

# **The Messenger Of the Parish of St Thomas, Tamaki Winter Edition, 2023**



***The Expiatory Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus is a Catholic Church located on the summit of Mount Tibidabo in Barcelona, Catalonia (Spain), completed in 1961.***

## **From the Vicar**

Paul's letters are more than merely theological statements.

Paul's letters are a significant part of the New Testament, both in terms of their sheer number and their theological importance. However, they weren't written as formal theological essays. Instead, Paul addressed them as practical advice and encouragement to his fellow Christians, especially those in the communities he founded.

These letters, written around 48-60 AD and collected by approximately 100 AD, make up nearly half of the New Testament. They have played a crucial role in shaping Christian theology throughout history. While major restatements of Christian beliefs have been based on Paul's letters, we should be cautious not to view them as systematic theological works. They were intended as personal letters to specific churches, dealing with their unique issues and disputes.

To understand Paul's true intentions, we need to consider the context of each letter and the specific situations it addresses. Paul's writing is always specific to the social and ethical concerns of the time and not meant to be universally applicable throughout history.

Paul's beliefs were influenced by the prevailing belief of his time, anticipating an imminent return of Jesus Christ. His letters aimed at missionary work, defending the faith, and guiding the early Christian communities through their contemporary challenges. One significant controversy he addressed was the question of what happens to believers who die before Christ's return.

The letters represent Paul's views, but they were not informal musings. They were meant to guide and persuade, but not as overarching theological statements. They were highly regarded by early Christians and were sometimes challenging to understand due to their specific context.

Paul's letters can be classified into two types: those addressed to new Christian churches and those written to individuals. The former addressed particular aspects of church doctrine and practice, often correcting misunderstandings or responding to questions. A common theme in many of these letters is the role of Jewish Law in early Christianity.

The "pastoral epistles," written to Paul's disciples Timothy and Titus, provide guidance for Christian preachers and church leaders. The letter to Philemon is a deeply personal one, addressing a Christian slave-owner on behalf of a runaway slave who had become a believer.

While Paul's letters contain theological elements, they are always subservient to the letter's purpose and not systematically organized. Scholars have attempted to find a central core of Paul's theology, but it remains a challenge due to the diversity of his letters and the possibility of some being wrongly attributed to him.

Paul's theology is grounded in scripture, especially the Old Testament covenant with Israel. While his letters are context-specific, they share certain fundamental principles that combine the new era of Christ with Paul's Jewish background.

Among all the New Testament writers, Paul's letters have had the most profound impact, reaching Christians far and wide. Though they may not have a unified theology, they offer valuable insights and guidance for Christian living. The depth of thought and passion in Paul's writing has made him a spiritual father to all Christians, influencing their faith and understanding of doctrine.

***Reverend Doctor Noel Cox***  
**Vicar**

## From Bishop Ross Bay

Some of you may have heard me speak about the work of the **Anglican Communion Science Commission**. The Commission was formed a year or so ago and then launched last year at the Lambeth Conference. Each Province is to have a lead bishop whose task is to promote the work of the Commission and encourage the interplay between faith and science, which the Commission believes is an important task for the Church as we look for the future. How can the Church take from the riches of science to enhance our understanding of God's activity and our mission? How can the Church offer back to science some sense of the impact of science on human life and on human ethics? So, it's a wonderful opportunity for the Church to engage in a different sphere of mission. And I have the role of lead bishop for Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia.

Just a few weeks ago, we gathered a group of Clergy out at St John's College in order to trial some of the kind of work that one of the Science Commission's projects will be undertaking, and that is to begin to explore with church leaders just what their understanding of science is, the ways in which science already impacts on their life and their ministry, and also issues around how they understand whether science is trusted in our society.

We had a really engaging day. We were very honoured by the presence of one of the commissioners, Professor Andrew Briggs from Oxford, and also by Professor Sir Peter Gluckman, former Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor and now president of the International Science Council. Alongside them were others from Auckland University and from within the Church. We were very blessed to be facilitated for the day by Dr Emily Colgan, who it's since been announced will be the next *Manukura* of the College. So, it was a pretty impressive group of people that we worked alongside as we began to explore some of those ideas. Part of the purpose of

our day here in Auckland was to trial some work which will become part of three regional international conferences over the next six months that will be held in Africa, in the Americas and back here in Oceania.

And so that will begin to form some of the base work for the Commission as it establishes the understandings of church leaders and therefore what some of the needs might be as we plan for this faith science engagement into the future. So, a really exciting piece of work, a different piece of work for me and I'm really looking forward to all that the Commission will offer to our Church as these next years unfold.

### *Editorial Comment*

## **Has Catholicism Beaten Us To It?**

Recently, I came across a sheet of paper which had been hidden away in my "Bits and Pieces for the Messenger" file. It contained two sides of information, headed **Pope Francis and the Catholic Church continue to look towards science, and that can only be a good thing.**

Apart from agreeing with the sentiment in that heading, I was at a loss to know where it came from (perhaps the late Stephen Osborne, possibly via Joan?). I was also perplexed by its contents, because the two pages tended to keep repeating, in the same or slightly different words, the same message as in the heading.

So, I mentioned this two-sided piece of paper at the end of a Church service in early July, hoping someone present might have given it to me, and would remember doing so; as well as remembering why.

With less than our usual small number in attendance that Sunday, that proved to be a forlorn hope! However, Vicar's Warden John Miller suggested feeding the title of the paper into "Google"; thank you John for your suggestion, because when I did, several things became much clearer.

Since 2011 there has apparently been in existence what I tend to think is a "fringe organisation", called ***The Conversation Australia and New Zealand***, although New Zealand did actually join in until 2017. It claims that all eight Universities in New Zealand now have academics who are members, and there are three "award-winning editors" in the group as well. Membership appears to be by self-selection, based on self-assessment of the quality of one's own academic work, as suggested by this quote from part of their entry on Google:

*"The Conversation Australia and New Zealand is a unique collaboration between academics and journalists that is the world's leading publisher of research-based news and analysis".*

It goes on:

*"Everything you read here is created by academics and journalists working together, supported by a team of digital technology experts. Our professional editors turn knowledge and insights from academics into easy-to-read articles, and make them accessible to readers like you".*

They go on in similar vein for the best part of a page. The sheet of paper I found in my "Bits and Pieces for the Messenger" file was in fact a copy of a broadsheet put out by this group on 15 October 2019.

Apart from being the Conversation's broadsheet, the broadsheet

itself made a number of (for me) quite startling statements about the Pope; for example:

- 1 Pope Francis and the modern church discussed scientific issues.
- 2 Pope Francis has embraced science as a way of learning about the world.
- 3 (As long ago as) in 1950, Pope Pius XII said evolution could co-exist with catholic doctrine.
- 4 Today, Pope Francis is quite open about his belief in evolution, albeit as a means by which God created humankind.

Basically I, and probably a number of other Anglicans, would say "I agree!"

But the questions remain, how did this fringe organisation in Australia and New Zealand get to know so much of what the Catholic Church was up to, and is it true?

Well, as it turns out, the Catholics also have their own quite active news agency, the CNA. or "Catholic News Agency". I quote from *their own* "Google" entry:

*"The Catholic News Agency (CNA) Staff are a team of Journalists dedicated to reporting news concerning the Catholic Church around the world. Our Bureaus are located in Denver, Washington, and Rome. We have sister language agencies in Kenya, Germany, Peru, Brazil and Italy."*

So, it appears the **Catholic News Agency** was founded in Denver (Colorado), in 2004, for the express purpose of spreading authentic news worldwide about the Catholic Church.

Here is a quotation from Pope Francis published in a CNA bulletin on

2 June 2021 (Just over two years ago):

*Pope Francis said Friday that there "cannot and must not" be any opposition between faith and science.*

The pope made the comment in a video message to participants at the "Science of Peace" event, an international meeting held on July 2 – 3 2021 in the Abruzzo region of southern Italy. At the event he further said:

*"Dear and distinguished scientists, your meeting is a great gift of hope for humanity. Never before as in this time have we been aware of the need to relaunch scientific research to face the challenges of contemporary society.*

*And I am pleased that it is the Diocesan community of Teramo which is promoting this meeting, thus testifying that there cannot and must not be any opposition between faith and science"*

Apparently, the Catholic News Agency (CNA) also broadcasts on the **Eternal Word Television Network (EWTN)**, a Catholic Network-Cable service which was founded as long ago as 1981 in Ironside Alabama, and now broadcasts world-wide.

So, to bring this to a conclusion, organisations like the "Conversation of Australia and New Zealand", the "Catholic News Agency" and "EWTN", seem to have ready access to latest Catholic scientific thinking, some of which will come as a surprise to us, but also probably as a relief.

Of these organisations, one is un-authenticated, and the other two may still be to some extent rooted in their past.

So, it's good that we (the Anglicans) are finally setting up our own



studies into the validity of science (See the statement by Bishop Ross that precedes this editorial comment.)

**But why not do it co-operatively; why not seek active membership (or at the very least associate membership) with the Catholic Church in particular, so that Anglican's and Catholics may together re-examine and hopefully agree on the place that science can and does play in determining religious truths, so that we can then both move forward in unison?**

*Tony Poole, Editor*

## **Memories of Janet Foster**

Janet Foster died on 18 June 2023. She is remembered by a number of parishioners and others, as a devoted parishioner. The following two obituaries have been received concerning Janet and her life.

Janet Foster was the wife of David, one of the "5 wise men" who re-established St Thomas' in the late 1950s after it was re built.

Janet was a faithful parishioner for over 70 years. She was also involved in Diocesan affairs, including being Diocesan Archivist when the masses of historic documents were re-located to the new Archives Centre, under the Cathedral. In this work she was supported by a team of volunteers, including Leonie Venville (wife of Rev Maurice Venville), also a St Thomas parishioner.

David and Janet had two daughters, Kate and Anne, and six grandchildren. Janet was very involved in the organisation of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations of the Parish, which extended over a whole weekend and included a Parish dinner. Janet spent her

later years at Remuera Gardens.

We will miss Janet as a friend, and miss also her often “feisty” nature. St Thomas’ is richer in its history and its memories of earlier parishioners, for our time with Janet, David and others who have gone before us. Rest in peace Janet.

**Archdeacon David Steele**  
**Former Priest of St Thomas Church.**

Janet Foster was also remembered by **Bishop Ross Bay** in the *Diocesan News* on 3 July, as follows:

**Janet Foster**, for many years the archivist for the Diocese of Auckland, died recently. Janet worked alongside a large group of volunteers and was responsible for bringing some order into the items held in Archives, stored beneath the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity.

## Christ Church Kororareka

*This article was first published in the April 2023 issue of The Auckland Diocesan magazine “The Anglican” and is reproduced here with the permission of the editor of the Anglican. It has been very slightly abridged solely to ensure it would fit into the space available. The article is well researched, and full of warmth and compassion. The name of the author is not known to us.*

The town now known as “Russell” was originally called *Kororareka*; and in its pre-colonial days was a fairly wild and disorderly commun-

ity. The town boomed as it was the best anchorage for ships. Popular with the Pacific whalers the town had the nickname “the hellhole of the Pacific”.

The Local Church Missionary Society (CMS) missionaries would row across from the mission station in Paihia, to take services in both English and Maori. The missionaries were determined to buy land and build a church for Kororareka; and in 1834 they did buy 4.5 acres from Chiefs Rewa, Wharerahi and Moko, a little way back from the town and the beach. A condition of the sale was that both Maori and Pakeha would be buried in the graveyard around the Church.

By 1835 enough money had been raised from local seamen, settlers, visitors, traders and missionaries, as well as from the Hokianga Methodist Mission and people in Sydney, and individuals like Samuel Marsden and Charles Darwin, for work to begin on a simple Church structure. Once built, it was a plain rectangular weatherboard clad building with large Gothic arched windows and a hipped roof sitting in the middle of the graveyard.

While there are some indications services may have been held earlier, the first recorded service was taken by Reverend William Williams on 3 January 1836. The graveyard was consecrated the next day (although some burials had in fact taken place there earlier), but there is no record of when the Church itself was consecrated.

On 30 January 1840, Captain William Hobson announced from the new Church that NZ was to become part of the territory of New South Wales, and a week later this was followed by the signing of the treaty of Waitangi just across the harbour.

1840 was also notable for a murder trial being held in the Church; missionaries are reported to have stopped Maori from seizing the prisoner, and stopped European troops from clashing with Maori. The Church was also used around this time for sessions of the Land Commission.

After the signing of the Treaty in 1840 the first resident clergyman, Robert Burrows, arrived, and lived in a small house on the hillside directly above the Church. Sufficient additional funds had been raised by 1840, for the Church grounds to be surrounded by a white picket fence; some of those pickets are thought to still be in use.

In 1844 Kororareka became "Russell". Ironically, the worst outbreak of violence in the town in 1845 is still associated with the name Kororareka. On 11 March 1845, Hone Heke and other chiefs, dissatisfied with British control, along with their men attacked the town. Despite reinforcements from New South Wales, Heke and his followers outnumbered the troops. Their aim was to cut down the flagpole, to them the symbol of colonialism – which in fact Hone Heke had already done three times before!

As a diversion, a group of Maori led by Te Ruka Kawiti clashed with a detachment of men from HMS Hazard close to the Church. The Church suffered some damage, and 34 Maori and 13 Pakeha were killed, including 3 civilians. Many of them are buried in the graveyard

During the conflict, HMS Hazard fired cannonballs, hitting the church, splintering the wood, leaving holes and shattering the windows. Musket holes and damage to a weatherboard from a cannonball still remain. Along with damage to the building the graveyard was also torn up.

During the conflict women and children were evacuated to the moored ships. Later in the day the powder magazine at a stockade exploded with surrounding buildings catching fire. Looting by Maori ensued, but Heke had ordered that the Anglican and Catholic churches were not to be touched.

People fled from the town which became almost deserted for over a year.

By the late 1840s settlers were returning and rebuilding. The

resident Vicar had left as the town was too small and poor to support him. The spiritual care was again taken over by CMS missionaries in Paihia. Vicars came and went, depending on whether there was money locally to pay for their share of the Vicar's stipend. When there was no Vicar it was left to lay readers to take services.

By 1871 life had improved enough that there was money for some major building work. A new steeper roof was built giving the Church its present-day appearance. The Church remained without a name until 1873, when at a meeting presided over by the Bishop of Auckland (Bishop Cowie) it was resolved to name it "Christ Church".

By the early 1900s as the building aged it became shaky and creaked during storms – so much so that services were sometimes cut short for fear of the building collapsing. The option of pulling it down was considered, but discarded and instead props were set up on either side of the building to make it more secure.

As centennial celebrations were being thought about, demolition was again considered. The public outcry was so great that demolition was again discarded, and the Church was repaired again.

Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip made their second Royal visit to New Zealand in 1963 and visited Christ Church. They were intrigued by its history and concerned at the light showing through the holes in the roof. Once they returned to England, this concern resulted in a donation towards re-shingling the roof that they were told was being planned.

Christ Church stands as a place for people to gather and minister together and as a reminder of our country's heritage. It was registered by the New Zealand Historic Places trust (now called Heritage New Zealand) on 11 November 1983 as Registration #1 and with a Category 1 listing.

After years of being looked after by clergy from other townships Christ Church became a Local Shared Ministry Unit in 1998. That

continued until early this year when it became a Mission District with the Reverend Peter Minson installed as Priest in Charge at the end of February.

The District Council visited Russell over the weekend of Peter's installation and met Church leaders to discuss the ongoing maintenance of the Church precinct, to ensure this *taonga* that has national significance is preserved into the future.

The history of Christ Church and its surrounding grounds shows us that the struggles around buildings that many churches face have not changed over the years. This Church has special significance in not only being the oldest surviving church but also possibly the oldest building in New Zealand still being used for its original purpose – it is important that we as the larger Church community support the preservation of this building into the future.



**Christ Church and Graveyard Today**

## **A Modern Version of the Prayer of St Patrick**

May the strength of God guide me this day,  
 And may his power preserve me.  
 May the wisdom of God instruct me;  
 the eye of God watch over me;  
 The ear of God hear me;  
 the word of God give sweetness to my speech;  
 The hand of God Defend me;  
 and the hand of God defend me;  
 and may I follow the way of God.  
 Christ be with me, Christ before me;  
 Christ be after me, Christ within me;  
 Christ beneath me, Christ above me;  
 Christ at my right hand, Christ at my left;  
 Christ in the car, Christ in the train;  
 Christ in the bus, Christ in the plane;  
 Christ in the heart of everyone who thinks of me;  
 Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks to me;  
 Christ in every eye that sees me;  
 Christ in every ear that hears me.

### **By contrast, a very old joke.**

Three elderly ladies are sitting in a waiting room to be seen by a doctor. The door opened, and an Indian man rushed in and went as though to go through the door to the doctor's room.

One of the ladies who were waiting leapt to her feet and said, loudly, slowly and clearly *"We have all been waiting for some time to go to see Doctor. You must wait your turn. Do YOU understand?"* To which the Indian Man replied "No, I am Doctor, That is my Room, you must wait for your turn. Do You understand".

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