



The Third-Sunday after Trinity

20th of June 2021

Domestic Violence: (A Diocesan Media Release)

All Anglicans should be deeply grieved by the study released this week by the Anglican Church of Australia on domestic and family violence.

"Like my predecessor, I want to state clearly that all forms of domestic abuse are incompatible with Scripture and Christian faith," said the new Archbishop of Sydney, Kanishka Raffel. "Nothing justifies violence or coercion. Christian relationships are to be marked by love, gentleness and respect."

The report, indicates the prevalence of family abuse was the same or higher than in the wider Australian community. The report will be studied to determine ways to further strengthen responses to domestic abuse and family violence within church communities and a ten point commitment has been enacted by the General Synod, as well as work already undertaken in the Sydney Diocese. "There is much work to do and our shock and sadness should stir us into further action," said Archbishop Raffel.

Archdeacon Kara Hartley, speaking on behalf of the Sydney Anglican Domestic Violence Task Force, said, "It is entirely appropriate that, as a national Anglican church, we should be committed to hearing from victims and

taking a serious look at how churches have responded and are currently responding to survivors. "The results of this survey mirror our concerns about domestic violence among church communities. This led the Sydney Synod to adopt a Domestic Abuse Policy and Guidelines in 2018."

In 2017, the then Archbishop Glenn Davies commended the work of the Sydney Diocese Domestic Violence Task Force, saying that abuse among those connected with churches, within the congregations and even in clergy families should never be the case as "it dishonours both God and his image-bearers".

It represents a personal tragedy in each case, and an affront to God which, as Archbishop Davies said must be "responded to both with justice and pastoral sensitivity".

"Alongside our policy, we've developed materials and training to highlight that all forms of domestic abuse are wrong and not tolerated in our church." Archdeacon Hartley said. "We've also taken seriously the fact that domestic violence has occurred in some clergy households and have established a fund to care for clergy spouses."

"Through Anglicare and Youthworks, we have developed the 'Before it Starts' campaign to educate young people from the Bible about respectful relationships, which we hope will lead to long term change in the incidence of domestic violence and sexual abuse. This research reminds us that there is more to do and we continue to seek ways to ensure victims of abuse in our Church are listened to, valued, respected."

"In particular, it is disturbing that less than 12 percent of Anglicans who find themselves in a violent relationship turn to clergy or those within their Church for help. This is despite the finding that clergy and lay leaders had high levels of awareness of abuse issues and that 74 percent of those who sought help within their congregation were supported."

The issue of twisting Scripture as a cover for violence was also raised in the research. "Some abusers distort the meaning of Scripture in order to exercise control over their victims. Rightly understood, the Bible condemns all forms of domestic abuse. Therefore, using Scripture as a cover for violence is a gross distortion." the Archdeacon said. "This report reinforces a key finding of our task force, that we must give priority to biblical teaching on marriage that leaves no room for misunderstanding or abuse.

In response to this report – I have prepared a liturgical lamen to be at both Sunday Services (20/06/2021) – Fr Robert H.

Sunday Services:

What a blessing last Sunday Services were. I enjoyed the enthusiasm Fr Ernest brings to leading the three Services. Fr Ernest will be the Preacher next Sunday, the 27th of June.

The Choral Evensong was a great time of worship as we honoured her majesty, Queen Elizabeth. It has been over thirty years since I was a catechist and last Sunday's Evensong was the best I have ever experienced. On

behalf of the Parish, I pass on our thanks to Dr Brett McKern and the Cathedral Singers. Your respective skills enhanced our worship of the LORD.

The fellowship over the afternoon tea was excellent. My thanks to Leanne Winter and Christine McCormack, who indeed modelled what Jesus taught about being godly servants. The afternoon tea was well done and very much appreciated.

I have reintroduced the Old Testament Reading into the 8 am 1662 Service. This change will allow the Preacher more scope on the choice of text to prepare for the Sunday Sermons. This change also honours our Anglican heritage of Word and Sacrament.

You will notice I have also changed part of the liturgy: ***Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word, and I will be healed.***

I have replaced the word *will be healed* with the words, ***I shall come***. The reason behind the change is both pastoral and liturgical in its design. First, this response is prior to the invitation to 'Come in faith with thanksgiving in your hearts.' Secondly, the word heal is obscured, as originally, it is a relational term that relates to being reconciled to God and not 'healing' in the physical sense of the word. Finally, the words, ***I shall come***, indicates we are responding to the invitation of Christ, and that response is in faith with humility.

I am investigating 'guest preachers' for the following quarterly roster. Guest Preachers will further enhance our understanding of being part of the body of Christ

beyond our Parish. I will be inviting licenced Preachers, both ordained and those in training. Please pray as I seek God's guidance in this area.

Future Planning.

One of the Church's goals is to see people come back to Church. In addition, we also have the goal of *connecting* with people with the aim of evangelism. These two goals can easily sit together and are not in competition with each other.

I am calling a meeting to discuss *children's ministry*. At the moment, there are parishioners involved with Scripture in the East Gordon Primary School. There has been good work in the past, and there is great potential for this ministry to Children. Undoubtedly, we must become more proactive and creative in connecting with Children and Families within our Parish. I know that many parishioners share the desire to develop Children's and Families ministries at St. Johns.

Melinda will also be calling for an expression of interest of women who may wish to be involved in a women's outreach/connecting event later in the year.

Pastoral Care:

I have permission to share the following: and the reason I am sharing is so you can commit to pray daily for Robert P, who has been diagnosed with *cancer*.

Further development since Robert's diagnosis is Robert **may** be accepted into a trial at the ICON cancer centre at the SAN. It is an androgen deprivation trial. Robert is still

facing seven weeks of radiation treatment once the trial is completed, then the course of radiation treatment begins.

There is no doubt that the initial diagnosis was hard news for Robert and Helen to receive. However, the notification that Robert *may* be accepted into the trial before the radiation treatment is what both Robert and Helen are praying for. Robert's doctors are very optimistic about a good outcome, which is an encouragement to Robert & Helen. As a Church, we can show our Care by praying for them daily as they wait to see if Robert can go on the trial and then during the treatment.

The Pastoral Care team are working well as a team. The sharing of weekly contacts being made will ensure everyone requiring Pastoral Care is receiving it. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, I have to announce that there have been members of St John's who have slipped through the cracks. The strength of Pastoral Care in *every Parish* is the parishioners. Parishioners contacting the Pastoral Team and alerting them to a member or close connection to the Parish who require Pastoral Care. Please do not hesitate to contact me directly – once receiving the news, I can put pastoral Care into action through one of my team or myself.

Around the Parish:

I had a fruitful meeting with our local Mayor, Cr Jennifer Anderson. The Mayor spoke well of the Parish and Fr Keith. Jennifer has actioned several matters that I raised.

I have received contacts from several staff members of the Council who will assist in our future planning. The traditional ANZAC service for 2022 in both the council and parish Diaries, with a clear breakdown of responsibilities, is one of the matters. After the local Government elections, I will be making another appointment with whoever is elected as Mayor to seek their support and involvement in the St John's sesquicentennial commencing in 2022.

Thank you to everyone who has assisted with the Op Shop sales. It is pleasing to see the faithful workers, who have come to sort twice a week. On Op Shop sales day, many workers display the items for the 'sale'. Then there is the testing and tagging of the various electrical goods that arrive, preparing them to be sold. In addition are the ladies who make batches of scones for the great morning teas, which are also well received as well as the various homemade jams.

It was great to have diaries aligned when I met with Beth, who came and examined the various copes and other liturgical garments. Beth also assessed the different Regimental Colours held in the Chapel. I am pleased that some of the liturgical garments can be rejuvenated. Beth will be making her recommendations after her discussions with the National War Memorial on the best way forward for the Regimental Colours and where we may be able to seek appropriate grants for their restoration. The discussions were all very positive. As

custodians, I feel we are now better positioned to care for and utilise these items in their proper use.

Reflection: "A lament."

A lament is a passionate expression of grief and/or sorrow. There are various accounts in the Bible where groups of individuals were lamenting or that of individuals. One famous lament was when the exiles were taken to Babylon. Psalm 137 we read:

By the rivers of Babylon - there we sat down, and there we wept when we remembered Zion. ² On the willows there, we hung up our harps. ³ For there, our captors asked us for songs, and our tormentors asked for mirth, saying, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion!" ⁴ How could we sing the LORD's song in a foreign land?

Laments do have a place in the lives of the individuals, nations, and the people of God, the Church. The Report on Domestic Violence and Abuse is hard-hitting, and many would say unbelievable. Yet, there is no need to adopt the nimby (not in my backyard) attitude. No matter where and when this abuse has taken place, the Bride of Christ has been hurt. Sisters and Brothers and Children who have been victims require us all to hear we support them. We all must agree we will not accept or cover up this sort of behaviour in the Church's life. It is unbiblical and can never be justified. Those who may have perpetrated violence and abuse against others, we call to repent! We challenge them to renounce the evil they have committed. Finally, we hurt because others are hurting when they should have been experiencing love. As a Church, we say No to Domestic Violence and abuse!