

## Special Services

**Ash Wednesday 26 February**

10.30 am & 7.30 pm

**World Day of Prayer 6 March**

2.30 pm @ St. Peter's

**Palm Sunday 5 April**

9.30 am Blessing of Palms

**Maundy Thursday 9 April**

7.30 pm Last Supper,

Washing of Feet

**Good Friday, 10 April**

9.30 am Good Friday Liturgy

**Easter Day**

6.00 am Service of the Light

9.30 am Celebration Eucharist

11.30 am Chinese Easter Service

2.00 pm Dinka Easter Service

## PARISH CLERGY

**Vicar.**

**Rev SHANE HÜBNER**

(0432 681 177)

shane.hubner@hotmail.com

**Sudanese Priest**

Rev'd Joseph Arou 0431 541 535

lokagai@hotmail.com

**Chinese Priest**

Rev'd Esther Zhang 0405 602 439

**Family Minister**

Barbara Plumridge 9898 5193

**Honorary Clergy**

Rt Rev'd George Hearn, 9840 7816,

Rev'd Betty Bracken, 9939 5881

Rev'd John Stockdale 9890 8388

Rev'd Harry Kerr 9893 4946

ahmkerr@hotmail.com

Rev'd Alastair McKinnon-Love

0438 323 059

## IN THIS ISSUE

The Vicar writes.....	p 1
Ash Wednesday, Holy Week & Easter.....	p 2
Social & Fundraising.....	p 2
Men's Breakfast.....	p 3
World Day of Prayer.....	p 3
Mothers' Union.....	p 3
Christmas Eve 2019.....	p 4
Humour.....	p 4
God in the Fires.....	p 5
Mallacoota New year's Eve	p6
An Impossible Dream.....	p 8
Reading for Lent .....	p 9
Women in India.....	p 10
Family Violence in Australia	p 11
Mothers' Union in Vanuatu	p 12

# GOOD NEWS

好消息

WELPIATH



Parish Magazine of the Anglican Parish of Box Hill February 2020

## The Vicar Writes

Welcome to the first edition of the 'Good News' for 2020. As you are not doubt aware this summer has been a nightmare for many across our land and I encourage all to continue to pray for and support those effected by adverse weather – be that fire or flood. You can continue to give to the bushfire appeal organised by

Anglicare Victoria: <https://www.anglicarevic.org.au/donation/bushfireappeal>. I have also included

in this edition of the

'Good News' the sermon

I preached on 5 January

2020 on the Feast of

Epiphany as I wrangled

with the question of

where is God with

disaster strikes.

Come the end of

February and our parish

will enter the season of LENT. This

will start with services at 10.30am and

7.30pm on Ash Wednesday

(Wednesday 26 February 2020).

Starting the next day Thursday 27

February and continuing all

Thursdays in Lent (and repeated on

Saturdays) will be out Lenten study:

'Saying Yes to Life' by Ruth Valerio.

Dr Ruth Valerio is Global Advocacy

and Influencing Director at Tearfund.

An environmentalist, theologian and

social activist, Ruth holds a doctorate

from Kings College London and

honorary doctorates from the

Universities of Winchester and

Chichester. She is Canon Theologian

at Rochester Cathedral and her home

church is part of the 24/7 Prayer

Network. She enjoys living

sustainably – practising what she

preaches and inspiring others as she

does so – in the south of England

with her family. She is the author of

'L is for Lifestyle: Christian living that

doesn't cost the earth' and 'Just Living: Faith and community in an age of consumerism.' This book is the Archbishop of Canterbury's recommended Lenten study material for 2020 and I am looking forward to leading parishioners in study as we delve into what Ruth has to say!

Holy Week services are as follows:

Palm/ Passion Sunday: 5

April 2020 – services as per

usual schedule.

Monday 6 April;

Tuesday 7 April; and

Wednesday 8 April –

Holy Communion in St

Francis chapel at

7.30pm.

Wednesday 8 April –

10.30am Eucharist

followed by Stations of

the Cross.

Thursday 9 April – 7.30pm

Eucharist with foot washing

and Tenebrae, followed by

Vigil in side chapel.

Friday 10 April - 9.30am Good

Friday liturgy.

**Easter Day – 6am Service of**

**the light; 9.30am;**

**11.30am and 2pm**

I want to take this opportunity to congratulate Bishop George on the occasion of his 55<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Priesthood (celebrated on 2 February.) We give thanks to God for George's faithfulness and pray that God continues to bless him richly for many more years! In January I marked four years as Vicar of the Anglican parish of Box Hill as I thank all parishioners for the support given to both Janet and me over these years. I ask we all continue to pray for God's blessings and discernment as we strive to be all that God calls us to be in Box Hill.



"All are from the dust,  
and to dust all return."

Ecclesiastes 3:20, ESV



## ASH WEDNESDAY

**26 February**

**10.30am & 7.30pm Imposition of Ashes  
& Ash Wednesday Eucharist**

## Holy Week & Easter 2020

**5 April**

**PALM SUNDAY/  
PASSION SUNDAY**

8 AM Holy Communion

9.30 a.m. Procession & Eucharist  
of the passion

11.30 a.m.

Chinese Palm Sunday service

2 p.m. Dinka Service

**Monday in Holy Week**

7.30 pm Holy Communion

**Tuesday in Holy Week**

7.30pm Holy Communion

**Wednesday in Holy Week**

10.30 a.m. Holy Communion and Stations  
of the Cross Liturgy.

7.30 Holy Communion

**9 April, MAUNDY THURSDAY**

7.30 p.m. Washing of feet, celebration of  
the Last Supper, and stripping of the  
altar,

Service of Tenebrae

9. p.m. Watch of the Passion

**10 April GOOD FRIDAY**

9.30 a.m. Liturgy of the Cross  
& Passion.

7.30 p.m. **Chinese Good Friday  
Service**



**12 April EASTER DAY**

6.a.m. Lighting of New Fire, Renewal of  
Baptismal Vows & First Eucharist of  
Easter.

9.30 a.m. Celebration Easter Eucharist.

11.30 a.m. **Chinese Easter Service**

2 pm **Dinka Easter Service**

## Social and Fund Raising News.

Thank you all for your caring and stalwart support last year.

We warmly welcome you to come along and support the planned events for 2020. We plan to have **Quiz nights, Songs of Praise, a Welsh Choir Concert, Book Sale, a pie drive, and Wine Drive.**

To start the ball rolling we plan to have on

**a Film Afternoon on Sunday March 1st in the undercroft.**

Of course we will have popcorn, ice cream and a cuppa available.

**DRUM ROLL!**

**THE PARISH SPRING FAIR IS ON OCTOBER 10.**

**OUR PATRONAL FESTIVAL** June 28 at 2pm followed by afternoon tea.

Any queries or feedback. See Hilary or phone her on 9899 7553



## ST PETER'S PARISH MEN'S BREAKFAST, SATURDAY, 29 FEBRUARY 2020

**Speaker** our in-house architectural historian, **Conrad Hamman**  
**"SIGNIFICANT BUILDINGS OF HOLY LAND and ISRAEL"**

We will hear more about the significant buildings that the Parish Expeditioners viewed during their exploring of Egypt, Jordan and The Holy Land in 2018.

This will be the last talk about the expedition of 2018.

Gentlemen and Ladies of St Peter's parish are invited to attend, have breakfast and find out more of the significant buildings of these locations.

Invite a friend or two, your son, son-in-law

Let us know on the Expression of Interest list available at entrance to church.

In May we will be taken on a visual tour of Sicily with Peter and Rosemary.

Later this year, but not confirmed, we may hear about the role of a Police Chaplain.

Contact Ken McDonald, Garry Plumridge or Len Manzie.,

## The World Day of Prayer 2020

Friday 6 March 2020, 2.30 pm at St Peter's

**The World Day of Prayer 2020 host country is Zimbabwe  
and the theme is "Rise! Take Your Mat and Walk".**

**The speaker will be Revd. David O'Brien, Senior Pastor of Waverley Baptist Church.**

David is Global Interaction's Country Coordinator for Zambia and Zimbabwe,

He regularly visits to those countries in support of Church leaders.



**Rise! Take Your Mat and Walk," said Jesus.**

**Our sisters from Zimbabwe are taking Jesus' encounter to be a call to act in love  
for peace and reconciliation.**

**This is the time for change!**

**We are empowered to take up our mats.**

## Mothers' Union

- **Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> February: First meeting for 2020.**
- We will attend the 10.30 Ash Wednesday Service followed by BYO lunch followed by a speaker, Fr, Shane or Fr. Alasdair.
- Following the decision at our Annual Meeting, subsequent meetings will be on the fourth Wednesday at 1.30 p.m. followed by afternoon tea.
- We have arranged a varied programme for 2020.
- All parishioners warmly invited to our meetings.
- Watch the "LINK" for speakers
- If you would like a syllabus, let us know.
- **Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> August :**  
our Annual Fundraising Church Service.

## Samaritan's Purse, Shoobox Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> October

- Stores have had specials in "back to school" items
- I have \$10 starter bags & boxes ready to go.
- Keep your eyes open for specials
  - of clothing and special toys.
  - **Can we beat last year's total**
    - **of 61 Boxes??**

*Jan Gunst*



# Christmas Eve 2019



- \* Christmas Eve was celebrated with our Children's Service.
- \* The children dressed up as Angels, Shepherds and Wise Men

- \* We shared the Christmas Alphabet narrated by Sophia and Laurence.
- \* Everyone was given an Illustrated Word to hold up when that word was mentioned in the reading.
- \* The Advent Candle was lit, and the Christmas Tree in the Sanctuary had been decorated with the names of people the congregation wished to remember who were important in their Faith Journey.
- \* After the service the children gathered in the stable at the back of the Church and had their photos taken.
- \* It was a lovely start to our Christmas Celebrations.

## Humour from

## Charles & Hilary

I was visiting my DAUGHTER last night when I asked if I could borrow a newspaper.

"This is the 21st century" she said. "We don't waste money on newspapers. Here, use my iPad."

I can tell you this... that fly never knew what hit him...



# WHERE IS GOD IN THE MIDST OF SO MUCH FIRE?

Fr. Shane Hubner

**Sermon: 5 January 2020**

**Text: Epiphany readings Year A**  
**Introduction:**

While I hate to admit it I love the build up to Christmas and the New Year period. I love the opportunity it affords to have a few days off for quiet rest and recuperation and renewal. I had even done some planning for this time – having the sermons prepared well in advance for the fourth Sunday of Advent; a sermon for Christmas Eve and a different one for Christmas day; the sermon prepared for the first Sunday after Christmas – last Sunday, and even a sermon prepared for today – the celebration of Epiphany. I was mighty chuffed with myself and felt super clever that I was so prepared ahead of time. I even felt okay to take a few days off with Janet as we escaped to Daylesford on New Year's Day. However, as the bushfires have intensified and we have all been so well aware of the loss of life and property – I felt that in all good conscience I could not preach the sermon I had prepared for today. It just wouldn't be right: Not that it's a bad sermon – in fact I know it's a good sermon for Epiphany. It's just not the right sermon for today. As Janet and I sat transfixed by the news of what so many are going through – it felt to me that this was new – it wasn't just fires raging in Australia in Summer as they always do – I may be wrong, and I hope to God that I am proved wrong but this situation seems so much more intense – so much more widespread. It appears frightening and harrowing, if this is to become the new normal, as we endure longer and longer droughts; as fuel loads build and temperatures rise and resources are stretched. I can't remember a time when our two major cities have been blanketed in so much smoke. I read in the papers on Friday that Canberra was on Thursday the most polluted city in the entire world due to the smoke drifting down from the fires. At least 20 people — 16 from

NSW, two from Victoria and two from South Australia — are now known to have died in and there are growing fears the toll could rise dramatically, with officials in Victoria saying 28 people were still missing in our state. Almost 6 million hectares have been burnt and over 2500 homes and buildings have been destroyed. I know that 180 people died in the tragic Black Saturday fires in 2009 but this fire season started earlier than normal and may extend for several months to come as we all know we haven't faced the hottest days of summer yet. Watching all this unfurl on the screen at night and in the papers each day has, I must admit, unsettled me and caused me to pray hard and reflect upon what my faith in an all Powerful and all loving God means when we as a nation face such a crisis. This situation raises profound and I admit at times heart-wrenching questions: How could this have happened? Why doesn't God do anything? Where is God amid such pain and suffering? In response many people express emotions of doubt and even anger – which of course is understandable and who am I to deny such emotions -- or, worse, quash them by calling them unfaithful. They are not unfaithful responses. Lament is all over our Scriptures and there is nothing wrong with adding ours to the catalogue already contained in the Bible. It is right to feel grief and shock and even numbness as we witness what is happening around us. And as I am honest in expressing my emotions I am also honest before you in saying that I don't have satisfying answers to the basic question: why? We don't offer our lament to get answers in the first place, but rather we offer our lament to be joined to others and to God through our lament. I am reminded that in the story of Job the ones who have all the answers -- Job's friends -- are the ones who get it wrong. Even when God appears in the whirlwind, it is not so much to give Job an answer as

to honour his questions and restore relationship with him. But in saying this is not to say that we don't have something to say.

We assert today that the entire biblical witness urges us to seek God not above tragedy -- controlling the fates of nature and humanity -- but rather amid tragedy, suffering with us and for us. This is nowhere more clear than in the cross of Jesus, where God was joined to the fullest human experience of loss -- suffering an unjust and cruel death -- out of love for us. God is present -- not causing chaos but entering into it, not sending calamity but suffering through it, not standing over us but holding tightly onto us and promising never to let go. Wherever there is human tragedy and pain, the incarnate and crucified God is there.

God does not only suffer with us, however, but also works through us. Paul's assertion that we are the body of Christ is, when you think about it, a bold and profound statement of faith. To confess that we who are broken, limited, and sinful are those persons and people through whom Christ is active in the world is incredibly empowering, as God sanctifies, commissions, and sends us into the world to bear and to be Christ's healing and helping presence. Even in the face of a calamity this immense, we are not helpless. We can donate to trustworthy and effective agencies like Anglicare and the Red Cross. We can, as the needs are clarified, participate in clothing or food drives or assist with whatever is needed. Today and in the weeks and months to come, we can assist in multiple ways with the restoration and rebuilding of the communities of our brothers and sisters. We are the body of Christ and agents of God's redemptive and restoring love in the world.

The tragedy occurring in the East of our state and in NSW bears down so heavily upon us in part because of its sheer immensity. Yet we also are aware that there are people suffering every day, and indeed this whole

world groans under the weight and limitations of death. For this reason the gospel is always promise. I know that at times, promises may not seem like much in the face of human tragedy, yet they are what help to create faith and restore hope. Our God has promised, in time, to wipe all tears from every eye and to create a new heaven and earth where suffering is no more. On Saturday morning, one of the readings from the morning office was from the

Gospel of John, chapter 4, the well-known encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan women.

Jesus words to her stuck me as if I had never heard them before, as he said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life." May God grant all not only physically water so as to put out

the fires and restore life but also the water that gushes up to eternal life. I finish with the words of the bishop of Gippsland, Richard Treloar, to the people of his Diocese this morning. May the light of the one who is revealed to us as the Beloved in this season of Epiphany shine into the darkness of this crisis, and show us a way forward together as beloved children of God, whose is heavy for us and with us in him. The Lord be with you.

## MALLACOOTA, NEW YEAR'S EVE 2019

Rev. Dr. Chris Mulherin

**I**t is Sunday morning, January 12, 2020. I am sitting at home where things are externally normal: normal traffic, normal bird noises, normal Melbourne blue sky with clouds, although a little smoky. Internally however, things are not normal: my mind and nerves are still on "Mallacoota action stations" three days after evacuating by Chinook helicopter from the coastal town that was besieged by fire in the early hours of New Year's Eve. It is now besieged by hundreds of kilometres of closed roads, which, incidentally, separate the Mulherins from their three family cars and other sundry possessions! Sunday two weeks ago (December 29) saw the Scripture Union Theos youth team worshipping at a quiet St Peter's church in Mallacoota. We had arrived from Melbourne the day before: 17 members of the team ranging from 18 to about 30 years old, plus "team parents" Lindy and myself. St Peter's is a joint Anglican-Uniting church where pews face large windows overlooking the Mallacoota lakes, sandbars, and past them the open sea. The local minister, who is a keen supporter of the annual SU pilgrimage to Mallacoota, is the Rev. Jude Benton, married to Andy, a fisheries officer.

On the drive to Mallacoota the day before, we had been aware of a fire near Bruthen and regularly checked the Vic Emergency details to see if we might have to detour via Lakes Entrance. Little did we know that a new fire would start the next day at Wingan River, 20 km to the west, and then be blown up the coast to

Mallacoota.

The team set up the youth centre and ran a successful first night on the 29th with around 40 young locals and campers spending time in the centre. The following day it became clear that Mallacoota was threatened by the fire with a change expected early in the morning on the 31st, which would push towards us. A community meeting (below) on the oval in front of the Theos centre advised us of plans for what looked like being a challenging next 24 hours. Things were looking ominous.

### PREPARING FOR THE WORST

That day, our afternoon team Bible study was interrupted by what appeared to be a false alarm. The Vic Emergency notification advised that the fire was expected to hit Mallacoota about 5pm. Apparently the mistake was the "pm," as all previous and subsequent notifications predicted that the fire would arrive in the early daylight hours of the 31st. The evening of the 30th was spent preparing for the morning. There were 15 CFA firetrucks in town and everyone was gearing up for the worst. People with portable gas bottles were advised to move them to the water and CFA instructions were clear: "If you hear sirens, it's time to move to the emergency refuge." The team slept in the youth centre rather than tents, and two people were posted on sentry duty ready to wake people. About 8pm on the 30th the power failed. The town would remain without power for days, with supply restored to a small number of buildings on January 3rd; most of the town remains

without power as I write.

### THE FIRE

Rather than waiting for sirens, the team woke about 5am on the 31st to have an orderly breakfast and move to the refuge. With tea towels acting as smoke masks and a wheelie bin full of wet woollen blankets they crossed the oval to the cinema which, for the next week, would serve as refuge, then emergency accommodation and evacuation centre, as well as the community information point. The cinema was a concrete building with a steel roof, hundreds of metres from the nearest bushland and only 100 metres from the water. Due to the location and proximity of the water, at no stage did I personally feel we were in serious danger, although the experience was physically uncomfortable and emotionally very demanding.

The next 8 hours were spent with 600 or so other refugees, including many extremely well behaved children and dogs, in the hot and very smoky darkness of the cinema (photo below). Four movies (including "Frozen"! ) entertained some people. Our team passed the time talking, sleeping, running errands, doing the rounds of the refuge with spray bottles of water to cool people down, and generally remaining calm despite the stressful circumstances. The occasional glimpses outside were surreal; swirling wind, darkness, and glowing orange surrounded us. As well, from within the cinema, we could hear the dull thud of distant gas bottles exploding: a sign that another house had been destroyed.



We eventually emerged into the slightly fresher air of a town strewn with blackened leaves and numerous plumes of smoke. Across the water from the pier we could see numerous fires still burning, some in the built-up parts of the town further to the north. We watched as gas bottles exploded and houses were destroyed. I haven't heard official figures, but my best guess is that around 100 houses were lost in Mallacoota.

### **EVACUATE OR REMAIN?**

Following the fire it was quickly clear that the roads out of Mallacoota would be closed for weeks. The town is isolated, connected only to the Princes Hwy by one 20-kilometre narrow bitumen road through dense bush. As evacuation plans (by ship or air) were being prepared by the authorities, the team considered their options. Unlike some SU teams, ours were all over 18 years old so a measure of democracy was appropriate in making decisions. All the team were in favour of remaining in Mallacoota as long as we could be useful and not a burden on the local community. While it was clear that our regular activities would be radically changed, the team's concern for the local youth, some of whom had lost homes, was uppermost in their minds.

Mallacoota Theos has been running for over 30 years and has an excellent reputation and support from a town known to be particularly difficult for Christian ministry. The Theos ethos (an anagram!) has always been to form long-term relationships with the youth who visit the centre. So, under



the circumstances, there was a sense that the team did not want to leave the locals without support. The centre was opened again on the 1st and 2nd of January with no particular program except to give young people a place to talk or to play pool or table



tennis or card games. Meanwhile, in conversation with Scripture Union, decisions had to be made: a navy ship, the HMAS Choules was to leave with evacuees on the 3rd. Premier Daniel Andrew's announcement of Victoria's first declared State of Disaster, in the early hours of January 3rd, made the decision for Scripture Union and the team. SU could no longer auspice the mission and the team reluctantly accepted that they needed to pack up and ship out. After a record-breaking pack-up of the centre, the 17 team members were on the last boat transport to the Choules waiting offshore. Along with 1200 others, they enjoyed Navy hospitality and the run of the ship for 20 hours on the voyage to Westernport Bay

### **MAKING OURSELVES USEFUL AND THEN DEPARTING**

For Lindy and I, the decision to stay in Mallacoota was a difficult one. Although we were confident the team was fine without us, the last thing we wanted to do was to be in the way in Mallacoota. We were eventually swayed by Rev. Jude's assurance that we could be useful to her and the church by staying. So began a surreal three days of helping out as we were able: listening to stories, helping in the op shop, helping organise movie times in the church, and changing sleeping locations each night. We didn't feel we were a lot of help, but we trust it encouraged Jude to have us around for those days. Sunday, a week after our arrival, saw a very different church service, this time on the point in the caravan park. A mixed group of locals and campers met for a sombre silence-filled service on a smoky orange morning with a navy supply boat offshore (below). As the predictions of road openings ranged from two weeks to even

months, and as our own emotional reserves waned, Lindy and I kept track of the evacuation possibilities so as not to be stranded for weeks. Then, last Thursday, we informed the Air Force personnel that we would be happy to be taken to the RAF base at Sale on a returning supply flight that day or the following day. I also suggested that, all other things being equal, a Chinook helicopter ride would be a bonus! The result: Lindy and I were "Chinooked" out as the only passengers on the 50-minute trip to Sale. The "tailgate" was open enabling a bird's-eye view of much of the extensive fire damage to East Gippsland.

Without pretending to plumb theological depths, let me share three incidents that have theological dimensions:

1. A day or so after the fire, a woman, "Judy," who knew we were Christians, and who had imbibed a more-than-healthy dose of alcohol, confronted Lindy and me: "Where is your God in all this? How can your God let this happen?" Here in its rawest is "the problem of evil" that I teach about in philosophy lectures; the apparent conflict between faith in a good and just God, and the tragedies and evils that befall us.
2. Standing behind another local woman, "Jan," in a shop after the fire, I heard her say "I made lots of promises to God, if only he would save my house. My house was saved; now I hope he doesn't come to collect." As she turned around, I smiled and pointed to my "Chaplain" badge and said "I think he has!" End of conversation with a laugh. However, it is worth pondering the seriousness with which we can treat God when we find ourselves in a jam, and then so quickly we turn the other way. It reminds me of a story about 10 people with leprosy.

*Rev. Dr Chris Mulherin is an Anglican Priest, a lecturer in the Philosophy Department of Catholic Theological College. Chris is part-time Executive Director for ISCAST - Christians in Science and Technology.*

# AN IMPOSSIBLE DREAM?

Janet Hubner

## Psalm 34.11-14

*Come, O children, listen to me;  
I will teach you the fear of the Lord.  
Which of you desires life,  
and covets many days to enjoy good?  
Keep your tongue from evil,  
and your lips from speaking deceit.  
Depart from evil, and do good;  
seek peace, and pursue it.*

**Y**ou might have recently about the Doomsday Clock which highlighted the two simultaneous existential dangers to humanity – nuclear war and climate change (see [thebulletin.org/doomsday-clock/current-time/](http://thebulletin.org/doomsday-clock/current-time/)). Could nuclear weapons disappear from the earth? Could we live to see a time when all countries with nuclear weapons dismantle them? It's not as impossible a dream as it sounds, and there is exciting progress being made towards this enormous goal. In January, Shane and I visited the Peace Boat when it docked in Melbourne on one of its world voyages. We went to an afternoon workshop held on the boat and were lucky enough to handle a Nobel Peace Prize medallion. What was it all about?

### Peace Boat

The Peace Boat was started by four students in Japan in the 1980s who wanted to honour the memory of innocent victims of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki nuclear attacks by travelling the world promoting peace. The boat is now a cruise ship that takes passengers on world cruises while staff and volunteers offer educational programs and disaster relief to victims of war and natural disasters. It's a truly remarkable organisation seeking to improve the lives of all around the world. Find out more by visiting the Peace Boat's website: [peaceboat.org/english](http://peaceboat.org/english)

### International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN)

On its 2019-2020 voyage to Australasia, the Peace Boat has partnered with ICAN to promote and educate visitors about ICAN's campaign. ICAN is a coalition in over



100 countries with over 500 organisations that are working to abolish nuclear weapons – what seems an impossible dream. However, in recent decades other types of weapons have been banned, including landmines, chemical weapons and biological weapons, so there is hope that nuclear weapons will follow. The **United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons** is the first global treaty to ban nuclear weapons and make them illegal. When 50 countries ratify the treaty, it comes into force: to date, 35 countries have done so. ICAN is working with ordinary people, like you and me, around the world to let our governments know that we want a world free of nuclear weapons; that we don't want to live under the threat of nuclear war. Australia has not yet signed or ratified the treaty (a two-step process). In 2017 ICAN, which began in Melbourne, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. At the workshop on the



Peace Boat, Shane and I were able to hold the medallion and hear about the ICAN's achievements and its far-reaching goal to make the world a safer, more peaceful home for all its creatures.

### What part can I play?

If you are one of the 79% of

Australians who want to see nuclear weapons banned, there are some simple things you can do that will make a difference. ICAN's website ([icanw.org.au](http://icanw.org.au)) has lots of information and ideas for what you can do. These include:

- \* Learn about the issues of nuclear disarmament on the ICAN website and read their report *Choosing Humanity*.
- \* Ask your local Federal member to make the Parliamentary Pledge to support the UN Treaty.
- \* Contact your local council and encourage them to support the UN Treaty.
- \* Ask your superannuation fund and bank if they have divested from nuclear weapons – if they haven't, consider changing to a fund or bank that has.
- \* Talk with your family and friends about the UN Treaty – find out if they want to see nuclear weapons banned, too.
- \* Sign up to ICAN's campaign to receive email news and suggestions.

Finally, pray with us that God will make possible in our lifetime what seems impossible; the abolition and dismantling of all nuclear weapons.

### Philippians 4.4-7

*Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to*

*everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And*

*the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

**Janet Hubner is an active member of peace group "Pace e Bene" and of Pax Christi and of course of St Peter's**



## READING FOR LENT

Harry Kerr

**L**ent is a time traditionally a time for serious reading to deepen our faith and understanding. I suggest three very different books, each of which will challenge you in different ways. Of course you don't have to read them all in Lent. They are good reading any time of year.

If you prefer the more traditional Lent book: Archbishop of The Canterbury's Lent Book for 2020 is

**SAYING YES TO LIFE** by Ruth Valerio, published by SPCK on 13<sup>th</sup> February

**Saying Yes to Life** lifts our focus from every day (and perfectly natural) concerns to issues that are impacting millions of lives around the world. As people made in the image of God, we are entrusted to look after what God has made - to share in the joy and creativity of God in making a difference for good. Ruth Valerio imaginatively draws on the Days of Creation (Genesis 1 - 2.2) in relating themes of light, water, land, the seasons, other creatures, humankind, Sabbath rest and resurrection hope to matters of environmental, ethical and social concern. Foundational to the book are what it means to be human and, in particular, to be a follower of Jesus during Lent. Voices from other continents are heard throughout, and each chapter ends with discussion questions, a prayer, and specially commissioned art to aid action and contemplation. Available from

[www.bookdepository.com](http://www.bookdepository.com) for \$22.44 or see

[www.spckpublishing.co.uk/saying-yes-resources](http://www.spckpublishing.co.uk/saying-yes-resources)

**SAYING YES TO LIFE** is the parish study book for Lent 2020

**DAMASCUS** by Christos Tsiolkas, Faber 2019

This is a novel by the Greek Australian writer Christos Tsiolkas, who wrote *The Slap* and *Barracuda*. It is a surprising and at times confronting story. It is "M Rated for mature audiences" and in places, shocking. As we read it we must remember that it is a work of a very creative imagination..

It is about people we meet in the pages of the New Testament, particularly the Apostle Paul. Using his imagination Tsiolkas takes us into the gaps in our knowledge of St Paul and of other figures who surround him to create vivid pictures of flesh and blood human beings, of what it is was like to be a Christian in the very early days and of the world in which they lived and with which they had to struggle.

He introduces us to Paul as a person who struggled with his demons. Instead of becoming an "instant Christian" on the Damascus road, Tsiolkas has Paul as a troubled soul wrestling with the challenge of the Risen Christ over months (very) patiently guided and supported by Ananias of Damascus.

We read of an intense relationship with Timothy. We also meet the apostle Thomas known as "the Twin" Tsiolkas imagines him as the twin brother of Jesus who finds it extremely difficult to cope with the life and death of his supposed "twin." On the one hand he is frustrated that Jesus' followers are not being faithful and not loving up to Jesus example. In the either he wants to be an independent person, free of the shadow of the Master.

**Tsiolkas takes us into the realities of life for the** early Christians into was a very brutal society with zero tolerance for people who were different. In Paul's letter to the Galatians chapter 3 we read: *In Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.*

For Christians to-day and for society in general, this a beautiful and inspiring text, particularly when we are fighting discrimination in church and society. In the world of the first century it was shocking and even dangerous. When the early Christian communities tried to live it out they were accused of undermining the whole society and could be thrown in jail or even to the lions. Tsiolkas introduces

us to a slave girl who is a member of a Christian community. Slaves were expected to know their place and defer to their masters and mistresses who regarded them as little better than furniture. This slave girl's mistress was invited along to her Christina meeting. She is horrified when her slave girl calls her "sister" and greets her with "an holy kiss." This was one of the challenges which Christians faced every day as they challenged values which everyone took for granted by the way they lived. One quote from the book sums it up: *They kill us, they crucify us, they throw us to beasts in the arena, they sew our lips together and watch us starve. They bugger children in front of their mothers and violate men in front of their wives. The temple priests flay us openly in the streets. We are hunted everywhere and we are hunted by everyone ... We are despised, yet we grow. We are tortured and crucified and yet we flourish. We are hated and still we multiply. Why is that? You have to wonder, how is it that we not only survive but we grow stronger?*

To-day's church is seen as part of the problem rather than part of the answer. The challenge to us is to rediscover the radical spirit of the early Christians. They weren't necessarily nice people and they weren't always easy to live with. But they were possessed by the vision of new life in Christ. We perhaps put too much emphasis on keeping ourselves nice and not enough on coming to Christ with our demons and letting him deal with them. We want to be "respectable" like everyone else. Read this book. Let it read you. Let it invite you to go behind the pages of the New Testament to meet the real people and let your imagination run riot. It will be a bumpy ride but one that is well worth while. You can borrow it from the Whitehorse Manningham library. It is available in most bookshops.

**DARK EMU, Bruce Pascoe.**  
**Magabala Books, Broome 2018**

This is a very different book. It challenges and encourages us.

**Bruce Pascoe** is an Indigenous Australian writer, of mixed Bunurong, Yuin, and **Aboriginal** Tasmanian (Palawa) heritage. He is a member of the Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative of southern Victoria and has been the director of the Australian Studies Project for the Commonwealth Schools Commission. He is a professor at the Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education & Research at the University of Technology, Sydney. Using the accounts of early European explorers, colonists and farmers, Bruce Pascoe compellingly argues for a reconsideration of the hunter-gatherer label for pre-colonial Aboriginal Australians. He allows the

reader to see Australia as it was before Europeans arrived - a land of cultivated farming areas, productive fisheries, permanent homes, and an understanding of the environment and its natural resources that supported thriving villages across the continent. The Aborigines were able to feed themselves on special grains and vegetables which were suited to the delicate soil of the Australian continent. They were able to dam rivers for irrigation. We can still see some of their waterworks. They built towns and villages using the materials to hand in the Australian bush. They knew how to use and deal with fire in the landscape. They cleared the land and developed grasslands again suited to the Australian climate. Bruce Pascoe gives us a picture of a highly developed society and civilisation

who knew how to live in harmony with the Australian landscape. Pascoe's conclusions and his credentials are disputed in certain sections of the media. However he has been validated by fellow scholars and Aboriginal leaders. I wonder from where this criticism comes. Do some elements of white Australia feel threatened by Pascoe? His book challenges the idea that the colonists took over and developed an empty continent populated only by backward people who for many years were listed with the plants and animals and only recognised as citizens of Australia in 1967. It's a challenge with which we all need to deal. **Black Emu** is available in the Whitehorse Manningham Library (and probably other libraries) and from Readings, Dymocks and probably other bookshops.

## THE CONDITION OF WOMEN IN INDIA

Fr. Victor Ferrao,

**T**he condition of women in our country is complex and cannot be described with a singular monopolistic category. Although a woman is honoured as Goddess in our culture, the way that we relate to women in practice may be aptly described as cultural fascism. Our society is not merely patriarchal, it is deeply patrifocal. This is why half of us Indians who are our mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters are victims of worst oppressions in our families, workplaces as well as spaces of worship. Women in our country seem to live in an intermediate space between death and life. It seems to be a journey from harassment to invisibility. Even at birth, the girl child is unwelcome. She is born with a cancelled identity. Several among them suffer an infliction of violent death at birth. Even before she is born, she comes out of the womb of the mother, she is made to enter the tomb. She is made to die in silence without a name and identity. No one cries for the aborted daughters of India. They just pass into invisibility and remain forgotten. But those that are lucky to survive the initial intensely violent cultural fascism are compelled to live a losing fight in an imposed chain of isola-

tions and politico-moral policing as survivors in a man's world till they too are relegated to silence and invisibility through their death.

The subjection of women to several indignities exhibits the will to power of a male chauvinist society. This will to power is ultimately and intimately grounded in the will to purity that is afflicting our caste-laden society. The quest for purity is everywhere in our society. It has put us in a perpetual cleansing drive. It is getting uglier by the day. Women like other impure ones are considered unclean and hence, suffer sexual abuse as children, domestic violence, rapes, confinement to homes, made object of sex and met with denial of repression as adults. We have naturalised and desensitized us of all guilt of violence to our women. It is this will to purity that generates the cultural fascism that is afflicting our society today. Indeed, we are taken captive by our will to purity. This enslavement is most visible today in the way we treat our tribals, Dalits, religious minorities and women. Violence against all these sections of our people is growing by the day. It will continue unless we find ways of coming to terms with our insatiable thirst for purity which

is forever elusive. It seems that this vicious will to purity is at the root of violence against women in our society.

The will to purity intensifies from a sense of loss that is haunting a society that is on a decline. It is a defence against decline and decomposition. In fact, a society afflicted by a sense of decay looks for out for victims that our powerless and enact the ritual of purity on them. In some way, women like others that are deemed as impure in society suffer what may be called sacrificial violence. This is why perhaps the twenty-first century India looms ahead of us as a spectral scene of mean violence of all shades and colour. We seem to be struck by the fear of contamination and are in search of a pure nation. At the same time, we enjoy a libidinal drive for the pleasure of inflicting pain, humiliation and death on those that are considered the impure ones. Women are the worst victims of this cultural fascism that is afflicting us all. We have the challenge to trace emancipative responses to our imagined dirty world. We have the ethical imperative to reassert the in-between zone where all Indians belong and have our life and being. We have to find and be-

and befriend the Indian in us. We are either Goans, Punjabis, Telugus, Tamils or Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas But not Indians. We exist fragmented. It is hard to find an Indian in India. May be we find them abroad. We need to let the Indian in us blossom again. The Indian is always in an in-between condition along with other Indians. There are multiple and divergent ways of being Indians.

This rebellion against the will to purity has to be natural for Christian. This does not mean that Christians are free from their enslavement to the will to purity. The condition of Indian Christian women is far from being any different from our society. Therefore, Christians like other Indians also have the common challenge to seek emancipative response to the cult of purity that is collectively afflicting us. We are all worshipping at the altar of imagined purities of all shades and

colours. Jesus who rebelled against the excesses of will to purity in Judaism can become a great inspiration to Indian Christians to generate an emancipative response that will not just bring dignity and freedom to Indian Christian women but all other women as well as other victims of our enslavement to will to purity. Indeed, we Christians have to respond to the prophetic call from our context today and work to generate a Gospel-centric response to the condition of women and those deemed impure in our country. Although Indian Christians are best placed to bring a theologico-moral response to condition of women in our country, it would not be possible without other Indians of Good will. This is why Indian Christians have to not just avail of the resources from their Christian tradition but align with other Indians and traditions in India to bring about a Gospel-culture encounter that will open ways of

breaking the enslaving shackles of will to purity. In this effort, great Indian traditions like Buddhism, Jainism, Vedanta etc., might be of great assistance. This means Indian Christians have the challenge to read the signs of the times and trace the seed of Gospels already germinating in cultures and traditions of India. This will open us to the in-between zone that is central to the triune God of Christianity. Perhaps, it will enable us to work to actualize the salubrious dancing space of the Holy Trinity in our society. The violence against women cannot be countered with violence. Such violence will intensify the spiral of violence. What we need is a prophetic affirmation of our deepest being as being in-between that in the image and likeness of God. It will only lead to the living our inter-being. ***Fr Victor Ferrao is the Dean of Philosophy at the Rachol Seminary Goa, India***

## AND IN AUSTRALIA

### Violence against women extends to local churches, Mark Brolly

**T**he new manager of the Melbourne diocesan program to prevent violence against women told the opening service of the 2018 Melbourne Synod that she had heard “many stories” since taking up her role six months ago of women in the Church here who had experienced violence.

Ms Robyn Boosey, Manager of the Diocesan Prevention of Violence Against Women Program, was preacher at Synod’s opening Choral Eucharist at St Paul’s Cathedral on 17 October. She said that by the same time the following week, one woman would have been murdered by a partner or former partner. “And in fact, this year, the figures are much higher than that,” she said.

“One in three women will experience family violence in their lifetime and one in five women will experience sexual violence.

“Did you know that violence is more damaging to the health of Victorian women aged 15 to 44 than any other well-known risk factors, including high blood pressure, obesity and

smoking?”

“Violence against women can be physical, but it can also be sexual, financial, emotional, psychological or spiritual.

“It happens to women from all backgrounds.

“Let’s be clear: it happens in our churches too. I have heard many stories since starting my job here in April of women in this Diocese who have experienced violence.”

Ms Boosey told the story of “Sarah”, a 13-year-old whose grandparents, her legal guardians, helped her to understand how much Jesus loved her. She started to go to youth group and get involved her local church in the Melbourne diocese. But when her grandfather died suddenly, she was grief-stricken and unable to stay in the same house where they had shared many memories. So at 16, she moved away to live with her biological mother. Her youth leader gave her lifts to help her keep going to youth group but her attendance fell and eventually she stopped coming. One day, Sarah contacted her youth leader

for support: she had fallen pregnant but her partner had forced her to have an abortion. The youth leader supported her through this. A year later, Sarah was pregnant again and gave birth to a girl. But not long afterwards, through Facebook, the youth leader learned that Sarah’s partner was hitting her. “She reaches out to Sarah, but Sarah assures her it is no big deal; she announces that she is pregnant again,” Ms Boosey said. “She is excited. “During her pregnancy, Sarah’s partner hits her so badly that she has to be hospitalised. Her youth leader offers to support her and help find her a safe place to live but Sarah is certain it won’t happen again and declines the offer. “Four months later, the youth leader gets the message that you never want to get: Sarah has been killed by her boyfriend, leaving a daughter and a three-month-old son without a mother. “This story is not an isolated incident. Violence against women is widespread in Australia.” Ms Boosey cited several biblical passages demonstrating God’s love



for us and the command to love others as ourselves. “All forms of abuse and violence go against the gospel’s core teachings of love and respect for human dignity,” she said. “Could I, could we, be holding attitudes or participating in behaviours that might be harmful to our neighbour – perhaps without even realising it? ...Our attitudes and behaviours are significant when it comes to violence against women.” She urged Anglicans to do the program training to know how to

support women who had experienced violence and ensure their church was a safe space. The program’s resources could help local churches explore this issue and how they could be part of the solution, with Bible studies and reflection guides to be produced. “You can get the right policies and procedures in place in your church or workplace to cultivate a culture of love and respect,” she said. “We are developing these and will be supporting you to put them in place. “Why not ask God right here, right

now – what would you have me do? “In recent years, the Church has become painfully aware that we have failed to love our neighbours as ourselves. We have let down children and we have let down women. The challenge for us is to ensure that all we do and say reflects the extravagant, unconditional, self-sacrificing love shown to us by Jesus.”

**Mark Brolly is a journalist with Anglican Media**

## MOTHERS' UNION STANDING UP TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN VANUATU

**S**heryl\* is a 66-year-old Ni-Vanuatu woman who lives on Pentecost Island, Vanuatu. She is a mother of eight, grandmother, and a community leader. Sheryl has changed work locations in recent times, but she now finds herself living back in her home village. Like many women from Pentecost, Sheryl grew up witnessing her father abuse her mother. In a home and community where violence against women was the norm, Sheryl believed “it was okay for men to hit women”. The cycle of abuse continued when she married; Sheryl was physically abused by her husband for decades.

It was not until Sheryl began work with the government and the Anglican Church of Melanesia’s Mothers’ Union that she became aware of beliefs and attitudes that were different from those she grew up with. She was introduced and exposed to women opposing gender-based violence (GBV) and learned that the violence she was

experiencing was not right and that she no longer had to endure it. Sheryl built awareness and knowledge of the effects of GBV with her husband, resulting in a significant transformation within him. However, it wasn’t until 1995 that change was realised. Then 45 years old and carrying their eighth child, Sheryl was relieved that her husband stopped abusing her following a serious injury he caused both her and their unborn child.

Today, Sheryl teaches her three sons to “talk to your wives, not hit them. Discuss your problems; understand each other”. On Pentecost, she says “women are not aware yet, they don’t know their rights. Women believe men hit us to teach us. I used to think it was okay for men to hit women, but now I know it is not”. Sheryl believes the church is starting to address GBV by preaching and raising awareness of it. She is also working hard with the Pentecost chiefs and has caused a shift in their beliefs to the point where the chiefs

now refer cases of abuse to her and involve her in running awareness sessions.

The **Safe, Resilient Communities Project** – which **Anglican Overseas Aid** support through funding from the Australian Government – is assisting more women like Sheryl. The project team was on Pentecost in October facilitating a study which gathered information through interviewing community members about their beliefs and attitudes towards GBV. The project aims to change harmful community beliefs and attitudes towards GBV, creating safer communities for women, men and children through community education and social networks. Many women like Sheryl are benefiting from this wonderful project, and the plan is to reach hundreds more women like her across Vanuatu.

**You can support the programme by donating to Anglican Overseas Aid <https://anglicanoverseasaid.org.au/>**

### There will be a Violence against Women Response and Prevention Training Day

**Friday 24 April 2020: 8:45am – 5 pm**

**Holy Trinity Anglican Church, 106 Church Road, Doncaster,**

*Morning and afternoon tea and lunch will be provided to keep you energised.*

Register at <https://www.trybooking.com/book/event?eid=576177>

- Understand the nature and dynamics of family violence and other forms of violence against women
- Recognise signs of family violence
- Help and respond to women who disclose experiences of violence
- Take practical steps to help prevent violence against women
- Make their church a safer place for everyone