

Official Journal of the Company of the Good Shepherd



The Holiness in Waiting

~ Michael Deasey, Burwood



The East Window of St Pauls, Burwood.

I could be regarded as the CGS 'plant' in Sydney.

Although I have fond memories of occasional working with the Company in iconic Nyngan, Cobar and Bourke, my church is now St Paul's Burwood in Sydney's inner west where I am Senior Assistant Priest, the result of an unsuccessful retirement.

Although the regulations of social distancing have been

changing almost daily, on a recent Sunday we held our services out of doors with the back drop of an open west door with the sun shining through the stained-glass window in the east.

To accommodate a maximum of ten people two metres apart, we offered the Eucharist (communion in one kind) every half hour from 8am, concluding at 10.30.

It was my lot that day to offer a short reflection and by the fifth time I was really getting into my stride. I chose the psalm for the day, Psalm 130. The following is a reprise, you might say my sixth go.

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'Out of the depths have I called to you O Lord: Lord, hear my voice'.

Psalm 130 seems to be so especially applicable today, when the depths are unfathomable because of a crisis, a crisis that brings out the best in some, the worst in others, and the greatest challenge to those in all capacities of leadership. All 150 Psalms cover every aspect of the human condition from elation and joy to despair and depression, and pervading everything, a longing for God. Psalm 97 speaks of the hiddenness of God. 'Clouds and darkness are round about him'. Sometimes we can be acutely aware of the absence of God's presence.

It happened once to Jesus himself when he quoted Psalm 22 in his death throes:

'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'

Another prevailing theme in the psalms is that of waiting, for example Psalm 37, 'Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him'.

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Plan B - Home to Australia

Hello everyone

In the early hours of Tuesday, March 31, as news of the Covid 19 situation became even more serious, and travel more restricted, we checked on the possibility of flights to Australia, and were surprised to be offered seats on a Qatar Airlines flight departing London on Wednesday, April 1!

We were able to extend the offer to Thursday, April 2, and arrived here in Sydney at 6.45am Saturday, April 4. We may have been living in a one

~ Robert & Rev Linda Boss ~

bedroom flat, but the packing and organising was a whirlwind I would not like to repeat, and we left my family with one or two loose ends to tie up for us, after England comes out of restrictions, whenever that may be.

England and Australia are travelling parallel paths, but with 66 million people in such comparative closeness, compared to our 25 million, their gross numbers are comparatively huge.

We did not know what to expect, but the trip could have

been described as our most comfortable ever, if we could discount the reason, and the possibility for contracting the virus.

London's Heathrow Airport was a breeze – no people, no queues, (also no shopping and no food), and soooo quiet. The plane out of London was about two thirds full.

Doha Airport, Qatar was almost the same – food but no shopping, very few people, and again choice of seating, quiet and peaceful.

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THE WANDERING BOOKSELLER

www.wanderingbookseller.com.au

Where is God in a Coronavirus World

Author: John Lennox

Here is a book you can't read in a coffee shop, or at a pub, or even sitting on the beach... Although perhaps you could take it for a run around the block...Just watch where you're going, because not everyone is keeping their distance yet... (pre-order available)

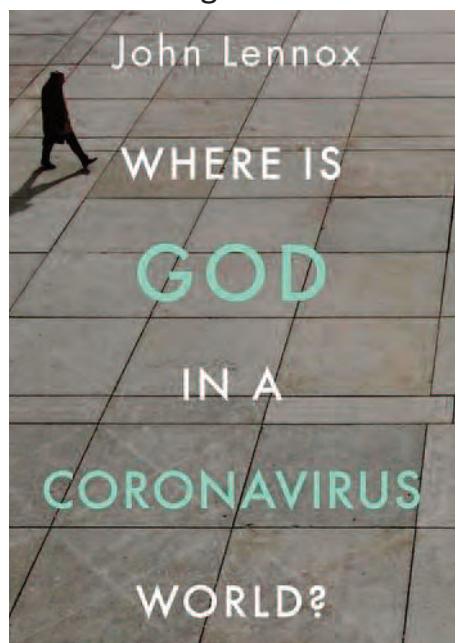
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From the publisher - Here's why John Lennox wrote the book: "This book consists of my reflections on what we are experiencing right now. I started writing it a week ago, and things have changed quickly since then and no doubt will do again...I would invite you, the reader, to view the book like this: we are

sitting in a coffee shop (if only we could!) and you have asked me the question on the book cover. I put down my coffee cup and attempt to give you an honest answer. What follows is what I would try to say in order to convey some comfort, support and hope."

John Lennox is an Emeritus Professor of Mathematics at the University of Oxford and Emeritus Fellow in Mathematics and the Philosophy of Science at Green Templeton College. He is also an Associate Fellow of the Said Business School and an Adjunct Lecturer for The Oxford Centre for Christian Apologetics. He has been part of numerous public

debates defending the Christian faith against well known atheists including Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens and Peter Singer.



An Easter message



As we are gripped by the COVID-19 pandemic, the message of Easter is exactly what we need to hear. Easter reminds us that God stepped into our world to conquer death and offer eternal

life to any and all who ask for it! Although he couldn't wipe the serious impact of our 'go-it-alone-without-him' attitude under the carpet, he loves us so much that he took on his own shoulders, what was due to us!

Jesus died for you. Instead of you. So you wouldn't have to. Then he rose again in power, showing us that his death was payment in full for all we've mucked up!

So here's the Good News—we mucked up, but God fixed up. We turned our back on him, yet he has done everything needed so we can return with confidence.

~ *Bishop Mark Calder*

That's astonishing kindness! Have you fully embraced his kindness or are you just playing around at the edges? The message of Easter is a simple but profound truth – that Jesus died for our sins and rose in power showing he has defeated sin and death and the evil one. God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. 2 Corinthians 5:17 That is the best news ever!! Allow this news to give you hope and perspective and comfort and joy, even in the midst of the difficult circumstances in which we find ourselves this Easter.

Lazarus Donation



The Brotherhood of the Good Shepherd Council continues to be the major financial contributor in support of the ministry of

the Company of the Good Shepherd (CGS) and a vital prayer partner in all we do in the name of Jesus, the Good Shepherd.

Through their many links the Brotherhood is able to facilitate others in contributing to this ministry.

For many years the New South Wales Commandery of The Military and Hospitaller Order of Saint Lazarus of Jerusalem has given generously to the ministry

of the CGS with particular focus on enabling ministry in Bourke, in the extreme northwest of the Anglican Diocese of Bathurst.

The Order, founded in Jerusalem at the end of the 11th Century, is a worldwide organisation linking Christians in acts of charity and benevolence to those in need. We give thanks to God for their continuing support and encouragement. *Editor*

Company of the Good Shepherd committed to Christ serving God's people

Principal ~ Grahame Yager, Gilgandra

Deputy Principal ~ Jeff Tym, Coonamble, Linda Boss, Warren,
Michael Deasey, Sydney, Nicholas Hurford, Dubbo,
Graham McLeod, Nyngan, John and Denise Gaff, Bourke.

2020, What a ride

The first quarter of 2020 What a ride it has been nationally, locally and personally, yet can we rejoice in the Lord?

Drought, bushfires, medical issues now Covid19, yet what blessings can we see from God to rejoice in?

Let's start to count them and name them one by one.

Here in Bourke we have had rain glorious rain and also the Darling river is flowing at last. This has raised the spirits of all in the community and renewed peoples hope for the future. It does not mean all the impacts of the prolonged drought are over. Recovery takes a long time in fact some people had not recovered from the drought from the early 2000's they now have to recover from this drought.

People out here are extremely independent and resilient but they also look out for each other too. However, things have been exceptionally hard and the assistance provided by government and community programs has been appreciated. In a way the drought has been a 'practice run' for dealing with the Covid 19 shutdown. Which by the way has impacted local business on top of the impact of the drought. The long-term impacts of both is yet to be seen. Please pray for people impacted by this, and give thanks for the rain as if it had not rained and the river had not been flowing it may almost have been too much, God is merciful to us.

Personally I had to go to Westmead at the end February for

some surgery, after a polyp was found in a routine colonoscopy in November, it was in a complicated spot so needed to be done by full bowel resection or by a specialist gastroenterologist who could do it by colonoscopy if possible. So, I went for Colonoscopy removal by Professor Bourke at Westmead as part of a research program on Feb 25, as day surgery. This took longer than expected. The polyp was larger than expected but it turned out thankfully to be benign when tests came back. However, at about 2am on Feb 26, I went to the loo and had a massive post op bleed and ended up back in hospital via ambulance and was in for a couple more days. Then returned to Dubbo and stayed with family to recover for two weeks to be near health services in case I needed it, then returned to Bourke.

It has taken a while to recover. Having this adventure, I have seen again how the hand of God and his timing has been in all that has happened and I am very thankful for all the prayers and support from so many

~ John & Denise Gaff, Bourke

people. We left Westmead just before the Covid 19 blew up in Sydney. Coming back to Bourke just in time to do services in Nyngan and Tottenham on the last Sunday service before Churches were closed. It was a real blessing to spend time with the folks there.

We now have a Facebook page "Bourke Anglican Church" to help communicate with people while churches are closed and also as a way to bring church to those who cannot attend due to distance or circumstances. Currently we post Bishop Mark's Sunday services and other things of interest.

This is a work in progress as running a Facebook page is new to me. I hope we can bring some new content to the page as time goes by. Also we were going to have a float in the Easter parade but as this has been cancelled we have put one of the banners up on the church to remind the community that Jesus is alive even if the church building is closed and last weekend I put up some Palms for Palm Sunday too.

Blessing to all from Bourke



Principal Paraphernalia

~ Rev Grahame Yager, Gilgandra

As we have journeyed through years of drought, then fire and now some lovely flooding rain, we could not have conceived of the life we are now living. It is like a fantasy movie and no doubt they will come soon enough.

Who would you choose to play your part?

What part are you playing right now in all this?

As we come to remember again the solemnity of the cross and rejoice in the triumph of the empty cave, please take the time to witness to the miracles happening around us every day.

The bubbling babble of running streams, the novelty of green, the joyous squelch of mud.

We lament so much that we are unable to do so give thanks for all that we can. Take the time to notice and give thanks

for the joy of a smile, the richness of a kind word or gesture given and

received by whatever means available and don't forget to pray.

As we pray, as we bring our anxiety and fears, our very real hardship and grief, remember also to pray into our hopes and our dreams, with our greatest hope being our trust in God and what has already been accomplished on the cross for each of us.

Bring God into your deepest heart, the secret place you have locked away, and be set free.

Allow God's love to be light in the darkness you are carrying and be transformed.

In everything which is happening, God is with us.

With every blessing today and always.

Grahame



The Castlereagh River at Gilgandra a banker.

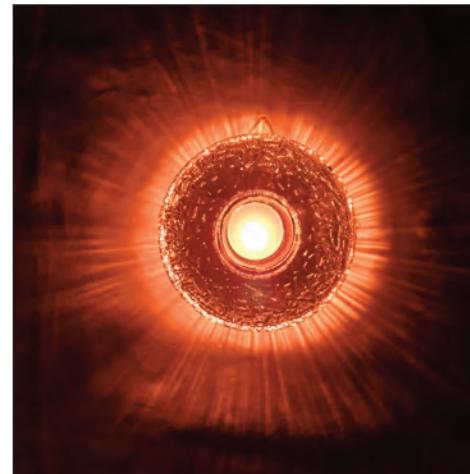
The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. John 1.5 NIV

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All through this day dear Lord, let me touch as many lives as possible for you, and every life I touch please bless by your Holy Spirit, whether through the words I speak, the prayer I breathe or the life I live; so shall your kingdom come on earth as in heaven.

Amen.

(Prayer of Brother John)



Plan B - Home to Australia

From page 2...

Doha to Sydney was 63 people on a 300 seat plane. Everyone was invited to choose their own seat – most took three seats, wrapped up and slept the whole way. It was like our own private jet.

We arrived in Sydney in rain, 6.45am. Extra paperwork, a temperature check, facemask, and lecture from a nurse, then through passport control, no queue, and into the baggage hall.

We, the 63 people, were the only people in the whole of Sydney Airport, quite surreal!! We even arrived at the exact same time as our luggage.

The only way to do it!!

The police, army, and navy officers who organized us through the airport, onto busses, through Sydney, and into the Rydges Sydney Central Hotel, (Albion Street Surry Hills) could not have been more helpful and positive.

We will be in quarantine for 14 days.

We were in our room by 10am, slept until lunch, ate, slept until dinner, ate, and managed to stay awake for an hour or two, then slept until about three the following morning. Getting back into proper sleep routine is proving difficult, particularly as we have no real reason to do so at the moment. After our two weeks here, we are tentatively planning to travel to Dubbo by train – we have too much luggage for the little plane, and also want to see the country, especially since the drought breaking

rains. We will collect our vehicles from the family in Dubbo, and drive to Warren. We have been invited to stay with Kath and Doug Fuller, but also hope to be able to help out with Robert's mother in Nyngan, where health problems are starting to develop. Our tenants will vacate our house in Blayney in mid August, unless they choose to leave early, (which is only an outside chance) and then we will be on our way to the next phase of our life in retirement. I have greatly appreciated Diocesan Registrar Karen Trafford keeping me on the Diocesan mailing list, so I have had access to all of the Bishop's communications, including his services. What an asset to the Diocese.

How have you all been managing? Have you been able to access on-line services over the past weeks?

Would it sound like bragging, if I said the celebrants at my recent Sunday services have been the Archbishops of Canterbury and York?

The BBC is more generous with its time than the ABC appears here, although I did catch the Jeremy Fernandes Easter program on the ABC on Tuesday evening.

If you missed it, it's available online. Well worth a look.

Even though we will soon be physically present at close range, technically our distance apart will be equivalent to our recent 17,000 kilometers.

You all remain in our thoughts and prayers as we all observe

a most unusual Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, and celebrate Easter Day in new and creative ways.

Love always, Linda & Robert

Sense for cents

This project was created by Austin and his daughter Leeann, prior to the opening of the CENTRE to the public.

It is located on a pedestal at the entrance to the *Heritage Centre*.

The budget for the year has been aimed at \$1000 and the proceeds are to go towards travelling expenses of the companions. At this stage income has exceeded \$175

It is hoped to see more of these jars throughout the Brotherhood area, have you a spot for one.

Principal of CGS Fr Grahame has ordered the first one. Contact Austin for yours.



The Holiness in Waiting

*~ Michael Deasey***From Front page...**

And in today's psalm we can especially echo and take to heart the verse 'I wait for the Lord, my soul waits for him: and in his word is my hope.' Waiting seems to be the role of the people of God.

In the Old Testament there is the theme of waiting for the Messiah.

During Advent we wait for Christmas, on Holy Saturday we wait for Easter, after Ascension we wait for Pentecost.

Today we are waiting.

Waiting for this crisis to be over, waiting for life to resume normality. Times of uncertainty don't need pious

clichés and glib answers. Instead they drive us to honesty about the elusive mystery of God, a God who is more often hidden than revealed, a God who keeps coming in and out of focus. We don't have to take the easy way out and deny the existence of God, just the absence of his presence. After all we can walk outside on the bleakest of days and say 'there's no sun today' but we know of course the sun is still shining, above the thick clouds that hide it. There is a holiness, a sanctity about waiting for God, even though he may be covered by clouds and darkness.

The important question is, how do we live in a time of waiting?

The compelling answer is to live as we should always live – to abide in Christ so that the fruits of the Spirit (listed in Galatians) will ripen in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

It is to be as salt in a world that has gone bland, to be light in a world that gropes in darkness – and in the evocative words of St Paul to the Corinthians, to be the aroma of Christ - to spread the fragrance of Christ that comes from abiding in him. (2 Cor 2.14).

What a change...rain!

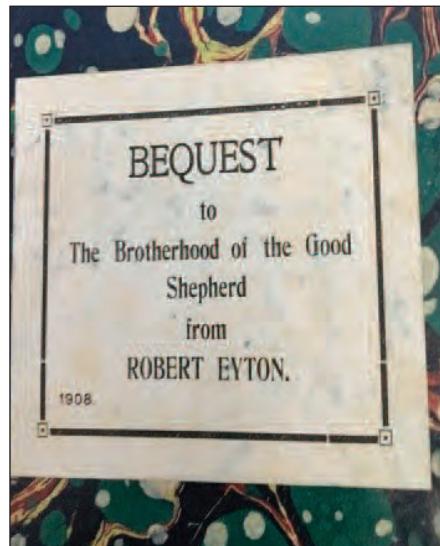
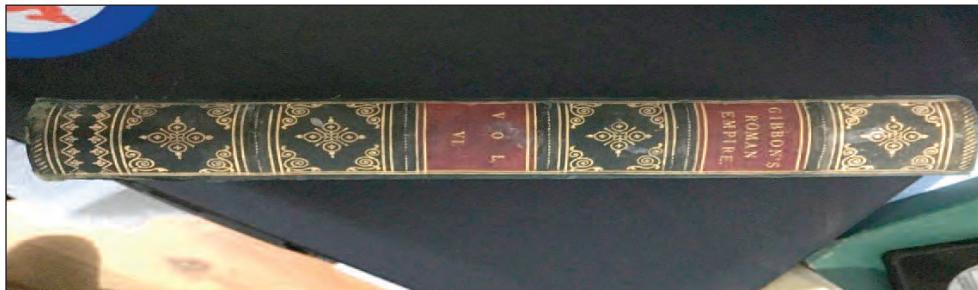


The wonderful rain has set the creeks to run. The Principal Dam is full and the colour green is lovely to see.

Book search - have you seen it?

As part of his bequest (in 1906) Robert Eyton left the full set (eight volumes) of Gibbon's Roman Empire to the Brotherhood. The bequest is clearly marked on the inside cover of

each issue. Volume One has gone missing. Looking for the original or a copy. Please contact Austin if you have information or can help replacing this volume.



Faith in Fiji

~ Rev Graham McLeod, Nyangan and Warren

I arrived back in Australia just prior to the restrictions on international travel coming into force having enjoyed a short holiday in Fiji.

One thing I like about fellowshipping with indigenous Fijians and other Pacific Island peoples is that it is so easy

to talk to them about the Christian faith.

They are not embarrassed to talk about Jesus. Many have a deep spirituality which permeates their entire being.

This seems to me to be not so prevalent in many Australians. I have a great concern for the people of Fiji and other small Pacific Island nations as they come under influences which may not support their faith.

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St Marks Nyangan, undoubtedly like many other parishes, has

found itself in a 'pickle' as a result of the Coronavirus Pandemic.

At both the Nyangan Show and Nyangan Ag Expo St Mark's operate the barbecue.

Now with their cancellation a much needed source of vital income has disappeared.

In this time of crisis the refrain which keeps running through my mind is....

"We must seek out new ways of doing church, we must seek out new ways of being church".

To find out more about the Company of the Good Shepherd please contact:



~ Editor ~

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What a change rain makes!



Just because green paddocks are a lovely colour after drought.