



Bible Readings for May 17

Acts 17:22-31
Psalm 66:8-20
1 Peter 3:13-22
John 14:15-21

Reflection from Ray

Each year in these Sundays after Easter we don't have a reading from the "Old Testament" (Hebrew Scriptures) but from the book of Acts. But only now is the dominant figure from Acts making his presence felt. He had a cameo appearance last week as Stephen met his demise at the hands of the rock hurling blood lusters. In a classic moment of understatement we read that they laid their cloaks at the feet of a young man named Saul, who, "approved of his murder".

But the risen Jesus changes people. No simpler or clearer or cleverer way of putting it than that. So basic we forget to say it, we neglect to expect it and we are embarrassed to talk it up. Now, 10 chapters later, this murder approving persecutor is the great spokesperson for the emerging Christian faith.

(cont page 4)

Our Favourite COVID-19 Cartoon This Week



Re-opening of Worship Services at Sunshine Uniting

Some of you will get this news letter on Friday, May 15 and those who receive it through the mail as much as a week later. Sobering to reflect that some of us remember there was the much touted next day delivery and even when the postie came twice a day! With the easing of restrictions there is opportunity to meet for worship in groups of no more than 10. Still, of course, observing sanitation and distancing precautions. People with any symptoms, or feel uncomfortable for any reason are encouraged to not attend worship in person but use online worship. At the time of writing the normal 10.00 group is being offered a 9.30am or 10.30am slot. The usual 11.30am group is still making a decision if they will meet on Sunday morning. Please contact Ray or Penaia to advise if you will be attending as we want to avoid a situation where more than 10 people arrive for any service.

Do Yourself a Favour



Halleljuah! A submission to “Do Yourself a Favour.”

Barbara Arnold read Neil Daniher’s book of autobiographical reflections, “When All Is Said and Done”.

A wise man said, 'Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forwards.' I understand the wisdom of this - right now, I don't have much 'forwards' left.

Neale Daniher sat down to pen a letter to the grandchildren he'll never get to know. And then he kept on writing ... In 2013, the AFL legend was diagnosed with Motor Neurone Disease - a cruel and incurable condition. He had a choice. He could spend his remaining time focused on himself, or he could seize the opportunity to make a better future for others.

Neale is no stranger to challenge. He grew up on a farm in remote New South Wales, the third of eleven children. He battled injury during his football career with Essendon, then jumped on the coaching rollercoaster, leading Melbourne for a decade. As general manager of football operations, he was part of the West Coast Eagles' cultural rebuild. cont page 5

The following story appears in full in Crosslight.

What is BCO and how long has it been going for? Boroondara Community Outreach is a mental health ministry of the Presbytery of Yarra Yarra, that has been running for 27 years. It supports people who are socially isolated or living with a mental illness to live with dignity and engage in community. The ministry offers an inclusive and welcoming community for



The Rev Natalie Dixon-Monu

those looking for a place to belong and to contribute. We are about creating a community of hospitality *with* people, a safe place where each person is valued as a member who contributes to creating the community that is BCO. We value compassion and respect, nurture hope and encourage creativity. Our hope is that when people feel they belong and are supported, their health and well-being will improve on all levels – physical, mental, emotional, spiritual and social.

You can read the full story on BCO by clicking the link below.

<https://crosslight.org.au/2020/05/14/coping-with-covid-19-natalie-dixon-monu/>

Crosslight is a bi-monthly magazine focusing on issues and events that are relevant to the church's Victorian and Tasmanian communities.

Its news stories, features, opinion pieces and letters explore the connection of faith with culture, science, politics and everyday life. They also reflect the depth and diversity of the church.



Crosslight has won numerous Australasian Religious Press Association awards and its 17,000 copies are distributed free to all Uniting Church congregations and agencies throughout Victoria and Tasmania.

Here is the link to read it online

<https://crosslight.org.au/>

Article than appeared in the New York Times on Friday

(This is really worrying)

The first cases of the coronavirus in crowded refugee camps for Rohingya Muslims in Bangladesh was confirmed on Thursday, raising fears about how quickly disease can spread through one of the world's most overcrowded and [vulnerable communities](#).

The United Nations refugee agency said that the Bangladeshi government had identified two people who had tested positive at medical clinics in the Rohingya camps, where around 1 million refugees have taken shelter after fleeing [decades of persecution](#) in neighboring Myanmar.

One of the two who tested positive is a refugee while the other is a member of the host population, according to the United Nations refugee agency. A community leader in the camps said that up to 1,900 people who had contact with the pair have been identified and may undergo some form of quarantine.

Epidemiologists fear the virus could spread like wildfire through such camps around the world, teeming with millions of people fleeing war, persecution and famine. It has turned up in [camps in Syria](#), South Sudan and Greece's Aegean Islands.

Paul, as he is now known, is travelling this part of the world, and it must be said, whipping up a storm of protest and opposition wherever he goes. By now he has been stoned himself and hounded out of Antioch and Thessalonica for his preaching in the synagogues and on the streets.. The persecutor is now the persecuted.

Having been urged to flee for his own safety from those towns Paul enters into the glory and splendour of Athens; the sophisticated intellectual and philosophical centre of the world. Now Paul himself is no backwoods country bumpkin. He is an astute trained Pharisee; he is a multi-lingual scholar who moves easily between the cultures of his world. He wanders among the gods **in** the market place and the gods **of** the marketplace. A dazzling yet bewildering pantheon of gods, each represented by their tangible representations. What to Paul is normally disdainfully dismissed as an idol. They are all there, just as they are around today, albeit under different guises. Quick fire gods who promise immediate relief, gods for the greedy, the indulgent, the crazed and the gods of ecstatic indulgence, gods of nationalism, gods with all the answers, gods of magic,, gods of institutions, gods to bolster the Roman or the Greek or the Australian political system, gods to keep the poor happily poor, gods for the curious.

Paul knows he is called upon to give an account of the hope that is within him.

How did Paul go? Well, to be honest the critics vary on their assessment of the success of his Athenian sermon. Some see it as a brilliant display of Christian apologetics – that is giving account of the faith. Shrewd because he so quickly assesses the key themes of the prevailing culture and starting where the audience is at he uses the local currency to give a vigorous account of the faith. "I have been going around your town and seen the shrine to the unknown god – well let me tell you something of what you experience but as yet do not know about". He starts with the common experience of the human family in which all are bound together as the human spirit seeks that which is unknown but is beyond and greater than us. This god is close, as even the Greek poets were conscious of and able to write of. He even quotes from their own poet, "In whom we live and move and have our being; for we are his family". Daring stuff for a fiercely monotheistic orthodox Jew brought up to abhor pagan worship and syncretistic religion. Everything he is seeing that day is a blatant violation of the first two of the ten commandments. "No god before me and no graven images"

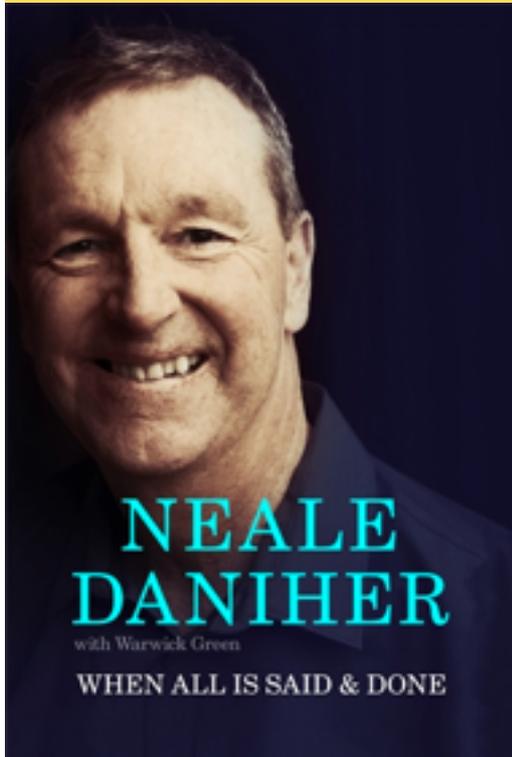
Others aren't so charitable and see this as Paul's biggest flop precisely because it is a departure from his usual method. What he preaches is barely recognizable as the apostolic faith. He has tried to be "relevant" but in not being able to talk about the very things that give him and his faith its identity, the things at other times he counts as essential – history of Israel, Law, sin, covenant Paul has lost his way. He learns his lesson. and shortly after when Paul writes to those in Corinth he says he determined to know nothing among you except Christ crucified, even though this is foolishness to the Greeks.

I think that second judgement that Paul is a flop is too harsh. Paul has found common ground – our common humanity in the family of God, and does manage to work to the point of the crucial place of Jesus in all this. But he has not traded truth for unity as he declares the presence of the Spirit in the culture. He does not find it necessary even in this pagan culture to declare a vacuum of the eternal, nor a monopoly on spirituality for the Christian faith. Any of our faith sharing in this age will bear the character of invitation; here this is what I have found in my life, here this is my experience, this is what works for me.

It does require of us some familiarity and even ease with our own spirituality, our own life story but also the tradition in which we are embedded. The scriptures that have given form to the church's and our own faith. And some ability to read the culture within which we are immersed. But at the end of the day there is no doubt the single most impactful thing upon the person you are speaking to is going to be your own life and the qualities in you that are Christ like.

From the hard-won wisdom of life on the land and the love of his family, to the triumphs and gutting lows of elite football, Neale has learnt to make the most of the cards he's been dealt - to always live with purpose and to appreciate what he has. True to form, Neale chose to stare down the disease he calls 'The Beast', and in 2014 he

co-



founded FightMND, an organisation that has since invested over \$40 million into research and care initiatives. In 2015, he became the public face of the foundation's biggest fundraising event, The Big Freeze.

When All is Said & Done is a book of stories and wisdom from a man who has always held his beliefs to the Bunsen burner of life. Neale is unflinchingly honest, sharing a timely reminder that, even though life doesn't promise to be fair, we all have the power to choose how to make our time on this earth matter.

Barbara added that what she got out of the book was just the remarkable way Neil's mind worked and how he gets around the terrible disease that has beset him. She stressed you do not need to be a Melbourne or Essendon supporter to get something from this book.

As Molly says, Do yourself a favour and read it!"

On Line Worship

Although we worship in you may still worship



can return to group s of 10 be looking for services on line.

The best way click on the and then scroll down to "On line Churches" and simply click the worship service you wish to attend.

to find the is Synod webpage

<https://victas.uca.org.au/resources/covid-19-worship-resources/>

Staff Contacts

Minister: The Rev Ray Gormann

rgormann@bigpond.net.au
ph 0447 142 425

Mental Health Ministry

Co-ordinator:

The Rev (Deacon) Fiona Botcher
feigh.b@gmail.com
ph 0421 027 467

Sunshine Youth Space

Co-ordinator: Samita Rai

sunshineyouthcoordinator@gmail.com
ph 0497 423 293



The Other Side of the Virus, An Opportunity to Awaken...

**Yes there is panic buying.
Yes there is sickness.
Yes there is even death.**

But,

**They say that in Wuhan after so many years
of noise
You can hear the birds again.**

**They say that after just a few weeks of
quiet
The sky is no longer thick with fumes
But blue and grey and clear.**

**They say that in the streets of Assisi
People are singing to each other
across the empty squares,
keeping their windows open
so that those who are alone
may hear the sounds of family around
them.**

**They say that a hotel in the West of Ireland
is offering free meals and delivery to the
housebound.**

**Today a young woman I know
is busy spreading fliers with her number
through the neighbourhood
so that the elders may have someone to
call on.**

**Today Churches, Synagogues, Mosques and
Temples
are preparing to welcome
and shelter the homeless, the sick, the
weary.**

**All over the world people are slowing down
and reflecting.**

**All over the world people are looking at
their neighbours in a new way.**

**All over the world people are waking up to a
new reality
To how big we really are.
To how little control we really have.
To what really matters.
To Love.**

So we pray and we remember that

**Yes there is fear.
But there does not have to be hate.**

**Yes there is isolation.
But there does not have to be loneliness.**

**Yes there is panic buying.
But there does not have to be meanness.**

**Yes there is sickness.
But there does not have to be disease of
the soul**

**Yes there is even death.
But there can always be a rebirth of love.**

**Wake to the choices you make as to how to live
now.**

Today, breathe.

**Listen, behind the factory noises of your panic-
The birds are singing again
The sky is clearing,
Spring is coming,**

And we are always encompassed by Love.

**Open the windows of your soul
And though you may not be able
to touch across the empty square,**

Sing.

**Written by Fr. Richard Hendrick, OFM, March
13th 2020**

An Interfaith article to finish this week:

FOR THE FIRST six centuries after his death, the Buddha was never depicted in human form. He was only ever represented aniconically by a sacred synecdoche — his footprints, for example; or a parasol, an auspicious mark of kingship and spirituality; or the Wisdom Tree, also known as the Bodhi Tree, under which he gained enlightenment. How did the image of the Buddha enter the world of men? How does one give a human face to god, especially to he who was never meant to be a god nor ever said one word about god? How, in rendering such a man in human form, does one counterintuitively end up creating an object of deification? And what is the power of such an object?

To read more click the link below

[https://www.nytimes.com/
2020/05/11/t-magazine/buddha-
statues-face.html](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/11/t-magazine/buddha-statues-face.html)