



ST. JOHN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH
TOORAK
EST. 1859



Fifth Sunday of Easter

28 April, 2024

8am

Welcome

On behalf of everyone at St. John's, Toorak, a very warm welcome to this church and faith community. St. John's welcomes everyone to all services and events, regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, race or background. This is a wonderful and historic church, founded in 1859. We are part of the Anglican Church of Australia and a member of the global Anglican Communion, comprised of 80 million people.

Worship

Regular services of worship are held each Sunday at 8am and 10am, and Wednesday at 7pm. All are welcome. Services are followed by times of fellowship over food and drinks to which everyone is also welcome.

Mission

This church actively follows Jesus' command to love God, love one's neighbour and to care for all people. Our clergy and parishioners regularly visit the sick, home-bound, and the dying. We care for the poor and needy through service and charitable giving, through our Opportunity Shop run in partnership with the local Catholic and Uniting churches, and by supporting the work of Anglicare, The Brotherhood of St. Laurence and The Anglican Board of Mission. Our clergy regularly baptise new members of the church, preside at weddings and care for the grieving through our funeral ministry.

Visitors

If you're visiting for the first time please introduce yourself to a welcomer or member of the clergy, and fill out the blue 'Welcome' card found at the end of every pew so we can stay in touch with you.

The Church

The church is decorated in white symbolising purity, grace, and, ultimately, the resurrection of Jesus Christ, which is the joyful culmination of the Easter season.

Cover Image

I am the True Vine (detail), 12th century

Apse mosaic above the high altar

Basilica of San Clemente al Laterano, Rome

Inscription: ECCLESIAM CRISTI VITI SIMILABIMUS ISTI

(We represent the Church of Christ as this vine)

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge we meet on the Traditional Lands of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and Bunurong peoples of the East Kulin Nations and pay our respect to their Elders past and present.



@stjohnstoorak



INTRODUCTORY RITE

Please stand as the procession enters the church

PRELUDE Siciliana (from a voluntary)
William Walond (1725-1770)

THE INVOCATION

Blessed be God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Blessed be God's kingdom, now and for ever.

GREETING

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

HYMN 'Rock of Ages, cleft for me'

D G D Bm Em A D
D G D F#m E A
D G D Bm Em7 A7 D

1. Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
let me hide myself in thee;
let the water and the blood,
from thy riven side which flowed,
be of sin the double cure,
cleans me from its guilt and
power.
2. While I draw this fleeting breath,
when my eyelids close in death,
when I soar through tracts
unknown,
see thee on thy judgement throne,
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
let me hide myself in thee.

Augustus Montague Toplady 1740-78 (TiS 222)

COLLECT FOR PURITY

**Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name, through Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

THE TWO GREAT COMMANDMENTS

'Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' Jesus said: 'This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: you shall love your neighbour as yourself.'

CONFESSION

Christ our Passover Lamb has been offered for us, therefore we come to celebrate the festival. Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith, with a sincere and a true heart.

Merciful God, our maker and our judge, we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, and in what we have failed to do: we have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves; we repent, and are sorry for all our sins. Father, forgive us. Strengthen us to love and obey you in newness of life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

ABSOLUTION

GLORIA IN EXCELSIS

Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's people on earth. Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory. Lord Jesus Christ, only son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us; you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the Glory of God the Father. Amen.

COLLECT FOR THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

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.**

Please be seated

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

THE FIRST READING Acts 8.26-40 *read by Ted Mouritz*

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.) 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 and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. Then the Spirit said to Philip, 'Go over to this chariot and join it.' So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, 'Do you understand what you are reading?' He replied, 'How can I, unless someone guides me?' And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. 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. In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth.' The eunuch asked Philip, 'About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?' Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. 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 baptised?' He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptised him. 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. 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.

Hear the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

THE PSALM Psalm 22.26-32 *said*

From you springs my praise in the great congregation:

I will pay my vows in the sight of all that fear you;

The meek shall eat of the sacrifice and be satisfied:

and those who seek the Lord shall praise him –

may their hearts rejoice for ever!

Let all the ends of the earth remember

and turn to the Lord:

and let all the families of the nations worship before him.
For the kingdom is the Lord's:
and he shall be ruler over the nations.
How can those who sleep in the earth do him homage:
or those that descend to the dust bow down before him?
But he has saved my life for himself:
and my posterity shall serve him.
This shall be told of my Lord to a future generation:
and his righteousness declared to a people yet unborn,
that he has done it.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; as it was
in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

THE SECOND READING 1 John 3.16-24 *read by Sam Shepherd*

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. 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. 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. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Saviour of the world. God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. 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. 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. 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. We love because he first loved us. 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. The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.

Hear the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Please stand for the reading of the Gospel

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia

This is the day that the Lord has made;

let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

THE GOSPEL John 15.1-8

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to St. John.

Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

'I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine-grower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. 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. 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. Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.

For the Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

THE SERMON

The Vicar, The Revd Dr Peter French

THE NICENE CREED *said together, standing*

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE *led by Brenda Mouritz*

The Prayers end with the following

Almighty God, you have promised to hear our prayers. Grant that what we have asked in faith, we may by your grace receive, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

PARISH NOTICES

THE GREETING OF PEACE *standing*

Christ is risen. Alleluia! He is risen indeed. Alleluia!
The peace of the risen Lord be always with you. And also with you.

All share with each other a 'COVIDsafe' sign of peace

OFFERTORY

As the gifts of bread and wine are brought forward, a monetary collection for the life of St. John's is taken. Please give by contributing to the collection plate, at the paypoint at the rear of the church or by scanning the QR code.



OFFERTORY HYMN 'Lord, enthroned in heavenly splendour'

Gr. Capo 3 Bb(G) Gm(Em) Cm(Am) F7(D7) Bb(G)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1. Lord, enthroned in heavenly splendour,
first-begotten from the dead,
you alone our strong defender,
lifting up your people's head:
alleluia, alleluia,
Jesus, true and living bread.</p> <p>2. Here our humble homage pay we,
here in loving reverence bow;
here for faith's discernment pray
we,
lest we fail to know you now:
alleluia, alleluia,
you are here, we ask not how.</p> | <p>3. Paschal Lamb, your offering,
finished
once for all when you were slain,
in its fullness undiminished
shall for evermore remain,
alleluia, alleluia,
cleansing souls from every stain.</p> <p>4. Life-imparting heavenly manna,
stricken rock with streaming side,
heaven and earth with loud
hosanna
worship you, the Lamb who died,
alleluia, alleluia,
ris'n, ascended, glorified</p> |
|---|---|

George Hugh Bourne 1840-1925 *alt.* (TiS 520)

PRAYER FOR RECEIVING THE OFFERTORY

Lord of life, with unbounded joy we offer you our sacrifice of praise. As we are fed with the bread of heaven may we know your resurrection power; through Christ our risen Lord. **Blessed be God for ever.**

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

All remain standing

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

The Great Thanksgiving Prayer continues to the following

Therefore, with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we proclaim your great and glorious name, for ever praising you and saying:

SANCTUS

**Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power and might,
Heaven and earth are full of your glory, Hosanna in the highest.**

BENEDICTUS

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

The Great Thanksgiving Prayer continues to the following

...Let us proclaim the mystery of faith
Christ has died, Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

The Great Thanksgiving Prayer ends with the following

... now and for ever.

**Blessing and honour and glory and power are yours for ever and ever.
Amen.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

As our Saviour Christ has taught us, we are confident to pray
**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come,
your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily
bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the
kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.**

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ. We who are many
are one body, **for we all share in the one bread.**

AGNUS DEI

**Jesus Lamb of God, have mercy on us.
Jesus bearer of our sins, have mercy on us.
Jesus redeemer of the world, grant us your peace.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION *kneeling or standing*

This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.
Blessed are those who are called to his supper.
**Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word, and I
shall be healed.**

ADMINISTRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION

All baptised Christians are welcome to receive Holy Communion. Communion is available as consecrated bread, which is given to each person, and wine which may be drunk from the chalice. A separate chalice for intinction (dipped) is also provided. If you would prefer a blessing, please come forward and indicate this by keeping your arms behind your back. Gluten free wafers are available on request.

POST COMMUNION PRAYER *Please stand.*

The prayer ends with the following

**Father, we offer ourselves to you as a living sacrifice through Jesus
Christ our Lord. Send us out in the power of your Spirit to live and
work to your praise and glory.**

FINAL HYMN 'That Eastertide with joy was bright'

Gtr. Capo 1 Eb(D) Cm(Bm) Bb(A) / Eb(D)

1. That Eastertide with joy was
bright, *alleluia, alleluia!*
the sun shone out with fairer light,
when to their longing eyes restored
th' apostles saw their risen Lord.
alleluia, alleluia, alleluia,
alleluia, alleluia!

possess,
that we may give you all our days
the tribute of our grateful praise.

Anon., Latin c, 7th cent. *Tr.*

John Mason Neale 1818-66 *alt.* (TiS 360)

2. Jesus, the king of gentleness,
come now yourself our hearts

BLESSING

DISMISSAL

Go in the peace of Christ. Alleluia! Alleluia!
Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia!

POSTLUDE *Con Spirito* (Organ solo from a Concerto)
Thomas Arne (1710-1778)

As the postlude is played please remain seated or leave quietly



Order of Service from *A Prayer Book for Australia 1995*. Broughton Books by E.J.Dwyer (Australia) Pty Ltd, Unit 13, Perry Park, 33 Maddox Street, Alexandria, NSW 2015. © 1995, The Anglican Church of Australia Trust Corporation.

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CURRENT NOTICES

Patronal Festival & Visit from Bishop Kate Prowd, Sunday 5 May, 10am only

Next Sunday May 5, we will celebrate our patron St. John the Evangelist with a visit from Bishop Kate Prowd. For this occasion, we will **NOT** be holding an 8am service, but will instead share in one joint service at 10am, followed by a scrumptious Morning Tea in Buxton Hall.

The Melbourne Anglican

In 2024 there will be 4 print & online editions and 7 online only editions. The March edition is currently available in the Narthex. The next print edition will be available on: **Sunday, 2 June.**

Rosters for May & June 2024

Rosters for May & June are now available. Copies available in the Narthex or [here](#). Did you know that we send out our pewsheets and roster weekly? Join the mailing list [here](#) or contact the parish office at enquiries@saintjohnstoorak.org.

Support St John's, Toorak

Your support of St John's is greatly appreciated!

Donations can be made directly to:

St. John's Anglican Church General Account, Westpac

Account Name: St John's Anglican Church | BSB: 033 086 | Account: 871931.

International transfers please include SWIFT code WPACAU2S.



REGULAR NOTICES

Safeguarding and Wellbeing

St. John's is committed to safeguarding all people and protecting their wellbeing, including young and vulnerable people, especially Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and children with diverse needs. All relevant staff and volunteers are trained in child safety and have appropriate clearance for service or clearance for ministry. If you have any concerns about the wellbeing of children in this parish, contact Kooyoora on 1800 135 246 or www.kooyoora.org.au If you have concerns about your wellbeing or that of another churchgoer please contact the clergy.

Pastoral Care

Clergy and members of the St John's Pastoral Care Team offer pastoral care on a regular basis to parishioners as well as to those who specifically request it. This may include Home Communion. They also visit local hospitals at the request of patients, family, friends or staff with the consent of the recipient. Clergy and Lay Pastoral Carers visit a number of local Aged Care facilities on a regular, usually monthly, basis. Parishioners and others are welcome to phone the church office to arrange a home visit by the clergy or a lay pastoral carer. Those who are no longer able to attend usual services at the church are visited on a regular basis at time intervals that suit them.

The Melbourne Anglican (TMA) and Prayer Diary

The latest edition of TMA is [here](#). The link to the May Prayer Diary is [here](#).

Contribute to Worship Services

All our ministries at St John's are supported by our wonderful volunteers. The rosters for May and June are available [here](#). And you will note that volunteering for morning tea has now been added to the list of duties. If you can help fill any of the gaps please contact the parish office. Thanks in advance.

Communion Instructions

All are welcome at the altar and those baptised are welcome to receive Communion. Holy Communion is distributed via a chalice from which to sip or, a separate chalice into which the bread may be intincted (dipped). If you wish to simply receive the bread only that is perfectly appropriate. Gluten free wafers are available on request. A blessing only is also available.

Zoom Link

Our 10am Sunday service is streamed here:

us02web.zoom.us/j/87520014330?pwd=VFNadGFaSzAzSmcrSEZuK1kVzFDQOT09

Meeting ID: 875 2001 4330 Passcode: 670339

Prayer Requests

Prayer requests can be sent to prayers@saintjohnstoorak.org. The clergy check emails for prayer requests daily, and pray in solidarity with anyone who would like prayers said for them.

Clergy Days Off

Our clergy have one regular day off per week. Our Assistant Curate Lydia has Monday and Vicar Peter has Friday. Wendy usually works Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday only. Please respect their time away from work and unless in an emergency, please refrain from telephoning, texting, visiting the Vicarage, or emailing them on these days. Thank you.

FOR YOUR PRAYERS

Prayers for Victims of War

Give comfort, O Lord, to all who are torn away from their homes and their loved ones, by war, by famine, or by cruelty; give the world your peace and turn the hearts of those who will to war; grant that we who dwell secure in this insecure world may be generous in caring for our displaced brothers and sisters, of all faiths and none. We ask this in the name of the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

From the Anglican Cycle of Prayer: St Thomas' Moonee Ponds (Vanessa Bennett); The Diocese of Willochra (Bp Jeremy James, Clergy & People); SparkLit (Michael Collie, National Director); St Mark's Camberwell – pastoral visit (Bp Kate Prowd); St Augustine's Mentone – pastoral visit (Bp Paul Barker); Holy Trinity Williamstown – pastoral service (Bp Brad Billings); The Church of Bangladesh (Bp Samuel Sunil Mankin);

For those who lead us in Government: His Majesty King Charles III; Governor General David Hurley AC; Prime Minister Anthony Albanese; Federal Member of Parliament for Division of Higgins, Dr. Michelle Ananda-Rajah; and Premier of Victoria, Jacinta Allan.

For Reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians: For Aboriginal Anglican clergy and lay-leaders around Australia, their spiritual health and physical well-being, and the people they care for. For Aboriginal and Government leaders and their work together.

For The Toorak Ecumenical Movement: Our partner churches, St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church, Toorak Uniting Church, and The Swedish Church.

For The Anglican Board of Mission, The Brotherhood of St. Laurence, and Anglicare.

For schools in our parish: Geelong Grammar School Toorak Campus, Head of Campus Nicole Ginnane; St Catherine's School, Interim Principal Robert Marshall; and Toorak Primary School, Principal Julie Manallack.

For the sick and all in need: Gwen, Rex, Bruce, Sam, Margaret, Nichole, Joanna, Ivan, Anthea, David, John, Tim, Joan, James, Karen, Trisha, Emma & Thomas.

For those in aged care and those who are housebound: Rosie; Beverley; Val; Rosalind; Elizabeth & Sue.

For those who have died and their families who mourn them: David Mackay, Andrew Wells, & Judyth Edquist

Give thanks for those whose Anniversary of Death is this week: Gwentyth Condon (2019); Adrian Gibson (2015); Lynette Lowry (2015); Flora Grimwade (2020); John Osborne (2020); The Honourable Anthony Staley (2023); Richard Trebilcock (2016) & Henrietta Morgan (2020).



SCRIPTURE COMMENTARY

Acts 10:44-48

Peter has been bidden to visit Cornelius, an officer of the Roman army of occupation stationed in Caesarea. Both have had visions; in Peter's case, he has been advised not to worry about what meat a Jew can eat per Mosaic law (and whether he can visit a Gentile home), Peter visits Cornelius and his household: "many had assembled" (v. 27). Peter tells them that God has shown him not to distinguish between Jews and non-Jews (v. 28). Cornelius, a devout man who reveres and prays to God, tells him of his vision, of God's agent who told him to send for Peter. Cornelius says: "So now all of us are here in the presence of God to listen to all that the Lord has commanded you to say" (v. 33). Peter has summarised Jesus' earthly ministry. In Jesus' baptism, the Father anointed [him] ... with the Holy Spirit and with power" (v. 38). The apostles witnessed "all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem" (v. 39). Jesus was crucified, but the Father "raised him ... and allowed him to appear" (v. 40) in the flesh to those chosen by God. Jesus commanded them to spread the good news, and to testify that he, as God's agent, is to judge (at the end of the era) those still living and those who have died (v. 42). He is the one of whom the Old Testament prophets spoke: "everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins" (v. 43). Now, the Holy Spirit comes, as a "gift" (v. 45), on all present, "even on the Gentiles": to the surprise of the Jewish Christians "who had come with Peter". ("Speaking in tongues", v. 46, is a sign of the presence of the Spirit.) The pouring out of the Spirit and baptism are closely associated in Acts; here baptism follows the coming of the Spirit. Peter's question (v. 47) amounts to: we Jewish Christians received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (2:14); now these Gentiles have received it, so surely they can be baptised. So they are baptised - not by Peter, but under his authority (v. 48). During his stay, Peter presumably ate with these nonJews. In 11:1-18, Peter returns to Jerusalem, and defends his actions. He recalls that Jesus had told them that they would receive the Holy Spirit. God has given the Gentiles "the same gift that he gave us when we believed" (11:17), so who was I to stand in God's way? Those present "praised God, saying, 'Then God has given even to the Gentiles the repentance that leads to [eternal] life'" (11:18).

Psalm 98

Worshippers are invited to sing "a new song" marking new evidence of God's rule. With truth ("right hand") and power, he has won the "victory", i.e. salvation, saving acts - for his people Israel. (Note the emphasis on "victory": the word occurs three times in vv. 1-3.) He has triumphed over all who seek to overthrow his kingdom. All peoples can see that Israel is right in trusting him ("vindication", v.2). Then v. 3: as he did when the Israelites groaned under oppression in Egypt (Exodus 2:24), he now remembers his covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob -to lead them and protect them. All peoples will see his saving acts. (These verses are in the past tense, but a scholar points out that the reference is to a future event.) Vv. 4-8 call on all creation ("earth", "sea", "floods" and "hills") to acknowledge and be joyful in

God's rule. Per v. 7b, people of all lands are invited to join in. God's coming to "judge the world" (v. 9b) will be a truly marvellous event. He will judge us, but his judgement will be perfectly fair and equitable, for he is righteous.

1 John 5:1-6

All who believe that "Jesus is the Christ" (vv. 1, 5), the saviour of the world who offers forgiveness of deviations from God's ways, have been adopted as children of God. All who love God ("the parent") also love his or her fellow believers: this love is a dimension of God. The mark of loving God and obeying him is loving our fellows (v. 2). Loving God implies that we obey him (v. 3); this is not "burdensome" for us, being God's, for we have the power to overcome evil. It is through our faith in God that we are victorious: we believe that "Jesus is the Son of God" (v. 5): this is the very core of our faith. As people come to Christ, so God's power is shown more widely in the world. Some dissidents may have accepted that Jesus was baptised ("came by water", v. 6) but rejected his very human agony on the cross ("blood"); however, but he experienced both baptism and crucifixion. The Spirit witnessed both these events; he is continually present as the soul of the Church, the continuation of Christ's action in the world. In vv. 7-8, the author tells us that three things jointly "testify" that Jesus is Son of God: (1) "the Spirit", at work in the community, (2) baptism ("water"), and (3) the crucifixion and/or the Eucharist ("blood").

John 15:9-17

Jesus continues to prepare his disciples for his physical departure from them. He has told them that he is the "true" (v. 1) vine, the Father's agent, and that they are the "fruit" (v. 2), "the branches" (v. 5). They represent him in the world - to bear fruit, to do in his name. This is how God's power will be extended among humans. He has loved them as the Father has loved him; they are to continue to love him, by being obedient to his "commandments" (v. 10); he has been obedient, even to death on the cross. He continues to be in a loving relationship with the Father. This kind of love leads to "joy" (v. 11), ultimate joy. Jesus, the model for our behaviour, loved us so much that he gave his life for us, his "friends" (v. 13). To be a servant (v. 15) of God was an honour in Old Testament times, but a servant was not normally admitted to the counsel of his master while "friends" were: his disciples know all that the Father has told him. Jesus has taken the initiative in choosing them and appointing them to seek converts who will be deeply and lastingly committed to him (v. 16).



ART COMMENTARY

This mosaic was completed during the 12th century in the Basilica of San Clemente al Laterano in Rome. (Pope Saint Clement was the third pope after Saint Peter). The theme depicts the words of our Gospel reading today: 'I am the vine, you are the branches'. We see at the very centre of the apse the crucified Christ with Mary his mother, and the apostle John. The cross is rooted in the acanthus plant from which his Church emanates. The Church with all its branches is shown growing out of the foot of the Cross. Christ sits in the middle of all these branches, surrounded by His Church. At the very base of the Tree of Life, we see the four rivers of Eden emerge, and animals are drinking the life-giving water. They include deer, a reference to Psalm 42:2 'As the deer longs for streams of water, so my soul longs for you, O God'. This is another reference to the Church which, through its sacraments, nourishes the faithful. The branches of the vine are all connected to the one tree, so all of us human beings are connected to one another. To me the most beautiful element of thinking of our Church as a vine is that when a vine is alive, it wants to grow. A vine wants to live and produce fruit. That fruit nurtures us physically when we eat grapes, and it nurtures us spiritually when it is changed from wine into the blood of Christ during the Eucharist. The vine and the cross are growing out of an acanthus bush, which was an ancient Greek and Roman symbol for abundance and new life. The bottom frieze shows the Apostles as the twelve sheep, facing the central sheep which has a halo, which symbolises Jesus as the Lamb of God.

MUSIC COMMENTARY

Prelude: Siciliana (from a voluntary) *William Walond (1725-1770)*

Little is known about William Walond, but what is known is that he was highly thought of among his fellow organists. He spent most of his career as the assistant of Richard Church, who was the Heather Professor of Music at Oxford and also the organist of both Christ Church and New College, Oxford. It seems that Church mainly looked after the music at Christ Church himself and left Walond to handle the music program at New College.

Postlude: Con Spirito (Organ solo from a Concerto) *Thomas Arne (1710-1778)*

Arne was an English composer from the 18th Century who is most well remembered for his patriotic song "Rule, Britannia!". He was a leading British theatre composer, working at Drury Lane and Covent Garden, and interestingly, because of his Catholicism, he never composed music for the Church of England (unlike most other leading English composers of his time).



ST. JOHN'S
ANGLICAN
CHURCH
TOORAK
EST. 1859

This Week

SUNDAY, 28 April 2024

Fifth Sunday of Easter

8am Said Eucharist
10am Sung Eucharist
12pm Baptism

MONDAY, 29 April 2024

10am Interment of the Ashes
of Judyth Edquist

WEDNESDAY, 1 May 2024

7pm Eucharist



Next Sunday, 5 May John, Apostle & Evangelist

NO 8am Eucharist

10am Eucharist

First Reading: *Proverbs: 8:22-31*, James Griffith

Second Reading: *1 John 1:1-5*, Marinella Milne

Gospel Reading: *John 20:2-8*

Intercessor: Jenny Smith

Preacher: Bishop Kate Prowd

Morning Tea: Jane Anderson, Celia Langford,
Fiona Singleton, Jenny Smith, Vivienne Randall
& Diana Morgan



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