

CHRIST CHURCH
CHARIVARI
Christmas 2009
Number 173



Parish Paper for the
Anglican Parish of Christ Church Brunswick
ISSN 0157-5805





A Christmas Prayer

May the Christmas star
be your constant guide this season
May its message give you comfort
in the midst of chaos.
May its radiating light lead you



A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM THE VICAR

The Letter of Titus—leading others to Jesus

Dear Parishioners,

The letter to Titus, along with 1 and 2 Timothy comprising the so-called Pastoral Epistles, form a unique part of the New Testament. Biblical experts are uncertain as to the authorship of these letters, but, as with the letter to the Hebrews, differences in language and theology lead many exegetes to doubt authentic Pauline authorship. However, the message of the letter to Titus is highly significant.

The central message of the passage tells us that the grace of God has appeared bringing salvation to all people. We know that the Christmas story is central to God's plan of salvation history. From the time God called Abraham, through the formation of the Israelite people, the great exodus, the periods of the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah and the prophets, and even the infamous Babylonian exile, God continued to provide evidence to the fact that a plan was in progress to bring God's people the gift of eternal life. Jesus' arrival in history begins the process that leads to his salvific death and resurrection.

The Pauline author of Titus says that while we await the manifestation of God's glory, to be made present upon Jesus' return, we have several significant responsibilities. We are initially called to renewal and to cast out worldly passions. The message of Christ must have a significant bearing on our lives. We must demonstrate in our lives of faith that the message of Christ has made a difference. Worldly passions are an everyday enticement. The allure of the created world is strong. Since the attraction of the world is so strong and pervasive, we must overtly choose to take another route.

This new path requires us to be countercultural, to place value on things of God and faith over the materialism of the world. People will think us odd, even foolish in our rejection of what the majority of our first-world society considers indispensable, yet this is precisely what being countercultural means. We must be a sign in an alienated world of a value system that is contrary to that of the world. Such a stance will require courage because the rewards that are so readily apparent and tangible for those who choose the world

are hidden and latent for the Christian who chooses to shun worldly ties. Yet, our faith teaches us of the necessity of holding fast. Saint Paul puts it powerfully and beautifully in 1 Corinthians 2:9: “No eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him.”

Paul tells us in the present age, and thus for all ages, we are to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives. In other words we must live lives consistent with our Christian vocation. We are to set an example that others would want to follow. If that life is consistent with Christ’s message then we become a beacon of light, like the star, which draws others to Christ.

Jesus came into our world, to bring light, hope, and to show us how to lead our lives in a way that is pleasing to God. He came to fulfill and complete the law, initiated on Mount Sinai with Moses. Christ did his share, but the work was only initiated during his life. We, his followers, have the privilege and responsibility to continue his work in our world.

Jesus is the light who comes to dispel the darkness. We must carry the light in a proactive way. We must be willing to take some risks in providing the light to others. We cannot abdicate this serious responsibility nor think we are not qualified to be Christ’s representatives in our world. We must avoid the hesitation and reticence that, if we are not careful, can creep into our lives.

A little story illustrates this challenge. Three wise men were encouraged to find and explore what many called the cave of wisdom and life. They made careful preparations for what would be a challenging and arduous journey. When they reached the cave, they noted a guard stood at the entrance. They were not permitted to enter the cave until they had spoken with the guard. He had only one question for them, and he demanded that they answer only after talking it over amongst themselves. He assured them they would have a good guide to lead them through the regions of the cave. His question was a simple one, “How far into the cave of wisdom and life do you wish to go?”

The three travellers discussed the matter and then returned to the guard saying that they only wanted to go a very short distance, only so far as to say that they had been there. The response of the guard manifested great disappointment as he summoned someone to lead the three seekers a short distance into the cave and then watched

them set out again after a very short time.

The three travellers were hesitant and were not willing to risk in order to find wisdom and knowledge. I am sure that Jesus will be equally disappointed in us, as was the guard of the cave, if we refuse to move forward and to use the talent, time, energy, and opportunities we have been given to bring the Lord's message to the world.

The Advent season, a period of patient expectation has ended and we welcome Jesus, the light, the Prince of Peace, and our source of salvation. As we rejoice in the Incarnation and the great privileges initiated for us who bear the name of Christian, we must always be mindful that responsibility is an essential element of the Christian life. The letter to Titus suggests our need to be countercultural, to move away from the teachings of the world's passions, materialism, and self-autonomy, which twenty-first-century Australia tells us is normative, and seek instead an attitude of community and greater simplicity of life.

Additionally, we are challenged to exercise self-control and to live upright lives according to the message that Jesus proclaimed. In other words, we are called to be good examples, to be the light of Christ to others. Our words, actions, and attitudes should bring people closer to Christ. It is an awesome and extremely important responsibility. As we celebrate the arrival of the light that no darkness can overcome, let us be the light to others. May the miracle of the Incarnation, God made man, transform our lives forever! Amen.

Wishing you a happy and blessed Christmas,

Yours in Christ,

Fr Robert Newton





FR ROBERT HOLLAND
40th Anniversary of
Priestly Ordination
Celebrated on the
Feast of St Andrew
Monday 30 November

Tonight I feel a great deal of affinity with all those whose birthday is 29 February. In other words all those people who only have an opportunity to celebrate their birthday *on* their birthday once every four years.

For in 1969 I was ordained a priest by Archbishop Frank Woods on 2 December, I know because he wrote just that in the Bible he presented to me. But in 1969 that's the day that was observed as St Andrew's Day, since Advent Sunday was on 30 November the normal day for observing the Feast of St Andrew. The makers of lectionaries and prayer books have wonderful rules for coping with such problems; they displace the lesser by the greater, sometimes by one day, sometimes by two. In 1969 it was by 2 days hence 2 December. Tonight, in 2009, no need for such displacement!!

However, if any of you want to join me next Wednesday I am happy to do it all over again.

As I mused over the last week about my 40 years I began to reflect on all those who have influenced me and those who have shared my journey. I came up with the following list. Some names will be familiar to you, some not so.

Explanations are not necessary, rather I simply wish to record their names now:

Alfred Levick
Russell Clark

Gerard Tucker BSL
Wenman Bowak

John McKie, Bishop
James Murray
Robert Houghton
Barry Marshall OGS
Ken Mason, Bishop
Owen Dowling, Bishop
Phillip Huggins, Bishop

Douglas Bartholomeusz
Edmund Randall
Geoffrey Sambell, Bishop
Brian McGowan
Michael Challen, Bishop
Jeffrey Driver, Bishop

The list is by no means exhaustive but it reminds me of the many steps that have occurred on that journey.

My own parents who brought me to this place as a child and encouraged and supported me as I tested my vocation are both constantly in my prayers, the more so as I regularly worship in the church and pass their resting place in the adjacent Memorial Garden. For the greater part on my priestly life Susan has been my constant companion and for that I am exceedingly grateful.

Can I suggest to each of you that this season of Advent, a time when we look both back as well as forward, is an excellent time to undertake just such an exercise.

Who have been the formative figures in your Christian journey? Are you still in contact with them, have you thanked them, prayed for them?

I continually thank God for the opportunity to serve him and for those who have helped bring me to this place here tonight.

Fr Robert Holland



RICHARD CONSTANT JOHNS PONDER

5 January 1956 — 27 September 2009



REQUIEM EUCHARIST

CHRIST CHURCH BRUNSWICK

Wednesday 7 October 2009

In the words of Peruvian born author Carlos Castenada: *To be a warrior is not a simple matter of wishing to be one. It is rather an endless struggle that will go on to the very last moment of our lives. Nobody is born a warrior, in exactly the same way that nobody is born an average man. We make ourselves into one or the other.*

Richard was indeed a warrior and I'm sure a hero to all of us who knew him well. Although he would disagree vehemently in his articulate and customary "bah humbug" manner to being referred to as such.

We all loved this creative, intelligent and self-deprecating man who found great, and often wicked, humour in life's banalities and loved nothing better than a vigorous verbal stoush. He was also a fabulous mimic.

He loved the footy and the theatre, reading and Sudoku, art and music.

Richard's intellectual and artistic leanings became apparent in his early years at Geelong Grammar School and subsequently led him into drafting then architecture. His love of music saw him sing in the school choir and later in St Paul's Cathedral Choir. He found his true musical home here in this beautiful church where he sang—at many services like this—for nearly twenty years. I have lovely memories of being so proud of my beautiful brother with his wonderful voice singing at the Christmas services here.

I loved it when he came to the Gold Coast to visit. We spent many hours sitting in the sun by the hotel pool or enjoying a nice meal and a glass of sav blanc solving the problems of the world. As well as the memories, I think I probably still have every gift Richard ever gave me—such was the thought with which they were chosen and given. He had simple tastes but immense style.

There are many words that describe Richie. Brave, staunch—in fact it is interesting that his middle name is 'Constant'. That he was. He could be dogmatic but also caring and generous, blunt but most definitely sincere. He was a gentle man.

My favourite word for Richard is 'passionate'. He was passionate about his music, conversation, his friendships, being an architect and his independence. He was excited about the new chapter he embarked on—going back to uni to do his Masters in Architecture—a truly courageous undertaking.

Unfortunately his overwhelming sadness, I believe, was feeling his passion being drowned by the limitations of his body. For those of us seeking understanding, we can perhaps find it in this metaphor which provides the answers to why and how Richard chose to free himself of these limitations.

Richard was many things to us all gathered here today; a friend, a brother, a cousin, an uncle, a nephew, a Godfather, a son, a lover, an architect, a colleague, a musician and an artist.

Only a few weeks ago he told me that he knew he was loved and surrounded by friends. This is a testament to all of us who supported and cared about him and I thank you on behalf of my family and, of course—Richard.

Richard lived life on his own terms until it became too difficult to do so. That he died on his own terms should be something he

would want us all understand. Likewise, he would most definitely not want any of us bearing the burden of his choice.

I was proud to be his sister and—like all of you I think—proud to know this brave man.

In closing—the writer George Elliot said: *Only those who know the supremacy of the intellectual life can understand the grief of one who falls from that serene activity into the absorbing soul-wasting struggle with worldly annoyances.*

Peace be with you.

Carla Hanlon née Ponder



A date for your diary

Sunday 7 February 2010

7:00 pm Evensong

Commemoration of

Charles I, King & Martyr

The Philip Harris Memorial Address:

The Revd Dr Drew Hanlon

Martyrdom: chosen and dangerous?

or imposed and life-giving?

Supper will be served



IMPRESSIONS FROM CHRIST CHURCH PARISHIONERS Jane Lee & Ian Manning

Anyone walking next to the Yarra at Southbank early this month may have noticed more than the usual number of people dressed in colourful national costumes. They would probably have been participants in the Parliament of the World's Religions, an event held every five years and hosted this year by multicultural Melbourne.

Melbourne's spacious new Convention Centre proved to be a fitting site for this event with thousands of international visitors. The number of sessions offered was staggering with approximately 80-90 possibilities each day, making a choice of sessions to attend was a major feat in itself. On one of the evenings we had a community night and our Anglican group led by Abp Freier and Bp Huggins was delighted to welcome a large number of people, from many different countries, who filled the chapel at the Mission to Seafarers for the Eucharist and the reception afterwards.

Each day started off with an opportunity to attend a practical spiritual session such as Jewish Morning Prayer or the Anglican Eucharist, (both of which I attended) or Sikh Observance which I heard from a fellow Christian had been wonderful. Other examples of the sessions offered included "Religion Conflict and Peace—building: the case of Papua New Guinea", "The Human Face of Climate Change", "Hindu Jewish Leadership Initiative" and "Reconciling Religious Values and the Universal Entitlement to Human Rights". Sessions such as "Rev. Moon's Vision of Global Family" revealed the inclusiveness of the program. I found it interesting to see some of the mixtures such as a Hindu monk with a long white beard and hair in a topknot who spoke with an American accent and talked about the Hindu need to be media savvy.

I was a volunteer for the actual Parliament and for the MCD Desk where I met some interesting people including a Hindu woman who was delighted to see that we had a Christian college, with so many

Christian courses, in such a secular city as Melbourne! After talking with a woman from Queensland and an Iranian woman completely dressed in black (a scholar who is translating the Quran into gender free language) we Australians were interviewed by an Iraqi TV team who wanted to know if we had ever talked to a Muslim before. I told them about my membership in the Jewish Christian Muslim Association but the woman from Queensland said that she hadn't and was surprised to find she could do so quite easily. This type of comment and things it revealed said to me that the aims of the Parliament of bringing people together to help build bridges locally, nationally and globally were clearly not in vain. We all hope there will be more opportunities to share in this way in the future.

Jane Lee



The Parliament of Religions went for six days.

Each morning began at 8am with devotions. There was no attempt at inter-religious services; all devotions were conducted by authorised (ordained?) people from each religion following the traditions of that religion, but people of other religions were welcome to attend. Each morning there were at least a dozen different devotions offered, so one could only attend a sample. Two things struck me from the sample I chose.

The first was the absence of idols and images. In all traditions, it seems, prayer can be conducted without recourse to devotional aids, much as it is not necessary to have either a cross or an altar to celebrate morning or evening prayer.

The second was the absence of English. Though English was the language of the Parliament (apart from a couple of sessions in Spanish), and apart from the rooms set apart for silent meditation, the devotions were conducted in the sacred languages of each religion—Japanese for the Shinto, Arabic for the Muslims, Hebrew for

the Jews, Avestan for the Zoroastrians, Punjabi for the Sikhs, Sanskrit for the Hindus and various near-Sanskrit languages for the Jains and Buddhists. There were doubtless other languages as well—for example, the Rastafaris seem to use a peculiarly Jamaican derivative of English. Whatever the language and whatever the way it was chanted, devotions consisted almost entirely of prayers—some of them ancient and obscure, some of them direct and urgent, but all of them traditional. I was left with the feeling that it is only modern Christians who believe that the more ordinary the language, the more efficacious the prayer.

I have long participated in other religions' devotions by repeating Christian prayers silently to myself, and whatever the words or the chant, each morning I found that morning prayer according to each tradition had much the same God-centred effect.

As for the rest of each day, the Parliament was a talkfest.

Jan Manning

Religious leaders needed the moral courage to risk being labelled wowsers and speak up for children's right to be properly nurtured and to have a childhood, Archbishop Freier told the Parliament of the World's Religions in Melbourne last week.



Dr Freier, speaking at a seminar 'The Future of Religion in Australia? Melbourne's Religious Leaders in Dialogue with Young People' on the final day of the Parliament on 9 December, said the optimism of Australia's secular ideology collapsed in the face of the threats to children and young people, such as homelessness, poverty, substance abuse and sexualisation and commercialisation of the young.

The archbishop joined Jewish and Muslim leaders and young adults from the three great monotheistic faiths to discuss issues such as religious belief among the young, secularism and intermarriage.

Friendship



*If all the world was mine to give,
I'd give it all to you.
The flowers in spring, the birds that sing,
The honey and the dew.
Alas, the world's not mine to give
It belongs to God above
But I'll be your friend until the end
In everything you do.*

*Tell me your sorrows,
And all your tomorrows
I'll try to make happy and bright.
You deserve the best
And I hope you rest
Bathed in God's holy light.*

*You're the best friend I have
In all this world;
You are so loyal and true.
I'm glad that I met you—
I'll never forget you
Even when my life is through.*

Lucy Pope



BLESSING A CHRISTMAS TREE

The Christmas tree stems from an ancient tradition of bringing evergreens into the house during the winter months as a hopeful reminder that spring would come.

Most Holy and Blessed One,
You sent your beloved Son into the world
to show us the path to true life.

May the green of this tree
remind us of the everlasting life you offer.

May the boughs of this tree
remind us that we are the living branches of your
love.

May the life of this tree
remind us of the cross on which your Son gave his
life.

May the lights of this tree
remind us that Christ is the light of the world.

SERVICES AT CHRIST CHURCH

Sundays

- 8.00 am Holy Communion
9.30 am Sung Eucharist
5.00 pm Evensong / **Sunday @ 5** for families and children

Weekdays

Holy Communion is celebrated at:

- 7.00 am Monday to Wednesday and Friday
10.00 am Wednesday
6.00 pm Thursday
8.00 am Saturday and public holidays

Confessions are heard by appointment with the clergy.

Father Robert is happy to discuss matters of faith and morals and to prepare people for the Church's sacraments.

Please phone for an appointment.

DIRECTORY

Vicar	The Revd Robert Newton
Associate Clergy	The Rt Revd James Grant The Revd Philip Burgess The Revd Dr Drew Hanlon The Revd Robert Holland
Director of Music	Mr David Cundy
Churchwardens	Dr John Parkes Dr Geoffrey Scollary Mr John Vincent
Secretary to the Vestry	Mrs Mary Harris
Treasurer	Mr Colin Reilly
Parish Office	 & fax 9388 0623
Website	www.christchurchbrunswick.org
Email	office@christchurchbrunswick.org