

## From Bishop Philip Huggins

Today, in some lectionaries, St Monica, mother of St Augustine of Hippo is remembered (333-387AD).

Her passionate prayers for the conversion of her wayward son are an example for us all. She had the joy of seeing her son baptised by St Ambrose, before she died.

The rest, as they say, is history. Her example of persistent, passionate prayer is before us as we pray for the “**peace of Jerusalem**”. Pray for our Australian Church too, as we seek to be peace-makers,



***Blessed are the peacemakers, they shall be called the children of God.*** (Matthew 5: 9)

On Sunday I was at a little country Church in **Bannockburn** outside Geelong. Youngsters of the Parish were being Confirmed amidst many family photos, spring flowers and much joy.

It was the ordinary scene of a country Church. The congregation included the lady who painted the roof.

Also, a bloke who made a new table and for whom this was very therapeutic. He gave me a cross he'd made, out of nails from the renovations.

A young fella, Henry, brought his footy to Church so we had a kick after the Service and the sponge cakes.



**We prayed for the peace of “Jerusalem”.**

I told them a story from the week after, the privilege of listening to leaders of our member Churches at the **National Council of Churches who have people in Syria, Northern Iraq and the rest of the Middle East**. It was a story told by the Reverend Ian Smith, the Executive Officer of the Victorian Council of Churches after his May journey to Jerusalem with Jewish and Muslim Australians.

Ian spoke of a couple of occasions when a car backfired in a nearby street. He thought nothing of it. Those locals with him flinched, freaked. In a moment, thus, he saw the stress under which people are living in those warring places: a fear of rockets, bombs from the air, car bombs, home invasions by armed thugs.

I remembered a time when, as a boy, our family went to the Melbourne Show: someone let off a fire cracker. My father fell to the ground, screaming. In a moment he had been transported back to the **World War II** traumas of Crete.

Out at **Bannockburn people** have normal problems to do with work and health. Some kids have put graffiti on the Church Op Shop wall. That's the extent of it.

Elsewhere, in the **Middle East** which is the current focus of our prayers, whole populations are entirely traumatised.

Wonderful Sydney artist Margaret Acland paints from the news. She portrays an anxious child looking at the sky.



Margaret Achland Painting – Families in the Middle East living in Terror

We have our problems and preoccupations but we do have a better space in which to pray for the peace of “Jerusalem”.

After Church I went to watch our youngest play footy in Brunswick, inner city Melbourne. He plays for “Labour in Vain”.

It's competitive footy but with a quirky edge. Great rock 'n roll plays from the grandstand as the game goes on. The umpires wear Hawaiian shirts. They are mostly young folk, from various progressive movements, of arts and politics. The State of the Nation gets extensive discussion as the game goes on!



We are a blessed nation. **You just wish every kid could have the same fun!**

## **Birthday Cake and Celebrations**

Staff celebrated Janet Cousens, Analee Yang, Jenny Tauro and Benny LittleJohn's Birthday's, with delicious **cottage cheese cake**.



## Welcome Liz Stone.

Liz will be dropping by on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> August and starting on September 1<sup>st</sup> assisting me in this Interim period until a new General Secretary is appointed. In writing to Staff last week I said;

“I am pleased to advise that from September 1, Liz Stone will be working here at the NCCA Office in Sydney. She has been able to take leave from her current work in NSW Health until the end of February 2015.



This is a matter for prayerful rejoicing! Trusting in the divine providence. I have been seeking a good outcome for when I finish this initial period as Interim General Secretary, working mostly in the Sydney office.

From September 1, I must pick up my duties in Melbourne again and so my time in the Sydney office will be much less.

For continuity and stability I have been asked to continue as Interim General Secretary until a new General Secretary is appointed and in place.

Liz's availability now makes this possible. In effect, she will be Assistant Interim General Secretary (even though this is quite a mouthful).

Liz will look after the day-to-day management of the NCCA, liaising with me as necessary.

She has particular expertise which will be very valuable for some of the specific work we have ahead of us. Liz will be known to many of you as the excellent current Chair of the Act for Peace Commission.

She has a rich employment history, including overseas aid work with Caritas, management in University and Public Sector positions.

Liz is Sydney – based and worships in a local parish. It is a blessing that she is available when we need someone just like her!”

Liz brought to our attention this week an interview on BBC HARDtalk with HG Bishop Angaelos regarding Christians and Minority Groups in the Middle East <http://youtu.be/GI9pQ5oCsyc>



**Sad passing of Mr. Samuel M Isaac** - Former CCA Executive Secretary for Inter-church Aid and Development (1971-75).

***“His spirit and commitment to strengthen the life and witness of the churches in Asia and around the world he will continue to inspire us and the next generation of ecumenical leaders”.***

We remembered Samuel in the Communion Service last Sunday.

## Act for Peace Appeals:

Act for Peace over the last 6 months have made ‘**a huge difference to survivors of conflict and disaster around the world**’. A few recent appeals include;

**Eating like a Refugee** ‘Walk in another’s shoes’ and share the rations that a Burmese refugee in a camp on the Thai-Burmese border would live on. This campaign joins participating families by living on rations of a small amount of rice, split peas, fortified flour, salt, oil, fish paste and water. This campaign has raised over \$58,000, going directly to the refugees in these camps. For more information or to take the challenge, go to [www.actforpeace.org.au/rationchallenge](http://www.actforpeace.org.au/rationchallenge)

**Standing up to Injustice and Oppression** – See **Myanmar free from conflict** and poverty, to view Act for Peace video go to:

<http://www.actforpeace.org.au/Get-Involved/Our-latest-appeals/child-soldiers-in-myanmar-appeal/Myanmar/Video-Rescuing-Child-Soldiers-in-Myanmar>



These are just a few examples of the tireless effort and support that Act for Peace donors and supporters participated in. In a more recent appeal which is directing funds and support to those who are fleeing **Iraq and Gaza** from persecution, and are in **urgent** need of **humanitarian aid** for more information about this, go to: <http://www.actforpeace.org.au/Get-Involved/Our-latest-appeals/Iraq-Crisis-Appeal#sthash.tA7NDz0Z.dpuf>



Iraq Crisis Appeal



Child soldiers in Myanmar appeal



Gaza Crisis Appeal



Help young girls in Afghanistan

**Act for Peace** will be celebrating  of the *Christmas Bowl Appeal!*

Some great resources are available. Please get in touch with Jenny by emailing [info@actforpeace.org.au](mailto:info@actforpeace.org.au). In anticipation of this we have asked Heads of Churches to kindly send through an endorsement of this year's major event. **Some beautiful endorsements have already been received.**

## Events, Seminars & Forums

**Achieving Peace with Justice Ecumenical Council** – Santa Sabina College Hall, 90 Boulevarde, Strathfield - Friday 29 August 2014 - **Registrations are full: great news!**

- Day Program: 11am-4.30pm
- Evening Program 4.30pm-8.30pm
- Dinner and Speaker: 6pm

**NSW Ecumenical Council Inc. AGM, Saturday, 30<sup>th</sup> August 2014** - The third session will include speakers from different churches. Rev James Collins will talk about his recent visit to **Jerusalem** and Archbishop Meelis Zaia, from the Assyrian Orthodox Church and Archbishop Malki Malki, from the Syrian Orthodox Church will speak about the situation in **Iraq and Syria**.

Outcomes of these **important discussions** will be in the coming Newsletters.

**Noticing Mr C. Palmer's belated apology**, may I offer these eighth century Poems of Wang Hei, insight from the rich depths of Chinese culture. [Source Collected Poems, edited by C.Milosz]

They convey the ups and downs of public life, the wisdom of detachment.

"Wang Wei was a poet and a painter but also an official and many of his poems juxtapose contemplative life with active career life. But in his old age he achieved a peculiar kind of non-attachment, when even poetry and painting seemed to him too close to early delusions", comments Milosz.

### LAZY ABOUT WRITING POEMS

With time I become lazy about writing poems.  
Now my only company is old age.  
In an earlier life I was a poet, a mistake,  
And my former body belonged to a painter.  
I can't abandon habits of that life  
And sometimes am recognized by people of this world.  
My name and pen name speak my former being  
But about all this my heart is ignorant.

*Translated from the Chinese by Tony and Willis Burnstone and Xu Haixin"*

*"If one lost the game, if one's political foes were effectively undermining one and at last triumphed, it was necessary to withdraw somewhere, to a house in the mountains, at least temporarily, and one had to accept that it would be forever. White clouds have the symbolic meaning of a world beyond and of the contemplation of things eternal".*

### A FAREWELL

I dismount from my horse and drink your wine.  
I ask where you're going  
You say you are a failure  
And want to hibernate at the foot of Deep South Mountain.  
Once you're gone no one will ask about you.  
There are endless white clouds on the mountain.

A measure of holy detachment is healthy and necessary, if we are to live and walk in Holy Spirit. We offer our best, humbly. People make of it what they make of it. We try to practice a generosity of spirit towards others, remembering to thank them for their efforts. Little by little, people become more relaxed with one another and even better things become possible.

At times of change, the key is to keep communicating with one another, as clearly as possible. When in doubt, communicate some more!

### **Prayers:**

**Prayers** for dear Daphne, recuperating after her recent surgery. (Some of us visited her today, she looks radiant and is surrounded by flowers from some of those many who cherish her.)

**Prayers** also for Liz Stone at her time of transition.

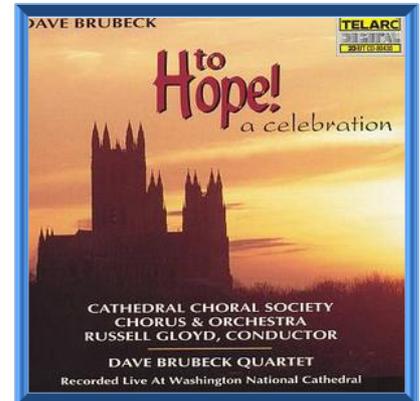
**Prayers** for Janet Cousens and Ben Fraser with Act for Peace partners in Pakistan.

**Prayers** for James Thompson, significant meetings soon in Bangkok.

**Prayers** for the Christmas Bowl team, busy finalising kits and worship resources.

**Prayers** for the United Nations and for a possible Protected Zone in Iraq to protect the country's minorities with UN Peace keepers.

**Prayers** too, yes, for the "Peace of Jerusalem".



A song by Dave Brubeck – 'The Peace of Jerusalem'

<http://www.allmusic.com/performance/iv-the-peace-of-jerusalem-responsorial-based-on-psalm-131-mq0000760900>

**In the Peace of Jesus,**

**Bishop Philip Huggins**

**Interim Secretary General**