

The BULLETIN

The Order of St John of Jerusalem Knights Hospitaller

THE GRAND PRIORY OF AUSTRALASIA

Under the Royal Charter of HM King Peter II of Yugoslavia

**THE PRIORY OF
QUEENSLAND AND
COMMANDERIES:
BRISBANE, GOLD COAST**

**THE PRIORY OF THE
SUNSHINE COAST**

**THE PRIORY OF
WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

**THE PRIORY OF THE
DARLING DOWNS**

**THE PRIORY OF
VICTORIA**

MAY 2020

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Members of The Priory of Victoria make their windy way down Chapter House Road from the Robing Room to St Paul's Cathedral Melbourne, for their annual Church Parade.

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CHEVALIER CHARLES CLARK GCSJ MMSJ

From the Editor's desk

The Patron Saint of the Order of Saint John of Jerusalem Knights Hospitaller, John the Baptist, is recorded in the Gospels as the Fore-runner, the Harbinger, of a new era.

His preaching theme was to "repent" and be ready for great change. So spectacular was his influence that two of the Gospels open with reference to him and his preaching. The Gospels of Mark and John, respectively the first and last of the four to be written, make no reference to the birth narratives of Jesus; to the writers, the Baptist is of prime importance. The Church exhorts us to "repent" because we are all guilty. But the word used in the early Greek

Gospels, metanoia, means looking back in one's mind and assessing with a view to changing. Guilt may be there, but not necessarily.

The word metanoia has not come into the English language (though an associated word paranoia has) but in this time of pandemic, metanoia might be a good thing to practise.

With activities restricted, with social contact reduced almost to nothing, with time to do things that we may not have done for a long time, we can assess the past, and consider what changes could be made for the for the betterment of our future.

The Covid 19 restrictions have

brought about some remarkable effects: fewer cars on the road, less atmospheric pollution, fewer traffic accidents, fewer people in the GP's surgery, some advantages from working at home at least part of the time.

With few people out and about, there is less rubbish, less pollution of waterways and beaches. Those who don't care about their environment are not out there now. Can we keep some semblance of this when we return to normal? What a change that would be!

We see remarkable acts of kindness, bravery, dedication, and courage, which we applaud, just as we deplore so many blatant acts of selfishness, thoughtlessness, and social disobedience. We see poverty and violence highlighted.

A crisis such as we are enduring invites us, as members loyal to specific oaths and a guiding motto, to look outside the square, to move out of our comfort zone a little more, to react to a great crisis and a great human need when it arises, to make change, and so follow the call to metanoia by our Patron, the Baptist.

There is usually a Bulletin published in August each year and there will be one this year. Unlike in previous years, it will not be covering Investiture activities and introducing New Members. So the Editor will be looking for material. You may have experienced, or read about, something connected, even tenuously, to the work of the Order of Saint John. Please share it. ✕



The Order of Saint John of Jerusalem Knights Hospitaller

THE GRAND PRIORY OF AUSTRALASIA

The modern Order of Saint John of Jerusalem Knights Hospitaller is a Christian, chivalric, ecumenical, and international community directly descended from the Hospitaller activities at the Hospice founded before the turn of the 11th century by Amalfi merchants, for pilgrims in Jerusalem.

Jerusalem 1048-1291; Cyprus 1292-1310;
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REVEREND DR DAVID PITMAN AM GCHSJ

Covid-19: a pastoral response

In an episode of *Call the Midwife*, Sister Julienne says, "God is not in the event, God is in the response". This is very good theology!

More than that, it is a really helpful affirmation in the context of the current crisis that the Covid-19 virus has created across our nation and the world.

Why does a God of love allow things like this to happen?

Over the 50 years of my own ministry, this has been the question most often asked of me, in a great variety of different circumstances.

Let's begin by looking at two really unhelpful responses to the question.

Firstly, we too often hear it said by those who should know better that the bad things that happen are God's punishment for our sin.

This response suggests that because we are sinful and disobedient people, God has to punish and discipline us in order to make us more obedient and faithful, and God does this through inflicting on us those crises and experiences that cause us pain and struggle and grief.

Now we understand very well that some of our actions are foolhardy and that we often suffer the consequences of our foolishness. In such circumstances we have no one to blame but ourselves. If we have any sense, we learn from our mistakes and try not to repeat them. To blame God for our own foolishness does no good at all, especially for ourselves.

However, the belief that God is the initiator of pain and suffering, in order to promote obedience and holiness, makes no sense. For a start, we see plenty of people all around us who live fundamentally good lives. They are essentially honest and caring folk who do their best to be responsible parents, faithful friends, and reliable employees. Yet they seem to be on the receiving end of all manner of bad luck.

On the other hand, we all know people who are irresponsible and selfish, who act dishonestly or unethically, and yet whose lives seem remarkably free of struggle and strife. If God wants to promote obedience and holiness through the experience of personal crisis, God seems to be going about it in a decidedly odd and ineffective manner!

Is suffering God's punishment for sin? NO!

So, let's make a conscious decision right now to put this false and misleading belief out of our minds. All it does is make us think badly of both God and ourselves. And it is not true to the faith of the New Testament!

Secondly, you may also have heard it said that God makes bad things happen to test our faith.

I have heard this statement many times over the years, and a number of variations on the same theme.

For example: Suffering is God's way of seeing how much we trust him or God has a reason for everything. All we need is to have enough faith and we'll be able to see what that reason is too. These statements are also nonsense!

Suffering is not good. It is bad!
Bereavement is not good. It is bad!
Tragedy is not good. It is bad!
Covid-19 is not good. It is bad!

We should never pretend otherwise. And we should never use the language of faith to obscure the fact that these things are bad!

It is true that our faith and trust in God will help us to cope with and live through these crises. It is true that we may be able one day to look back and see that we have indeed become better and stronger people because of what we have been through.

But this does not mean that the original experience was somehow good in and of itself. Nor does it mean that God inflicted it on us to find out how much faith we have.

The problem with all these so-called explanations is that they assume that God is the cause of human suffering. God never caused a bad thing to happen, and God never will! God's purpose for us is only ever good!

It is our experience from time to time, in the complexity of our life's journey, to feel that God has left us, that he is absent, that for some reason he has forsaken us.

Yet at other times we feel that God is as close to us as our breath, that he is in the very depths of our being.

God never leaves us, or forsakes us. But there are times when it feels that way.

There is no shame or weakness in recognizing and expressing our feeling that God has left us alone in our struggle. With God's people of old, we can cry out to God from our heart:

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For it is in the acknowledgement of our weakness that God can become our strength

It is in the acknowledgement of our loneliness that we can know the love and companionship of God as never before

It is in the acknowledgement of our grief that we can experience the peace of God that passes all understanding

It is in the acknowledgement of our anger and frustration that the grace of God can bring resolution and renewal

In this life, there is no clear and final answer to our "WHY?"

We can feel that God is absent at any time, but in that moment, as we are honest with ourselves and with God, our faith takes us beyond our feelings into the reality of God's unceasing presence, and the power of his love and grace.

The witness of the scriptures is very strong at this point. When we openly and honestly pour our hearts to God, the healing work of his love and grace can begin in us, comforting our sorrow, restoring peace to our troubled spirits and instilling a sense of hope and purpose for the future.

This is a deeply spiritual reality. God cannot help those who believe they are self-sufficient and can do it on their own!

Ultimately we are healed and renewed because we have encountered the love and grace of God when we are most weak and vulnerable.

Jesus said: *Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you....Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.* (John 14: 27)

Rev'd Dr David Pitman AM GCHSJ
March 23 2020 ✠

DAME SUSAN MICHALANNEY DSJ

The Priory of Victoria Annual Church Parade

Members of the Priory of Victoria were able to hold their annual Church Parade before the severe restrictions due to Covid19 were brought into effect.

On Sunday 15th March 2020, they assembled at St Paul's Cathedral, Melbourne, for a Church parade at 10.30 am. In full robes and regalia they paraded with the Priory banner from the robing room in the Chapter House down Chapter House Road and into the Cathedral (see cover photograph).

The service was conducted by the Dean of the Cathedral,

the Very Reverend Dr Andreas Loewe, who gave the sermon on St Paul's contact with the Greek Christians in Athens and Corinth. The Reading, from one of St Paul's letters to the Corinthians, was read by Chevalier Peter Davidson RFD KSJ.

It was evident that the Corona Virus had caused numbers to be down both from our Order and also the general congregation.

Following the Service, the Knights and Dames and their guests joined for a buffet lunch at the RACV Club in the city. ✠



Images

Above: Outside the Cathedral
From left: In the Robing Room: Chevalier Edward Lewellin, Dame Camilla Van Megen, Dame Val Sumner, Chevalier Michael Fogarty, Chevalier William McAuley, Dame Susan Michalanney

Images courtesy Stella Conlon

Zephyr: supplying educational needs to children of domestic violence situations

In response to the Covid19 crisis, and an urgent appeal, Queensland Priory and its Commanderies have assisted Zephyr Education in their work with children of domestic violence situations.

They moved out of their comfort zones to dig deep into their charity accounts and provided funds over and above their normal annual charity donations. Together with two generous private donations, from Dame Dr Kay Lane, and from the Grand Prior and Dame Marion Feros, a total of \$10,000 was donated to Zephyr Education.

Brisbane based Zephyr Education Inc. supplies schooling needs for children who are the victims of domestic violence. It was founded in 2013 by two sisters, Isabella Bevan, Carmel Martin, and their husbands, and now has many volunteers, none of whom take fees, and all carry their own running costs, resulting in overhead costs for their operation of no more than 1%.

They receive no government funding and are supported by community grants and individual donations. The organization is registered on the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Register and donations are tax deductible.

The Strategic Planning Committee of the Queensland Priory was made aware of this organisation by Dame Marion Feros. In domestic violence situations where mother has to leave home quickly taking the children, and with little money, settling the children into a new



Images Above, in 'The Garage': Carmel Martin with Isabella Bevan Lower, a socially-distanced presentation: Dame Dr Kay Lane, Commander Leanne O'Shea, Prior Charles Clark and Isabella Bevan

school can be a major hurdle. Zephyr can respond to a call within 48 hours, supplying school uniforms, school bags, shoes, socks, swim packs, text books and stationery, and items specific to the grade of a child. This reduces the embarrassment to children in being in different clothing, which often adds to their sadness which follows violence and separation in a family.

For this they work with ninety-four DV shelters in Queensland,

seven in Tasmania, and five in Perth. In Queensland shelters are as far away as Mt Isa and Mornington Island. Packs are assembled in what Carmel calls her garage in Tennyson, Brisbane, and transport companies voluntarily deliver them.

Domestic violence is increasing as a result of Covid 19 lockdown, and also remote learning increases a demand for computers for the children in addition to their other requirements. ❌

CHEVALIER ANTHONY HOWES KCSJ

WA: bringing us back to the joy in creation

The Western Australian Priory sends every good wish to Dames and Knights, and all associated with the Order, in these strange and unusual times. At the time of going to print, all of the members of the Order in the West are in good health.

Prior, Chevalier Jamie, and the two Vice Priors, Chevalier Bill Munro and your writer, are to meet shortly (quite possibly by Zoom!) to consider the inevitable changes to the way in which our fund-raising will need to work in the future. From this meeting we will send out our thoughts to all in the WA Priory to stimulate and engender more ideas and, indeed, concrete plans with which we might operate in more 'normal' times. In particular, we will be looking at the inevitable change in the way individuals, businesses and the general public are able to donate to activities.

One area which will receive our attention is how we might best alleviate the poverty of both material matters and in that which is responsible for the mental health of the community.

This latter area is a very complex one, of course. In our last fund-raiser before the pandemic changed our lives, where we raised funds by ticket sales to Theatre 180's premiere of A B Facey's *A Fortunate Life*, our aim was, yes, to raise money, but, equally importantly, we recognized that by supporting Perth's new Theatre 180 Company, we were assisting the home grown art form of theatre in its supply of creative energy and intellectual

understanding into the lives of many.

When the pandemic is over and its aftermath is with us we will be part of a community suffering impoverished mental health, and that will need our help as never before, in creating music, theatre, film (and the like). Especially, as composers, playwrights, theatre personnel and musicians will be in harsher economic conditions than they have ever experienced.

Let me describe in a little detail the background to our support of Theatre 180. The creators of the theatre company are professional artists who have given freely of their talents to the Order in WA, and over time, that gift has resulted in thousands of dollars which we have been able to distribute.

A B Facey's *A Fortunate Life*, adapted for the stage by Jenny David OAM, and director Stuart Halusz, premiered in WA the technique of stage and film



combination. The city season received great acclaim, both for direction, performance, beauty and sheer enjoyment.

I spoke with Theatre 180's artistic director Stuart and the associate director, Jenny, about the Company's commitment to the whole of WA, and not just the city. Their reply, epitomises what I believe to be of importance in the mission of theatre anywhere and the health of the community in which they serve.

They told me that this



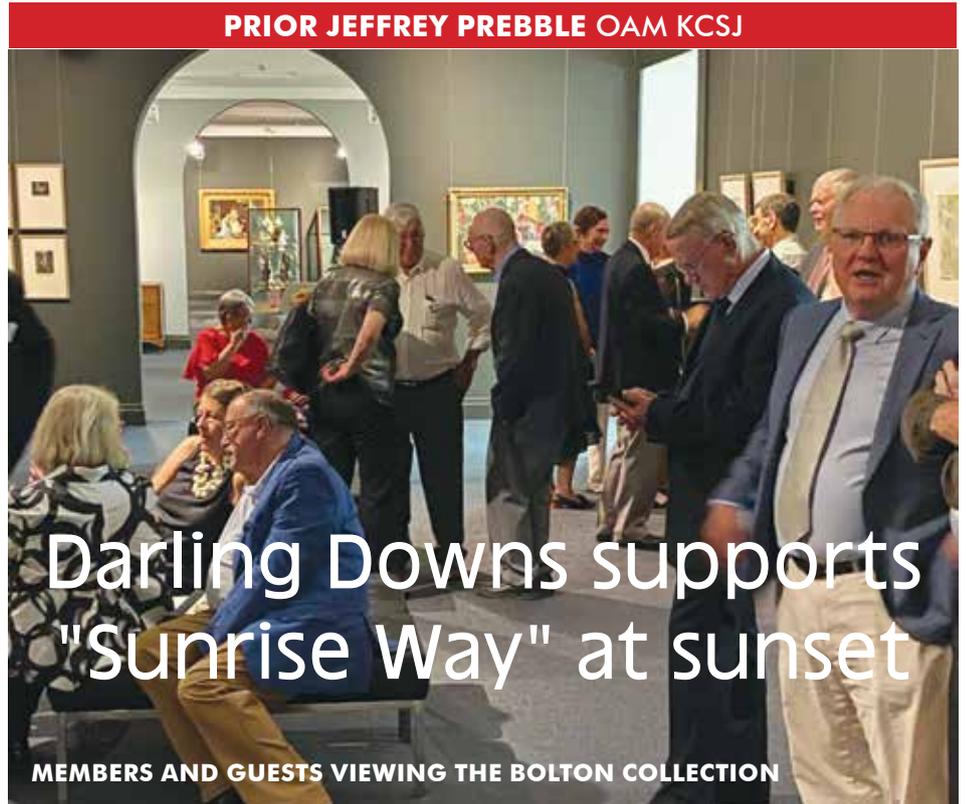
production is all about people on the land, lives governed by seasons and weather: story of our rural heritage; wheat, sheep, pigs, chickens, cattle, and orchards. Bert Facey worked with them all.

They pointed to the vastness of the regions; to the isolation living on the land, and the need to come together to celebrate the richness of our stories.

Jenny and Stuart went on to say how we need to see and hear stories about ourselves, and we must share those experiences with others to show we understand the importance of community to human happiness. Both were adamant that In the bush we witness great examples of community spirit and the generosity, especially in times of hardship.

Certainly the Arts will be one vital area which will need our support in bringing Australia (and dare I say, the World) back to the joy in creation: as TS Eliot said – God, the Creator made Man in his turn, to be a creator. ✠

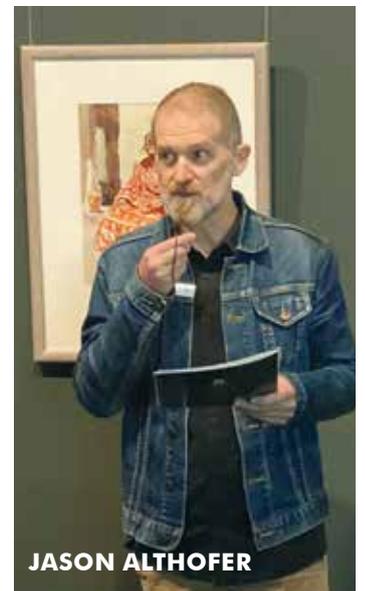
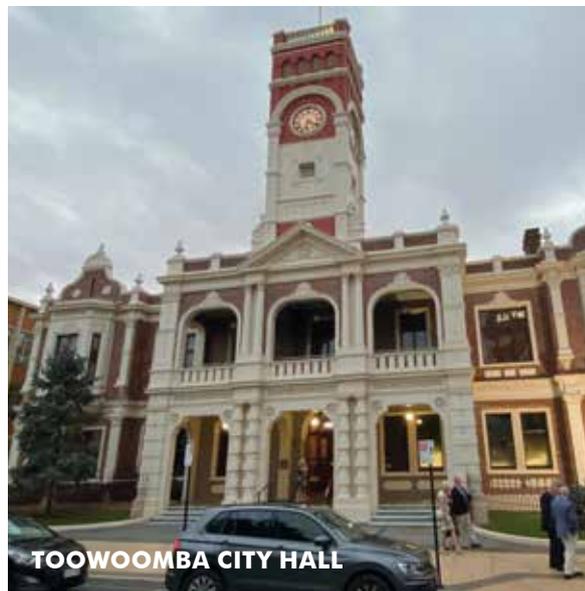
Images: At left, during rehearsal. Courtesy Stewart Thorpe Photography. Below, one of the photographic backgrounds used in the production. Courtesy Green Man Media.



On Friday 6th March, sixty-one members and guests attended a function to raise money for “Sunrise Way”, a not-for-profit residential unit for drug and alcohol rehabilitation in Toowoomba. We met at the Toowoomba City Hall where Councillor, Chevalier Chris Tait KSJ aided by Councillor Joe Ramia conducted a tour of the renovated, heritage listed building. We were welcomed by Mayor Paul Antonio and invited into his office.

We then walked next door to the Toowoomba Regional Art Gallery where we were greeted with canapes and drinks. Ms Sue Lostroh, the Gallery Director and Mr Jason Althofer, curator of the Bolton Collection introduced exhibits in the gallery focussing on the Bolton Collection.

An informative social occasion was enjoyed by all. A donation of \$2,000 was subsequently presented to “Sunrise Way”. ✠



CHEVALIER ROBIN KLEINSCHMIDT OAM KCSJ

Sunshine Coast gatherings helped Our Rainbow House



In common with all other Priors and Commanderies the Priory of Sunshine Coast has been compelled to abandon its plans for activities and events in the immediate future. This includes the cancellation of its popular annual True Blue Cocktail Party which was planned for the 24th April. However, several successful and enjoyable events were held before the restrictions aimed at limiting the spread of the coronavirus came into effect.

The year began with a social gathering on 8th of February at the Buderim home of Dame Airlie

Images: Above left, Dame Anne Stitz, Dame Vicki Stewart, Bishop Jeremy Greaves, Dame Bette Tipper, Mrs Josie Greaves, Mr Mike Milwright

Bell. Those who attended shared a superb spread of fine food while recounting their experiences during the Christmas and New Year holiday period. A successful raffle of wine, chocolate and plants enabled the Priory to make a donation towards its support for Our Rainbow House.

Our Rainbow House is an Australian charity which provides education and nutrition for young children in the township of Chainta near Lusaka in Zambia, offering a safe refuge and practical help to children who are poor and vulnerable.

The priory has supported this charity for some years, and was pleased to welcome its founder and Director, Mrs Alison Ray, at an afternoon tea hosted by Dame Cherie Wortley and Chevalier David Woodrow.

Dame Airlie Bell, the Vice-Prior, presented a cheque to Mrs Ray to continue the Priory's support, specifically for the care of very sick poor children. ❖



Images:

At the afternoon tea, above, from top, Mrs Alison Ray and Dame Airlie Bell

Chevalier Prior Mel Tipper, Dame Bette Tipper, Dame Jan Jones, Chevalier David Woodrow, Dame Cherie Wortley, Dame Airlie Bell

Chevalier David Woodrow, Mrs Alison Ryan, Dame Cherie Wortley.

The 2020 Sovereign Council Meeting, Vancouver

No decision has yet been made on how and when to hold the planned 2020 Sovereign Council meeting. Members of Le Petit Conseil (LPC) expect to make a final decision at their meeting on 4th June.

The Grand Master and members of LPC are monitoring impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as resulting controls imposed by health authorities and governments.

At the moment four options are under consideration:

1. Proceed with the meetings as planned. This option is unlikely, but still on the table.
2. Hold an online meeting utilizing a ZOOM-like meeting arrangement. This is possible with a slight alteration to the Rules allowing an electronic meeting to be held. It would also enable non-Sovereign Council members to watch.

3. Hold a partial online meeting with a quorum of Sovereign Council members living in Vancouver and Victoria. The other members of the Sovereign Council will participate online to meet the other quorum requirement that two thirds of the qualified members are present in person or by proxy.
4. Postpone the meeting to 2021. This would be complicated but would allow for a physical gathering. ❖