

Parish Magazine

Anglican Parish of St Stephen & St Mary Mt Waverley



From Your Vicar

Pentecost to All Saints 2016

Some of you may be aware that I am an Oblate of our Anglican Benedictine Community at Camperdown. I have been visiting the monastery since the early 1990's and became an Oblate in 1994. I find trying to shape my life by the Rule of St Benedict very nourishing, challenging and supportive in the spiritual journey as a Christian. We receive news from the Abbey every couple of months via a newsletter. I found the most recent remark from Sr Raphael very thought provoking and simulating for my prayer time, so I thought I would share it with you:

"In this part of the world, autumn is clearly with us. The weather is much cooler, the trees have their coloured finery and the days are much shorter. Longer hours of darkness begin and end each day. Soon the glorious colours of the season will have faded and bare, colourless trees will be evident. This melancholy time can also reflect our spiritual journey. Darkness, lack of colour/enthusiasm, weariness, indifference, can dog our prayer, our spiritual journey.

Prayer too has its seasons, it can be difficult, it can also of course, be beautiful. Cistercian monk and author, Michael Casey suggests that sometimes it is necessary to stay with the darkness, realising that for the moment more truth is in the darkness than in the abundance of light. In the

natural world, the apparent 'deadness' of trees in winter is in fact a time of inner growth and consolidation. Thought what we see is dormant and waiting for spring, the hidden root system is quietly active finding water and nutrients, replacing damaged roots and so preparing itself for the above ground growth and fruit of spring and summer. 'Staying with the darkness' in prayer is a similar thing to the tree roots in winter. Instead of allowing anxiety, unhappiness, and giving in to a 'what's-the-use' attitude, let us rather see these times as an opportunity to expand our roots deeper into God, In the darkness, we listen with ear of our heart for the coming of the Spring." Sr Raphael (April/May 2016 News and Information for Oblates of St Mark's Benedictine Abbey).



I would encourage you to use this cold and dreary weather, where we stay indoors more, to either commence, re-invigorate or continue your contemplative prayer time. Contemplative prayer tends to be quiet in nature, lifting our hearts in

love to the Lord we love and sitting in present but active listening. It might be helpful to sit with a candle lit or an icon and either read scripture slowly and gently (perhaps the next weeks gospel) and see what comes to the fore; perhaps even imagining yourself in the story – see which person in the story you are drawn to, picturing what is happening in the story and what it is saying to you. But read the story every day slowly and gently.

I, have for a few decades, used what is called the Jesus Prayer (Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God have mercy on me a sinner). This is a repetitive prayer (this is also different to a mantra) that you say again slowly and gently within yourself. Try starting of being relaxed, breathing gently and then commencing the Jesus prayer, repeating it over and over again, do this for say five minutes a day for a week or so and then build it up in time over the following weeks as you are able. So, where did saying a repetitive prayer come from?

The Christian tradition of repetitive prayer comes from the first Christian monks of the Egyptian desert in the late third century. These men found that a short prayer, frequently repeated, stopped the mind wandering away from the remembrance of God, it kept

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Acknowledgement and thank you to Rowena, Graeme and Becky for photos in this edition of the Parish Magazine

Any suggestions and feedback to helenedur@netspace.net.au

From the Registers:

Deaths:

Adrian Neil Hawthorn	3.3.16
Gladys Irene Rogers	29.3.16
Pamela Fay Weller	15.4.16
Mavis Deutscher	24.4.16
Patricia Gertrude Moll	6.6.16

“May they rest in peace
And rise in glory”



**Ever considered making a bequest to the Parish in your Will?
Need more details, then please speak to one of the Wardens.**

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temptation at bay, and helped the heart to stand in the Kingdom of God. The repetitive prayer was usually from the psalms or a passage of scripture used in the liturgy, like the response for the psalm or the Gospel acclamation. It was out of this milieu that the Jesus prayer developed, and gradually became the most favoured way to pray because it contained the name of Jesus. By frequently using this prayer the mind and the heart are shaped and formed by the attitude of calling upon Christ. This prayer then eventually spread throughout Christendom and is particularly strong within the Orthodox Church.

I have a number of books on this topic so if you want to read more about the Jesus Prayer let me know and you can borrow a book from me or we can simply talk about it – make a time for coffee with me!

Vicar Dianne



Michael Casey is a Cistercian monk of Tarrawarra Abbey in Australia. He is a well-known retreat master and lecturer on monastic spirituality. Casey is the author of many books, including *Toward God: The Ancient Wisdom of Western Prayer*; *A Guide to Living in the Truth: Saint Benedict's Teaching on Humility*; and *Fully Human, Fully Divine: An Interactive Christology*.



Coming soon

The Patronal Festival

on the

14 August at 9.45 am with

Bishop Brad Billings

Brunch will follow

Touring with a purpose.

We celebrated our 40th wedding anniversary and 40 years of ministry with an eleven week trip in eleven states in the USA. We were married in Aspen, Colorado 1975 in winter snow and then set up home in sandy Cairo where camels passed through our street. This spring return trip we camped under Half Dome at Yosemite, visited the Grand Canyon and drove up and down the Californian coast staying at many of the saintly towns (San Francisco, Santa Maria etc.) with many modern saints. We returned to Aspen where it snowed reminiscently and visited the nearby Benedictine monastery. We didn't see Thomas Keating but bought their chocolate chip cookies. In California we warily slept in a house with a python on the loose and were woken early morning with our bedroom loudly bumping up and down in the recent earthquake.

But most of our time was fund raising in churches to send a container of New Testaments to Europe for Arab refugees. Why? Let me explain by telling you a story that we have heard repeated many times in different ways.

Mazhar regularly visited AlAzhar mosque in Cairo for faith discussions with the sheikh and would bring to him groups of Christians wanting to learn first-hand about Islam. Mazhar then had private devotion in the Gospels in the quiet of the mosque. This day a sheikh visiting from Yemen approached exclaiming, "I have been looking for the Gospel for 30 years. I studied theology in Saudi Arabia and heard a verse from the Bible and wanted to read it myself, but although I have been searching in many countries I have never found one. They also told me not to read it. God has answered my prayer."

The Bible is not an easily accessible book for Muslims in their countries. Some Bibles are smuggled and treated like drug smuggling. Bibles are available in churches and Christian book shops, but both are not places Muslims normally enter, so the sheikh searched in Islamic centers and secular shops, with no success. It is Mazhar's calling to make the Christian Scriptures understandable to Arabic speaking Muslims and readily and legally available in secular and religious venues through mutual co-operation with both Muslim and Christian scholars and secular publishers. Another problem is that the most common Arabic translation is 150 years old and was done by a Dutch missionary for the church. Language has changed and theological terms now have different meanings in mainstream Muslim Arabic. Hence even though the Bible is Arabic it reads like a foreign and unclear book.



One example is the word used for Jesus as our "mediator". It's now commonly used in local parlance for the "broker/middleman". In a conference we attended for Muslim and Christian leaders seeking peaceful relations between the two faiths, a representative of King Abdallah of Jordan said that Muslims need access to a more understandable

Christian message. Since 1991 we have been working on this with a team seconded from Wycliffe and working with Muslim and Christian scholars have published the first collaborative New Testament Study Bible for Muslims since hundreds of years. The Patriarch of the Eastern Orthodox church welcomed it, "We have been waiting for this for centuries. A New Testament presented in a way that we can share honourably with the Muslim majority in our countries". These books are often given as presentation gifts to world dignitaries. Christian NGO's giving aid will make it available with a sign, "This is the message of Christ that brings us to serve you". These refugees who have lost everything and fled violence need more than physical bread. They also need spiritual nourishment. Christ said "I am the bread of life" and promises power to forgive enemies and peace and healing to hurting hearts. This message has been proven to change the world. Most Muslims have never had the opportunity to read it or even hold the book in their hands. One Muslim woman arriving as a refugee in America carried one precious book among her clothes – one of the Gospels we published. This is the same gospel that we read every Sunday and probably never give a thought to it being so available that we never had to search for it, for a day much less thirty years.

Christine Mallouhi

The lost islands of the Pacific

Everyone has images of Pacific Islands, where the sun always shines and white beaches are fringed by coconut palms, where the sea is warm for swimming everyday, where the smiling locals offer fresh pineapple and coconut milk to drink, where a fishing line thrown casually over the side of a canoe will net a fine fish for the evening BBQ. Wait, wait ...I am sounding like a tourist advertisement. It is not really like that! We have all seen television coverage of islands flattened by cyclones or inundated by tsunamis. A recent report from the Synod of the Anglican Church in [Aotearoa](#) (New Zealand) and Polynesia, caused me to reflect on what life on a Pacific Island is really like in 2016. But first I need to remember the life as I experienced it.

In the year that men first walked on the moon (1969), I arrived at Sag Sag on New Britain, one of the many islands that make up Papua-New Guinea, as the new teacher for the mission school. Unlike most people I know, I did not see the Moon Landing but heard about it on the mission wireless. The next day, the moon was shrouded with clouds and this disturbed the local people who complained that the Americans had upset the moon! The week before I arrived at Sag Sag, a man had fallen asleep leaning against a palm tree and was killed by a falling coconut. Yes the sun did shine most days, so strongly that school began at 7am and finished at noon. But the annual rainfall at Sag Sag was 180

inches (457cm) and we had to close the school on days when water lapped around our ankles and dripped through the grass roof. The volcanic soil was so rich that the school students were self-sufficient in vegetables and even radishes planted one Sunday could be eaten the next week. There are many positive experiences from living on an island where life runs to a different time frame and where relationships build community. But not everything is sunshine.

The Pacific is a vulnerable area in which small islands often suffer the consequences of events many thousands of kilometres from their shores. In 1969, there was another earthquake near Japan and we were warned by wireless that a tidal wave or tsunami might reach our village and its beach. It did! But forewarned we had dragged all the canoes inland to the village and removed all fishing nets. Next morning, I noted that the path down from the village was very soggy and that a watermark showed on the palm trees well above my head. Thankfully we were all safe.



Most people would have difficulty finding Sag Sag on a map. On the

global stage it is not important to other people, just to those who live there. But when the volcano Krakatoa erupted in 1883, all the people who lived along the coastal areas of this part of New Britain were wiped out and only the mountain people survived. Their descendants remember! Life for many Pacific islanders is not secure.

This has become an urgent matter following reports from the Anglican Church of [Aotearoa](#) (New Zealand) and Polynesia that five vegetated Pacific islands which were part of the Solomon Islands group have completely disappeared and six others are experiencing loss of land and water security due to severe shoreline recession, caused by rising sea levels and stronger wave action. This is fact, not political spin! The research evidence supporting this report makes worrying reading and is supported by photographic evidence from 1947-2014. Two Solomon island villages established in 1939, have been moved to higher ground because they were no longer safe. As their island becomes uninhabitable, vulnerable local people have to find a new home and leave the place where their families have lived for generations, where their language and culture were created and where their ancestors are buried. Like the people of Sag Sag, these islanders are in no way responsible for their plight.

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They are the victims of global climate change and widespread ignorance or denial of the consequences.

When Church leader Fe'iloakitau Kaho Tevi from the Diocese of Polynesia spoke of the climate change crisis in the islands, he was challenging the Anglican Church to prepare for a future that his people did not choose, to develop a resilience strategy and to train young people from the many cultural groups that make up the Church in Aotearoa and Polynesia for disaster relief. We too should respond to his challenge, we who live on the biggest island in the Pacific.

The next natural disaster should elicit a compassionate and practical response such as sending building materials, medical supplies and food with long use by dates. What would we need in such a situation?

Could we be prepared to build up the financial resources of those organisations, which serve on our behalf, by targeted fund raising?



Funafuti atoll,
Tuvalu Vltchek
one of the sinking Islands
in the Pacific Ocean

Maybe we need to prepare to offer sanctuary to those islanders displaced by the effects of climate change on the mainland, and not on other poorly resourced islands. It is hard to imagine the pain of knowing that your home has disappeared forever and that nothing you have done caused this tragedy. It is also hard to imagine the guilt of realizing that you could have done something to prevent this...and didn't!

Fe'iloakitau Kaho Tevi

is also talking to us.

Dr Irene Donohoue-Clyne

Words of welcome

God bless our eyes so that we will recognise injustices.

God bless our ears so that we will hear the cry of the stranger.

God bless our mouths so that we will speak words of welcome to newcomers.

God bless our shoulders so that we will be able to bear the weight of struggling for justice.

God bless our hands so that we can work together with all people to establish peace.

National Council of Churches of Australia, Protecting the Persecuted Liturgy, 2002



National Council of
Churches in Australia

A Handful of Prayers for our young people

Use your hand. Your fingers can be used to bring to mind different things to pray for:

Thumb

This is the strongest digit on your hand. Give thanks for all the strong things in your life, like home and family, relationships that support and sustain you.

Index finger

This is the pointing finger. Pray for all those people and things in your life who guide and help you. Friends, teachers, clergy, doctors, nurses, emergency services and so on.

Middle finger

This is the tallest finger. Pray for all the important people who have power in the world, like world leaders and their governments, members of parliament and local councillors, the Royal Family, other world leaders and their governments.

Ring finger

This is the weakest finger on your hand. It cannot do much by itself. Remember the poor, the weak, the helpless, the hungry, the sick, the ill and the bereaved.

Little finger This is the smallest and the last finger on your hand. ...*Pray for yourself.*



Parish Photos



Home Group

Contemporary Eucharist



Blessing



Farewell to Hillarie

**Mainly Music Mothers' Day
Morning Tea**



**Children's Talk with
Revd Kate**



**Thank you
Maggie for the beautiful flowers
arranged by you and all those
on your roster of assistants**

The event was a wonderful celebration of community and provided an opportunity for the team members to strengthen relationships with our Mainly Music mothers in a relaxed environment. So many of the mothers commented that they felt "truly valued and honoured" by the loving care extended by the team on the day.
Becky



**Thank you
Miriam for the gift of
Lectionary
for the people who
read each week**



**MU 58th Birthday lunch shared with
Parishioners**

THE MAGICAL PARISH GARDEN GROUP

which gathers every THIRD Saturday morning of the month (except in January) is a very happy band of enthusiastic Parishioners, many with great gardening skills and others who come along to assist by offering their many other and diverse skills...and when it all comes together there is a wonderful outcome which contributes to the fulfilment of our premise as stated in Mark 5 – “Treasure God’s Creation”.

The team of volunteers, currently numbering around 20, comprising Brett, Bruce, Chris & Pam, Darren, Doug, Geoff and Margaret, Geoff, Howard and Jenny, John, Greg and Lorraine, Graeme and Maggie, Paul and Vivienne, Reis, Russell and Shirley, who turn-up regularly when they can given their other commitments, and we rarely have less than 12 on each occasion enabling achievement of copious weeding, trimming, tidying, raking, sweeping, planting, drain and grate maintenance, ensuring clear access for Meter Readers of Gas, Electricity & Water, painting, window cleaning, mulching plus garden and lawn fertilising – all at virtually no cost to the Church.

Some major works achieved recently were...The restoration and re-location of the original Baptism Font for the Sesquicentenary of St Stephen’s...Eradicating an ant infestation in the St Stephen Statue along with restoration and re-application of “sun-block” plus preparation for restoring flood lights



to the Statue, which will also improve safety at the entrance to the main driveway...Improvements to the pedestrian access beside the Vicarage from Damper Creek Reserve...Establishing a large ‘Iris’ bed for cut flowers...Lowering and re-planting the lawn around the new electronic sign at our frontage to ensure compliance with the sign’s Warranty...and a major make-over of the gardens at the entrance to the Car Park from Norman Court, thereby dramatically improving visibility and safety for pedestrians and cars.

It is a wonderful help to have the lawns and edges maintained fortnightly by the Waverley Help Mates, a group of very fit young people from a nearby Sheltered Workshop, supervised by a Teacher, and they also help us with the annual distribution of piles of mulch around the various garden beds as necessary...This regular mulching has proved particularly beneficial in reduction of need for watering garden beds in dry weather and over time, the mulch degrades to wonderful compost and fertiliser... Maintenance of the bigger trees is undertaken by our friendly “Tree Man”, who invariably leaves us with the resultant mulch and also regularly donates other mulch generated during his rounds.

In the major ‘make-over’ of the frontage of the Church property in 1995, great care was taken to select plants which would enhance the presentation of the Church, have a Biblical connection (including Olive Trees which have proved so prolific that many bottles of Olives have been produced), have an indigenous connection, and incorporate plants which were hardy and also those which could contribute to the foliage and flowers needed for floral arrangements in the Church, thus saving money by reducing some of the cost of purchasing flowers each week. All of that grand plan has been largely achieved, so much so that the plants in the grounds overall are now very vigorous and prolific, needing quite a lot of attention on each occasion that the Group gathers...resulting in regularly filling 5 or 6 of the biggest Green Sulo Bins with tightly packed green waste for the fortnightly Council’s Green Waste Collection, thereby avoiding trips to the Tip and the saving on Tip Fees.

Each gathering of the team is preceded by a general reminder in the weekly Pew Slip, followed by an emailed “Wish List” during the week prior, compiled by the Garden Group Convenor, in which is listed a great variety of jobs needing attention, and from which people can select a job that particularly appeals to them ...and frequently more than just one !

Usually, by about midday, everyone (or nearly everyone) is ready for a sit

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The Ladies Guild

During the last couple of months the Guild has been busy with our week at the Op Shop and organising our annual Morning Tea.

We wish to thank everyone for the support given to both functions - \$1004.00 was raised through the Op Shop and \$871.00 with the Morning Tea.

The Guild has recently given \$2700.00 to the Church, some of which went towards the security upgrade.

The annual morning tea guest speakers – Shirley Hardy-Rix and Brian Rix – gave a wonderful presentation on their motorcycle travels through Russia and Eastern Europe. All present were fascinated.

Our May meeting took the form of an afternoon tea. \$210.00 was raised for the Cancer Council.

At our June gathering Di Scrivenor gave our brain cells some Exercise with a most entertaining quiz session.

Our meetings are held on the second Thursday each month at 2.00 pm in the Parish Centre.

Everyone is most welcome to join us and we would love to see you there.

Janice Miller



Third Thursday Eucharist

10.00 am

followed by a special morning tea in the Parish Centre
All welcome.

Future dates in 2016:

18 August
15 September
20 October
17 November
15 December



Shirley Hardy-Rix and Brian Rix on their Motor bike

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Enjoying a well earned rest and cup of tea, coffee and cake!

down, a cup of tea or coffee with home-made cake plus an animated chat making the morning a very social occasion and an opportunity to meet and get to know other Parishioners. Some of the team get so engrossed that they need encouragement to break off for Morning Tea, and then afterwards return to finish what they were doing, going in to the early afternoon.

Over the years, a great benefit has been the establishment of a huge variety of “pre-loved” tools and implements, plus a few donated new ones, stored in the dedicated Red Shed at the rear of the old Church Hall...This avoids people having to fill their car with numerous tools from home and then getting involved in a job and saying ...'Oh, I wish that I had brought 'so and so'... With any

luck, it is in the Shed!

If you have managed to read all of the above and feel moved to join the Garden Group, please just “turn up” around 9.30am on a THIRD Saturday morning You will be most welcome to help us “Treasure God’s Creation”.

Chris Knight—Convenor



Garden around the wooden statue of St Stephen

The Active Bystander Intervention Workshop

delivered by Ree Boddé (PhD): Program Director for Think Prevent



Ninjas Not Necessary—

Try Chips...

Or spilling your coffee, or tooting your horn, or ...We **can** stop male violence to women anywhere...the train, park, church, shopping centres, café...

Dr Ree Boddé's Active Bystander Intervention workshop encouraged us to recognise our own power to safely interrupt abuse of women.

Almost everyone in the group had witnessed incidents of male contempt and mistreatment of women, reflecting its prevalence.

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull noted, "But all violence against women begins with disrespecting women". He regards domestic violence as "a national disgrace" and has called for a "cultural shift".

Hence the question, 'What can you do to **prevent** violence to women?' appeals to the Good Samaritan in all of us.

Ree provided many examples of male condemnation and disruption of other men's physical and verbal abuse of women. Non-abusive males were implicitly affirmed as a potent part of the solution to male violence.

A Power and Control Wheel diagram included the coercion and emotional abuse that define the battered woman. Less apparent are economic abuse, isolation and male privilege. In contrast, an Equality Wheel affirmed respectful, supportive relationships.

And what about the chips? In an amusing and resourceful intervention on a train, a man slowly munched from his packet of chips as he sauntered between the bully and the victim. The bully was shown, without words or confrontation, that he was being watched.

Sponsored by Mothers' Union

Such thought provoking, concrete active bystander interventions sparked the group's discussions about both safety and other intervention options.

Ree stressed personal safety. Public places are best for some interventions. Strategies such as "bring it home" and "we're friends, right?" reprimand the bully. One attendee had "call[ed] out the harasser" when she confronted a manager berating an employee in a public place.

Consider the risks to the woman while "checking with the target" or being a "fake friend" to assist her, as the offender could renew his attacks.

Less direct disruptions were also suggested. Ring police or report matter to a superior. "The distraction" enables a victim to leave. A "silent stare" shows the perpetrator that he is being watched.

thinkprevent.com displays imaginative interventions.

Next, while chuckling at our role playing skills, our own strategies emerged. The scenarios were from real life. Bystanders invited a sobbing elderly woman to discuss solutions. Onlookers detached a battered woman from a dismissive policeman to consider alternatives.

These interventions require knowledge about community resources.

The safe, "group intervention" was effective. Together, shoppers confronted a man berating a woman in the supermarket.

Parishioners jointly challenged a woman-blaming priest for stating that it was God's will that she died, when it was really the will of the violent boyfriend.

Ree noted that sermons addressing domestic violence were scarce.

An ABC video of an updated episode of 'What would you do?' was less intense than a G rated movie. It featured the responses of male café patrons to the enacted scene of a male verbally abusing his bruised partner.

In general, the café males did 'man up'! When the offences were outside they enquired if the woman was ok and offered to drive her somewhere.. They challenged the man, condemning his behaviour. Ninja-like, one disgusted individual invited the bully to "step outside" and fight him instead!

"Not all men are bad", chorused the group cheerfully.

It takes courage to tackle this confronting topic of domestic violence and, prevent it. Ree Boddé balanced caution and inspiration. We **can**. We must. The chips are down.

Celia Hodges

WHAT DOES MY FAITH MEAN TO ME?

When I was 17 my mother died of cancer. When she was diagnosed she was given two months to live. She spent those two months at home being cared for by her twin sister, Joan. During that time many friends and relatives came to visit her and although they were upset at her imminent passing, all of them were struck by her serenity and total acceptance. It was clear to all that Mum, a deeply religious person, was completely and utterly convinced that when she died she would go to heaven. Then an odd thing happened: the night before she died, Mum woke up in the middle of the night, sat bolt upright and said, seemingly to nobody, "but I want to go, I'm ready". My father woke up and my aunt rushed to her side. She lay down again and said, resignedly, "They don't want me yet. They tell me I'm not yet ready", and then went back to sleep. The next day, I came home from boarding school for the Easter break. That night, my father, Joan and another aunt and I sat around my mother's bed and watched and waited as she slowly faded from consciousness and peacefully departed this world. I think she was waiting for me to come home. My sister stayed at a friend's place for the night.

A few days later we had the funeral at the church and the cremation at the Ballarat Crematorium. Joan's husband, Bob had arrived from Tasmania and we all got ready in our finest clothes. The day was fine with clear skies. We drove into Glenthompson and turned the corner into the main street where the church was. I sobbed inwardly when I saw row upon row of cars lined on either side of the road, virtually from one

end of Glenthompson to the other. I had never seen so many cars before and I knew that every one of them was there for the funeral of my mother. The Uniting Church was packed to the gills. All standing room was taken up and there were scores of people standing outside the open doors, unable to get inside. We were escorted inside by the funeral directors. All eyes were upon us as the crowds parted like Moses parting the sea. I felt like a criminal being led to the guillotine because at that very moment, more than anything else, I wished like I'd never wished before that my life had been taken and Mum's life had been spared. I was racked with guilt and despair. I don't remember much of the service, but I remember leaving the church behind the coffin and standing outside as it was loaded into the hearse. I saw grown men crying. I sat down on a patch of grass at the front of the church, totally numb. People came up to me to give their condolences. I acknowledged them and even managed a faint smile, but I could have been on another planet, so disengaged I was. The rest of the day was a blur. We drove to Ballarat, had the cremation and then drove back to Glenthompson. I didn't cry that day. It was a week later that I was going through some photographs and finally I cried. It was the start of a grieving process that took a long time.

Up until that point, my mother was the most important person in my life. As an adopted person who had been "abandoned" by my birth mother and now my adopted mother had died, I was feeling

pretty shattered. After Mum's death, my father also withdrew from me. He was never a demonstrative person at the best of times and only ever spoke to me when he was shouting at me - now, he simply didn't speak to me. Various relatives berated me on how I had to be the man of the family now and it was my responsibility to look after my father and my sister. They even told me how lucky I was to have had such a wonderful mother and how I didn't deserve her. So, in my shame, during my final year at secondary school I went home every weekend and cooked 14 meals for my father and washed his clothes and cleaned the house. Two years later, when I was 19, he died of a heart attack.

I began to question my faith greatly. I wondered what I had done to deserve all that had befallen me. Why had God chosen to take a woman who was so sweet and gentle and who was loved by so many - the only person who showed me real love? Why was my father so distant from me? Why were my relatives so horrible to me? I was convinced I must have been evil. Here was a 19 year old, not even remotely ready to face life on his own, having just lost both parents. It would have been very easy to go completely off the rails and do what my younger sister did: multiple boyfriends, two unwanted pregnancies terminated, lots of drugs and alcohol, lots of trouble with the police. Fortunately, she's happily married now, but we haven't seen each other for many years.

I was determined to be better than that and I needed answers to my faith: Since there was no longer anything for me on the family

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property, I moved to Melbourne, got a job in a recording studio and joined a church choir. Being in a church choir served a number of purposes: it fed my musical needs, it brought me back into the church and it gave me time during the church services to contemplate my life and all that had happened to me.

Slowly over time, after lots of reading the bible, listening to sermons and lots of meditating on the words of Jesus Christ, the pain and suffering died down, I started to feel better about myself, I realised that God didn't hate me and I wasn't evil. As they say – time heals all wounds, and I knew that God wanted me to make my own way in life.

I believe we are all put on this earth to learn life's lessons – it seems to me that I have a number of lessons to learn in my life and that God is testing

me. Through all of the things that have happened to me, I hope it has made me a better person and that I am more considerate of others and compassionate about people's situations.

I don't understand why my parents had to die, even today, 40 years later, but I do know that they have gone to a better place. My mother, although a wonderful person, had a body that had failed her and my father was never happy in his own skin and I think God took him to give him peace.

For me, I believe my ministry is in music and there is still much for me to do on this earth and I hope that when my time is come, I will have achieved all God wants for me.

David Cundy



David pictured at the Organ with Sue

“The Poet With His Face In His Hands

You want to cry aloud for your mistakes. But to tell the truth the world doesn't need anymore of that sound. So if you're going to do it and can't stop yourself, if your pretty mouth can't hold it in, at least go by yourself across the forty fields and the forty dark inclines of rocks and water to the place where the falls are flinging out their white sheets

like crazy, and there is a cave behind all that jubilation and water fun and you can stand there, under it, and roar all you want and nothing will be disturbed; you can drip with despair all afternoon and still, on a green branch, its wings just lightly touched by the passing foil of the water, the thrush, puffing out its spotted breast, will sing of the perfect, stone-hard beauty of everything.”

– Mary Oliver



Mary Oliver

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Herbert King
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ANGLICAN PARISH OF ST STEPHEN & ST MARY

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Assistant Curate: The Revd Kate Lord
Theological Student: Garry Deverell
Office Administrator: David Cundy
Parish Office: Wednesday/Thursday/Friday 10am–2pm.
Email: parishoffice@stephenandmary.org.au
Home Communion and
General Visiting; Ian Smith
Aged Care Chaplaincies: Bruce Chugg
Hospital Visiting: Sue Retschko
Contemporary Eucharist Contact: Rowena Ferguson
Funeral Ministry: The Vicar
Pastoral Associate (Emeritus): Trevor Bickerstaff

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