

# Voice from the Vicarage 18th May 2023

Dear All,

So I'm not actually writing this Voice from the comfort and indeed noisiness of the Christ Church Vicarage (see last week's Voice) but from Sewanee in Tennessee. That's distinct from the more well known 'Swanee' of the 'Way down upon the Swanee river', made famous by the now very politically incorrect 'black and white' minstrels. *That Swanee* runs through Georgia, but like the song, *this Swanee* is certainly 'far, far, away'. It took twenty seven hours to get here!

Why Sewanee you may well wonder. I'm here at an Anglican retreat conference centre to spend some time with the North American brethren and companions of the Oratory of the Good Shepherd. You may know I'm currently the Superior of the Order and in that capacity the North American province invited me to conduct their retreat and attend their annual Chapter. Sewanee is almost entirely made up of a University part of which is a theological faculty that also prepares students for ordination.

One of our brothers is a professor here. The campus is on a mountain with a lovely remoteness which I suspect brings out the best and the worst in its undergraduates!

Leading a retreat includes giving numerous addresses as well as seeing individuals for counsel or confession. It's demanding, but also a joy. My theme is Psalm 23. One biblical commentator warns that the work of 'dissecting'



*Not a bad aid to meditation...*

so complete and beautiful a psalm is the work of a vandal. But the deepening of our understanding of the Good Shepherd is at the heart of our Oratory life, so I'll take the risk! It's a psalm so full of divine love, consolation and challenge.

By the way, I'll be back in Brunswick on Monday.

*On Sunday I worshipped at a little church in Chattanooga. Somewhat disappointed to discover there is no 'choo choo' to be found, this familiar image gave some consolation!*



*But now to our life in Brunswick...*

It was a great sadness to learn that our **James White** had died last Sunday just a little while before Fr Chris arrived at the hospital with the Holy Sacrament. But he was able to be with the body to pray and commend him to the Lord. James has been part of our community for several years, having lived much of his life, and learned the faith in rural Victoria. Christ Church became very much his spiritual home. He was a member of our Thursday lunch team and on our Sunday reading rota. Though in considerable pain, he made his way to the lectern the Sunday before he was admitted to hospital that final time. He was taken very unwell at the following Wednesday morning mass, so his last 'public' act and desire we might say was to attend the Eucharist.

James faced the disappointment of cancer with pragmatism and 'no fuss'. He was often accompanied at mass by 'tall Tim' who was baptised and confirmed here last Easter, much, it must be said, due to the godly influence of James.

Let's commend James to the Lord in the hope that he will indeed here the most blessed of all voices, saying unto him:

**"Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter the joy of thy Lord"**

**ASHES to FIRE** The journey from Ash Wednesday to Pentecost is almost over!

## THIS SUNDAY @ 6 in The Lamb café

Father John Stewart will guide us for the third and last time in this mini series on the theme, and he will be reflecting on how we might helpfully examine what God is doing in our lives.

We have been blessed to have this contribution by Fr John to our life together. Come along on Sunday.

And next Sunday...the 28th

## THE FEAST OF PENTECOST



It's just about impossible to exaggerate the importance of the Gift at the heart of this Feast. Without the Holy Spirit we would be lifeless. There would be no Church, no Sacraments, no believers.

**ON THE FIRST DAY OF PENTECOST** the apostles, having experienced the Gift were enabled to speak in many tongues and all could understand.

**It's become our custom at Christ Church** to invite those who speak another language to help us as we recite the Lord's Prayer during the 10 am Celebration on this day. All you need do is be willing to pray the prayer in that tongue. It will be a gift to our worship and a sign of the unity we share in Christ Jesus. Same prayer, many languages, one communion.

**Cara**, our pastoral assistant is co ordinating this. You can make contact with her: [crgreenham@gmail.com](mailto:crgreenham@gmail.com) or see her on Sunday!

*And finally,* server **Mason Bradford** is in London at the moment. No tour of London is complete without a visit to Westminster Abbey, where it's a must to see the list of bishops consecrated there (of which I happen to be one). How shocking that he could find no verger who knew such a list existed! Undeterred our intrepid Mason found it for himself...

Much love,

+ *Lindsay*

