

On Easter

“Let every man and woman count himself immortal. Let him catch the revelation of Jesus in his resurrection. Let him say not merely, ‘Christ is risen’, but ‘I shall rise’.”

—*Phillips Brooks*

“Our Lord has written the promise of resurrection, not in books alone, but in every leaf in springtime.”

— *Martin Luther*

“But from this earth, this grave, this dust, my God shall raise me up, I trust.”

— *Walter Raleigh*

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Saints Alive

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Northcote
Parish of South Darebin

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Pilgrimage — Fugitives, Refugees, Pilgrims

Bp David Farrer

Just after the Second World War, the Australian artist Louis Kahan painted *Flight to Egypt* – Joseph, Mary and the Child huddled in a jeep, driving by night from a bombed-out city. They are fugitives, they stand for millions of refugees and asylum-seekers.

There is a sense in which pilgrimage has this element of escape.

I mean by this that just as the Holy Family headed for Egypt and asylum looking for more than survival, so are many refugees coming to our shores: they are looking for a life with meaning, a fuller life. Pilgrims hope for something beautiful, something sacred, something coloured with the divine.

The Holy Family fled to Egypt as refugees but also as pilgrims in quest of God's gracious presence in utterly new circumstances.

Life (whether we travel far or not) is to be seen as pilgrimage. We are all pilgrims of possibility, a possibility where the divine and human merge. TS Eliot, one of our greatest modern poets, has spoken about the conditions of true pilgrimage in powerful terms:

You are not here to verify,
Instruct yourself, or inform curiosity,
Or carry report: you are here to kneel
Where prayer has been valid.



***Flight to Egypt* by Louis Kahan, 1952**
The painting represents the Holy Family in a contemporary war-torn context. Joseph's tools are stacked in the back of the car. Mary shields the baby with her body. In the bonnet, a single star is reflected. In the headlight, dimly shown, is the map of Australia.

Image: jesuit.org.au

Pilgrimage is a powerful image of the Christian life: indeed, the whole of our journey through this life is a pilgrimage towards the life that is to come. “For here we have no permanent home” as we are told in the Letter to the Hebrews, but we are searching and labouring and looking for what is to come; and our fulfilment lies in eternal life, which was bought for us by the shedding of Christ's blood on the Cross.

It is in the journey that we discover things about ourselves and about God. We discover the reality of suffering, and the promise and

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“An outward journey
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hope of resurrection life. Indeed, it is in the conversations with our companions along the way, as we bear one another's burdens and delight in accompanying others on our journeys of faith, that we are enriched with insights and deeper understanding of God's loving purposes for each of us, his beloved children.

Travelling and journeying on the way is central to Biblical images – indeed, the book of Exodus is just this, the account of the Israelites' journey from slavery to freedom in the promised land. Their journey takes some forty years, but this is because of what they need to learn about God and about themselves in order to be ready to arrive.

The great writings about pilgrimage, from Chaucer's motley collection of travellers – who set off from Southwark (London) journeying to the shrine of Thomas Becket Archbishop of Canterbury, to Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* and other more modern writings – these all reflect upon what happens along the way. An outward journey is accompanied by an inner search for deeper meaning and purpose in life. For in the

searching is the finding, and the treasure lies in an enduring understanding of what it means to be truly the pilgrim people of God.

Happy are the people whose strength is in you! Whose hearts are set on the pilgrims' way...

They will climb from height to height, and the God of gods will reveal himself in Zion. (Psalm 84)

This psalm speaks of life as a pilgrimage, an understanding that may be enormously helpful in finding our way, especially during a time in our world, in our nation, and in the Church, when there is so much disillusion. Whatever our present setting it is not the resting-place, but only a step in our pilgrimage.

I have been privileged to go on pilgrimage in Spain, in India, in England and in Italy. The experience of walking on pilgrimage across Spain on the ancient *Camino Frances* and later on the *Camino Portuguese* to Santiago de Compostela was life-changing and life-enriching. The pilgrimages brought the scriptural images of pilgrimage and journey to life and offered a *Canterbury Tales* experience. This was there in the meaningful and the mundane; in exhilaration and exhaustion, in hunger and deep satisfaction, in the sweat of the daily toil in thirty-plus degree heat, and in the exhilaration of a cold shower in the *Refugios* (simple accommodation available along the pilgrim routes). We enjoyed fellow travellers; we saw lives changed, bodies and spirits healed; deep friendships started. We climbed from height to height, we walked the endless flat *meseta* in central Spain. We had some great highs and some real lows. We reflected, we prayed and we sang. We enjoyed the view: for some miles we resented the passing cars. We ate fruit and cold water given to us, enjoying the status of *peregrinos*. We spent hours each day in silence, we spoke to one another and to strangers of serious issues, and we laughed a lot. We got lost, we needed help, and we helped, not least in the administration of band-aids and bandages. We discovered early on that we were carrying too much weight in our packs.



From a medieval manuscript illustrating Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, a very long poem depicting a group of pilgrims on the way to Canterbury, written in about 1392. The pilgrims agree to tell stories to pass the time along the way, and these convey all the vices and virtues, strengths and sins to be found in any group of people, anywhere.

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Back in the twelfth century along the *Camino de Santiago*, an eye-witness described an endless flood of the poor, the fortunate, the barbarous, knights and maidens, the illustrious and the ignoble, heroes and debtors, royalty and

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paupers, monks and nuns, merchants and mendicants; some barefoot and some on horseback; some holding the image of the cross or an icon in their hands; others distributing their possessions to the poor; some carrying materials for the construction of a church; others, just liberated from prison, carrying iron shackles and manacles upon their shoulders, performing penance and weeping for their sins.

Through the centuries, there have been many different people from many different backgrounds and in many different stages on life's pilgrimage. There are, too, as many ways to be a pilgrim.

Why see life as pilgrimage? Every pilgrim will have his or her own intentions for this *bonum arduum*, this difficult good. Down through the centuries, people have gone on pilgrimage to purge their soul of sin, to 'walk off' a past chapter of their life (a friend of mine walked part of the Camino picking up rubbish to make up for having dumped a car in a public place many years before). For others it's been to 'walk into' a new chapter of their life, to say Yes to God's abundant gift of life in the present and to walk freely into God's future. It may be a combination of both, or for other reasons.

Pilgrimage is often about losing your old self to find yourself anew. The English word 'pilgrim' comes from the Latin *peregrinus*, 'foreigner'.

As Christians we need to hear the word 'pilgrim' or 'foreigner' or 'stranger' in the light of Jesus' life and teaching, and in his language.

Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul. (1 Peter 2: 11)

We are called to understand that this world is not our own. It belongs to God — all of it. In our lifetimes we are entrusted by God to be stewards.

We are passing through, not because the world, or our part in it, doesn't matter. It matters every step of the way. It's just that this world is not our ultimate end. Jesus is our inspiration and our companion on the way, and he is the fulfillment at the journey's end, he who has gone before us to prepare a place for us forever. As followers of Jesus, our life on earth is not incidental, it is sacramental. We are here in this life to practise the presence of God, which is the way of the pilgrim. We are pilgrims in life, and there are some practices and some places that may be very helpful along the way.

You may find it possible to go on actual physical

pilgrimage to some destination. In the Christian tradition, there are many places recognised as holy spaces; that is, places where there is a thinness between earth and heaven. There is the medieval route to Santiago, there is Canterbury, Durham, Iona, Rome and Jerusalem.

And there are destinations in our own country which may well be important to you personally. Some examples will be religious communities like St Mark's Abbey in Camperdown, New Norcia in Western Australia or Tarrawarra Abbey in the Yarra Valley. There may be a quite different place that is very important to you personally; a mountaintop, a familiar place from your childhood, or a church — some place that, for you, is liminal — a thin place where you can experience the coming together of earth and heaven. TS Eliot said, 'Go and kneel at a place where prayer has been valid.' That was the inspiration for me to go to Santiago di Compostela, not the bones of St James (if they are indeed his), but a place where prayer has been valid. There are other places that are special for me in this country and in other parts of the world.

What place speaks to you? Can you go there in person? Can you go there in memory? Can you go there in imagination? Martin Luther said, 'God writes the Gospel, not in the Bible alone, but also on trees, and in the flowers and clouds and stars.' I must say that the Australian outback is a special and holy place for me.

An important aspect of pilgrimage is the preparation. What will you need along the way? Weight is a real issue. Weight, quite literally, is an issue if you are carrying your life goods on your back. Weight is an issue metaphorically, given the weight of the burdens of life. What do we need to offload? What can we leave along the way? It is so easy to accumulate in life, accumulate lots of material things, and lots of inner baggage. A pilgrimage may help you part with both surplus possessions and inner burdens in the form of disappointments, resentments, unforgiveness, fear—whatever weighs you down. You will be freed up and will have space to take in what is new and life-giving. And what would that be? Pilgrimage may help you claim God's gift of fullness of life now.

Even if you are not likely to travel on pilgrimage to a specific holy place, if you are simply embracing being a pilgrim in life, what can you part with? What can you detach from? What can you give up as an offering to God: 'Here it is, gracious God: You take it, transform it, use it, multiply it, free me up from controlling it...'

Another reality about travelling on pilgrimage is the other pilgrims. When you are on pilgrimage, you soon appreciate one value above all others: how you relate to

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“Ponder and pray with it. Life as a pilgrimage is alive with adventure...”

one another in kindness. At any moment you may be in need, in need of help. At any moment, someone else may be in need, in need of help.

In St Paul's Letter to the Colossians (3: 12) we read:

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

If you're travelling on pilgrimage, there's both the way you travel (the road you take) and the way in which you travel. One thing about the way in which we travel is that others will follow us. Whether we are talking about pilgrimage to a destination or about living as pilgrims in life, we mustn't leave a scar, we mustn't take more than our share, we must show respect, for others and for the whole of creation, all of

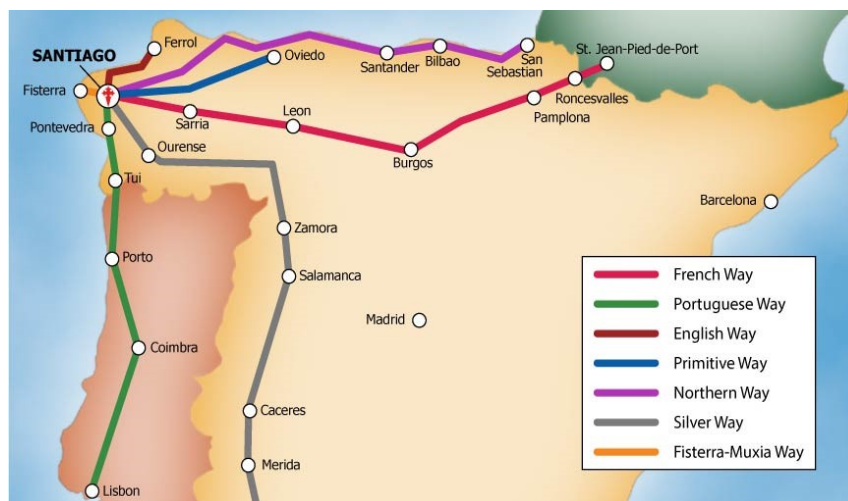
which belongs to God. That is the mark of good stewardship of the life entrusted to us – our relationships with people, and places; our relationship to air and water, light and sound, birds and animals, mountains and rivers. Our calling is to protect, thank, and respect.

I commend both actual pilgrimage and the metaphor of pilgrimage to you.

Ponder and pray with it. Life as a pilgrimage is alive with adventure, and we need to be aware that there will be companions, not all of our choosing. We will have needs and we will meet needs.

*He who would valiant be 'gainst all disaster,
Let him in constancy follow the Master.
There's no discouragement
Shall make him once relent
His first avowed intent
To be a pilgrim.*

— Percy Dearmer, in *The English Hymnal*
(from the words of John Bunyan)



Many roads lead to Santiago de Compostela. Hundreds of thousands walk the Camino de Santiago (Way of St James) by one or more of the pilgrim routes each year. The Shrine of the Apostle St James the Great (above) has been a place of pilgrimage for over 1000 years, after a ruined chapel was excavated and human remains were discovered. These were declared to be the relics of St James, brought by sea, guided by angels. St James became the patron saint of Spain and is thought to have performed many miracles for pilgrims arriving in Compostela and on the roads leading there. Map: petrabax.com; image: commons.wikipedia.com

Poems at Easter

Soporific:

Late last night,
in absence of light,
into bed I fell.
The water lilies —
every and each —
already well
and truly asleep:
Sensible hours they could
learn me to keep.

* * *

Searching:

Between dad jokes and despair,
Between brave face and
confusion,
Between fear and trepidation,
I must needs find my way.
This morning, it begins
with a run — and a prayer.

* * *

Still dark, but still:

Light in my heart
Heart that beats
Beating steady
Steady sense
Sense of good
Good to be.

* * *

Celestial signs:

Pink streak in sky
reflects sun's unseen glory,
Booming gas burner heralds
balloons of hot air passing —
oh so close:
'Tis the season for
Calm sky sailing.

"Sacred planet, Sacred people"

I heard the call,
joined a group of Christian elders
on Bunurong land, at "Rosebud".
We rang bells,
heard of aussie pollie climate wreckers,
and some good news stories
inside a bigger tale of dread...
It was humble,
it was powerful,
it told me why
I strive to be
a person "of faith",
seeking the sacred in all things:
sky, planet, fellow beings
— human and not —
and ourselves.

— Arnaud Gallois



First light, Tubbarubba, February 2021

Photo by Arnaud Gallois

Child Safety update



Laura Tsakmakis, Child Safety Officer

Thank you to all those who participated in the process for interim clearances over the summer.

I'm pleased to report that all people in governance and leadership positions (wardens, vestry members, the synod representative, child safety officer, and COVID safe officer) at All Saints Northcote are now up-to-date with diocesan requirements.

For those of you who haven't been involved, the interim clearances process represents the next step for the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne in ensuring all churches and congregations in the diocese are safe places for children.

The requirement to engage in this process is determined by the Archbishop in Council, which approves a list of positions within parishes and authorised congregations which need specified documents and clearances; for example, police checks and Working With Children checks. The first table of prescribed clearances was passed by resolution on 22 June 2017 and published in the May 2018 *Diocesan Business Services Bulletin*. A new table of prescribed clearances was passed by resolution on 22 October 2020. Parishes were informed of these new requirements in the December 2020 *Diocesan Business Services Bulletin*.

Under the 2017 table, wardens and parish councillors were required to have police checks but were not required to have Working With Children checks. Since the end of 2020, those positions are now also required to have Working With Children checks, regardless of whether any children attend services. The table also requires some 34 categories of volunteers and lay employees to obtain an interim clearance for service. This came with a direction that people holding relevant positions must apply for a clearance no later than 28 February 2021 and that, if they did not, they would no longer be allowed to volunteer.

Kooyoora, the diocese's independent Office of Professional Standards body, conducts a National Register check on applicants. This is a national Anglican Church database of professional standards cases and other similar information. Depending on the outcome of that check, an interim clearance may be issued to the applicant. Due to the large volume of applications received by Kooyoora, it may take some time before applicants receive their clearance.

Final clearances will be required later in the year and, once issued, will be valid for five years.

Other requirements for volunteers and lay employees include signing a statement of commitment to the diocese's Code of Conduct for Child Safety and participating in professional standards and child safe training. We will inform those required to undertake this training when it is running again.

Parishes were also required to provide the registry office with a register of details of all relevant volunteers and lay employees. This included police check reference numbers, Working With Children reference numbers, and the date on which the applicant applied to Kooyoora for their interim clearances.

As always, please feel free to talk to me if you would like any further details on child safety in the parish.

On interpretation — *The Prince of Egypt* (1998)

Bruce Clezy's film review

Whenever we read, we interpret. Whether it is a book, a film, a map, or even daily life; when we read we make sense of an object through our own eyes. Meaning is never fixed, never stable. Rather it exists in the flow of information between two interlocutors.

Interpretation is the challenge that lies at the heart of *The Prince of Egypt*, Dreamworks' blockbuster animated classic, a story of Moses, the chosen deliverer of the Jewish people from bondage in Egypt.

Released in 1998, the film has an all-star cast of vocal actors including Val Kilmer, Ralph Fiennes, Helen Mirren, Michelle Pfeiffer, Sandra Bullock and Jeff Goldblum. The soundtrack went on to win multiple awards, including best original song at both the Academy Awards and Golden Globes, and its state-of-the-art animation has been universally praised as stunning. Clearly, these are sound Hollywood credentials! The question is, though, how does the film manage to represent perhaps the foundational text of the world's three great monotheistic religions, and not be accused of blasphemy, or misrepresenting the word of God? Indeed, the film was banned in some Islamic countries, on the grounds that Islamic prophets, including Moses, cannot be depicted in the media.

While I am by no means a biblical scholar, I strongly believe that the film does more than justice to the original story, and it does this by providing a strong culturally and historically appropriate vision.

The film successfully returns the story to its Middle Eastern roots. Moses, Ramses, Tzipporah, Miriam, Jethro and Aaron are all depicted with dark hair, skin and eyes – a representation almost unheard of within the Hollywood canon. (Charlton Heston, who played Moses in *The Ten Commandments* in 1956, for example, was renowned for being the all-American hero and for having piercing blue eyes.) In this film, the use of famous American and English vocal actors who are easily recognisable does not overwhelm the movie. Familiar accents are nicely counter-balanced by the inclusion of traditional songs in Hebrew, particularly as the Children of Israel flee Egypt. The killing of Hebrew sons at the hands of

Pharaoh Seti is very cleverly recounted using hieroglyphs early on in the movie. Similarly, the film beautifully covers all the key events of the story including the baby in the basket, the burning bush, the plagues, the parting of the Red Sea and Moses' descent from Mount Sinai.

It also slows and lingers on details perhaps not so well known to Christian audiences.

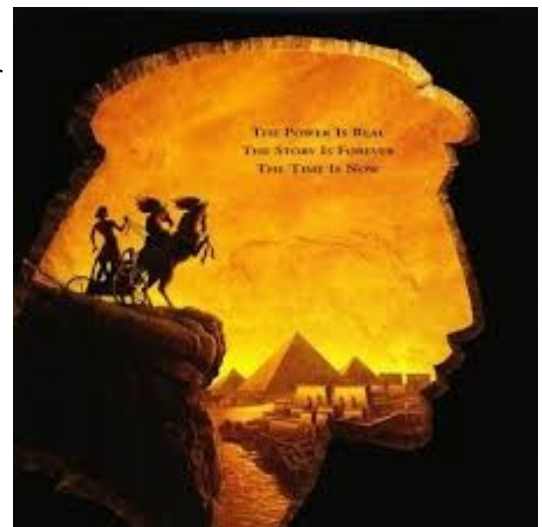
Nachshon's entry into the Red Sea is a good example. While the vignette is a central event retold in any Passover Seder, the story is perhaps somewhat overlooked in our modern Christian retellings.

But perhaps the film's most impressive interpretation is its re-imagining of God. God does not appear as a transcendent entity, an external being. Rather he is a presence who is much more intimate, much more internal. The characters of Moses and God are voiced by the same actor (Val Kilmer). So when God appears to Moses through the burning bush commanding him to liberate his peoples, it sounds as if Moses is actually talking to himself. The effect is subtle, but by not giving God a different voice, the film very cleverly suggests, that when we speak to God we hear his answers through our own voices and in our own heads. God's voice is our voice: he is in fact our interpretation.

You may not agree with this, or with the underlying premise of the film, but nevertheless I do recommend *The Prince of Egypt* as a marvellous film to watch during the Easter season. It gives the modern viewer a much broader picture of what life was like when these ancient events took place and these ancient stories were first told.

Happy Easter, everyone.

“...the film's most impressive interpretation is its re-imagining of God.”



‘The power is real. The story is forever. The time is now.’ *The Prince of Egypt* garnered many awards, including music awards. It is available for streaming on STAN. Image: Dreamworks.fandom.com

Saints Alive

Alive and well

June McKay, Churchwarden

Through the dark tunnel and out into the light! Walking out of our church on Easter Day I felt renewed and invigorated. We did not have the resources this year to be able to hold a Maundy Thursday service at All Saints, but worshipping with members of St James' congregation at St James on that day and again at All Saints on Good Friday was a special sharing experience adding depth and strength to our Anglican presence in South Darebin.

We were privileged to witness the quiet strength of faith of the Reverend Dr Duncan Reid at our Good Friday and Easter Day services and benefit from his charge to us to understand that the unprecedented has become a precedent: in the words of the Creed, we should expect what was once unheard-of, and look for the resurrection all around us, and in our own lives. We are most grateful to the Reverend Philippa Wetherell for presiding at St James and at All Saints when needed. We look forward to Bishop Genieve's appointment of a longer term intentional locum.

Before Easter we were extraordinarily blessed, uplifted and strengthened by the vibrant presence of Bishop David Farrer in our parish for seven weeks. His wonderful preaching, together with his understanding and empathy with our situation provided a much-needed injection of hope for our future.

Despite the lack of continuity in our pastoral care we have not turned from our responsibilities to ourselves and others. Over several months the Property and Grounds Group (comprised of Arnaud Gallois, Fr Ken Cahill and myself, guided by technical advice provided by Rod Junor) has been progressing a number of small projects attending to health and safety matters, improving amenity for users of the meeting room, kitchen and toilets complex and showing us to be a living church community. The garden bench seat has been repaired, uneven pavers at the church entrance reset and the scratched noticeboard perspex replaced with strengthened glass and the frame freshly painted. The next task is to replace the aged lettering! We continue to work on obtaining quotes for completion of the ramping work to achieve wheelchair access via the north porch door. The most recent project completed was installation of a

storage hot water service in the kitchen. Alleluia, piping hot water for the dishes!

We can all be grateful to Arnaud for his tireless work in tending to the lawns and grounds, ensuring that we present well to the many people who pass our church and sometimes pause to rest. Arnaud has recently received assistance from Željko and is likely to be seeking additional helpers. To reduce the workload of parishioners we have employed cleaning services to conduct thorough weekly cleaning of the meeting room, kitchen and toilet complex to ensure that our hirers are well supported. Our regular hirers have returned to onsite meetings and our meeting room continues to be used by groups such as the public housing support network, within COVID-safe guidelines.

At a recent meeting with Brotherhood of St Laurence management I was encouraged to learn that the store is recovering, following the long closure due to COVID. As soon as sufficient volunteer staff can be recruited, the plan is to increase the opening hours to the former six days per week, so if you are considering volunteering, please visit the store and let the manager know of your interest. BSL management noted with thanks the improvements we made to amenities in 2020 and we re-affirmed the mutual benefits of our longstanding relationship. We discussed the planning of future projects, the first of which will be maintenance and improvement of the circuitry and fluorescent lighting in the BSL store. We can look forward to a continued fruitful relationship with the BSL team who manage and operate the Northcote Community Store.

Finally, a word of thanks to those who have supported the re-establishment of our community fellowship by providing hospitality in the meeting room after our services, again using COVID-safe practices. We had all missed this important aspect of our worship life during lockdown and when services first resumed, so it is wonderful to be able once more to invite all to share a little time and together each week and to leave refreshed.

Eyes on the Prize—*Judas and the Black Messiah*

Alma Ryrie-Jones

This is a film destined for high praise and recognition, both for its qualities as film and the compelling performances of its two principal actors. Set in the late 1960s, it is the story of the brief and spectacular rise of a leader of the newly formed Black Panther Party in Chicago, Fred Hampton (Daniel Kaluuya), his visionary leadership, and his death following betrayal by a trusted friend and follower, William O'Neal (LaKeith Stanfield).

The dramatic invitation to the viewer to bring Christian symbolism to the story as it unfolds seems overblown at first. But as we come to know Hampton, the idea becomes more convincing. We see him move through the chaos and suffering involved in the civil rights struggle, through danger and pressure of every kind, with a deep self-certainty, and the conviction that his life is entirely given over to a mission. His existence is totally defined by 'love of the people' and service to the cause of their liberation. He has his eyes on the prize (a phrase from a gospel folk song, re-purposed as a protest song), and his 'hand on the plow': he cannot weaken or look back, or put his own needs first—or even those of his wife or child.

His vision is revolutionary and, as with Jesus, his message is not just for his own tribe. In a memorable scene, Hampton and a few followers enter a white gathering, with the Confederate flag prominently displayed. He's not there to start a fight: he's there to start a 'rainbow coalition', a revolutionary alliance of people of all colours. He wants whites to join him in a larger vision of justice for everyone. He is able to bring white people and Hispanics and other groups together, not because of a common religious cause but because he understands that inequality damages everyone and rots the social fabric. I was shocked to discover later that Hampton was only 21 when he died, given this depiction of his courage and eloquence, and his grasp of the politics of economic exclusion.

But to me, the power of the film lies in the story of the other figure—the betrayer. It would be surprising if LaKeith Stanfield did not receive the highest accolades for his performance, in which fear and anxiety are the keynotes. We understand how the FBI has been able to recruit and ruthlessly use him as an informer and this makes it impossible for us to judge him coldly or see him as a straightforward villain, despite his despicable actions and their terrible consequences.

The story made me wonder who we are more like—the Messiah, or Judas? What courage do we bring to situations that call for it, and what are we willing to sacrifice for a great cause? Certainly I could not imagine being as selfless as the Black Messiah, but I could easily imagine being as weak and afraid, as human, as Judas.

The film closes with an extract from a real-life interview William O'Neal gave to the makers of *Eyes on the Prize*, a superbly detailed TV documentary history of the civil rights movement, first released in 1987. If you have online access, there is no better account of the heroically non-violent beginnings of this movement and the atrocities it met with in the Southern states. It is easy to forget that this movement demanded no more than basic rights that had already been granted at the federal level through the US constitution, such as the right to vote.

In the gospel song, 'the prize' is perhaps an allusion to Philippians 3: 'I press on towards the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Jesus Christ'. Perhaps it is up to us, each in our own circumstances, to listen for that call and find the courage to follow it.

Judas and the Black Messiah is directed and co-written by Shaka King, and is showing at Palace Cinemas at the time of publication. *Eyes on the Prize* has been re-released and is available on YouTube.



William O'Neal in 1973
en.wikipedia.com

The All Saints BSL store is not just a retail operation. It is a partnership, and our support for it is part of our mission in Northcote. Please bring donations of good quality clothing, books and small household items, tell others about the store and encourage them to donate and to shop there. If you would like to offer other forms of help to the Brotherhood, such as volunteering as a worker, ask Brad or John about this, or contact the manager on 9489 6183.

High Ground

Fr Ken Cahill

A little while ago I listened to an interview with two of the stars of the film *High Ground* (2020, directed by Stephen Johnson): Witiyana Marika, who is also one of the producers, and Simon Baker (*The Mentalist*, *The Guardian*), one of the leading actors.

The thing that stood out in the interview was that the film was to be seen as representing the voice of the Aboriginal people, and that this matters. Even the most cursory viewing of the film's credits is impressive, with the large number of Aboriginal people recognised for their contribution to the film.

Witiyana Marika was also one of the founding members of the band Yothu Yindi and his voice is heard singing in places throughout the movie. The film itself is dedicated to the memory of Dr Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunupingu, who died in 2013.

It's very obvious that the director took many years to earn the trust and cooperation of the Indigenous communities whose stories and culture would be depicted. It's this evident respect and care from both sides that adds to *High Ground*'s authenticity, aiding the film in its confronting portrayal of brutality as a peaceful setting is violently uprooted in a matter of minutes during the opening scene.

Initially set in 1919, the film introduces us to former army sniper Travis (Simon Baker), a level-headed police officer who is overseeing an operation involving an Indigenous family and the white police officers who interrupt their peaceful gathering. What should be a procedure of minimal force is quickly turned into a bloodbath, due to the trigger-happy lawmen. It's a horrible scene, but one that appears necessary in its depiction of the white man's violent treatment of Aboriginal people.

Taking pity on a young survivor, Gutjuk, Travis drops him off at a nearby outpost where he can be raised in a safe environment under the guidance of white missionaries. Wracked by guilt over the incident, and refusing to be part of covering it up, Travis moves on from the police force to work as a bounty hunter.

His new path ultimately crosses with a grown-up Gutjuk who is recruited as a tracker when Travis, at the insistence of his former superior officer, is asked to take on capturing and taming Gutjuk's uncle, Baywarra, a leader of an uprising against white settlers. Baywarra had been severely wounded in the opening massacre but was healed by his father (Witiyana Marika) using his culturally inherited knowledge of bush medicines.

Travis is hoping that he will have the assistance of Gutjuk in finding a peaceful resolution to Baywarra's violent campaign. In his training of Gutjuk, Travis advises, 'When you've got the high ground, you control everything.' This turns out to be a very short-sighted observation.

Marika's character, Grandfather Dharrpa, questions the commanding officer who is pursuing his son, and who says that he is serving the King's law and justice in bringing Baywarra to trial. He asks why does he not also seek the same justice for those who murdered his family?

Many commentators have called this movie an 'Australian Western', where you would expect that there is a group of villains who are put right by the hero in the white hat. This is not that sort of movie at all.

In many ways the film is a beautiful portrayal of the Australian landscape with the mysteriousness of the sight of an eagle soaring high above with its distinctive cry, and the thrumming of Aboriginal music sticks and singing.

High Ground — continued from page 10

Many Australians are fearful that the retelling of the shameful horrors from the past will do nothing to bring healing and reconciliation and fear that it will only increase the division. They ask, 'Why are we dragging up what has happened in the past?'

We have just experienced again the events of Holy Week, retelling the betrayal, arrest and trial of Jesus leading to his shameful and painful death on the cross. The story is told without rancour and without specifically blaming and targeting the Jews and Romans. We recognise our own part in the events. The remembering and the entering into these events prove to be life-giving for us as we move through the week and arrive at Easter Day.

The theme for the 2019 NAIDOC Week was 'Voice. Treaty. Truth'. The naidoc.org.au website explains:

Voice. Treaty. Truth. were three key elements to the reforms set out in the *Uluru Statement from the Heart*. These reforms represent the unified position of First Nations Australians.

It specifically sequenced a set of reforms: first, a First Nations Voice to Parliament enshrined in the Constitution and second, a Makarrata Commission to supervise treaty processes and truth-telling.

(*Makarrata* is a word from the language of the Yolngu people in Arnhem Land. The Yolngu concept of Makarrata captures the idea of two parties coming together after a struggle, healing the divisions of the past. It is about acknowledging that something has been done wrong, and it seeks to make things right.)

We know that the remembering and reviewing of some of the painful events of our lives can be cathartic and healing. It's this same process that our Aboriginal people are asking for in truth-telling, so that we can all hear how the pain of these past events is experienced.

High Ground is a visually arresting drama that presents itself as a timely anti-racist message, captured beautifully while acknowledging and presenting the truth about historical atrocities.

"Our Aboriginal people are asking for...truth-telling so that we can all hear how the pain of these past events is experienced."



***High Ground* is showing in local cinemas at the time of publication.**

Film Poster image: aceshowbiz.com



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NEXT ISSUE: June 2021



1860 — 2021

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

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 159 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 Bible, 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 the spiritual connection of First Nations people 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

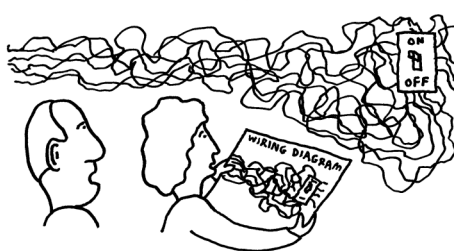
Saints Alive is published on our website, along with other information about All Saints.

THE ANNUAL INSPECTION

THE CHURCHWARDENS MUST HAVE A LOOK AROUND THE CHURCH ONCE EVERY YEAR OR SO. THESE ARE THE SORTS OF THINGS THEY SHOULD BE LOOKING FOR:

SIGNS OF DANGER

(EG WIRING THAT DOES NOT LOOK QUITE RIGHT)



SIGNS OF MOVEMENT

(IN OLD BUILDINGS)



SIGNS OF LIFE

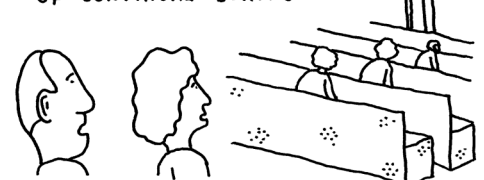
IT'LL HAVE TO COME DOWN - WE CAN'T RISK HAVING LEAVES IN THE GUTTERING



SIGNS OF DEATH-

WATCH BEETLE

CHURCHWARDENS HAVE TO WATCH CLOSELY TO SPOT SIGNS OF CONTINUAL BORING



Cartoon by Dave Walker Used under licence from Cartoonchurch.com