

Rector's Message

2nd of May 2021

Around the Parish

Bishop Keith and Alice are visiting from South Australia. They are both looking well and enjoying their time with their children. Bishop Keith took the opportunity to march with the submariners during the ANZAC Parade. Their daughter Rebekah is marrying Conor on Friday the 7th of May at St John's. Bishop Keith will return to his diocese for their Synod and then be back to celebrate their daughter's marriage. Please pray for the Dalby and Moran families as they come together and celebrate this great occasion.

What's happening at the Rectory? The Bird Aviaries and old fencing has been removed. Eleven tonnes of clean fill soil delivered to assist in levelling out part of the backyard. There were six tonnes of crushed rocks required to rejuvenate the back footpaths. Installation of an internal dog and grandchild fence has been completed and it looks excellent. All this work has been completed by Thomas, Edward, Nicky Melinda and a few of their friends. There is over sixty metres of turf to be laid at the time of writing this note. I am seeking to have this task completed by Friday. The internal work of rejuvenating the garage is also a work in progress.

During the Rectory Family and Friends working-bee(s), we had a visitor of an echidna. I hope he likes termites. It would be great if the echidna has some friends that will join him in feasting on them. I am actually quite proud of how the sons and their friends rallied to do this work. To have people working together is excellent, giving of their time and abilities to improve an asset of the Church is admirable.

It was tremendous to see the increased number of helpers with the last Op-Shop Sale Day. Thank you to all, and I know some travelled from a distance to be a helper. I know we had one volunteer from the community who has little or no connection with St. Johns. As her boyfriend was going to be doing work in the Rectory, she asked if she could assist with the Op-Shop. I know there has been faithful men and women who come faithfully to assist in the preparations and the packing up. This commitment is greatly appreciated, and I pray that all involved do feel valued for the work you do.

I am pleased to say Onno Bakker has agreed to join Parish Council as the Rector's appointee. With Onno's acceptance, membership of Parish Council is complete. The first meeting of the Parish Council will be in person it is the 10th of May.

I am looking forward to working closely with these members of the Parish Council as I seek to honour God by exercising the leadership of the position of the Rector. I urge everyone to continue to pray for the elected team and myself that God will be gracious to us all and grant each of us wisdom. I have included in my prayers to the LORD, asking that St John the Evangelist Gordon will continue to be strengthened and further equipped in the areas of being inclusive and welcoming.

The term inclusive is an important concept to understand and strive to achieve. The Apostle Paul brought forth the teaching of Christ when he wrote:

²⁷As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise. (Galatians 3:27-29 NRSV)

As we all now belong to Christ, we have all become one in Christ. Belonging to Christ is the truth behind our inclusiveness. As Jesus welcomes all who call upon his name, so we too are called to

receive all. This concept of inclusiveness produces the fruit of humility. Let us all strive to have the fruit of humility in our lives and the life of the Church.

Thank you to all who wore their citations or medals or family medals on ANZAC Day. Both the BCP and the Second Service flowed into an Act of Remembrance. Thank you for the gracious and encouraging comments that flowed after each Service. During the Hornsby RSL Dawn Service, at the very poignant moment of the Last Post and Reveille, the local birdlife began welcoming the Dawn. The birds greeting the Dawn in no way detracted from this solemn event; instead, it reinforced to me how far away from their homes these young men who fought for the defence and protection of others were.

Monday the 3rd of May is an Ordinary Session of Synod. The 4th May up-to and including the 7th of May is the Archbishop Election Synod. Synod Commences with the opening service at the Cathedral at 1pm. Due to spacing requirements, the Synod will be held at the International Convention Centre. The days of this Session of Synod concludes each night at 10pm. Then there is the travelling home, after orderly exiting of the International Convention Centre. Please pray for Nigel Hubbard, Jenifer Lum and myself as we represent the Parish of Gordon. Please pray that the election Synod will be transparent and honouring of all four Nominees. Please pray for the Nominees and their respective spouses as they each wait upon the LORD. They will be waiting to learn who will receive the invitation to be the next Archbishop of Sydney. The Nominees for the position of Archbishop remain the same:

- ✓ Bishop Chris Edwards
- ✓ Bishop Peter Hayward
- ✓ Dean Kanishka Raffel
- ✓ Bishop Michael Stead

Assurance of Salvation:

We all know that the Salvation we have received is from the work of Christ on the Cross. We can not add to the Work and Passion of Christ. Every Sunday, we profess with our lips that Jesus is Lord. We celebrate his death and resurrection every time we participate in the Service of the LORD's Supper. There is no doubt that through the liturgies of the Anglican Church, there is the reassurance that we are the children of God, the body of Christ, his beloved people. Yet, are there times in your life where you might doubt the Assurance of Salvation?

In the Epistle to the Romans, the Apostle Paul writes on this subject. Paul desires that his congregations and congregations beyond his immediate care understand that Christians have the Assurance of Salvation. He wrote in Romans 10:9 the following:

***"because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord
and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead,
you will be saved."***

The Apostle Paul is affirming that his congregations belong to God. They belong to God because they have responded to the love of God shown through His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. For anyone to enter into the kingdom of God is the work from the above verse within their heart. Becoming a Christian is not a complicated nor an arduous process. It is the acknowledgement of who Jesus is.

I have chosen to write about the Assurance of Salvation to encourage the rejoicing that we do have in this Assurance. The foundations for our Assurance is on the promises of God. What we are doing weekly through coming together to worship the LORD is persevering in the Christian faith. Perseverance in the Christian faith is the nurturing of the expressions of our faith in the way we live.

The Hymn that captures the Assurance of Salvation for me is: "Blessed Assurance."

By Fran Van Alstyne.

Blessed Assurance, Jesus is mine,
O what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of Salvation, purchased by God;
Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.
*This is my story, this is my song
Praising my Saviour all the day long.
This is my story, this is my song
Praising my Saviour all the day long.*

Regards

Fr. Robert Happer

(insights for the Biblical reflection – Don Carson)