



# *Mountain and Sea*

A periodic newsletter of the Anglican Parish of Caloundra-Glasshouse  
Country

St Andrew's Caloundra  
Mary McKillop Centre Beerwah  
St Thomas' Mooloolah

Issue #7            19 November 2021

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Welcome to our parish newsletter. This publication has come about because of revisions to our parish Pew Bulletin. We intend and hope to publish "Mountain and Sea" fortnightly, and it will comprise information about events and life within the parish, as well as articles of a theological or informative nature, and some more light-hearted material. We hope that you enjoy it, and will find it both instructive and diverting. Please direct any comments or complaints to the locum priest, Fr Michael, with whom all responsibility for the following lies.

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*Following Jesus  
Proclaiming his Gospel  
Connecting with his world  
Enjoying our common life*

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**Notices**

- Tuesday 23 November - Anglican Friends' end of year Dinner at Pelican Waters Bowls Club commencing at 6pm. A two-course dinner will be provided and a gold coin donation will be collected to raise funds for the Mission to Seafarers and the Archbishop's November Appeal.
- Sunday 28 November - Fish & Chip Lunch – St Andrew's Patronal Festival 11.30am
- Saturday 4 December - Mooloolah Markets
- Saturday 4 December - Hard of Hearing Training 2pm
- Saturday 11 December - "Taize" service at St Andrew's, 6pm
- Sunday 19 December - Lessons and Carols" at St Andrew's, 3pm
- 7-12 January 2022 - The CMS Summer School at Mt Tamborine, register at [cms.org.au/qnsw/summerschool](https://cms.org.au/qnsw/summerschool) or phone 07 3171 3020.

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*The following presentation was written and devised by Bishop Michael Curry, the presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church in the USA, who is the equivalent of our primate. (The Episcopal Church does not use the title or position of "Archbishop"). Bishop Curry famously preached at the wedding of Meghan Markle and Prince Harry.*

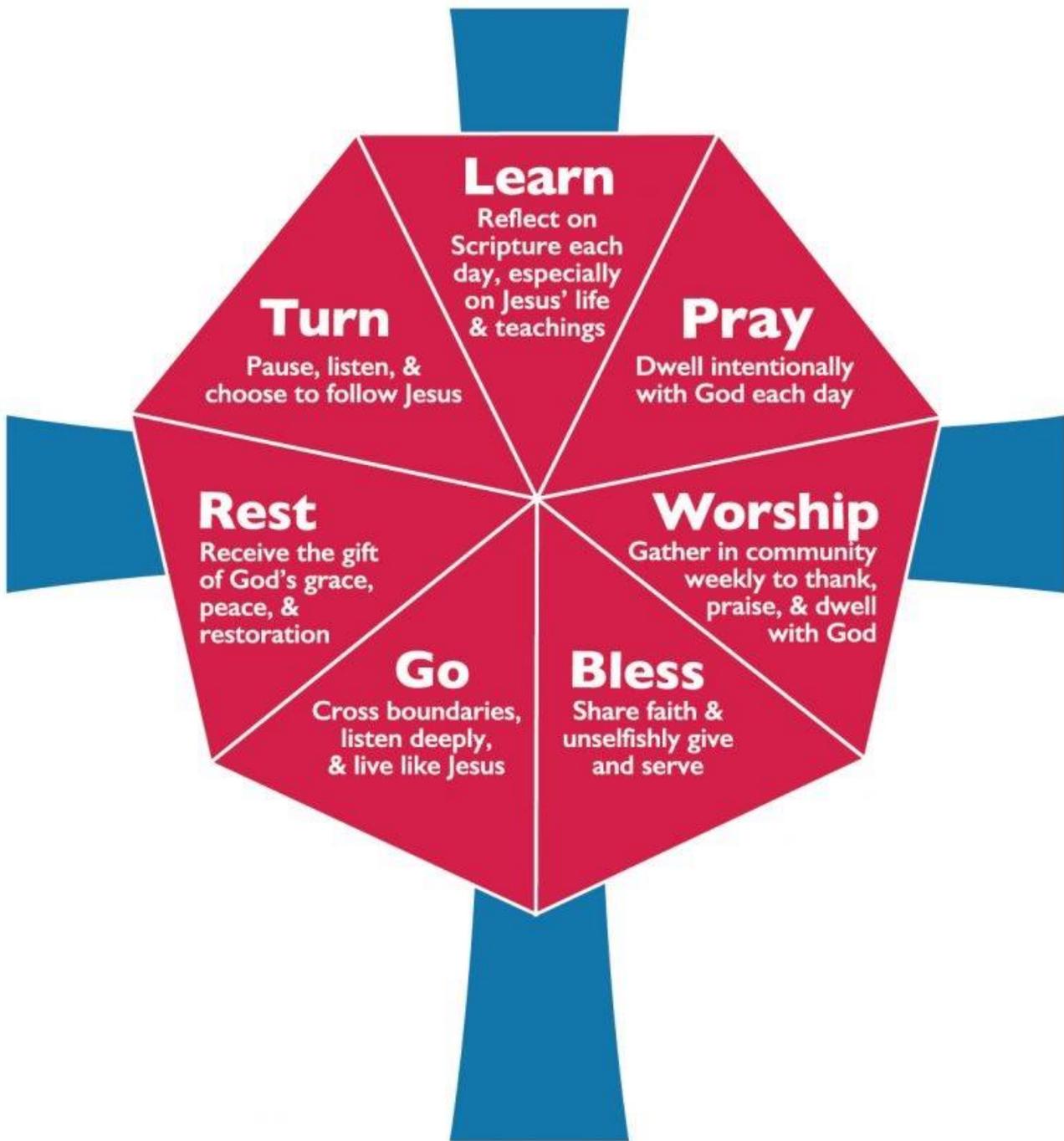
*When reading this, you might mentally substitute the word "Episcopal" with "Anglican" for it to make more sense. I have also deliberately not changed any American spelling; "centre" instead of "center" etc.*

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## **The Way of Love**

### **Practices for a Jesus-centered Life**

In the first century Jesus of Nazareth inspired a movement. A community of people whose lives were centered on Jesus Christ and committed to living the way of God's unconditional, unselfish, sacrificial, and redemptive love. Before they were called "church" or "Christian" this Jesus Movement was simply called "the way". Today I believe our vocation is to live as the Episcopal branch of the Jesus Movement. But how can we together grow more deeply with Jesus Christ at the center of our lives, so we can bear witness to his way of love in and for the world? The deep roots of our Christian tradition may offer just such a path. For centuries, monastic communities have shaped their lives around rhythms and disciplines for following Jesus together. Such a pattern is known as a "Rule of Life". The framework below – The Way of Love: Practices for a Jesus-Centered Life – outlines a Rule for the Episcopal branch of the Jesus Movement.



## **THE WAY OF LOVE**

### *Practices for Jesus-Centered Life*

It is designed to be spare and spacious, so that individuals, ministry groups, congregations, and networks can flesh it out in unique ways and build a church-wide treasure trove of stories and resources. There is no specific order you need to follow. If you already keep a Rule or spiritual disciplines, you might reflect and discover how that path intersects with this one. By entering into reflection, discernment and commitment around the practices

of Turn – Learn – Pray – Worship – Bless – Go – Rest, I pray we will grow as communities following the loving, liberating, life-giving way of Jesus. His way has the power to change each of our lives and to change this world.

Your brother in the Way of Jesus,

The Most Reverend Michael B. Curry  
Primate and Presiding Bishop  
The Episcopal Church

Early in his ministry, Jesus of Nazareth was surrounded by crowds. He turned and asked, “What do you seek?” (John 1:38). For more than a thousand years, monastics have greeted pilgrims knocking on their doors by asking: “What do you seek?” Today, each of us can pause with the same question. As much as the world has changed, the fundamental human hopes and yearnings that draw us to faith may not be so different.

We seek love. We seek freedom. We seek abundant life. We seek Jesus. Come and follow:

## **THE WAY OF LOVE** *Practices for Jesus-Centered Life*

### **TURN**

*Pause, listen and choose to follow Jesus*

Like the disciples, we are called by Jesus to follow the Way of Love. With God's help, we can turn from the powers of sin, hatred, fear, injustice, and oppression toward the way of truth, love, hope, justice, and freedom. In turning, we reorient our lives to Jesus Christ, falling in love again, again, and again.

### **LEARN**

*Reflect on Scripture each day, especially on Jesus' life and teachings*

By reading and reflecting on Scripture, especially the life and teachings of

Jesus, we draw near to God and God's word dwells in us. When we open our minds and hearts to Scripture, we learn to see God's story and God's activity in everyday life.

## **PRAY**

*Dwell intentionally with God daily*

Jesus teaches us to come before God with humble hearts, boldly offering our thanksgivings and concerns to God or simply listening for God's voice in our lives and in the world. Whether in thought, word or deed, individually or corporately, when we pray we invite and dwell in God's loving presence.

## **WORSHIP**

*Gather in community weekly to thank, praise, and dwell with God*

When we worship, we gather with others before God. We hear the Good News of Jesus Christ, give thanks, confess, and offer the brokenness of the world to God. As we break bread, our eyes are opened to the presence of Christ. By the power of the Holy Spirit, we are made one body, the body of Christ sent forth to live the Way of Love.

## **BLESS**

*Share faith and unselfishly give and serve*

Jesus called his disciples to give, forgive, teach, and heal in his name. We are empowered by the Spirit to bless everyone we meet, practicing generosity and compassion and proclaiming the Good News of God in Christ with hopeful words and selfless actions. We can share our stories of blessing and invite others to the Way of Love.

## **GO**

*Cross boundaries, listen deeply and live like Jesus*

As Jesus went to the highways and byways, he sends us beyond our circles and comfort, to witness to the love, justice, and truth of God with our lips and with our lives. We go to listen with humility and to join God in healing a hurting world. We go to become a Beloved Community, a people reconciled in love with God and one another.

## **REST**

*Receive the gift of God's grace, peace, and restoration*

From the beginning of creation, God has established the sacred pattern of going and returning, labor and rest. Especially today, God invites us to dedicate time for restoration and wholeness – within our bodies, minds, and souls, and within our communities and institutions. By resting we place our trust in God, the primary actor who brings all things to their fullness.

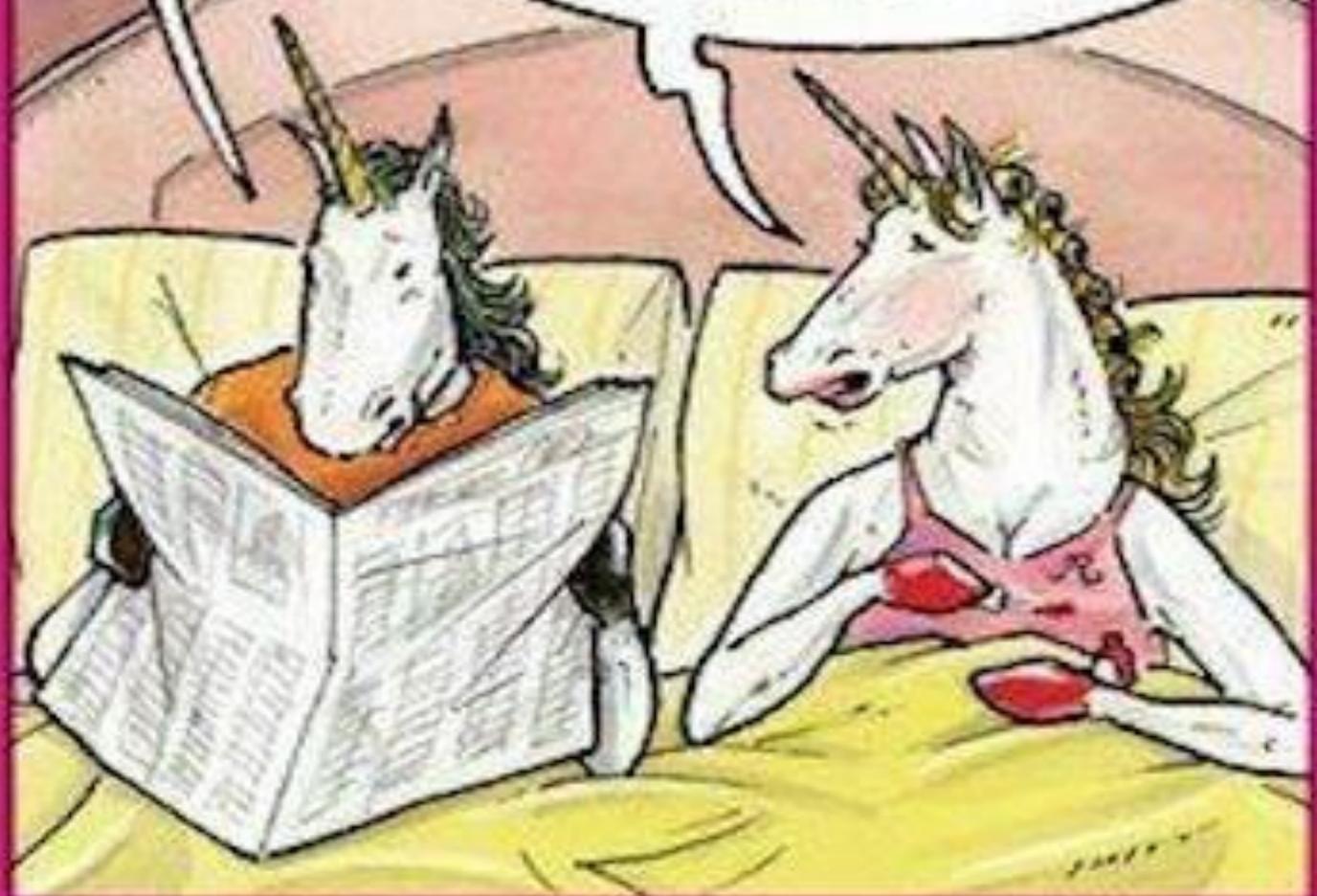
*Learn more about the Way of Love at [episcopalchurch.org/wayoflove](http://episcopalchurch.org/wayoflove).*

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Big storm's  
a brewin'.

Then I'm glad  
we didn't go on that  
cruise thing with your  
whack-job friend  
Noah.



*(I'm going to introduce a mild note of theological controversy with the next article, but I think that after almost six months of listening to my preaching, many people in our congregations understand that I'm a bit of a theological ratbag! Bruce Epperly, who wrote the following, is a theologian, spiritual guide, healing companion, retreat leader and lecturer, and author of nineteen books, including **Holy Adventure: 41 Days of Audacious Living.**)*

What do you do with Good Friday and the Cross when you've abandoned the doctrine of substitutionary atonement and the divine necessity of Jesus' death? Like many progressive Christians, I grew up hearing the mantras "Jesus died for our sins, Jesus died so that we might have eternal life and escape God's wrath, Jesus paid the price for our salvation," and "sin deserves death and Jesus stood in our place." Recently, I saw a billboard with the stable and manger and three crosses in the background, with the description "born to die." Without reflecting, many 21st century Christians, who regularly use iPods, ponder photos from the Hubble telescope, go to Sikh and Hindu doctors, and believe that humankind emerged from a multi-billion year process of evolution, assume the following:

- Human sin brought death into the world.
- We are born steeped in this original sin.
- Human sin deserves divine punishment.
- Jesus came to break our bondage to sin.
- Jesus' death was foreordained and Jesus lived his adult life knowing he was going to die on the Cross.
- Jesus' death is God's way of securing our salvation.
- Only a divine sacrifice can free us from sin and ensure eternal life, rather than eternal damnation.
- The only pathway to salvation is a personal relationship with Jesus, demonstrated by an explicit affirmation of our sin and the sole salvation of Jesus Christ.

Although these "orthodoxies" may have provided assurance for us once upon a time, to many of us they no longer make sense, nor do we believe in a God who requires the death of "his" son to secure our salvation. We also see divine grace operating in other religious traditions and in the

experience of faithful agnostics. Still, many of us attend Good Friday services; some of us even preach at such services, despite our theological and liturgical reservations. Can we as progressives "redeem" Good Friday in a way that affirms the interplay of divine love, human creativity, and human brokenness, while avoiding dubious theologies that assume salvation requires violence, including the predestined death of God's only Child?

We do not need to celebrate divine violence on Good Friday or any occasion, but we live in a world characterised by implicit and explicit violence against the Earth, child and adult slavery and sex trafficking, political gridlock, disparity between the wealthy and vulnerable, and political unrest. We are only too aware, when we open the doors of perception, not only of the beauty of the Earth but of our precarious situation as a result of human decision-making and the machinations of powers and principalities.

I believe that we can creatively remember Good Friday in ritual and retreat by reflecting on the interplay of our personal and institutional shortcomings and God's companionship. "Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?" is the quintessential Good Friday hymn. Of course, none of us were there physically. But, we are all part of an ambiguous history that persecutes prophets and promotes celebrities. On Good Friday, we can ponder all the little crucifixions going on right now in our world, often unnoticed, but very real – death dealing actions that lead to melting polar icecaps, global climate change and the potential cataclysm that awaits our children and children's children, complacency at mass starvation and genocide, apathy at sex trafficking and human slavery, our addiction to oil and gun ownership, and the list goes on, even before we explore our own personal ambiguities and culpability in the subtle violence of everyday life.

Even though Jesus' death was neither foreordained nor necessary to appease God's wrath, we can recognise that we are no better morally and spiritually than many of those who shouted for Jesus' crucifixion, stood idly by doing nothing to prevent it, and implicitly sentenced Jesus by their involvement in political and religious institutions. Are our political leaders

- and we as voters - any more moral than Pilate or the Jewish religious leaders? We also operate out of self-interest and are willing for many to suffer or die for the "American way of life."

Good Friday also affirms the tragic beauty of God's relationship with the world. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, from the vantage point of a prison cell, proclaims that only a suffering God can save and Alfred North Whitehead speaks of God as the fellow sufferer who understands. Throughout the centuries, Christians have debated the doctrine of patripassianism, the belief that God the Father suffers on the Cross with the Son, Jesus. While patripassianism, or divine suffering, has been labeled a heresy, based on the belief that the divine nature is incapable of suffering and that Jesus' suffering touched his humanity but left his divinity unsullied, I believe that the deeper heresy is the belief that God does not suffer with the world. A changeless, unfeeling, and apathetic God can neither heal nor save. In contrast to a passionless deity, a meaningful vision of Good Friday proclaims that God suffered - the whole of God suffered - on the cross and in every moment creaturely suffering.

Difficult as it is to admit our complacency and culpability, we can on Good Friday answer "yes" to the question, "Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?" We can also say "yes" to the grace that feels our pain and regret, the pain of those broken by the world's greed and complacency, and live in the hope that the one who feels also forgives and transforms, and enables us to rise up with new energies for global healing.

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*This edition of "Mountain and Sea" will also cover the first week of Advent, so I include the following reflection.*

These days most people keep vigils because they are anxious. We wait in hospital corridors for news of a sick relative. A parent stays up with an infant who may be teething or running a high temperature. We might even sit by the phone waiting to be reassured that a loved one is safe and well, or that we have passed the exam or got the job. Some of the younger or hardier ones amongst us sometimes keep vigils that are filled with excited anticipation, as when some of us sleep outside to get tickets to a sports

event or a concert, or when we see the old year out and the new year in. *[Full disclosure- I wagged school to queue for tickets to a Paul McCartney and Wings concert in December, 1974. Channel 9 News filmed me with some schoolmates in the queue, and we all ended on the carpet in the Headmaster's study the next day.]*

It was not that long ago, that vigils were a much more common feature of people's lives. We often kept vigil with the dead. We used to keep all-night vigils of prayer, as we still sometimes do on Maundy Thursday, when we keep the Easter Vigil. Before most of us can remember, there were also vigils kept with the bride on the night before her wedding, when she waited and watched for the sign of her approaching groom and his attendants. Other denominations of the Christian church, particularly the Roman Catholic church, have enshrined the experience of keeping vigil through the Vigil Mass on Saturday evening and the Vigil Ceremony in their funeral rites.

This tradition starts with today's Gospel where we are exhorted to be alert, to keep awake and wait for our Lord to return. In a sense this is a strange gospel message to have as we prepare for Christmas. It is linked to the first preface for Advent, which reads, "Now we watch for the day, hoping that the salvation promised us will be ours, when Christ our Lord will come in glory." Our attention is, therefore, directed to a great future event, not the future feast we are about to celebrate.

In liturgical circles, this is unique. All other feasts of the church either remember a past event, like those of Holy Week or Pentecost, or they are the so-called "title feasts" that proclaim the truth of God's action among us that the entire church holds to be true, like Trinity Sunday. But not the first Sunday of Advent. Rather than talk about the coming of Jesus at Christmas it helps us reflect on the final coming of our Lord at the end of time. It is the bridge between the "last days" of the church's year, which we have been celebrating over recent weeks, and the first days of the church's new year.

And how does the church ask us to approach this feast? As if we were on a vigil. Not a vigil of anxiety, where we never want to hear the worst news. Not a vigil of excited anticipation, where we pin our happiness on entry

into an event. But a vigil of hope, where we wait and trust in a person who has shared our lot, understands our frailties, and loved us to death. We place our hope in Jesus the Christ, our brother, our saviour and our friend. This first Sunday in Advent we look beyond Christmas to the final moment when heaven and earth will be united and our vigil will be complete.

The first week of Advent is like the first days of other vigils where we pitch our tents, unroll our sleeping bags, and begin the wait to make sure we have front-row seats for what is going to be, when it arrives, the best show in town.

Fr Michael  
November 2021

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*"Your shepherd, Louie, has retired. I'm Mr. Smathers. I will be your grazing-resource coordinator and flock welfare-and-security manager."*