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Working for Love, Hope & Justice

Pew Reflections

REFLECTIONS
ABM

2 February – 28 April 2024

Readings from
An Australian Lectionary 2023
(Year B)

Written by
Clergy and Laity
from the
Diocese of Newcastle

The Scripture is God's way of initiating a conversation; prayer is our response. – Mark Batterson

It is a pleasure to present the February to April set of ABM's Pew Reflections for 2024. This set has been written for us by clergy and laity from the Diocese of Newcastle.

We hope that these reflections will stimulate you to ponder more deeply as you read or hear what God is saying to the Church, and to you, through the Sunday and feast day readings. We hope that they will be a springboard for you to delve more deeply into the Holy Scriptures.

This is why we feast on the Word of God, to understand the love of God, shown in the flesh-and-blood person of God, that we might find our way back to God. – Wendy Speake

In Christ,

Robert McLean

The Diocese of Newcastle



Christ Church Cathedral, Newcastle

Much information about the Diocese of Newcastle can be found by looking at the latest edition of Encounter Magazine. It can be seen at www.newcastleanglican.org.au/encounter-christmas-23-edition

How to use ABM's *Pew Reflections*

ABM's *Pew Reflections* are designed for you to be able to easily cut and paste them into your pew bulletins and apply your own formatting. As every parish bulletin has its own house style it is important that you use a typeface that fits into yours but as a general guide they can be formatted like the two examples below. We try to ensure that they take up about half of an A5 sheet, though some writers are more concise than others.

Example 1



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Pew Reflections

Good Friday

– Friday 3 April 2015

- Isaiah 52.13 – 53.12; Psalm 22
1 Corinthians 1.18-31 or Hebrews 10.16-25
John 18.1 – 19. 42

Good Friday could be called 'Where is God day?' so often is that question posed by the various texts offered today. The answer, where it is given, is in suffering, disfigurement, on a cross, wherever we would not like to look.

- Pray for the lost and the dying. Pray too for ecumenical and interfaith relationships.
- Pray for ABM's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partners, giving thanks for the work they do to further God's mission in the world.

Text: The Very Rev John Roundhill, Dean of Bendigo
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Example 2

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Pew Reflections – February to April 2024

Candlemas

– Friday 2 February 2024

- Malachi 3.1-4; Psalm 24 or Psalm 84; Hebrews 2.14-18; Luke 2.22-40

There can be no doubt that the Temple in Jerusalem would have been awe-inspiring. It visibly reminded people of their religious practices and obligations. Faithful people understood that these behaviours would enable them to be closer to God. Mary and Joseph do this for their son. They believed that God cherished their obedience. As people of the new covenant, we know we are liberated by grace through faith and not through the law. Yet, we also know that rituals and routines can guide us when our faith-journey experiences turbulence.

- Pray for clergy supporting healthy religious practices that enable people to grow in their discipleship.
- Give thanks for the work and witness of the Anglican Church of Kenya

Text: The Rt Rev Peter Stuart, Bishop of Newcastle
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Sunday 4 February 2024

– Ordinary Sunday 5B

[Epiphany 5]

Isaiah 40.21-31; Psalm 147.1-11;
1 Corinthians 9.16-23 Mark 1.29-39

Healing Hands

Our hands can be used for many things, including healing and prayer. Dr Ben Carsons is a brilliant and renowned neurosurgeon with *Gifted Hands*, but without the love of his mother and her faith in him, his life would have been very different.

Without Jesus using his hands for healing and prayer, Simon's mother-in-law and those who are sick or possessed by demons would not have been healed of the things that afflicted them.

How can we use our hands to bring comfort and healing to others? How can we use our hands for prayer?

In the words from *Jesus' hands were kind hands* by Margaret Cropper, "Take my hands, Lord Jesus, let them work for you ... till my hands are kind hands, quick to work for you."

- Pray for all who use their hands to bring healing and wholeness to others or to pray for others.
- Give thanks for the work and witness of the Church of the Province of Myanmar.

Text: The Rev Nicole Baldwin, Cessnock Parish,
Diocese of Newcastle
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EITHER

Ordinary Sunday 6 B – Sunday 11 February 2024

[Epiphany 6]

- 2 Kings 5.1-14; Psalm 30;
1 Corinthians 9.24-27 Mark 1.40-45

The healing miracles of Jesus were always about restoring the person to dignity and fellowship in their community, not only physical and/or mental healing.

When we turn to Jesus in faith he listens, understands, and blesses our whole truth and restores us to community.

How can we bless someone by hearing their truth with grace and compassion and mercy as Jesus did?

- Pray that we may have the patience to promote healing by listening wholeheartedly and compassionately to another's truth.
- Give thanks for the work and witness of the Anglican Church of Japan, the *Nippon Sei Ko Kai*.

Text: The Rev Amanda Brockwell, Diocese of Newcastle
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OR

Sunday 11 February 2024 – The Last Sunday after the Epiphany

- 2 Kings 2.1-12; Psalm 50.1-6;
2 Corinthians 4.3-12; Mark 9.2-9

Mountains are special places. I love that it takes so much effort to hike to the top and then you are rewarded with a spectacular view. In the scriptures God is often encountered at the top of mountains. Peter, James, and John see Jesus meet with Moses and Elijah, then they hear the very voice of God. It's no wonder they want to stay but like all mountain top experiences it must end. When we encounter God in our own mountain top experiences, we need to take that feeling with us, back down into our everyday life.

- Pray for those who struggle daily to experience God in their lives.
- Give thanks for the work and witness of the Anglican Church of Japan, the *Nippon Sei Ko Kai*.

Text: Fr Mark Cooper, Rector of MICA Ministries,
Diocese of Newcastle
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Ash Wednesday – Wednesday 14 February 2024

- Joel 2.1-2, 12-17 or Isaiah 58.1-12; Psalm 51.1-17;
2 Corinthians 5.20b – 6.10;
Matthew 6.1-6 [7-15] 16-21

As we begin our Lenten pilgrimage, we are called into transformation, called into Holiness and called into an intimate relationship with Christ. Today's scripture calls for "all" of our heart as we repent, fast and pray during these 40 days. What one thing will I do every day this year to make Lent a time of transformation?

- Pray that many lives will be transformed by repentance and forgiveness this Lent.
- Give thanks for the work and witness of the Anglican Church of Korea, the *Daehan Seong Gong Hoo*.

Text: The Rev Canon Garry Dodd, Diocese of Newcastle
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Holy Innocents' Day – Saturday 17 February 2024

[Alternative Date]

- Jeremiah 31.15-20; Psalm 124;
1 John 1.5 – 2.2; Matthew 2.13-18

All too often we shy away from reading passages of scripture that are confronting. When reflecting on the Christmas story, we prefer to focus on the happy, non-threatening aspects that do not challenge us to see a more wholistic understanding of the redemptive act of Jesus' birth. Just like Rachel, God – The Mother, weeps over the loss of innocent lives as humanity makes grabs at power and control. Jesus' birth illuminates such darkness and calls it out into the light.

- We pray for all who are caught in cycles of violence.
- Give thanks for the work and witness of the Episcopal Church of Jerusalem and the Middle East, remembering especially the children of Gaza, the West Bank and Israel

Text: The Rev Sarah Dulley, Parish of Maitland,
Diocese of Newcastle
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Lent 1 B

– Sunday 18 February 2024

- Genesis 9.8-17; Psalm 25.1-10;
1 Peter 3.18-22; Mark 1.9-15

The Noah story reminds us that God's covenant is not just with humans but with the whole creation. The old idea of God as a destroyer is moved away from in this narrative, symbolized by the hanging up of the bow that fires arrows upon the earth. God, in covenant with us pledges not to destroy the earth. It's a good reminder that as God's covenant people we are part of the pledge to care for creation.

- We pray for sustainable ways to mitigate global heating.
- Give thanks for the work and witness of Gawura School within St Andrew's Cathedral School in Sydney

Text: Archdeacon Rod Bower, Director of Mission,
Diocese of Newcastle
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St Matthias' Day

– Saturday 24 February 2024

- Acts 1.14-17, 20-26; Psalm 84 or Psalm 113;
Philippians 3.13-21; John 15.9-17

Matthias possibly didn't imagine that he would be called upon to join those first Apostles. Yet when they prayed and asked God to reveal who would replace Judas it fell to him. God knew Matthias' heart and asked him to step up to continue to tell the Good News of Jesus. Through grace he was empowered to answer God's call.

- Holy God, you know the inner workings of our hearts, give us grace and courage to answer your call wherever you lead us.
- Give thanks for the work and witness of the Episcopal Church in the Philippines.

Text: The Rev Scott Dulley, Parish of East Maitland,
Diocese of Newcastle
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Lent 2 B

– Sunday 25 February 2024

- Genesis 17.1-7, 15-16; Psalm 22.24-32;
Romans 4.13-25; Mark 8.31-38 or Mark 9.2-9

There is Abraham and Sarah in the retirement village when God totally disrupts their plans. It's never too late to act in faith. Abraham and Sarah are such extraordinary examples of faithfulness that St Paul refers to them in his letter to the Romans as a model of faith. When it comes to faith there is no retirement age.

- We pray for older people that their faith may be an inspiration to all.
- Give thanks for the work and witness of the Church of the Province of Central Africa.

Text: Archdeacon Rod Bower, Director of Mission,
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Lent 3 B

– Sunday 3 March 2024

- Exodus 20.1-17; Psalm 19;
1 Corinthians 1.18-25; John 2.13-22

The Psalmist, in Psalm 19, speaks in beautiful and timeless language of the grandeur of God revealed in the natural world, and in 1 Corinthians 1:18-25 Paul speaks of the wisdom of God that surpasses human wisdom. In a world in which science and religion have long been seen by many as mutually exclusive, the progress of science can be seen to be leading more to a convergence than a divergence. For as science continues to roll back the frontiers of human knowledge it, paradoxically, simultaneously extends the frontiers of the unknown, and in the process reveals anew, for those who take the time to see, the awe-inspiring mystery that underpins our universe, and the provisional nature of the understanding derived from human wisdom.

- Lord, empower us to see your grandeur revealed in the world around us and, seeing this, strengthen our resolve to husband and nurture our earthly home.
- Give thanks for the work and witness of NATSIAC, the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Anglican Council

Text: Ron Hacker, Diocese of Newcastle
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Lent 4 B

– Sunday 10 March 2024

- Numbers 21.4-9; Psalm 107.1-3, 17-22;
Ephesians 2.1-10; John 3.14-21

The joyous proclamation of the Christian faith is that the reality and capacity of God's love and grace are not hidden from the world nor beyond our ability to see and know. Jesus, the Saviour, the Messiah, put aside the divinity and glory of heaven to be one of us, to be a visible part of this world and to invite the world into a journey of enlightening us to God and God's love. Naming Jesus as Lord begins our journey, and if you know nothing or everything of the bible, these words of Jesus recorded by John will continue to invite you, like Nicodemus, to seek to know how his life, death and resurrection is the power of God's love for our redemption and to eternal life.

- Pray that God's endless love would transform the darkness of our world to light – transforming hatred to forgiveness and freedom, conflict to peace and joy, fear to hope and faith, death to life.
- Give thanks for the work and witness of CAPA, the Council of the Anglican Provinces of Africa.

Text: Jenny, Diocese of Newcastle
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Lent 5 B

– Sunday 17 March 2024

- Jeremiah 31.31-34; Psalm 119.9-16;
Hebrews 5.5-14; John 12.20-33

There are people today, like the Greeks of the Gospel passage, who wish to see Jesus, they don't want to see church wardens, parish councils, bishops, priests or deacons. Still Jesus relies on his followers, us, like he relied on Philip and Andrew to bring others to see him. One of the hallmarks of being a mature disciple, apart from being fed on solid food, skilled in righteousness and trained to distinguish good from evil, is our readiness to introduce others to Jesus.

- God, help us to be mature disciples that show Jesus to others by our love, actions and speech.
- Give thanks for the work and witness of the Anglican Church of Melanesia.

Text: The Rev Christian Ford, Diocese of Newcastle
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St Joseph's Day

– Tuesday 19 March 2024

- 2 Samuel 7.4-16; Psalm 89.19-30;
Romans 4.13-22; Matthew 1.18-25

The Gospel writers tell us little about Joseph. We know however, that he was a righteous and respectful man who would not bring disrepute to his fiancée. A man who could serve not only as an example to men of his time, but, in his treatment of Mary, to men of all time.

- Let us support and give thanks for all organisations who work to keep women safe from domestic violence as well as educate men to treat their partners with compassion and respect.
- Give thanks for the work and witness of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia.

Text: AJH, Diocese of Newcastle
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Palm Sunday

– Sunday 24 March 2024

- *Liturgy of the Palms*
Psalm 118.1-2, 19-29; Mark 11.1-11 or John 12.12-16
- *Liturgy of the Passion*
Isaiah 50.4-9a; Psalm 31.9-18;
Philippians 2.5-11;
Mark 14.1 – 15.27 or Mark 15.1-29 [40-47]

On Palm Sunday, as we begin the journey into Holy Week, our Palm Gospel readings bring to us a picture of Jesus' identity as the King who comes to save us. Many of Jesus' contemporaries longed for a king who would save them from the Romans. But Jesus is a king who saves us in a deeper and more personal way, as he gives his life out for love for us on the cross. In this Palm Sunday scene we see a contrast between Jesus and earthly kings. While the former ride into battle on great chargers, Jesus is a humble king, whose steed is a donkey. No earthly trappings of power for Jesus, nor for us as we follow him. Let us be refreshed on Palm Sunday in our call to follow Jesus in humility, love, and life-giving service.

- Pray for all leaders, that they will lead and bear of a sense of service and humility.
- Give thanks for the work and witness of *La Iglesia Filipina Independiente*, the Philippine Independent Church

Text: The Rt Rev Sonia Roulston, Assistant Bishop,
Diocese of Newcastle
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Holy Monday

– Monday 25 March 2024

- Isaiah 42.1-9; Psalm 36.5-11;
Hebrews 9.11-15; John 12.1-11
- In a few days, on Maundy Thursday, we will remember how Jesus washed the disciples' feet. Was Jesus inspired by Mary of Bethany? When he knelt at their feet and commanded them to also serve in this manner, was he remembering this act of loving service from Mary? When we serve others, may they feel as treasured and honoured as Jesus felt in this moment.
- We pray for all those who serve as Deacons in community.
- Give thanks for the work and witness of Wontul-Bi-Buya College in Cairns and Nungalinya College in Darwin.

Text: The Rev Kate Heath, Diocese of Newcastle
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Holy Tuesday – Tuesday 26 March 2024

- Isaiah 49.1-7; Psalm 71.1-14;
1 Corinthians 11.23-26; John 12.20-36

I personally find Holy week is a time for reflection on one's calling, spiritual journey and how we as Christians serve our fellow human beings, that being with love, compassion, kindness and self-sacrifice. Christ Jesus being our true example.

The reason I believe we do this is because the "Truth of Christ" has been revealed to each of us in different ways and at different times according to His will. But in saying that, we do have a choice. To accept the truth and love of Christ or reject it?

In the Gospel reading we hear of some Greeks who came with those to worship at the festival. According to some theologians, the Greeks that we hear of most likely would have been religious seekers, converts to the Jewish faith, this enabled them to worship alongside the Jews.

Theologian William Barclay remarks that "the Greek was a man with a seeking mind."

The Greeks of the time were interested in the world around them always in search for "Truth."

We hear they came to Philip and said to him, "Sir we want to see Jesus."

We are not sure why they wanted to see Jesus, maybe they were among the crowd when he entered Jerusalem and witnessed people laying down palm branches shouting, "Hosanna" which simply means please save us.

"Hosanna in the highest blessed is he who comes in the name of the lord." Jesus would have been the talk of the town, stories of the miracles that had been witnessed at his hands, and the knowledge of the scriptures that he shared and preached among people, the love and acceptance he gave to outcasts unlike other religious leaders.

Is it any wonder the Greeks wanted to see Jesus? This man who said that he is the way the truth and the life! In this time of Holy week as we journey on to good Friday it maybe good for us to ask ourselves questions about our faith.

Do I really want to see Jesus as the Greeks wanted to?

Do I still have that first love and passion for Jesus as I first did?

Does his word still guide me and lead me into his truth?

- Lord Jesus, we pray for all that seek you and those who want to know you more. Give them true discernment of who you are that they may forge a deeper understanding of your love and truth. In Jesus' name. Amen.
- Give thanks for the work and witness of the Church of Ceylon.

Text: Fr David Hesketh, Diocese of Newcastle
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Holy Wednesday – Wednesday 27 March 2024

- Isaiah 50.4-9a; Psalm 70;
Hebrews 12.1-3; John 13.21-32

Consider paradox. What is it to live in the space between love and betrayal? The sting of love betrayed calls us to draw near, as Jesus does, to the God in whom we place our trust. We trust in Him to redeem our suffering, and through this, to call us into the mystical union of the self and Christ.

- Pray for all of those suffering the hurt of betrayal.
- Give thanks for the work and witness of the *Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui*, the Anglican Church of Hong Kong.

Text: The Rev Kimbalee Hodges, Diocese of Newcastle
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Maundy Thursday – Thursday 28 March 2024

- Exodus 12.1-4 [5-10] 11-14; Psalm 116.1-2, 11-18;
1 Corinthians 11.23-36; John 13.1-17, 31b-35

"If only it were all so simple! If only there were evil people somewhere insidiously committing evil deeds, and it were necessary only to separate them from the rest of us and destroy them. But the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being. And who is willing to destroy a piece of his own heart?" – *Alexander Solzhenitsyn*

How tempting it is to mentally segregate the "good" and the "bad" people! It is so much easier and comforting to think in terms of black vs white or Judas vs Peter. Yet human nature is so much more complex. Thankfully, my role is not to judge. It is to follow the Lord's command to serve and love.

- Pray for those who suffer violence and the repentance of those who inflict harm on others.
- Give thanks for the church's ordained ministers, remembering them as they renew their ordination vows at chrisma masses this week.

Text: CJ, Diocese of Newcastle
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❖ Good Friday

– Friday 29 March 2024

- Isaiah 52.13 – 53.12; Psalm 22;
1 Corinthians 1.18-31 or Hebrews 10.16-25;
John 18.1 – 19.42

Whenever I read the Passion, I am reminded of my ministry in the judicial system. The men and women who have sworn on a book that will confirm “truth” and ultimately be their judgment. The prisoner leaves the court with no hugs allowed, children screaming, partners shattered; through a maze of corridors into a truck travelling to an unknown destination. Alone, condemned, fearful and devastated.

Jesus was one with the oppressed. He suffered brutality and was humiliated. He died.

But what if there is more to see? From Jesus we see Love. Robert Browning said “take away love and our earth is a tomb.”

- Pray for all those involved in the justice system in Australia.
- Give thanks for the work and witness of the Anglican Church of Papua New Guinea.

Text: The Rev Canon Dianne Langham, Secretary of NATSIAC,
Diocese of Newcastle
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Holy Saturday

– Saturday 30 March 2024

- Job 14.1-14; Psalm 31.1-8;
1 Peter 4.1-11; Matthew 27.57-66

Shadows, darkness, uncertainty, touch our soul most days but on Holy Saturday all of these are intensified. Grief is magnified, all consuming. At times we can be ‘sealed in the tomb’ (Mt 27:66). The temptation to escape, to free ourselves from feeling these emotions is very strong and yet as Christians we know that these are passing. Ours is a vocation of patient perseverance as hope emerges.

- Pray for those who live with despair, that they may glimpse and hold on to hope in their darkness.
- Give thanks for the work and witness of the Melanesian Brotherhood, the Melanesian Sisterhood, the Society of St Francis and the Sisters of the Church who minister throughout the Pacific Islands.

Text: Fr Roger Zohrab, Diocese of Newcastle
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The Easter Vigil
– Saturday 30 March 2024

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| • Reading | Responsorial Canticle |
| Genesis 1.1 – 2.4a | Psalm 136.1-9, 23-26 |
| Genesis 7.1-5, 11-18; 8.6-18; 9.8-13 | Psalm 46 |
| Genesis 22.1-18 | Psalm 16 |
| Exodus 14.10-31; 15.20-21 | Exodus 15.1b-13, 17-18 |
| Isaiah 54.9-14 | Psalm 30 |
| Isaiah 55.1-11 | Isaiah 12.2-6 |
| Either Proverbs 8.1-8, 19-21; 9.4b-6 | |
| Or Baruch 3.9-15, 3.32 – 4.4 | Psalm 19 |
| Ezekiel 36.24-28 | Psalms 42 & 43 |
| Zephaniah 3.14-20 | Psalm 98 |
| Romans 6.3-11 | Psalm 114 |
| Matthew 28.1-10 | |

In the Easter Vigil we are reminded of the great arching story of salvation, especially the saving event of the Hebrew people in the Exodus as they move through the waters of the Red Sea. For Christians this is linked, through baptism, to saving event of Jesus' death and resurrection. Tonight, we remember the passing through the waters into freedom.

- We pray for all the baptised, that we may live the risen life.
- Give thanks for the work and witness of the Church of the Anastasis (= Resurrection in Greek) in Jerusalem – also known as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Bless all pilgrims who visit this Eastertide.

Text: Archdeacon Rod Bower, Director of Mission, Diocese of Newcastle
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Easter Day
– Sunday 31 March 2024

- Acts 10.34-43 or Isaiah 25.6-9; Psalm 118.1-2, 14-24 or Hymn to the Risen Christ (APBA, p. 6)
1 Corinthians 15.1-11 or Acts 10.34-43; John 20.1-18 or Mark 16.1-8

We are reminded today that death has lost its sting. We are inheritors of eternal life because Jesus has been raised from the dead. Alleluia! Alleluia! As people of the resurrection, we carry this message of hope into every arena of grief and loss. The cords of limited life and the shadow of death do not ensnare us forever. Jesus gives us the hope of heaven. He invites us to a life of joy and thankfulness. Alleluia! Alleluia!

- Pray for churches everywhere as they proclaim the Mystery of Easter.
- Give thanks for the work and witness of the Community of the Resurrection in the UK and southern Africa.

Text: The Rt Rev Peter Stuart, Bishop of Newcastle
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Easter 2 B
– Sunday 7 April 2024

- Acts 4.32-37; Psalm 133; 1 John 1.1 – 2.2; John 20.19-31

On this Sunday some years ago, I celebrated the eucharist for Iranian Christians in a refugee detention centre. The doors were locked because we had been made afraid of them. This place of torture was designed to keep out all signs of hope and compassion. But guards and razor wire could not keep the risen Lord out. Bread was broken Christ had risen and was present with the world's most vulnerable people.

- We pray for refugees, that that may find a safe home.
- Give thanks for the work and witness of those people and organisations who help refugees and asylum seekers

Text: Archdeacon Rod Bower, Director of Mission, Diocese of Newcastle
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The Annunciation – Lady Day – Monday 8 April 2024

- Isaiah 7.10-14; Psalm 40.6-13;
Hebrews 10.4-10; Luke 1.26-38

Only ten days ago we stood at the cross with Mary, the mother of Jesus, as her dying son entrusted her care to the beloved disciple, just before he took his final breath. The image is visceral and haunting as the one who bore him, who has nursed and nurtured him, in that awful moment is powerless to care for or comfort her child, as he is dying an excruciating and humiliating death. He is “her child” even as he is the Son of God. He is that same child whom the Angel Gabriel announced would be conceived in her through the power of the Holy Spirit, because “nothing will be impossible with God.” (Luke 1:37) What seemed impossible at the annunciation – a virgin who has not had any sexual partner who becomes pregnant, and what seemed impossible at the foot of the cross – a dying man who within three days defies the powers of sin and death once and for all, to rise from the dead, are absolutely possible. In God’s mysterious way this impossible conquering of death announced that Jesus is exactly who he was prophesised to be (cf Isaiah 7:14), and he has fulfilled the promise of his name given to him by the Angel Gabriel: “God saves”.

- We pray for the worldwide Mother’s Union today and give thanks for their ministry with families.
- Give thanks for the work and witness of the Church of North India

Text: The Rev Angela Peverell, Diocese of Newcastle
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Easter 3 B – Sunday 14 April 2024

- Acts 3.12-20; Psalm 4;
1 John 2.15-17; 3.1-6; Luke 24.36b-48

The Psalmist assures us that knowing Christ’s presence takes away shame and brings refreshing, gladness and peace. Today we are reminded that Jesus stood among his disciples and helped them to see his truth. As his witnesses, we stand among others who are disbelieving and still wondering and we show them the presence of the risen Jesus in the world through our transformed lives.

- Lord, help us to welcome your transforming presence in our lives and give us the courage to make you visible to a suffering world.
- Give thanks for the work and witness of the Primate of the Anglican Church of Australia, the Most Rev Geoff Smith

Text: The Rev Natalie Quince, Diocese of Newcastle
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Easter 4 B – Sunday 21 April 2024

- Acts 4.5-12; Psalm 23;
1 John 3.16-24; John 10.11-18

As we follow Jesus, we go with him to the synagogue to hear his teaching as he reveals wisdom and authority. We see Jesus answer cries to be made whole as unclean spirits depart obeying the Holy One of God. We walk with Jesus and continue to grow in knowledge that we may speak the words of God.

- Lord, help us to move beyond words to actions.
Amen.
- Give thanks for the work and witness of the Episcopal Church in South Sudan.

Text: The Rev Jacqui Smith, Diocese of Newcastle
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St Mark’s Day – Thursday 25 April 2024

- Isaiah 62.6-12; Psalm 89.1-9;
Ephesians 4.7-16 or 1 Peter 5.5b-14;
Mark 16.1-16 or Mark 16.16-20

St Mark’s Day is now overshadowed by ANZAC Day. This is a pity because St Mark reminds us of something important when it comes to thinking about war and peace. He brings us Jesus’ commandment to “Go into the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation.” It is not just people who are to be saved but the whole creation. It is the things that create war, greed, thirst for power, tribal tensions, that also contribute to the destruction of the creation that God desires to save.

- Pray for a peaceful co-existence for all creation.
- Give thanks for the work and witness of the Episcopal Church in Sudan.

Text: Archdeacon Rod Bower, Director of Mission,
Diocese of Newcastle
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ANZAC Day (Set I)
– Thursday 25 April 2024

- Micah 4. 1-4; Psalm 46;
Hebrews 10.32-11.1; John 15. 9-17

“No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” Christ Church Cathedral Newcastle holds many treasures, and one of our most precious is the ‘Book of Gold’. Following World War I, the names of all those who had died during the Great War, were beautifully and carefully written in this book. The covers of this book are made from the gold from the jewellery, largely rings, donated by those whose loved ones had died. The book carries the weight of love. In Jesus we encounter such love beyond measure.

- Pray for those for whom the weight of remembrance is heavy.
- Give thanks for the work and witness of the ADF Bishop, the Rt Rev Grant Dibden, and all forces chaplains

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ANZAC Day (Set II)
– Thursday 25 April 2024

- 2 Samuel 22.2-20; Psalm 51. 14-19;
Romans 5. 1-8; John 10.1-21

“Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person – though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die.” Following World War I, the Dean and Chapter of Christ Church Cathedral, Newcastle, was entrusted with the Victoria Cross posthumously awarded to Clarence Smith Jefferies, to care for in perpetuity for the people and community of the Hunter. We take this custodianship very seriously. Each time we tell Jefferies’ story, his sacrifice is heard by a new generation. How much more powerful, then, when we tell the story of Jesus, given for us.

- Pray for peace.
- Give thanks for the work and witness of the ADF Bishop, the Rt Rev Grant Dibden, and all forces chaplains

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Easter 5 B
– Sunday 28 April 2024

- Acts 8.26-40; Psalm 22.26-32;
1 John 4.7-21; John 15.1-8

It is said that St John in advanced age became too frail to preach, so his disciples would carry him into the assembly where he would say simply, “Little children love one another”. Abiding in love is one of the central themes of the writings that take his name. Today we have those themes brought together in the image of the vine. The vine is the sum of the branched. One is indistinguishable from the other. When we truly abide in Divine love, we are indistinguishable from Christ.

- Pray that we all may experience God’s love.
- Give thanks for the work and witness of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Rev and Rt Hon Justin Welby

Text: Archdeacon Rod Bower, Director of Mission,
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