

Voice from the Vicarage 13th October 2022

Dear All,

I suppose you have all experienced days that seem 'bitty'. You set a plan for your waking hours and then unexpected things come along. 'Events, dear boy, events'. British PM Harold MacMillan used to describe 'events' as the greatest challenge in leadership. Though many end up worthwhile, for me to see such events as less interruptions to plans as opportunities is still a bit of a work in progress. If I was a saint I'd surely see them as a blessing...For sanity and godliness sake, I have to accept that not everything I want to get done, will get done. Will Jesus fall off his throne as a result of the not done?

But I must admit today is one of those bitty' days.

After the 'as planned' 6.30 am Morning Prayer with Sister Cara and our usual coffee and chat afterwards I set myself the task of doing the Report and the accounts for 'The Lamb'. I want to get it done in time for the parish Exec group meeting after mass tonight. It's complicated. Thank goodness I've not been alone in it. If you'd peeked into the backroom at the café yesterday you would have seen Donna kneeling on the floor surrounded by receipts as she busily checked, sorted and compared them against bank statements.

After that I was going to settle myself down to writing this missive as well as a few long overdue letters to members of the Oratory in other parts of the world. Such are my 'Superior' duties in the OGS. Of course that won't happen before a visit to the wondrous Thursday lunch team for my usual 'You're all doing very well' as they prepare to serve lunch wondering, given the rain, how many will turn up for the tuna and pasta melt. (Plenty did!)

But in the midst of those plans, a long unexpected phone call about a pastoral problem that couldn't be rushed. It deserved my full attention and sympathy. Hopefully I offered some useful advice. Then the doorbell, and an unexpected visit from the architects for the school development to talk about the colour of the outside wall and negotiate a change in the way they are intending to deal with the undercroft on the vicarage side of the property. Then a call from our own excellent builders asking if they can change the agreed schedule and start work on the internal changes to the laundry and bathroom tomorrow given the rain forecast will make outside work on the extension nigh impossible over the next week. And so in the midst of the high and lofty thoughts that as you know surround the preparation for the Voice from the Vicarage, all of a sudden I'm wondering what to do with the freezer and its contents, and the table in the laundry! Fortunately, the lads on site come to my rescue. I bless God for them, and tell them so!

After a couple of other distractions, it's now much later than I hoped and I am looking out of the upstairs front window as I write. I can see the reflections of trees in the enormous puddles across the road. A blocked drain...

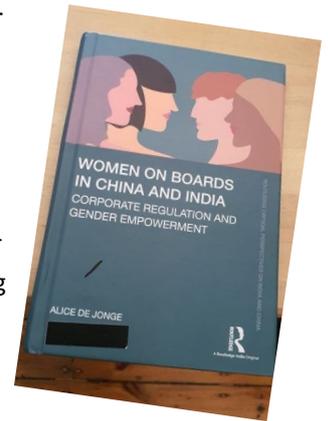
Rain, rain go away...come gain another day

So we used to sing when I was a kid, or at least someone used to. And those words would surely strike a chord with so many folk in parts of Australia in these days who have lived, and are living again with the terrible anxiety of flooding. In my naivety I thought global warming would have meant *less* rain not more, but as with most things, it's more complicated than that. Well, whatever the cause, water, though so necessary for life and so they tell me makes up 60% of my body, can mean danger and drowning, the destruction of property and the death of livestock and people. Like its opposite, the

equally necessary, fire, uncontrolled it can be disastrous. Not too unlike human passions perhaps, so fruitful when disciplined, destructive when unruly.

A lovely 'stream' of a different kind...

The rain, rather unexpectedly brought a lovely stream of folk into our very welcoming 'Lamb' for coffee yesterday, including long staying parishioner **Ian Manning** who showed me, with a measure of quietly expressed pride a book just published by his wife, our own **Alice de Jong**. Congratulations Alice! Alice is a senior lecturer in Law at Monash University, and a strong advocate for many who are disadvantaged. She is part of our Thursday lunch team.



A great idea from young hearts?

And talking of yesterday, how lovely it was to be *taken out* for dinner by two of our younger parishioners, Mason and Tatjana. Good food and good conversation. As so often, the young can be such an example to others. **I hope the idea will catch on.** Please note, *they took me out...*

Knowing your ABC...

And finally someone more distinguished, it must be admitted, was in the neighbourhood on Tuesday. Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby visited Holy Trinity Coburg and its Arabic congregation. I was luck enough to be invited. He spoke so warmly and with understanding of the plight of refugees, and equally warmly of the Australian welcome many have received.



The head in between me and the Arch belongs to Jesuit, Frank Brennan. Happily I sat next to him afterwards. Once called 'the meddling priest' by a former PM I think he is a wonderful combination of the unafraid and the unassuming.

Morning tea afterwards was no 'tea and timtam' affair! Typical Arabic food and hospitality! I know the ABC a little from my English days. We had a brief conversation, but mainly about how much he'd enjoyed meeting my episcopal sister!! I suppose that was good for me.... Much love, +Lindsay

AGREED TODAY! CAROLS & JAZZ Wed Dec 14th