



S^T PAUL'S
ANGLICAN CHURCH
MANUKA
& S^T DAVID'S, RED HILL

ST PAUL'S E-PISTLE

MAINTAINING COMMUNITY DURING THE PANDEMIC



3 AUGUST 2020-
NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Have you missed a previous edition of the E-pistle? They are available on our [website](#).

Contributions are welcome: please email them to ben@stpaulsmanuka.org.au

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FROM THE RECTOR

Dear Parishioners,

We see in today's Gospel passage that small gestures of compassion, generosity and mutuality can lead to great blessing and change. The reproduction value on goodness can be truly astounding. When people co-operate with one another and with God, amazing, miraculous things can happen. When we go it alone, choosing to neither love God or neighbour, we end up in places of deep darkness.



I think that this is an important message for our society to receive as we endure the uncertainties and trials of this pandemic. 'Love thy neighbour' is not just some quaint old-fashioned notion that our complex society and economy have outgrown. This is a fundamental ethical framework and way of life that can lead us back from the dead-ends of self-interest and atomising indifference to compassion and community.

We need only look at very recent history to see the danger and pain that follow when classes of human lives are deemed less valuable than others. Some callous attitudes expressed about the very elderly and frail by those who see themselves as unsusceptible to the coronavirus—those who openly say words to the effect 'they're old and going to die anyway so why should this inconvenience me' – are a sign of this dangerous devaluation of life creeping in. Today's appointed Psalm reminds us, 'The Lord is loving to every one of us: and his mercy is over all his works'. Through Christ we are called to experience that love and to unleash it in our lives, seeing all human life as valued by God and therefore to be valued by us.

Parish Luncheon

Next Sunday 9 August we will observe our 'dedication festival'. It will certainly not be on the scale of last year's, which featured an orchestral mass setting, the Bishop as guest preacher and the Governor-General as our special guest. However, in order to try and mark the occasion with some festivity I am inviting you to a Parish Zoom Luncheon from Midday - 1pm. I encourage you to organise your own nice spread and to have a charged glass ready for a toast or two. We will break up into smaller groups for which will get shuffled around every 10-15 minutes enabling people to 'work the room' as it were. You might even like to make a bit of an effort and dress up smartly for the occasion.

Pax,

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Join our Sunday Zoom Service

just click on this link

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84104942744?pwd=NWdWUDMvS3lwWFVRVDO2cUIVWXhpUT09>

Meeting ID: 841 0494 2744

Password: manuka

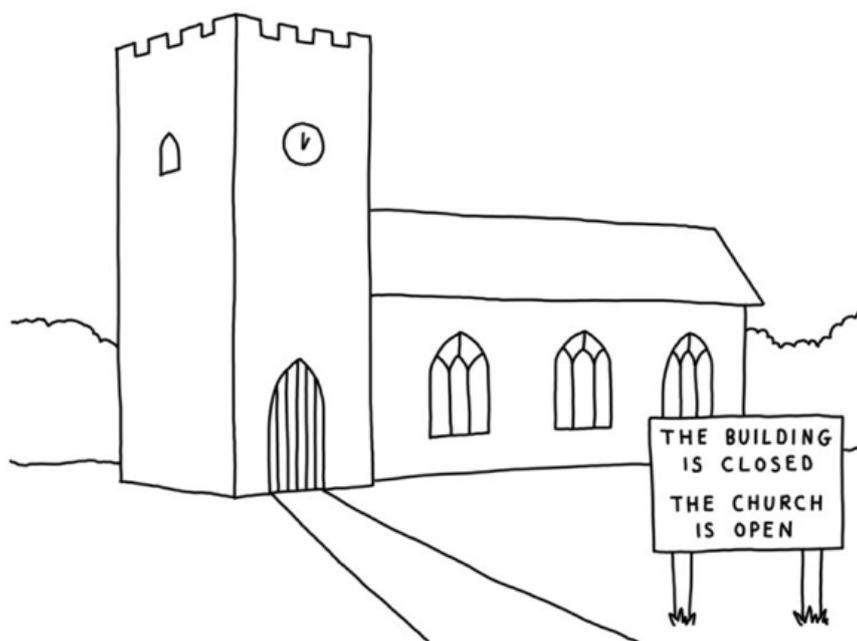
To phone in mobile:

+61370182005,,84104942744#,1#,766416#

+61731853730,,84104942744#,1#,766416#

Dial in: +61 2 8015 6011

The building is closed



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A SERVICE OF PRAISE, PRAYER AND PROCLAMATION

PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING TO GOD

The minister greets the people and reads the sentence of the day

The Lord is near to all who call on him in truth. He fulfils the desire of all that fear him,
hears their cry, and saves them. *Psalm 145.18–19*

The following or a similar thanksgiving may be said together.

**Gracious God, we humbly thank you
for life and health and safety,
for freedom to work, leisure to rest,
and for all that is beautiful in creation and human life.
But, above all, we praise you for our Saviour,
Jesus Christ,
for his death and resurrection;
for the gift of your Spirit;
and for the hope of sharing in your glory.
Fill our hearts with all joy and peace in believing;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

The Collect of the Day

O God, giver of life and health,
whose Son Jesus Christ has called us to hunger and thirst for justice:
refresh us with your grace,
that we may not be weary in well-doing,
for the sake of him who meets all our needs,
Jesus Christ our Saviour;
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

This prayer or a suitable alternative is said in preparation for the reading and teaching of Scripture.

Thank you, Father, for making yourself known to us
and showing the way of salvation
through faith in your Son.
We ask you now to teach and encourage us
through your word,
so that we may be ready to serve you;
for the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF GENESIS 32.22-31

The same night he got up and took his two wives, his two maids, and his eleven children, and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. He took them and sent them across the stream, and likewise everything that he had. Jacob was left alone; and a man wrestled with him until

daybreak. When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he struck him on the hip socket; and Jacob's hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. Then he said, 'Let me go, for the day is breaking.' But Jacob said, 'I will not let you go, unless you bless me.' So he said to him, 'What is your name?' And he said, 'Jacob.' Then the man said, 'You shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with humans, and have prevailed.' Then Jacob asked him, 'Please tell me your name.' But he said, 'Why is it that you ask my name?' And there he blessed him. So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, 'For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life is preserved.' The sun rose upon him as he passed Penuel, limping because of his hip.

PSALM 145.8-9, 14-21

The Lord is gracious and compassionate:
slow to anger and of great goodness.
The Lord is loving to every one of us:
and his mercy is over all his works.
The Lord upholds all those who stumble:
and raises up those that are bowed down.
The eyes of all look to you in hope:
and you give them their food in due season;
You open wide your hand:
and fill all things living with your bounteous gift.
The Lord is just in all his ways:
and faithful in all his dealings.
The Lord is near to all who call upon him:
to all who call upon him in truth.
He will fulfil the desire of those that fear him:
he will hear their cry, and save them.
The Lord preserves all those that love him:
but the wicked he will utterly destroy.
My mouth shall speak the praises of the Lord:
and let all flesh bless his holy name, for ever and ever.

A READING FROM THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS 9.1-8

I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience confirms it by the Holy Spirit—I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my own people, my kindred according to the flesh. They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; to them belong the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, comes the Messiah, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen. It is not as though the word of God had failed. For not all Israelites truly belong to Israel, and not all of Abraham's children are his true descendants; but 'It is through Isaac that descendants shall be named after you.' This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as descendants.

A READING FROM THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST MATTHEW 14.13-21

Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. When

it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, 'This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves.' Jesus said to them, 'They need not go away; you give them something to eat.' They replied, 'We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish.' And he said, 'Bring them here to me.' Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Reflection

This Affirmation of Faith may be used.

**We believe in one God,
who made and loves all that is.
We believe in Jesus Christ,
God's only Son, our Lord,
who was born, lived, died and rose again,
and is coming to call all to account.
We believe in the Holy Spirit,
who calls, equips and sends out God's people,
and brings all things to their true end.
This is our faith, the faith of the Church:
We believe in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

CONFESSION OF SIN

'Come now, let us reason together,' says the Lord. 'Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson they shall be like wool.'

Isaiah 1.18

Let us now confess our sins to almighty God.
**Heavenly Father,
you have loved us with an everlasting love,
but we have broken your holy laws
and have left undone what we ought to have done.
We are sorry for our sins
and turn away from them.
For the sake of your Son who died for us,
forgive us, cleanse us and change us.
By your Holy Spirit,
enable us to live for you;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

The minister declares God's forgiveness.

God desires that none should perish,
but that all should turn to Christ, and live.

In response to his call we acknowledge our sins.

God pardons those who humbly repent, and truly believe the gospel.

Therefore we have peace with God, through Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

THE MINISTRY OF PRAYER

Responsory - Psalm 145:10-11. 15-16

R. You open your hand to feed us, Lord; you answer all our needs.

All creation will thank you, and your loyal people will praise you.

They will tell about your marvellous kingdom and your power.

You open your hand to feed us, Lord;

you answer all our needs.

Everyone depends on you, and when the time is right,
you provide them with food.

By your own hand you satisfy the desires of all who live.

You open your hand to feed us, Lord;

you answer all our needs.

Prayers of intercession are offered concluding with the Lord's Prayer.

Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name,

your kingdom come,

your will be done,

on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins

as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial

and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours

now and for ever. Amen.

CONCLUDING RITE

This or a similar prayer may be said.

Loving God, we thank you for hearing our prayers,

feeding us with your word,

and encouraging us in our meeting together.

Take us and use us

to love and serve you

and all people,

in the power of your Spirit

and in the name of your Son,

Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The service may conclude with this blessing.

The God of peace equip you with everything good for doing his will, working in you what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

‘FROM THE PULPIT’: LIMPING TOWARDS SUNRISE

THE REVEREND ELAINE FARMER

... a man wrestled with Jacob until daybreak. When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he struck him on the hip socket; and Jacob's hip was put out of joint ... [The man] blessed Jacob [who said] '... I have seen God face to face, and yet my life is preserved.' The sun rose upon him as he passed Penuel, limping because of his hip.¹

Most people, it seems to me, except for daredevil thrill-seekers, like order and predictability in their lives. A little risk is fine, the occasional thrill of a mildly defiant action – like the old woman wearing purple and rattling her walking stick along the park rails² – but most people don't want to live with chaos. We're more interested in controlling chaos. Furthermore, we rather expect God to keep chaos at bay, clean up mess, solve problems – BUT, the irony is that some of God's best work tends to get done in the middle of chaos.

Think Jesus and Calvary. Think Elijah fleeing from Jezebel's murderous threats. Hunkered under that broom tree, fearful and ready to toss in the towel, he begged God to kill him but God simply demanded to know what on earth he thought he was doing hiding from his life and God's purpose for him.³ Or think Mary, frightened out of her wits by an angel, all incandescent light and smelling of heaven. Have I got a deal for you! The opportunity of a lifetime! Or would it actually be scandal, stone-throwing and death. *'The Lord is with you,'* the angel promised⁴ but, quite understandably, Mary played for time. Time wasn't given Paul, trudging that road to Damascus.⁵ No warning, just a bolt of divine light. Paul flat on his face. Mouth full of dust. Eyes blind and empty. Heart pounding fit to burst in his chest.

Chaos. God can be in it. God can work with it. For Jesus, chaos in the clash of heaven and earth and the creation of a new way of being. Chaos swirled round Elijah, Mary and Paul, turning their lives upside down. But they survived. White-faced, robes singed, hands trembling, no doubt, but we don't hear talk of their fighting back. *'Remove this cup from me,'* Jesus had prayed to God⁶ before his arrest but he'd accepted approaching death as his lot. Mary wanted to fill in at least some blanks in the angel's story but, like the others, she fell in with the purposes of God. Which Paul went on to preach. They were on God's side.

But Jacob? Jacob was on his own side and nobody else's! Jacob was a lying, cheating, manipulative scoundrel. He was also clever, patient, and self-aware but definitely not nice. No way could Jacob have said to God, as the Psalmist said, *'If you try my heart, if you visit me by night, if you test me, you will find no wickedness in me; my mouth does not transgress'.⁷*

Was it God who visited Jacob in the night? Was it God who tested him by the ford of Jabbok? And, if it was, why favour such an apparently unworthy soul? Why bless him? These kinds of questions have always intrigued, and answers to them are as impossible to grasp as mist in the morning. Wherein lies part of the eternal attraction of the Jacob/Israel story. As long as answers are elusive we can hope – though we might know better – that the hand of judgment might move on, that we might slip by overlooked, our secret sins still secret. Not busted. Saved but spared the pain of self-examination. Thank God.

So was it God who wrestled Jacob? A man, Genesis says simply, no italics or quotations marks or underlinings to alert us to any specialness about this creature. Did Jacob think at first it was his wronged brother Esau? Or a lawless vagabond lurking in the dark to prey on unsuspecting travellers? Are there traces here of ancient myths and animism, hints of still believing that every natural object had its own spirit, some benign, some jealous, some evil? Did Jacob encounter a demon or an angel? Or was it God, glorious and mighty? Whatever Jacob first thought, by the time the first streaks of day coloured the sky, Jacob knew his was

no ordinary adversary. This encounter, this story, reeks of the presence of God. It is dark and threatening, full of mystery and power. To Jacob, the man with whom he wrestled was *Elohim!* The Almighty God of Righteousness, come to force him, Jacob, to a reckoning of the state of his soul.

And Jacob's soul was in a pretty parlous state. God knew there was wickedness in Jacob, that his mouth was full of lies, but was not willing to give up on him. Twenty odd years earlier Jacob had diddled his older brother Esau of his inheritance. We all know the story. Esau reduced to submissive dependence. His towering rage. His oath of vengeance. Jacob fleeing for his life. But – repentant Jacob was not!

On the run he'd wandered in the wilderness. Alone, he'd thought, but God was there. When Jacob slept he'd dreamed of that ladder to heaven still named for him. Jacob's Ladder and a vision of angels, the messengers of God, coming and going between heaven and earth.⁸ Jacob had woken and the sense of holiness around him had seized his heart. *'How awesome is this place!'* he'd whispered. *'This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.'*⁹ But, ever the schemer, he'd dismissed fear and pondered how he might manage this divine intervention. *'If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and clothing to wear ... then the Lord shall be my God.'*¹⁰ Still the unrepentant, uncowed shyster, he'd tried to cut a deal. *'Be my God, and of all that you give me I will surely give one-tenth to you.'*¹¹

God, of course, doesn't do deals. God had covenanted with the people long before. *'I am God Almighty,'* God had said to Abram. *'Walk before me, and be blameless and I will make my covenant between me and you, and will make you exceedingly numerous ... No longer shall your name be Abram, but [you] shall be Abraham; for I have made you the ancestor of a multitude of nations.'* To this covenant, God had been utterly faithful. But Jacob, complacent in his piety, had simply gone on his way. He named the place where he first encountered God Bethel – in Hebrew 'House of God' – and left, to follow other gods and craft his fortunes with them.

Now, years later, God came to Jacob again. And this time found a fearful, uncertain man. Longing to return to his family and his home. Terrified that the brother he had wronged would at last take vengeance and see Jacob in his grave. He realised his cleverness and ambition and years of labour had gained him a much-loved wife, two mistresses, eleven children and herds of camels, sheep, goats, cattle and donkeys but ... he had no place he could call home, no place where his old bones could rest in their time. His wives and children he sent across the river, along with his servants and herds. And he was alone with the memory of the wrongs he had done, fear of what would be now, and chaos hovering in the darkness around him, paralysing his soul.

None of the self-knowledge with which Jacob now wrestled wiped out his weakness, or the baseness of his soul. But a frail and guilt-ridden soul is no problem to God, who works with whatever order or chaos comes along. God saw chaos roiling in Jacob's heart, stirring up the sediment of a life lived by ruthlessness and greed. But God also saw in Jacob respect for his ancestry, faith in God and trust in the great inheritance of the divine promise to Abraham and his own father Isaac: land, descendants like the dust of the earth, blessings.¹² Those blessings were to have flowed from Abraham, then through Isaac – now God was poised to extend the promise to Jacob, the flawed one. But Jacob had to fight for it, just as he had to fight unruly pride and the sly determination to control.

So through the long black night hours they wrestled. An even test of strength; no winner here. Until dawn flushed the sky and *the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, [and] he struck him on the hip socket.*¹³ Wounded, Jacob clung to his adversary, panting through gritted teeth, *'I will not let you go, unless you bless me.'*¹⁴

In response, no familiar words of divine blessing but a name change. As God had changed Abram's name to Abraham to mark new life in a new world, so now Jacob became Israel, 'the one who strives with God'. Jacob had prayed at Bethel, 'If God will be with me ... then the Lord shall be my God'.¹⁵ Now he had the answer to that prayer: God-with-him – always. Jacob had struggled, with himself and with God. He would always be wounded, his 'strength by limping sway disabled'¹⁶ but God had held up a mirror to him and Jacob had seen, not just his flawed and sinful self, but also Peniel, the face of God.¹⁷

Jacob's story, and ours, is about the God who sees all the grubby passion and shabby unloveliness of human greed and intrigue and is moved to say to us as he said to Jacob, 'Know that I am with you and will keep you wherever you go ... for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you'.¹⁸ This God looks on the faces of all the heroes, anti-heroes, bit players and silent bystanders in every human drama, and sees in each only the face and heart of the beloved.¹⁹ This God graciously accompanies every frail and wounded human soul that we might each limp into the sunrise, and never fear the night.

ENDNOTES

1. Title based on Richard Holloway's book, *Limping Towards the Sunrise. Sermons in Season. 'On Reflection Series'*, Saint Andrew Press, Edinburgh, 1996, p. 8.
2. Genesis 32: 29b-31, adapted.
3. From poem 'Warning' by Jenny Joseph.
4. 1 Kings 19:1-10.
5. Luke 1:28.
6. [needs ref]
7. Luke 22:42.
8. Psalm 17:3.
9. Genesis 28:12.
10. Genesis 28:17.
11. Genesis 28:20-21.
12. Genesis 28:22.
13. Genesis 28:13-14.
14. Genesis 32:25.
15. Genesis 32:26.
16. Genesis 28:20-12 adapted.
17. William Shakespeare, Sonnet LXVI.
18. Based on Walter Brueggemann *et al*, *Texts for Preaching, Year A*, Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville, Kentucky, 1995, p. 427.
19. Genesis 28:15 adapted.
20. These sentences are from M.E. Farmer, "Jacob's Story", a sermon preached 11 July 1999, at St Paul's Manuka, Canberra ACT.

SAINTS ALIVE!

28 JULY: J.S. BACH (1685-1750)

J.S. Bach, who died on 28 July 1750, may not be listed in the official calendar commemorations of the Church, however on the strength of his legacy as a composer of church music of the highest calibre, Bach gets a special mention in this week's Saints Alive.

THE GOD-CENTREDNESS OF THE COMPOSER JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH THE REVEREND DR JOHN A. MOSES

Even here in remote antipodean world the influence and achievement of the greatest German composer of spiritual music is appreciated, indeed venerated. We are enabled, in spite of our isolation, through the educational lead of our superb musicians to experience Bach's sublime, timeless music that resonates with the human spirit and re-connects us with the divine author of the universe.

Johann Sebastian Bach was one of those towering geniuses like Beethoven or Händel who has made an indelible impact on the spiritual life of generations of people throughout the world. Even though most of us grew up in the Australian bush we could be acquainted with Bach through our hymn books, and I know how delighted I was when I first heard, as a student in Germany, the St. Matthew and the St. John Passions, that I was already familiar with such great chorales as "O sacred head sore wounded" from the version in the English Hymnal. One did not get to hear much original Bach, though, living as we did in the remote north, except occasionally on the radio with such well loved chorales as "Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring" and "Sleepers Awake!". Even in a great city like Brisbane one would have to say that Bach for many years took second place to Händel because of the established English tradition of performing the Messiah during Advent. But that gradually changed with the foundation of the Bach Society some fifty years ago.

My point is that people hungered for truly spiritual music and so great efforts were made to connect us with our spiritual roots via performances of selections of Bach's choral music. It has since become part of our religious culture to expect that along side Händel the church music of J.S. Bach will be performed regularly in our larger urban centres. In Germany, as one would expect the situation is remarkable. It is simply a given that at Easter and Advent both churches and secular venues will be presenting the great oratorios and cantatas. It is an essential part of the culture. And this was made doubly clear during the forty year period of Communist control in East Germany.

Communist regimes have a paranoia about Christianity, and in East Germany the eras of rule under Walter Ulbricht and Erich Honecker were characterised by an insidious persecution of the Churches. Indeed, the ministry of culture and religion in the communist German Democratic Republic wanted to ban public performances of Bach's music because of its religious content but found that it was impossible to implement such a ban because Bach's music had become such an ingrained part of cultural life. The idea that one could get through the church's year in a city like Leipzig where Bach had so long served as cantor in St Thomas' Church (1723 until his death in 1750) without performances of his music was unthinkable. And that was true of every other East German city and indeed even tiny villages. In fact one can argue quite plausibly that the Protestant consciousness of many thousands of East Germans during the Communist tyranny was sustained by the regular public performances of Bach's music. And, of course, this served to make them more strongly resistant to the destructive absurdities of Marxism-Leninism. Bach, and one

would have to add Luther, have triumphed over the inhumane brutalities of so-called Real Existing Socialism. And this brings me to an essential point: Bach was an orthodox Lutheran though some claim that there is a strong pietistic dimension to Bach's work. But the real point is that Bach earnestly believed that his music proclaimed the eternal presence of God among us. A Lutheran scholar in Adelaide, John Kleinig, reminds us that:

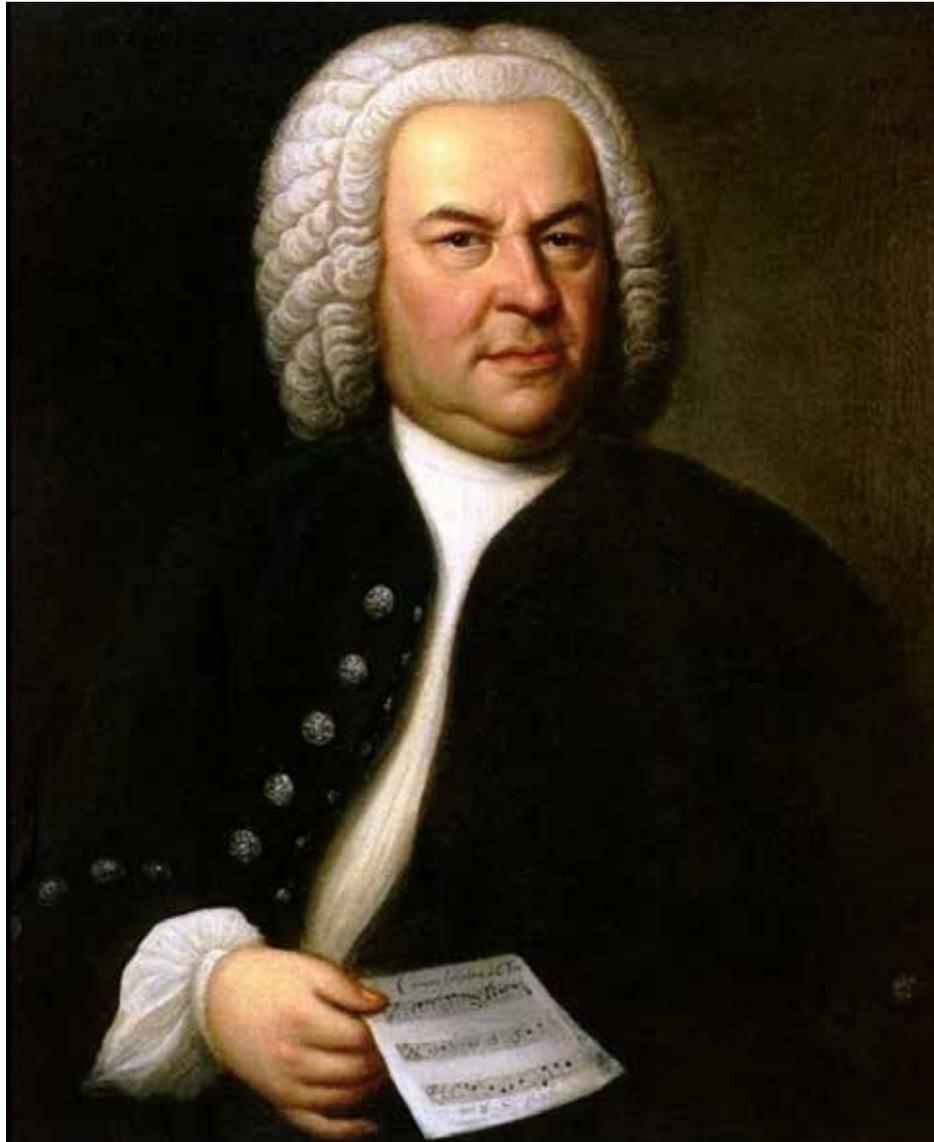
[The] connection between access to God's presence and the performance of sacred music is shown most vividly by the account of the dedication of the temple by Solomon in 2 Chronicles 5:11-14. This story tells us that after the priests had placed the ark in the inner sanctuary of the temple and had come out of the temple, the full Levitical choir began to sing a song of praise to the accompaniment of lyres and harps. As soon as they began to sing the Lord's song, the glorious presence of the Lord filled the temple. But the glory of the Lord was not seen, because it was hidden in a cloud. The story therefore indicates that the glory of the Lord was revealed to the people audibly to the human ear in the song of praise rather than visibly to the human eye. The performance of praise in music and song disclosed the hidden presence of the Lord and announced his acceptance of his people. It was for this reason that Bach prized this story. It summed up the theological significance of all true church music. He affirmed the importance of this story for him as a church musician by inserting the comment in the margin of his Bible: 'NB: In devotional music God is always present with his grace'.

There are a handful of other comments by Bach that can be found in his annotated Bible that indicate his conviction that, as he wrote, "...music has been mandated by God's spirit". But even without these comments a listener to Bach's works would have to be very obtuse not to be moved by the intensity of the composer's devotional purpose. The notion that Bach was a hack musician who, as it were, mechanically wrote church music simply because he was paid to do so, is patently absurd, though apparently, some writers have maintained that. On the contrary, for Bach the ultimate end of music was the honour of God and the recreation of the soul. (Wolff, 8). This is scarcely surprising because he had been brought up with the Eisenach Hymnal of 1673 which contained 612 Lutheran hymns. (Wolff, 41) Bach's formation, then, was intensely and unequivocally in the tradition of 17th century Lutheran piety that was focussed on the majesty of God and His infinite mercy as demonstrated on Calvary.

Bach was always aware from his knowledge of the Bible that the presence of the invisible God at Hebrew worship was prompted by music, and the divine presence was signified by the appearance of a cloud. Now, for Bach the Lutheran theologian, the metaphysical presence of God's grace replaced the visible proof of the physical cloud. And this grace was to Bach no less manifest than the actual sound of music that would bring it about provided the music was devotional, attentive and directed toward the one divine purpose. So Bach lived by the deep conviction that his gifts as a composer enabled him to advance an argument for the existence of God, perhaps the ultimate goal of his musical science. (Wolff, 339)

If we neglect the pursuit of perfection in our employment of music in worship we are in danger of losing our "sense of the numinous", the reality of the spirit, and hence fail to realise the potential of our essential humanity. True Christian worship, then, has to employ sublime music, otherwise it is not serving to make us aware of the Incarnation itself. This is by no means a bold claim. We live in a country where most people treat the mystery of the Incarnation with scant concern. They oscillate between crass materialism and a bogus spirituality based on some ill thought-out scheme designed to provide a short-cut to fulfilment, indeed between a sordid realism and escapist fantasy. They fail to get the message that the true path to the goal they are seeking is the way of the Cross. They refuse to accept that it is Christ who holds all things together. In Him everybody and everything has its proper place.

That the world does not realise this is very much our own fault. We Christians have yet to act in the unity for which Our Lord in His high priestly prayer in St John's Gospel, so earnestly prayed. Quite obviously, churches that do not promote unity, who are not in fact capable of dialogue, have lost the plot, to say the very least. It would seem, I believe, to most of us, that a good starting point would be for all of us to realise, as the World-War II Archbishop of Canterbury, William Temple, once pointed out, that Christianity is the most material of all religions. That is because it affirms God's creation of the physical world, God's activity in history, His incarnation in Christ Jesus and His death and resurrection from the dead, as well as our resurrection and the final redemption of all creation.



Finally: Sacred song and music bear witness to the union of the physical and spiritual in the Christian faith. In this holy sound is celebrated God's physical involvement with us through the Incarnation, as well as our physical involvement with God through Christ. When we sing the Lord's song led by great Christian composers like Bach we rejoice no less in the marriage of heaven and earth. Through such spiritual music we are involved in the Incarnation itself and thereby we anticipate our complete physical incorporation into the Godhead at our resurrection. As arguably the greatest of all Christian composers Johann Sebastian Bach's music transports us to the portals of heaven itself.

(For further reference, see Christian Wolff, Johan Sebastian Bach: The learned Musician, New York: Norton Press, 2000).

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

ON 'THE CULT OF SELFISHNESS'

DR ADA CHEUNG

In an op-ed published in the New York Times on 27 July 2020, Paul Krugman cogently analysed the politics of what he described as 'America's cult of selfishness'. He writes:

It's the principle of the thing: Many on the right are enraged at any suggestion that their actions should take other people's welfare into account.

This rage is sometimes portrayed as love of freedom. But people who insist on the right to pollute are notably unbothered by, say, federal agents tear-gassing peaceful protesters. What they call "freedom" is actually absence of responsibility.

This mindset, fortunately, has not taken root in mainstream Australian politics, but neither is it unknown in wider society. Arguably more disturbing than various social media videos of people behaving badly in hardware stores, is a recent podcast from ABC Radio National, titled *Kindness and Longevity*.

One of the guests is Marta Zaraska, a journalist who has reviewed a large number of research papers and come to the conclusion that social connection is as important to one's longevity as a healthy diet. This is intended to be a heart-warming piece, but is it, really? There is something distinctly depressing, if not actively chilling, about suggesting that taking other people's welfare into account should be motivated by one's fitness - or worse, 'self-care' - regime. Imagine telling a child, 'now play nice, because that's as good for you as eating vegetables'. (If this actually happens, please don't tell me as I'd rather not know.) Shouldn't one behave as a responsible member of society simply because that's the decent, moral thing to do? Or should this be seen as a tacit acknowledgement that pro-social behaviour is too much to ask of people?

Don't misunderstand me; I have no beef with enlightened self-interest as a concept; it is, after all, what underpins the system of international law. If appealing to people's base instincts is what it takes to achieve the outcome of a just, kinder, society, then that end would certainly justify the means. Except that it seems highly unlikely that highlighting the link between kindness and longevity would actually work. After all, we all know about the other determinants of health - exercise, diet, not smoking, etc - and still, at the population level, consistently refuse to take those actions which are within our control. Is doing justice and loving kindness really so much easier than getting up early to exercise, or ignoring that tasty treat, that being aware of the benefits will change behaviour?

So, what would it take? Krugman's glum conclusion is that the coronavirus 'has revealed the power of America's cult of selfishness. And this cult is killing us.' Somehow, I doubt even that grim lesson will be enough, either.

ON 'CELTIC WORSHIP' AND SUNDAY SPIRIT

THE REVEREND ANNE TURNER

During this Pandemic and all the restrictions to our lives as we knew them, not only have I missed regular church services but especially the 5pm service of Celtic worship including Holy Communion twice a month. This time of worship began at St David's to introduce a more informal style of worship for all age groups.

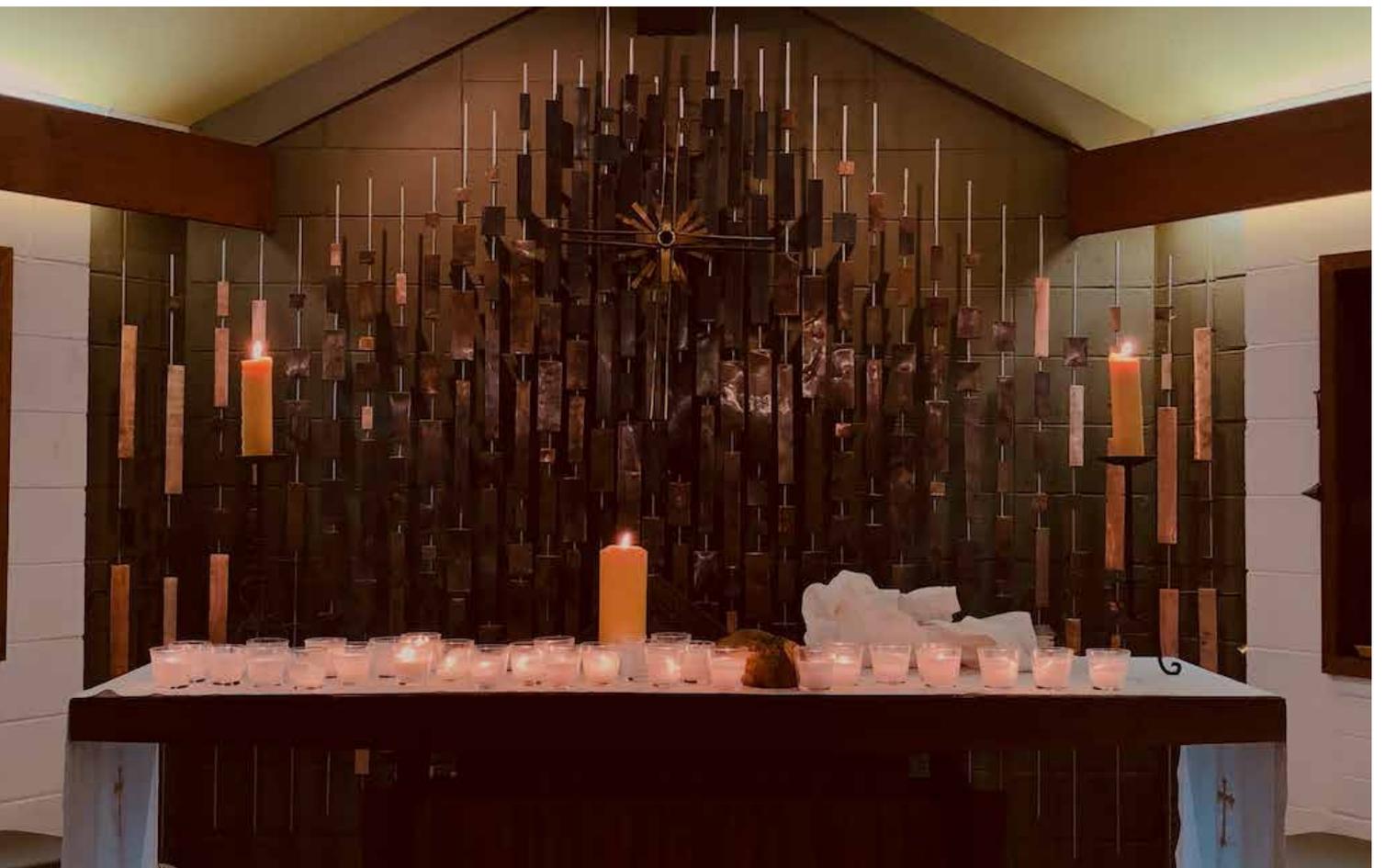
It was a service which appealed to me because there was an emphasis on silence as well as music, liturgy and candle light. I think there had been a hope it might attract younger people. As time went on, such is the way of the Spirit, it seemed St David's was not the best or easiest place for this service. The worship had developed a more contemplative and meditative style.

The service was eventually moved to the sanctuary at St Paul's. My soul was nurtured in a way I desperately needed at that time. I have always found the connection I feel with others in communal silence is even stronger than with the use of words. I was committed to organising the wheelchair taxi weekly and so touched because the Rector with help of Les and Bruce had organised a ramp for my wheelchair to take me into the sanctuary. Without that I could not have been part of this precious time.

I am confident at the right time we will return to such a service. In the meantime I use quite a number of Celtic resources to assist in my ongoing inner journey of faith in solitude. Ever since reading John O'Donohue's wonderful book called "Anam Cara" not only has he become one of my favourite writers but on reading and hearing about Anam Cara I realised this is the ministry I had been exercising as a Priest and indeed on reflection all my life. It was as if in those two simple words I could see how God had led me to something of my truest self and my truest calling. I call my ministry "soul care" or "soul friendship" from this concept of an Anam Cara.

Anam Cara in the Celtic world was the soul friend. In the early Celtic Christian Church a person who acted as a teacher companion or spiritual guide was called an Anam Cara. Anam Cara was originally someone to whom you confessed, revealing the hidden intimacies of your life. With the anam Cara you could share your innermost self, your mind and your heart. There is no cage for the soul. The soul is a divine light that flows into you and into your other. In everyone's life there is a great need for an Anam Cara, a soul friend." These words were given to me in a framed work of beautiful calligraphy.

Throughout my life I have had many Anam Caras and I am privileged to have been and continue to be a soul carer/friend; an Anam Cara, to others. This ministry is not for the special few even though God has called women and men to specialise in what we more commonly refer to as a Spiritual Director or spiritual Guide. At its heart I would think many who may read this have been, or are Anam caras to special people in their lives and vice versa. This is in a more informal sense than for example me seeing my Spiritual Director on a regular formal basis. It is most important all who undertake this work have a soul carer of their own and so on. (Even my youngest son calls me his "Anam Cara"!)



ON 'GOD'S GIFT OF FAITH'

YVONNE MILLS

We are urged to increase our faith. God tells us, Faith is His gift to us, but as with all gifts, we need to accept with gratitude, recognise its usefulness, then apply it to the use for which it is given. If we are given a gift that someone dear has chosen for us, knowing our need for its usefulness, we lack gratitude, respect and kindness towards the giver, if we put it away on a shelf to admire, or in a dark cupboard, where it is forgotten and allowed to wither and die.

God, as the Divine Giver, knows exactly when we need faith for a particular purpose, and like a loving parent He provides it in correct measure, to be used according to His instructions. We would be foolish to beg like immature, bold, foolish, children, crying out repeatedly "I want, I want!" when the loving parent knows what we ask for is not in our best interests. Sometimes the answer is "Not yet, wait till I say now is the time" or perhaps "This is not for you. I have a different plan for you. My plan for you would be to allow my gift of faith to grow as a sturdy, upright plant, able to withstand the storms and difficulties of the climate and conditions in which I place it, to gain further faith, and produce flowers and fruit to be selected when ripe, to offer to a friend."

Perhaps the gifts of faith are like seeds to plant in our garden: If they are left to lie dormant, they may lose their viability, and certainly not be able to grow, unless planted in fertile soil, supplied with water, food and sunlight. We give thanks for this insight and ask, for grace to accept your gifts, to understand the purpose for which they are given, heed the instructions provided for their most effective use, and then put them to work, when and how You plan.

A picture comes of us, seeking the faith God promises, rather like whipping a stubborn mule into activity, shouting Go! Go! as though by constantly reminding our loving Lord of His promise to heal us, we prove our trust, and to motivate Him, to heal our ills, troubles and lacks, without waiting for Him to divulge His particular intention for us, or His Time Frame.

It is good to remember God's promises but perhaps better to be careful of an over-abundance of reciting them to ourselves. Perhaps we are trying to convince ourselves to believe that God will naturally do for us, what we ask and expect of him. It could be possible He has a different plan.

These are things to consider: how God answers our appeals to him for healing, for physical, emotional or spiritual ailments or for anything else we ask. When we look about, we see, many are healed, but some are not, confusing and troubling for those who prayed, together with all who prayed with them in faith, when they did not receive what they sought.

Some have gone on to be wonderful witnesses of faith in God's love, wisdom and kindness, while still carrying the physical marks of their illness. Other have continued for years in fruitless expectation of a physical cure, while others are lost in disappointment and bitterness.

The question is perhaps sometimes we are asking, pleading, or even demanding, faith for healing, when maybe we should be asking for faith in God, His wisdom and purpose – to receive a different healing, a measure of contentment, joy and calm in the midst of pain and difficulty, which could be a greater witness to the world, than actual healing of a physical malady. God may even have lessons for us to learn through suffering.

Job suffered far more than any of us could imagine, but God was in control! God had named Job as a man, blameless and upright, who feared God and turned away from evil, and yet he suffered.

In the end after God spoke to Job, he replied:

I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eyes see, therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes.

God's purposes are often mysteries that our human frame cannot grasp. How can we know what is in the mind of God? But, if we seek Him, He will reveal Himself and His purpose, to enable us to follow His way.

ON LOVE, FORGIVENESS AND HUMILITY : A BOOK REVIEW

DR INGRID MOSES

The Five People you Meet in Heaven, a much acclaimed book by Mitch Albom, an American author and journalist, is not a book about the Christian heaven. It was Hugh Mackay's article in the last E-Pistle which resonated with me as it expressed some of the same sentiments and values I found in this book. We read the book in my book group and all of us – ten women from different countries and backgrounds – got something positive out of it.

A very 'ordinary' old man, Eddie who can see little value in his past life dies trying to save a little girl from a crashing cart in an amusement park ride where he had been the maintenance man for many years.

He wakes up in 'heaven' and meets five different people in the state he was as that time, a kid, a POW in the Philippines, meeting an old woman after whom the pier where the amusement park was located was named, his future wife at a wedding where they met, and on his death a little girl who had died in a fire Eddie had set when escaping in the Philippines.

Each of these stories has a lesson: (1) We are all interconnected in some way, everything happens for a reason, though the reason might not be obvious to us. (2) Sacrifices, small or large impact on other people's lives. (3) Our anger, whatever the origin of it, poisons us and we need to release it and forgive those who we believe cause that anger. Not knowing fully the other person(s) who caused that anger may do them an injustice. (4) Love endures and the love of those who have died loving us impacts us greatly. (5) There is a purpose to our life, even though we may not know it. In the end our self is defined by our past actions, decisions we have made and the people we have loved and who have affected us.

For me the great lesson was humility. As Hugh wrote, we do not know how others are affected by us withholding a smile, a hug, a handshake, an invitation to join in an activity.

Many people have asked me after meetings why I was frowning disapprovingly. In fact I was not, I was just concentrating. But when I concentrate I look disapproving, not neutral. I wonder how many people I have put off from voicing their opinion. I wonder how many people have felt rejected because I have withheld that smile, that hug, that invitation. Over more than thirty years of leadership positions and positions of authority, how often have I impacted on people not in a way I intended? And with family and friends – have I always been as loving and accepting as I should have been? I know the answer and humbly ask all of those I have inadvertently offended to forgive me.

Mitch Albom's *The Five People you Meet in Heaven* is said to be heavily influenced by a series of conversations he had with his old college professor Morrie Schwartz in 1995 when Morrie was dying. Mitch reconnected and visited him every Tuesday, compiling after Morrie's death the reflections on "the importance of the small things in life, the listening to other, the caring for others, the small details of a life that in the end are more satisfying and important to others than the trapping of material success." "So many people walk around with a meaningless life. They seem half-asleep, even when they're busy doing things they think are important. This is because they're chasing the wrong things. The way you get meaning into your life is

to devote yourself to loving others, devote yourself to your community around you, and devote yourself to creating something that gives you purpose and meaning.”¹This is a Christian message after all.

I borrowed the book *Tuesdays with Morrie*, published in 1997. The book topped the NY Times bestseller list for 205 weeks, was made into a film and got many awards. I look forward to reading it.

THE BODY BEAUTIFUL: HAIR

THE REVEREND ELAINE FARMER

PART II: HAIR ...MORE THAN CROWNING GLORY

'Behold,' said Jacob to his mother, Rebekah, *'Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man'* (Genesis 27:11). Interesting that, of all the poetic wonders in the bible, such a prosaic statement is one of the most remembered, and long before modern comedians discovered its usefulness. Hair, on both men and women, is beautiful, varied, an ideal tool for adornment, an inspiration for creativity and full of potential for religious art and symbolism.

In secular artistic symbolism, a single lock of hair falling forward on the forehead represents opportunity (following what 'falls before you?') and a naked woman wringing out wet hair represents Venus (remember Botticelli's painting?). Ancient custom is reflected in art generally: unmarried women wore their hair long and flowing, not bound (artless innocent freedom or making use of an alluring attraction?); prostitutes wore theirs bound (the sensual allure of hair being 'let down?'). Religious art picked up and expanded this symbolism: virgin female saints are often given long flowing hair but it's also meant as a symbol for penitence. It's impossible not to speculate about that dual symbolism. The penitential dimension is clear in Luke 7:38-38: *a woman in the city, who was a sinner... stood behind [Jesus] ... weeping, and began to bathe his feet with her tears and to dry them with her hair.* This story (found in the other gospels but the hair reference in particular is in John 12:1-8) encouraged hermits and others penitents not to cut their hair.

But focus on hair appears long before we reach the New Testament. Leviticus in the Old Testament, for example, has whole chapters bristling with hairdressing tips and, presumably given the absence of a good anti-dandruff shampoo, a lot about leprosy and 'the itch'. Hair must not be dishevelled, warns Moses (Lev. 10:8) unless, that is, a person is found to be leprous when it's OK but wherever they go they must cry out, *"Unclean, unclean"* (Lev 13:44). And fancy hairstyling is out: the men are told *you shall not round off the hairs on your temples or mar the edges of your beard* (Lev 19:27). But it's not all prohibitions and 'the itch'. Grey hair is declared to be the beauty of the aged (Proverbs 20:29)—one in the eye for beautiful youth—and the beloved of The Song of Solomon has *hair ...like a flock of goats, moving down the slopes of Gilead* (4:1 & 6:5).

As for individuals, Esau is not the only hairy one in Old Testament records. Elijah too is remembered for more than his mantle. When King Ahaziah asked about Elijah he was told, *"He is a hairy man, with a leather belt around his waist"* (2 Kings 1:7-8). Rather a bold answer to give a king in those days, especially one with pressing personal problems. It's unclear why Elijah's hair was notable but quite clear in the case of David's much loved son, Absalom whose beautiful hair is lauded: *Now in all Israel there was no one to be praised so much for his beauty as Absalom ... there was no blemish in him. When he cut the hair of his head ... when it was heavy on him ... he weighed the hair of his head, two hundred shekels by the king's weight* (2 Sam 14:15). Was he inordinately proud of this handsome mane? We'll never know but he got his head caught in the branches of an oak tree and there he was murdered (2 Sam 18: 9-15). Perhaps his hair got tangled in the branches and contributed to his unfortunate end.

It should be added that hair, or more accurately its treatment, is also a tool for suppression. Many Moslem women cover their hair as do many Orthodox Jewish women. Once upon a time, Christian women wore hats to church. Why, on all three counts? Hair is part of God-given creation. If one thinks in those terms, the obvious question is why create hair if only for it

to be covered up? Another obvious question is whether hair covering for women is about something altogether different: an imposition by men who found women's hair attractive, alluring and distracting and therefore demanded covering by women to protect men from temptation.

Of course, many women who cover their hair do so in all sincerity as a religious offering and not because covering is forced upon them. But we are still left with a range of possible motivations: religious interpretation, coercion, fashion and custom. There is apparently no requirement in the Koran that women cover their heads which suggests an evolved mix of customs and theological preferences that is hard to untangle. Similarly, I suspect with the Orthodox Jewish practice of women cutting their hair short and wearing wigs. More certainly in a Christian context, hats for women in church had more to do with custom and fashion than God. Changing times, changing customs and wearing a hat in church has become more about the weather and dressing-up for a high day than anything else.

Sometimes women change their minds about covering up. One day in Jakarta a young woman called on me and, though I knew I had met someone of her name, I could not place her. It took some time into our meeting before the penny dropped. When I had first met her she was wearing the hijab. Now her hair was free, flowing and, as it happened, lushly beautiful. I asked her about her changed and her response was unexpected and intriguing. "I went on the haj," she told me, "and I learned that I am acceptable to God just as I am. That's when I took off the hijab." Fascinating but I suspect she did not make the change while in Saudi Arabia but once she'd returned to Indonesia. There are always some customs and practices that need to be respected and I for one would wear a head scarf in Saudi Arabia, for example.

Finally, in the realm of fairy stories, perhaps the prince needed to have checked his facts carefully before calling out to the princess in the tower, "Rapunzel, Rapunzel, let down your hair!" In the Muppets version the princess shouts, "What? Speak louder! I can't hear you!" If she'd covered her hair she would never have been rescued!

A last suggestion: try to see the film 'Unorthodox'. It's a brilliant film and gives a glimpse into Orthodox Jewish world, including the women wearing wigs.

PART III: HAIR ...THE LONG AND THE SHORT OF IT

No account of hair and the bible would be complete without mentioning Samson and the devious Delilah (Judges 16). Not really a very appealing character, Samson. His story suggests an arrogant spoiled brat. Be that as it may, Samson's long hair was the source of his strength, so the story goes, and when Delilah cut it as he slept on her lap, his strength and power left him. His hair grew back and his strength returned and, as we all know, he pulled the temple of the pagan god Dagon down on the heads of the Philistines, winning the day and killing them all but dying in the process. Not a good hair day but then the man was a martyr to his hair.

Samson brings us to Nazirites, a special group of Israelites under vows, of whom Samson was one (not a good one). We have, for example, the prayer of the childless Hannah (1 Sam 1:11): *O LORD of hosts ... give to your servant a male child, then I will set him before you as a Nazirite until the day of his death. He shall drink neither wine nor intoxicants, and no razor shall touch his head.*"

(See also Num 6:5). A Nazirite's vows were not necessarily lifelong. Vows ended because their implied promise was fulfilled or through 'defilement' (by touching a dead body or other unclean substance as, for example, Samuel and the lion's carcass from which he took the honey—Judges 14:9); hair was then shaved off and offered as a sacrifice to Yahweh (Numbers 6:9-19).

There were very strict rules laid down for priests in ancient Israel with regard to hair. According to Lev 21:5, baldness was out (translations that say 'bald spots' suggest medieval tonsures and they were definitely a no-no); so was trimming beards or temple hair. For priests, no loose disheveled hair (Lev 10:6 & 21:10) and, says Ezekiel 44:20, no shaven heads and no 'long hairs'. Actually, I'm hoping not to go bald and have no immediate plans to grow a beard but I'm not sure what biblical literalists do with all these ancient ways. Meanwhile, I shall keep an eye on my clean shaven colleagues. Shaving was permitted only for 'the itch' (probably ringworm or leprosy), according to Lev 13:33 and 14:8-9, though it was regularly associated with mourning (Job 1:20 and Jeremiah 7:29 are just two examples).

Moving forward into the Christian era, hair as the symbol of penitence has perhaps been most strongly associated with Mary Magdalene. Long hair, sometimes covering her whole body, has been the religious artist's attribute for poor Magdalene. The tradition has maligned her as a prostitute but there's nothing in the bible to justify that. Long hair is also an attribute of the penitent desert-dwelling Mary of Egypt (possibly 5th Century) whose hair grew long to replace her worn out clothes, and of the virgin martyr, Agnes, stabbed through the throat in Rome about 350CE.

It's interesting to note that Christian culture has not consistently demanded that hair, one of the beauties of God's creation, be covered up. In fact, Paul went so far as to ask *does not nature itself teach you that if a man wears long hair, it is degrading to him, but if a woman has long hair, it is her glory?* (1 Cor 11:14) Hair was given women, Paul laboured on, for a covering (1 Cor 11:15), but, at the same time, he went on and on demanding women wear a veil (1 Cor 11:2-16). Their hair might be a glory but showing it was a disgrace. Poor Paul! Caught between secret admiration and displaying moral fibre! But he's not alone. Within Orthodox Judaism and Islam women's hair is frequently covered by a wig (Jewish) or scarf (Muslim) the stance is different for men. Conservative Jewish and Muslim men's hair is not cut, witness, for example, the attitude of the Taliban in Afghanistan who systematically punished men for not having beards. And, by the way nor do Sikh men ever cut their hair.

THE ECCLESIASTICAL MYSTERY TOUR

DR ADA CHEUNG

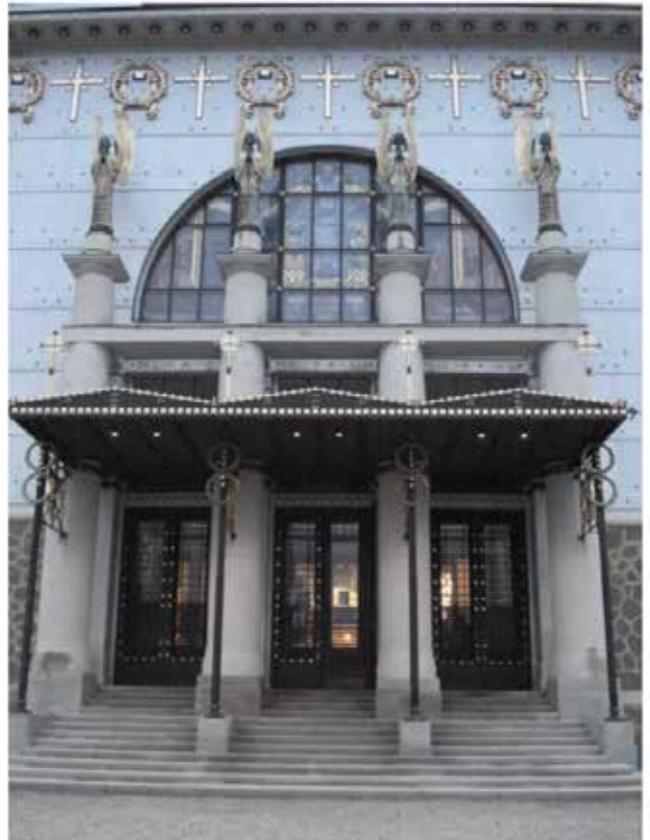
Where am I?

Location: Europe



Date: Constructed 1903-1907

Denomination: Roman Catholic





Last week, or Tardis called (due to a sheer alphabetical fluke) at Hagia Sophia, in Istanbul.



WELCOMING YOU BACK TO CHURCH ON SITE - FROM THE RECTOR



Our plans to reopen have been put on hold due to the current COVID-19 outbreaks in Melbourne and Sydney. While the ACT remains relatively unaffected at this stage, we considered 'watchful waiting' was the prudent course. What follows is information that will be helpful for when services do resume, hopefully in the not too distant future. Please keep in mind that these protocols are designed to minimise the risk of infection for all who come on site in compliance with our COVID-Safe Plan.

FEEL FREE TO STAY AT HOME

Firstly, no one should feel pressured to return to services in the church at this stage. We understand and respect that many people in our community of faith may prefer not to join a physical gathering like a church service at this time. We urge those who are at high-risk of infection to exercise due caution by staying at home. We will be continuing our weekly online Zoom service and also streaming the service held in the Church.

If you do wish to book to attend a service, please take note of these requirements. We also encourage you to download the COVID-Safe app.

YOU MUST STAY AWAY IF UNWELL

- You must not book or attend services if you have any cold or flu-like symptoms, have been overseas in the last 14 days or have been in contact with anyone showing signs of Coronavirus eg. fever, dry cough and sore throat.
- If you have booked to attend a service and you or a member of your household are unwell on the day, you must not attend. Please notify us ASAP of your inability to attend by emailing bookings@stpaulsmanuka.org.au or phoning 0499 704 665 so that we can offer your place to someone else.

YOU MUST PRACTISE GOOD HYGIENE

- use the provided hand sanitiser when entering and exiting from all Parish facilities
- wash your hands often with soap and water.
- use alcohol-based hand sanitisers when you can't use soap and water
- avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- avoid unnecessarily touching things
- stay away if you are unwell

YOU MUST KEEP SOCIAL DISTANCING

Social distancing is one of the best things we can do to stop the spread of the coronavirus.

- follow social distancing directions from ushers and markers on the floor in areas where people line up (at main entry to church, to receive Communion, and if queueing to enter / exit church premises and at the toilets)
- keep the required 1.5m distance from each other
- do not shake hands, greet others with hugs/kisses
- do not change from your assigned pew during the service

BOOKING FOR SERVICES

When services resume, attendance will be by booking in order to comply with social distancing restrictions. An email will be sent to parishioners with the weekly E-pistle with a link to the booking site for upcoming services. Due to the limited numbers, I would ask that you do not treat this like booking for highly sought after concerts, but that you limit yourself to one service per fortnight. In August we will introduce a mid-week service at 11am on Wednesdays and I would encourage those who are able to attend mid-week to take that option to maximise opportunity for those who are restricted to Sundays. Any parishioner without internet capacity should contact me or the Church Wardens for assistance.

WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOU COME BACK TO CHURCH

The impact of COVID-19 means that there will be some significant changes in the way we celebrate our common worship. While we will all appreciate being back in church together, unfortunately some of our former practices need to be modified or suspended. We will also need to be very disciplined about following the directions of the COVID-Wardens.

ON ARRIVAL - SCREENING

When you arrive at St Paul's you will need to be signed in by one of our Covid-Wardens who will have a roll of all bookings for that particular service.

You will also be asked some basic screening questions about your state of health prior to admission. You will then be escorted to a seat in the Church. You must not change seats.

These screening requirements mean that it will take a little bit of time to admit worshippers to the Church. Please make sure you arrive at least 15 minutes before the service is scheduled to begin so that everyone can be screened in a timely fashion.

THAT'S NOT MY PEW!

Only half of the pews in St Paul's will be available for use. Anglicans tend to be creatures of habit and have been known to be territorial about pews. Unfortunately, with space at a premium, worshippers will need to sit in the place to which they are escorted.

- Worshippers must only sit in the designated zones (marked by a sticker) in each pew.
- Only household groups may sit together, all others must maintain social distancing in their pews.
- While we are normally unfazed by children moving about the church, for reasons of social distancing it is important that small children don't freely roam about the church.

ADMINISTRATION OF COMMUNION

- The sacrament will be distributed to the congregation only under the species of bread.
- The administering clergy will have sanitised their hands and worshippers will be requested to do the same on approach to receive the sacrament.
- An usher will prompt worshippers row by row as to when they may approach the Communion Station. Please remain in your pew until invited to move.

LEAVING THE CHURCH

To avoid congestion in the aisles at the conclusion of the service, ushers will direct people when it is time for them to move to the appropriate exit. Please do not leave your pew until invited to do so by an usher.

There will not be any post-service refreshments and there cannot be any mingling inside the church at the end of the service. Social distancing must be maintained at all times on parish premises.

LITURGICAL AND OTHER CHANGES

For the time being these changes will be in place:

- there will only be one 9am Sunday service and a Wednesday 11am service to commence in August
- attendance will be restricted to the maximum number in compliance with the 4m² rule
- there will be no communal hymn singing or sung responses however there will be organ music and cantors
- ushers will control movement in and out of the church
- there will be no offering collections – electronic giving is preferred but cheques can be placed in the provided collection box
- there will not be a Greeting of Peace
- there will not be votive candle stations
- Services will be livestreamed via Zoom / Youtube for those unable to be present.
- there will be only be one lector at each service
- normal service rosters will not be resuming for the time being
- there will not be any refreshments following the service and the kitchen facilities will not be available. You are welcome to chat outside afterwards but social distancing must be observed.
- the water dispenser is not available – worshippers should bring their own water bottle
- COVID-Wardens will be on duty at all services to ensure compliance with our COVID-Safe plan.

Despite the changes and restrictions, it will no doubt be uplifting and encouraging to once again gather as a community of faith in our Parish Church. In the meantime, if you have any concerns please contact me directly ben@stpaulsmanuka.org.au

NEWS AND NOTICES



Seminar Series: The proposed seminar series for 2020 was disrupted by the pandemic shut-down. The Rector will now be convening an online Seminar Group from August - an opportunity to discuss some shared reading on ecclesiastical and theological themes. The first topic will be Anglicanism and the primary text is *Anglicanism: A Very Short Introduction* by Mark Chapman from the Oxford Very Short Introduction series. It is available in print or as an e-book - please get your own copy. The online seminar sessions will be held on Wednesday evenings at 7.30pm. If you are interested in participating please email ben@stpaulsmanuka.org.au



LINKS

<https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/join-us-service-daily-prayer>

<https://www.epray.com.au/Pages/Company/MobileApp.aspx>



FINANCES

With the suspension of Sunday services and activities, our Parish will experience a significant disruption to its income. This is because a significant portion of our giving is still taken from the plate in Church, fundraising and hall hire. We are extremely grateful to those parishioners who are using the direct giving system through bank transfer. Other parishioners are urged to take up the option of direct transfer for giving purposes. Our account details for direct giving are below

(the receiving institution appears as Indue Ltd):

BSB 702389 Account 005200454 .



PARISH CONTACT DETAILS

Parish Office *currently closed*

(02) 6239 6148 office@stpaulsmanuka.org.au

www.stpaulsmanuka.org.au PO Box 3417 Manuka ACT 2603

Rector

THE REV'D DR BEN EDWARDS

0499 704 665 ben@stpaulsmanuka.org.au (*day off Monday*)

Assisting Clergy

THE REV'D ALIPATE TUINEAU

(with responsibility for St David's Red Hill & Aged Care Ministry)

(02) 6295 3381 alipate@stpaulsmanuka.org.au (*day off Friday*)

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