in light of the Earthquake and Tsunami, Central Sulawesi, Republic of Indonesia September 2018*. Little old me! Bruce Clezy from Abbotsford,

Bruce's letter—continued



Bruce at a UNAIDS organised rally in Jakarta

Saya berani means 'I am brave' or 'I dare', and is intended to encourage people to undertake AIDS testing

Victoria! You would not read about it! Fortunately (and you will be relieved to hear) there a set of international guidelines is already published, so I was not quite making it up on the fly. But I did have to do an analysis, make judgments of what was relevant to the current situation, and edit it all down and create a meaningful, brief document that could then be fed into the UN's overall relief operations.

It truly has been a truly amazing week; very humbling—awe inspiring even—when you see how humans can come together in times of crisis. Other highlights include:

- Sitting in the World Health Organisation's 'Situation Room' (yes, it really is called that), and yes it does look a little like rooms of the same name you see in US TV drama series, with lots of video screens.
- Hearing stories from Javanese people who have HIV, who went into the affected areas last weekend to deliver emergency supplies of antiretroviral treatments (they were some of the first people to go into Palu).
- Knowing that we, UNAIDS Indonesia, are one of the few UN agencies incorporating the recommendations of ordinary Indonesians into our response.

- Seeing my words appear in the international humanitarian aid plan (please forgive the conceit, but I am proud of what I have achieved).
- Shedding a few tears now and then, and pushing on.

I will sign off now. Do make a donation if you can. Money does get through despite all the errors we humans make. Remember when you read about Palu, how challenging it is for the Indonesian government. They are still dealing with Lombok (and Bali too). Actually on an interesting side note, part of the reason why the government has been stalling is because of what happened in 2004 with the tsunami in Aceh. Indonesia was flooded with international aid in an unthinking way that just caused more problems rather than helping anything.

Remember that a million minor miracles happen every day, even if the press does not report them. Remember to practise safe sex—drug resistant STDs are on the rise in Victoria!

Happy Christmas to you all.

Saints Alive

Boys don't always start out right

Film reviews from the Rev'd Ken Cahill

My interest was piqued by two films recently. Both are based on actual people and events drawn from the memoirs of young people and their parents. The stories portray great resilience, development and an amazing growth in each of the characters.

Boy Erased relates the experience of a young man, Jared Eamons, who is led to believe by his parents and church that he can be cured of his homosexuality. In fear of being cast out of his church and family, and yet trusting his loving parents, Jared ends up at a 'conversion therapy' camp auspiced by the southern Baptist church in the US.



Nicole Kidman and Russell Crowe in *Boy Erased*

directed by Joel Edgerton, released by Focus Features
www.imdb.com

Written and directed by Australian director Joel Edgerton, the film stars Nicole Kidman and Russell Crowe as Jared's parents. Crowe's portrayal of the somewhat distant father is of a taciturn and conservative minister caught out by his son's embarrassing 'condition'. Kidman plays Jared's mother with a humour that helps her survive the role of a pastor's dutiful wife and the mother of a gay son who challenges her belief.

Jared is confused. While he has no doubt he is gay, he is not sure that he wants to be and agrees to attend Love in Action for a two-week evaluation while his mother stays in a nearby motel. Jared's possessions are taken from him at the front desk, including his phone and notebook. At 19 years of age Jared is an avid reader and writer. His notebook is

taken from him and scrutinised and examined by his 'therapists', who fill him with a series of expressions reminiscent of an AA meeting and a list of strict clothing policies and hair styles for men and women that are designed to drive the gay away.

Jared is one of the lucky ones, as it turns out. While cruel and unthinking, his treatment is not as harsh and excessive as has been reported of other similar places. Many conversion therapy survivors speak of a series of physical tortures and electric shock therapies while watching porn movies to cure them. A number of suicides have been attributed to this treatment. It has been estimated that some 70,000 adults in the US have attended such treatment facilities as teenagers.

In the film we see the movement and development of each of the characters. The boy's parents believe it is Jared who needs to change, only to realise that it is they who need conversion.

The film *Beautiful Boy* is based on the memoirs of David and Nic Sheff, a father and his drug-dependent son. It stars Steve Carell and Timothée Chalamet. As the film progresses we see Nic's father David writing and reflecting on his experiences and struggles with his son's addiction and his commitment to rescuing Nic. He writes 'Some people may opt out. Their child turns out to be whatever it is that they find impossible to face – for some, the wrong religion; for some, the wrong sexuality; for some, a drug addict. They close the door. Click. Like in mafia movies: "I have no son. He is dead to me." I have a son and he will never be dead to me.'

It takes some time for David to let the Al-Anon saying: 'You didn't cause it, you can't control it, you can't cure it' to take root in him. The most wrenching moment in the film is when Nic calls his parents and begs to come home but not undergo any therapy or rehabilitation. It's then that David realises he can no longer rescue his son.

Film reviews—continued

Earlier in the film, Nic is introduced to the poetry of Charles Bukowski. The first part of the poem *Let it Enfold You* is read while Nic attends college literature classes, and speaks of the dirtiness of life. At the end of the movie, after the credits, Nic's voice is again heard, finishing the poem:

*...and finally I discovered real feelings of others,
unheralded, like lately,
like this morning, as I was leaving, for the track,
I saw my wife in bed, just the shape of her head there...
I saw the shape of my wife's head, she so still,
I ached for her life,
just being there under the covers.*

*I kissed her in the forehead,
got down the stairway, got outside, got into my marvellous car,
fixed the seatbelt, backed out the drive, feeling warm to the fingertips,
down to my foot on the gas pedal,
I entered the world once more,
drove down the hill past the houses full and empty of people,
I saw the mailman, honked,
he waved back at me.*

We don't really understand why Nic got himself so caught up in drugs. He talks of the feeling that drugs gave him at first of an immense pleasure. It seems that his eventual discovery is that pleasure is to be found in the very ordinary and mundane.

As Christmas approaches, what could be simpler? A young woman and her baby and a stable at the rear of an inn in Bethlehem. Then, a sky full of angels, a few shepherds and wise men, the plots and machinations of kings, the flight of the refugee family to Egypt. It ends up complex and dangerous but the ingredients are all centred on the arrival of a son, and the Father's proud declaration: 'This is my beloved Son, listen to him.'

Timothée Chalamet and Steve Carell in *Beautiful Boy*
Directed by Felix Van Groeningen,
released by Plan B Entertainment
www.imdb.com



The Joys of Teaching

Then Jesus took his disciples up on the mountain and gathering them around him he taught them, saying: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn, blessed are they that search for justice, blessed are you when you suffer, be glad and rejoice for your reward is great in heaven.'

Then Simon Peter said: 'Will we have a test on this?'

Philip said: 'I don't have any paper.'

Bartholomew said: 'Do we have to hand this in?'

John said: 'The other disciples didn't have to learn this.'

Matthew said: 'I have three other assignments and I work on Thursday nights.'

Then one of the Pharisees who was present asked to see Jesus' lesson plan and inquired of him: 'What are your learning objectives in the cognitive domain and where are your assessment criteria and how are they benchmarked against the national curriculum?'

And Jesus wept.

(Unattributable)

Saints Alive

Melbourne Diocesan Synod 2018



*From our Lay Representative to Synod,
Laura Tsakmakis*

After last year's marathon five-day Synod session, this year was a walk in the park. And while last year's session was largely focused on implementing reforms from General Synod in relation to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, this year felt far more Melbourne-focused and administrative (albeit with some very important discussions along the way).

The sermon at the opening service was given by Robyn Boosey, Manager of the Diocesan Prevention of Violence Against Women Program. She quoted that 'disrespect doesn't always end in violence, but it's always the beginning.' She reminded us that we are required to fulfil the commandments to love God and love others, and questioned whether we are fulfilling these commandments if we disrespect or belittle women.

Some of the key points covered in the President's (Archbishop's) Charge to Synod were:

- The proposal for a Provincial Aboriginal Council so that we can properly hear their voices (noting that there are five Aboriginal priests in the Diocese of Melbourne).
- The cost of the redress scheme, currently estimated to be \$12–21 million and the impact this will have on the budget and operational plan.
- The importance of the prevention of violence against women, and disability inclusion.
- As we approach the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it is sad to see that Australia is now responsible for the ongoing detention of children.
- A farewell to Philip Huggins and welcome to new Bishop Kate Prowd, the President noting how good it is to see another woman in the leadership team.

A question was put as to whether the Diocese has further considered the parish levy that was mentioned last year as a way to raise money for the redress scheme. The answer was that this would be further considered at the November meeting of Archbishop in Council. The fund still needs an extra \$2.5 million per year. No decision has been made on the levy yet, but it remains a live issue.

There were three major pieces of legislation. The first was the Financial Governance Bill. This Bill transfers moneys from a number of existing funds into Diocesan General Revenue (ADF and Anglican funds not included). The others were the Melbourne Anglican Trust Corporation (MATC) Bill and the Archbishop in Council (AiC) Bill. These are part of the overhaul of governance that has been going on in the Diocese for some time.

The MATC Bill introduces six-year terms of office for trustees of the Melbourne Anglican Trust Corporation, with a maximum term of 12 years. These positions were formerly held for life. There will be a deemed expiry of trustees in November 2019, followed by an election at the 2019 Synod of six trustees. The Archbishop and Chancellor will also be trustees *ex officio*. An amendment to remove the Registrar as a trustee was passed.

The AiC Bill creates a formal change in title from 'the Archbishop in consultation with the Council of the Diocese' to 'Archbishop in Council' and reduces the number of people on the Council. It consists of 17 members, with six clergy and six lay people to be elected by the Synod. A significant amendment was to require equal representation of women on the council, specifically three women and three men from each category of lay and clergy. This subject saw an 'unprecedented' intervention by the Archbishop, who addressed the Synod to say that a diverse list of people is put forward for these positions, but that the members of Synod are the ones who see fit not to elect them.

Synod report – continued

Regarding the budget, it was noted that parish incomes continue to decline, which makes it risky for the Diocese to rely on parish assessments. The Diocese needs to live within its means, and there will be some reductions in staff costs. The Diocese has engaged Deloitte to conduct a review of the structure of the central organisation.

We heard an address by Areej Masoud, a Palestinian Christian from the Bethlehem Bible College. She spoke of what it's like to live in an occupied land, and told us how the people of Palestine have to create hope each day. She told us to love our enemies and find the human in them. She asked us to pray for Palestinians, and to be peacemakers.

A number of motions were carried without debate. Importantly, a motion calling for the removal of refugee children from Nauru was carried.

A motion calling for people to permanently avoid recommending gay conversion therapy, and for the government to ban it, was carried, but there was some debate about what is considered conversion therapy. It was made clear that it means a process intended to make people change their sexuality (not, for example, praying for people who are struggling to understand their sexuality).

Two motions did not get as far as a vote. The first was a motion calling on the Archbishop in Council to consider a form of blessing for civil marriages. As the mover, Craig D'Alton said, we allow the blessing of animals, can we not also allow for blessing of married couples?

The second was one calling for Synod to thank God for GAFCON's support to "those Anglicans...who are seeking to remain faithful to the Bible and to our Anglican heritage". You might think this is all Anglicans, but GAFCON – Global Anglican Future Conference – is a conservative movement. One cleric said that Jesus would rebuke us for our petty tribalism. but it was noted that one of the really positive aspects of the Melbourne Diocese is our diversity.

This was the third and last session of the fifty-second Synod (each year is counted as a session), and once again it was a pleasure to be part of it, and to enjoy meeting new people and seeing old friends.

Melbourne Diocesan Synod

Synod is held in St Paul's Cathedral, with all licensed clergy entitled to attend, and lay representatives from all parishes. Together clergy and lay people consider questions of church governance and finance, as well as issues of moral and spiritual importance. Media observers are also present.





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1860 — 2018

*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 actively oppose racism, sexism and other 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.

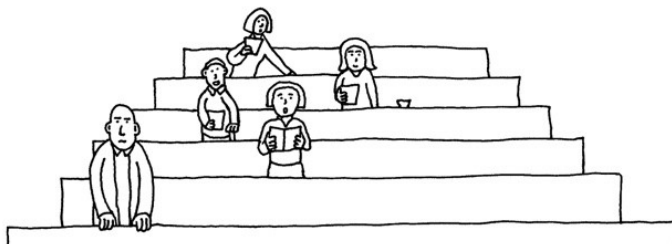
allsaintsnorthcote.org.au

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

IN THE PEWS

WHAT IS GOING ON?

WHAT THE
VICAR SEES



ACTUAL
ACTIVITIES

