

Dear Mothers' Union Members and Friends,

In Genesis 1:27 we read ...

*So God created humankind in his image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.*

*How would different would society be if God's intentions
had been followed?*

During this month we have heard a great deal about women in our community. Monday 8th was **International Womens' Day** (celebrated since 1911) to honour the achievements of women. *How far have we come?* We have had only one woman as Prime Minister, only one premier in this state. There several women as judges including Susan Kiefel, the first woman appointed chief Justice of the High Court in 2017. In the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne, we have fared a little better, currently with 2/5 bishops being women (+Genieve & +Kate) and our own Vicar Dianne is one of only 5 women who are Archdeacons! Women are under-represented in many aspects of our nation's life... in leadership roles, government, business and industry, but over-represented in cases of domestic violence, rape, lower wages and poverty. *How far have we come?*

However, on **March 25th Feast of the Annunciation**, we honour a very brave woman Mary, the Mother of Jesus. Without her agreement, confidence and trust, we would be living in a very different world. Mary's acceptance of God's plan for humankind, enabled God to be incarnated (made flesh) in the person of Jesus Christ. Mothers' Union celebrates this day, to honour the Blessed Virgin Mary, but also to recognise all mothers and to give thanks for their love, care and our creation.

Love and peace, irene



Dates for Your Diary

Monday March 22nd. 1-30pm

Meeting the Neighbours... a presentation on the Anglican Church in Papua-New Guinea. The project we have chosen to support *Positive Parenting* will begin in PNG as soon as it is safe to do so. We need to discuss ways of meeting raising funds for this project.



Thursday March 25th. 5:10 pm

Lady Day @ St. Paul's Cathedral

This will be a special Choral Evensong to celebrate the Feast of the Annunciation. Everyone is welcome to attend but we need to book a free attendance ticket. Please let Irene know if you wish to attend.



Open Garden Day Bishopscourt

Saturday March 27th. 10:30-4pm cost \$10

This is a beautiful garden in East Melbourne, well worth visiting. If you would like to visit, please let Irene know so tickets can be booked. Transport can be arranged. Afternoon tea, garden and craft stalls available.



Monday April 26th. 2pm *Ageing Well, Ageing Wisely* presentation by Di Cerini from Uniting Agewell.

This talks about what should I do now, to prepare for my later years. Open invitation to parish & MU friends.

MONEY MATTERS

Our Mothers' Union membership fee in 2021 is \$45 which is used to support the administration and programs of the Diocesan Mothers' Union such as *Mia Mia*.

The autumn issue of the MIA MIA magazine will be available at the next meeting. It includes some tasty recipes, news from MU branches and thoughtful prayers and of course, newsworthy articles.

Marg Tingate, our branch treasurer suggests that you choose one of these methods to pay your subscription:

- Send a cheque for \$45 made out to "St. Stephen's & St. Mary's Mothers Union" to Marg Tingate (her address is on the MU Contacts list)
- Pay the money into the MU bank account at the Westpac Branch at Mt. Waverley. If you do this online, by internet banking, use these details BSB 033-112, Account number 276 504. Please include your Surname so Marg knows who sent the money.
- Bring your money in cash to the next meeting

If you are not confident with online banking, and prefer to go to the bank, please take a copy of the MU bank account numbers (shown above) and ask a bank employee to help you.

Introducing Ann Gerondelis...

I first discovered Ann's poetry and prayers in an ebook *Open Our Eyes* I purchased from the Iona community in Scotland late in 2020. Since then I have discovered her webpage www.sketchprayers.com and have become very interested in her prayers, each of which is illustrated by a colourful sketch.

Ann Gerondelis is by her own description a "grateful Lutheran artist and founder of Sketch Prayers studio" where she explores questions regarding the role of sacred communities and the power of images and image-making in shaping perceptions of God's holy imagination. Both her prayers and her sketches are personal and dramatic. idc.

Here are some short prayers from *a-prayer-a-day* section of her website and from *a-prayer-for-our-times*.

VISITED

In Gabriel's presence, might I have had the courage to say "Yes. Here am I!"? On the other hand, how could I keep from singing?! Basking in the glow. Grateful. Amen



BLESSED

When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb: and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. (Luke 1:41)

Thankyou God for the gifts of the spirit and body, including leaping loving babies. Hope indeed Amen

HOPE

Thank you for the power of a pause. A song. A candle. The recollection that I am your child. We all are. Indeed all shall be well. Amen.

PROTECTING...

O God
Creator of these lands,
We are because you breathed life into us.
Your people. Your land.
Gifts- one to the other.
Yet lines divide us-one from another.
Lines we impose,
Drawn and marked
On the earth, adorned, embodied.
Sacred markers.
Staking claims.
We stand, in gratitude.
Here we stand, together.
Here we stand guard.
How did it come to this?
O God,
Stand up with your people.
Stand with all your people.
Stand when it is hard.
Reconcile us -one to another. Build a way forward, a way for us all.
Stand near.
Stand strong.
Build peace. Amen