



# ST PAUL'S ANGLICAN CHURCH

## Burwood

### Welcome to worship

**Sunday 5th March 2023**

**Second Sunday in Lent**

- 8.00am Said Eucharist
- 9.30am Choral Eucharist (with the St Paul's Choir)
- 10.30am Midweek Communion in the Chapel of Christ Passion

**W**ELCOME TO ST PAUL'S. We are glad that you have come to worship God with us today. If you are a visitor from another parish, or worshipping with us for the first time, please introduce yourself to our parish priest, Fr James Collins, or to anyone wearing a name badge.



### Included in this issue ...

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**And Much More...**

## Things you may

### need to know



#### First Aid

First aid kits are located on the wall of the kitchen in the Large Hall behind the church and in the choir vestry.

I am  
who I am

#### Name badges

Name badges help make St Paul's an inclusive community. If you need a new name badge, fill in the form inside the pew sheet, send it to the parish office, and one will be made and left in church for you.



#### Toilets

Toilets are available at the entrance to the parish hall, which is located behind the church.



#### Still got questions?

Ask a member of the clergy or anyone who's wearing a name badge. We're here to help.

### In case we

#### need to evacuate

As you take your place in your pew, please make yourself aware of the route to the nearest emergency exit. Should there be a fire, leave quickly, turn right, and assemble by the roundabout on Burwood Road.



#### Getting inside

People needing wheelchair access can enter St Paul's most conveniently by the door at the base of the belltower.

#### Switch it to silent !



Please turn your mobile phone off or on to silent before the service starts. It'll save you much embarrassment later on.

#### Children are welcome at St Paul's



Children are welcome in church at any service. There is a selection of children's books and toys at the back of the church near the font and there are also kids' activity sheets and pencils available at the back of the church where the pew sheets and prayer books are.

Children's Church runs during Term Time. Meet at the back of the church at the beginning of the 9.30am Eucharist.

Please feel free to bring your children to the altar rail to receive a blessing, or to receive Communion if they have been admitted to the sacrament.

#### Photos

Please do not take photos inside the church or during the services of worship without permission.



## **Acknowledgement of the Wangal people of the Eora Nation**

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land upon which we meet, the Wangal People of the Eora Nation, and pay our respects to their elders, past, present, and emerging; and we pray that God will unite us all in the knowledge of his Son, in whom all things were created, in heaven and on earth.

## **We are glad that you have found us!**

We affirm that through God's redeeming love for all, we are one in Christ. We respect the inherent and valuable contributions each member makes to the Body of Christ. We celebrate our diversity and recognize the sacred worth and dignity of all persons of any age, gender, gender identity, gender expression, race, ethnic origin, economic reality, family status, sexual orientation, diverse ability, or social status. We believe that through Christ we are being included and welcomed by God and one another. As we journey towards inclusion, we proclaim this welcome to all God's people, especially to those who have known the pain of exclusion and discrimination within the church, affirming that no one is excluded or condemned. We invite all persons to journey with us as we discover the call of God on our lives through the ministries of St. Paul's Anglican Church, Burwood. To that end, St. Paul's Anglican Church commits to the welcome and inclusion of all persons as children of God and declares itself to be a welcoming community of faith.

<b>Bible Readings at today's Eucharist</b>	<b>Year A</b>	<b>Bible Readings for next Sunday</b>
Genesis 12.1-4a Ps 121 Romans 4.1-5 (6-12) 13-17 John 3.1-17	<b>The First Reading</b> <b>The Psalm</b> <b>The Epistle</b> <b>The Gospel</b>	Exodus 17.1-7 Ps 95 Romans 5.1-11 John 4.5-42

## **Everyone is invited to join us at Communion**

There is a wide diversity in how Anglicans prefer to receive the bread and wine at Holy Communion; some stand, others kneel, most receive the wafer in the hand, a few wish to have it put on the tongue. Most like to guide the Chalice to their lips, others like to take it into their hands, while others prefer not to touch it at all. None of these variations really matter but simply reflect Anglican diversity.

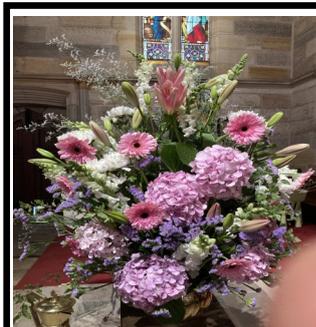
For health reasons and out of concern for other worshippers, we ask you not to dip your bread into the wine. If you are uncomfortable receiving from the Common Cup the practice in our Parish is to receive the bread only.

Judging by the number of people who do it, many must imagine that not receiving the Chalice to the lips but dipping the wafer or bread into the cup (called intinction) is a more hygienic way of receiving the Sacrament. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Apart from the obvious fact that the wine they are dipping into has already been in contact with the lips of others, with all the best intentions in the world, the fingers of those who dip often come in contact with the wine. Disease can

spread more easily through the hands than through the lips, making this method the most unhygienic. In addition, the Prayer Book directs that all consecrated wine must be consumed before it leaves the Church, meaning that someone, usually the Chalice Assistant or the Celebrant, has to drink the left-over wine that has had multiple contacts with hands.

In order to protect others it is perhaps understandable to want to dip if one has sore lips or has a cold, but the consensus of the Church is that taking only the bread is fully participating in Communion.



### **Flowers as a Memorial**

Decorating our church with flowers is one way to remember a loved one or in thanksgiving for a special event. If you would like to give flowers in memory of a loved one, or as an offering of thanksgiving please contact Judith Laurence the week prior to the date at [judealaurence@gmail.com](mailto:judealaurence@gmail.com) or on 0438041726 and contact Caroline in the parish office at [office@stpaulsbuwood.org.au](mailto:office@stpaulsbuwood.org.au) to arrange the wording of the memorial notice in the pew bulletin.

### Welcome to St Paul's!

My Dear Friends,

We are very glad to be able to welcome you to worship with us at St Paul's.

The following services will be offered:

- Sunday 8:00am Said Eucharist
- Sunday 9:30am Choral Eucharist with choir
- Wednesday 10:30am mid-week Eucharist

I am truly grateful to all those who, over the past months, have helped us to remain connected to God and to each other through this pandemic. Thank you for your loving Service of God and of God's people at St Paul's and beyond.

I hold you and our community, nation, and world in my prayers.

May God's peace sustain and surround you at this time.

**Fr James**

### Parish Prayer List

At St Paul's, we pray by name for people who have either asked for our prayers or for whom someone else has made a request. This list is updated every 3 months or when we receive a new request. Some names are on our list on a long-term basis while others reflect a more immediate need and are short term.

We will only be reading the names on the short-term list in the services but the whole list will still be included in the printed prayers for parishioners to use throughout the week. The full list of names will be read in our midweek service.

Names can be added to or removed from the lists at any time.

## **Annual General Meeting**

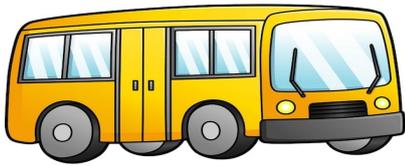
The Annual General Meeting of Parishioners for the Anglican Parish of St. Paul's, Burwood, will be held on **Sunday 26th of March at 11.00 a.m.**

There will be a combined Service that day at 9.00 a.m. so as to ensure that all Parishioners can attend the AGM after the Service.

Please see the attached Agenda.

### **ST PAUL'S ANGLICAN PARISH, BURWOOD, ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING SUNDAY 26<sup>th</sup> of MARCH, 2023 AGENDA**

- (a) to receive the declarations of those persons then present
- (b) to determine whether a quorum is present
- (c) to elect a minute secretary
- (d) to receive apologies
- (e) to receive notification of the name of the person appointed by the minister as a warden
- (f) to elect 2 qualified persons to be wardens
- (g) to determine whether or not qualified persons should be elected as members of the parish council and if in the affirmative:
  - (i) to resolve that there be 3, 6 or 9 elected persons, and
  - (ii) to elect qualified persons to be those members
  - (h) to elect parish nominators
  - (i) to elect a qualified person or persons to the office of auditor of the financial statements and accounts of the wardens, and
  - (j) to receive a report about ministry within the parish from the minister
  - (k) to receive a report from the wardens about the exercise of wardens' functions
  - (l) to receive and pass or otherwise determine on the financial statements of the wardens
  - (m) to receive and pass or otherwise determine on the financial statements of the trustees of Blacket House
  - (n) to make such recommendations as it may wish on any matter connected with the business of the church or parish, including any matter which it is appropriate for the wardens or parish council to deal with
  - (o) to give directions as to the confirmation of the minutes of the meeting at or after its conclusion



## **Bus Trip Return**

Now that COVID is not so much of a problem we are considering bringing back the bus trips. The first one will be in the spring, date and destination yet to be determined.

We have been offered a 22 seater bus for our use. I need to have some feedback regarding interest in people wanting to join these trips before I proceed.

Please let me know if you are interested.

Contact Pam Brock email [pambrock@hotmail.com](mailto:pambrock@hotmail.com) or 0402547892



## **Street Stall Fundraising**

**Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> April 9am - 1pm**

Street Stall at the

front of the church (weather permitting)

Selling Jams, Marmalades, Butters, Chutneys, plants, cakes, biscuits, bric-a-brac

Help needed with setting up, selling, putting away.

Cooking Cakes/biscuits needed

Please contact Pam to offer help on the day as well as offer to make cakes/biscuits for sale.

## **FOOD FOR PARISH PANTRY**

### **PLEASE HELP**

The Pantry is running out of food fast. Can you please help?

Any food, perishable, or non-perishable, fruit or vegetables, bread. If you can't shop and would like to make a donation we can shop for you.

Please talk to Jane Cordina or Rosemary.

Thank you.



## Trading Table



The Trading Table made \$230.00 last Sunday.

We look forward to serving you with our jams/butters/chutneys (see below for the varieties), plants etc.

### Butters

Lemon, Lime, Lemon/Lime/Passionfruit

### Chutneys/Pickles

Crab Apple Sauce, Pear & Apple Chutney, Quince & Apple Sauce, Banana & Date Chutney, Pumpkin and Sesame Chutney

### Jams

Golden Passionfruit Jam/Sauce, Cherry Guava Jelly, Crab Apple Jelly, Apple Cherry Guava Jelly, Choko & Ginger Jam, Quince & Apple Jam/Sauce, Spiced Peach & Nectarine Jam, PawPaw/Pineapple & Ginger Jam, Guava Jam, Guava and Ginger Jam, Strawberry, Strawberry & Apple, Blueberry & Apple, Peach Liqueur Jam

### Marmalades

Lime, Shredded Lime, Orange, Orange/ Coriander & Ginger, Orange & Cranberry, Lemon, Lemon & Ginger, Lemon Ginger & Gin, Orange & Passion fruit Jelly, Citrus (various combinations of citrus fruit), Citrus Jelly, Chai Spiced Grapefruit, Mandarin, Mandarin with Cardomen & Ginger, Orange/ Grapefruit & Ginger, Cumquat Moroccan Style, Cumquat, Whisky Cumquat

Small bags fresh home grown Roma Tomatoes are available \$4

Books, DVD's & CD's available at \$1 each

Thank you for your support

Pam Brock



### KEYS

If you have any church keys that you no longer need, please return them to either the office or Rosemary.

## PARISH PANTRY

Parish Pantry is open on Tuesdays and Thursdays from  
9.00am-10.30am.

With the current cost of living and food shortages, we are now  
spending in excess of \$800 per week.

Hands and Feet supply us with fruit and vegetables. But this costs us  
\$200 per week. Our thanks to the community Choir who are now  
picking up the tab for this.



### ITEMS MOST NEEDED

- Plain flour
- Breakfast cereal
- Long life milk
- 2 minute noodles
- Complete meals in a box or a tin
- Spreads eg honey, jam, peanut butter
- Margarine
- Sweet and Savoury biscuits
- Sugar
- Salt
- Cooking oil
- Margarine
- Rice wine
- Soy sauce
- Large tins of tuna
- Rice and pasta
- Pasta sauce
- Tinned tomatoes
- Fresh eggs

### WOMEN'S Toiletries

- Soaps
- Deodorant
- Safety razors
- Tooth brushes & paste
- Shampoo & conditioner

**\*For General & Offertory  
Donations**

**please use the following account  
details:**

**Account Name: St Pauls  
Anglican Church**

**BSB: 032 062  
Account #: 250028**

**\*For Parish Pantry & For  
Community Choir Donations**

**please use this account  
details:**

**Account Name: Parish Pantry  
BSB: 032 062  
Account #: 812238**

Please clearly mark whether it is for  
the Parish Pantry or the  
Community Choir.

Offertory -

**Collection given at St Paul's this  
week and other donations:**

≈ Offertory: \$2,228.00  
≈ Parish Pantry: \$410.00

**TOTAL OF GIVING: \$2,638.00**

Thank you for responding to God's  
generous love.



**Official Logo for NSW Volunteer Referral Service**



**the centre for  
volunteering**  
member 20/21

## **Donations and Bequests**

Over the years the parish has benefited from the generosity of parishioners, not only when they have been active members of the parish, but also at the time of their death. Parishioners are invited to remember the parish in their wills by making a bequest as a thank offering to God and to ensure that generations to come will enjoy worship and fellowship in well maintained buildings.

Those wishing to make a bequest are invited to do so using these or a similar form of words: " I bequeath the sum of \$..... to the Rector and Wardens of the Anglican parish of St Paul, Burwood, to be used at their absolute discretion for the charitable purposes of the parish."

## **Donations with Tax Deductibility - National Trust Account**

If you would like to make a donation to the Parish for the upkeep and maintenance of the Heritage building it can be done through the National Trust.

### **Cheques can be made out to:**

National Trust of Australia (NSW) St Paul's Anglican Church Burwood

### **Or**

Direct Credit to the above name with bank account details: Westpac

**BSB:** 032-044

**Account number:** 742 926

**Branch:** 275 George Street Sydney NSW

Please contact Pam for more details or place a donation in an envelope and label with National Trust donation and include your name for your receipt and an address to post it to. Thank you.

## Given events in Ukraine we pray for Peace

A prayer for peace (APBA p 202)



God of the nations,  
whose sovereign rule brings justice and peace, have  
mercy on our broken and divided world. Shed abroad  
your peace in the hearts of all and banish from them the spirit that makes for  
war, that all races and peoples may learn to live as members of one family  
and in obedience to your law, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## St Paul's Coat of Arms

**Shield** — The Shield of Faith which St Paul exhorts us to carry (Ephesians 6:16)

**Pallium** — The shield is in three sections using the heraldic charge of a Pall or Pallium, a symbol traditionally associated with an ecclesiastical vestment.

The three sections represent the Holy Trinity.

**“Faith, Hope, Love”** — These are the three Theological Virtues taken from St Paul's Letter to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 13:13):

*“And now faith, hope and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.”*

**Dove** — Symbolising the Holy Spirit and Peace

**Cross** — The symbol of our Faith

**Book and Sword** — The symbols of St Paul

**Colour Red** — Liturgical colour for Martyrs (Paul); The Holy Spirit (Fire); and the Blood of Christ

**Colour Blue** — Representing the Water of Life (Baptism) and the liturgical colour for Mary Mother of our Lord

## St Paul's Church Archive Search

The archives at St Paul's are very comprehensive and we are asked regularly for baptism, wedding and funeral searches. This is very time consuming in many cases.

We have decided to have a search fee imposed on these. It will be \$50 per simple search and \$100 per complex search. The fees may include a copy of documents if available.

Pew  
Reflections  
REFLECTIONS  
BGM

**The Second Sunday in Lent – Sunday 5 March  
2023**

Genesis 12.1-4a; Psalm 121;  
Romans 4.1-5, [6-12], 13-17; John 3.1-17  
or Matthew 17.1-9

One can feel for Nicodemus seeking out Jesus for enlightenment, understanding, only to be confronted with the idea of being 'born again? Today we'd ask Google only to be given thousands of options to choose from. My choice of explaining Born Again, would be *Kintsugi* – the Japanese art of repairing a broken pot by joining the pieces together with gold, with us as the pot, and the Spirit of God being the gold that holds us together.

≈ Pray for understanding and welcoming being born again – the Holy Spirit into our lives.

≈ Give thanks for the work and witness of the Anglican Church of Japan, the *Nippon Sei Ko Kai*.

*Text:* Bob Randle Holy Hermits Online St John's Cathedral, Brisbane © Anglican Board of Mission, 2023

**ABM** Anglican Board of Mission - Australia  
**Working for Love, Hope & Justice**

**Name Badges**

Don't forget to wear your name badge so that new comers can get to know you.

If you are a new parishioner and need a name badge, please fill out the form at the back of the church. Thank you.



**With his luxury watch and murky Soviet past, Patriarch Kirill is Putin's spiritual leader and power broker - *By Lucy Sweeney and Lucia Stein***

When Patriarch Kirill sat down with Russian Justice Minister Alexander Konovalov he might not have realised the meeting would embroil him in controversy.

His attire was typical of a man of the cloth. His white headscarf was embossed with religious symbols and a gold cross signified his senior status within the church.

But an object adorning his left wrist would later come back to haunt him: a designer watch.

For years, rumours swirled around this flashy piece of jewellery after it was first spotted on the patriarch during a tour of Ukraine in 2009.

With the esteemed religious figure's designer collection an object of fascination online, a doctored image of the meeting appeared on the church's official website in April 2012.

In the photo, the \$US30,000 (\$43,375) Réveil du Tsar model watch disappeared under an extended black sleeve.

No-one would have been the wiser if it wasn't for a tiny, telling detail, which gave the lie away.

Eagle-eyed bloggers were quick to pick up on a blurry reflection of the timepiece lurking just below the patriarch's hands on the highly glossed table.

The terrible airbrushing was mocked online, calling the moral authority of the church into question and embarrassing senior figures.

An overeager staff member was blamed for the incident, and the church promised the manipulation would be investigated and "the guilty ones punished severely".

But Patriarch Kirill was unfazed, admitting he owned the Breguet timepiece, but kept it in its box.

Expensive watches, he said, were not part of his official attire.

The mysterious leader wields enormous influence as the head of the Russian Orthodox Church, bestowing guidance to more than 100 million believers — about 70 per cent of the country's population.

It also makes him a useful ally to Russian President Vladimir Putin.

The pair appear to have struck a mutually beneficial alliance that offers Russia's leader spiritual cover in exchange for the Kremlin's influence.

### **The young priest who became disillusioned with the West**

Born Vladimir Mikhailovich Gundyayev, Russia's future patriarch grew up in a compact apartment in Leningrad during the Soviet empire

From an early age, his path led him to the religion of his father and grandfather.

His family suffered for their faith under the repressive Communist regime, spending years inside gulags on trumped-up charges.

Gundyayev heard these accounts and watched as authorities systematically shut down churches, but remained committed to the church, entering the Leningrad Seminary after high school and rounding off his studies at the Leningrad Theological Academy.

By 1970 he had abandoned his childhood name and was rechristened Father Kirill after the saint, Cyril the Philosopher, a theological scholar who championed the Orthodox Church above all others.

He traded a formal education in Oxford for a real-life one in Geneva, spending the decade travelling abroad and serving as the Moscow Patriarchate representative at the World Council of Churches in Geneva.

"My work at international organisations was worth another university course and ... would help me a great deal in the future," he told TASS.

The young priest also became disillusioned with the West, claiming he

saw the beginning of its moral degradation first hand.

When a group of Protestants put forward the possibility of admitting women into priesthood during an All-Christian congress in 1974, Father Kirill applied all his energies to preventing it.

"I witnessed a deepening crisis," he said in a documentary devoted to his 70th birthday, which aired on Russian state television in November 2016.

Within Russia he had earned a reputation as a "zapadnik" — a pro-Westerner — but likely maintained deep links to Russia's state apparatus, principally the KGB.

Membership of the Soviet spy agency was a requirement for any religious figure who travelled abroad, according to a paper called *The Mikhailov Files: Patriarch Kirill and the KGB*, by historian and human rights activist Felix Corley.

Kirill's predecessor, Patriarch Alexy II, was outed as a fully fledged KGB agent in secret documents uncovered in Estonia in 1999.

After ascending to the rank of archbishop in 1976, Kirill spent the next 20 years developing a uniquely modern, but deeply conservative style of worship.

With a fondness for stocks, car racing, downhill skiing, and breeding exclusive kinds of dogs, he did not fall into the typical depictions of a man of faith.

But that didn't matter to Vladimir Putin.

How Putin helped shore up Kirill's power and wealth

Mystery surrounds the first meeting between patriarch and president, but both men ascended to the height of their powers shortly after the fall of the Soviet Union.

The Russian Orthodox Church emerged from the Soviet era with a mission to regain its status as Russia's most powerful ideological institution and ultimate moral authority.

Those at the top set about rebuilding the congregation and their places of worship, after decades of persecution and the destruction of thousands of churches.

But some of the ways they used their new-found privileges stoked controversy.

When church departments, including Kirill's, were accused of profiteering in the import of millions of dollars' worth of duty-free tobacco and alcohol in the mid-1990s, critics pushed for more transparency about the institution's shadowy finances.

More than two decades later, the situation remains cloudy.

In 2020, former in-house journalist Sergei Chapnin wrote that "Orthodox congregations in Russia have developed a completely incomprehensible accounting system", necessitated by a "profoundly corrupt" administrative structure.

Through the early 2000s, Kirill maintained the church was "completely separate from the state apparatus", once declaring that clerics would never involve themselves in politics.

But by the time he was enthroned as the church's new leader in 2009, who should appear at the side of the altar but then-prime minister Vladimir Putin and his seat-warmer, Dmitry Medvedev.

The president and the patriarch have maintained a close relationship, with Kirill once describing Putin's ascension to power as "a miracle of God".

Putin has also leaned on Christian symbolism and ideology to cement his popularity with the Russian public, and once suggested it was Kirill's own father who secretly baptised him in 1952.

"[Putin] really depends on the church for his legitimacy," says Chrissy Strop, senior correspondent for Religion Dispatches and a scholar in modern Russian history.

"He cannot entirely alienate the church because he has embraced ... essentially a kind of Christian nationalist ideology as something to unify the Russian state. Just like in the Russian Empire, before Soviet times."

After Patriarch Kirill endorsed Vladimir Putin's return to the presidency in 2012, the Russian Orthodox Church continued to steadily increase its wealth.

Aside from parishioners' donations and income from its in-house TV channel and "Sofrino" factory, which produces everything from priests' robes to church pews to candlesticks, the church relies heavily on the Kremlin.

It has reaped tens of millions of dollars in state funding for religious schools and grants to reconstruct old churches that were destroyed during the Soviet era.

According to a 2016 investigation by RBC, the church and its affiliates received 14 billion rubles (\$290 million) from the government between 2012 and 2015.

The man who commands this institution has also amassed a significant fortune since his rise to the top — but estimates of his wealth are virtually impossible to verify.

The church has done its utmost to downplay the leader's image as a member of the Russian elite.

It has gone to great lengths to explain the patriarch's use of luxury yachts, private jets, exclusive mansions and other gifts donated by various Russian benefactors — including the infamous gold watch.

The patriarch is also understood to oversee a sprawling private property portfolio of his own, including three apartments under his name in Moscow and St Petersburg.

Meanwhile, the Kremlin has reportedly spent millions on remodelling part of the 2.5-hectare St Petersburg property that once housed Russia's imperial family, and was designated as church property in 1994.

In 2018, the presidential property office awarded a \$43.4-million contract for renovations to allow Patriarch Kirill to work and reside on the palatial grounds.

And yet, Patriarch Kirill frequently preaches the dangers of accumulating extravagant wealth, warning Russians who indulge without sharing their spoils with those in need are "on a path to hell".

But it's his sermons on the virtue of war in Ukraine that have demonstrated the close ties between the patriarch and Putin.

### **Kirill's enduring support for the man inside the Kremlin**

Over the years Patriarch Kirill has frequently come to the defence of Vladimir Putin.

When feminist punk band Pussy Riot staged an unsanctioned musical protest in the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour in 2012, asking for the Virgin Mary to "chase Putin out", Kirill dismissed calls for leniency and backed jail time.

The church has also been supportive of Russia's military efforts overseas, in some cases working as a key communication tool for the Kremlin.

When Russian forces entered Syria in 2015 to fight off Islamic State terrorists, Patriarch Kirill described their cause as "surprisingly noble and honest", and driven not by political strategy but "in defence of our Christian Orthodox brethren".

Just as Putin's proxies establish his power across Africa, the Russian Orthodox Church is vying for influence across the continent, establishing dioceses in Cairo and Johannesburg in 2021.

The church is also in step with the Kremlin in Europe, undermining NATO and EU aspirations in Moldova and Montenegro, and in Iran, where it hosts an Islam-Orthodoxy dialogue every few years.

Most recently, Patriarch Kirill has been a vocal supporter of the war in Ukraine, blessing troops in his weekly sermons and espousing the familiar nationalistic narrative that paints eastern Ukraine as rightfully Russian.

In his first sermon after Putin sent his troops across the border, Patriarch Kirill blamed "Western values" for the unfolding violence, describing a struggle of "metaphysical significance".

"Someone must pray for our united people. Someone must defend God's truth that we are really one people," he told his followers a few weeks later.

His endorsement for the Russian campaign prompted swift backlash, including financial sanctions from the UK and a warning from Catholic Pope Francis, against becoming an "altar boy" for Vladimir Putin.

But the patriarch has not backed down from his support.

After Putin's military mobilisation drafted in thousands of young Russians to replace his dwindling forces in September, the patriarch told his followers their sacrifice on the battlefield would "wash away all your sins".

Earlier this month, he called for a temporary ceasefire to allow Ukrainians and Russians alike to observe Orthodox Christmas, which Putin announced his troops would comply with across the front line.

No such reprieve came. Ukraine, which had immediately rejected the idea as a hypocritical ploy to halt their advances in Donbas, reported Russian forces continued firing in several areas.

"In a way, the aim of the ceasefire proposal was to force the Ukrainian army and politicians to reject it in view of the Ukrainian public," wrote Alexander Baunov, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

"In this context, the proposal fits into the Kremlin's version of the situation, in which there are some good, potentially pro-Russian Ukrainians on one hand, and an occupying army of Ukrainian nationalists on the other."

Now pilloried as a puppet of Putin's regime, Kirill has become isolated, even within his own church.

The new schism and Kirill's precarious position

The Eastern Orthodox Church comprises 17 self-governing churches that recognise each others' autonomy in various parts of the world.

While patriarchs are ultimately responsible for affairs within their own domains, the Ecumenical

Patriarch of Constantinople (Istanbul) is seen by many as the spiritual centre.

But for decades, Kirill has made clear his intention for Russia — which accounts for about half of the world's Orthodox population — to be regarded as the highest authority.

"The Russian Orthodox Church holds de facto first place among all of the other Orthodox churches ... we are rightful heirs of Byzantium," he declared as Metropolitan of Smolensk in 2005.

The Moscow and Constantinople patriarchates have been jockeying for power for centuries, but recent tensions came to a head in 2019 when Patriarch Bartholomew allowed the Ukrainian Orthodox Church to break away from Russia and establish its own self-governing body.

Patriarch Kirill refused to recognise the decision and severed ties with Constantinople completely, setting in motion one of the greatest schisms in the church's modern history.

Stroop says the kind of soft power Patriarch Kirill appears to be

chasing has always been central to the Russian Orthodox Church mission, and neatly aligned with the Russian state.

"[From Putin's point of view], this whole split is also about who has the right to expect compliance or deference of other Orthodox Christians in the world," she said.

"That's kind of a radical view, but it's a very pro-Russian nationalism, which is very consistent indeed with Kirill's career."

Since ramping up his anti-Ukrainian rhetoric during Putin's war, the rift has deepened even further, with believers across Europe and the United States switching their allegiances.

More than 272 clerics from around the world signed an online letter, calling for an immediate end of the invasion.

"It is damaging to the prestige of the whole of Orthodoxy because Orthodoxy doesn't support war, violence, terrorism," Patriarch Bartholomew told the New York Times last year.

But there may be other political calculations at play.

For people like Kirill, who worked their way up the clerical ranks during the tumultuous Soviet period, the memory of state crackdowns is very much alive.

As Stroop explains, they were only able to regain their positions of influence by cooperating with the state, so it is in their self-interest to continue operating this way.

"People of a certain age, like Patriarch Kirill, they were part of the structure, and in a sense, they've returned to it except with a state ideology that is much more congenial to them," Stroop said.

"He doesn't know how to do anything else. If he were to go against the church, it wouldn't go well for him."

### **First woman pastor in Holy Land ordained - *By Yolande Knell***

In many parts of the Christian world, female church leaders are no longer unusual. But until now, the Holy Land - where events in the Bible are set - had not seen a local woman ordained.

On Sunday, a Palestinian from Jerusalem, Sally Azar, became its first woman pastor at an event at the Lutheran church in the heart of the Old City, attended by hundreds of international well-wishers.

"I got more excited seeing the excitement of other people," Reverend Azar told me. "It's an indescribable feeling to take this step with the support of the church."

"I hope that many girls and women will know this is possible and that other women in other churches will join us. I know it will take a long time, but I think it could be exciting if this changes in Palestine."

Christians make up a minority in the Palestinian Territories, Israel and Jordan. Most Christians here belong to the Greek Orthodox and Latin Catholic Churches, which do not allow women priests.

However, the ordination of women has been taking place in a growing number of Protestant Churches in the past few decades. These have small local congregations and run schools and hospitals in the Holy Land.

"Everywhere where you have a patriarchal society and culture this is a major step," says the recently retired Archbishop of the Church of Sweden, Antje Jackelen.

"Since I've been ordained for over 40 years, I've met many people who didn't think it was possible. But now they've seen women actually serving as pastors, as bishops, as archbishops, we know it works and we know that it's actually in accord with the Bible."

In the Middle East, churches in Lebanon and Syria have already conferred holy orders on women, while at least one Palestinian woman is known to serve in the US.

Ms Azar was ordained by her father Bishop Sani Azar. She insists that while his example inspired her, she never felt pressured into studying theology.

"It's what I wanted, what I was called to do," she says.

As a pastor she will take on different duties including leading services and bible studies in Jerusalem and in Beit Sahour, in the occupied West Bank, for English speaking congregations.

"It's a big, big day for the life of our Church, it's an important step forward and it's overdue," comments Reverend Dr Munther Isaac, Lutheran Pastor of Bethlehem and Beit Sahour.

He says he looks forward to introducing Reverend Azar as a role model at local Lutheran schools - which teach children who are Christians of all traditions and Muslims.

Rev Dr Isaac has written a book in Arabic about women's leadership in the Bible and in support of women's ordination.

"We accept women ministers, we accept women professors, we accept to go in surgery performed by women and it's strange that we still have to argue that women can teach the Bible or perform the sacraments," he says.

"This tells me that despite the progress we've made as Palestinians, when it comes to empowering women and women rights, that there is still work to be done."

Supporters of Rev Azar believe she is the right person to challenge stereotypes and break the mould.

## **Perrottet's shame presents a teachable moment for us all: A Catholic's perspective**

*- By Teresa Pirola, a Sydney-based freelance writer and Catholic faith educator with a special interest in Jewish-Christian relations and its bearing on Christian theological perspectives and societal cohesion.*

How many of us look back — with horror — at some of the foolish or questionable choices we made when we were young? I'll confess that I have a good deal of sympathy for the New South Wales Premier, Dominic Perrottet, as he walks the path of shame following his disclosure that he wore a Nazi uniform as fancy dress to his twenty-first birthday party in 2003.

The Premier was right to step up and take full responsibility for his mistake, without dilution or excuse. As a young adult, he willingly donned a garment identified with one of the most murderous regimes of the twentieth century, a killing machine that destroyed the lives of six million Jews — including 1.5 million Jewish children — for a costume party. This is deeply distressing for Holocaust survivors, and to every Jew who carries the intergenerational trauma of these terrible events. It is also highly offensive to Australian ex-service people, among many others, and violates the values that gird Australian society: compassion, mutual respect, tolerance, and the dignity of all individuals.

As a Catholic who belongs to the same faith community as the Premier, I would also add that this act runs contrary to the values that committed Christians hold as disciples of Jesus and members of a Church whose roots are anchored in Jewish history, and in sacred texts that uphold the inviolable dignity of all human beings. The awareness of this history, of these roots, is something that the Catholic community as a whole needs continually to renew.

In the way they've handling the matter, both the Premier and representatives of the Jewish community have acted with grace and dignity. They have moved from a mutually respectful and frank exchange to a constructive focus on a common commitment to education against prejudice and to combat antisemitism. I am drawn to the thought that this

unfortunate incident represents a “teachable moment” for my own Catholic community and for all Australian Christians — an opportunity to deepen our collective understanding of the Holocaust. We can pause to reflect on ways of ensuring that our religious commitments contribute to a society where no person is tempted to flirt with such evil, whether through ignorance, misplaced humour, immature bravado, or ill intent.

### **Telling the truth about Christianity and antisemitism**

What, exactly, could Christians communicate to their children, students, parishioners, colleagues, and others within their sphere of influence? What key lessons are at stake when it comes to Holocaust education, and what could a Christian perspective offer to wider society?

While there were Christians who heroically resisted the evil unleashed by Nazism, there were many more Christians implicated in its rise and progress, whether through acts of commission or omission. We could therefore express our admiration for those who acted morally and with courage, regardless of their religious background,

condemn Christian support for Nazi policies, and critique the inaction of bystanders in the face of Nazi atrocities. We could ponder together the sobering question, “What would I have done?” A visit to the Sydney Jewish Museum would help to illuminate such a conversation about the consequences of our moral choices.

We might further point out, in age-appropriate ways, that Nazi propaganda skilfully manipulated anti-Jewish sentiment and tropes that pervaded Christian culture for centuries: lies that portrayed Jews as sub-human beings, as the killers of Christ, enemies of the Church, and “cursed” for their so called “blindness” for not accepting Jesus as the Messiah. Terrible lies like these were repeatedly employed. They were never formally adopted as Church teaching, but certain toxic distortions of the Christian message crept into discourse in the early centuries of the Church’s development and proceeded to fester. They are found in the writings of the early Church fathers; they intensify in artworks of the Middle Ages; and they appear as late as the 1930s in well-regarded Catholic publications in Europe. As German Cardinal Wal-

ter Kasper — who headed the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity from 2001 to 2010 — soberly wrote:

between the end of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth, even very authoritative Catholic journals published articles in an anti-Semitic vein, and “more generally fanned anti-Jewish prejudices; they stemmed from the Medieval ‘teaching of contempt,’ that was a source of stereotypes and popular hatred” ... so that it can be said, in this regard, that such an attitude offered a favourable context for the spread of modern anti-Semitism.

We ought to point out that poisonous words often lead to violent actions.

In Christian societies over many centuries prior to the Second World War, Jews had faced all kinds of persecution: demeaning public falsehoods about their traditions, restricted rights, confinement to the ghetto, being required to wear a distinguishing mark on their clothing, the burning of their books, forced conversion, torture and violent death. To be sure, there were also periods when Jewish communities lived in relative peace, with

certain protections given by church authorities. However, these times did not last, and the “teaching of contempt” referred to by Cardinal Kasper continued to spread and mutate.

Thus, we can — and should — ponder the link between antisemitism in Christian cultures, and the ways in which distortions of the Christian message contributed to Auschwitz. Whatever the intention of individual Christians, the anti-Jewish sentiment infecting Christian thought, speech, and activity provided ammunition and even implicit permission for those who perpetrated the Holocaust. A visit to the vast online education resources of Yad Vashem, the World Holocaust Remembrance Centre, would help to fill out the picture.

### **The responsibility to continue to combat antisemitism**

It is undoubtedly painful for Christians to hear this part of their history. One of the great achievements of the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) was the decisive repudiation of antisemitism by the magisterium of the Catholic Church — which included dismantling the unjust accusation that held Jews of every time

and place collectively responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus. An appropriate Catholic response would be to reflect upon paragraph four of the conciliar Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, *Nostra Aetate*, and the many post-conciliar statements of popes, bishops conferences, and church commissions that have sought to implement the teaching of the Council by promoting a “teaching of respect” for Jews and Judaism.

We can also educate ourselves in the history leading up to this historic shift of gears in Catholic thinking that produced *Nostra Aetate*. Historian John Connelly’s *From Enemy to Brother: The Revolution in Catholic Teaching on the Jews, 1933–1965* is an excellent place to start.

Catholics can also be encouraged by the fact that other mainstream Christian churches have undergone their own revolutions when it comes to recognising and rejecting antisemitism, and forging positive relations with Jewish communities. The reception of these official church reforms takes time — after all, the reforms are barely 60 years old and Christians have been influenced by anti-Jewish messaging for two millennia.

Antisemitism in Christian circles has been powerfully addressed by many church leaders and institutions around the world, and yet it is not eradicated from the ecclesial psyche. It continues in subtle, unintended biases; it is expressed from pulpits and in classrooms, through simplistic statements about the “legalistic Pharisees”, “Jewish conspirators”, and the so-called “wrathful” God of the Old Testament who is then pitted against Jesus’s teachings on “love”. Far less forthcoming from Christian teachers and preachers are statements about the tender, compassionate, liberating God of the Old Testament, about how Christian ethics and values find their grounding in the Hebrew Bible, about God’s irrevocable love for, and fidelity to, the “children of Israel” which is at the heart of Scripture, and about the enduring vitality of Jewish covenantal life.

Meanwhile, education about all forms of contemporary antisemitism is as necessary as ever, as hateful propaganda flourishes on social media and new generations display an alarmingly high level of ignorance of the Holocaust. Furthermore, we can alert our children, students, parishioners,

and colleagues to anti-Jewish tropes historically embedded in Christianity, which continue to feed extremist groups on both sides of the political divide. To be sure, these extremists are not sincere Christians, but sometimes identify as if they were, using the raw material of what Christian communities have left behind and enlisting its emotive power for ever-changing sinister guises. The Christian responsibility to combat anti-semitism thus grows.

### **Why education and empathy matter**

It is sometimes claimed by political operatives that we should never waste a crisis. In that spirit, if we can rise above the politics of the moment, there is an opportunity for the Premier's apology to galvanise a common effort for effective anti-prejudice education in New South Wales.

The quality of that education will be critical. Was it simply youthful foolishness that led a 21-year-old Dominic Perrottet to don a Nazi uniform for a costume party? He was an adult, and twenty years ago the New South Wales state curriculum taught about the lethal criminality of the Nazi regime. Perrottet must have known about the horrific details of the Nazi genocide against the Jewish people, the Roma and other groups, and about the high price paid by Australian service men and women in North Africa, Syria and elsewhere, to prevent Nazi tyranny from dominating the world. At some level, he must have understood that the freedoms we enjoy today would not be possible without such service and sacrifice.

Yet looking back, one can see that the knowledge of facts is not enough. Equally essential is empathy. Undoubtedly, maturity and experience have taught him — as it teaches many of us — not only to understand the perspectives of people who might appear unlike ourselves, but also to have empathy for what they have experienced, and how their lives continue to be affected by it. Programs such as Together for Humanity and Interfaith Encounters can assist schools and community groups in this regard.

Along with Opposition Leader Chris Minns, I believe that the Premier's apology was sincere. I also believe that, twenty years later, the Premier is a more sensitive, empathetic, wiser person. The journey he has undertaken presents a "teachable moment" for the common good. It is certainly a call to me, to my Catholic community, and to all Christians, to examine our consciences and attitudes towards the Jewish people, and to make a robust contribution in our personal and professional lives to redress past wrongs.

### **'God loves us as we are': Pope says homosexuality is not a crime**

Pope Francis has criticised laws that criminalise homosexuality as "unjust," saying God loves all his children just as they are.

The head of the Catholic Church also called on Catholic bishops who support such laws to welcome LGBTQ people into the church.

"Being homosexual isn't a crime," he said in an interview with The Associated Press on Tuesday.

Pope Francis acknowledged that Catholic bishops in some parts of the world supported laws that criminalise homosexuality or discriminate against LGBTQ people, and he himself referred to the issue in terms of "sin".

But he attributed such attitudes to cultural backgrounds, and said bishops in particular need to undergo a process of change to recognise the dignity of everyone.

"These bishops have to have a process of conversion," he said, adding that they should apply "tenderness, please, as God has for each one of us".

Pope Francis' remarks, which were hailed by gay rights advocates as a milestone, are the first time a pope has commented about such laws.

But they are also consistent with his overall approach to LGBTQ people and belief that the Catholic Church should welcome everyone and not discriminate.

There are 67 countries or jurisdictions worldwide that criminalise consensual same-sex sexual activity, 11 of which can or do impose the death penalty, according to The Human Dignity Trust, which works to end such laws.

Experts say even where the laws are not enforced, they contribute to harassment, stigmatisation and violence against LGBTQ people.

In the US, more than a dozen states still have anti-sodomy laws on the books, despite a 2003 Supreme Court ruling declaring them unconstitutional.

Gay rights advocates say the antiquated laws are used to justify harassment, and point to new legislation, such as the "Don't say gay" law in Florida, which forbids instruction on sexual orientation and gender identity in kindergarten through third grade, as evidence of continued efforts to marginalise LGBTQ people.

The United Nations has repeatedly called for an end to laws criminalising homosexuality outright, saying they violate rights to privacy and freedom from discrimination.

The UN says they breach of countries' obligations under international law to protect the human rights of all people, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

### **'It must do this'**

Declaring such laws "unjust," Pope Francis said the Catholic Church can and should work to put an end to them.

"It must do this. It must do this," he said.

Pope Francis quoted the Catechism of the Catholic Church in saying gay people must be welcomed and respected, and should not be marginalised or discriminated against.

"We are all children of God, and God loves us as we are and for the strength that each of us fights for our dignity," Pope Francis said.

The pontiff's remarks come ahead of a trip to Africa, where such laws are common, as they are in the Middle East.

Many date from British colonial times or are inspired by Islamic law.

Some Catholic bishops have strongly upheld them as consistent with Vatican teaching, while others have called for them to be overturned as a violation of basic human dignity.

There was no indication that Pope Francis spoke out now because his more conservative predecessor, Pope Benedict XVI, recently died.

The issue had never been raised in an interview, but Pope Francis willingly responded, citing even the statistics about the number of countries where homosexuality is criminalised.

On Tuesday, Francis said there needed to be a distinction between a crime and a sin with regard to homosexuality.

Church teaching holds that homosexual acts are sinful, or "intrinsically disordered", but that gay people must be treated with dignity and respect.

Bantering with himself, Pope Francis articulated the position: "It's not a crime. Yes, but it's a sin. Fine, but first let's distinguish between a sin and a crime".

"It's also a sin to lack charity with one another," he added.

Pope Francis has not changed the church's teaching, which has long riled gay Catholics.

But he has made reaching out to LGBTQ people a hallmark of his papacy.

The pope's comments didn't specifically address transgender or non-binary people, just homosexuality, but advocates of greater LGBTQ inclusion in the Catholic Church hailed the pope's comments as a momentous advance.

"His historic statement should send a message to world leaders and millions of Catholics around the world: LGBTQ people deserve to live in a world without violence and condemnation, and more kindness and

understanding," president and CEO of the US-based advocacy group GLAAD Sarah Kate Ellis said.

New Ways Ministry, a Catholic LGBTQ advocacy group, said the church hierarchy's silence on such laws until now had devastating effects, perpetuating such policies and fuelling violent rhetoric against LGBTQ people.

"The pope is reminding the church that the way people treat one another in the social world is of much greater moral importance than what people may possibly do in the privacy of a bedroom," the group's executive director, Francis DeBernardo, said.

One of the cardinals recently appointed by the pope – Robert McElroy, the bishop of San Diego -- is among those Catholics who would like the church to go further, and fully welcome LGBTQ people into the church even if they are sexually active.

"It is a demonic mystery of the human soul why so many men and women have a profound and visceral animus toward members of the LGBT communities," Mr McElroy wrote on Tuesday in the Jesuit magazine *America*.

"The church's primary witness in the face of this bigotry must be one of embrace rather than distance or condemnation."

Starting with his famous 2013 declaration, "Who am I to judge?" — when he was asked about a purportedly gay priest — Pope Francis has gone on to minister repeatedly and publicly to the gay and transgender communities.

As archbishop of Buenos Aires, he favoured granting legal protections to same-sex couples as an alternative to endorsing gay marriage, which Catholic doctrine forbids.

Despite such outreach, Pope Francis was criticised by the Catholic gay community for a 2021 decree from the Vatican's doctrine office that said the church cannot bless same-sex unions.

**“Mystic Prophet Dream Girls”:  
A literary trope for our  
apocalyptic age  
- By Danielle Terceiro**

In this time of plague, war, displacement, political unease, and climate change, there is a sense that this could be our ending: morally and existentially. It sometimes feels as though we have been plunged into the pages of a dystopian narrative. The time is ripe for prophets, even if we aren't inclined to listen to them — individuals who are not afraid to stand apart and call for a repentance, or a turning around to a better way while there is still time.

In the literary context, this prophet has arrived in the form of a young woman: what I call the Mystic Prophet Dream Girl. There are four examples of this new literary trope to which I'd like to draw your attention:

Blandine from Tess Gunty's *The Rabbit Hutch* — the mystic who stands against corrupt development;

Florence from the third novel in Ali Smith's "Seasons Quartet", *Spring*, who seeks to humanise the bureaucratic machine with compelling truth;

Zebra from Azareen Van der Vliet Oloomi's *Call Me Zebra*, who is on a mission to save the abject exile; and Lauren from the first novel in Octavia Butler's *Earthseed* series, *The Parable of the Sower*, who establishes a new community and a new religion to escape ravages of environmental and social destruction.

Just why is it particularly apt, in our apocalyptic age, for a young woman to take on such a prophetic mantle? What does this trope tell us about our own visions for the future and the nature of any hope or resignation that it inscribed into it?

The Mystic Prophet Dream Girl is related to the Manic Pixie Dream Girl — a girl you may have seen on the screen. The Manic Pixie Dream Girl is a quirky, bubbly, somewhat neurotic young woman who introduces all the colours of the world to a male protagonist, her future romantic mate, who would otherwise lead a life that is emotionally barren.

The Mystic Prophet Dream Girl has a different calling. Her calling is not to romantic whimsy and the redemption of her male romantic partner from the emptiness of his

inner life. Rather, her calling seems to include suffering within and on behalf of a world marked by trauma — a world that seems intent on self-harm. The Mystic Prophet Dream Girl understands that the world is spiritually barren, and that the world is not able to self-diagnose itself as such, even as she tries to speak truth to its powers and effect a turnaround in individual lives. There is a kind of meta-spirituality at play here in these novels that draws self-consciously on biblical scripts, even as it sometimes subverts or rejects these scripts.

### **“The Rabbit Hutch”: Mystic portals**

In *The Rabbit Hutch*, Blandine is an orphan who has aged out of the foster care system. Her extremely fair and waif-like appearance codes her as having an otherworldliness: attractive to some, repellent to others. Blandine was previously “Tiffany”, and has taken on the name of a second century, fifteen-year-old Christian martyr in an effort to “transcend the troublesome corporeality into which she was born and achieve untouchability”. This “troublesome corporeality” is linked in painful memory to being

sexually groomed by her middle-aged drama teacher and now having “knowledge that one of the defining moments of her life was nothing more than a solution to a tired equation”.

Blandine lives in Vacca Vale, a mid-western American town working through the trauma of its defilement: it used to be the site of an automobile company that has left it contaminated it with mutation-producing chemicals, and now its green belt, the Valley, is to be destroyed in a corruptly conceived redevelopment.

Blandine describes Vacca Vale as a “travel guide” to Dante’s Purgatorio, and is particularly angered by the treachery of its local officials and their role the redevelopment of the Valley, a green area. She has a vantage point on this corruption that is like the temple-hole-in-the-wall vantage point given to the prophet Ezekiel, who witnesses the talk of those corrupt officials that have prioritised their own new housing developments and who consider that consider the “city is a pot, and we are the meat in it”. Blandine uses her vantage point to rain down a protest of twigs and (fake) blood.

Blandine's special connection to the Valley is linked to her reading of female Christian mystics such as Saint Teresa of Avila and Hildegard von Bingen:

Blandine loves the mystics because they, unlike her, never stopped searching for portals. They treated prayer as a getaway car, cathedral as rabbit hole, suffering as wonderland, divine ecstasy as the cyclone that delivered a woman to color. The mystics never gave up on the Beyond, and they refused to leave the Green World.

The opening of the Rabbit Hutch cues the expectation that Blandine will exit her body, and that the agony will be "sweet, as the mystics promised". However, the resolution of this expectation involves a disturbing act of violence against the innocent. Blandine is expecting to experience it as an ecstatic "Seraph's Assault", but there is no angel, rather the confusing appearance of a "bioluminescent man in his fifties" who has set himself apart for a personal mission by rubbing glow stick ointment onto his body.

The Rabbit Hutch drains Blandine of her frenetic energy and her desires for American political revolution (which she tables for later), and layers over her "dreams of total sufficiency and freedom from the market" with a modest but intense need for human companionship in the here and now. In the wake of the violence, Blandine is severely injured, alone in hospital and with no emergency contact or family visitors. Her out-of-body experience leads to an intense desire for a real-world connection, which is provided in an unexpected, awkward, and yet welcome visit from Joan, a middle-aged neighbour from their Rabbit Hutch apartments. Blandine is the catalyst to for Joan's renewed appreciation of ordinary life and the precious awkwardness of its interconnectedness. She has told Joan of her interest in female mystics, and Joan's at once banal and profound personal revelation at the end of this novel is that we "should all take each other a little more seriously. I want to wake up."

The theologian Sarah Coakley considers that our contemporary culture has over-valued and falsely-psychologised the ecstatic states of mystics such as Saint Teresa of Avila. In the case of Saint Teresa, the most profound

insights she was given into the nature of God did not come through ecstatic experience, and she did not expect her experiences of union with God to result in a withdrawal from the everyday (using one of Blandine's portals). There is a quiet, quotidian, incarnational counterpoint to frenetic versions of "mysticism" woven into *The Rabbit Hutch*.

### **"Spring": Prophetic escapades**

Spring forms part of the "Seasons Quartet" of novels by Ali Smith (to which Smith added a further volume last year, titled *Companion Piece*), which explore the social and political realities of post-Brexit Britain. In *Spring* we meet a "legendary" 12-year-old girl of mysterious past, who is a detainee at an Immigration Detention Centre. Her escapades are becoming famous among the centre staff and include the ability to become invisible, evade video and other security measures, and turn up unexpectedly to chide those in charge. She turns up the CEO's office and speaks words that effect an immediate turnaround in the cleanliness of toilet facilities.

The most obvious literary allusion is to the character Marina in Shakespeare's play *Pericles*. Like Marina, our legendary girl appears at a brothel, and the brothel owners plead with authorities to remove her because her moral persuasiveness makes her bad for business. In the space of half an hour, *Spring*'s legendary girl has persuaded clients out of "what they were in the middle of doing" and made the doorman unlock it so that fifteen sex-trafficked girls can run for their lives.

When a detention centre officer named Brit (the homophone here is no doubt deliberate) meets this girl on a train-journey escape, the girl introduces herself as Florence. Brit jokingly declares herself to be Florence's "machine", without realising that she herself is, in fact, part of Florence's "humanizing the machine programme". As the two converse on the train, Florence explains how Brit could stop being an "inhuman" machine:

We can change your job, the girl says.

Can't teach an old machine new tricks, Brit says.

Built-in obsolescence, the girl says. You'll rust. But don't worry, because

when you do, we'll oil you and adapt you and upgrade you to a new way of working.

We'll see about that, Brit says.

We'll see, we'll see, with any luck like dragonflies from all the angles, the girls says. We'll begin again. We'll revolve.

You mean we'll evolve, Brit says.

No, I mean revolve, the girl says. As in revolution. We'll roll forward to a new place.

You mean revolt, Brit says. You're talking about revolting.

I mean revolve, the girl says.

No you don't, Brit says.

I do. We'll turn it round, the girl says. We'll do it differently.

Florence's desire to see the machine "revolve" is closer to the biblical idea of repentance than we realise. Repentance is a turning away from something, and a turning towards something, all in the one revolution. There are some biblical links in this semantic chain: John the Baptist, the ascetic locust-eating prophet asks for people to "repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near", in advance of the coming of Jesus; and Jesus announces that this kingdom will, in fact "do it differently", and like Florence, he will have an interest in setting prisoners free.

John the Baptist's courage in speaking truth to power — in his case, the corrupt court of the Jewish king — leads to his grisly death by beheading being served up as entertainment for the court. But Florence seems to have protection and an invisibility superpower during her escapades that align her more with the Old Testament prophet Elijah and his flea-in-the-ointment encounters with King Ahab.

### **"Call Me Zebra": Literary PTSD**

Azareen Van der Vliet Oloomi's *Call Me Zebra* is narrated by a young woman, a refugee from violent persecution in Iran, who travels from New York to Barcelona after the death of her father. At her father's funeral her new name — Zebra — is revealed to her. The sharp flash of insight through which she receives and incorporates this new "truth" is characteristic of her way of being in the world:

I watched the undertakers — three men dressed in black, all of them strangers — sow my father into the earth, thinking, as I did, that the juxtaposing stripes of light and darkness were sending a message to me, a message that consisted of that very word, zebra, which had spontaneously manifested itself as much as the truth does. The truth, which is odder than one expects.

Zebra is an apt name because a zebra is “an animal striped black-and-white like a prisoner of war; an animal that rejects all binaries, that represents ink on paper.” Zebra uses her delusional perceptions as the basis for an intricately reasoned literary narrative about her life as an abject exile.

Zebra begins her story by detailing the history of her ancestors in Iran, who “pursued the life of the mind”, and by noting that her father “armed” her with literature and taught her the languages of the oppressed and oppressors because “the wheels of history are always turning and there is no knowing who will be run over next.” The “First Commandment” in this family is to “trust nobody and love nothing except literature”.

On her way to Barcelona, Zebra reflects on Dante’s triangular purgatory and pictures the world’s exiles — its “living dead” — as at the bottom of the “Pyramid of Exile, an elastic funnel in which the refuse of the world can be piled.” Zebra believes that she has absorbed her father’s mind, and through an intense program of interaction with the “Matrix of Literature” she develops her theory of exile and primes her mind to receive “spontaneous signals” from this matrix.

Zebra’s slippage from reality is shown by her adoption of a cockatoo, Taüt, which she comes to see as representing the voice of her mother, a voice with divine authority. Taüt disappears, and then reappears, which gives Zebra “validation from the mind of the universe, and, therefore, from the fumes of my father for the direction in which I had chosen to take the Grand Tour of Exile.” Taüt’s divine authority reminds us of Félicité’s ridiculous yet poignant attachment to her parrot as representing the Holy Spirit in Gustave Flaubert’s novella *A Simple Heart*.

And yet, while there is much that is ridiculous about Zebra's "Grand Tour of Exile" and its thwarted attempts to enact a manifesto built on the work of Nietzsche, Lorca, and Dalí, it is neither simple nor uncomplicated in the demands it makes on Zebra's small, ragtag group of followers. Zebra's ex-boyfriend, Ludo, rails at Zebra in the wake of a pilgrimage up a Catalan mountain that is swept away in an avalanche, and accuses her of "pathological indifference to the living".

The sense of this novel's ending is found in Zebra's recuperation of the idea of love as "everywhere and nowhere at once". She sails to Florence, the city to which Dante never returns from exile, and hopes to find Ludo. Zebra's relentless joining-of-the-literary-dots is put on hold. She hears the writers of the void speak, but only in the "calm susurrus" of the ocean as her boat comes to shore. *Call Me Zebra* suggests that the impulse toward "Grand Narratives" can end up hurting the ones that want to love you, and that quieting the impulse to hyper-articulate meaning can open up a sense of quiet kinship with the whole world and its "loveable" mountains.

Zebra clearly has delusions of prophetic grandeur, but perhaps we have pause for thought when we consider that even the Old Testament prophet Elijah may have been her kin in this regard. Elijah tells a group of people assembled in King Ahab's presence that he is "the only one of the Lord's prophets left", and yet Elijah has just been informed by Obadiah, a palace administrator, about his top-secret work in hiding a hundred of the Lord's prophets in two caves. The flipside to Elijah's grandiosity is him prone and depressed under a broom tree, and Zebra's flipside is her prone and taking pills in a cold bath, and mediating, by means of "Dante the Pilgrim", on how "hard a path it is for one who goes ascending and descending others' stairs." We are reminded that the "hard path" that Zebra has had to tread is not figurative, and that the death of her mother as they attempted to flee persecution has likely been a trigger for ongoing post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Zebra's experiences of trauma isolate her, and at the same time there is a painful dramatic irony for the reader in understanding the collective nature of her experience. Jesus himself predicted the suffering that would

follow in wake of his city's destruction, and understood that this would be a time of intense trauma for women and children.

This gendered pattern of trauma is persistent to this day. In this time of conflict, women are forced to take on dreadful, additional burdens of war. Displaced women and girls are vulnerable to gender-based violence and as a result are like to suffer PTSD and other consequence of complex trauma. The authoritarian regimes that have fallen into place in our world seem to be particularly intent at the moment on policing the freedoms of young women and restricting their access to education. Call Me Zebra recognises the importance of female voices speaking about this suffering, even as it also recognises a difficult truth that it this is often a PTSD-framed perspective. The voices speaking out on behalf of the traumatised need healing, too.

### **“The Parable of the Sower”: A call to change and community**

Octavia Butler wrote her novel *The Parable of the Sower* in 1993, and its sequel, *The Parable of the Talents*, in 1998. However, these texts did not come to wide attention until after 2016, when both seemed to be feeling our collective nervous pulses. The references in *The Parable of the Talents* to a leader who promises to “make America great again”, and an authoritarian regime policed by religious zealots, brought Butler's work to public attention after the election of Donald Trump.

*The Parable of the Sower* opens in California in 2024, in a dystopian country ravaged by climate change, which has led to poverty and insecurity, to the dismantling of education and other social infrastructure, and to the ravaging of the country with uncontrollable fire. Lauren, the teenager daughter of a Baptist preacher, is forced onto the road after her gated community is devastated by raiders. She has already rejected the faith of her family and has, over her teenage years, felt compelled to use her precious literary skills to write *Earthseed: The Books of the Living*, outlining a new religion. This religion rejects what Lauren perceives as the rigid and uncaring God of Christianity, and frames its central understanding around change and adaptability:

All that you touch You Change.  
All that you Change Changes you.  
The only lasting truth Is Change.  
God Is Change.

Out on the road, Lauren recruits a small band of followers, with the aim of establishing a new religious community in Canada. Like Blandine in *The Rabbit Hutch*, Lauren is fixated with the idea of escape through a portal, although in Lauren's sci-fi context the ultimate escape that she wishes for is through space travel to another world. Lauren's followers on the road seem happy to take on most aspects of *Earthseed*, except for this space-travel aspiration.

The spiritual formation of the band that Lauren has gathered around her has more to do with a baptism by uncontrollable fire, than to what she is preaching to them through her word. The fire is personified as "eating its way towards us"; and moreover, "Neither humans nor animals were foolish enough to waste time attacking one another. It was live and live."

Lauren's community come through the baptism of uncontrollable fire to arrive at their planned remote location, to find that the family they were expecting to connect with there has perished. They talk about the need to plant a garden and to make shelter, and then plant oak trees for the dead. The last narration of the novel notes that the community "sat together and talked and ate a meal and decided to call this place Acorn". The simple domesticity of this scene recalls the hidden communities that supported prophets such as Elijah and Elisha — known as the "sons of the prophets".

The end of *The Parable of the Sower* features a Bible open at Jesus's own "Parable of the Sower", leaving it open for the reader as to whether the words of Lauren's *Earthseed* will fall on "good ground" and bear fruit within her prophetic community.

### **Dreaming dreams in an apocalyptic age**

The Mystic Prophet Dream Girl has arrived in the pages of these literary novels. The contemplative accountability that she is able to

offer from the margins provides an unexpectedly forceful challenge to the proud, corrupt, and powerful within society — even if they do not end up changing their ways. In some cases, she is a prophet of symbolic action who embodies the suffering of those around her, and carries their trauma while on a mission to unravel it from its source. Like the prophets of the Old Testament, she is sometimes subject to an existential despair. The grand mission can be a source of disappointment, and it can all seem too much. That is where the communities that support the prophet come into their own. As I mentioned, in biblical times, these communities would be called the “sons of the prophets”: here we might like to call the fledging communities “new friends of the girl prophet”.

I’m now thinking about another text that foregrounds the prophetic voice of a young woman: I hope to take the posture of the teenage girl Mary as she is described in the Gospel of Luke, who treasured and pondered words from God as the Holy Spirit came upon her. The Gospel of Luke has a sequel hot on its heels: the Book of Acts, which describes the fledging Christian community that gathered together after Jesus’s return to heaven. It describes the Pentecost event, and I treasure and ponder the words that the Apostle Peter took from the Old Testament prophet Joel to explain what was happening to the fledging Christian community, gathered there in the power of the Holy Spirit:

In the last days, God says,  
I will pour out my Spirit on all people.  
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,  
your young men will see visions,  
your old men will dream dreams.  
Even on my servants, both men and women,  
I will pour out my Spirit in those days,  
and they will prophesy.

As I believe the four novels I’ve here adduced suggest, these are the dreams for which our culture longs — even if sometimes it needs to cover its intense desire with a kind of postmodern irony.

In this respect, I believe it is helpful to turn to the ending of the Bible, the last two chapters in the book of Revelation, and get a sense of the ending for our apocalyptic age. This book churns through a sickening cycle of empires, war, and judgment that seems never-ending, but which ends with a dream of a peaceful, golden city. It is no dystopian city. It takes no prisoners and imposes no border restrictions. This eternal city remains unlocked, yet it is also safe. Its authority, Jesus, honours past traumas, and they are brought to mind in order for him to wipe away tears and erase pain and suffering from the earth.

It is no coincidence that the “river of the water of life, as clear as crystal” flows generously down the middle of the street in the middle of the city: there is no baptism of uncontrolled fire to be had here. The leaves of the tree next to the river are marvellous medicine; they will heal the nations. This city is not our escape portal, nor our hidden-away haven from the suffering of the world: it is the world, adapted and changed to be our forever home without trauma.

**Danielle Terceiro** is completing a PhD by publication at Alphacrucis University College, in the areas of literature and theology.

### **Do Jews suffer from “Holocaustomania”? The real question is, why don't you? - By Rabbi Raymond Apple**

Many years have now passed since the Second World War, which left such a trail of havoc and horror all over Europe, and traumatically influenced the course of modern history, and the Sho'ah, the Holocaust, with its brutal destruction of millions of innocent Jewish lives and wanton annihilation of great and peaceful Jewish communities whose only wish was to live unmolested in the way their conscience dictated.

We regularly hear from those who would deny it all happened or minimise its extent, or try to relativise its significance, as well as from otherwise decent and fair-minded people who somewhat impatiently ask, “Surely this Holocaust occurred a long time ago; why can't you Jews forgive and forget, and free yourselves from your obsession with it all?”

The answer is that the experience has left such a permanent mark on the Jewish psyche, such a searing pain in the Jewish soul, that to suggest that it be erased is to ask the impossible, the unthinkable.

Never has there been such a catastrophe, such a deliberate, cold-blooded campaign to eradicate every single member of an entire people — the healthy and the sick, the old and the young — without exception, escape, exoneration, immunity, compassion, appeal, or redress. Countless families are still inconsolably grief-stricken and bereft. Many of the survivors still suffer the nightmares; often the pain is getting worse, not better. Even those fortunate enough to be less personally involved continue to be outraged at the bestial ferocity that brought to a sudden end over a thousand years of proud, dignified Jewish history and culture on the continent of Europe, wiping scholars, sages, and saints, and great centres of piety and learning, off the face of the earth.

As Abba Eban writes in *My People: The Story of the Jews*:

Jewish history and consciousness will be dominated for many generations by the traumatic memories of the Holocaust. No people in history has undergone an experience of such violence and depth. Israel's obsession with physical security; the sharp Jewish reaction to movements of discrimination and prejudice; an intoxicated awareness of life, not as something to be taken for granted but as a treasure to be fostered and nourished with eager vitality; a residual mistrust of what lies beyond the Jewish wall; a mystic belief in the undying forces of Jewish history, which ensure survival when all appears lost; all these together with the intimacy of more personal pains and agonies, are the legacy which the Holocaust transmits to the generation of Jews grown up under its shadow.

I readily admit to having an obsession with the Holocaust. And that obsession — someone inelegantly called it “Holocaustomania” — has hold of Jews everywhere and will not let them go.

But the Holocaust is not just a Jewish concern. Its dimensions are universal. The Rev. James Parks Morton, one-time Dean of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York, said, “Auschwitz was the single most

important event of the twentieth century, a paradigm of the advanced, intellectual, industrial, technological society gone to hell.” Never was there such a confrontation between two diametrically opposed world views, as Jacob Talmon expresses it, between morality and paganism; between the sanctity of life and the cult of warfare; between the quality of all men and the supremacy of the selected few; between the search for truth and the discharge of instinctive impulses; between the vision of a genuine society of equals and the prospect of a society of masters lording it over slaves.

Along these same lines, a reviewer of Walter Laqueur’s book, *The Terrible Secret: Suppression of the Truth about Hitler’s “Final Solution”* poses this question: From where, if not from the Holocaust, a premonition of the death rattle of the thermonuclear age, can come the testimony and the warning that man is capable of the worst as he is capable of the best, that through madness or blindness, he may transform the planet into a crematorium?

The Holocaust starkly confronts our generation with the paradigm of what can happen if man does not see in his fellow the face of a brother man; if, instead of using the new means of communication as media for dialogue, people blatantly or subliminally peddle lies and distort the truth; if some would prefer to see the whole world destroyed rather than rejoice to see other people peacefully inhabit their own little corner in the sun.

The Holocaust is not just one more chapter of Jewish suffering: it is a message to the world. In a world in which Jews can be ground down by the jackboots of inhumanity, no one is safe anywhere. In a world in which the glass of the synagogues can be wantonly shattered, nobody’s sanctuary or identity or ideology is safe anymore.

That is why people everywhere should develop an obsession with the Holocaust if they value their future. That is why there should be not less “Holocaustomania”, but more.

**Raymond Apple** is Emeritus Rabbi of The Great Synagogue in Sydney.

**Vatican's top woman says church needs to rebuild trust in Australia - By Anna Patty, a Consumer Affairs Editor and Senior Writer for The Sydney Morning Herald. She is a former Workplace Editor, Education Editor, State Political Reporter and Health Reporter**

The most powerful woman in the Vatican, French nun Nathalie Becquart, accepts that women have hit a stained glass ceiling in the church.

But the former marketing and advertising consultant doesn't feel limited by the Catholic Church's rigid position on the ordination of women and said she has found a fulfilling leadership path around it.

In December, she was named on the BBC list of the 100 most inspiring and influential women in the world.

Speaking in Sydney on Friday, she said she is on a global mission to bring the Pope's decision-making process closer to the laity.

That process involves listening to what Australian Catholics have to say about the big decisions the church has to make about its future and seeking a consensus.

"I am here, ready to listen, to learn more about the reality of the church here," she said. "What is very important for me is the Catholic Church has to speak the language of the people."

Becquart, 54, acknowledges that women's ordination into the priesthood is not up for negotiation.

"At this moment, at the Vatican and from the point of view of the official teaching of the church, it is closed," she said.

But as the Pope's right-hand woman, as the undersecretary of the Synod of Bishops, she believes there are other ways for females to play a bigger role in the church.

"There is a strong call today for more women in leadership, more women's participation, especially in the decision-making process," Becquart said.

Becquart says there is a need to rebuild trust following the child sex abuse crisis but said it will be a long process.

“We are more and more aware in many countries that the church has failed because there have been abuses and cover ups,” she said.

She accepts the Catholic Church faces a public relations challenge in rebuilding trust and says her background in communications and project management has been useful in her pastoral work and team leadership.

Becquart did not go to Cardinal George Pell’s funeral at St Mary’s Cathedral on Thursday, saying she had only just arrived in Sydney from Melbourne that day.

In Rome, she occasionally crossed paths with him, including over lunch, but says she didn’t know him well.

Pell was reportedly the anonymous author of a memo that was critical of the papacy of Pope Francis, accusing him of being silent on moral issues.

While Pope Francis was known as being more pastoral, Becquart was reluctant to talk about the differences between the two men, other than to say the main one was cultural.

“I think [with] what people say or write and how they act, you can’t just judge by what you see outside.”

After graduating from the HEC Paris business school with a major in entrepreneurship, Becquart worked for two years working as a marketing and communications consultant for an NGO.

She joined the Xaviere Sisters in France at the age of 26 after working as a volunteer in Lebanon and realising her calling was in the church.

When the Pope asked her to become an undersecretary in 2021, it was an easy decision. Her appointment is now seen as a watershed moment.

As one of two undersecretaries, she is the first woman to have the right to vote in the synod, making her the most powerful woman in the Vatican.

## Quote of the week...

When a poor man dies of hunger, it has not happened because God did not take care of him or her.

It has happened because neither you nor I wanted to give that person what he or she needs.

- Mother Teresa (1910-1997)

An Albanian-Indian Catholic nun who, in 1950, founded the Missionaries of Charity

In loving memory of

**Tyson O'Donnell**



May he rest in peace and rise with Christ in glory.

*Rest eternal grant unto him, O Lord, and let light perpetual shine upon him!*

## Outdoors...

### **Christians UNITED! World Day of Prayer Ecumenical Service - Country Focus TAIWAN**

Everyone is welcome to celebrate the World Day of Prayer Service to be held at St Patrick's, Mortlake on **Friday 10th March 2023 at 10:30am.**

#### **What is the World Day of Prayer all about?**

The World Day of Prayer is an international ecumenical Christian laywomen's initiative. It is run under the motto "Informed Prayer and Prayerful Action," and is celebrated annually in over 170 countries on the first Friday in March. The movement aims to bring together women of various races, cultures and traditions in a yearly common Day of Prayer, as well as in closer fellowship, understanding and action throughout the year. Contact: Linda Praum on 0425 866 892

# Mid-Lent Prayer for Peace



## Mid-Lent Service of Prayer for Peace and for those affected by Natural Disaster

**When: Tuesday 14 March 2023**

**Time: 7.00pm -8.30pm**

**Where: St Andrew's Ukrainian Catholic Church**

**Address: 57 Church Street, Lidcombe**



## INTERCESSIONS – Sunday 5th March 2023

### Second Sunday in Lent

**[PRIEST] We pray for God's Church and for his world, as we look for his Kingdom which is to come.**

Almighty God, your Son Jesus Christ has promised that you will hear us when we ask in faith: receive the prayers we offer.

For your Church, that the light and truth of your gospel may shine upon the darkness of this world; that you will inspire and enable all who lead us; Justin of Canterbury, Geoffrey our Primate, Kanishka our Archbishop, Michael our bishop and James our rector. Renew the world, O Lord, through the presence in its midst of your servant Church, the body of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Lord in your mercy: **hear our prayer.**

For the gift of wisdom and compassion to all world leaders, and for those who lead our nation, that all may live in peace and mutual trust; for those who are subjected to oppressive regimes, especially in Russia, North Korea, Afghanistan, Myanmar and Iran. Heavenly Father, grant peace in our time and an end to all strife, that your people may be one in the reign of Christ and his peace.

Lord in your mercy: **hear our prayer.**

For the sick and sorrowing, for the discouraged and the depressed, for all prisoners and captives, for the abused and the helpless, and for those who live in fear or poverty, that they may know your love, presence, healing and peace; especially those for whom we have been asked to pray: Fr Roger Kelly, Margot Kennedy, Melissa Moore, Robert, Judy Russell, Jill Sharwood, Joyce Bannister, Barry Brandy, John Burns, June Cameron, Fay Conaghan, Pat Conchar, Elsie Dunnam, Malcolm Green, Enid Kell, Mary MacPherson, David Morgan, Graham Norman, Sally Palmer, Michelle Phillips, Warwick and Jan Roden, Diane Smith, John Sorensen, Peter Sorensen, Sylvia, Daphne Storey, Martin de Vries, Bob Woods, Bill Whittle and others known to us.

Lord in your mercy: **hear our prayer.**

For all your servants whose lives have honoured Christ, For the recently departed, especially John Todd, for those who have died in faith, for those who have died alone, or unloved. And we commend all those whose year's mind occurs at this time: Merle Pollard, Margaret Bruce, Sheila McEwan, Fay Burke, Christine Fogerty, Jack Salisbury, Luke Egan, Tyson O'Donnell and Fr Marc-Augustine Eggert.

Lord in your mercy: **hear our prayer.**

[PRIEST] **Almighty God, you have promised to hear our prayers.**

**Grant that what we have asked in faith we may by your grace receive, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**



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## **The Week Ahead...**

**Midweek communion** is on every Wednesday at 10.0am in the Chapel of Our Lord Passion.

**Commemorations** noted this week

~ Tuesday 7th March - Perpetua and her companions, martyrs at Carthage (d.203)

~ Wednesday 8th March - John of God, worker among the sick and poor, Spain (d.1550)

~ Thursday 9th March - Sister Emma SSA, superior of the Society of the Sacred Advent, Queensland (d.1939)

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**Honorary Priests** Fr Mark Battison

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**Organ Scholar** Bailey Yeates

**Lay Assistant** Ms Natalie McDonald

**Captain of the Bell Tower** Mrs Pam Brock

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