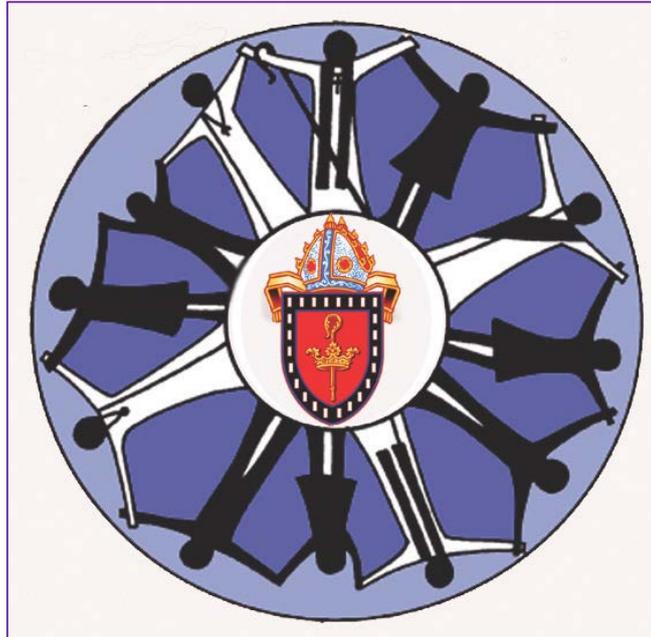


Charge to Synod “Wondering”



Presidential Address to the Third Session of the Fiftieth Synod of the Diocese of Newcastle

Together with the Record of Visitors to the Diocese, and the
Record of Appointments, Ordinations, Resignations and Retirements

The Rt Rev'd Dr Peter Stuart
Administrator

Friday 13th September 2013
Bishop Tyrrell Anglican College

Introduction

WIYALITA YIRRI YIRRI

With these words from the Awabakal people meaning 'We gather to speak in a sacred way', it is my privilege to have the opportunity to reflect on the life of the Diocese as we gather in Synod. I honour the Awabakal, Darkinjung, Wonnarua, Worimi and Birpai peoples with whom the Diocese now shares custodianship of land. I commit myself to join our stewardship with theirs and honour their peoples.

We have an interesting couple of days in front of us. My address this afternoon is focussed on the regular work of the Diocese. Tomorrow, I will speak further about the work of discerning who our next bishop should be.

Episcopal changes and appreciation

Since our last Synod Bishop Brian and Mrs Robin Farran have entered retirement with a joyous celebration of their ministry amongst us at Christ Church Cathedral last December. Dr Rowan Williams has been succeeded by Justin Welby as Archbishop of Canterbury. Archbishop Peter Jensen has retired with Archbishop Glenn Davies becoming our new Metropolitan. Bishop Richard Hurford has been succeeded by Bishop Ian Palmer in Bathurst. The Dioceses of Riverina and Grafton have entered into discernment processes following the resignations of Bishop Doug Stevens and Bishop Keith Slater respectively. In the wider church, Bishop Ian Lambert is the new Bishop to the Defence Forces following the retirement of Bishop Len Eacott and Bishop Alison Taylor has commenced ministry as part of the episcopate in the Diocese of Brisbane.

I am pleased that we have been able to celebrate at the beginning of Synod the new ministries of Canon Hugh Bright as the NASC Schools Liaison Officer and Mrs Sue Williams as a Ministry Development Officer. They will be offering us great experience and enthusiasm in their new roles. While it will only be a short relationship with us I am

deeply grateful to Dr Robert Tong for agreeing to be the Acting Chancellor for this Synod. I am hoping that we will not be asking him any tricky questions but we can be confident that his knowledge of the law of the Church especially in NSW is amongst the finest.

I want to express my appreciation to the members of the Bishops' Ministry Team - Archdeacons Copeman, Pullin and Roulston together with our Diocesan Business Manager, John Cleary and Parish Services Manager, Linda Wilson. They, together with Danielle Veronesi and Alison Dalmazzone, give great support to the diocese and its bishops.

I want to honour the ministries of our parishes, agencies and schools. We can spend time identifying what they should be undertaking next and critiquing the present but those important tasks should not mask the faithfulness to God expressed week by week by so many people who pray, hope and work that God's kingdom will come and his will be done on earth as in heaven.

The quest for God

Earlier this year I turned 50 so I have been alert to some of the jubilee memories of 1963. Amongst them have been Martin Luther King Junior's great speech in Washington DC, the assassination of John F Kennedy, the death of Pope John XXIII (who we Anglicans name as an Inspirer of Renewal) and the formation of Malaysia (which at that time included Singapore). This Diocese prepared to farewell its Assistant Bishop, Bob Davies, who became a well-loved Bishop of Tasmania. We celebrated the completion of a number of church buildings and halls. In that year Anglicans from across the globe gathered in a Toronto, Canada for congress which concluded with the statement calling for "the death of old isolations and inherited attitudes" and for "the rebirth of the Anglican Communion, which means the death of many old things but—ininitely more—the birth of entirely new relationships"

(http://anglicanhistory.org/canada/toronto_mutual1963.html)

In England, Bishop John Robinson released a series of reflections under the title *Honest to God* which surprised everyone with the number of copies sold. It seemed to capture the mood of a questioning people many of whom were baby boomers just reaching adulthood. Robinson was seeking to unleash people from what he saw as the shackles of an unhelpful expression of Christianity in order that they might encounter God at the heart of everything. Bishop N.T. Wright is critical of Robinson's writing. He provides a useful insight into Anglican thinking of the early 1960s suggesting that 'Anglican theology, piety and preaching oscillated uneasily and inarticulately between a firm reassertion of the old truths as though they were unproblematic and a kind of *enfant terrible* flirtation with questionings of the Virgin Birth and Bodily resurrection.' (Wright, N. T, *Doubts about Doubt: Honest to God Forty Years On*, Journal of Anglican Studies, 2005, 3 (2), 181–96 p191) Wright does concede that the book was engaging in an important conversation and affirms that Robinson was 'struggling with the unwelcome consequences of people being unable to relate to [God as] their absentee landlord and simultaneously puzzling over the fact that some people do not find this a problem (p195)'.

In Australia, fifty years later, the same theological conversations continue and many who wrestle with God still have similar perceptions. Gary Bouma, an Australian Anglican priest and sociologist, suggests that for Australians 'God is distant, able to be got around, and while useful for desperate last minute appeals, not quite relevant to daily life (Bouma, G, *Australia Soul*, Cambridge University Press, p 42)'. He suggest that God is recognised as 'an important if largely indistinct force, slightly shaped by the images of Christianity (p38)'.

All this points to the fact that we continue to face a very complex environment as we seek to enable people to know God as we have come to know Him in the power of the Spirit, through Jesus Christ and named as Father. One of our tasks is to keep the rumour of God alive in a society and cultures whose normal suspicions of religious professionals have been increased by disclosures about abusive behaviour in churches. The norm in our community is now to be

sceptical or disinterested in questions of faith and belief. We are losing our sense of the transcendent and with it a sense of the sacred. One of the worrying outcomes of this trajectory is that people are becoming objectified and commodified with dire consequences for the ways we conceive humanity, creation and the cosmos.

It is in this complex world that all of our ministries are conducted. We are not meant to be holy huddles doing our private things while others do theirs. The mission we have joined is to be witnesses and ambassadors of the living God whose life is entwined with the life of all that he has created. Every Anglican Church should with its people and buildings witness to God's encounter with us. We should echo God's amazing love and grace. There are a few clues in all of this - if we are only concerned with those who come to church: we have missed the point, if we are seduced by agenda that are not God's agenda: we have missed the point, if we live as if there is no God: we have missed the point.

In reflecting on these themes I also recognise that they are not new. Between the 8th and 5th centuries before the birth of Christ, God's ancient people, were grappling with similar theological themes as they sought to explain God as they had come to understand him. They were working out their faith and belief in the wake of a number of violent experiences of dispossession. As they recollected the heroes and forebears they affirmed that One God was the source of all creation. This One God, wrapped in mystery and beyond knowing, was also intimately engaged with the affairs of the creation and especially human beings. They grappled with the presence of sin and evil seeking to comprehend God's response. They pondered both wonder of creation and how one people became many peoples disconnected from each other. With confidence they proclaimed central truths that shaped life but recognised that there was much beyond their knowing. This pilgrimage and reflection is captured in the first 11 chapters of the book of Genesis.

It is with these starting points that I want to reflect further on our shared life. As I do so I am going to begin with two themes that might

be painful and very real for you, those you love and those whose lives are entwined with yours. I recognise that simply raising some of these themes may cause disquiet and that you may begin to revisit them. Make time to talk about them with the people you trust and who support you. Our strength as a community is shown when we recognise that even silently some people carry stories of anguish. We need to be careful around the urn and meal table recognising that the person next to us may have a much more personal connection with the themes I am going to address.

The First Peoples

My first area of concern is to do with the first peoples of this land. I have been continually surprised how little reference we give to the nations present before white settlement and which are part of our community now. As we tell and retell our story they are not named and we do not acknowledge them in our history. I have come to wonder whether, in part, this is to do with the fact that this history is, for us, a shocking history. Something that is too hard to talk about. Our possession is a result of their dispossession.

Christine Bramble in her 1981 thesis suggests that the Hunter Valley was the most violent arena of racial contact in the pioneering period. She suggests that the colonising interests of the majority of settlers meant that there was little interest in avoiding racial violence or in securing dignity for the first peoples. She suggests that within a short period of the coming of white settlers the first peoples were subservient and demoralised. This occurred on the land we now occupy.

<http://www.newcastle.edu.au/Resources/Divisions/Academic/Library/Cultural%20Collections/pdf/1981-bramble-aborigines.pdf>

The Samaritans Foundation continues to alert us to the appalling gap between living conditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and those of non-Aboriginal Australians reminding us that this gap is a major barrier to a fair Australia. It seems to me that a key aspect of reconciliation is acknowledging the pain of our history and seeking to

enter into the partnerships in which future encounters with our first peoples which bear more of the marks of mutual respect and mutual responsibility than have been present in the past.

I am grateful for the suggestion from the Reverend Di Langham that an Aboriginal Consultative Committee be established to further the dioceses' conversation with our first peoples. Di will be recommending a structure, membership and terms of reference on which the Diocesan Council will be asked for advice.

There is much to do here and I wonder what it would be like for us to include a dimension of reconciliation in every decision about land. I wonder what it would be like for us to ensure that every parish knew the story of the land on which it stands.

Sexual abuse

My second area of concern is as powerful as the first. It relates to the loss of trust, innocence and hope that is the result of the abuse of children.

In 2004, at the General Synod in Fremantle, the members stood and read the following apology as the members and the Synod continued to come to terms with the reality of the abuse that had occurred within the Anglican Church and its institutions -

That this General Synod and we as members of it acknowledge with deep regret and repentance the past failings of the Church and its members. On behalf of the whole Anglican Church in this country we apologise unreservedly to those who have been harmed by sexual abuse perpetrated by people holding positions of power and trust in the Church. We apologise for the shameful way we actively worked against and discouraged those who came to us and reported abuse. We are ashamed to acknowledge that we only took notice when the survivors of abuse became a threat to us. We apologise and ask

forgiveness for the Church's failure at many levels to listen to and acknowledge the plight of those who have been abused, to take adequate steps to assist them, and to prevent abuse from happening or recurring. We commit the Church to listen to survivors of abuse to respond with compassion to all those who have been harmed, both to those who have come forward and to those who may choose to do so in the future, and to deal appropriately, transparently and fairly with those accused of abuse and negligence.

The genesis of this apology was independent inquiries into sexual abuse in Tasmania, Brisbane and Adelaide with findings that abuse did occur and that the church was, at times, defensive or dismissive when complaints were made. In most Dioceses, including ours, there have been major changes since then including the development of professional standards processes and responses such as pastoral aid and assistance schemes.

One of the responses to abuse is to minimise or distance it from our thinking. We do this by saying, in effect, 'that is their story not my story'. I want to be clear with the Synod, the reality of abuse by clergy and lay people in the church is part of our Diocesan story. We have people who were members of our Anglican family telling us how, as children, serious sexual assault was perpetrated against them by respected clergy and/or laity. Their recollections are profoundly heart breaking. These children were often targeted because they were very vulnerable because of family or personal circumstances. We need to accept and come to terms with the reality that there were people in our midst who we trusted but who preyed on others and we did not see it. We are now challenged by survivors who say "you should have seen it and you should have done something about it."

As we respond to survivors with true repentance we will find that we are called upon to offer financial support as part of our response. This will affect our balance sheet and budget, and rightly so. Recently

I initiated some revisions of our process with the full support of our legal advisors that will further expedite our fair, just and pastoral response to those whose spirituality and identity has been harmed in our midst.

I wonder what it would be like if across the Diocese we prayed for victims and survivors of abuse with the deep desire that they might experience real healing and transformation.

Professional Standards

Over a number of meetings this year the Diocesan Council has been engaged in complex discussion about a policy or policies for those members of the congregation who on reasonable grounds can be identified as having committed sexual crimes or sexual misconduct against children and who wish to be part of a community of faith.

There are three main reasons for such a policy. First, and foremost, those who participate in church activities, especially children and vulnerable people, have a right to expect that they can do so in safety. Second, there is a community expectation that where we can reasonably control the inappropriate activities of people within our common life then we should do so. Thirdly, we can assist those who have a disposition towards offending not to re-offend.

As people of the new covenant it is not our practice to banish someone forever beyond the boundaries of the community of faith. It is the practice of the church that even notorious sinners can participate with due repentance, contrition and amendment of life. This practice is not understood by some in the wider community who would like offenders of all sorts to be locked up and the key thrown away. It is also important to understand that communities of faith were never intended to be naive. We see in the scriptures that high levels of mutual accountability are called forth from believers.

The main thrust of this policy approach, which is based, in part, on the work of the Professional Standards Commission of the General Synod, is that those who have been found to have offended against others in this way will enter into voluntary agreements in which they will receive support and through which they will undertake not to participate in some events and activities while agreeing to close supervision where specific risks are identified.

In other professional standards matters, the Diocesan Council has approved a new protocol for the investigation of professional standards matters, supported enhanced enquiries prior to appointment in the diocese, approved a form of integrity review for the operation of the professional standards processes to come in the form of an ordinance to Synod next year, and is seeking to ensure a full, prompt and complete response to any expectations of the Royal Commission enquiring into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

I wonder what more we need to do in the Diocese for our clergy and laity to affirm that these matters are of critical importance and call each other to support and implement them.

Human sexuality

This year the Australian Anglican bishops chose to meet for an extra day in conference to allow for a careful conversation about human sexuality. The bishops recognised the importance of this work following their decision in 2012 to agree upon a morally binding protocol which states -

“As bishops in the Australian Church we accept the weight of 1998 Lambeth Resolution 1.10 and the 2004 General Synod resolutions 33, 59 and 61-64 as expressing the mind of this Church on issues of human sexuality.

We undertake to uphold the position of our Church in regard to human sexuality as we ordain, license, authorise or appoint to ministries within our dioceses.

We understand that issues of sexuality are subject to ongoing conversation within our Church and we undertake to support these conversations, while seeking to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

To ensure a good understanding of its decisions, the bishops attached to the protocol a copy of all the documents referred to in its decision. This year, the bishops added another document, a statement from the 2013 bishops conference which reads

In our conversations at this meeting we have prayed, studied and considered deeply issues of human sexuality and behaviour. We have had the benefit of significant scholarly input to inform our deliberations. We were unable to reach a common mind on the application of scriptural teaching for today. Nevertheless, we acknowledge that differing perspectives held by the bishops were held with integrity. There remain matters that we need to consider further and there are some things we still do not sufficiently understand. The challenges for us are:

- a) to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace;*
- b) to be faithful to the way of Christ in the world today, with respect to human sexual expression;*
- c) to care for members of Christ's body; and*
- d) to promote Christ's mission.*

We recognise that in our Church there are people who experience themselves as having same-sex orientation. Many of these members are seeking to be faithful in the power of God's Holy Spirit and look to the Church for pastoral care and moral guidance in their lives. We accept with heavy hearts that these people bear a great weight of pain. We assure them that they are loved by God, and that

all baptised, believing and faithful persons, regardless of sexual orientation, are full members of the body of Christ.

For me, three sentences have been an important part of my continued reflections -

We were unable to reach a common mind on the application of scriptural teaching for today. Nevertheless, we acknowledge that differing perspectives held by the bishops were held with integrity ... We assure [people who experience themselves as having same-sex orientation] that they are loved by God, and that all baptised, believing and faithful persons, regardless of sexual orientation, are full members of the body of Christ.

My friends with one worldview tell me that it is too little and too late; that society has moved on. My friends with another worldview tell me that this concedes too much ground and that it is vital that the church state its historic views with vigour.

Prior to the conference the bishops had read extensively and were presented with rigorous academic reflections within the conference. A critical turning point for us was the reminder that all of our work with scripture is hermeneutical, that is the task of interpreting these vital texts in the light of knowledge and insight from a variety of traditions, cultures and experiences including those in which they were written. The work of interpretation and application is an ongoing responsibility for the church; a work we share.

I have no doubt that there will come a time when the Commonwealth Parliament will debate legislation aimed at authorising the marriage of two people of the same gender. I envisage that this legislation will contain provisions designed to ensure that no minister of religion is compelled to officiate at such a marriage in the same way that they are not obliged to officiate at marriage of a person who has been divorced.

Sometime after that legislation is enacted there will be a same gender couple who approach an Anglican priest to see what religious service might be possible. I am thinking of a couple in which one or both members seek to live in some way as a follower of Jesus and who are connected, themselves or perhaps through their parents or grandparents, with an Anglican parish. They will approach their priest because they have some sense of association with him or her and believe they will be received with dignity. The priest will want to know what it is possible for them to do.

The reality for us is that at some point our response will be shaped by a debate about our canon law or what it contains. I lament the fact our legal discussions are often the mechanism we use to decide how we will live together as Anglicans. These processes so often lack pastoral sensitivity and risk objectifying the people affected by the deliberations whether they be in favour or opposed to a particular proposition.

Given that the constitution of the Anglican Church of Australia makes the standard of our doctrine the Book of Common Prayer of 1662 I cannot see how this Church will be able to adopt changes to Canon Law that allow for the solemnisation of marriage of people of the same gender in church buildings or by its clergy. In the end, I imagine we will be discussing whether the Canon Concerning Services from 1992 allows for a blessing or recognition of such a partnership with the officiant seeking to use a form of service he or she considers suitable because the authorised services of the church make no provision. I am not sure whether it will be possible for such an officiant to develop a service which is not contrary to or a departure from the doctrine of this church. At some point a diocesan bishop will be asked under this Canon to adjudicate on the proposed service's reverence, edification and doctrine.

Given the conversations in the wider community I wonder whether as a diocese we need to assist our Bishop in their work and return to the discussions about human sexuality in such a way as would allow us to be faithful to Christ's way, maintain our unity and care for

people. I don't think our shared life and witness will be helped if we avoid those conversations, as difficult as they may be. The decisions of our bishops, the work of the General Synod Doctrine Commission, the Lambeth Conference and our own General Synod will be an important part of our conversations.

Celebrating the ministry of ordained women

At the bishops conference this year there were three bishops who are women as well as the bishop-designate for Brisbane diocese, Alison Taylor. Bishop Richard Appleby and I both joined in her consecration on Easter Saturday. Last December, there was a simple but wonderful celebration of the 20th anniversary of the ordination of women as priests by Bishop Geoffrey Parker at the request of the then Administrator of the Diocese.

Over the last few years we have been reminded that the ordination of women as bishops, priests and deacons in our church is a matter of reception. That is a process of study and evaluation through which the Church reflects on an action it has taken to discern whether it can be positively affirmed as God's will for the Church. As I reflect on the events of 1992 in Perth, Melbourne, Canberra, Hobart, Newcastle and further afield I do not think we believed we were taking a tentative step rather we believed, and I still believe, that we were moving closer to God's desire for Christian community in its ordered expression.

There was a risk in 1992 that supporters of women's ordination were triumphalist because the process of exploring it had been very difficult, hurtful and long. I know of my own experiences and I watched with anguish what my women friends and colleagues went through. I have since then on a number of occasions heard the anguish of those who believe that this Church was mistaken. In the course of some of those conversations I advised people of the Protocol on Women in the Episcopate adopted by the Australian bishops which seeks to ensure that our unity in Christ is sustained.

All of this has become more real for me as Administrator as there is an increasing number of enquiries for ministry in the Diocese from people who are not able to accept women in leadership or in teaching ministries among men. I hadn't anticipated that I would need to make decisions in this regard but, after reflection I decided that I would be content to nominate a priest to a parish where that parish has in some formal ways expressed continued reservation about women in ordained or teaching ministries. However, I have not been willing to nominate people to other parishes or ministries in the Diocese if they cannot accept the sacramental and teaching ministry of women as peers. I have also taken this view in considering those who should be candidates for ordained ministry. I believe that my positions are consistent with the decisions and practice of the Diocese.

I wonder how we will deal better with differences of belief in such ways that those dealings are not life denying or spirit quenching.

Parish structures

For some time I have been wrestling with the question as to why conversations about parish restructuring struggles to gain a foothold in thinking of many faithful Anglicans. Conversations about parish structures are not capturing the hearts and minds of the people in our pews.

For some time we have been hearing fiscal and missional advice that our congregations need to be larger if we are going to provide effective ministry well into the future and if we are going to sustain the necessary cost of stipends and salaries. This advice is grounded in an important series of propositions that suggest that vibrant Anglicanism ministers to people of all ages. There is general acceptance that our successors in the faith will not be assisted if we squander our resources in self-care and fail in the work of proclaiming the kingdom. We know that they will not be assisted by us losing our nerve when the time comes for courageous decisions.

Yet, I wonder if many of our Anglicans cannot see themselves in the pictures of the future communities that have been painted for them.

If we look back at the early church we see that people gathered to celebrate the resurrection, to be informed about the Way of Christ and to be nurtured in the Way. In expressing their commitment to the kingdom they ensured that those who were ill or in need were cared for focussing on those who were affiliated with the Way and those who would not be hostile. As time went on and the homes of people were insufficient for proper hospitality special purpose buildings were erected which over time themselves became pointers to the Way. As time also went on those who exercised eldership in the community and then a series of communities were increasingly provided with financial support so that they could be released from ordinary work to assist the community in its mission and ministry. It seems to me that at the heart of this expression of Church are communities of meaning in which people grow in faith and move out to live the faith in such a way as others are invited to find reconciliation with God and follow Jesus Christ as Lord.

Anglicans like to gather in communities in which they are known and know others whether this be in a congregation which is part of a multi-congregation parish, whether in a cell group of a large church or in a small congregation. It seems to me that we need to focus on creating communities of meaning, mission and ministry in multi-centre parishes, single centre – single service parishes or multi-congregation parishes.

I was disappointed by the way that important discussions about the future of ministry in Newcastle were reduced in the media to an incorrect suggestion that we are looking at forced closure of church buildings. This has been an unhelpful distraction. I anticipate that in the future there may be a partnership between bishop, priest and congregation that reaches a conclusion that there are better ways of engaging in good stewardship and effective mission than sustaining some buildings. I also anticipate that into the future the partnership

between bishop, priest and congregation will identify new and exciting ways of ministry that can be widely celebrated.

I am hopeful that the motion on developing specific building plans will be supported by the Synod such that we will, for every building, and in partnership make good mission based and realistic decisions about our properties. I do think we have to move on from simplistic and unhelpful categorisations of discussions with diocesan bodies as "us" and "them". We need to wrestle together with the complexities facing our shared Gospel work.

I am excited by what seems to be happening with programs like Messy Church and Mainly Music, as well as their variants. There has been much prayer, visioning, planning and commitment to make this happen.

I rejoice that we have buildings that are beautifully cared for and prayed in which are kept open each day so that people may visit them and reflect on their life and on God.

I am really encouraged when I see Op Shops not just used for fund-raising but as places of creating community and responding to human need.

I also think that there are also many exciting opportunities in front of us. Ann Morrisy in her recent visit with us suggested that we should celebrate more the gift and contribution of older church members who can reach out to their peers and explore together questions of meaning, hope and purpose. She encouraged us in thinking about peer ministry as well as ministry to other generations.

Ministering Communities in Mission

With all of this that it is critical that we do not undervalue the significant contribution to that the vision of becoming ministering communities in mission has made and should continue to make in

the Diocese. It has been central to our rediscovery of the baptismal call to radical discipleship and the call to be engaged with our local communities in strategic mission.

Central to the vision of becoming ministering communities in mission are

- a ministry team (either sharing the leadership with every member assigned a portfolio or being focused on one or two mission initiatives)
- an empowered laity who join in the work of discernment about ministry
- missional leadership with mission action plans
- a thriving group of people undertaking ministry
- the formation of an intentional learning community with clear educational plans for the team and the congregation
- careful attention the parish infrastructure with prompt decisions focussed on well-being and growth
- a changing understanding of the role of Incumbent to that of missionaryer

In many parishes we will continue to rejoice in the work of priests and deacons in local mission. In some parishes the ministry of word and sacrament will depend on their work. Ministering Communities in Mission is a strategic, biblically and theologically based, approach that is helping many communities enhance their work.

I hope that in the new year we will be recognising parishes as parishes with ministry teams those that have embraced some of the variations in models of ministry teams, developed mission action plans and developed team education plans.

Diocese of Guadalcanal

I am looking forward to the partnership that seems to be emerging with the Diocese of Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands. A former assistant bishop, Leslie Stibbard served there and with the Melanesian Brotherhood.

Archbishop Rowan Williams said of the brothers, following the martyrdom of seven of their number, that

When the Brothers - and Sisters - proclaim the gospel now, whether in the Pacific or in their visits to the Western world, this story has become inseparably linked with their identity. The reality of death and resurrection has embedded itself so deeply in the awareness and identity of the Brotherhood that their unforgettable presentation of the Good News in dance and story and drama becomes a living-out of the hope that the story of their martyred friends embodies.

In partnership, this gift is offered to us as a diocese, and we will discover ways in which we can offer support to their work. For this partnership to be real it must be one in which many of our people, from all walks of life, are able to offer and receive hospitality from of Melanesian friends.

Anglican Church in Nigeria

From time to time the demands facing our sisters and brothers in other places is pressed upon us. Last weekend we heard that the second most senior cleric in the Church of Nigeria, Dean of the Province and Archbishop of Niger Delta Province, the Most Revd Ignatius Kattey had been kidnapped with his wife, although his wife has already been set free. We pray for his safety and speedy release. As we do so we are reminded that Anglicans, along with people of other churches, minister in some very complex places where their safety is not guaranteed.

Australia Today

At the Diocesan Convention I spoke at length about my concerns for the situation facing refugees who come to this country. I commend my reflections to you. Like many of you here I have questions about an election process where people with a very small vote will represent their state in the Senate. I am concerned about the proposed policies in relation to foreign aid with a focus on helping ourselves before we help others. All of these matters require careful consideration by Christians as the words of an election become formal proposals put to the community and the parliament. There will be time for informed comment then. We maintain our commitment as a church to pray for our parliaments and all who exercise authority in this land.

My wonderings

Our story is enveloped by God's story which gone on before us and will go on after us. Some of the deepest themes have come up over and over again as we have made sense of our setting, been sidetracked by sin and discovered again God's grace.

In concluding this address I want to place on record my deep appreciation to my wife Nicki, my son Ben and my daughter Rebekah. It has been a challenging year for us in many ways but their love and support has not wavered as they have enabled me to be free to serve you. It is an immense privilege to be a bishop amongst you, something I look forward to doing for many years to come.

And now to God who is powerful and mighty be power and glory for ever. Amen.

KAIYU KAN KAIWAL KILLI BIN BIN YANTI KATAI

Visitors to the Diocese

Bishop Graeme Rutherford

Bishop Godfrey Fryar

Dr Vicky Balabanski

Bishop Peter Watson

Dr Ann Morisy

The Reverend Professor Graeme Ward

Appointments, Ordinations, Resignations and Retirements

The Anglican Church of Australia

The Right Reverend John Ford the Bishop of Plymouth will be enthroned as the Bishop of the Diocese of the Murray on 6 December 2013.

The Right Reverend Ian Palmer was consecrated and installed as the 10th Bishop of Bathurst on 9 February 2013.

Bishop Alison Taylor was consecrated as Bishop of the Southern Region of Brisbane Diocese on 6 April 2013.

Bishop Keith Slater resigned as Bishop of Grafton on 17 May 2013

Bishop Ian Lambert from the Diocese of Canberra and Goulbourn was installed as Bishop to the Defence Force at Royal Military College on 5 July 2013.

Archbishop Peter Jensen retired on 11 July 2013.

The Right Reverend Dr Tom Frame has given notice of his resignation as Director of the Council of St Mark's National Theological Centre. His last day in that role will be 10 January 2014.

Diocesan Appointments and Moves

The Reverend Chris Yates was appointed Priest in Charge of the Parish of Raymond Terrace on 30 October 2012.

The Reverend Canon David Battrick was installed into the Stanton Canonry on 11 November 2012 and commissioned Rector of the Parish of East Maitland on 25 November 2012

The Reverend Les Forester was appointed (0.5) Regional Ministry Development Officer for the Paterson, Manning and Maitland Deaneries and (0.5) Intentional Interim Ministry priest on 16 November 2013.

The Reverend Kesh Govan was appointed Rector of the Parish of Nelson Bay on 13 November 2012.

The Reverend Chris Jackson was appointed Deacon (0.5) in the Parish of MiCA on Friday 30 November 2012.

The Right Reverend Dr Peter Stuart was appointed Administrator of the Anglican Diocese of Newcastle on 16 December 2012.

The Reverend Julie Turnbull was appointed Area Dean of the Manning on 21 December 2012.

The Reverend Jody Zammit was appointed Curate of the Parish of Denman on 23 December 2012.

The Reverend Clive Gerard was appointed to an ongoing Locum Tenens role in the Parish of Swansea on 1 January 2013.

The Reverend Les Forester was appointed Intentional Interim Priest (0.4 FTE) in the Parish of Williamstown, Medowie and Mullabula on 8 January 2013.

The Reverend Bryce Amner was appointed Assistant Priest in the Parish of Williamstown, Medowie and Mullabula on 8 January 2013.

The Reverend Walter Firth was appointed Curate in the Parish of Toukley with a 0.5 appointment on 17 January 2013.

The Reverend David Cole was appointed Sub-Dean of Christ Church Cathedral on 2 February 2013.

The Reverend Dr Chris Garland was appointed Priest in Charge in the parish of Stroud on 4 February 2013.

The Reverend Canon Katherine Bowyer was appointed Rector of the Parish of Cardiff on 7 February 2013.

The Reverend Gary Harman was appointed to an ongoing Locum Tenens role in the Parish of Nelson Bay on 1 March 2013.

The Reverend Michelle Hazel-Jawhary was appointed Priest in Charge of the Parish of Gloucester on 3 March 2013.

The Reverend Paul Robertson was appointed to an ongoing Locum Tenens role in the Parish of Stockton on 1 April 2013.

The Reverend Drew Hanlon concluded his ministry at the Samaritans on 18 April 2013.

The Reverend Janet Killen was appointed Rector of the Parish of Belmont on 29 April 2013.

The Reverend Michael Davies was licensed with a general license as Chaplain to the Mission to Seafarers on 8 May 2013.

The Reverend Doug Morrison Cleary was appointed to an ongoing Locum Tenens role in the Parish of Beresfield Thornton on 12 May 2013.

The Venerable Arthur Copeman was appointed Intentional Interim Priest in the Parish of New Lambton on 12 May 2013.

The Reverend Canon Sonia Roulston was appointed Acting Archdeacon for Mission Support on 12 May 2013.

The Reverend David Cole was appointed Honorary Minor Canon of the Cathedral and will be known as the Canon Liturgist on 23 June 2013.

The Reverend Chris Orczy was appointed Parish Priest in the Parish of Branxton, Greta and Lochinvar on 24 June 2013

The Reverend Stephen Niland was appointed Parish Priest in the Parish of Harrington and Coopernook on 1 July 2013.

The Reverend Stewart Perry was appointed Area Dean of the Deanery of Newcastle on 1 July 2013.

The Reverend Canon Hugh Bright was appointed as the NASC Diocesan Schools Liaison Officer on 2 September 2013.

Ordinations

The Reverend Wendy Brack was ordained a Deacon on 30 November 2012.

The Reverend Kathy Dunstan was ordained a Deacon on 30 November 2012.

The Reverend Barbara Hayes was ordained a Deacon on 30 November 2012.

The Reverend Chris Jackson was ordained a Deacon on 30 November 2012.

The Reverend Jody Zammit was ordained a Deacon on 30 November 2012.

The Reverend Nathan Atkinson was ordained a priest on 30 November 2012.

The Reverend Sue Ballard was ordained a priest on 30 November 2012.

The Reverend Donald Grace was ordained a priest on 30 November 2012.

The Reverend Luke Hopkins was ordained a priest on 30 November 2012.

The Reverend Peter Inman was ordained a priest on 30 November 2012.

The Reverend Stephen Niland was ordained a priest on 30 November 2012.

The Reverend Chris Orczy was ordained a priest on 30 November 2012.

The Reverend Cathy Walker was ordained a priest on 30 November 2012.

Parish Ministry Teams

Lakes Anglican Parish Ministry Team was commissioned on 24 February 2013.

Gloucester Parish Ministry Team was commissioned on 3 March 2013.

Retirements

The Right Reverend Dr Brian Farran retired as Bishop of Newcastle on 15 December 2012.

The Reverend Ray Manual retired as Rector of the Parish of Harrington – Coopernook on 13 March 2013.

Resignations and/or Departures from the Diocese

Mr David Sarich, Head of Junior School at Lakes Grammar – an Anglican School retired on 21 January 2013.

The Reverend Joshua Bovis resigned as Assistant Priest in the Parish of Muswellbrook on 30 December 2012.

The Reverend Jessica Grant resigned as Assistant Priest in the Parish of Forster Tuncurry on 31 January 2013.

The Very Reverend James Rigney resigned as Dean of Christ Church Cathedral on 1 February 2013.

The Reverend Ray Manual resigned as Rector in the Parish of Harrington and Coopernook on 13 March 2013.

The Reverend Dr Daniel Dries resigned as Rector in the Parish of Belmont on 20 January 2013 to become Rector of Christ Church St Laurence in Sydney.

Mrs Margaret Gibbs resigned as the CEO of the NASC on 14 May 2013.

The Reverend Gavin Talbot resigned as Rector in the Parish of Stockton on 12 June 2013.

Mr Glenn Turner resigned as Principal of Manning Valley Anglican College on 21 June 2013.

Arrivals

Mr William Wallace commenced as Head of Junior School at Lakes Grammar – an Anglican School in January 2013.

Mr Geoff Lancaster commenced as Interim Principal of Manning Valley Anglican College for Terms 3 & 4 of 2013.

Deconsecrations, Consecrations and Blessings

St Paul's Church, Maitland was deconsecrated by Bishop Brian Farran on 20 October 2012.

St Philip's Church, Waratah was deconsecrated by Bishop Brian Farran on 1 December 2012.

St Clements, Camberwell was deconsecrated by Bishop Peter Stuart on 7 July 2013.

Special Anniversaries

The Reverend Beatrice Pate celebrated 25 years of Deaconing on 6 February 2013.

The Reverend Audrey Fuller celebrated 25 years of Deaconing on 6 February 2013.

Awards

Mr Raymond Samuel Neilson was awarded an Order of Australia for his service to the community of Dungog.

In Memoriam

Among the faithful departed, we make special mention of:

The Reverend Dr Ann McElligott, died on 10 October 2012.

The Reverend Tom McElligott, died on 6 November 2012.

The Reverend Warren Croft died on 20 November 2012.

The Reverend Roy Wotton OAM died on 3 February 2013.

The Reverend Max Timbrell died on 17 February 2013.

Mr Doug Shannon died on 19 February 2013.

The Right Reverend Adrian Charles AM died on 10 April 2013.

Archbishop Sir Ellison Pogo died on 13 May 2013.

The Reverend Noel Frederick Sphor died on 17 May 2013.

Mr Colin Lye died on 22 June 2013.