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| 2 October – 25 December 2022 |
| Readings from *An Australian Lectionary 2022* (Years C and A) |
| *Written by* Robert McLean |

*Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you.*

(Colossians 3:16a)

In his *Nineteenth Homily on the Acts of the Apostles*, St John Chrysostom (d. 407) writes, ‘It is not possible, I say

*not possible*, ever to exhaust the mind of the Scriptures. It is a well which has no bottom’.

It is a pleasure to present the final quarter’s set of ABM’s Pew Reflections for 2022.  
  
This set has been written by Robert McLean, who has worked for ABM for the past 14 years.

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.

In Christ,

**Wilnor Flores**  
Church to Church Program Officer

*Robert McLean*

This quarter’s reflections have been written by Robert McLean. Robert has worked for ABM since 2008.



A chorister and later a lay clerk of Christchurch Cathedral in New Zealand, Robert completed a postgraduate degree in theology from the University of Otago in 1996 and has been employed within the Anglican Church in various roles ever since.

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**



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, where ever 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**

*Pew Reflections – Fourth Quarter 2022*

Pew Reflections

Good Friday  
– Friday 3 April 2015

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**2 October – 25 December**

Ordinary Sunday 27 [Pentecost 17]  
– Sunday 2 October 2022

Lamentations 1.1-6; Lamentations 3.19-26 *or* Psalm 137;  
2 Timothy 1.1-14; Luke 17.(1-4) 5-10

Duty seems a rather old-fashioned thing to talk about, though we have heard much about it recently in reference the late Queen. Some of us will be old enough to remember when we heard day by day, week by week Cranmer’s post-communion prayer, beseeching God ‘to accept this our bounden duty and service; not weighing our merits, but pardoning our offences’. Perhaps he had today’s reading from St Luke on his mind as he wrote. As Christians our duty is to do what God asks of us. Happy are we if we can genuinely say ‘We are worthless slaves; we have done only what we ought to have done!’ for it is then that Jesus, our God who took on the form of a slave (Philippians 2.7), calls us his friends.

* Lord, help me to do my duty as a Christian.
* Give thanks for the work and witness of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia.

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Ordinary Sunday 28 [Pentecost 18]  
– Sunday 9 October 2022

Jeremiah 29.1, 4-7; Psalm 66.1-11;   
2 Timothy 2.(1-7) 8-15; Luke 17.11-19

The Samaritan leper was the only one of the ten whom Jesus healed to give him thanks for being restored to full health. Let our prayer each day this week be one of thanks for all God has done for us in our lives.

* Give thanks for everything that Jesus has done for you from your childhood until now.
* Give thanks for the work and witness of the Church of the Province of South-East Asia.

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Ordinary Sunday 29 [Pentecost 19]  
– Sunday 16 October 2022

Jeremiah 31.27-34; Psalm 119.97-104;   
2 Timothy 3.10 – 4.5; Luke 18.1-14

Jesus tells us of the tax-collector’s heart-felt prayer: *God, be merciful to me, a sinner.* This is the basis of what is known as the Jesus Prayer, and is central to the prayer lives of Orthodox Christians throughout the world. May it be our prayer each day this week.

* *Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God: be merciful to me, a sinner* – The Jesus Prayer, beloved by the Orthodox Church.
* Give thanks for the work and witness of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Anglican Council.

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St Luke, Apostle and Martyr   
– Tuesday 18 October 2022

Jeremiah 8.22 – 9.3; Psalm 145.10-18;  
2 Timothy 4.9-17a; Luke 10.1-9

Jesus commands the apostles to go out and tell others that “The kingdom of God has come near to you.” May we find opportunities this week to do that on Christ’s behalf. Let our prayer be that we might become effective ambassadors for our Lord Jesus Christ.

* *O Lord, let me not live to be useless* – a prayer of John Wesley.
* Give thanks for the work and witness of the Anglican  
  Church of Korea, the *Daehan Seong Gong Hoe.*

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Ordinary Sunday 30 [Pentecost 20]  
– Sunday 23 October 2022

Joel 2.23-32; Psalm 65;   
2 Timothy 4.6-8, 16-18; Luke 18.15-30

Jesus tells Peter, ‘Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who will not get back very much more in this age, and in the age to come eternal life’. Help us to realise, as the ‘Prayer of St Francis’ has it, it is in giving that we receive.

* *Lord, help us to understand that it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.* – from the ‘Prayer of St Francis’.
* Give thanks for the work and witness of the Anglican Church of Melanesia

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SS Simon and Jude, Apostles and Martyrs  
– Friday 28 October 2022

Deuteronomy 32.1-4; Psalm 19.1-6;  
Jude 1-3, 17-25; Luke 6.12-16

Jesus chooses the twelve apostles, among them Simon and Jude. May our prayer be that, like them, we may be ready to follow Christ’s call.

* Give thanks for those who follow God’s call, despite the cost, and pray that you may be numbered among them.
* Give thanks for the Melanesian Brotherhood, the Anglican Communion’s largest religious order, established this day in the Solomon Islands in 1925.
* Give thanks for the work and witness of the Anglican Church of Australia, and the National Council of Churches in Australia. May we all be one so the world may believe.

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Ordinary Sunday 31 [Pentecost 21]  
– Sunday 30 October 2022

Habakkuk 1.1-4, 2.1-4; Psalm 119.137-144;  
2 Thessalonians 1.1-4, 11-12; Luke 19.1-10

Today Luke tells us about the encounter between Jesus and Zacchaeus, a rich tax collector, a despised collaborator with the Roman occupiers of the province. People took the opportunity to grumble about Jesus going to Zacchaeus’ house. Do we ever grumble about the good things that God is doing in the world?

* Give praise for all the wonderful things happening in God’s name around the world.
* Give thanks for the work and witness of the Episcopal Church of Jerusalem and the Middle East.

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All Saints’ Day  
– Tuesday 1 November 2022

Daniel 7.1-3; Psalm 149;  
Ephesians 1.11-23; Luke 6.20-31

Today Jesus tells us to love our enemies, do good to those who hate us, bless those who curse us, pray for those who abuse us. As the Burt Bacharach song says, *What the world needs now is love, sweet love, No, not just for some but for everyone.* It’s as true now as it was in Jesus’ day. Not just for some but for everyone.

* Give thanks for God’s love and forgiveness in your life and pray that you can reflect them to others, no matter how badly they may have treated you in the past, no matter how deep your hurt.
* Give thanks for the work and witness of the Church of the Province of Myanmar.

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Ordinary Sunday 32 [Pentecost 22]  
– Sunday 6 November 2022

Haggai 1.15b – 2.9; Psalm 145.1-5, 17-21 *or* Psalm 98;   
2 Thessalonians 2.1-5, 13-17; Luke 20.27-40

When questioned about life after death, Jesus talks to the Sadducees about the God of the living. May we strive to be worthy of that eternal life that God offers us through Jesus.

* *When you had overcome the sharpness of death, you opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers ... We therefore pray, help your servants whom you have redeemed with your precious blood. Make them to be numbered with your saints in glory everlasting.* – from the Te Deum.
* Give thanks for the work and witness of the Episcopal Church of Jerusalem and the Middle East.

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Ordinary Sunday 33 [Pentecost 23]  
– Sunday 13 November 2022

Isaiah 6517-25; *A Song of Isaiah* (APBA p 391);   
2 Thessalonians 3.6-13; Luke 21.5-19

Jesus tells us that in a chaotic world, by our endurance we will gain our souls. May we persevere to the end living lives that are pleasing to God, worthy of the promises of Christ.

* Pray for strength to follow Jesus, no matter how confused or confusing the circumstances around.
* Give thanks for the work and witness of the Anglican Church of Kenya.

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Ordinary Sunday 34 [Christ the King]  
– Sunday 20 November 2022

Jeremiah 23.1-6; *A Song of Zechariah* (APBA pp 10, 425)   
*or* Psalm 46; Colossians 1.11-20; Luke 23.33-43

Today we see what Jesus’ kingship is about, and it’s quite the opposite of the sort of monarchy that we might see, say, in the Downton Abbey film: *Fulfilled is now what David told / in true prophetic song of old, / how God the nations’ King should be; / for God is reigning from the Tree.* Jesus our King has given up his life so that we might win eternal life with him.

* Pray that Jesus may be king of your heart.
* Give thanks for the work and witness of the Episcopal Church in the Philippines.

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The First Sunday of Advent  
– Sunday 27 November 2022

Isaiah 2.1-5; Psalm 122;   
Romans 13:9-14; Matthew 24.36-44

Keep awake … you must be ready: as we begin the Western Church Year we are exhorted to take things seriously by being alert and vigilant. How can we prepare ourselves? By finding ways to be closer to Jesus: in prayer, in reading the Scriptures, in serving others.

* Give thanks that we have time to prepare ourselves this Advent: before Jesus is present as a baby at Christmas, before Jesus is present in bread and wine, before Jesus is present as Judge of the world.
* Give thanks for the Church of Bangladesh, remembering especially today their ministry in a predominantly non-Christian context.

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St Andrew, Apostle and Martyr  
– Wednesday 30 November 2022

Deuteronomy 30.11-14; Psalm 19.1-6;  
Romans 10.8-18; Matthew 4.18-22

Jesus chooses Andrew to ‘fish for people’. The Greek Church calls him Πρωτόκλητος – *Protokletos –* which means ‘First-called’ because in St John’s gospel Andrew is a follower of St John the Baptist who is then the first – along with an unnamed disciple – to follow Jesus. *Christ doth call / one and all / ye who follow shall not fall.*

* Give thanks for the work on intentional discipleship ([anglicancommunion.org/mission/intentional-discipleship](https://www.anglicancommunion.org/mission/intentional-discipleship)) being undertaken by the Anglican Communion.
* Give thanks for the work and witness of the *Iglesia Filipina Independiente*, the Philippine Independent Church.

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The Second Sunday of Advent  
– Sunday 4 December 2022

Isaiah 11.1-10; Psalm 72.1-7, 18-21;   
Romans 15.4-13; Matthew 3.1-12

John the Baptist quotes the prophecy of Isaiah: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight’. How can we prepare the way of the Lord this Advent? As Isaiah tells us, by proclaiming (in deed and in word) good news to the poor, freedom for the prisoners, recovery of sight for the blind, freedom for the oppressed and the year of the Lord’s favour.

* Pray this week for the chance to proclaim to others the fullness of life that Jesus offers the world.
* Give thanks for the work and witness of the *Nippon Sei Ko Kai*, the Anglican Church of Japan.

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The Third Sunday of Advent  
– Sunday 11 December 2022

Isaiah 35.1-10; *Song of Mary* (APBA, pp 31, 435);  
 James 5.7-10; Matthew 11.2-11

Jesus says of John the Baptist that he is the one who has been sent to prepare the way for Jesus himself. The Greek Church calls John the Baptist the Πρόδρομος – *Prodromos – the Forerunner.* This week, pray that like John the Baptist you can prepare the way for Jesus himself in whatever circumstance you find yourself.

* Pray this week for the chance to prepare the way for Jesus to enter the world.
* Give thanks for the Church of the Province of Central Africa, remembering especially the work of the Zambia Anglican Council.

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The Fourth Sunday of Advent  
– Sunday 18 December 2022

Isaiah 7.10-16; Psalm 80.1-7, 17-19;   
Romans 1.1-7; Matthew 1.18-25

*They shall name him Emmanuel, which means, ‘God is with us’.* What a profound concept – that God should take on human form and become one of us – what the poet John Betjeman called ‘the most tremendous tale of all’ in his poem, ‘Christmas’. We wait in anticipation for the Incarnation when God comes to us wearing the clothes of humanity, and allows us to become like God by participating in God’s life. Alleluya! Salvation is at hand!

* Pray this week that you may become more and more like God himself by following the example of Jesus.
* Give thanks for the work and witness of the Anglican Church of Papua New Guinea, remembering especially today the staff and students at Newton Theological College in Popondetta.

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St Thomas, Apostle and Martyr  
– Wednesday 21 December 2022

Habakkuk 2.1-4; Psalm 117;  
Ephesians 2.19-22; John 20.24-29

Thomas said: ‘My Lord and my God!’ – and thus became the first person to address Jesus as God. Despite the doubt for which he is famous, he could see clearly when others could not. Pray this week for the gift of spiritual insight: *Enable with perpetual light / the dullness of our blinded sight.*

* Give thanks for the great gift of the Holy Spirit, and pray that the Spirit may dispel any darkness that prevents you from seeing spiritual things clearly.
* Give thanks for the work and witness of the Episcopal Church of South Sudan. May peace soon flourish in that country.

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The Birth of our Lord – Christmas Day  
– Wednesday 25 December 2022

Isaiah 9.2-7; Psalm 96;   
Titus 2.11-14; Luke 2.1-14 (15-20)

The angel says: *Do not be afraid.* The phrase is used throughout the Bible – in the Hebrew Scriptures, in the Apocrypha and in the New Testament. God does not want us to be timid, afraid, anxious or troubled. God wants us, as the birth of Jesus shows, to come closer. Perfect love casts out fear (1 John 4.18), and today God surrounds us with perfect love in the birth of the Baby at Bethlehem.

* Pray this week that you may show perfect love to all   
  you encounter.
* Give thanks for the work and witness of the Council of Anglican Provinces of Africa.

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