

Rev Maile Molitika - Minister's Message

"The Essence of Maundy Thursday"

Maundy Thursday is always a reminder to all Christians, about the ultimate love of Christ

Maundy comes from Latin, which means 'command', 'a command to love and the revelation of that love is Christ Himself. Jesus knew that his time on earth is coming to the end. According to the Gospel of John 13, Jesus is having a meal with his disciples and he rose from the table, took off his outer garment, and tied a towel around his waist. Then he poured some water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and dry them with the towel. Peter was reluctant have his feet washed by Jesus, but Jesus said, **"If I do not wash your feet, you will no longer my disciple."**

After Jesus washed their feet, he went down to his place at the table and explained - **"You call me Teacher and Lord and it is right that you do so, because that is who I am. I, your Lord and Teacher, have just washed your feet. You, then, should wash one another's feet. I have set an example for you, so that you will do just what I have done for you"**.

The first lesson that we learn from this last supper is the servanthood of Jesus. No one in the disciples would have thought about this washing of the feet. Jesus himself the Lord and Teacher came down on his knees to wash his disciples' feet. We need to be humble at all times. Jesus' biggest act of service showing His humility when He washed the feet of His disciples on Maundy Thursday. This action is often taken as a sign of servitude and humility, usually performed by a servant for their owner or their guests.

The second lesson that we learn from Jesus on Maundy Thursday is the new commandment. He did not tell to his disciples, to fight the good fight for Him so the people will know that you are my disciples. He said in John 13:34 - 35 **"And now I give you a new commandment: Love one another, As I have loved you, so you must love one another. if you have love one another, then everyone will know that you are my disciples."** Love one another is a command of Jesus to show that we are his followers. Humility and Love are the essence of Maundy Thursday.

Let us start this Easter Weekend with a clear conscience, pure heart and a joyful attitude. **We all come as one big family of God, to listen to him, to study his words, to pray, to fellowship, and to recharge our lives from the bread of life, the Living water, and the True Vine.**

As we come together this weekend we lay all our troubles and concerns into the mighty hands of God. His hands are bigger than ours.

So our trust and hope are given to Him who knows the past, present, and the future, Amen.

The Servant King

(An Easter Meditation)

I have a regular Easter ritual! On Good Friday I retreat to my study, don my headphones, go online and listen uninterrupted to John Stainer's *Crucifixion*. Ironically, I have never sung it in a choir, apart from an acapella quartet, "God so loved the world". Nevertheless, this beautiful oratorio never fails to bring me to my knees in gratitude, deep affection, and recommitment to the core values of our faith. Easter brings us to the foot of the cross and the very essence of our Christian faith. We are confronted once again with the truth of a pure, sinless divine Being, who gave himself totally and absolutely to those whom he loved, even to the point of dying for them: for us!

The story is described simply and poignantly in the words of Philippians 2. Most significantly, the poem begins with a focus on attitude (v.5), a good place to start! It all begins with attitude: our attitude towards life, towards others, or towards personal relationships. The Apostle urges his readers (which includes us) to adopt the same attitude as that of Christ. At the very beginning, at its very core, is an act of self-abnegation: He does not cling selfishly to his own rights, status, or position. On the contrary, the very core of Christ's attitude is self-denial, for the sake of others. He does not cling to his "divine rights" but foregoes them, intentionally and voluntarily. He is the ultimate epitome of humility.



The cross in my photo is West Australian Jarrah, and the base a piece of mallee root. They were brought together by the skilful hands of our faithful member Alan Donaldson into a simple worship centre for our lounge room buffet as a silent testimony to our calling in Christ. Easter is before us every day!

This attitude was expressed in a deliberate act of letting go: He emptied himself (v.7) and adopted the role of a servant (doulos). He becomes the **Servant-King** who washes the feet of his disciples, who walks alongside them on dusty roads, sits with them on the hillsides yarning all night, and never asks them to do what he does not himself do. He leads them by his own example, both in words and actions.

But as if that's not enough, there's more, much more! The ultimate expression of his humility was to become "obedient unto death, *even death on a cross*" (v.8). The Roman cross was not a nice way to die. It was absolutely barbaric, humiliating, repugnant, shameful and unbelievably cruel. There is one brief but beautiful passage in Stainer's Oratorio where a bass singer sings "Oh 'twas love", echoed by a tenor, followed by "Yes, and still thy patient heart is yearning, with a love that mortal scarce can bear". Divine love contradicting human barbarism!

Here is our model for Christian discipleship and service. Where else in the world can we find such a model? Many down through the centuries have found their deepest motivation through meditation on the cross. People such as Zinzendorf (founder of the Moravians), Wesley, Bonhoeffer, Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, Mother Teresa, Mercy Ships, and thousands of others, have all found their inspiration for service in the crucified Christ, the Servant-King. Certainly, it is the heart-beat of my own faith and service.

But that is not quite all! The Faithful Servant is vindicated through a mighty act of resurrection. **Christ is risen!** The cross is empty! The Servant has been restored to a position of honour and is worthy of worship, praise and adoration (v.9. Rev 5:12). The victim has become the Victor! (Tom Holland). Faithfulness, integrity, sacrifice and loving service are ultimately rewarded. The Divine King reigns!

Yet the challenge remains, to all Pastors, Ministers, Elders, church leaders, and indeed all disciples: are we ready to follow Him in sacrificial service?

*This is our God, the Servant King,
He calls us now to follow him;
To bring our lives as a daily offering,
of worship to the Servant King.* (Graham Kendrick, TiS256)

Rev Graham Warne

The **NeXus** between our mission and our spiritual power
is the gathered congregation.

While God comes to us by His Spirit thus transforming us by his grace,
we are drawn into precious fellowship with each other.

As a congregation gathers for worship, it is being strengthened,
then sent out again for a missional purpose.

In times such as these, this copy of **Nambour NeXus** is provided
so that you may have resources to assist you in your personal household
worship of God, to assist you in growing your faith,
and to encourage your concern and prayers for others.

SEVEN DAILY PRAYERS

FOR SEVEN DAYS

APRIL/MAY 2026



**Prayers for everyday living;
honouring and serving our Living God.
EASTER**



**Pray aloud at any time, or with a soft voice,
in the morning, and at dinner time,
the Lord will answer each prayer, one at a time.**

Day 1 Sunday Prayer - losing my way

My dear Lord God, when I look around at what's happening in this world, I wonder where I fit in. Your Word tells me to set my heart on things above, not on things of this earth, then please grant me the wisdom to seek first and foremost Your kingdom and Your righteousness. Lord, help me to believe in You, and also in myself as a Christian.

I pray through your Son, Jesus Christ my Lord, Amen.

Day 2 Monday Prayer - surrender

My dear Lord God, forgive me for trying to be the master of my life. Help me to depend on You for my sense of self-worth, my satisfaction, my fulfillment, and my joy. I surrender my heart and my will, and my ways to You. I have placed my life in Your loving hands, Lord have mercy.

I pray through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Day 3 Tuesday Prayer - direction

My dear Lord God, teach me your ways, Lord, show me my path I should take. Guide me in your truth and teach me where my place and value lie, for you are God, my Saviour, and my hope is in you all day long. My mind is weakened by temptations but my heart is strong for you. Direct me toward Your will and Your ways I plead. I trust You in my next step, I await Your guidance.

I pray through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

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Sunday Services are available on the Nambour Uniting Church Website and youtube

(2024/25/26 services unavailable due to ongoing works in our Church auditorium)

The website also contains Mission Possible photos, word study, reflections, stained glass windows and more.

Thanks to Don Heaton for recording those Services, and Ian Brown for our great website

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Day 4 Wednesday Prayer - purpose

My dear Lord God, You have given specific gifts and talents to me that I can use to help and bless others in need. Lord, I look to You continuing to reveal Your purpose for my life, I pray that I will be open and obedient to do what You ask of me. Help me to let go of control over people and their situations, letting You show me how to give Your assistance in the ways that give You the glory that is Yours.

I trust in You to help me, and am ready to serve You in every way I can.

I pray through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Day 5 Thursday Prayer - trust

My dear Lord God, thank you that I am saved by my faith in You, that faith comes from You and Your Holy Spirit's work in my life. Help me to exercise that faith, allowing it to grow more over time. Please let me understand more fully my place and in what You have designed for me to do. My trust is in You.

I pray through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Day 6 Friday Prayer - guidance

My dear Lord God, be my sun, shining Your light on the path You have given me, protect me from mistakes and temptations along the way. Grant me wisdom, to know which way to turn and how to move forward. Lord, make Your voice very clear to me through Your Word, that I am guided on the correct paths through my journey in this life.

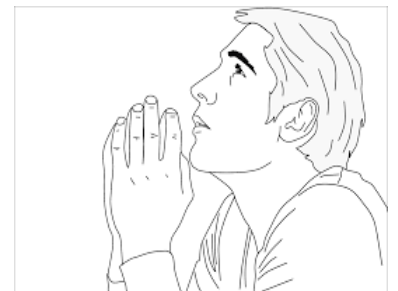
I pray through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Day 7 Saturday - The Full Serenity Prayer

God, grant me the serenity
To accept the things I cannot change,
The courage to change the things I can,
And the wisdom to know the difference.

Living one day at a time,
Enjoying one moment at a time,
Accepting hardship as the pathway to peace.
Taking, as Jesus did, this sinful world as it is,
Not as I would have it.

Trusting that You will make all things right
if I surrender to Your will.
So that I may be reasonably happy in this life,
And supremely happy with You
forever in the next, Amen.



DID JESUS REALLY EXIST? DID JESUS DIE ON THE CROSS? DID THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS TAKE PLACE?

Pages

6-10

Sceptical English journalist Frank Morison believed Jesus' resurrection was mythical and began research for a book proving his case. Morison wanted to know what actually happened that changed Jesus' followers and started a movement that has made such a profound impact on our world.

He realised there were five possible explanations:

1. Jesus didn't really die on the cross.
2. Jesus' body was stolen.
3. The disciples were hallucinating.
4. The account is legendary.
5. It really happened.

Morison began examining the facts.

1. Was Jesus Dead?

Morison first wanted verification that Jesus was really dead when placed in the tomb. He learned that Jesus' death was considered factual for nearly 1800 years. Then about 200 years ago, a few sceptics postulated that Jesus didn't die on the cross, but merely lost consciousness, and was revived by the cool, damp air of the tomb. This became known as the "*swoon theory*."

Morison wondered if Jesus could have survived the cross. He researched both Jewish and Roman contemporary history and discovered the following facts supporting Jesus' death:

- All the accounts affirm he died.
- Pilate verified he died.
- During the lifetime of the eyewitnesses no one disputes his death.
- Secular and contemporary historians, Lucian, Josephus, and Tacitus cite his death as factual.

Morison became convinced that Jesus was truly dead, a fact almost universally accepted as true by trusted scholars and historians.

Morison concludes, "That Jesus Christ died on the cross, in the full physical sense of the term...seems to me to be one of the certainties of history."

2. Was Jesus' body stolen?

Morison wondered if the disciples faked the resurrection story by stealing Jesus' body, and then claiming he was alive. That might be plausible if the tomb was in an obscure area where no one would see them.

However, the tomb belonged to a well-known member of the Sanhedrin Council, Joseph of Arimathea. Since Joseph's tomb was at a well-known location and easily identifiable, any thoughts of Jesus being "lost in the graveyard" would need to be dismissed.

Not only was the location well known, but the Romans had assigned guards to watch the tomb 24 hours a day. This was a trained guard unit comprised of four to 16 soldiers.

Former atheist and sceptic Josh McDowell spent more than seven hundred hours researching the evidence for the resurrection. McDowell notes, “***The Roman Guard unit was committed to discipline and they feared failure in any way.***” It would have been impossible for anyone to have slipped by the guards unnoticed and then move the stone. Yet the stone was rolled away, making it possible for eyewitnesses to enter the tomb. And when they did, the body of Jesus was missing.

If Jesus’ body was anywhere to be found, his enemies would have quickly exposed the resurrection as a fraud. Tom Anderson, former president of the California Trial Lawyers Association, summarises the strength of this argument:

“With an event so well publicised, don’t you think that it’s reasonable that one historian, one eye witness, one antagonist would record for all time that he had seen Christ’s body? ... The silence of history is deafening when it comes to the testimony against the resurrection.”

So, with no body of evidence, and with a known tomb clearly empty, Morison accepted that Jesus’ body had somehow disappeared from the tomb.

3. Were the Disciples Hallucinating?

Morison wondered if the disciples might have been so emotionally distraught that they hallucinated.

Former president of the American Association of Christian Counselors, Psychologist Gary Collins, explains that, “***Hallucinations are individual occurrences. By their very nature, only one person can see a given hallucination at a time. They certainly aren’t something which can be seen by a group of people.***”

Hallucination is not even a remote possibility, according to psychologist Thomas J. Thorburn. “***It is absolutely inconceivable that ... five hundred persons, of average soundness of mind ... should experience all kinds of sensuous impressions – visual, auditory, tactual – and that all these ... experiences should rest entirely upon ... hallucination.***” The hallucination theory, then, appears to be another dead end.

4. Is it just a Legend?

Some attribute the resurrection story to a legend that began with one or more persons lying or thinking they saw the resurrected Jesus. Over time, the legend would have grown and been embellished as it was passed on. But there are three major problems with that theory.

1. Legends simply don’t develop while multiple eyewitnesses are alive to refute them. One historian of ancient Rome and Greece, A. N. Sherwin-White, argued that the resurrection news spread too soon and too quickly for it to have been a legend. Even sceptical scholars admit that Christian hymns and creeds were recited in early churches within two to three years of Jesus’ crucifixion.
2. Legends develop by oral tradition and are not supported with contemporary historical documents. Yet the Gospels were written within three decades of the resurrection.
3. The legend theory doesn’t adequately explain either the empty tomb or the fervent conviction of the apostles that Jesus was alive.

Morison’s original assumption that the resurrection account was mythical or legendary didn’t coincide with the facts.

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5. Did the resurrection really happen?

Having eliminated the main arguments against Jesus' resurrection due to their inconsistency with the facts, Morison began asking himself, "*did it really happen?*" Instead of looking for evidence against Jesus' resurrection, he wondered how strong the case was for its actual occurrence. Several facts stood out.

Women First

Each eyewitness account reports that Jesus suddenly appeared bodily to his followers, the women first. Morison wondered why conspirators would make women central to the plot. In the first century, women had virtually no rights, personhood, or status. Morison reasoned that conspirators would have portrayed men, not women, as the first to see Jesus alive. And yet we read women were the first to find the empty tomb, touched him, and spoke with him.

Multiple Eyewitnesses

The disciples claim they saw Jesus on more than ten separate occasions. They say he showed them his hands and feet and told them to touch him. He ate with them and later, on one occasion, appeared alive to more than 500 followers.

In Caesarea, Peter told a crowd why he and the other disciples were so convinced Jesus was alive. "*We apostles are witnesses of all he did throughout Israel and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by crucifying him, but God raised him to life three days later ... We were those who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.*"

Morison realised that these early sightings of a risen Jesus by so many of his followers would have been virtually impossible to fake.

Consistent to the End

As Morison continued his investigation, he began to examine the motives of Jesus' followers. He reasoned that something extraordinary must have happened, because the followers of Jesus ceased mourning, ceased hiding, and began fearlessly proclaiming that they had seen Jesus alive.

As if the eyewitness reports were not enough to challenge Morison's scepticism, he was also baffled by the disciples' behaviour. These eleven former cowards were suddenly willing to suffer humiliation, torture, and death. All but one of Jesus' disciples were slain as martyrs. If they had taken the body, would they have sacrificed so much for a lie? Something happened that changed everything for these men and women.

IT WAS THIS SIGNIFICANT FACT THAT PERSUADED MORISON THE RESURRECTION MUST HAVE REALLY HAPPENED.

Morison acknowledged, "*Whoever comes to this problem has sooner or later to confront a fact that cannot be explained away ... This fact is that ... a profound conviction came to the little group of people – a change that attests to the fact that Jesus had risen from the grave.*"

Professor J. N. D. Anderson and author of "Evidence for the Resurrection" concurs, "*Think of the psychological absurdity of picturing a little band of defeated cowards cowering in an upper room one day and a few days later transformed into a company that no persecution could silence – and then attempting to attribute this dramatic change to nothing more convincing than a miserable fabrication ... That simply wouldn't make sense.*"

Why Did Christianity Win?

Finally, Morison was bewildered by the fact that *“a tiny insignificant movement was able to prevail over the cunning grip of the Jewish establishment, as well as the might of Rome. “Within twenty years, the claim of these Galilean peasants had disrupted the Jewish church... In less than fifty years it had begun to threaten the peace of the Roman Empire. When we have said everything that can be said... we stand confronted with the greatest mystery of all. Why did Christianity win?”*

By all rights, if there were no resurrection, Christianity should have died out at the cross when the disciples fled for their lives. But the apostles went on to establish a growing Christian movement. Whatever one believes about the validity of Jesus’ resurrection, clearly *“something happened”* after his death that has made a lasting impact on our world.

When world historian **H. G. Wells** was asked who has left the greatest legacy on history, the non-Christian scholar replied, **“BY THIS TEST JESUS STANDS FIRST”**.

2 Timothy 1:10; **“For Christ has completely abolished death, and has now, through the Gospel, opened to us men the shining possibilities of the life that is eternal.”**

In other words, Jesus’ death and resurrection opened the door for us to have eternal life with Christ. But, there is an obstacle preventing us from going to heaven.

The apostle Paul explains; **“You were his enemies, separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions...”** —Colossians 1:21, NLT. The obstacle to us having eternal life with Christ is that we have sinned and rebelled against our holy God. Although God loves us beyond our understanding, his perfect justice requires payment for our sins. This penalty is death. Many wonder why an all-powerful, loving God can’t just forgive us without punishing us for our sins.

Why does God demand justice?

Here is the picture painted by the New Testament. God stepped down into human history, in the person of Jesus Christ, and was crucified on the cross for us. Jesus is not a third-party whipping boy being punished for our sins, but rather he is God himself. Stated more bluntly, God had two choices: to punish us for our sin, or to receive the punishment himself.

In Christ, he decided to pay the penalty for us.

In other words, God’s perfect justice is completely satisfied by the death of Jesus Christ, his Son. All of our sins—no matter how bad they are or have been—are completely paid for by the blood of Christ. Paul writes,

“...yet now he has brought you back as his friends. He has done this through his death on the cross in his own human body. As a result, he has brought you into the very presence of God, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault.”

—Colossians 1:22, NLT

Do I have to do good deeds to get into heaven?

Since eternal life is a gift from God, you and I can’t do anything to earn our way into heaven. Paul, in his letter to the Ephesians, explains God’s amazing grace.

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.” —Ephesians 2:8-9, NIV

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For a gift to be ours, we need to actually receive it. Like any gift, you can choose to accept or reject Jesus Christ’s pardon for the penalty for your sins. This was made clear by the apostle John.

“This is what God told us: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life, but whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.” —1 John 5:11-12, NCV

To become a Christian, you must place your faith in Jesus’ death for your sins on the cross, and trust in His resurrection for your eternal life. It is a choice that you alone must make. No one else can do it for you.

You must honestly admit you have sinned and want the forgiveness Jesus Christ offers you. The apostle John tells us;

“If we freely admit that we have sinned, we find God utterly reliable . . . he forgives our sins and makes us thoroughly clean from all that is evil.” —1 John 1:9

John tells us that whoever receives Jesus Christ becomes his child.

“Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God”. —John 1:12, NIV. You can receive Jesus right now by asking him to come into your life and forgive your sins.

If you haven’t ever invited Jesus into your life, simply pray the following words.

It’s not the words you say but the attitude of your heart that is important.

“Dear Lord Jesus, thank you for dying for all my sins—past, present, and future. Thank you for giving me eternal life. I receive you as my Saviour by faith, and desire you to be Lord of my life. Make me the kind of person you want me to be, Amen.”

SOURCE; https://y-jesus.com/did_jesus_rise_from_the_dead?

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In the midst of this deepened conflict in Middle East,
I thought you may appreciate some authentic media, personally,
or possibly to inform corporate intercession, and/or Nexus.

Rev Ian Stehbens

Dear friends, partners, and brothers and sisters in Christ,

Grace and peace to you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We write to you at a very heavy and uncertain moment in our region. War once again casts a long shadow over the Holy Land and the broader Middle East. Violence, fear, and instability affect everyone—families, churches, ministries, and the most vulnerable among us. In times like these, no one remains untouched. War does not discriminate; it leaves emotional, economic, and spiritual wounds in every community.

As a Christian institution serving in Palestine for decades, Bethlehem Bible College continues its mission of equipping leaders to serve Christ in the midst of conflict and complexity. Yet we feel deeply the weight of what is happening around us. Our students, faculty, and church communities carry anxiety for loved ones, uncertainty about the future, and concern for daily safety and provision.

And still, we cling to the promises of God.

“The Lord is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be afraid?” (Psalm 27:1)

In the midst of shaking ground, we hold to the unshakable Kingdom. Our confidence is not in political powers, nor in human systems, but in the Lord who reigns above all nations.

We humbly ask you to stand with us in prayer:

- Pray for peace in our region and for wisdom among leaders.
- Pray for protection over civilians—especially children, the elderly, and the displaced.
- Pray for the Church in Palestine to be a faithful witness of Christ’s love and truth.
- Pray for our students at Bethlehem Bible College, that they would be strengthened, not discouraged, and formed into courageous servant leaders.
- Pray that we would continue our ministry with hope, resilience, and integrity.

In times of crisis, your prayers mean more than words can express. They remind us that we are not alone. We are one Body in Christ—sharing burdens, sharing hope, and sharing in the mission of God even in suffering.

We do not ask for sympathy; we ask for solidarity in Christ. Stand with us before the throne of grace. Intercede for the Holy Land. Ask the Prince of Peace to bring healing to wounded hearts and justice tempered with mercy.

May the Lord be your refuge as He is ours.

With gratitude and hope,
Rev. Dr. Jack Sara

President of Bethlehem Bible College



Army chaplain Fr Joel Vergara hears the echo of Easter on Anzac Day, seeing Australia’s most solemn secular date as a kind of bookend to Christianity’s Holy season.

‘It reconnects us to our Easter faith, that it’s not the end, but that there’s an eternal life that we believe in for our members who died in war,’ Fr Joel says.

Anzac Day is very important for chaplains, he says, and they are always there to provide prayers at services wherever they are held. In fact, chaplains in the Australian Defence Force are there to provide a ‘ministry of presence’—in-person and empathetic pastoral care—all year round.

Chaplains have been attached to Australian military contingents for 140 years. The first was believed to be with a small force sent to help the British empire in the Sudan War of 1885. A painting held by the Australian War Memorial (AWM) by Arthur Collingridge, pictured below, shows his brother Charles, a Roman Catholic chaplain, embracing the artist’s wife and son before the contingent departed Sydney’s Circular Quay.

The first official, post-federation Australian army chaplains came just ahead of World War I, when Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian and Methodist representatives and a top-level general established the Australian Army Chaplains Department in 1913. Each denomination has a chaplain attached to each infantry and lighthouse brigade, plus a senior chaplain from each state and a chaplain general. A ‘roving’ Jewish chaplain served during the First World War, becoming an official position during the Second World War.

Together, they were responsible for conducting many thousands of burials, recording the details of the dead and their place of burial, and often contacting families to break the news of their loved one’s death. They also conducted religious services and organised activities to boost morale.



‘The departure of the Australian contingent for the Sudan’ by Arthur Collingridge, oil painting, 1885.

Photo courtesy of Australian War Memorial

The AWM is full of stories of the chaplains who served in wartime, a sign of their importance in supporting service men and women at the most difficult and dangerous times of their lives.

The first chaplain ashore at Gallipoli, having disregarded an order to stay on the ship, was Fr John Fahey. The Catholic padre (as they are affectionately called in the Australian armed forces) survived and went on to serve in Egypt and France in 1916, becoming the longest-serving frontline chaplain.

There was the ‘barefoot’ Discalced Carmelite priest Elzear Basil Phillips, known as Fr Joe, whom the AWM describes as ‘quiet and pious with an interest in horseracing’. He served during World War II in Africa, Palestine and Syria, then—as the war came to Australia’s doorstep—in New Guinea and Borneo. He also served in the 1950–53 Korean War. Fr Joe was awarded an MBE for ‘fearless devotion to duty’, which included working with other padres as stretcher-bearers on the front line.

Things are different now. Warfare has changed; religion is not as central to people’s lives anymore, and there is a different understanding among the top echelons of the defence force about the psychological impact of military life on serving members.

Fr Joel has been working in this environment for more than a decade, and says chaplains are arguably more important than ever. But there is also a shortage, with only five full-time Catholic chaplains in the whole Australian army (plus three full-time Deacons and three Pastoral Associates), and a small number in the navy and air force.

Catholic soldiers attending Mass on the Gallipoli Peninsula. The chaplain celebrating Mass is Fr John Drinan Murphy.
Photo courtesy of Australian War Memorial



A chaplain supports Defence members and their families, Fr Joel explains. A Catholic chaplain provides ministry, makes sacraments available to Catholic members and celebrates Mass.

‘[However,] we are chaplains for all those people with faith, and no faith’ he says. ‘We provide religious support and spiritual support. Pastoral care is one of our roles, and we visit members who are in hospital or sick, or their family members who need support.’

They also provide ‘character-formation training’ like teaching values and ethics classes. According to Fr Joel, Australian Defence Force values—which include service, courage, respect and integrity—are rooted in Christian values.

‘Our Australian army is a very secular organisation, so we have to be very careful. But it’s important to have the Christian, the Catholic presence in this organisation. We develop a rapport with members,’ he says. ‘It’s a ministry of presence, and whatever members say to the chaplain is confidential. We value the trust between members and soldiers, but also there’s some limit with the confidentiality.’

The limit Fr Joel is referring to is if someone declares thoughts of suicide or self-harm, which although it happens at lower rates in serving men and women than in the general population, does jump substantially among those who have left.

The Australian Defence Force now acknowledges that complex psychological and psychiatric conditions can arise in its members. Fr Joel says there is also recognition of moral injury, a term likely coined in the 1990s for trauma people may experience in situations that violate their conscience or moral positions.

Recognition of this syndrome ‘validates the importance of chaplaincy’ he says, ‘because again, our role is support, spiritual ministry, but also looking after the mental health of our members.’

Fr Joel comes from a military family in the Philippines and says his first childhood ambition was to become a soldier. But he had a religious calling and went into the seminary instead. While he was studying there, a visiting military bishop explained about military chaplaincy. That reignited his childhood dreams, which he felt could be fulfilled by becoming a chaplain.

After working in a parish in the Archdiocese of Melbourne for several years, Fr Joel sought permission from then-Archbishop Denis Hart to join the Australian army. Under the system, a priest is seconded to the Catholic Diocese of the Australian Military Services, or military ordinariate, to work as a chaplain.

Fr Joel says it is a unique role for a priest but can also be very challenging. ‘As a chaplain, we move every two years. So I don’t have that community like a priest in the parish. We go where soldiers are in training and exercise and deployment. I’ve been to Afghanistan in 2012, and training exercises overseas in the Pacific.’

He is seeing an increasingly multicultural defence force mirrored in the military chaplaincy.

‘We’ve got more Christian denomination chaplains now, and we have Hindu, Buddhist and Islamic chaplains as well. So you have this multicultural and interfaith unity in Defence.’

Marking Anzac Day in Australia is also an increasingly multicultural experience, as understanding deepens that those who served, and serve today, are not just white Anglo-Saxons but from every background that makes up the Australian community.

‘On Anzac Day, you always see the important role of the chaplain,’ Fr Joel says. ‘We don’t glorify war, but we pray for peace and unity. The chaplains’ role is to honour the dead and to comfort those who are so sorrowful.’



**Royal Australian Army Chaplain's
Department (Christian) – Hat
Badge (Brightshine)**

DAILY BIBLE READINGS APRIL 2026

Vanderbilt Divinity Library's Revised Common Lectionary
*CLICK on the underlined readings for each day
to access the daily verses on the Bible Gateway website*

Wednesday, April 01, 2026: [Wednesday of Holy Week](#) Isaiah 50:4-9a, Psalm 70, Hebrews 12:1-3,
John 13:21-32

Thursday, April 02, 2026: [Maundy Thursday](#) Exodus 12:1-14, Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19,
1 Corinthians 11:23-26, John 13:1-17, 31b-35

Friday, April 03, 2026: [Good Friday](#) Isaiah 52:13-53:12, Psalm 22, Hebrews 10:16-25, John 18:1-19:42

Saturday, April 04, 2026: [Holy Saturday](#) Job 14:1-14, Psalm 31:1-4, 15-16, 1 Peter 4:1-8,
Matthew 27:57-66, Lamentations 3:1-9, 19-24, John 19:38-42

Easter Sunday, April 05, 2026: [Easter Vigil](#) **Old Testament Readings and Psalms**

Genesis 1:1-2:4a and Psalm 136:1-9 & 23-26, Genesis 7:1-5 & 11-18; 8:6-18; 9:8-13, Psalm 46,
Genesis 22:1-18, Psalm 16, Exodus 14:10-31; 15:20-21, Exodus 15:1b-13 & 17-18, Isaiah 55:1-11 & 12:2-6,
Baruch 3:9-15 then 3:32-4:4, Proverbs 8:1-8 & 19-21; 9:4b-6, Psalm 19, Ezekiel 36:24-28, Psalm 42,
Psalm 43, Ezekiel 37:1-14, Psalm 143, Zephaniah 3:14-20, Psalm 98.

New Testament Reading and Psalm Romans 6:3-11 and Psalm 114.

Gospel Matthew 28:1-10.

Sunday, April 05, 2026: [Resurrection of the Lord](#) Acts 10:34-43, Psalm 118:1-2 & 14-24, Colossians 3:1-4,
John 20:1-18, Jeremiah 31:1-6, Acts 10:34-43, Matthew 28:1-10

Sunday, April 05, 2026: [Easter Evening](#) Isaiah 25:6-9, Psalm 114, 1 Corinthians 5:6b-8, Luke 24:13-49

Monday, April 06, 2026: Psalm 118:1-2 & 14-24; Exodus 14:10-31; 15:20-21; Colossians 3:5-11

Tuesday, April 07, 2026: Psalm 118:1-2 & 14-24; Exodus 15:1-18; Colossians 3:12-17

Wednesday, April 08, 2026: Psalm 118:1-2 & 14-24; Joshua 3:1-17; Matthew 28:1-10

Thursday, April 09, 2026: Psalm 16; Song of Solomon 2:8-15; Colossians 4:2-5

Friday, April 10, 2026: Psalm 16; Song of Solomon 5:9-6:3; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Saturday, April 11, 2026: Psalm 16; Song of Solomon 8:6-7; John 20:11-20

Sunday, April 12, 2026: [Second Sunday of Easter](#) Acts 2:14a, 22-32, Psalm 16, 1 Peter 1:3-9, John 20:19-31

Monday, April 13, 2026: Psalm 114; Judges 6:36-40; 1 Corinthians 15:12-20

Tuesday, April 14, 2026: Psalm 114; Jonah 1:1-17; 1 Corinthians 15:19-28

Wednesday, April 15, 2026: Psalm 114; Jonah 2:1-10; Matthew 12:38-42

Thursday, April 16, 2026: Psalm 116:1-4 & 12-19; Isaiah 25:1-5; 1 Peter 1:8b-12

Friday, April 17, 2026: Psalm 116:1-4 & 12-19; Isaiah 26:1-4; 1 Peter 1:13-16

Saturday, April 18, 2026: Psalm 116:1-4 & 12-19; Isaiah 25:6-9; Luke 14:12-14

Sunday, April 19, 2026: [Third Sunday of Easter](#) Acts 2:14a & 36-41, Psalm 116:1-4 & 12-19,
1 Peter 1:17-23, Luke 24:13-35

Monday, April 20, 2026: Psalm 134; Genesis 18:1-14; 1 Peter 1:23-25

Tuesday, April 21, 2026: Psalm 134; Proverbs 8:32-9:6; 1 Peter 2:1-3

Wednesday, April 22, 2026: Psalm 134; Exodus 24:1-11; John 21:1-14

Thursday, April 23, 2026: Psalm 23; Exodus 2:15b-25; 1 Peter 2:9-12

Friday, April 24, 2026: Psalm 23; Exodus 3:16-22 & 4:18-20; 1 Peter 2:13-17

Saturday, April 25, 2026: Psalm 23; Ezekiel 34:1-16; Luke 15:1-7

Sunday, April 26, 2026: [Fourth Sunday of Easter](#) Acts 2:42-47, Psalm 23, 1 Peter 2:19-25, John 10:1-10

Monday, April 27, 2026: Psalm 100; Ezekiel 34:17-23; 1 Peter 5:1-5;

Tuesday, April 28, 2026: Psalm 100; Ezekiel 34:23-31; Hebrews 13:20-2;

Wednesday, April 29, 2026: Psalm 100; Jeremiah 23:1-8; Matthew 20:17-28

Thursday, April 30, 2026: Psalm 31:1-5 & 15-16; Genesis 12:1-3; Acts 6:8-15

DAILY BIBLE READINGS MAY 2026

Vanderbilt Divinity Library's Revised Common Lectionary
*CLICK on the underlined readings for each day
to access the daily verses on the Bible Gateway website*

Friday, May 01, 2026: Psalm 31:1-5 & 15-16; Exodus 3:1-12; Acts 7:1-16;
Saturday, May 02, 2026: Psalm 31:1-5 & 15-16; Jeremiah 26:20-24; John 8:48-59;
Sunday, May 03, 2026: [Fifth Sunday of Easter](#) Acts 7:55-60, Psalm 31:1-5 & 15-16,
1 Peter 2:2-10, John 14:1-14
Monday, May 04, 2026: Psalm 102:1-17; Exodus 13:17-22; Acts 7:17-40;
Tuesday, May 05, 2026: Psalm 102:1-17; Proverbs 3:5-12; Acts 7:44-56;
Wednesday, May 06, 2026: Psalm 102:1-17; Proverbs 3:13-18; John 8:31-38;
Thursday, May 07, 2026: Psalm 66:8-20; Genesis 6:5-22; Acts 27:1-12;
Friday, May 08, 2026: Psalm 66:8-20; Genesis 7:1-24; Acts 27:13-38;
Saturday, May 09, 2026: Psalm 66:8-20; Genesis 8:13-19; John 14:27-29;
Sunday, May 10, 2026: [Sixth Sunday of Easter](#) Acts 17:22-31, Psalm 66:8-20, 1 Peter 3:13-22,
John 14:15-21
Monday, May 11, 2026: Psalm 93; Genesis 9:8-17; Acts 27:39-44;
Tuesday, May 12, 2026: Psalm 93; Deuteronomy 5:22-33; 1 Peter 3:8-12;
Wednesday, May 13, 2026: Psalm 93; Deuteronomy 31:1-13; John 16:16-24;
Thursday, May 14, 2026: [Ascension of the Lord](#) Acts 1:1-11, Psalm 47, Ephesians 1:15-23,
Luke 24:44-53, Psalm 93
Friday, May 15, 2026: Psalm 93; 2 Kings 2:1-12; Ephesians 2:1-7;
Saturday, May 16, 2026: Psalm 93; 2 Kings 2:13-15; John 8:21-30;
Sunday, May 17, 2026: [Seventh Sunday of Easter](#) Acts 1:6-14, Psalm 68:1-10 & 32-35,
1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11, John 17:1-11
Monday, May 18, 2026: Psalm 99; Leviticus 9:1-11 & 22-24; 1 Peter 4:1-6;
Tuesday, May 19, 2026: Psalm 99; Numbers 16:41-50; 1 Peter 4:7-11;
Wednesday, May 20, 2026: Psalm 99; 1 Kings 8:54-65; John 3:31-36;
Thursday, May 21, 2026: Psalm 33:12-22; Exodus 19:1-9a; Acts 2:1-11;
Friday, May 22, 2026: Psalm 33:12-22; Exodus 19:16-25; Romans 8:14-17;
Saturday, May 23, 2026: Psalm 33:12-22; Exodus 20:1-21; Matthew 5:1-12;
Sunday, May 24, 2026: [Day of Pentecost](#) Acts 2:1-21, Psalm 104:24-34, 35b,
1 Corinthians 12:3b-13, John 20:19-23, Numbers 11:24-30, Acts 2:1-21, John 7:37-39
Monday, May 25, 2026: Psalm 104:24-34 & 35b; Joel 2:18-29; Romans 8:18-24;
Tuesday, May 26, 2026: Psalm 104:24-34 & 35b; Ezekiel 39:7-8, 21-29; Romans 8:26-27;
Wednesday, May 27, 2026: Psalm 104:24-34 & 35b; Numbers 11:24-30; John 7:37-39;
Season after Pentecost
Thursday, May 28, 2026: Psalm 8; Job 38:1-11; 2 Timothy 1:8-12a;
Friday, May 29, 2026: Psalm 8; Job 38:12-21; 2 Timothy 1:12b-14;
Saturday, May 30, 2026: Psalm 8; Job 38:22-38; John 14:15-17;
Sunday, May 31, 2026: [Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth](#) 1 Samuel 2:1-10, Romans 12:9-16b,
Luke 1:39-57, Psalm 113
Sunday, May 31, 2026: [Trinity Sunday](#) Genesis 1:1-2:4a, 2 Corinthians 13:11-13,
Matthew 28:16-20, Psalm 8