



Prayer in the Parish

In the Parish & Beyond:

- +Garry; the people in Parish of Ararat & Fr Martin, Rev Cheryl, Rev Darrell, Rev Adriaan;
- For Nola Browell;
- For Fr Nagi Habib;
- For Belinda – undergoing surgery & for a swift recovery;
- For the people of Ukraine;
- For the people of New Zealand; Chile; Türkiye; Syria; South Sudan; Nigeria; Democratic Republic of Congo; Palestine;
- For those experiencing grief;
- For those living with illness and disease;
- For Christian Emergency Food Centre;
- For those we love – near and far away;
- For all those in Agricultural Industry;
- For our Post Office Staff & communication services in region;
- For our personal Lenten journeys – that we may be open to God’s voice and guidance;
- For those celebrating birthdays and anniversaries and milestones;

Years Mind: Donald McKenzie, Beryl Hooper, Judith Marshman, Coral Panter

“Rest eternal grant to them, O Lord, and let light perpetual shine upon them.”

Services – March

Thursday 02 March

Lenten Reflection in Rectory
6.00-8.00pm with simple meal

Lent 2 – 05 March

9.30am & 5.00pm Warracknabeal
11.00am Areegra

Wednesday 08 March

Lenten Reflection in Rectory
4.00-6.00pm

Lent 3 – 12 March

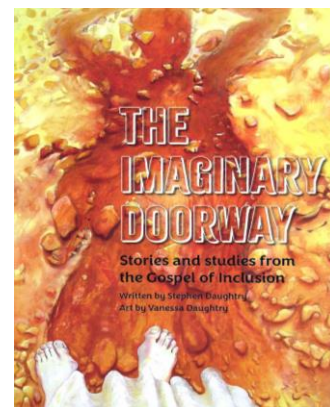
9.30am & 5.00pm Warracknabeal

Thursday 16 March

Lenten Reflection in Rectory
6.00-8.00pm with simple meal

Lent 4 – 19 March

9.30am Warracknabeal
5.00pm Retreat in Daily Life begins



Rev James has 3 Lenten study booklets from ABM – “The Imaginary Doorway”. If you would like a copy – get in touch! (*You don't need to attend the study to get a booklet*)

Lenten study dates:

In Rectory – all ages welcome

Thurs 02 March: 6.00-8.00pm (meal)
Weds 08 March: 4.00-6.00pm
Thurs 16 March: 6.00-8.00pm (meal)
Weds 22 March: 4.00-6.00pm
Tues 28 March: 5.00-7.00pm

Parish Luncheon

A sincere thank you to all those who attended our first Luncheon for the year.

We raised \$1092.70

Thank you to the Cooks, Brian on the door and Pam on the Raffle.

It was good to see all your happy faces again and look forward to more luncheons throughout the year.

The Catering Team.

Parish Council Minutes

Parish Council met on Tuesday night for the first time in three months. Several documents were tabled including: National Church Life Survey (NCLS) Parish Pack; Diocesan Policy documents regarding Rectory's & Parish Council member guidelines; various administrative matters regarding Leith Charitable Trust funding for 2023 (totalling \$18,500) and various quotes for Parish Centre upgrades.

Discussion was frank and conducted in a spirit of harmony and purpose.

November 2022 minutes will be displayed in Church Foyer. If you would like a copy emailed to you – get in touch with Rev (if you haven't done so already).

Thumbs up to our Parish Councilors!

*Please continue to pray for us
as we pray for you.*

The Boys' Shed - Phase 1 progress

Thank you to our Wardens who organized a working bee and relevant builders to work on the Boys' Shed on Wednesday. It was no small feat considering the pressure that is on everyone at the moment. Special thanks to: Russell, Brian, Curl, Buddy, Ken, Hamish (*I think*).

Progress includes: disabled toilet framing complete ready for cladding and fitting; one window frame on the east wall ready for window installation; framing for north-west corner of shed ready for cladding; installation of sliding door; guttering on east roof installed and ground work for tank begun.

I am most grateful! *Thank you Rev!*



[World Day of Prayer - Friday 3rd March at 2.00pm at Wheatlands Church.](#)
TAIWAN is focus country. Thanks to Pam as our representative.

TODAY'S READINGS

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

First Reading : Genesis 12:1-4a

A reading from the book of Genesis

The Lord had said to Abram, 'Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. 'I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.' So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Harran.

This is the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Psalm: 121:1-8

Response: *Our help is from the Lord who made heaven and earth.*

1. I lift up my eyes to the hills.
From whence does my help come?
My help comes from the Lord,
who made heaven and earth. **(R)**
2. He will not let your foot be moved,
he who keeps you will not slumber.
Behold, he who keeps Israel will
neither slumber nor sleep. **(R)**
3. The Lord is your keeper;
the Lord is your shade on your
right hand.
The sun shall not smite you by day,
nor the moon by night. **(R)**
4. The Lord will keep you from all evil;
he will keep your life.
The Lord will keep your going out
and your coming in from this time
forth and evermore. **(R)**

Second Reading: Romans 4:1-5, 4:13-17

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans

What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, discovered in this matter? If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about – but not before God. What does Scripture say? 'Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.' Now to the one who works, wages are not credited as a gift but as an obligation. However, to the one who does not work but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, their faith is credited as righteousness. It was not through the law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith. For if those who depend on the law are heirs, faith means nothing and the promise is worthless, because the law brings wrath. And where there is no law there is no transgression. Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring – not only to those who are of the law but also to those who have the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. As it is written: 'I have made you a father of many nations.' He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed – the God who gives life to the dead and calls into being things that were not.

This is the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Gospel Acclamation:

Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

From the shining cloud the Father's voice is heard: this is my beloved Son, hear him.

Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

Gospel:

John 3:1-17

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John

Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. He came to Jesus at night and said, 'Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him.' Jesus replied, 'Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.' 'How can someone be born when they are old?' Nicodemus asked. 'Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother's womb to be born!' Jesus answered, 'Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, "You must be born again." The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.' 'How can this be?' Nicodemus asked. 'You are Israel's teacher,' said Jesus, 'and do you not understand these things? Very truly I tell you, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? No one has ever gone

into heaven except the one who came from heaven – the Son of Man. Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.' For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

This is the gospel of the Lord

Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

The Propers

Sentence: God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

Collect: Remember, O Lord, what you have wrought in us and not what we deserve, and, as you have called us to your service, make us worthy of our calling; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**



For your prayer and reflection – written by my first Bishop, George Browning. *I am claiming my bias on this issue – which I have publicly expressed several times. I submit this article, a) because I think George's thoughts are very clear, b) I think this is an important debate and conversation we need to have in our modern society, and c) if I'm honest probably willing to be provocative as we prepare for the Referendum later this year.*

POWERLESSNESS AND THE VOICE

26/2/2023

+GEORGE BROWNING (USED WITH PERMISSION)

Poverty is powerlessness. It is the incapacity to deal with one's own issues. It is not addressed through charitable acts, but through empowerment. Responding to the presenting signs of poverty only through acts of charity is like dealing with a major physical ailment only with a pain killer. Indeed, addiction to the pain killer can become the biggest problem. Powerlessness can only be overcome with empowerment.

Signs of poverty are easily recognisable: hunger, homelessness, ghettos, various forms of violence – including self-inflicted violence, illiteracy, unemployment, incarceration, mental health issues, etc. These are addressed daily in Australia through government welfare, and by charities and humanitarian organisations. Sadly, these presenting issues do not decrease because of these noble and generous activities. Within the Indigenous community of Australia in particular, many of these problems have escalated in recent decades, despite well intentioned initiatives designed to 'close the gap'. Something more insidious lies behind these presenting problems, a disadvantage which is seldom named and therefore generally remains unaddressed?

This disadvantage does have a name it is **powerlessness**. At its roots, poverty is powerlessness. It is the incapacity to deal with one's own issues. It is not addressed through charitable acts, but through empowerment. Responding to the presenting signs of poverty only through acts of charity is like dealing with a major physical ailment only with a pain killer. Indeed, addiction to the pain killer can become the biggest problem. Powerlessness can only be overcome with empowerment.

Powerlessness has many causes, most often historical and intergenerational: loss of culture and language, discrimination, alienation, lack of education, unemployment, mental or physical ill-health, mis-guided governmental policy, colonisation by others, climate change.

Signs of poverty cross all segments of Australian society but predominate amongst our First Nations peoples. Over many decades government policy has attempted to address the signs, but never to address the underlying cause – powerlessness. People do not rise out of a quagmire of poverty because of what is done for them by others, but because of what they are able to do for themselves. It should be no surprise that the gap between quality of life experienced by First Nations people and the rest of the population stubbornly refuses to narrow.

This is why **VOICE** is such an urgent matter for Australians to understand and support. Embedding recognition of First Nations people in the constitution and enabling a voice to parliament is no more but no less than a mechanism of addressing underlying powerlessness experienced by them, a consequence of severe dislocation.

Rev James Wood: P: 5398 1251 M: 0438 233 630 E: warrackanglican@gmail.com

This is not, as some are mischievously arguing, granting an advantage to some that is denied to the rest. Nor is it simply a symbolic gesture with no capacity to address the various manifestations of poverty and disadvantage experienced by First Nations people. VOICE is a generous invitation from First Nations people to the rest of us to enter a partnership with them to address issues that we all want addressed. First Nations people are not asking for an advantage unavailable to other Australians, they are asking for a mechanism through which they might find the dignity of addressing their issues on their terms.

Let us look at one issue that is almost too shameful to mention and a source of enormous grief to First Nations people – the indigenous rate of incarceration. Currently almost one third of the nation's prison population is indigenous.

In 1988 the Anglican Social Responsibilities Commission (Australia) issued a report with the title: *Prison, the last resort: a Christian response to Australian prisons*. In the intervening 35 years the situation has deteriorated, not improved. Politicians find increased incarceration a vote winning response to crime and civil disturbance. Increased punitive action with no commensurate rehabilitative investment has become the norm.

The Voice would enable local leadership (let us say Alice Springs) to make recommendations which they believe will facilitate a life-giving outcome for both the perpetrators and the community they are hurting. As I understand it, if these recommendations have a wider appeal, they will then be presented to regional voice representatives and finally, where appropriate, to those elected to present recommendations to the national parliament. No government agency, local regional or national, would be bound to accept or legislate any recommendation, however, if the referendum is passed, local, regional, and federal law makers will and should feel obliged to consider such recommendations before legislating on behalf of First Nations peoples.

There is much at stake as the **Voice referendum** comes before the nation in a few months. The advantages for all are obvious. Its failure would be quite catastrophic, not for Albanese and the government, but for the nation. First, it would be a rejection of an invitation from First Nations Peoples to partner with them. The rejection of any invitation always carries its own message and with consequences that cannot be treated lightly.

A rejection would mean no further attempt would be made for a very long time. Secondly it would mean accentuated division between First Nations people and the rest of Australia will become more apparent. There can be no doubt that in a vacuum left through failure, unpleasant division will occur, led, not by those who support the referendum, but by those on either end of the spectrum who oppose it. On the one hand Lidia Thorpe and followers will seek sovereign identity not shared by all Australians while those on the right of politics will rise in high dudgeon spearheaded by the Pauline Hanson's of this world. The result would be ugly and shameful for us all.

If Peter Dutton's reluctance to support the voice results in failure of the referendum, this could deliver extremes of argument and presentation, further eroding Australia's maturity. I would like to think he would find this an unacceptable outcome – but perhaps not.

The Voice referendum is an invitation which offers loss to none, healing and empowerment to some, and common purpose to all. Why would we not vote for it?