



Diocese of Willochra

# The Willochran

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## A PUBLICATION OF THE ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF WILLOCHRA

FOLLOWING Jesus ♦ PROCLAIMING His gospel ♦ CONNECTING with His world ♦ and ENJOYING our common life



Photo cour-

**Then God said 'Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees...'**

**Genesis 1:11**

**Photo: Mt Remarkable National Park**



Dear Friends in Christ

Every year the Jewish community celebrates the festival of Tu Bi-Shevat, the New Year of the Trees.

Christians might think that a responsible approach to the environment begins in Genesis with God granting humans dominion over the earth. Reading 'Justice for Christ's sake', the biography of James Jones, the former bishop of Liverpool, I've been given a new understanding.

For Jewish people it begins in the book of Deuteronomy with God's instructions to Moses that, as they entered the promised land, they were never to destroy a fruit-bearing tree. Long before we began to speak of the science of climate change, there was a human intuition that trees were central to our present and future ecology.

In Morris Epstein's 'All About Jewish Holidays and Customs' he writes:  
'Flowers and trees...mean so much to every human being. Our ancestors knew this. They realised that trees are among our best friends. Trees help to feed and clothe us. They give us wood for our house, paper for books, fruit to eat, and shade from the hot sun. Trees keep the soil rich and fertile and they give beauty to the world'.

The title Jesus used more than any other to define his mission was 'Son of Man', which in Hebrew is 'Ben Adam' and literally means 'child of the one hewn from the earth'. Consider these well-known

sayings. Remember the older version of the Lord's prayer? 'Thy will be done **in** earth (not 'on') as it is in heaven'. The preposition 'in' speaks of God's will being done not just on the surface of the Earth but also deep within. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus teaches, "Blessed are the meek for they will inherit the earth" (Matthew 5.5). Jesus promises a future for the Earth, one that would be inherited by the meek, who tread the Earth and treat others with humility.

These sayings reflect Jesus' conviction that the future will see a renewed and transformed Earth. At a point after his death and resurrection, Jesus believed he would return, at the end of history, to herald "the renewal of all things" (Matthew 19.28). Jesus, the Child of the Earth, the Son of Man, would be the agent not of the Earth's obliteration, but of its regeneration

This Willochran comes with the moving tribute to Michael Ford, by his son Thomas, and a reflection on Rev'd Trevor Briggs, the Diocese's Registrar from 1991-2010. Ezra Lockwood shares his not-to-be-forgotten journey to Bali, seeing it for the first time as non-tourist. Quite differently some of us learnt how to make spring rolls, under expert instruction (thank you Lily and Team!). The Rev'd Sarah Wiles speaks of her experience of the Moonta Vietnam Veteran's service, Dr Jane Lee-Barker's latest book is reviewed, and the Mothers' Union celebrates Mary Summer Day. Last, but not least, there's a BIG DAY coming up for the Editor!

Blessings and Peace

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# THE WILLOCHRAN

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DEADLINE: Summer 2023 Edition

## Friday 14th October 2023

Contributions towards the cost of printing publications would be appreciated and may be made to the Diocese of Willochra.

Have your say in The Willochran  
Suggestions, comments, contributions and insights are welcome

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Anglican Church Of Australia

Diocese Of Willochra

## A PRAYER FOR OUR DIOCESE

God of hope and love,  
you have called us to be the body of Christ.  
Inspire us in the Diocese of Willochra  
to worship with joy and energy,  
serve with compassion and be welcoming  
of others in our communities,  
so that all will know the good news of Jesus  
to whom with you and the Holy Spirit  
be honour and glory for ever.  
Amen.

### Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the traditional custodians  
of this country

We pay respect to the elders, past, present and emerging



The ordination of Rev'd Elizabeth Harris as a Deacon, 30th September 2023

Deadline for articles for Willochra summer edition 14th October 2023. If you know that you will have an article coming up after that date please let Church Office know so that we can leave room.



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Silver Certificate winner 2020, Gold Certificate winner 2021 - Best Regional

# Farewell Michael Ford - a dear Friend of Willochra

## JOHN MICHAEL FORD (1947-2023)

I only ever saw my father cry once. It was in the position that I now stand, giving the eulogy at his father's funeral 24 years ago. Surprising to no one here today, Dad gave a perfectly executed eulogy that afternoon, the summation of four decades of public speaking. As he closed, a small quiver in his voice was noted, as he said: 'Good bye, Dad, rest easy'. Dad revealed to us about 10 years ago that he had already written his Eulogy. After our initial shock and his reassurances that he was healthy, we questioned why. 'Because', he said looking at we three boys, 'I want you to get it right!' To this day, I'm not sure if that revealed more about Dad or about us, but we obliged him. On the eve of Dad's passing last week, my mother unearthed this mysterious document, which she too had never seen. I read it and was left... *underwhelmed*. Mum, Ben and Nicko then read it and agreed. You see, Dad was a man educated in the fields of science and mathematics and naturally, it contained ALL the facts. It didn't, however, contain the colour, the humour, or the musicality of Dad's life that we knew, and that you here today knew.

He told me on many occasions how proud he was of my academic achievements in the field of history; I still remember his beaming face at my final graduation inside Bonython Hall at the University of Adelaide - which was also his *alma mater*. And so, Dad, with mum's blessing, I'm taking your Eulogy and, like a good historian, using it as the primary source to construct here today your biography. And I will endeavour to contextualize your life in a way that is deserving of the life you lived so well.

John Michael Ford was born in Minlaton on the Yorke

Peninsula on 21 August 1947 - the eldest child of John and Judy Ford. He was the 5th consecutive generation of eldest Ford children to be given 'John' as a first name. My brother became the sixth when he was born John Benjamin in 1977. Dad spent the first 16 years of his life in Minlaton, in what he called a 'stable upbringing in a Christian environment', entirely due to his mother Judy, who was a faithful worshipper at the local St Benedict's Church. Dad credits the Parish priest from those days, Ben Williams, with kick starting his strong faith; also attributing Bill Johnson, Des Brockhoff, John Bleby, Brian Ashworth and Garry Weatherill in doing their bit along his journey to keep him on the path towards God.

Along with his younger brother, Matthew, Dad always knew the farm life was never going to be for him. He completed his Leaving Honours Year at Adelaide Boys High, where the biggest highlight for him, was starring in a production of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* alongside Greig Pickhaver, known better now by his stage name, HG Nelson. We boys knew whenever Roy & HG appeared on the TV, Dad would make a point of recalling his 'starring' role in Shakespeare's play, and seeing HG transform into the craggy Caliban.

I think Dad was bitten by the acting bug quite early. For someone who could think, talk and preach on some of life's most profound questions, he wasn't afraid to leap into the unknown or make a fool of himself. And he never lost that itch to be on stage. He was in



Michael 'pulling out all stops' at Synod 2023

numerous stage musicals in his Renmark days with Mum and dear friends John & Claire Angove. But it was his vocation as a teacher in which we boys first came to know and admire Dad. He enjoyed all of his teaching appointments - in Victor Harbor, Renmark, Burra, Mt Gambier, Adelaide and Canberra. He was proud of the fact that he became Deputy Head of Grant High School in Mt Gambier at the age of 32, through an open interview process, which was rare at that time. He wrote that he was 'madly ambitious' back then and couldn't be dissuaded from the job in the Mount. He was also proud of the positions he filled at Pulteney Grammar, and as Principal of O'Connor Christian School in Canberra. This last appointment, in Canberra, felt like it fulfilled Dad's destiny - from a professional point of view anyway. Mum and I moved to Canberra with him in 1997, the older boys staying put in Adelaide, and I saw first hand how he put everything into that role. It was his first Principal position. He was so proud. We were so proud. But he didn't flinch at the responsibility. Within a term of assuming the role, he decided to change the name of the school - so it became Brindabella Christian

College. Shortly after Dad's arrival, the fledgling school had a total of 137 students from K to Year 10, and was threatened with closure constantly. Again, Dad's pre-written Eulogy glosses over the details, perhaps owing to humility, but the amount of out-of-hours work he did in saving that school was not only exceptional but indicative of his incredible work ethic. It seemed like every second Sunday, Dad was visiting churches around the nation's capital, preaching the good word, attempting to entice prospective parents. His engaging words and absorbing public speaking had a huge effect. By the time Mum and Dad decided to retire in 2002, the school had recovered, boasting close to 400 students. Today, Brindabella has two campuses and more than 750 students. As a sign of their gratitude, the school opened the Michael Ford Science and Technology Building in 2008; I'm sure one of his crowning achievements.

Allow me also to touch on Dad's ability as a public speaker. He was awesome. As he wrote in his Eulogy, he was proud of the fact that for two years he was a member of the State Debating team which included a future State Premier, a now convicted fraudster and a disgraced parish priest! I first got to know Dad's debating acumen through his role as debating coach at Pulteney, and he led numerous teams to multiple championships. There was even a school trophy named in his honour. No doubt Dad is watching me now, pen in hand, ready to ring that bell and give me a one-minute warning. Sorry Mr Ford, not this time. He wrote in his Eulogy that he would have continued representing the State in debating except for a teaching transfer to Renmark, but that was where he met Mum, and as he says, 'that outcome was excellent'. Michael and Anne

had a wonderful, happy marriage - 'rock solid', as Dad put it - of 49 years, a figure I'm sure not lost on my numerically inclined father. He was proud of the fact that he and Mum never once had an argument, only disagreements, and never in front of us. Dad had four bouts of anxiety and depression across his life - always work related, and he credits Mum as the rock which guided him through them. Their partnership was built on a foundation of love and faith, and a healthy shared passion for music.

Dad, was a very fine pianist. As an extension of that, he also played the organ at every parish where he was a regular member of the congregation. All three of us boys, had or have careers in music, and it's in no small part thanks to Dad and his infectious love for music. According to Mum, some of his best and most moving performances at the organ came late in life when, clearly struggling physically, he literally 'pulled out all the stops' and gave it his all.

It would be remiss of me not to put today's location in context too. The Good Shepherd here in Plympton was where the Ford family were parishioners for more than 12 years. Some of my earliest memories come from this building, and Dad was always involved, whether it be playing the organ, reading the Gospel, or behind the scenes as Warden. In the early 1980s, Dad undertook a Theological Diploma by correspondence. He was proud of his achievement: he graduated with First Class Honours, winning the top student in Australasia prize - for which he was awarded \$20! He loved classical music almost exclusively, particularly the music of Mozart and Beethoven; modern music to Dad was Gilbert & Sullivan or Scott Joplin. Conspicuously absent from

Dad's Eulogy was the mention of sport. In his youth he was a speedy wingman in football, a handy hockey player in his university days, a classy opening bat in cricket (including a brief stint of Masters cricket in Canberra), a capable if somewhat frustrated snooker player, and a very fine table tennis player. I discovered this last talent at Brindabella when there was a student table tennis tournament for the entire student body. The Principal was allowed to enter as a wildcard, and Dad blitzed the competition away, smashing the poor 15-year-old finalist into oblivion in front of the entire school. He coached many a school team, mainly in cricket, and to this day, he's the best damn Under 10 Football Goal Umpire I've ever seen.

Family was everything to Dad, and we all had a great, trouble free, love-filled relationship with him. Mum, my brothers Benjamin and Nicholas, our partners Aleisha and Emma, and his four gorgeous grandchildren - Georgia, Hunter, Sienna and Henley - all adored him. This extended to his many pets too, from his and Mum's first cat and dog duo, Gilbert & Sullivan, to our beloved kelpie/bull mastiff cross, Henry, to the grumpy looking tabby cat Smee (named after a former Headmaster of Pulteney) to his final pet, Stanley, who joined us from Canberra. He loved them all and they loved him.

Speaking of family, I need to make special mention of Nicholas Lewis, who is with us today. Mum and Dad's Christian charity came to the fore when 'Big Nick' came to live with us for three years in the early 90s, while his family undertook missionary work in Nepal. If ever Dad had a fourth son, it was you Nick, and we're thrilled you're here today. Dad's faith was the cornerstone of his life, perhaps the greatest

constant besides Mum of course. In retirement, he was proud of what he managed to achieve for the Diocese of Willochra, for 15 years as its Treasurer. He helped keep the Diocese debt-free, allowing them to do Mission work as well as supporting their own ministries. He wrote how proud he was of Mum's academic qualification which enabled her to be ordained as a Deacon and Priest in the Ministry District of Yorke Peninsula. As he said, 'she was the good listener and pastoral person' which he was not.

Mum and Dad returned to Burra in 2021, and despite a harrowing first year with a flood, a broken arm, a heart attack and then a level 4 Cancer diagnosis, Dad said they never regretted it.

Dad concluded his Eulogy with a declaration of what he believed greets us in the afterlife. He wrote: *"God's kingdom is timeless, and my little brand of theological insight suggests that, when I reach that kingdom beyond the Judgment, those we love will already be there. And if not, there must be something far better. So get ready for the ride"*.

Last week, and like many of his now sadly neglected antique clocks, the pendulum stopped swinging for Dad. His favourite saying was "We do what we can, and not what we can't. The rest is God's problem and he's never been far away." And so, it now gives me the ultimate honour and privilege to return Dad's own words, uttered 24 years ago, and say to him:

**"Goodbye Dad, rest easy".**

**Thomas Ford**

#### THE SEASONS OF THE SPIRIT...LAND

Listen... Land is inviting us in.

She asks us to join in her song deep within the earth.

Land cries out from the ground.

There is grief in her song but there is a rhythm of hope.

Listen...

We are not separate.

Our hearts beat together as one.

Where could we go from Spirit?

Nowhere.

Nowhere.

God is under our feet.

God is over our heads.

God is here. Listen....

## Vale Reverend Trevor Briggs



Dear Friends

Trevor had become a Sunday School Superintendent, Methodist youth fellowship leader and qualified local leader before Anne and he married in 1967, and set up home in Port Augusta.

Trevor was confirmed as an Anglican and they became actively involved in St Augustine's where they started a youth group. Anne helped out by teaching religious instruction at Wilsden Primary School in Elizabeth Terrace.

At the end of 1969 Trevor and Anne moved to Cleve where Anne helped in the Sunday School and Trevor was licensed as a lay reader, and where they were both active with the local branch of the Bible Society. It was helpful preparation for moving to Marree, (1971-76), which saw them encouraging local worship.

In 1976 Trevor and Anne moved to Burra, where they spent eight years. They worshipped at St Mary's. Anne joined the Ladies Guild and Mothers' Union. During a long interregnum, Trevor was consistently involved in the parish.

In 1984 they moved to Jamestown and worshipped at St James the Great. Anne was Secretary of Mothers' Union, and Trevor a lay reader and priest's Warden. Trevor was also appointed convenor of the Diocesan Stewardship Task Force, moving around the Diocese so he could work with local groups on stewardship programmes and speaking at dinners.

In 1991 they moved to Gladstone where Trevor was appointed Diocesan Registrar, a position he held until 2010, serving Bishop David McCall and Bishop Garry Weatherill.

Trevor also acted as CEO, Treasurer and Chair of the Willochra Home, managing four major building upgrades and the passing of management from the Registrar to the Willochra Home for five years.

He was ordained deacon in December 2002, and as a priest for local ministry in February 2004.

Trevor and Anne both undertook the three day Cursillo weekend.

Trevor became the local priest at Christ Church, Kadina in 2010, and Visiting Priest at Leigh Creek and The Northern Mission from 2013.

He maintained a passion for Farina and the Anglican community there. Trevor will be surely missed by all who have known him.

Trevor died on Saturday 5 August 2023 in the Royal Adelaide Hospital. His sister Marilyn was with him in his final hours. He had been suffering from cancer.

Trevor was strongly supported by his parish priest, Rev'd Sarah Wiles.

I visited Trevor on the day and read the Commendation from the prayer book:

*'Go forth, good Christian, on your journey from this world,  
in the name of God the Father who created you;  
in name of Jesus Christ who suffered for you;  
in the name of the Holy Spirit who strengthens you;  
in communion with the blessed saints,  
and aided by angels and archangels and all the heavenly host.  
May your portion this day be in peace,  
and your dwelling in the heavenly Jerusalem.'*

Please pray for Anne, and Marilyn and all the family. Trevor is now in the nearer presence of Christ, his Lord and Saviour.

**May he rest in Peace**

**And rise in Glory**

**May Light Perpetual shine upon him.**

Yours in Christ

**+Jeremy**



## Ezra's mission trip to Bali



*Ezra addressing the congregation at Christ Church Balaklava*

*In April I travelled with a group from Horizon Christian School to Bali, Indonesia for a mission trip. Over 10 days, we worked with The Bali Life Foundation, the local C3 church and Akademi Kristus, all groups dedicated to helping families and individuals living in slum areas by providing them with opportunities to break the poverty cycle.*

*It was eye-opening to see Bali from the perspective of a non-tourist. Many Australians view Bali as not much more than a holiday getaway, but in reality, it is much more complex. Once you step behind the hotels and the beaches, it's a completely different world with many local people living in dire poverty. Despite these people living in challenging circumstances, so many of them shone with contentment and happiness.*

*This really put our first world lifestyles into perspective.*

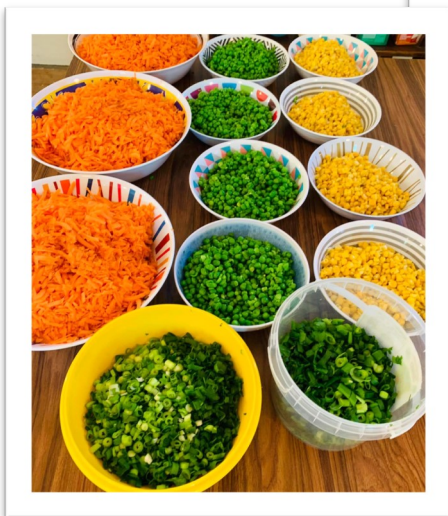
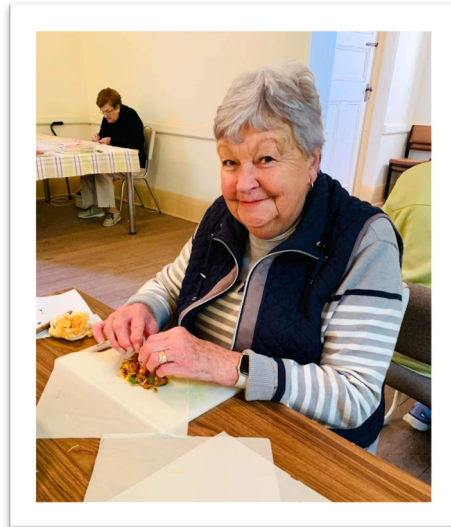
*It was amazing to see what God was doing throughout Bali, and to go to a Balinese church, not understanding the language, but still worshipping our God with people I'd never met before.*

*I am grateful for this opportunity to have been able to go to Bali, to serve Him there and to learn from the Christian faith of the Balinese people.*

**Ezra Lockwood, Balaklava**



The Ministry District of Southern Flinders was at it again with the making of 750 spring rolls. Everyone gathered at St Alban's Gladstone as they do every few months for the fund raising event. We also had a special visitor with Bishop Jeremy dropping in to lend a helping hand. Well done.





# Bishop Gilbert White, first Bishop of Willochra

I was browsing the internet recently, looking for information on my great uncle, the Reverend William Harold McFarlane, who was appointed to Murray Island in the Torres Strait in 1917, and nine years later became Priest-in-charge of the Western and Central Torres Strait Islands then from 1927 until 1933, Administrator of the Diocese of Carpentaria. In my internet travels I came across the following article by Ruth Teale on Bishop Gilbert White, who from 1915 - 1925, was the first Bishop of Willochra. Those who have visited the Anglican Church Office in Gladstone, or attended meetings will no doubt know of the Gilbert White Hall named for him.

## Excerpts from the article

Gilbert White (1859-1933), poet, author and bishop, was born on 9 June 1859 at Rondebosch, Cape Colony, South Africa. The family returned to England in 1861 and Gilbert was educated at Fettes College, Edinburgh, and Oriel College, Oxford. Made deacon in 1883, he was priested in 1884 by the bishop of Truro. A lung condition necessitated emigration and he arrived at Townsville, North Queensland, in September 1885. White became successively rector of Charters Towers, Herberton and Ravenswood, and archdeacon of Townsville (1892). On 24 August 1900, in Sydney, he was consecrated first bishop of Carpentaria and was enthroned in November on Thursday Island. In June 1905 he personally founded an Aboriginal mission on the Mitchell River and in 1907 explored the Roper River for another mission site. Next year he negotiated the resettlement on Moa Island of Melanesians deported from Queensland.

## IN THE ARTICLE, THIS IS WHERE

### WE COME INTO HIS LIFE

*From July 1915 to September 1925 White was first Bishop of Willochra, another sparsely settled diocese, in South Australia. He spent ten years travelling, and founded and edited The Willochran.*

*An 'austere Tractarian' despising popularity and ecclesiastical politics, he attended every general synod from 1891 where his forthrightness enlightened debates on social issues. In 1916 he helped to revive the Australian Board of Missions. Seeing World War I as a crusade for 'the liberties of mankind', White supported conscription and the League of Nations, and opposed a rigid White Australia policy as impeding northern development. In 1920 he attended conferences at Lambeth, England, and Geneva, Switzerland, and in 1925 was Australian representative at the Stockholm ecumenical conference.*

In 1926 White retired to Epping, Sydney, and joined the boards of the *Church Standard* and the Australian Board of Missions whose *Review* he edited until November 1932. He died in April 1933 and was buried in Northern Suburbs cemetery.

## White, Gilbert (1859–1933) by Ruth Teale

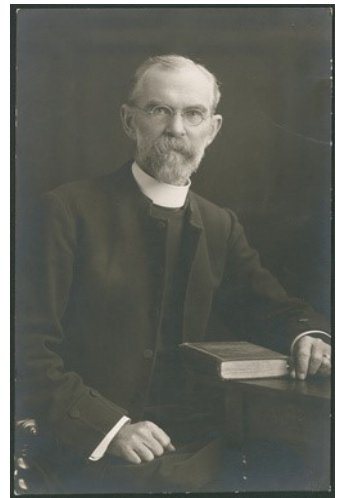
This article was published: in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 12, 1990 online in 2006...

## And then I found the following

### THIRTY YEARS IN TROPICAL AUSTRALIA BY THE RIGHT REVEREND GILBERT WHITE, D.D. BISHOP OF WILLOCHRA

An excerpt from the book reviewed by Bishop H H Montgomery

*...From Northern Australia the Bishop descended into the South Australian State, but not to a well-organized Diocese. It was characteristic of him to elect to be Bishop of a newly formed Diocese, and as such unorganized, in what may not unfairly be called the back blocks of South Australia. Here, as Bishop of Willochra, he is creating traditions fine in aim and full of promise for Australian life, moral and spiritual. And in this connexion I may say that I do not know a more fearless man. He believes in plainness of speech, and since he loves Australia and the Australians he tells home truths in a manner understood of the people. If he ruthlessly lays bare the sins of modern social life, even those who are offended will not fail to recognize his transparent faithfulness to the plain duties of his office...'*



Bishop Gilbert White

## STILL BROWSING THE INTERNET, I FOUND A FAMILY CONNECTION TO OUR DIOCESE

My great Uncle Will was born in 1884 at **Yorke town**, the eldest of nine children, whose parents had grown up in **Clare**. He served in parishes in the Diocese of Ballarat and with the Australian Board of Missions in the Torres Strait. In later life he settled in Tasmania where he was rector of St Barnabas Church, Scottsdale, and of Christ Church, Longford. He served as North Central Rural Dean until his retirement from the active ministry of the Anglican Church in 1946.

**An interesting and intriguing few hours of internet browsing.**

**Elizabeth Harris**

## Moonta Vietnam Veterans Day 2023 : August 18 The Battle for Long Tan

This year marked 50 years since the withdrawal of troops from Vietnam, and in our community, a plaque at the Cenotaph commemorating their service was unveiled by former SA Governor Hieu Van Le. Bishop Jeremy and I attended the 11.00 am Long Tan Day service, and the Stone commemorating their service was blessed by Bishop Jeremy. Serving as Chaplain for the Veterans, I continued the association started with the Rev'ds Prue O'Donovan, David McDougall and Trevor Briggs.

A moving part of the day was the unveiling of a new sign in the Memorial Dog garden first opened by Prue O'Donovan, honouring the 11 tracker dogs (Labrador and Kelpie mix) who served in Vietnam and were left behind. Peter Haran, the soldier whose dog Caesar, was there, gave a moving reflection on his own experience and love for his dog. Peter recalled that when someone pressed Caesar's tags into his hand on a previous Long Tan Day, he was driven to write a book to honour those faithful and remarkable friends. Peter has never known who gave him the tags. (Book: *Trackers: The Untold Story of the Australian Dogs of War.*)

This was my second marking of Long Tan Day, however it has been marked throughout my life as a child of a Vietnam Veteran, and in my lifetime, a witness to the impact of this war upon the men and women who served. They were medical guinea pigs; vaccinations and chemicals not passed and since banned for use were used on them and in their fields of conflict. It was a jungle war against Communists who did not agree or abide by the Geneva Convention. They fought alongside the South Vietnamese with whom they formed lifelong and intense friendships and respect and who they had to abandon. They returned to a country, from where they had

been conscripted, to be shunned.

Yet these are the men and women who have been the backbone of the Country Fire Services, Volunteer Ambulance, Patient Transport, and a myriad of other community organisations. They have sought validation of their worth and living. This year a South Vietnamese man, who had grown up with Australian soldiers as friends, said 'thank you.'

Never having been on a boat, Hieu Van Le navigated from Vietnam to Darwin Harbour in search of the democracy, friendship and decency proffered to him as a child by Australian soldiers. Met in the Harbour by an ex-service man and a VB, Hieu Van Le knew that he was home.

Each year these veterans mark their time in Vietnam with prayers, which are worth reading, and their binding service is expressed in the Prayer from St Francis of Assisi. Below are the prayers we share, prayers which we need to repeat -

*'Father, as we look to the past, we give thanks for all those who fought for peace and were (and are) prepared to sacrifice their lives for the safety of their loved ones and friends.'* **Lest we forget.**

*We remember with gratitude those who gave their lives for the cause of peace, dying that we might live in a just and free world.'* **Lest we forget.**

*'We pray for those who suffer still, living with the tortured memories of loved ones and mates lost; suffering physical and mental pain from a past that still hold terrors. Not all wounds are visible.'*

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

'We pray that we will learn the lessons of the past so that the future will be a time of peace, a future where reconciliation will be found in words and not acts of



The sign commemorating the dogs' service in Vietnam

hatred; and a future where there will be recognition that we are brothers and sisters tied together by our humanity.'

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

*'Eternal God, as a nation we pause today to remember the sacrifices made by Australian and Allied Forces in the Vietnam War. We remember the ordinary men and women who contributed to our defence. We remember the suffering that men and women endured as a result of their involvement in the war and honour the memory of those who made the supreme sacrifice.'*

**Amen.**

**The Peace Prayer of St Francis of Assisi**

Said together each and every Long Tan Day -

*Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:*

*where there is hatred, let me show love;*

*where there is injury, pardon;*  
*where there is doubt, faith;*

*where there is despair, hope;*  
*where there is darkness, light;*

*where there is sadness, joy.*  
*O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console, to be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.*

**Amen.**

**Rev'd Sarah Wiles**

## A praiseworthy partnership in the grace of the gospel

(An edited excerpt from a sermon on Philippians 1:3–7) writer unknown

*I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.*

Paul's letter to the little church he planted in Philippi in AD50 is remarkable on numerous counts. First, is Paul's **thanksgiving**, given he writes from prison in Rome (house arrest with a guard), facing trial and possible execution! Paul's thankfulness is grounded in the big-hearted love and generosity of God in Jesus – something that's easy to forget when in prison or under the pump.

Second, is that Paul's thanksgiving and prayer is infused with **joy**. A key theme occurring some 14 times in Philippians, which is four times more compared to Paul's other letters.

Gospel **joy** is that calm inner happiness and contentment we can learn that is unshakeable by life's circumstances because it's grounded in God's unshakeable love and provision for His people in Jesus (Philippians 4:11–13,19)

Third is how **deeply personal** Paul's thanksgiving and affection is for the Philippians. It's grounded not just in Paul's own relationship with God (my God), but in his relationship with the Philippian Christians (in every prayer of mine for all of you). The particular reason Paul was praying with such 'thankful joy' for the Philippians was their big-hearted '*partnership in the gospel from the first day until now*'.

**Share, fellowship, partake, partnership** are words used in Philippians to translate the word, **koinonia**. Christian **Koinonia** is a relationship born out of the 'shared fellowship' in the love and grace of God in Jesus. It results in striving side by side together with the one mind of Christ to see the gospel flourish in more and more people's lives (Philippians 1:27; 2:1–11).

**Like a display in a shop front window**, Paul puts in the shop window of scripture this timeless display of the Philippians big-hearted **koinonia** and how they have 'gone the distance' to pray, give and practically care for him from the beginning until now. *And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and*

*receiving, except you only. Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again. (4:15–16)* By **their own initiative**, the Philippians had prayed for and financially supported Paul's gospel work from the beginning until now. We learn that it wasn't out of their wealth, but out of their 'poverty' that the Philippians along with other Macedonian churches had insisted on contributing not just to Paul's ministry, but to the welfare of other hard-pressed Christians. **It was a radically NEW kind of gospel-shaped friendship subversive to the culture of the day.**

'When we grasp that God has called us to be partners with Him – and each other – in the great gospel enterprise, it really does change everything. It transforms our understanding, not just of money and generosity, but of everything we do' (*The Generosity Project: learn, pray and work together to become the big-hearted people God calls us to be* by Tony Payne, Geoff Robson)



*A sign of Spring.*

Picture courtesy of Margaret Hollister.

One of the issues of getting older in our day and era is the coping with the increasing complexities of doctoring and the many and multifarious strategies and procedures to which we are subjected.

Let me tell you about this tale with an apology to Charles Dickens for paraphrasing his title.

I woke up, and for a moment wondered where I was. Then I remembered that I was lying partly dressed and covered with a sheet on a barouche in the x-ray department of a country hospital. In all I was there for three hours while the radiologist took some x-rays concerning my prostate. In those days there were no CT scans for the x-ray machine was utilised for that examination. However, when I entered that hospital three hours earlier, they had started the procedure only to have the x-ray machine malfunction. 'Do not worry' said the technician, 'we have an up-to-date consultant on the line from the RAH who will tell us how to fix it and then we can proceed. Get off the barouche, get dressed and wait in the office while we talk to the RAH.' After an hour of listening in to the relayed instructions via the telephone in the office, punctuated by fiddling with the machine, it took off, and I remounted the barouche to complete part one of the procedure. I then went into the waiting room and in due course was again summoned to the barouche under the x-ray machine. This time it malfunctioned straight away. In some exasperation the technician retired to the office and again rang the RAH. Meanwhile, it being now mid-afternoon and left lying on the barouche I succumbed to a visit from Wee Willie Winkie, so the hour went quickly. I was woken up and the procedure was accomplished.

**Forward in time ten years.** Another town and another machine for the same scan but this time a multimillion-dollar CT scanner. I had the day before received a letter from the doctor enclosing a CT scan order form. It was essentially the same procedure as before but with the new improved scanner. There was no covering letter with the form, and it was full of technical and medical terms of which I knew next to nothing. I have never been one of those people who try to self-diagnose by knowing as much as the doctor. After all, why go to the doctor if you can do it yourself? I duly rang the place where the form directed me and made an appointment to have the scan the next day. I turned up and after some time in the waiting room was called in. I presented the form to the radiologist and was directed to lie on the barouche that was built into the machine in front of the circular entry. There were many ascertains gone through that asked who I was purporting to be and my understanding of what was to happen. I passed these tests and so the prep began with adjustment to my clothing, a swabbing of my arm and the insertion of a cannula so that dye may be injected, an injection of



saline preparatory to the dye and then the barouche moved me into the body of the machine with just my head out. The radiologist said, 'I just want to check that form again that you gave me.' He came back with the form and pointed out that on the form it stated that the procedure was to take place three months hence. So back to square one. The machine disgorged me, cannula removed, off the barouche, clothing adjusted for public use, and the instruction to go to the desk and make another appointment in three month's time. There was no fee to pay.

Talk about been there, done that! It was an exercise in how far modern medicine had come in ten years and how nothing much had changed as far as the human factor was concerned.

The human factor is what does not change and stands in need of attention our whole life long. Each generation seems to start at the beginning and repeats the triumphs and terrors of the one before it. We are minded of this with war in Europe breaking out again, just when we thought that humankind was finally beginning to live in peace. There is an upside of this however in that heroism and altruism have also been displayed again. Against all odds the people of Ukraine have been able to resist the aggressor to an extent that was never expected and become heroes to the rest of the world and many of the rest of the world have been able to respond in support with sacrificial giving. May good prevail.

St Paul encouraged the Christians in the city of Corinth, undergoing persecution from without and troubles within by asking them to place their trust in God.

*"Thank God, then, for giving us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord .... keep firm .... Being sure that in the Lord's work none of your labour is wasted,"* (I Corinthians 15:58. NJB)

**Father Bartholomew O'Donovan**