

What is it all about?
by Robin Richards

COMMENT



The Reawakening of the
Ghost in the Theatre
by Alan Dilnot

The Choir, the Music,
and Me
by Paul Annabel



the Eagle and Lamb

Spring Edition

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ST. JACK'S AND THE HEART OF THE GOSPEL

BY WINSOME THOMAS
Pastoral Associate

Every Sunday parishioners donate food and toiletries and other necessities for distribution to those who attend the St. Jack's lunch on Fridays. When these items are put out for collection they disappear within minutes. There is nothing left. Most eagerly await that time as your donations supplement what they can buy on a meagre income.

Every Friday Norma Flowerday collects food from Cabrini and from OzHarvest for use at St. Jack's. She works like a galley slave collecting, delivering, sorting and ensuring that there is a spread for everyone.

Regular as clockwork a group of about six volunteers (all on a roster compiled by Sally Wallis, our Pastoral Care Coordinator) turn up at about 11:00 am. They set up the tables and chairs and lay the table. One is responsible for soup – enough to feed about 15 people. They then put out trays of sandwiches (from Cabrini) and put together a main course. More often than not there is something sweet available as well. Tea and coffee and water are in abundant supply.

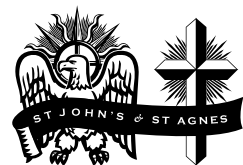
Regulars arrive between about 11:15 and 12:15 and unless I have another commitment I do too. Attendees are mostly men. There are a few women regulars as well. Some turn up intermittently, others never fail. They enjoy the company, the food, the takeaway goods and the general ambience of the lunch.

St. Jack's diners come from a wide range of backgrounds and circumstances. Some are highly educated. I always speak to everyone and make them feel welcome. Some enjoy having a long, deep conversation. A good listening ear is really appreciated. The volunteers provide a great service. Some work in the kitchen and some just come and chat to the attendees. *Continued page 3*

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A NEW LAND,
A NEW OPPORTUNITY,
A NEW FAITH

BY MIN LI, CHRIS

Australia brings a new life to me, from daily things to education. All of these things different from my country. Fortunately, I met a friend who introduced the John Church. From the church, I acquired power and peace to overcome difficulties.

Totally speaking, the new place brings me lots of happy things. I passed my Bridging language course, so I had an opportunity to start my master degree; I met my really good teacher who helped me a lot during my hard time. The most important thing is that I appreciate the Jesus, because I believe that he planned these things and people. Even some difficulties, these are chances to push me to grow. Each week I went to the church, I can find

peace in my heart, and I believe the Jesus always company with me and protect me. In the past, I'm so stupid that I just believe myself and think I can change everything that I want. Now, I realize that only the God can control everything, because he creates all of things. We need to follow the God's step and do things that make him happy.

"I'm so happy that I find a sense of belonging in the church"

I'm so happy that I find a sense of belonging in the church, and also find the importance to go to the church because it will be a gift for me. Another reason that I like this church is that all of people are very friendly and nice, which really brings huge motivation and lets me continuously to go the church. Thanks for the Jesus brings all of these things to me. I will follow his step for ever and ever. Amen ☩



Chris (that is her English name – her Chinese name is Min Li) is a young Chinese lady who worships with us at 8.00. She comes from Zhengzhou in central China, which is about 760 km south of, and 12 hours by train from, Beijing. It is an ancient city, with a population about twice the size of Melbourne's. She has had one year in Australia, spent learning English. This year she is starting a Master's degree in Professional Accounting at Monash University.



*Continued from page 1:
St Jack's and the Heart of the Gospel*

A few weeks ago some of the regulars turned up very early. I flippantly remarked to one, "Hey, you guys are coming earlier and earlier." He replied, "You know what, if there's nothing else in your life this is the highlight of the day." It's a full tum, company, some laughter, a place of welcome and a place where generosity is shown.

So what are the pastoral outcomes? I don't think we'll ever know. We never 'push' religion but always provide a place of welcome and support. We carry out the Gospel injunction of feeding the poor and the needy. We rejoice with those who rejoice (usually small gains) and weep with those who weep (sickness, problems etc). We never make judgments but welcome all and sundry with open arms. God does the rest. ☩

ST JOHN'S SIGNATURE NO.1

Other churches do some of the things that we do here at St John's, and some do things that we do not do. The particular mix of the things that we do and the particular ways that we do them have a large part to play in making this the special, different community that it is.

These are the things that constitute St John's signature. We plan to look closely at each, one in each issue. One part, and a prominent and important part of our signature is the weekly St Jack's lunch.

And, please take this as an invitation. If you have the opportunity, or can make one, to call in between about 11.30 and 12.30 one Friday and see what happens at St Jack's, you would be more than welcome.



EDITORIAL

We talk to one another, almost by instinct. Often, it is necessary but, even when it is not, we talk to one another. Of course, there are differences among people. Some people talk more and some less, it is hard to stop some people and hard to start others but, regardless of that, we talk to one another.

Talk is essential to our connectedness. Talk is essential to communities. People in a community talk to one another. Talk forms bonds, and is essential to sustain the bonds that are made. The bonds that are made between people eventually extend to create communities. Talk is important to providing each person in a community the position in relation to it and to other people in it that is mutually comfortable. Someone in a community who does not talk to others in that community is likely soon to find himself or herself isolated within it, which is the equivalent of finding himself or herself outside of it.

In any community, there is talk of all kinds going on, all the time. Talk is essential to communities.

The kind of talk that takes place is important in shaping the community. There is good talk, that encourages and enhances people and their efforts. Other good talk constructs meaning for a community's existence. Other, again, conveys a vision for a community's future and gives it the cohesion and courage it might need to approach that future. There is poisonous talk, that damages people. Some talk creates healthy bonds, and there is other talk that destroys the bonds that exist and may destroy a community.

At this church, at St John's East Malvern, there is wonderful talk after the service over our cups of tea. At other times and places, there is more wonderful talk between people who share tasks as they work out what is to be done, and how the people who are doing it can cooperate. It extends from the kind of talk that is appropriate in financial and administrative councils and committees to the sharing of the tools that are on hand in working

on the gardens. One of the important reasons for our gathering every Sunday is to talk together.

Important in our talk is that provided by those who lead services of worship, and important in that is the talk provided by, for example, the prophets, psalmists and evangelists. As our musicians lead the congregation in singing hymns, they give emphasis and nuance to our community talk. They contribute to it again, and differently, with anthems and voluntaries. Those who bring their concerns about the world and how we live in it, in the form of their prayers of intercession, provide another kind of talk that shapes attitudes and consequently shapes the community. Of course, the faithful exposition of our shared beliefs in their every aspect and implication, that very specialised form of talk that we know as preaching, is crucial not only to the existence but also to the health of a community of believers. There might be serious lack in our collective talk when, as it appears we – and this 'we' extends to worshippers in every church – talk little about that



preaching, not only among ourselves but also, and more importantly, with the preacher.

A church paper contributes a different kind of talk. We might expect that a church paper contributes talk that is thought about more carefully before it is uttered, talk that is more or other than a matter of checking up that the other is going OK, talk that is other than mutual reassurance and the fostering of bonds, talk that is more than a matter of organising who will do what and when and how – important though all of those things are. The talk that we might expect with a church paper might express someone's thoughts about shared beliefs; perhaps what they are, why they are held, and how they have changed. It might be intended to comment to others in the community about difficulties that one or some encounter in acting in a Christian way in this or that situation, or about how our shared beliefs and values bear on one aspect or another of how we live, or do not but should. Its subject-matter can and perhaps should be as wide-ranging as the concerns of the people of the church

in which it is produced; it might provide a place in which one person shares with others the experience of a direct encounter with God, or one in which another explains why some moment in a television program is fundamentally offensive to their Christian values.

“One of the important reasons for our gathering every Sunday is to talk together.”

This church paper might provide the kind of talk that builds the health and strength of this community, or it might not. It might come to provide a different kind of talk altogether, and we might find that that different kind of talk is one that we cherish. We hope that this new effort at producing a church paper is successful; that is, that its audience will find it to be valuable, and valuable enough to sustain it with their own continuing and considered contributions.

And there is more involved in sustaining it than the making of written, publishable contributions. Talking about it is important. There will be many things here and, we hope, in all those many future editions, that will catch people's attention, provoke their thought and foster their Christian discipleship. Perhaps, this time or that, one person or another will find there is little that is of value to them will be small. Perhaps, on the other hand, our church paper will overflow with things that are valuable to most of us most of the time. In whatever quantity that things of value might be present, when you talk about what is here – first to yourself and later with others – you enhance the value of your church paper. Such is our hope as we put this new creation in front of you. We hope that you will find it to be valuable. More precisely, we hope that you will make it of value and maintain its value to yourself and to others who comprise this community. ✠

I HAVE A DREAM — NEWNESS OF LIFE

BY DOUGLAS EDDY

Getting on for a decade ago, I read in the newsletter of an Anglican church in another state the words of a well-known Archbishop who is on record as saying that “Although we are redeemed, we are not yet redeemed from our sinful natures” – which, I think is akin to a lady saying she is just a little bit pregnant!

To me, our redemption is all-embracing with the liturgy we follow ideally being a reflection of all of the dimensions of the drama of our faith experience; in other words a re-enactment of the process of conviction, repentance, forgiveness, reconciliation, rehabilitation, re-creation to newness of life, with rejoicing and much praising of God.

Sadly, however, the liturgy used in many Anglican churches seems to stall at the Cross rather than move on to a celebration of our status in Christ, where the apostle Paul tells us that “if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!”

At your average church it seems that at every opportunity during the course of the service we relapse into the words (sometimes not in English): ‘Lord, have mercy’/‘Christ have mercy’ – particularly inappropriately in the context of intercessions when, occasionally, these words are used in response to the petitions.

The constant return to the theme of seeking the mercy of God seems to me to be in the nature of grovelling to God when, in fact, He has already dealt with our sin and would like us to enjoy our ‘newness of life’. I sometimes wonder if God thinks: “Why did I, in My Son, bother to suffer and die on the Cross if My people continue to hold back from entering fully into all that has been accomplished.”



The attitude described above is negativity in the extreme and is not cognisant of the words of the apostle Paul (2 Corinthians 1:19-20) “For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, . . . was not Yes and No, but in Him it is always Yes. For all the promises of God find their Yes in Him.”

Significantly, the enigmatic Australian songwriter, Nick Cave, in 1998 displayed his religiosity when he wrote in the introduction to publisher Canongate’s version of the Gospel Of Mark: “Merely to praise Christ in His Perfectness keeps us on our knees, with our heads pitifully bent. Clearly, this is not what Christ had in mind. Christ came as a liberator. Christ understood that we as humans were forever held to the ground by the pull of gravity

– our ordinariness, our mediocrity – and it was through His example that He gave our imaginations the freedom to fly. In short, to be Christ-like.”

This theme was taken up last year, at Saint John’s, on the occasion of the Feast of Mary, the Mother of Our Lord when visiting preacher, Dr. The Rev. Prof. Dorothy Lee, Dean of Trinity Theological School, University of Melbourne, described Mary as “God Bearer” and extrapolated this thought to encourage us all to comprehend that we, as members of the Body of Christ, are also God Bearers.

Newness of life — it’s not just a dream (You can walk in it!) ✠

NEW LIFE

BY ALEX S. WOOD

Having a then academically retiring, famous brother involved in IVF (in vitro fertilisation), I mused about his life, before speaking at his retirement ceremony. Recently then, ICSI (intra cytoplasmic sperm injection, a needle injection of a single sperm into the female ovum nucleus) had been introduced for couples in some more refractory instances of infertility. It seemed amazing that one as active, fertile and fun loving as my brother was involved in such projects through a vigorous co-operative group of colleagues, but Carl, (Professor Carl Wood) was a great human as well as academically top and a great organiser. He and his group understood that new life was fervently wanted by some unable to achieve it by more conventional means and worked hard to compassionately help them.

Other musing (I have to fill in my time somehow), has often led me to think about the magic of half instructions coming from a female ovum (egg) and half instructions from a single male

sperm uniting to almost always produce the complexity of a normal female or male human. Delving into the process further those instructions lead to innumerable details of biological activity involving energy use, chemical use and sequences that lead to a new human being. The numbers of instructions and sequences run into billions. That any normal human is produced ever is quite amazing, yet most of us fit that category more or less.

“His group understood that new life was fervently wanted by some unable to achieve it.”

When new life follows its course, with so many outside beneficial and adverse factors being met or playing a part in development of physical and mental capacity, so many national, economic, nutritional, climate and other factors interacting it is surprising that anything works so well as it does in our world.

Clearly we must continue our puny efforts, but there is more to life than that. ✠



COMMENT

WHAT IS IT ALL ABOUT?

BY ROBIN RICHARDS

Life presents us with so many interesting and challenging opportunities all the time that “New Life” seems so relevant almost expected every day, with both positive and negative responses.

We can continually experience the dawn of the day with its burst of yellows and reds in the eastern sky as the sun rises above the horizon. We hear the chorus of birdsong heralding in the new day – new life. At the other end of the day, as the light fades, again with reds,

yellows and sometimes rich purple hues in the sky, the nocturnal native animals emerge, looking for their new night life matched with the rising of the moon, a particularly brilliant sight of full white light at Easter.

The birth of a baby and the wide sweep of emotions connected with this demands us to consider new life – the instant explosion of love and amazement as we view the tiny hands, feet, perfect face, and come to terms with the miracle of birth and how we can understand and provide for the needs of this new life. The first green shoots of seeds and new plants, the regeneration of seasons continually show life in all its diversity of newness in colour and shape.

New life is thrust upon us with changes such as a new or failed marriage, a death in the family, a serious illness, a change

of residence, a career change, and even choices of holidays.

New life by its very definition means a change of some kind. Out with the old and in with the new. But is the “new” always welcome? Is it always what is wanted? Can it be handled like the “old” comfort zone? Are the new shoes as comfortable as the soft worn out tatty oldies? We need to experience a different, new life as we learn to walk in the shoes of others, to learn to graciously give and receive the gifts of love and new life.

Yes, new life –with its new changes and challenges is essential – to keep us vibrant, alive, interesting and interested; to help us try to understand who we are and how we fit into God’s vast creation. ✠



THE REAWAKENING OF THE GHOST IN THE THEATRE

BY ALAN DILNOT

Margate is a holiday resort on the South East coast of England. According to a brochure from the 1920s visitors may access Margate by sea (per the “Royal Daffodil”), by road (by charabanc) and by rail (North Kent Line). When I was sixteen and beginning to be stage-struck I worked at the Theatre Royal Margate on the Christmas Pantomime. Amongst the stage crew were Tony and Spike, both eighteen and well-built, who had to raise or lower the painted back-drops in the flies, and the heavy safety curtain at the Interval. Then there was Salome, the Assistant Stage Manager, aged about twenty-two, who seemed very knowing, not just about theatre, and her boy-friend Marc, who knew nothing about theatre but quite a lot about Salome. Then there was Jean, whom I’d known since infant school, who might have been my girl-friend

but was never declared as such. She was hoping to make the stage her career, and indeed when I last heard she was working at the theatre in Harrogate. I felt junior to them all, partly because I was a general dogs-body, just scene-shifting, sweeping the stage and occasionally augmenting the numbers in the chorus line.

The Theatre itself was a gem, the oldest outside London apart from the Bristol Old Vic. Above the stalls were the tiers of the Circle and the Gods, and when you looked out from the stage you could see the classical ornamentation all around. There was an orchestra pit, and when they played you would see only the head and shoulders and the waving arms of the conductor. There were two splendid richly-embroidered deep red velvet curtains with gold trim. In those days a show began with those curtains being drawn back, and the audience

would always applaud to show their satisfaction with what was then revealed. The stage had a trap-door, the conduit for the explosive entry for the Wicked Baron, accompanied by crackers and smoke, and hauled up on pulleys from the depths below the stage.

Architecturally, the masterpieces of the theatre were the “Boxes”. Those on the OP side were disused, the viewing spaces being sealed over, wall-eyed, and painted cream. Those on prompt side were still functional, and were reserved for the wealthiest patrons or for Margate’s Mayor and Lady Mayoress, and during pantomimes hilarious exchanges might take place between the big-wigs in the Boxes and the Clowns on stage (in even bigger wigs) on some topic of current local interest, such as the piles of seaweed that had mounted up on the sands.

The Theatre had a rich history. It was said that Sarah Siddons and Sarah Bernhardt had played there (though I don’t believe that now); and at just about this time Sarah Miles took over the theatre and used it as a try-out space for shows to be transferred to the West End. Another Sarah, Sarah Thorne, had been the licensee of the theatre for something like forty years in the Victorian period, and it was this latter Sarah who was partly responsible for the most important attribute of the Theatre Royal Margate, its Ghost. Probably she had earned the right to be a Ghost simply because of her long life in the theatre, but more particular legends had gathered about her. One story ran that when it became clear that she must give up her lease of the theatre she was so despondent that on the last night of her last production, just before the final curtain she jumped from the top Box on the Opposite Prompt side and plummeted into the orchestra pit. The play, I was told, was Isaac Bickersteth’s “Love in a Village”, an old play but a popular one. It would never be performed again at that theatre.

But I now have reason to doubt that it was Sarah Thorne’s Ghost that haunted the Theatre, or at least not by itself, because Wikipedia says that the Thorne sightings didn’t commence until 1918. However, there was yet another Sarah, Sarah Holdsworth, an actress who committed suicide after her heart was broken by the moustache-twirling leading man of the company, back in 1862. Both Sarahs have been sighted from time to time, but of course not together – one has never up-staged the other.

So we know that there were two ghosts, but for us in the stage crew they were one. We would gather round and talk about Sarah the Ghost. Everybody believed in her existence, but no-one had ever seen her, except for Ern the carpenter, who would often work late at night constructing sets: he claimed to have seen her several times. But Ern was a bit of a loner, as well as an enthusiast

for Samson Stout (brewed locally by Tomson & Wotton) and some of his sets would quiver threateningly as if, like his, their footings were not quite secure. So Ern’s testimony was not totally acceptable. But it was noticeable that belief in our Ghost would grow as an evening wore on – by 11.15 p.m., when the theatre was growing dim, nobody wanted to hang about. For all that, we would talk about daring to stay in the theatre over-night. True, Tony and Spike claimed to have better things to do than looking for a ghost, and Salome and Marc agreed with them. Phil for his part said that he had no worries about being alone in the theatre at night: he would bring a blanket, make a bed on the stage, take a couple of sleeping tablets, and wouldn’t care whether Sarah appeared or not, because he’d be asleep.

I thought that was cheating, and said so. “What’s the point of waiting for the Ghost if you ensure that you can’t see her? You ought to stay awake in the theatre through the whole night and see what happens.” “Would you?” they all said. I couldn’t get out of it. “Of course I would. There’d be nothing to it.” Jean looked at me. She guessed that I was already regretting my bravado. But the others wouldn’t let me off now.

That was on a Tuesday evening. On Wednesday I brought my torch – actually a bicycle lamp, that had a button at the top that you screwed down to get a pale and fitful light – and a Thermos flask, filled with weak black tea (N.B. I had no milk). I would be able to get a blanket from the theatre wardrobe, and I would need one or even two since it was early in January. When the play was over that night, I would do my usual duty of inspecting the Gents to make sure that no patrons were hiding there (not the Ladies – Jean did that), and would stay there until the rest of the crew had left the theatre.

And that is what happened. At 11.30 pm the theatre lights were all turned off, except the tiny emergency light that still glowed red in the auditorium. Then I heard the closing of the heavy

front Foyer door and then a pause, and then the banging shut of the stage door at the side of the theatre, and I was left with silence. At first I was thrilled to think that I had commenced my brave adventure. That thrill lasted about five minutes and then the theatre became the home of shadows, with just a faint ray of light coming from the skylight lantern. It wasn’t yet time to make my bed on the stage, I thought. I stumbled my way to the Green Room, which was cheerful enough immediately after a show, but very dull now in the gloom with no-one behind the Bar. It was a similar story at the Circle Bar and down in the Foyer. Perhaps the Boxes would be more interesting. What about the closed-off set? There was a door at the foot, which I had never seen used, but it opened easily enough. Behind the door in the stairwell was a pile of old props – Hessian boots for “The Little Tin Soldier”, sections of a jointed Beanstalk for Jack to climb up, a very large stuffed black cat for “Dick Whittington”, a large and dusty golden egg for “Mother Goose” and a clutter of other things which my bicycle-lamp couldn’t pick out. Impeded by all this clutter were the stairs to the disused Boxes. I was about to start climbing those stairs when I heard the faintest strains of music. It wasn’t my kind of music. It sounded like what my parents might listen to – on “Henry Hall’s Guest Night” or from “Ambrose and his Orchestra”. I wanted to get closer to the music, but the stairs were very rickety slats of wood, more like a ladder, as some of the risers were missing altogether. I broke a couple of them as I went up, but at last I managed to get to the top floor, outside the door of the highest disused Box. At that level I could hear not just music, but voices, and these voices were getting louder and angrier, a man’s and a woman’s, and the man was laughing and the woman was crying, and suddenly she said “If you talk to her again, I shall throw myself over the side”, and he laughed again, and then there was the most awful scream I have ever heard, and a great

thump of something or someone hitting the stage below. Then there was silence. I scrambled down the stairs as fast as I could, jumping the gaps and in one spot pulling the railing off the wall, and just as I reached the bottom the whole theatre was suddenly a blaze of lights, and a posse led by a policeman was heading my way. It turned out that my parents had been worried when I had not come home that night, and they had contacted Jean's parents, and Jean had told them what I was up to and they had informed the Police. Nobody looked very pleased with me, and I was apprehensive that I might be charged with breaking some law, though I didn't know what law that might be. "I'm sorry, Alan," said Jean. "I had to tell them."

But then the little throng was joined by the unmistakable figure of J. Burgess Barrington, the owner of the theatre (he owned the old theatre in Brighton too), a flamboyant man, patterned after Peter Ustinov, with a monocle and a cravat, a beautiful button-hole, a silver-mounted cane and a rich and cultured voice that would resound through any theatre – and he was in full fig even at that hour of night.

"Well done, my boy," he said, "You dared to stay here overnight. I did it myself when I was a boy. And what did you see, my boy?"

"I didn't see anything. But I heard something. A dreadful scream. Whoever it was must be lying on the stage – it only happened a few minutes ago."

"Ah, don't worry, that will have been Sarah." Sure enough there was no corpse on the stage.

"Now, let's see," said J.B.B. "It's 1 a.m. on Thursday now. If we work quickly we can get a report of this into the local paper. That will come out on Friday and it will be sure to get people into the theatre on Friday and Saturday nights. 'Theatre Ghost Sarah Screams Again' – that will bring them in!"

"Don't you want to press charges against the lad?" said the policeman hopefully.

"The pathologist's report said that she must have died between midnight and one o'clock."

"Of course not. What would we charge him with? Besides, he's done us a favour!"

And that would normally have been the end of the matter.

But when "The Isle of Thanet Gazette" was published on Friday it carried another report, headed 'Visitor Dead at Foot of Cliff'. Apparently at about six o'clock on Thursday morning an elderly gentleman walking his dog had spotted the body of a young woman lying on the rocks below the cliff (just round the corner from Margate Pier as you go towards The Lido). The paling fence at the top of the cliff was loose and sagging, but there were no marks of a scuffle, and no-one in the vicinity had heard anything. The pathologist's report said that she must have died between midnight and one o'clock. A transistor radio was found a couple of yards away from her body, and she was still clutching her handbag, from which it was established that her name was Sarah Huggins. I felt in some vague way that I was responsible, and I might have been considered a suspect, I suppose, but plenty of witnesses could vouch for the fact that I was locked inside the theatre at the time of her death.

The Coroner's Inquest revealed a few more details, which I had heard in advance from my Aunt Bertha, who kept a boarding-house in Margate and took in visitors.

As Aunt Bertha told the Court, it was only by chance that Sarah Huggins had been staying with her – "normally", she said, "we only take in visitors in the summer season, but by some oversight the 'Vacancies' sign had been left in the front parlour window, and when the poor girl had asked for lodgings of course we had been glad to oblige. She had come in on the Saturday before her death, with just one small suitcase. She was neat and well-spoken and not really difficult. Well, she preferred her eggs poached rather than fried, and Rice Crispies rather than Corn Flakes, and we had had to speak to her once about playing music on her transistor radio in her room late on her first night, but she had taken that in good part and hadn't offended again. No, there hadn't been any men following her around, although Fred had noticed that when she came out of the bathroom in her bathrobe she had bright red nail polish on her toes, but there wasn't any other sign of her being fast. We gave her a key of her own for the week, and as our bedroom is at the back of the house we never heard her let herself in, whatever time it was."

The Coroner found, of course, that this was Accidental Death, but recommended to the local Council that they keep their cliff-top fences in better order in future.

There was one more feature of the case that intrigued me – I found out that her transistor radio, though broken in its fall from the cliff, still had its dial intact, and it showed that she had been listening to the BBC Light Programme when she fell – to Ambrose and his Orchestra as it turned out.

Is there such a thing as the transmigration of souls? I'm not sure. How otherwise do we explain the Sarah of the theatre seeming to merge with the Sarah lying broken on the rocks? Was it just coincidence? Whatever it was, I know enough to be certain that it is not a subject to tell lies about. ✂



THE CHOIR, THE MUSIC AND ME

BY PAUL ANNABEL

I am moved by Luther's remark that when we sing we pray twice. As most will know, I am blind, and, as many will know, I am a trained musician. For these reasons, my experience of music might be different from others'. I doubt that music means any more to me than it does to many others, but I can engage with music quickly and I imagine that I can do so more fully because I do not have visual distractions to deal with.

I have been attending St John's since 2004. Other churches have no choral music, or little. Some things can be done to lift services in those circumstances, but are often not done. The result is dry, drab and bleak times of worship. For twenty years, I attended another church (no need for names) that assembled a choir only for Christmas and Easter. The difference between that situation and ours at St John's is vast. Having good music within the service that is well sung and played is integral to our worship. Music in the service creates an atmosphere for worship, and provides variety, which is also important. We are profoundly blessed.

I am glad that the choir has sopranos rather than boy trebles. The latter might be blessed by English traditions but they are inclined to go out of tune.

The music that the choir provides is varied, which is good. I am glad that its repertoire is representative of the English musical tradition and also that it is drawn from Elizabethan and nineteenth- and twentieth-century church music. As such, it provides a complement and balance to the liturgy, which is also of that tradition. English church music and English ways of worship grew up together and complement each other. For all that, I cannot resist the wish that we heard more of Bach's music from the choir.

Tom Baldwin does splendidly in his choice of music, not only in terms of the general repertoire but also for occasions in the liturgical year. The music that is provided for us at Christmas and Easter is always splendidly chosen and performed. It may be that the work of the choir in carol services at Christmas is directed more to producing good performances – which is understandable, because Christmas music has such an appeal, even to people who do not come to church at any other time. Regardless of that, it provides a precious enrichment of my – and, I am sure, our – Christmas. What is good at Christmas becomes very much better at Easter,

because everything the choir brings to us then is channelled towards a deep and real spiritual experience.

Week by week, apart from those special moments of the year, the music that Tom chooses for the Eucharist is always appropriate. That moment of the celebration of the Eucharist is a very personal one and the music enhances it.

"I am moved by Luther's remark that when we sing we pray twice."

The performance of Howard Goodall's arrangement of the Twenty-third Psalm on Feb 21 (I write this on the following Friday) was very special. As a performance, it was excellent. As a contribution to the worship, it was enormously effective in elevating and clarifying the whole Eucharistic experience. That was the same, differing only in degree, as is done regularly. ✂

THE DATE OF EASTER

BY BEN DRAPER

A lunar calendar marks the passing of time by the phases of the moon. In the Jewish calendar, each month starts with a new moon and a full moon always falls in the middle of the month, on the fourteenth day. Passover is set on the fourteenth of the month of Nisan. According to the synoptic gospels, Jesus had the Last Supper with his disciples on the evening of Passover and was crucified on the morning of Passover (eg Mark 14:12), on the following day, a Friday. Scholars have studied the records and many come to an unavoidably tentative conclusion that Jesus died on Friday April 7 in the year 30 or on Friday April 3 in the year 33. As part of that investigation, historians provide dates – for example those of Pilate’s governorship – and astronomers are able to locate the occurrence of full moons on Fridays between those years. Whereas Christmas is a fixed feast, Easter is a moveable feast, and the determination of the day on which it will be celebrated year by year, apart from its being always on a Sunday, is complex. In the first couple of centuries, there was some variation among Christians in the day they chose to celebrate Easter. Some, for example, celebrated it on Passover. They were known as the Quartodecimans – approximately, ‘the Fourteen People’, or ‘the Fourteenth People’. To put an end to this, the Council of Nicaea in 325 made the regulation that Easter should be the first Sunday following the first full moon following the vernal, or spring, equinox – which translates, in the southern hemisphere, to the autumnal equinox. They added a proviso that when that full moon falls on a Sunday, then Easter is delayed for a week. They of the council assumed that the equinox would always fall on March 21, although it does not always do so. One result of this procedure is



that Easter varies considerably, between the earliest possible date of March 22 and the latest, of April 25, both inclusive. In the five years 2016-20, Easter varies from March 27 to April 21 (in 2019). Another result is that all the western churches observed Easter on the same day. And another, that the people at Nicaea felt was important, the observance of the Quartodecimans was invalidated and Easter was separated from the Jewish observance of Passover.

“Whereas Christmas is a fixed feast, Easter is a moveable feast”

And, whether this was considered or not, it provided that Easter could fall before Passover. We need now to digress briefly and look at calendars. One way to measure time is by the movement of the sun. Such moments in the year as seasons, and times to plant and reap, coincide with the movement of the sun. Another way is by the movement of the moon. Tides, which are important to maritime communities, for example, relate to the movement of the moon, and are monthly. Another way is by days – by, for example, the time between one sunrise and the next. Days provide

the natural, perhaps unavoidable, means of marking the passing of time. And it is there that the basis of the difficulties with calendars lie. The moon circles the earth in 27.322 days, and the sun circles the earth – it does not really, of course, but it makes the present point clearer – in 365.2425 days. These awkward fractions mean that it is impossible to synchronise these different ways of measuring. We must set out the calendar in days, but neither the lunar year nor the solar year can be defined in terms of a whole number of days. The way by which people sought to overcome this problem was by inserting, or intercalating, extra days in such a way that the recurrence of any date coincided as closely as could be contrived with the recurrence of some fixed annual event, such as the vernal equinox. Republican Rome had a calendar that worked this way, but not well. Julius Caesar introduced a better calendar in 46 BCE – that was named the Julian calendar, after him – that had a better program for the intercalation of adjusting days. In many ways, it was a good calendar but it was based on the idea that the year consists of 365.25 days. This is inaccurate, to the extent that it adds one day every 128 years, and one result of this is that Easter gradually drifted away from the spring equinox to which Nicaea attached it. By the



sixteenth century, and according to the Julian calendar, the equinox occurred ten days before March 21. Church leaders were worried and, after years of investigating, proposing and delaying, another calendar was introduced by the Council of Trent in 1582 and named as the Gregorian calendar for the pope of the day, Pope Gregory XIII. It remains the calendar we still use. It was different from the Julian calendar in having a better scheme of intercalating days to keep it in line with solar events. There remains an error but it is much smaller. The Gregorian calendar adds one day in 3226 years. The Gregorian calendar is kept closely in accord with the movements of the sun – apologies again – by a system of naming some years as leap years and inserting extra days. In general, each fourth year (1988, 1992, 1996) is a leap year, in which there is one day added. But if the year is a centennial year, with its date a multiple of 100 (eg 1800, 1900), it is considered not to be a leap year. But if it is millennial, a multiple of 1000 (eg 2000), it is considered to be a leap year. The Gregorian calendar has been generally adopted as a civil calendar. Greece was the latest of the major European countries to adopt it, in 1923. Western churches and churches of western origin set their date for Easter by the Gregorian calendar, but most

Orthodox churches continue to use the Julian calendar to determine their date for Easter and, for those churches, Easter will always follow Passover and will fall on any day between April 3 and May 10 (Gregorian dates). In 2016, their Easter will fall on May 1. Those at Nicaea made use of an imaginary equinox, an ‘ecclesial’ equinox, that would always fall on March 21 or September 21. The Orthodox churches that use the Julian calendar do not use March 21 but the equinox as observed at the meridian at Jerusalem. This is a source of further difference from western churches, because the equinox varies; for example, in Melbourne in 2016, the autumnal equinox fell on March 20 and the vernal equinox will fall on September 23. There are problems also with relying on the moon; one, because the rotation of the moon is sometimes affected by the sun and, two, because the exact moment for the moon being full can fall on different days in different time zones. The problems with the calendar are, by and large, adequately dealt with as above. However, the fact that western and eastern churches usually observe Easter on different dates is the source of some awkwardness. There is, for example, the suggestion that they celebrate different festivals, or that they have different ideas about Easter, or that there is disunity in the church.

The divisions in the church are, in any case, deep and tragic; the difference over exactly when Easter occurs each year appears to be the most trivial and least necessary of all the reasons for division. It would be preferable on several counts if all parts of the church could celebrate this major festival together. On a personal level, it would be preferable if Christian neighbours – for example, Catholics or Anglicans or other Protestants who live beside Greeks, as here in Melbourne – though perhaps celebrating in different ways, at least celebrated on the same day and could celebrate together.

“The divisions in the church are, in any case, deep and tragic”

There have been many suggestions made about how to resolve these difficulties concerning the date of Easter and several efforts have been made. There was a law passed in England in 1928 to place Easter on the Sunday following the second Saturday in April, but it was never implemented. Vatican II agreed to make Easter a fixed festival, conditional on the agreement of the major churches. Another proposal was made in 1997 by the World Council of Churches, but no member body put it into effect. The most recent was made on January 16 of this year when the pope, the archbishop of Canterbury and representatives of the Coptic and Orthodox churches met to discuss a proposal to have a set time for Easter. The chief suggestion was that it be set for the second or third Sunday in April, in a way that would honour opinions about when the crucifixion occurred, as above. Unfortunately for the change, religious traditions are difficult to alter, and Orthodox Christians hesitate to change their ways of doing things. As well, businesses would have their planning disturbed by the making of an early change, so the possible implementation of the alteration was put off for several years. It may turn out to be longer. ✠

JOKES
BY MARIGOLD DRAPER

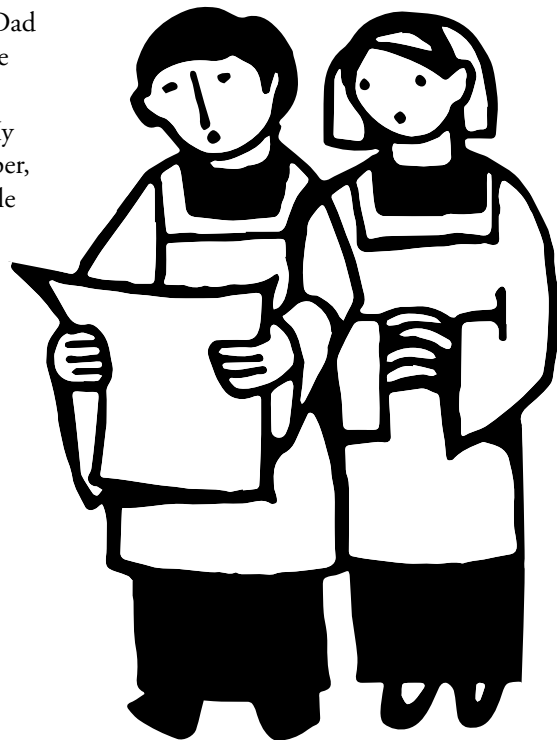
A kindergarten teacher was walking around observing the children while they were drawing pictures. As she got to one girl who was working diligently, she asked what the drawing was. The girl replied, "I am drawing God". The teacher paused and said, "But no one knows what God looks like". Without looking up from her drawing, the girl replied, "They will in a minute".



Father O'Malley answers the phone.
"Hello. Is this Father O'Mally?"
"It is"
"This is the IRS. Can you help us?"
"I can"
"Do you know a Ted Houlihan?"
"I do"
"Is he a member of your congregation?"
"He is"
"Did he donate \$1,000 to the church?"
"He will"



Three boys are in the school yard bragging about their fathers. The first boy says, "My Dad scribbles a few words on a piece of paper, he calls it a poem, and they give him \$25."
The second boy says, "That's nothing. My Dad scribbles a few words on a piece of paper, he calls it a song, and they give him \$200."
The third boy says, "I got you both beat. My Dad scribbles a few words on a piece of paper, he calls it a sermon, and it takes eight people to collect all the money!"



At the pearly gates again, a taxi driver and minister are waiting in line. St. Peter consults his list and says to the taxi driver, "Take this silken robe and golden staff and enter the Kingdom of Heaven."
St. Peter next greets the minister saying, "Take this cotton robe and wooden staff and enter the Kingdom of Heaven."
"Just a minute," says the minister. "That man was a taxi driver, and he gets a silken robe and golden staff while I get a cotton robe and wooden staff. How can this be?"
"Up here, we work by results," says St. Peter. "While you preached, people slept; while he drove, people prayed."

A CRUCIAL SOLUTION

BY BEN DRAPER

I am not often beaten by a crossword puzzle,
But this one has held me up all day.
I have ground to a stop. It is almost done,
But I can't get these last few words, try as I may.
I am sure you know how it is with these –
You have thought till it hurts and have most of it out
But, until it's complete and everything fits,
Over all you have done hang fogs of doubt.

There are several elusive words that I need,
But two, that must cross, are keys to the rest,
So that, if I could find them, those others remaining,
I am sure, would readily fall into place.

One clue is about the loving Creator;
The other, the existence of suffering and pain.
I have several plausible solutions for each
But there is simply no way they can be joined,
With no letters in common at the crucial point.



H	A	P	P	Y	T	D	R	S	W	S	X
M	N	E	G	H	C	N	T	K	L	U	A
B	G	F	S	Z	M	O	R	N	I	N	G
J	E	S	U	S	M	H	U	Y	O	D	M
Y	L	D	S	B	N	E	A	M	R	A	W
P	S	V	J	E	E	A	M	A	R	Y	R
T	Y	U	V	I	O	S	M	L	A	P	G
A	S	A	D	F	G	T	H	K	L	Z	X
R	E	S	U	R	R	E	C	T	I	O	N
H	R	E	N	E	D	R	A	G	C	B	R
W	E	R	Y	E	M	P	T	Y	T	S	D
C	D	O	N	K	E	Y	N	G	E	U	R

WORDFIND

BY MARIGOLD DRAPER

Words can go across, down, diagonally, or backwards. These are the words that are hiding in the small squares:

- MORNING
- GARDENER
- EASTER
- ANGELS
- DONKEY
- HEAVEN
- MARY
- RESURRECTION
- HAPPY
- SUNDAY
- PALMS
- EMPTY
- TOMB
- JESUS

WHAT COULD BE WORSE?

BY BEN DRAPER

In this list of some of Australia's problems, select the one that you think is the worst, write a figure 1 in the box beside it and rank the others, in order. Use the numbers to 15 to indicate how you regard their relative importance.

- unequal distribution of wealth
- unfair distribution of education funding
- unequal access to power
- unjust asylum seeker/refugee policy
- inadequate support for the unemployed
- incompetent politicians

- inadequate care for the environment
 - inadequate attention to Aborigines' needs
 - inadequate efforts to deal with homelessness
 - unequal impact of the tax burden
 - insufficient affordable housing
 - inadequate provision for national defence
 - unequal access to health care
 - inadequate provision of public transport
 - inconsistency in matching sentences to offences
 - inadequate protection of our resources against foreign sale
-

WHAT COULD BE BETTER?

You have read to the end. Your first impressions have been firmed into opinions. I have learned that many people at St John's have a great affection for The Eagle. Please do not allow the simple difference between this and The Eagle to weigh too heavily in the way you make your opinion of this.

Of course, I hope that you will welcome this. However, to produce something that will be the kind of parish paper that you will cherish, I need your feedback. Importantly, I need your ideas about how this can be done better next time. I need to know about what you feel is missing, that you think should be here; about what is here that you think should not be; about what is done here, but is not done as well as you think it should be done.

I will value your responses as much as I hope that this can be valued by everyone. But, be warned. The response to the opinion that there is something missing will be the question,

"Can/will you provide it?" and the response to the opinion that this or that should be done otherwise and better will be the question, "Can/will you do it?"

But do not be deterred. The blunt, brute fact is that everyone in the parish must be a contributor to the parish paper. If not, in however small and occasional a fashion, there will not be one. Your own special contribution might be to provide suggestions about content and style, as suggested here. Or about something else.

Your feedback is essential if future efforts at producing a parish paper are to provide something that will be valued in this community.

*Contact Ben Draper at
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SAINT JOHN'S SERVICES

Sunday
8:00am & 9:30am Eucharist
11:00am Kids@Church 1st Sunday

Wednesday
11:30am 3rd Wednesday of the month
6:00pm Meditation each Wednesday

Thursday 10:00am Eucharist

Friday 7:30am Eucharist

SAINT AGNES' SERVICES

Sunday
9:30am Eucharist