



Seek you first His Kingdom and His righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well. Matthew 6:33

## This Issue

Caring for Seafarers

Vale: Herb St Pierre

What Isolation?

Pastoral Care Groups

Witten's Wonderings

Wrapped in God's Loving Care

Zooming Synod - Sat 18th July

## ISOLATION

ARCHDEACON TOM HENDERSON-BROOKS

There is no greater cry of isolation in all history, than that of our Lord Jesus Christ on the cross. *"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"* (Mark 15:34)

This month's **CQFirst** focuses on ISOLATION. Whether it is the isolation of seafarers unable to return to family; the lack of grey nomads out west; or isolation accentuated by the death of a loved one, like our beloved Herb, or Nathan Turner from Blackwater, the youngest COVID fatality in Australia; this issue of **CQFirst** is about *hope, in the midst of isolation.*

Hope is found in the provision of basic needs. Hope is found as communities connect through perseverance and technology. Hope is found in a friendly phone call, a welcome message, or an act of kindness and love. And hope is found in the church, that is, in God's people actively loving each other and caring.

*For God is love  
and those who live in love,  
live in God.*

1 JOHN 4:16

Jesus' cry of isolation on the cross was also a cry of love from God, and therefore a cry of hope for us. For it was precisely because of God's love, that Christ died for us. The more we can point people to the love of God found in Jesus, the more they will be truly set free from their isolation, for eternity. Jesus is our hope.

*Tom*



# CARING FOR SEAFARERS



*Let all that you do  
be done in love.*

1 CORINTHIANS 16:14



Despite the normal operations of the centre being paused due to COVID-19 the staff and volunteers at Gladstone Seafarers Centre have still been very busy. The board made the decision in late March to restrict Seafarers social contact with the general public. Whilst this was the best decision for their physical health, their mental health has been significantly affected as they are now unable to get off their ships in any port. Many have not been able to travel home at the end of their contracts.

GSC are putting together welfare boxes to be delivered to the ships. These boxes include the essentials like toothpaste, shaving items, shampoo and soap as well as activities like books, magazines and DVDs. They are also getting a few luxury items such as hand knitted beanies provided by local parishioners and treats like chips, chocolate and soft drinks. Where possible free Sim cards and calling credit is also being delivered so the seafarers can make contact with their families whilst they are in Australian waters.

Jess Mulhall, Manager of the centre, tells us that "It's been a complex process with receiving and purchasing goods with so many limits in place and to pack the boxes appropriately for customs and border force approvals. The project now has a great routine and team who are delivering the packages to the ships."

The response from the crews has been brilliant. Anyone wanting to keep up to date can follow us on [Facebook](#). (MTSGladstone)



*"I feel so happy that someone on this planet is thinking about us."* Capt. Abhishek Anand Tiwari, Master of M.V. Aqua Honor

*"Many thanks for providing 11 sim cards for my on-board crew. Informing with gratitude that my crew really enjoyed the chat with their families."* Capt. Lester Pereira

*"All crew were very happy upon receiving a free sim card with phone credit and most especially from God's word – the Bible."* Capt. Nicomedes O. Vitasa, Master Inge Kosan

*"It made the whole crew happy with big smiles in our lips and our hearts. God Bless you all!"* The officers and crew, Motor Vessel KK Pirapo Family

# VALE: HERB ST PIERRE

## A STAUNCH AND FAITHFUL DISCIPLE

One of the less happy aspects of growing old is the decline in the number of one's friends and mentors as we all grow old together and, in our turn, as Christian believers, embrace the next stage of our progress towards our heavenly Father. The recent death of Herb St.Piere brought this 'fact of life' home to me with sharp realisation.

My first encounter with Herb was in 1953 at the synod of the Diocese of North Queensland that year in Townsville. I was a very new boy in the cut and thrust mechanisms and Byzantine politics of Synod and Herb took me under his wing. I was representing the Parish of Gordonvale and Herb, Mount Isa.

In 1960, as a newly ordained Priest, I was again at Synod where Herb was still representing Mount Isa and I as the curate of that Parish. Herb, by this time, was the Manager engineer at the uranium mine at Mary Kathleen. 'Mary K' was the base for everything west to the Northern Territory border and staffed by The Bush Brotherhood of St. Barnabas. As the junior priest, it was part of my duty to celebrate the Holy Mysteries at Mary K once a month when the Brother was further west. Herb and Val fed me and I slept in the annex to the Church. After Jocelyn and I were married she was not allowed to sleep in the Annex and so Herb and Val came to the rescue!

After several moves we both ended up in the Diocese of Rockhampton in the late 60's. Herb was on the start up team at Queensland Alumina in Gladstone.

As well as being a stalwart of the Gladstone Parish he served the Diocese in almost every position open to a layman and was present at over fifty synods of the Diocese. He served as Chairman of Committees in the Synod and a member of the Standing Committee as well as a long term member of Diocesan Council and Bishop in Council and the Bishopric Election Committee on several occasions. He was a founder of Tanyalla Recreation Centre at Tannum Sands in 1977, giving it its name, and served on the board for 42 years.

Herb was not one to wear his faith on his sleeve but was a reliable and prayerful member of whatever congregation in which he found himself, obedient to his Lord and a true son of the Holy Church.

### **Requiescat in pace**

The Venerable Dr Rob Philp



Herb St Pierre 24 July 1927 - 18 May 2020





Mt Slocombe Lookout, Yaraka. Photo Jan Robinson

## WHAT ISOLATION?

Isolation is relative to the environment and lifestyle you grow up in.

I'll try and explain. Some years ago, as I was paying my fee and entering the Qantas founders museum in Longreach, I spoke to the young woman behind the counter. I asked how she liked living in Longreach and how long she had been here. Her answer was not what I expected. She said she had been here too long and found the place too crowded. I then asked her where she came from to which her answer was Boulia.

Boulia is in the far, far, west of the Diocese - a small town and thousands of kilometres from anywhere that we would probably call normal. For us, to live there we would likely feel isolated, but for this young woman it was far from that. For her it was home - it was her normal.

During this time of the COVID-19 pandemic, social isolation for people in the outback has been almost non-existent. Life for us is fairly normal, as we live in isolation, from a coastal, SE corner of QLD perspective, all of the time. What has been abnormal and highlighted the pandemic for us, is the lack of tourists, the closing down of major tourist attractions such as the Stockman's Hall of Fame and Qantas Founders' Museum, plus the closing of churches and schools.

Other than this the question for us is: "What Isolation?"

When the restrictions are lifted and the country opens up, please come west, immerse yourself in the remoteness of the outback and experience the lack of isolation.

The Revd Capt Graeme Liersch  
Mission Facilitator & Trainer  
Central West QLD





# PASTORAL CARE GROUPS

As the spread of COVID-19 became apparent the importance of maintaining connections between parishioners was realised. Incumbents across our Diocese acted quickly, before the restrictions prevented group meetings, to develop a framework for the setting up and operation of pastoral care groups. In the Cathedral parish this was the Dean and the Lay Ministers.

Each Lay Minister put forward names of people they could make contact with, and using the parish roll, and baptism and wedding records groups were established and each LM given responsibility for maintaining contact with the people in their group. Dean Melusi made the initial contact with all parishioners to confirm that they were happy to be contacted by the group leader. Then on Friday 3 April our PCG ministry commenced with the tolling of the Cathedral bells at noon.

Since then group leaders have been sharing 'virtual coffee' by making contact with members of their group. In most cases the contact is via telephone, but for some people email or other means is the preferred medium, and group leaders adapt to whatever is the best fit for each person.



Group leaders are also included in a group so that they too feel cared for, and we greatly appreciate the regular contact from the Dean and his support for our ministry.

*As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.*

## 1 PETER 4:10

The feedback within the Cathedral parish, and across the Diocese in general, has been very positive with people most appreciative of the contact and sharing, with links and friendships being strengthened. While group leaders are not in a position to provide direct assistance to people with other issues, they can at times give people details of where to seek such support, and this has also been most helpful.

The contact has also proved, in many cases, to be a mechanism for encouraging people to join in our weekly service via Zoom and access live streamed services from other places. With encouragement from group leaders and support of family members, some of our Parishioners have embraced new technology and are now happily joining in each Sunday morning, even getting creative with their background images and enjoying the few minutes of sharing and laughter that follows the service – much like any Sunday morning really!

The model established could continue to work well in the post-corona world, maintaining our expression of Christian love, fellowship, and care for all people in our parishes and community.

Cheryl Haughton  
Cathedral Parish



# WITTENS' WEDNESDAY WONDERINGS

WHO SAID YOU CAN'T TEACH AN OLD DOG NEW TRICKS?

From being a visiting clergy once a month to livestreaming weekly Wednesday Devotions has been quite a steep learning curve for Revd Bob Witten and Sue.

COVID-19 has challenged us all. As Bob is in the vulnerable group some things stopped for them completely, including no monthly services to the Dawson Valley Anglican churches - not even for Easter.

Things needed to be rethought. How were they going to keep connected with congregations and communities, and continue to deliver support and comfort from God's word? Sue Witten says, "We prayed and the answer for us lay in videoing services. So it was a case of check out what others had managed to do, get networking and ask for advice and assistance. Thanks Max, Roy, Ange, Jen, Graham, Judy, Em and Nathan for guiding us in the process."

"Bit by bit our videoing skills improved, as did the number of congregational members participating in the production of the videos doing various sections. We are now at the stage where the Sunday Services can be handed back to them with us - yes us - only needing to do the editing."

Sue tells us with surprise that there were over 200 views on the daily devotions and reflections during Easter week. Many of these people were from around the Dawson Valley where their ministry is focused, and it was pleasing to see who was watching.

Before Easter/Holy week had finished they had requests for the devotions to continue, not only from Dawson Valley but from personal friends other groups they belong to such as BCA Nomads. A daily livestream was not sustainable, but weekly is.



The need is there.  
God has given us  
the ability and  
time and so we  
minister on in  
this new and  
exciting format.



CQFirst loves the way handyman Bob has created his recording studio props.



# WRAPPED IN GOD'S LOVING CARE

My Facebook feed has been filled with Bob and Sue Witten and I couldn't be happier! When lockdown laws closed our small churches, I am sure some of us feared, "is this the beginning of the end?". Unfortunately, in small rural centres, all too often, when things close or stop they never reopen or start again. Through a tremendously sharp learning curve of Google Play, camera angles, microphones and assorted technological recording devices, Sue and Bob have not only kept our parish connected, they have kept us wrapped in Gods loving care constantly.

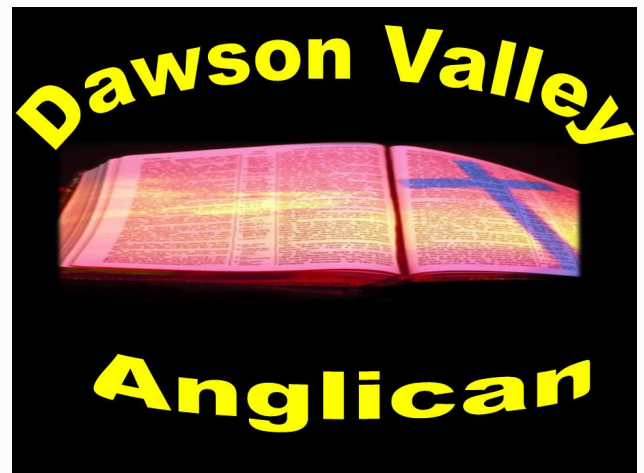
COVID-19 for rural communities could mean disaster. Our small hospitals are not equipped with ventilators or ICU wards, and most have limited beds and resources. The Special Ministry Districts of Theodore and Moura, in the Dawson Valley, are mostly made up of the most vulnerable age group to COVID-19 therefore many of our parishioners went into complete isolation. Easter Week was looming to be a lonely time and spiritually difficult without any services.

On the 6th of April Bob and Sue launched Dawson Valley Anglican Easter Week Devotions - it was just what we all needed! My teenage boys were most impressed with Bobs attire. In their eyes you can't beat a Jackie Howe singlet! These daily devotions continued throughout Easter week and finished with us celebrating Jesus's resurrection on Sunday. This was the day the Lord had made we were able to rejoice and be glad in it.

'Wednesday Wonderings' began the week after Easter and our Sunday Services continued in the virtual world. Bob and Sue have included parishioners in to the services by editing in their recordings of readings and prayers. God has given us a tremendous gift in difficult times, which he so often does. In this time of solitude, we have been blessed with more quiet time with God and as a parish I think this will leave us renewed and energized to continue our focus on serving God together. My prayer is we continue to realize our impact on the smaller communities and our responsibility to spread Gods message to our communities.

God Bless Bob and Sue for your commitment to the Dawson Valley Special Ministry Districts.

Ruth Edwards  
Theodore



Unite against COVID-19



# ZOOMING SYNOD - Sat 18th July 2020

Our most recent Diocesan Council (DC) has decided that a Synod meeting is needed. It will be by Zoom! All Synod members, lay and clergy, are asked to put **Saturday 18th July** aside and to make sure they are able to connect to the Synod using technology. It will mean a little bit of effort from all to enable this to happen. It may mean sharing on office space (safely) to access the technology needed. Information will soon be distributed.

At our March DC meeting, we received legal advice on our fiduciary and legal obligations as DC Members, which also applies to all Synod Reps. At our May DC meeting, the Registrar and I tabled our 'State of the Diocese' Reports. The only good news in our reports, is the good news of Jesus! The Diocesan Council now wishes to present this important information to the Synod. In a nutshell, our Diocese is running out of finances and time. The following things are some of the main factors contributing to this 'perfect storm'. Ongoing liability from past abuse; years of negative cashflow; extreme insurance costs; ongoing debt; dwindling parishes and parish income; the impact of COVID-19; ageing congregations. The Registrar and I have developed a Roadmap to Recovery, but it requires some bold decisions. Hence, the call for a Zoom Synod!

There is hope in all of this. It begins with earnest, fervent prayer. I ask you to pray. We serve a God who holds the universe in His hands. He empowers His people with abundant gifts and resources. We are not in want because the Lord is our Shepherd!

We have been praying for a shepherd after God's own heart. **CQFirst** hopes to be able to announce the outcome of the Bishopric Election process in our next edition! Pray for our Provincial Bishops as they determine the 'canonical fitness' of our elected candidate.

Around the Diocese, as evidenced by this and our previous editions of **CQFirst**, there is much happening that is bringing lasting hope to people. It is the hope that is only found in Jesus. It is the hope that is kindled by the Holy Spirit. It is the hope that is fed by His Holy Word. It is the hope of the Gospel, that transcends this material life even when all material is lost! It is the hope that has established your identity, first and foremost, as a child of God, as an inheritor of His Kingdom, as a co-heir with Christ. Continue to go forth into our community in the hope that has found us. The living hope we have in the love of God, as expressed in the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead. Amen!

Archdeacon Tom Henderson-Brooks  
Bishop's Commissary/Diocesan Administrator



CQFirst is the monthly online publication of the Anglican Diocese of Rockhampton, QLD.  
Barbara Smith - Content Production/Layout  
Tom Henderson-Brooks - Editor/Layout  
We heartily thank this month's contributors and welcome parishioner contributions.

**Next Edition Deadline: Wed 24th June**

Next Edition Theme: 'Perfect Love'  
and... *Introducing Karen's Kitchen!*