



Anglican Diocese
of Bendigo

The Spirit

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Gathered: Bishop Matt Brain leads the renewal of ordination vows for the diocesan clergy at the beginning of Holy Week

Clergy renew ordination vows at beginning of Holy Week

Sarah Crutch

The diocesan clergy gathered in St Paul's Cathedral on the Monday of Holy Week for the Blessing of Oils and Renewal of Ordination vows service.

The rich red of the clerical stoles added to the stunning colours of the Cathedral altar setting, with a strong sense of collegiality in the air as the clergy formed a circle around Bishop Matt while he led the renewal of ordination vows.

Preaching from John 12: 1-11, Bishop Matt reminded the clergy of the nature of discipleship and how they are privileged

to be able to tell the story of what God has done with others.

"As we renew our vows we stand as those who have been empowered and given the great joy of being the ones who tell that story for others. So do it faithfully, and do it with devotion," he said.

During the eucharist the oils of catechumenate, chrism and unction were blessed by Bishop Matt, with clergy then able to collect some newly consecrated oils to take home to their parish to anoint people coming to baptism and for use in the ministry of healing.



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The Bishop writes

....and tweets  @MattBrain1

The Spirit

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of the Anglican Diocese
of Bendigo

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May issue: Contributions due by **Friday 20 May.**

Dear Friends,

There is something significant about the final things that might be said. I am sure that we can all think of a public figure, work colleague or family member who needs to cap off every conversation or argument with the final statement. This is amplified as we approach death.

Ned Kelly said "Such is life", and Breaker Morant called out, "Shoot straight you bastards." Both Ned Kelly and Breaker Morant are tragic figures, but there is something rousing about their refusal to be cowed by death. They both bring a sense of defiance against the might arrayed against them. Yet Easter brings us another word uttered in the throes of death. It is defiant, however unlike Kelly and Morant it does not end in nothingness.



because he also had a clear sense of purpose in which he confronted the forces that deny the goodness of all that we were made to be. We feel this as the effects of a climate that is harsh and changing wreaks its havoc, as people wrong us and, as we (if we are

have won. All the evidence would seem to suggest quite the contrary! It needs validation somehow. It needs action to back up the words.

And so this is why Easter Day is so good. The reality of an empty tomb, of a resurrected Jesus, is also the hope of completion for us. So the great gift of Easter is that we are offered the opportunity to join in with the work that Jesus completed. To be able to pin our hopes on the one who has seen and felt the reality of a contrary world and our contrary selves and demonstrate that we may be made complete in him.

Friends, because of this first Easter we have two great opportunities because we too are people of the resurrection. The first is personal. Because Jesus took on, defeated and thoroughly triumphed over death – both the little deaths that litter life and the big death that threatens to extinguish it – we are freed from slavery to self-interest and pride. One of our great Anglican prayers describes service in Jesus' name as the 'perfect freedom.' We are freed to find who we were made to be and not get lost in our own belly-buttons.

The second gift is one we share together. As people who have been freed from enslavement to sin we are then called into a life that is focused on God's Kingdom. We live in the midst of a world yearning for hope and worn down by uncertainty. We have both hope and a future. Now that is a gift worth passing on!

Your servant in Christ,

Matt

“The great gift of Easter is that we are offered the opportunity to join in with the work that Jesus completed”

In the last gasp of his own execution Jesus cried out "It is finished!" The language that Jesus spoke meant more by this phrase than simply "it's over." It carried the sense of "I have completed my work," or, "My mission is done."

Unlike Breaker Morant or Ned Kelly Jesus had a sense of completion even as he was suffering; fruitfulness even as his life slipped away. This was

honest) wrong others. These 'little' deaths are captured and summed up in the 'big' death Jesus experienced. One that we too will face.

Yet the claim that in finishing the work and confronting the big and little deaths that stalk us all is a startling claim to be making when in the process of dying. Especially if by this you mean that you have confronted the world's deepest problems and

Bishop's Meeting 2018

Bishop Matt Brain

Octopi are amazing creatures. I have enough trouble coordinating two legs, let alone two legs and two arms. The idea of synchronising eight legs is quite mind blowing! Yet in some ways life as Australian Anglicans is a bit like being and octopus, except that the Anglican octopus has twenty-three legs!

Each year the bishops of the Australian Anglican Church gather to discuss matters of life and faith, the structural issues that we share that either help or hinder ministry, and to pray and learn together. This is a vital gathering for it is as we listen to God's word, learn from each other and pray together God has been pleased to keep us together.

This year Bishop Michael Stead (South Sydney) lead us through the Book of Psalms to show how God not only gives us permission to grieve over our own failings, but also the distress forced upon us by others and the world around, but then to move through this into greater trust in him. These studies were personally enriching, and I hope to be able to share some of the insights gained through these talks as I get to visit you as they were realistic and helpful.

We also worked through how together we must continue to work so that the legal frameworks, policies and most importantly cultures of our dioceses make church a safe place for all.

Much of the week was spent developing responses to different matters that were raised at General Synod. Guidelines in responding to the recent redefinition of marriage were established, and the different needs of ministry in urban and rural areas identified and opportunities for collaboration were worked on.

I facilitated the group tasked with charting how we can find and develop ministers for the ministry needs of the future. It was great to be able to flesh out the inner characteristics and outer environments that we have seen promote faithful and fruitful ministry across Australia. Our next step is to talk with those who train new ministers so that we can be preparing new generations of pastors well.



Teach: Cindy Bell and Michelle Edwards show uni students around the kitchen

Students learn the basics of cooking at South East Bendigo

Greg Harris

A story (possibly apocryphal) was told of a uni student in Bendigo who ate nachos for lunch and dinner for six months because they didn't know how to cook after leaving home. That was the inspiration for 'Cooking 101' at South East Bendigo.

After recently completing the refurbishment of the church facilities, which included a registered kitchen, the church community was looking for ways to be a blessing to the community.

"Through an established partnership with Christian Union we were able to achieve two goals – blessing the community and engaging with the

university at the end of the street," Rector Greg Harris said.

Now every Monday afternoon tantalising aromas waft through the church foyer with up to 18 students at one time learning basic cooking skills. It's a hands-on experience with church members Michelle Edwards and Cindy Bell teaching the students a new dish each week that is enjoyed by all at the end of the evening.

Fiona Preston, a staff worker for Christian Union, commented that "the Christian Union has had a desire to run cooking classes for the students living on campus for a while now and when South East Bendigo approached us with a similar idea we knew it was time to push forward."

The Bishop's Diary...

Monday, 9 April	Diocesan Executive	
Saturday, 14 April	Consecration of John Roundhill	Brisbane
Sunday, 15 April	Visit to Parish of Charlton-Donald	
Sunday, 22 April	Visit to Parish of Heathcote	
Sunday, 29 April	Visit to St Paul's Cathedral	
Monday, 30 April	Clergy Conference	Echuca
Friday, 4 May	Provincial Council	Warragul
Sunday, 6 May	Visit to Parish of Kerang	

Christ Church Castlemaine



Choral evensong

Coming up...

Sunday 6 May at 5.00pm

Canticles: Hylton Stewart in C

Responses: Radcliffe

Anthem: *The Strife is O'er* by Henry Ley

Sunday 3 June 5.00pm

Music to celebrate the 65th
year since the coronation
of Queen Elizabeth II

I was glad by H Parry

Canticles: Stanford in C

Responses: Radcliffe

Anthem: *Thou Wilt Keep
Him* by S.S. Wesley

May-September Evensongs

Beginning at 5.00pm

Refreshments after the service



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- c) establishing and developing charitable work

If your parish or group has a project that meets the above criteria please contact Jackie Mullan - Manager on 5443 4711 to discuss your proposal and obtain a Bencourt Application form.

Applications are due Monday, 23 April.



Follow Bishop Matt on Twitter

See what Bishop Matt has been up to over the past month...



Matt Brain @MattBrain1 · Mar 5

Beginning to think about Sunday's passages. John 3 and Eph 2. It really is quite mind blowing to ponder the reality that God would not just give life, but dwell in us. I guess this is what Paul was reflecting on in 2Cor4 'we have this treasure in jars of clay'. Treasure indeed!



Matt Brain @MattBrain1 · Mar 7

Morning Tea with most of our wonderful Registry Team and soo to be farewelled Dean @AJRoundhill we will miss him greatly but look forward to seeing God work through him as a bishop in Brisbane just as he has worked through him here!



Matt Brain @MattBrain1 · Mar 10

I had a great time with the Swan Hill saints...and even the giant cod! Today's collect is in my view one of the most beautiful ever written. Indeed we are restless until we find our rest in the Everlasting God!



it: you shall love your neighbour as yourself.
Lord, have mercy
Lord, have mercy
Christ, have mercy
Christ, have mercy
Lord, have mercy
Lord, have mercy.
Collect: Everlasting God
in whom we live and move and have our being,
you have made us for yourself,
and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you:
give us purity of heart and strength of purpose,
that no selfish passion may hinder us
from knowing your will,
no weakness prevent us from doing it;
that in your light we may see light,
and in your service find perfect freedom;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever. **Amen.**
Readings



Matt Brain @MattBrain1 · Mar 19

With the dream team at the annual oz bishops' meetings. We've been thinking through what the leaders for the future look like. An essential question and a great mob to be answering it with.





Recognition: Members were presented with 50 and 60 year scrolls

Lady Day celebrated by MU Australia members

Ronda Gault

Lady Day (The Annunciation to the Blessed Virgin Mary) celebrations were held at Holy Trinity, South East Bendigo on 21 March for members of MU Australia within the Diocese of Bendigo.

During the service we were also able to recognise the long service of our members, with three people receiving their scrolls and badges for 60 years of membership and service, and two members receiving their 50 year scrolls and badges.



Guest: The Revd Dr Lesley McLean



Music: Sam Martin & Jenny Furness

We were also delighted to have musicians Jenny Furness at the piano and young Sam Martin with his cello, enhancing our service as members arrived, supporting the singing during the service and also quietly playing as the Eucharist was shared.

The sermon from Greg Harris gave us a perspective on the Magnificat we may not have considered and our guest speaker, Revd Dr Lesley McLean, commented on many things relating to both herself, God and aspects of prayer throughout her address.

A day of reflection, celebration and fellowship was enjoyed by all and we had much food for thought to take with us.

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Around the Diocese

Charlotte Baker set for study tour



Swan Hill College is proud to announce that Charlotte Baker, who is also a part of the Swan Hill Anglican Parish, from Year 11 was selected as a state finalist in the Premier's Department run the 'Spirit of Anzac competition'. State finalists have an opportunity to travel on an overseas study tour.

Charlotte worked for two terms on an essay in response to a question determined by the Premier's Department. To write her essay, she researched all the wars that Australia participated in. Her essay survived the initial cull which meant she then had to participate in a selection day with 80 other students from across Victoria. From this, she was one of 40 selected to represent the state. We are extremely proud of Charlotte and cannot wait to hear about her experience.

- De Rosewarne

Success: Charlotte Baker

Maryborough-Avoca says farewell to Malcolm Thomas

The Revd Malcolm Thomas was recently farewelled by members of the Parish of Maryborough with Avoca, with a lunch following the Sunday service.

Father Malcolm has been an integral part of our parish and a welcome celebrant at all centres. He also endeared himself through his pastoral ministry across the parish and for his impish jokes which always brought a smile, a giggle or even a loud laugh....and there were many of them.

He very happily shared a photo of the ornamental garden windmill and bridge he was planning to purchase with his monetary gift from the parish to enhance his garden. We will miss Malcolm but know that other parishes will benefit greatly from his time with them.



- Ronda Gault

Thank you: Malcolm Thomas

Parishioners complete Trinity Certificate



Complete: Parishioners who finished the Trinity Certificate in 2017

At the end of 2017 a number of parishioners completed the *Trinity Certificate of Theology and Ministry* (now the *Australis Certificate of Ministry*) course as part of the Diocesan Ministry Formation Program and were presented with their certificates by Bishop Andrew.

Two groups had been meeting regularly for two years, with the course teaching theology, biblical studies, church history and Christian living. Parishioners from Maryborough-Avoca, St Paul's Cathedral and St Arnaud were part of the 2017 group to finish the course, with 2018 seeing a number of new faces joining from Maldon, Maiden Gully, Eaglehawk and the Cathedral parish beginning the newly named Australis Certificate.

If you have an interest in the *Australis Certificate*, please contact Margaret Wesley or Heather Marten at the Registry Office.

Around the Parishes

Young church members confirmed at St Mary's Kangaroo Flat

Sunday, 4 March was a special day for two members of our St Mary's 'On the Way' service congregation.

Lochlan and Hugh were confirmed by Bishop Matt Brain at a combined 10.00am service. The boys were well supported by family members, sponsors, friends and parishoners who gathered for the occasion.

"I knew Bishop Matt was going to be a hit with the boys when he mentioned Lego in his first few lines - it's a favourite with the boys" said Revd Tracey.

Following the service, a great morning tea, including a confirmation cake, was enjoyed by all and people had the opportunity to congratulate Hugh and Lochlan and chat with Bishop Matt.

- Tracey Wolsley



Confirmed: Lochlan and Hugh with Bishop Matt

World Day of Prayer centres on Suriname



Centrepiece: Marg Finnemore and Joan Mellahn

The Anglican Parish of Swan Hill hosted the World Day of Prayer service on Friday, 2 March, with this years theme "All God's Creation is Very Good". The South American country of Suriname featured in the centrepiece which included the Suriname flag colours of green, red, white and gold in the floral work depicting the rainforest, and all the products of the country formed part of the display: honey, oil, coffee, sugar, cocoa, fruit and vegetables, fish, turtles and shells.

The music for the service included a powerful rendition of "How Great Thou Art" from saxophone and organ, and the DVD, "Kids at Risk" showed the programs undertaken to deal with the problems faced by children in Suriname. A delightful ecumenical morning tea followed, with all most appreciative of the presentation of the service.

- Contributed

Roof works begin on Christ Church Old Cathedral, St Arnaud

Con Alki and his team have been busy re-tiling the roof of Christ Church Old Cathedral, St Arnaud - we are delighted to have them there but the church filled up with dust so on Palm Sunday we processed to the Hall instead.

The upper part of the hall is the old Common School, the first official building in St Arnaud. The Church of England held services there twice a month from 1861 to 1865 when our church was built so we are returning to our roots for the next four Sundays. We hope the weather holds.

- Jan Harper



Relocated: Palm Sunday was held in the hall due to work on the roof

Castlemaine Memorial Concert

Bishop Ron Stone

A very special concert, known as *The Fr Dan Teed Memorial Concert*, is to be held in Christ Church Anglican Church Castlemaine.

The concert will feature some quite outstanding artists from Neuss in Germany and proceeds will fund equipment for nurses at the Solomon Islands National Referral Hospital. Singers from the Solomon Islands will also perform while refreshments are being taken following the concert.

The Revd Dan Teed, who died several years ago, was a priest who served in the Diocese of Bendigo as Rector of Tongala and as Rector of Castlemaine. Fr Dan also served as a missionary with the Anglican Board of Missions Australia (ABMA) and was priest-in-charge of the Anglican Mission in Sag via Rabaul in PNG.

The concert will not only honour Fr Dan's life and ministry, but will also benefit a missionary cause, which would be close to his heart.

The concert will feature Joachim Neugart, Organ and Piano; Stefanie Sassenrath, Oboe; and Sebastian Klein, Baritone and will be held in Christ Church, Castlemaine, at 5.00 p.m. on Friday, 20 April 2018. Members of the CWA will serve refreshments following the service.

Details:

When: Friday, 20 April 2018

Where: Christ Church Castlemaine

Admission: \$20 and tickets will be available at the door or by booking at www.trybooking.com



THY KINGDOM COME

Kangaroo Flat joins world-wide prayer movement *Thy Kingdom Come*

Tracey Wolsley

Thy Kingdom Come is a global prayer movement that invites Christians around the world to pray for more people to come to know Jesus.

What started in 2016 as an invitation from the Archbishops of Canterbury and York to the Church of England has grown into an international and ecumenical call to prayer. To date churches from over 85 countries will be uniting in prayer from Ascension Day (10 May) to the day of Pentecost (20 May) in praying *Thy Kingdom Come*.

The people of St Mary's Kangaroo Flat are excited to join this world-wide wave of prayer. Parishioners have begun ploughing the ground through prayer and planning. During the 11 days, St Mary's will facilitate opportunities for people

to pray specifically for their loved ones, neighbours, community and the world. Prayer stations will be set up in the church, opportunities for corporate prayer extended and a number of creative prayer walks conducted.

"In praying *Thy Kingdom Come* we all commit to playing our part in the renewal of the nations and the transformation of communities," Archbishop Justin Welby said.

If you would like to find out more check out the *Thy Kingdom Come* website <https://www.thykingdomcome.global>. There is a wealth of resources for parishes to use. Wouldn't it be great if we as a diocese participated together in 2019!

May Thy Kingdom Come in your church, community and parish.

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Cr Rod Fyffe (City of Greater Bendigo)

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Ordination: Bishop John Noble (fourth from left) at his ordination



Bishop: Bishop John Noble as Bishop of North Queensland

Celebrating a life in ministry: Bishop John Noble reaches 50th anniversary of ordination to the priesthood

Bishop John Noble

On the 31 March this year I celebrated the 50th anniversary of my ordination to the priesthood. I have been a deacon for over 52 years having been ordained in late 1965 - that's the whole of my adult life. I will have been a bishop for 25 years on the 29 June this year. What a journey it has been!

The two photos show a change of hats. In the one there is my ordaining bishop, Archbishop Strong of Brisbane, splendid in his mitre, and in the other there is me likewise in my mitre holding the pastoral staff of the Diocese of North Queensland in 2002 at my installation as bishop. The boy (virtually) in the one photo could never have dreamed at the time that one day I would be a bishop myself, ordaining others. Such are the mysterious gracious actions of God.

I was educated in Brisbane at our local primary school and the Anglican Church Grammar School, and was accepted for training as a priest in

Brisbane, commencing at St Francis' College in 1963.

After curacies in Brisbane and Ipswich I went back to study for some years at the University of Queensland. For a time I was in a bi-vocational ministry teaching in secondary schools for a time as well as serving in parishes in Brisbane and Mackay in North Queensland, then I went off to work as a chaplain in two church schools in Adelaide and Brisbane. After this I became Rector of St John's Dalby and St Barnabas' Sunnybank in the Diocese of Brisbane.

I joined the staff of St Francis' Theological College in Brisbane in 1989 as lecturer in mission and ministry, including Christian Education. A real highlight at this time was when in 1992 I went on a Sabbatical in England investigating new forms of clergy training, and at this time also attending the Irish School of Ecumenics in Dublin Ireland.

In 1993 I was elected to be an Assistant Bishop in the Diocese of Brisbane, and was consecrated on St Peter's Day 29 June, 1993. From 1993

to 1999 I was Bishop of the Northern Region, then from 1999 to 2002 I was Director of Ministry Development and Theological Education.

In 2002 I was elected as Bishop of North Queensland, based in Townsville. I served there from 2002 to 2007 before retiring to Melbourne because of ill health. I took a small parish in inner Melbourne and then 'retired' to Bendigo. I continue in ministry in various ways, assisting at the Cathedral and with locum ministries around the diocese.

Over the years I also served the national Church in various ways mostly with education and ministry development. Of course over so many years I have seen a great deal of change in the Church. Some of it good, some of it not so good. Perhaps that reflection will have to await my memoirs.

Then there is my other vocation, to be a husband and father. Lorene and I celebrate our golden wedding anniversary next January, and without the help of my wonderful wife, most of what I have written would never have been possible.

The Three Marys

Richard Stamp

Richard Stamp, a part of the Diocesan service relief clergy, has written the following Easter-tide poem entitled *The Three Marys*.

The Three Marys at the tomb is the name used for a group of three women who came to the tomb of Jesus on the first Easter morning. All four gospels mention women going to the tomb, but only Mark 16:1 mentions the three that this tradition interprets as bearing the name Mary. These are: Mary Magdalene, Mary of Clopas and Mary Salome. The three Marys have been a popular subject in art and stained glass.

The Three Marys

*Backlit, the arched cathedral window glows.
With mediaeval colour in their faces
Three heart-struck Marys, carefully composed,
Look inward into these cavernous spaces
To pierce the holy gloom that time embraces.*

*And did that Bright Angel in the Easter cave
Look through them at a brighter light outside,
That lit the entrance of the rock-hewn grave,
[The earthquake blasted stone now heaved aside],
And tell them news that reason still denied?*

*There were those other caves in times long past,
Painted with figures or Plato's shadows on the wall.
Art and Philosophy combined, to try and cast
Some light on evolution's onward crawl.
Was this the place where meaning dawned for all?*

*And through the lenses of these three stilled faces,
Transformed, awestruck midst grief and instant fright,
Can vision come for other times and places
Where hope has long since faded out of sight?
Backlit at last by resurrection light.*



Jesus Appearing to the Three Marys
by Laurent de La Hyre (1606-1656)



The Last Supper: Painted by Angela Morrisey and featured in the *Feast Pray Love - A Place at the Table* art exhibition at the Collins Street Baptist Church

A place at the table

Angela Morrisey

As Easter approaches and we scoff down Easter eggs and hot cross buns, it is important to remember the trials and tribulations faced by Christ just before and during his death by crucifixion.

I did a painting of one of the important events prior to Christ's crucifixion. My painting is of The Last Supper, the meal Jesus ate with his followers the night before his death. My painting was accepted into this year's *Feast Pray Love - A Place at the Table* art exhibition at Collins Street Baptist Church in Melbourne.

My artwork is a modern take on this ancient scene. I have painted Jesus and his followers, as they would look today: young men of "Middle Eastern appearance". They are talking and sharing in the Passover meal with bread and wine (Matt 26:26-28).

Although the Son of God, Jesus was also just like any other man who had friends who supported him. But just like friends for any other person, he was betrayed and denied by two of them. At the Last Supper, Jesus tells them that one person will betray him and they all wonder who it will be (Matt 26:21-22).

Of course, as we know, it was Judas Iscariot who betrayed Jesus and Jesus knew it (Matt 26:25). His good mate turned against him! That's why Jesus can relate to us in everyday life because he faced betrayal (Matt 26:47-50) and denial (Luke 22:54-62) by two of his own good friends, Judas and Peter.

It really means a lot to me to paint The Last Supper because on Maundy Thursday last year at Holy Trinity Anglican Church we shared in Holy Communion with traditional, flat, Lebanese/Turkish bread along with wine. The bread was passed around on a board and parishioners could take a piece to eat just like they would have done in Jesus' day. I told my Turkish-Australian, Muslim friend about it and she said it was great in that we were "building in community and spirit". I would have to agree.

The Last Supper is a bittersweet scene. On the one hand it's thirteen men sharing in food and fellowship. On the other hand, it's a sad moment for Jesus who predicts the one who will betray him.

The important thing is that we remember Jesus today through Holy Communion during church services.



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Sing Alleluias for the Easter season

Fay Magee

Easter Day often brings out the best in the singing of the congregation. For the rest of the Easter season why not carry on with joyous singing!

To start with there are several "alleluias" in Together in Song which can be sung either as the Gospel acclamation or maybe as a sung response to the opening greeting. The Caribbean traditional song "Halle, halle, hallelujah" (720) is great fun, can be sung unaccompanied as an expression of Easter spontaneity, with perhaps a tambourine or hand-drum.

From the Iona Community (701) is one in a similar mood which can be sung with solo or small group cantor and harmonised response. The Taizé "Alleluia" (702) has the quiet strength of the minor key. With the Celtic alleluia (257), the refrain can be used on its own.

Then there are lots of good songs/hymns we can explore. If there are children present "Big kids, little kids" (719) is definitely a fun song. And once you've learnt the Easter version, remember to use the Christmas verse later in the year.

"Now the green blade rises" (382) uses a French traditional melody which also works well with minimum accompaniment – hand drum, maybe treble recorder/flute. The lyrics for this song are quietly powerful, in the Dorian mode but don't take it too slowly.

"At the dawning of salvation" by modern hymn-writer Jock Curle (392) uses the easy-to-learn tune "Nettleton" and makes a good 'sending-out' song. Guitar accompaniment is also appropriate for these three songs.

If you are using online resources I hope you've found Resoundworship.org (UK). "Hallelujah, Christ is risen" is a simple song which becomes a three-part round or alternatively, one group could stay with the first part and let the singing group take the other two parts.

Sing for joy at Easter time!

clergy contemplations

The Rev'd Dr Margaret Wesley | Parish of Heathcote

Why have you forsaken me?

These words of anguish that Jesus cried out from the cross are distressing for us to hear, even from this distance of almost two thousand years. We find them confusing. We wonder, "How can God forsake God?" and in that question we are confronted by the mystery of the Trinity.

But these words don't just trouble our heads. They trouble our hearts as well. Can we hear Jesus cry, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me!" without remembering times when we have felt abandoned by God; times when we have cried out our own fear and anger and pain?

These words are the first line from Psalm 22, one of the main Scripture passages that the early Christians used to interpret the death of their Messiah. There are so many details



into that world of human pain and struggle. He was not simply fulfilling prophecy. He was being fully human in that darkest and most painful place of human existence.

So now, when we are in that place, we can be sure that Jesus understands: that Jesus has experienced every

“Are there any of us who have never felt that if God really loved us then surely God would rescue us, but instead God seems to be ignoring us?”

of this Psalm that connect with Jesus' final hours that Christians sometimes think its whole purpose was to point to Jesus. But that is not the role this Psalm played in the community that wrote and used it. This Psalm has always been a cry of anguish that anyone can use in times of pain and abandonment.

Are there any of us who have not, at some time, felt ourselves surrounded by "bulls" and "lions" (v12-13), in the form of human enemies or formidable life events? Are there any of us who have never felt that if God really loved us then surely God would rescue us (v8), but instead God seems to be ignoring us (v2)? This Psalm is not just for Jesus, it is for us all to use when we need to express those darkest and most painful of feelings.

When Jesus cried out the first line of Psalm 22 he was entering fully

dimension of human suffering. This means that the moment when we feel most abandoned by God is a moment when we can be most certain that God is with us.

We are not left alone in our pain, and we are not left there forever. There is a turning point in Psalm 22 at verse 21 where the distressed person experiences God's rescue and learns to praise God again.

Similarly, Jesus, who experienced the full depth of human suffering, was not abandoned. On the other side of death, God becomes abundantly present with resurrection life. And just as Jesus identified with humanity in every dimension of our pain, so he has brought our humanity with him through death into resurrection. Just as Jesus shared our death, he now calls all creation to share his indestructible life.



Storm clouds: Jan Harper captured this incredible cloud pattern forming over Christ Church Old Cathedral St Arnaud during the recent stormy weather. Have you taken a great snap of your church or landscape? Send it in!



Steve Geyer



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June Andrew



Diocesan Executive

Monday, 9 April

Clergy Conference

30 April - 2 May - Echuca

Provincial Council

Friday, 4 May - Warragul

Diocesan Executive

Monday, 7 May

Bishop in Council

Tuesday, 8 May - Golden Square

Synod

Friday 25 - Saturday 26 May

Reaching Indigenous Australia for Christ

Hear The Revd Neville Naden,
BCA Indigenous Ministry Officer
at the BCA Victoria Annual
General Meeting and Dinner



Friday 27 April 2018
6.15pm drinks for 6.45pm

St Paul's Boronia, 273 Dorset Road, Boronia
ample onsite parking available

Annual General Meeting will be followed
by a Spit Roast Dinner
Only \$35 per person
Childminding available (please advise)



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