

St Peter's  
CHURCH SOUTHPORT



Key Notes Easter IV & V – April 2024

In the last edition of the Key Notes, we painted a picture – with many photos – of the glorious season of Easter at St Peter’s. Allow me now to paint a ‘verbal picture’ of current and past ‘goings on’ in the Parish by providing an abridged version of my report to Parish Council last night.

Easter at St Peter’s was truly moving this year – which is not to suggest that it hasn’t been in other years. The beautiful “Seven Words from the Cross” set to Haydn’s glorious music was a wonderful way to mark Good Friday Tenebrae. Our Easter Eve ‘first light’ service saw the dedication and lighting of our new candlesticks and our new Paschal Candle. Since those who had given these gifts were present as well (all but one donor was there) it was a very emotional and grateful liturgical experience. I note that interest has been expressed in the giving of more candlesticks, but we will wait and see how that progresses. Numbers were good at the Easter services (slightly down in some services but almost double the size at some of our main services.)

Alongside all this Jill and I have been pressing on with the refurbishing of the far end of the Rectory. So far, a new kitchenette has been installed, a new vanity has been installed in the bathroom, a new wardrobe has been installed in the bedroom and the study has been completely repainted and will have air conditioning installed next week. This is all for Jill’s father who was more than happy to pay for all this. Everything has been done to a good standard and we have used our ultra-reliable tradies for this work.

I have purchased a new coffee machine for the hospitality space. It produces lovely coffee – up to about 10 cups before it needs water, coffee, milk or emptying. It is a *Jura* and is rated as both particularly good and reliable. The “Coffee on Monday” folk love it.

Oh, the shame! I have had to update my computer since my current Surface Computer is eight years old. Craig has sold me a new MacBook that he was no longer using and, as much as I hate to admit it, it is a very worthy replacement. However, it did mean that I could no longer ‘cast’ onto the TV in the centre, so we swapped that with a TV from downstairs (the space that Craig used to use as his workspace.) We now have a beautiful TV working very well with updated technology. (Regarding that space downstairs: Jill now rents it for her father’s movie poster business.)



### ***Time for an update.***

#### **A. A snapshot of events since our February meeting:**

- Our “Surprised by the God of Hope” bible study series had a brief recess over Easter but we are now back into it. We are up to our eighth session.
- TSS Easter Service. I was very pleased to be invited by Fr John Doherty to preach at the Easter Service at TSS on Tuesday 19 March. 1200 were in attendance, but despite the potential for chaos when it came the administration of Holy Eucharist everything went very well.
- St Hilda’s Easter Service. On Monday 25 March I was pleased to be invited by Fr Patrick Duckworth to join in the St Hilda’s Easter Eucharist. Again, it was very pleasing to be part of this wonderful service.
- Our Holy Week services, ranging from our morning Eucharists, to Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Eve vigil and Easter Day were very moving, greatly enhanced by the quality of our music – sincere thanks to Maddie, Luke and the choir for their commitment.
- Easter Day accident. I did manage to fall down the concrete stairs at the back of the Church on Easter Sunday morning. It hurt (physically as well as my pride!) Note to all: caution is required on those back steps.
- Phoenix Group. At last Thursday’s meeting the group enjoyed a talk given by the local Women’s support group. (Our casting technology let us down again so the need for new technology was once again raised.)
- Inga Moore has commenced working in the parish office courtesy of a job scheme. She really enjoys the opportunity to have regular work and is loving the environment.

## **B. Forthcoming:**

- Bishop John Roundhill joins us this Sunday evening. He is looking forward to having a 'meet and greet' with the parish council.
- Tim Newton's forthcoming Deaconing on Sunday 23rd June at St Nicholas Arundel (Chichester Diocese.) We pray for Tim, Stephanie, Wini and Rupert as they prepare for this milestone event.
- ANZAC Day. As is customary I have been invited to be part of the Southport ANZAC Day commemorations. I have also been asked to speak at an ANZAC Service at GCUH the day before, and at St Hilda's on the 26th.

## **C. Final points:**

It is that time of year, when the High Feasts of the Church are passed, that we begin to get into our ordinary rhythms in the Church. That doesn't mean that things quieten down!

Going forward I want to press on with the Catechumenate and thereby develop a strong commitment to Adult Rites of Initiation into the Church.

May the Lord Bless us in all our endeavours. In his name and to his glory. Amen

Fr Don Parker

Thursday 18 April 2024



PS: On an unrelated topic: my sermon on Sunday regarding *Dignitas Infinita* prompted a number of requests for a copy of my sermon. I have done my best to provide this below.

## ***Dignitas Infinita***

On the 8th of April 2024, the Dicastery of the Doctrine of Faith released *Dignitas Infinita*. To clarify, the Dicastery of the Doctrine of Faith (DDF) is the Vatican body responsible for promulgating and defending Catholic doctrine. It is not a long document, nor is it overly complex and since it had been five years in the making, it was worth an hour or two of my time.

Having read *Dignitas Infinita* (meaning ‘infinite dignity’) *why would I recommend it to parishioners?* Here are some of my answers:

**Firstly, by its very structure and ethos Anglicanism does not (cannot) make statements that speak for the whole of Anglicanism.** The reason being that we are not governed by a centralised body, and we have no Pope. Even the Archbishop of Canterbury cannot speak for worldwide Anglicanism. Depending on how you look at it, this is either a strength or weakness, or both... Going further, a former Archbishop of Canterbury, Geoffrey Fisher (d. 1972), said of Anglicanism, “We have no doctrine of our own. We only possess the Catholic doctrine of the Catholic Church enshrined in the Catholic Creeds, and these creeds we hold without addition or diminution. We stand firm on that rock.”

**Secondly, this document speaks from the Church outwards.** By which I mean, this document takes as its starting point the teachings of the Church (its dogma, theology, and traditions) and speaks to the contemporary issues of our day. It does so, rather than starting with the issues of the day and seeking to find theological ways to appease these issues.

**Finally, this document is carefully and sensitively crafted.** Some of the issues *Dignitas Infinita* addresses are ‘red hot’ by today’s standards, and yet, without capitulating to these issues, it still affirms a caring and pastoral attitude. It provides a vital counterpoint to the popular discourses of our day.

So, those are my recommendations.

*Please note: the document is too long to quote extensively below so, with a little commentary from myself, I will provide bulleted quotes on the key issues. The number of the paragraph from which the quote is taken will be in “[...]” at the end of the quote.*

*You can find the full text on line - just Google “Dignitas Infinita”*

## **HUMAN DIGNITY**

The cornerstone of *Dignitas Infinita* is that of our understanding of **human dignity**. What does the Church mean by this? While acknowledging that there are different views of what we mean by Human or Personal Dignity, the following is offered:

- Every human person possesses an infinite dignity (‘Dignitas Infinita’) inalienably grounded in his or her very being, which prevails in and beyond every circumstance, state, or situation the person may ever encounter.[1]
- “No anthropology equals that of the Church regarding the human person—particularly concerning the person’s originality, dignity, the intangibility and richness of the person’s fundamental rights, sacredness, capacity for education, aspiration to a complete development, and immortality.” [3]
- To clarify the concept of dignity even further, it is essential to point out that dignity is not something granted to the person by others based on their gifts or qualities, such that it could be withdrawn. Were it so bestowed, it would be given in a conditional and alienable way, and then the very meaning of dignity (however worthy of great respect) would remain exposed to the risk of being abolished. Instead, dignity is intrinsic to the person, it is not conferred subsequently..., it is prior to any recognition, and it cannot be lost. All human beings possess this same intrinsic dignity, regardless of whether or not they can express it in a suitable manner. [15]
- Every individual possesses an inalienable and intrinsic dignity from the beginning of his or her existence as an irrevocable gift. However, the choice to express that dignity and manifest it to the full or to obscure it depends on each person’s free and responsible decision [22].

Having affirmed the *intrinsic* dignity of all human beings through Biblical and Church traditions, *Dignitas Infinita* also affirms the United Nations 1948 “Universal Declaration of Human Rights” as a milestone in the long and difficult path of the human race.

This inevitably raises the issue of “whose rights?” What do we do when your (rightful) desire to seek freedom of expression clashes with mine? This particularly important issue is addressed:

- There is an evergrowing risk of reducing human dignity to the ability to determine one’s identity and future independently of others, without regard for one’s membership in the human community. In this flawed understanding of freedom, the mutual recognition of duties and rights that enable us to care for each other becomes impossible. In fact, as Pope St. John Paul II recalled, freedom is placed “at the service of the person and of his fulfillment through the gift of self and openness to others; but when freedom is made absolute in an individualistic way, it is emptied of its original content, and its very meaning and dignity are contradicted.” [26]

Thus, the only way to counteract this is to view human dignity through the lens of the *relational character* of the person. A true understanding of human dignity...

- helps to overcome the narrow perspective of a self-referential and individualistic freedom that claims to create its own values regardless of the objective norms of the good and of our relationship with other living beings. [26]

In very simple terms: we all have obligations to other members of society and if bullying-others-into-seeing-things-my-way is to be avoided, these must be respected.

The document then goes on to list ways in which Human Dignity is violated in the world today. The violations listed do not claim to be exhaustive:

### **The Drama of Poverty.**

- One of the phenomena that contributes significantly to denying the dignity of so many human beings is extreme poverty, linked as it is to the unequal distribution of wealth. Benedict XVI recognized that “the world’s wealth is growing in absolute terms, but inequalities are on the increase. In rich countries, new sectors of society are succumbing to poverty and new forms of poverty are emerging. In poorer areas, some groups enjoy a sort of ‘superdevelopment’ of a wasteful and consumerist kind, which forms an unacceptable contrast with the ongoing situations of dehumanizing deprivation.” The “scandal of glaring inequalities’ continues,” where the dignity of the poor is doubly denied because of the lack of resources available to meet their basic needs and the indifference shown toward them by their neighbors. [36]

### **War**

- Another tragedy that denies human dignity, both in the past and today, is war: “War, terrorist attacks, racial or religious persecution, and many other affronts to human dignity [...] ‘have become so common as to constitute a real ‘third world war’ fought piecemeal.’”[64] With its trail of destruction and suffering, war attacks human dignity in both the short and long term: “While reaffirming the inalienable right to self-defense and the responsibility to protect those whose lives are threatened, we must acknowledge that war is always a ‘defeat of humanity.’ [38]

## **The Travail of Migrants**

- Migrants are among the first victims of multiple forms of poverty. Not only is their dignity denied in their home countries,[72] but also their lives are put at risk because they no longer have the means to start a family, to work, or to feed themselves.[40]

## **Human Trafficking**

- Human trafficking must also be counted among the grave violations of human dignity.[77] While it is not a new phenomenon, it has taken on tragic dimensions before our eyes [41]
- the Church and humanity must not cease fighting against such phenomena as “the marketing of human organs and tissues, the sexual exploitation of boys and girls, slave labor, including prostitution, the drug and weapons trade, terrorism, and international organized crime [42]

## **Sexual Abuse**

- The profound dignity inherent in human beings in their entirety of mind and body also allows us to understand why all sexual abuse leaves deep scars in the hearts of those who suffer it. Indeed, those who suffer sexual abuse experience real wounds in their human dignity. These are “sufferings that can last a lifetime and that no repentance can remedy. This phenomenon is widespread in society and it also affects the Church and represents a serious obstacle to her mission.” From this stems the Church’s ceaseless efforts to put an end to all kinds of abuse, starting from within. [43]

## **Violence Against Women**

- Violence against women is a global scandal that is gaining increasing recognition. [44]
- Pope St. John Paul II recognized that “much remains to be done to prevent discrimination against those who have chosen to be wives and mothers. [...] [T]here is an urgent need to achieve real equality in every area: equal pay for equal work, protection for working mothers, fairness in career advancements, equality of spouses with regard to family rights and the recognition of everything that is part of the rights and duties of citizens in a democratic State.”

## **Abortion**

- The Church consistently reminds us that “the dignity of every human being has an intrinsic character and is valid from the moment of conception until natural death. It is precisely the affirmation of such dignity that is the inalienable prerequisite for the protection of a personal and social existence, and also the necessary condition for fraternity and social friendship to be realized among all the peoples of the earth.” On account of the intangible value of human life, the Church’s magisterium has always spoken out against abortion. [47]

## **Surrogacy**

- The Church also takes a stand against the practice of surrogacy, through which the immensely worthy child becomes a mere object. On this point, Pope Francis’s words have a singular clarity: “The path to peace calls for respect for life, for every human life, starting with the life of the unborn child in the mother’s womb, which cannot be suppressed or turned into an object of trafficking. In this regard, I deem deplorable the practice of so-called surrogate motherhood, which represents a grave violation of the dignity of the woman and the child, based on the exploitation of situations of the mother’s material needs. A child is always a gift and never the basis of a commercial contract. [48]

## **Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide**

- There is a special case of human dignity violation that is quieter but is swiftly gaining ground. It is unique in how it utilizes a mistaken understanding of human dignity to turn the concept of dignity against life itself. This confusion is particularly evident today in discussions surrounding euthanasia. For example, laws permitting euthanasia or assisted suicide are sometimes called “death with dignity acts.” With this, there is a widespread notion that euthanasia or assisted suicide is somehow consistent with respect for the dignity of the human person. However, in response to this, it must be strongly reiterated that suffering does not cause the sick to lose their dignity, which is intrinsically and inalienably their own. Instead, suffering can become an opportunity to strengthen the bonds of mutual belonging and gain greater awareness of the precious value of each person to the whole human family. [51]

- Certainly, the dignity of those who are critically or terminally ill calls for all suitable and necessary efforts to alleviate their suffering through appropriate palliative care and by avoiding aggressive treatments or disproportionate medical procedures. This approach corresponds with the “enduring responsibility to appreciate the needs of the sick person: care needs, pain relief, and affective and spiritual needs.”[94] However, an effort of this nature is entirely different from—and is indeed contrary to—a decision to end one’s own life or that of another person who is burdened by suffering. Even in its sorrowful state, human life carries a dignity that must always be upheld, that can never be lost, and that calls for unconditional respect. [52]

### **The Marginalization of People with Disabilities**

- One criterion for verifying whether real attention is given to the dignity of every individual in society is the help given to the most disadvantaged. Regrettably, our time is not known for such care; rather, a “throwaway culture” is increasingly imposing itself. To counter this trend, the condition of those experiencing physical or mental limitations warrants special attention and concern.

We are reminded, therefore,

- ...that each human being, regardless of their vulnerabilities, receives his or her dignity from the sole fact of being willed and loved by God. Thus, every effort should be made to encourage the inclusion and active participation of those who are affected by frailty or disability in the life of society and of the Church. [53]
- In a broader perspective, it must be remembered that “this charity, which is the spiritual heart of politics, is always a preferential love shown to those in greatest need; it undergirds everything we do on their behalf. [...] ‘To tend those in need takes strength and tenderness, effort, and generosity in the midst of a functionalistic and privatized mindset that inexorably leads to a ‘throwaway culture’ [...]. It involves taking responsibility for the present with its situations of utter marginalization and anguish, and being capable of bestowing dignity upon it.’ [54]

### **Gender Theory**

- The Church wishes, first of all, “to reaffirm that every person, regardless of sexual orientation, ought to be respected in his or her dignity and treated with consideration, while ‘every sign of unjust discrimination’ is to be carefully avoided, particularly any form of aggression and violence.” For this reason, it should be denounced as contrary to human dignity the fact that, in some places, not a few people are imprisoned, tortured, and even deprived of the good of life solely because of their sexual orientation [55]
- Regarding gender theory, whose scientific coherence is the subject of considerable debate among experts, the Church recalls that human life in all its dimensions, both physical and spiritual, is a gift from God. This gift is to be accepted with gratitude and placed at the service of the good. Desiring a personal self-determination, as gender theory prescribes, apart from this fundamental truth that human life is a gift, amounts to a concession to the age-old temptation to make oneself God, entering into competition with the true God of love revealed to us in the Gospel. [57]
- Another prominent aspect of gender theory is that it intends to deny the greatest possible difference that exists between living beings: sexual difference. This foundational difference is not only the greatest imaginable difference but is also the most beautiful and most powerful of them. In the male-female couple, this difference achieves the most marvelous of reciprocities. It thus becomes the source of that miracle that never ceases to surprise us: the arrival of new human beings in the world. [58]
- In this sense, respect for both one’s own body and that of others is crucial in light of the proliferation of claims to new rights advanced by gender theory. This ideology “envisages a society without sexual differences, thereby eliminating the anthropological basis of the family.” It thus becomes unacceptable that “some ideologies of this sort, which seek to respond to what are at times understandable aspirations, manage to assert themselves as absolute and unquestionable, even dictating how children should be raised. [59]

- It needs to be emphasized that ‘biological sex and the socio-cultural role of sex (gender) can be distinguished but not separated.’” Therefore, all attempts to obscure reference to the ineliminable sexual difference between man and woman are to be rejected: “We cannot separate the masculine and the feminine from God’s work of creation, which is prior to all our decisions and experiences, and where biological elements exist which are impossible to ignore.” Only by acknowledging and accepting this difference in reciprocity can each person fully discover themselves, their dignity, and their identity. [59]

### **Sex Change**

- The dignity of the body cannot be considered inferior to that of the person as such. The Church expressly invites us to recognize that “the human body shares in the dignity of ‘the image of God.’” Such a truth deserves to be remembered, especially when it comes to sex change, for humans are inseparably composed of both body and soul. In this, the body serves as the living context in which the interiority of the soul unfolds and manifests itself, as it does also through the network of human relationships. Constituting the person’s being, the soul and the body both participate in the dignity that characterizes every human. Moreover, the body participates in that dignity as it is endowed with personal meanings, particularly in its sexed condition. Teaching about the need to respect the natural order of the human person, Pope Francis affirmed that “creation is prior to us and must be received as a gift. At the same time, we are called to protect our humanity, and this means, in the first place, accepting it and respecting it as it was created.” It follows that any sex-change intervention, as a rule, risks threatening the unique dignity the person has received from the moment of conception. This is not to exclude the possibility that a person with genital abnormalities that are already evident at birth or that develop later may choose to receive the assistance of healthcare professionals to resolve these abnormalities. However, in this case, such a medical procedure would not constitute a sex change in the sense intended here. [60]

### **Digital Violence**

- Although the advancement of digital technologies may offer many possibilities for promoting human dignity, it also increasingly tends toward the creation of a world in which exploitation, exclusion, and violence grow, extending even to the point of harming the dignity of the human person. Consider, for example, how easy it is through these means to endanger a person’s good name with fake news and slander. On this point, Pope Francis stresses that “it is not healthy to confuse communication with mere virtual contact. Indeed, ‘the digital environment is also one of loneliness, manipulation, exploitation, and violence, even to the extreme case of the ‘dark web.’ Digital media can expose people to the risk of addiction, isolation, and gradual loss of contact with concrete reality, blocking the development of authentic interpersonal relationships. New forms of violence are spreading through social media, for example, cyberbullying. The internet is also a channel for spreading pornography and the exploitation of persons for sexual purposes or through gambling.” In this way, paradoxically, the more that opportunities for making connections grow in this realm, the more people find themselves isolated and impoverished in interpersonal relationships: “Digital communication wants to bring everything out into the open; people’s lives are combed over, laid bare and bandied about, often anonymously. Respect for others disintegrates, and even as we dismiss, ignore, or keep others distant, we can shamelessly peer into every detail of their lives.” Such tendencies represent a dark side of digital progress. [61]

### **To conclude**

- ...today, in the face of so many violations of human dignity that seriously threaten the future of the human family, the Church encourages the promotion of the dignity of every human person, regardless of their physical, mental, cultural, social, and religious characteristics. The Church does this with hope, confident of the power that flows from the Risen Christ, who has fully revealed the integral dignity of every man and woman



# Collect & Readings

## ~ Easter IV ~ Sunday 21 April~

### Acts of the Apostles 4: 5-12

5The next day their rulers, elders, and scribes assembled in Jerusalem, 6with Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family. 7When they had made the prisoners stand in their midst, they inquired, ‘By what power or by what name did you do this?’ 8Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, ‘Rulers of the people and elders, 9if we are questioned today because of a good deed done to someone who was sick and are asked how this man has been healed, 10let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that this man is standing before you in good health by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead. 11This Jesus is

“the stone that was rejected by you, the builders; it has become the cornerstone.”

12There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved.’

### Psalm 23

#### **R The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want**

1 The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not be in want.

2 He makes me lie down in green pastures and leads me beside still waters. **R**

3 He revives my soul and guides me along right pathways for his Name’s sake.

4 Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. **R**

5 You spread a table before me in the presence of those who trouble me; you have anointed my head with oil, and my cup is running over.

6 Surely your goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever. **R**

### 1 John 3: 16-24

16 We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for one another. 17 How does God’s love abide in anyone who has the world’s goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help?

18 Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action. 19 And by this we will know that we are from the truth and will reassure our hearts before him 20 whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. 21 Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have boldness before God; 22 and we receive from him whatever we ask, because we obey his commandments and do what pleases him. 23 And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. 24 All who obey his commandments abide in him, and he abides in them. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit that he has given us.



## John 10: 11 - 18

11 'I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. 12 The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. 13 The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. 14 I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, 15 just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. 16 I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. 17 For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. 18 No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father.'

## THE COLLECT

for  
GOOD SHEPHERD SUNDAY  
(Easter IV)

*God of peace,  
who brought again from the dead our  
Lord Jesus,  
the great shepherd of the sheep,  
through the blood of the everlasting  
covenant:  
make us perfect in every good work to do  
your will,  
and work in us that which is well-  
pleasing in your sight;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen*



# Collect & Readings

## ~ Easter V ~ Sunday 28 April~

### Acts of the Apostles 8: 26-40

26 Then an angel of the Lord said to Philip, 'Get up and go towards the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.' (This is a wilderness road.) 27 So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship

28 and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. 29 Then the Spirit said to Philip, 'Go over to this chariot and join it.'

30 So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, 'Do you understand what you are reading?' 31 He replied, 'How can I, unless someone guides me?' And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. 32 Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this:

'Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter,  
and like a lamb silent before its shearer,  
so he does not open his mouth.

33 In his humiliation justice was denied him.

Who can describe his generation?

For his life is taken away from the earth.'

34 The eunuch asked Philip, 'About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?' 35 Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus.

36 As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, 'Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?'

38 He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. 39 When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. 40 But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he was passing through the region, he proclaimed the good news to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

### Psalm 22:24-30

**R Make known the saving deeds that God has done.**

24 My praise is of him in the great assembly;  
I will perform my vows  
in the presence of those who worship him.

25 The poor shall eat and be satisfied,  
and those who seek the Lord shall praise him:  
'May your heart live for ever!' **R**

26 All the ends of the earth  
shall remember and turn to the Lord,  
and all the families of the nations  
shall bow before him.

27 For kingship belongs to the Lord;  
he rules over the nations.

28 To him alone all who sleep in the earth  
bow down in worship;  
all who go down to the dust fall before him. **R**

29 My soul shall live for him;  
my descendants shall serve him;  
they shall be known as the Lord's for ever.

30 They shall come and make known to a people  
yet unborn  
the saving deeds that he has done. **R**



## 1 John Chapter 4 verses 7-21

7 Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. 8 Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. 9 God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. 10 In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. 11 Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. 12 No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.

13 By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. 14 And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Saviour of the world. 15 God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. 16 So we have known and believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. 17 Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgement, because as he is, so are we in this world. 18 There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. 19 We love because he first loved us. 20 Those who say, 'I love God', and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. 21 The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.

### THE COLLECT

O God,  
form the minds of your faithful people,  
that we may love what you command  
and desire what you promise,  
so that, amid the many changes of this world,  
our hearts may there be fixed where true joys are to be found;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

## John 15: 1 - 8

1 'I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine-grower. 2 He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. 3 You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. 4 Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. 5 I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. 6 Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. 7 If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8 My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.

*This photo captures the beauty of the Garrett window in the Columbarium: "The True Vine" is our theme for Sunday Easter 5. This window is dedicated to "all who have made St Peter's their spiritual home"*



# For All the Saints

*St George ~ April 23*

*Martyr, Patron Saint of England*

## **St George - Martyrdom**

It is uncertain when Saint George was born and historians continue to debate to this day. However, his death date is estimated to be April 23, 303 A.D.

George was born to a Gerontios and Polychronia, a Roman officer and a Greek native of Lydda. Both were Christians from noble families of the Anici and George, Georgios in the original Greek, was raised to follow their faith.

When George was old enough, he was welcomed into Diocletian's army. By his late 20's, George became a Tribune and served as an imperial guard for the Emperor at Nicomedia.

On February 24, 303 A.D., Diocletian, who hated Christians, announced that every Christian the army passed would be arrested and every other soldier should offer a sacrifice to the Roman gods. George refused to abide by the order and told Diocletian, who was angry but greatly valued his friendship with George's father.

When George announced his beliefs before his peers, Diocletian was unable to keep the news to himself. Yet, in an effort to save George, Diocletian attempted to convert him to believe in the Roman gods, offered him land, money and slaves in exchange for offering a sacrifice to the Roman gods, and made several other offers that George refused.

Finally, after exhausting all other options, Diocletian ordered George's execution. In preparation for his death, George gave his money to the poor and was sent for several torture sessions. He was lacerated on a wheel of swords and required resuscitation three times, but still George did not turn from God.

On April 23, 303 A.D., George was martyred before Nicomedia's outer wall. His body was sent to Lydda for burial, and other Christians went to honor George as a martyr.

## **Saint George and the Dragon:**

There are several stories about George fighting dragons, but in the Western version, a dragon or crocodile made its nest at a spring that provided water to Silene, believed to be modern-day Cyrene in Libya.

The people were unable to collect water and so attempted to remove the dragon from its nest on several occasions. It would temporarily leave its nest when they offered it a sheep each day, until the sheep disappeared and the people were distraught.

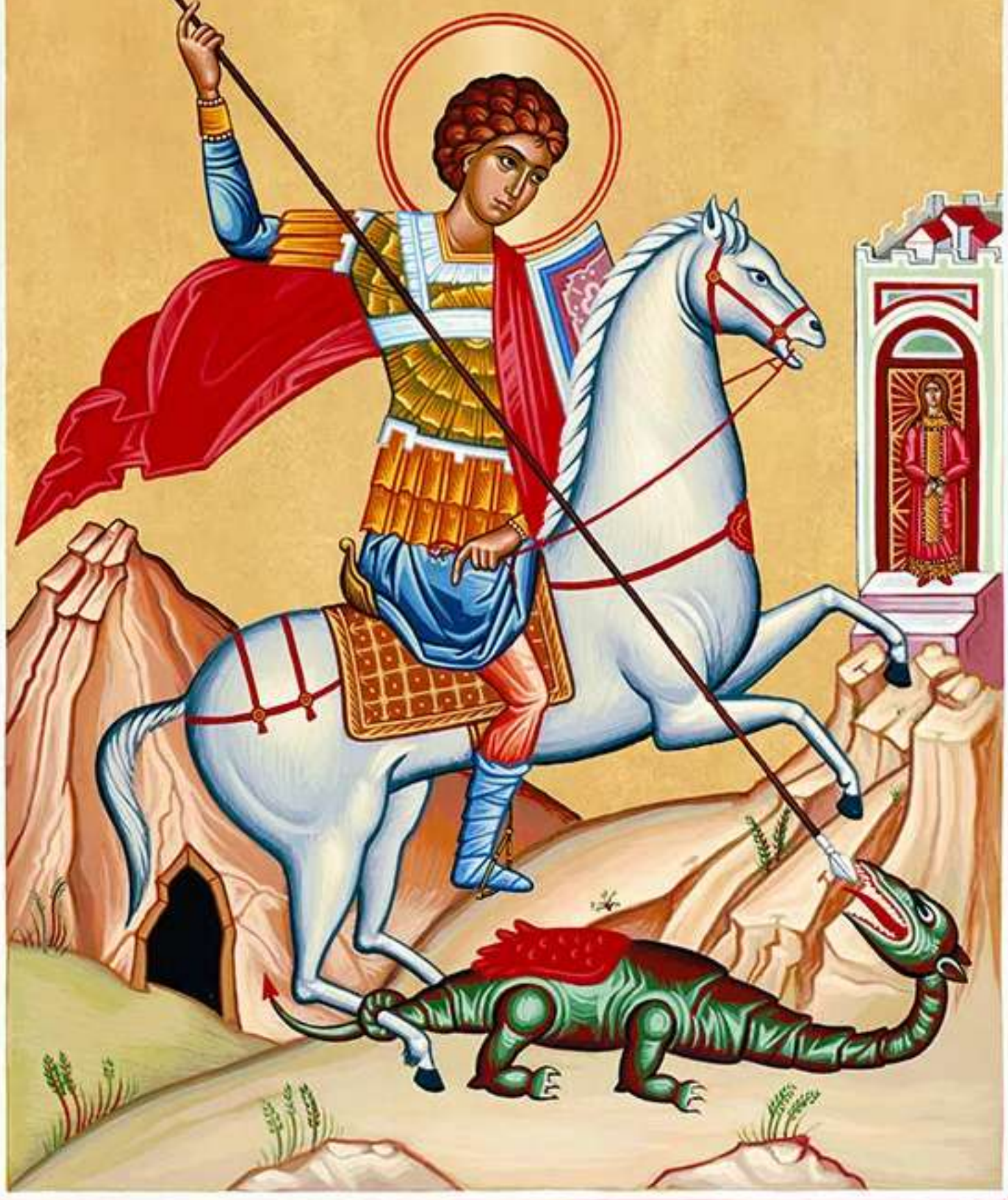
This was when they decided that a maiden would be just as effective as sending a sheep. The townspeople chose the victim by drawing straws. This continued until one day the princess' straw was drawn.

The monarch begged for her to be spared but the people would not have it. She was offered to the dragon, but before she could be devoured, George appeared. He faced the dragon, protected himself with the sign of the Cross, and slayed the dragon. After saving the town, the citizens abandoned their paganism and were all converted to Christianity.

## **St George - Patron Saint of England**

The enormous popularity of St George in England seems to have grown up during the crusades. A vision of St George and St Demetrius preceded the fall of Antioch on the First Crusade, and Richard I placed himself and his army under the saint's protection. According to tradition it was King Edward III who made St George patron of the Order of the Garter in 1348, and whose soldiers first raised the cry, "For England and St George". Soldiers and sailors began to wear his red cross on a white ground as a sort of uniform. With Caxton's printing of the Golden Legend in the next century, the saint's story was widely read, in particular the famous episode of his vanquishing the dragon.

## SAINT GEORGE



## The Collect for St George

*Almighty God,  
you called your servant George to lay aside all fear  
and to confess you even unto death;  
grant that we whose banner is the cross of Christ  
may triumph over all that is evil,  
and serve you faithfully to the end;  
through Jesus Christ our Saviour.*

*AMEN*

"FOR WHAT THEY HAVE  
DONE,  
THIS WE WILL DO"

"We, the people of Australia, respect and give thanks to all who have served in our defence force and their families." "We acknowledge the unique nature of military service and the sacrifice demanded of all who commit to defend our nation." "We undertake to preserve the memory and deeds of all who have served and promise to welcome, embrace and support all military veterans as respected and valued members of our community." "For what they have done, this we will do." The family of St Peter's Anglican Parish, Southport, affirm this oath declared in The Australian Veterans' Recognition (Putting Veterans and their Families First) Act of 2019 which received Royal Assent on 30 October 2019.



## *St Mark the Evangelist*

*~ April 26 ~*

The church commemorates Mark both as the author of the earliest Gospel and also as one of the leaders of the early church.

The earliest reference to Mark is in the Acts of the Apostles, where he is referred to as “John, whose other name was Mark” (Acts 12:12). The two names, one Jewish and the other Roman, suggest that he was a Hellenistic Jew. His mother lived in Jerusalem, and the home was a meeting place of the early church. Mark was a cousin of Barnabas (Colossians 4:10), who came from Cyprus. The fact that John Mark’s home was in Jerusalem has led to various suggestions that he knew of or even was involved in some of the events of the last days of Jesus’ life, but nothing can be said for certain. A later report asserts that he had not heard Jesus or been one of his followers.

Mark was with Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey as their assistant (Acts 13:5). When they got to Perga in Pamphylia (in modern Turkey), for reasons that we cannot discern, Mark left the group. Two years later, Paul and Barnabas planned another missionary journey, and Barnabas wished to take Mark, but Paul would not agree. So Barnabas took Mark with him and went to Cyprus, while Paul took Silas with him to Syria and Cilicia (Acts 15:36-41).

We next hear of Mark from near the end of Paul’s ministry, when Paul was under arrest (whether in Rome, Ephesus or elsewhere is not certain). Clearly a reconciliation had come about between Paul and Mark. Paul describes Mark as “a fellow worker” (Philemon 24), and it was hoped that Mark might visit Colossae (Colossians 4:10). Paul asked Timothy to bring Mark to him (2 Timothy 4:11).

According to 1 Peter (5:13), Mark was with Peter in Rome (which the text calls “Babylon”, a common early Christian pseudonym for Rome), and is even described as Peter’s “son”, testifying to a close relationship in the faith between the two. The association of Mark with Peter is also made by Papias of Hieropolis about 150, which supports the almost universal attribution of the second Gospel to Mark.

Mark, who had been Peter’s interpreter, wrote down carefully, but not in order, all that he remembered of the Lord’s sayings and doings. For he had not heard the Lord or been one of his followers, but later, as I said, one of Peter’s.

Most scholars regard Mark’s Gospel as the first to be written, and consider that it was used by both Matthew and Luke in their accounts of the good news.

There is a strong tradition that associates Mark with the founding of the church in Alexandria. Still later traditions assert that he was the first bishop of Alexandria and was martyred there during the reign of the emperor Trajan. He is also associated with Venice, because in 829 his relics were brought there from Alexandria and placed in the original church of San Marco.

### THE COLLECT FOR ST MARK

*Almighty God,  
who enlightened your holy Church  
through the inspired witness of your evangelist Saint Mark:  
grant that we, being firmly grounded  
in the truth of the gospel,  
may be faithful to its teaching both in word and deed;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.*

*Detail from a window in the parish church of SS Mary and Lambert, Stonham Aspal, Suffolk, with stained glass representing St Mark.*



# *What's On?*

## *Coffee on Mondays ('COM')*

*Every Monday, 10:00 am in the Parish Centre*

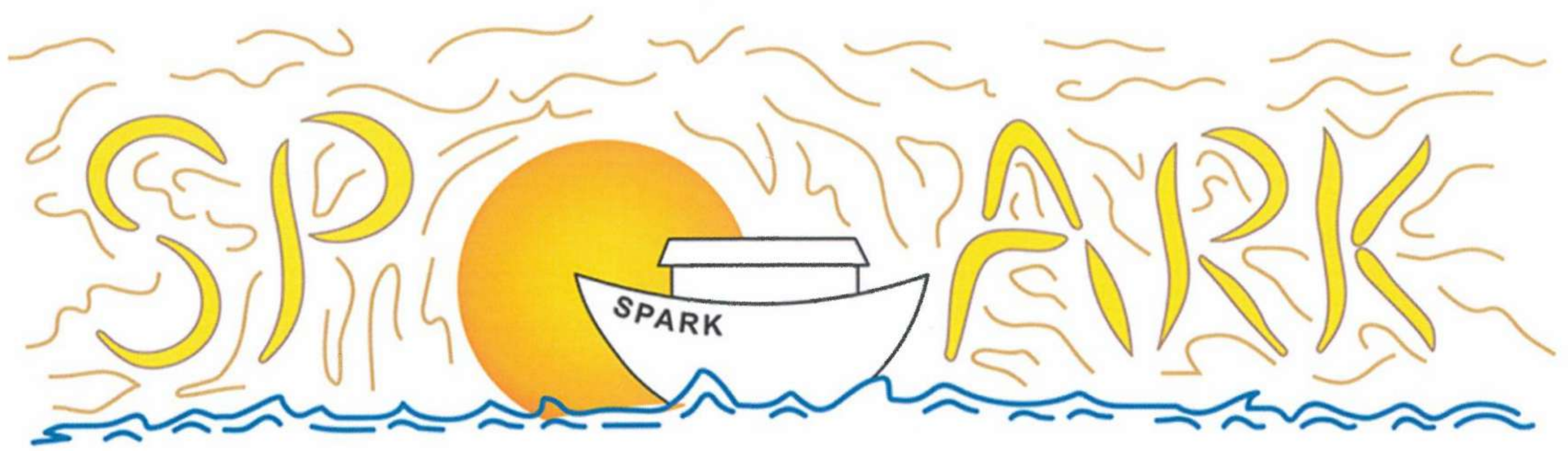


No time to stop on for a cuppa after Sunday Morning Eucharist?

Looking for a coffee with your church friends. Why not join us on Mondays for a relaxed coffee/tea/chai in the Parish Centre.

- There's no cost (you can make a donation if you wish, but this is not a fundraising event.)
- You can chat with other parishioners and even bring a friend if you like.
- We have lovely facilities here - why not come along and enjoy them?





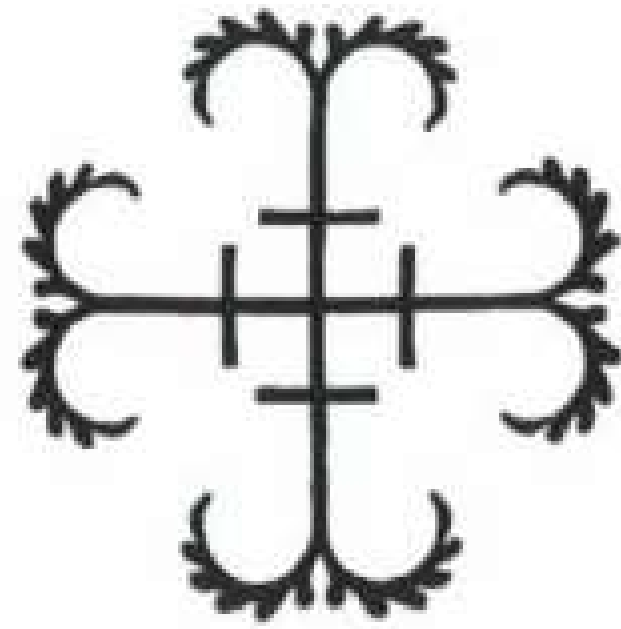
St. Peter's. Anglican Religious Kids

*Sunday School has  
recommenced for the new term*

*Our SPARK! Sunday School is now running during  
our 9:30 am service.*

*Bring your children (or grandchildren) along for some excellent teaching and fun.*

*Please volunteer if you want to help (contact Christine in the Office.)*



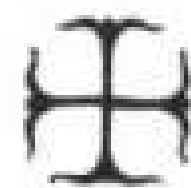
*please pray for*

**TIMOTHY WILLIAM NEWTON**

to be made Deacon by

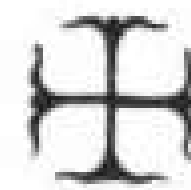
**WILLIAM, BISHOP OF LEWES**

in the Parish Church of St Nicholas in Arundel  
on Sunday, 23<sup>rd</sup> of June 2024 at 11am



*please pray also for*

Canon David Twinley and the people of the  
Benefice of Arundel with Tortington and South Stoke,  
and for Stephanie, Winifred, and Rupert



THOU HAST GIVEN ME THE DEFENCE OF  
THY SALVATION: THY RIGHT HAND ALSO  
SHALL HOLD ME UP AND THY LOVING  
CORRECTION SHALL MAKE ME GREAT

*Psalm 18:35*

# Parish Diary

## Sunday 21 April – Easter IV

7:00 am Holy Eucharist (BCP)  
9:30 am Holy Eucharist (APBA) ~ SPARK Sunday School  
4:30 pm Wine & Cheese – meet Bp John  
5:45 pm Evensong/Holy Eucharist (APBA) with Bp John

### Monday 22 April

10:00 am 'Coffee on Monday' – Parish Centre

### Tuesday 23 April

6:00 pm (No Choir Practice this evening)

### Wednesday 24 April

10:00 am Holy Eucharist (APBA)  
11:00 am Study Series – 'Surprised by the God of Hope'  
12.30 pm Anzac Eve – GCUH

### Thursday 25 April

5:30 am Anzac Service Southport Parklands  
Midday No Service

### Friday 26 April

7:00 pm Holy Eucharist/Feast of St Mark

### Saturday 27 April

10:00 am Baptism

## Sunday 28 April – Easter V

7:00 am Holy Eucharist (BCP)  
9:30 am Holy Eucharist (APBA) ~ SPARK Sunday School  
5:45 pm Holy Eucharist (BCP)

### Monday 29 April

10:00 am 'Coffee on Monday' – Parish Centre

### Tuesday 30 April

6:00 pm Choir Practice—New members' welcome

### Wednesday 1 May

7:00 pm Holy Eucharist/Feast of Philip and James



"St Peter's Church Southport, is a welcoming and hospitable community, committed to the worship of God in beauty and holiness in the classical Anglican tradition."

You can find out more about us at

[www.stpetersgc.org.au](http://www.stpetersgc.org.au)

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Phone: 07 5558 3887

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**Rector**

Fr. Don Parker

[rector@stpetersgc.org.au](mailto:rector@stpetersgc.org.au)

**Parish Administrator**

Mrs. Christine Corroy

[parish@stpetersgc.org.au](mailto:parish@stpetersgc.org.au)

**Director of Music**

Mr. Luke Sharpe

[luke@stpetersgc.org.au](mailto:luke@stpetersgc.org.au)

**SERVICES**

**Sunday**

7:00am: Holy Eucharist (BCP)

9:30am: Holy Eucharist (APBA)

5:45pm: Holy Eucharist (APBA)

5:45pm: Choral Evensong

(2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of the month)

**Weekday Eucharist**

10:00am – Wednesday

12:00pm – Thursday

[stpetersgc.org.au](http://stpetersgc.org.au)

**Anglican**  
Church Southern Queensland