

105 Greaves Street Nth.
P.O. Box 872
WERRIBEE VIC 3030
ABN No. 28681862552
Email: werribee@cam.org.au
www.standrewswerribee.org.au
Tel: 9741 4144
Fax: 9741 4433

Parish Office Opening Hours:
Mon. – Thurs. 9am – 4pm
Fri 9am – 12.30pm, 2pm – 4pm

Liturgy: Mass Times
Saturday 6pm Vigil
Sunday 8, 9.30, 11am, 5pm
Reconciliation
Saturday 9.30am and 5pm

PARISH TEAMS

Pastoral Team:

Fr. Frank Buhagiar PP
Fr. Darien Sticklen
Fr. Shymon

Thekkekalathungal

Marthese Temming

Pastoral Care in
Werribee North Community
Louisa Sullivan

Pastoral Care in Wyndham Vale
Sherry Vivera

Pastoral Care in Werribee South/
Werribee Central

Therese Kennedy

Home Based RE Coordinator
Benita Dahanayake

Home Based RE Coordinator
Norma Marot

Baptism Prep. & RCIC

Administrative Team:

Birgit Minness (Coordinator)
Cora Ilagan

Jen Climie (Finance)

South Sudanese Deacon:

Rev. George Piech Meat
9741 4144 (1st/3rd Tue)

PARISH SCHOOLS

St. Andrew's Primary
School – Ph. 9741 3686
Principal:

Michael Gavaghan

Corpus Christi Primary
School – Ph. 9741 8440
Principal: Linda Roynic

Bethany Primary School –
Ph. 9742 9800

Principal:

Marlene Monahan

Our Lady of the Southern
Cross Primary School –
Ph. 9974 8500

Principal: Jennifer Poon

St. John the Apostle PS –
Tarneit West
Ph. 9748 9003

Principal: Simon Dundon

MacKillop Catholic
Regional College –
Ph. 8734 5200

Principal: Rory Kennedy

Thomas Carr Catholic
Regional College –
Ph. 8734 2444

Principal:

Dr. Andrew Watson



ST. ANDREW'S PARISH

Incorporating the Communities of
Werribee Central, Wyndham Vale,
Werribee South, Werribee North,
Tarneit West, Upper Point Cook
and Little River

LORD, RENEW THE FACE OF THE EARTH

PENTECOST SUNDAY – 4TH JUNE 2017

**As we come to worship, we remember the Wathaurong People,
the original custodians of this land.**

FIRST READING: Acts 2:1-11

When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled, they were all in one place together. And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were. Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim. Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven staying in Jerusalem. At this sound, they gathered in a large crowd, but they were confused because each one heard them speaking in his own language. They were astounded, and in amazement they asked, "Are not all these people who are speaking Galileans? Then how does each of us hear them in his native language? We are Parthians, Medes, and Elamites, inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya near Cyrene, as well as travelers from Rome, both Jews and converts to Judaism, Cretans and Arabs, yet we hear them speaking in our own tongues of the mighty acts of God." **THE WORD OF THE LORD.**

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: Psalm 104:1, 24, 29-30, 31, 34

Response: Lord, send out your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth.

Bless the LORD, O my soul! O LORD, my God, you are great indeed! How manifold are your works, O Lord! the earth is full of your creatures;

May the glory of the LORD endure forever; may the LORD be glad in his works! Pleasing to him be my theme; I will be glad in the LORD.

If you take away their breath, they perish and return to their dust. When you send forth your spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the earth.

Response: Lord, send out your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth.

SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 12:3b-7, 12-13

Brothers and sisters: No one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit. There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; there are different forms of service but the same Lord; there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone. To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit. As a body is one though it has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body, so also Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons, and we were all given to drink of one Spirit.

THE WORD OF THE LORD.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, Alleluia. Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Alleluia.

GOSPEL: John 20:19-23

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained." **THE GOSPEL OF THE LORD.**



GOSPEL REFLECTION: Love is Gentle

It was late spring and the buds still refused to open. Tightly wrapped up in themselves, they were as hard as stones. The wind shook them. The hail beat them. The frost squeezed them in a fist of iron. All three shouted, "Open up! Open up!" Instead of opening up the buds reinforced their shells, and retreated even more deeply into themselves. Then along came the sun. It issued no threats and made no demands. It just created a more friendly climate. And what happened? Almost overnight the buds began to soften and expand. Then their shells cracked, and they burst out. If you love, you are gentle. And there are certain tasks which only gentleness can accomplish.
Flor McCarthy SDB

PRAYER AT HOME: Use today's Gospel Acclamation as your prayer this week: ***Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of the faithful and kindle in us the fire of your love.***

VOCATION VIEW: "There are different gifts, but the same Spirit." Each of us has been graced with certain gifts of the Spirit. And they are active, if we utilise them for the building up of the Church. Name the way the Lord has gifted you.

RECENT DEATHS: Grant eternal peace, O Lord to: **Jennifer Giaccotto**

ONE MONTH ANNIVERSARY: Domenico Zaffina (family attending 10.30am Mass), Tony Cassar

ONE YEAR ANNIVERSARY: Margaret Welladsen

ANNIVERSARIES: Christine Grima, Vito and Guiseppina Portogallo, Frank and Maria Filippin, Concetta Gandolfo, Giambattista and Gesualda Aidone, Angelo Santamaria, Leone Brunato, Angelo Mel, Giovanni Marino and all the deceased members of the Marino and Elevato Families and all the deceased members of the Giliberto and Giulano Families, Pauline Restall, Bert Day

REMINDER: Parishioners please note that names for Recently Deceased, Anniversaries etc. to be included in the Sunday Bulletin must be at the Parish Office no later than Wednesday afternoon and please address envelopes to the Admin Staff. The names for Prayers for the Sick will be deleted at the beginning of each year. If you have a name you would like included, please contact the Parish Office.

PRAYERS FOR THE SICK: Br. Helmut Knab CMM, Helen (H) Kelly, Pauline Jones, Andrew Roberts, Paula Miller, Julie Morgan, Rosaleen McKenna, Jeanette Ballentine, Lisette, Henriette, Paul Carlton, Lynne Worsley, Theresa Ng, Sr. Reena, Milton Roberts, Fortunato Valiente, Harish Narayan, Angela Castillo, David Young, Tom Shone, Natalie Berry, Mark Lauron, Paul Kent, Hainz Schegigtz, Zeahn Hayes, Mary Crawford, Robert Ip Soo Ching, France Ethan Jadoc, Clemencia Melkie, Raywin Roberts, Frank Fazio, Palepina Alofi, Leanne Peardon, Leonila Moso, Mr & Mrs. Walters, Julie Cassar, John McCarthy, Larissa Rathnathurai, Joyce and Jeffrey, Jack Keane, Antonietta, Tony Gaetano, Margaret Roberts (Hobart), Lauren Evans, Patsy De Abreu

COMMUNION TO THE SICK AND ELDERLY: We try to be aware of all who through illness or disability are unable to attend Mass regularly. If you know of anyone who would benefit from Communion being brought to them, please contact the Parish Office on 9741 4144.

LITURGY THIS WEEK: St. Andrew's Church

Daily: 8.30am Adoration and Prayer

Mon: Feast of St. Boniface

9.00am Liturgy of the Word with Communion

Tues: 9.00am Liturgy of the Word with Communion

Wed: 9.00am Liturgy of the Word with Communion

Thurs: 9.00am Liturgy of the Word with Communion

Fri: 9.00am Mass

Sat: 9.00am Mass

9.30am Confessions

5.00pm Confessions

PARISH COMMUNITY MASSES – 10AM

Werribee Central/South Sun, 18th June

Corpus Christi Primary School

Tamil Mass Sun, 18th June

Penola Hub

5pm

Tarneit West Community Sat, 24th June

St. John the Apostle PS

5pm

Little River Community Sun, 25th June

St. Michael's Church

South Sudanese Mass Sun, 25th June

Penola Hub

2pm

All parishioners and school families welcome to attend.

STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

FIRST COLLECTION (loose money):

For the needs of the Priests in the Archdiocese of Melbourne and our local Priests.

SECOND COLLECTION:

(Stewardship Envelopes or credit card or direct debit):

The Parish is financially dependent on our Stewardship Program to fund its operation.

Note: Stewardship and Census Cards are available from the Church Brochure Racks or Parish Office.

NEW PARISHIONERS:

Welcome! Please collect your information pack from the Parish Office.

MULTICULTURAL PIZZA NIGHT:

A Big Thanks to all of you who made the Pizza night a great success. Through your kindness and generosity we raised \$3,231.45 in support of the Parish Fair. We appreciate you for braving the autumn night and for coming in huge numbers.

We would like to acknowledge Corpus Christi Primary School for letting us use their hall and to everyone who lend a helping hand in making this night a success. Together with Fr. Frank and the St. Andrew's Multicultural Pizza Night Committee – **THANK YOU AND SEE YOU ALL NEXT YEAR.**

CHILDREN'S LITURGY – On Sunday, 11th June 2017, the 9.30am mass will be filmed for our Parish Media Project. Please let us know on that day if you don't want to have your child/children to be included in the filming. Thank you for your cooperation and we apologise for the inconvenience.

MINISTRY ROSTERS FOR WEEKEND OF 10th / 11th JUNE 2017

	6.00pm	8.00am	9.30am	11.00am	5pm
LECTORS	Clara Rovetto	Janelle Walters	Chrissie Van Der Hoeven	Fransisca Raviola	Young Adults
MUSIC	Volunteer	None	Volunteer	Sudanese Group	Young Adults
COUNTERS	This Week: Next Week:	Sun 4 Jun: Team 6: Ch. Bensted, M, Bensted, D. Cox, F. Pidtala Sun 11 Jun: Team 7: B. Bartels, M. Bartels, R. Dubier, J. Thompson			
CHURCH CLEANING	Cleaning: Vacuuming:	Mon 5 Jun: Team 2: B. Ashford, Z. Prasad Fri 9 Jun: Team 1: B. Hassett Mon 5 Jun: Team 1: E. Wallace, V. Galea			
ALTAR CLOTHS	This Week: Next Week:	Sun 4 Jun: Cora Ilagan Sun 11 Jun: Mary Galea			
OUR LADY'S STATUE	This Week: Next Week:	Sun 4 Jun: M. H. Chong, 9 Hartwell Court, Werribee, Mob. 0400 965 542 Sun 11 Jun: M. H. Chong, 9 Hartwell Court, Werribee, Mob. 0400 965 542			

EL SHADDAI CHARISMATIC PRAYER GROUP continues on Tuesday, 6th June 2017 from 1pm – 2.30pm, followed by afternoon tea in Penola Hub, 33 Mortimer St., Werribee. Theme: 'SIGNS OF THE TIME AND TRUSTING GOD', Speaker: Mario Carlos. For all enquiries or a lift, please contact Frances via the Parish Office on Ph. 9741 4144.

RINNOVAMENTO NELLO SPIRITO SANTO ITALIANO Ricorda che il nostro incontro continua Mercoledì 7 Giugno nella Penola Hub, 33 Mortimer St., Werribee alle ore 10am fino le 12pm tema per l'incontro LE FUSIONE DELLO SPIRITO. Tutti siete invitati e benvenuti grazie.

MARIA PELLEGRINA si trova a casa di G. & D. Pozzuto e la prossima settimana sara a casa di F & L Brotto Tel. no. 9741 3763. Tutti benvenuti grazie.

ST. ANDREW'S CHOIR – The next Choir practice for St. Andrew's Choir will be held on Tuesday, 13th June 2017 at 7.30pm. Please call the Parish Office re. venue. All welcome, no experience required! Come and join a group of wonderful people who enjoy singing.

CHURCH CLEANING – We urgently require more volunteers to help with Church cleaning and vacuuming. We have a number of teams on a roster (some of which are doing it by themselves) and need more support to share the workload. Please contact the Parish Office if you can help.

MACKILLOP COLLEGE INFORMATION EVENING YEAR 7 / 2019 – Parents and Guardians of current Grade 5 students are invited to attend MacKillop College's Information Evening on **Tuesday, 20th June 2017 at 7.30pm** in the Moreno Performing Arts Centre. For further information regarding the College, please visit the College website www.mackillop.vic.edu.au or contact the College Registrar on 8734 5200. **Applications for Year 7 / 2019 are now open and will CLOSE** on Friday, 25th August 2017. Letters of offer will be sent on 13th October 2017.

Please see flyer on notice boards.



Feast of St. Anthony

Sunday, 11th June 2017
at St. Andrew's Church,
105 Greaves Street North, Werribee.
Mass to commence at 2pm,
celebrated by Fr. Frank Buhagiar,
Fr. Shymon Thekkekalathungal and
Fr. Darien Sticklen

Mass is followed by the procession and the blessing of the Bread of St. Anthony with distribution to the Congregation. Fellowship at St. Andrew's Room. Bring a plate to share. For more information, call the Parish Office on 9741 4144. ALL WELCOME!

DIVINE MERCY GROUP continues each Friday from 10am – 11.30am (except during school holidays) in the Penola Hub, 33 Mortimer Street, Werribee and on the third Friday each month at Mercy Place Wyndham, Cnr. Greaves and Deutgam Streets, Werribee. All welcome. For all enquiries please call Philomen Fernandes on Ph. 8742 3520.

BE COURAGEOUS – Archbishop Hart's Pentecost Letter to Youth 2017 is available in the Church Foyer. It has been prepared as an encouragement to young people to embody the fullness of the Gospel message. Please take a copy with you.

DIOCESE OF MALAYBALAY, BUKIDNON PHILIPPINES – 2017 Australian Tour, 'PARAISO' a concert of Stewardship, Gratitude and Joy. Saturday, 17th June 2017 at 2pm at St. Leo the Great Parish Hall, 315 Mason Street, Altona 3025. Please see flyer on notice boards for details.



ST. VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY WINTER APPEAL 2017 – ‘TOGETHER WE CAN DO HEROIC THINGS’ Please give generously to the St. Vincent de Paul Society's Winter Appeal collection over the weekend of Saturday, 10th June and Sunday, 11th June 2017 for people living in desperate situations. All non perishable food, clothes and blankets brought to Masses on this weekend will be collected by the Werribee Conference volunteers and distributed to people in need in our local area.

Vinnies members visit people in their homes to provide friendship and support, along with material aid where needed. Envelopes will be provided on the seats throughout the Church for credit card donations or money may be placed in the envelope and placed in the special collection. It is through the generosity of you, the parishioners of St. Andrew's, that we are able to continue our work. THANK YOU.

LOOKING FOR RENT – A family of three is looking for a 3 bedroom house with low rent, no more than \$300 per week. Please contact Fr. Frank through the Parish Office if you can help.

MASS FOR YOUNG ADULTS, SOUTH MELBOURNE – Wednesday, 7th June 2017 at 7pm, Sts. Peter & Paul's, 377 Dorcas Street, South Melbourne. Young people from all over Melbourne come together at this Mass to celebrate the source and summit of our faith. Fr Robin Koning SJ will be the main celebrant this month. Music for the Mass will be led by Georga Byrne. Afterwards, the lads from YMG West will provide a BBQ for all to enjoy. *Please see flyer on notice boards for details.*

CATHOLICARE REFUGEE DADS AND KIDS WEEKEND – Friday, 16th June to Sunday, 18th June 2017, Myrniong. Registrations are now open for the next Refugee Dads and Kids Weekend which will be held at Lake Dewar Lodge, Myrniong. CatholicCare is inviting refugee dads to bring along one of their children between the ages of 8 and 16 for a FREE fun weekend experience, which acknowledges and celebrates the importance of a father in a child's life. If you know of any families who would benefit from this experience, please make contact. **Details:** Marita.Taylor@ccam.org.au or www.ccam.org.au/rdk *Please see flyer on notice boards for details.*



Palms Australia
www.palms.org.au

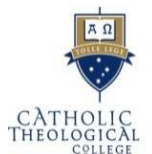
THE POPE TELLS US TO GET UP AND GO. NO MATTER YOUR AGE, THIS IS YOUR CHANCE! If you are an experienced professional, business or trades person, in any area, here is a volunteering opportunity that will change your life. Communities in Asia, the Pacific and Africa are looking to provide mentoring opportunities for local personnel and to improve processes and procedures for organisations, both vital to reducing poverty. To ensure sustainable development they prefer those who can come for two years, but accept that some are only available for 12 months. If you want to find out more, please contact Christine on 02 9560 5333 or email

palms@palms.org.au

ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL: ANNUAL ANNIVERSARY MASS – Sunday, 30th July 2017 at 11am, St. Patrick's Cathedral, Cathedral Place, East Melbourne. Are you celebrating your 25th, 40th, 50th, 60th – 70th wedding anniversary this year? The Life, Marriage and Family Office invites you and your families to the annual Anniversary Mass. The Mass will be celebrated at St. Patrick's Cathedral by Archbishop Denis Hart. Couples who register will receive commemorative certificates and packs. Registration: www.cam.org.au/lifemarriagefamily or Life, Marriage and Family Office on 9287 5587 or lmf@cam.org.au. Registrations close Friday, 14th July 2017.

AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE FROM THE PARISH OFFICE – **FRANKLY** Magazine for \$5 per copy – based on Pope Francis' engaging style with stories of real people living their faith. **MERCY** Magazine for \$2 per copy – inspired by the Jubilee Year of Mercy and Pope Francis' joy-filled emphasis on evangelisation.

ENTERTAINMENT BOOK – Purchase the NEW 2017/2018 Entertainment™ Book and Support St. Andrew's Parish! Selling for just \$70 for the Melbourne edition (prices for other editions vary, see link), the NEW Entertainment™ Membership is packed with thousands of up to 25% OFF and 2-for-1 offers for the best local restaurants, cafés, attractions, hotel accommodation, travel, and much more! Order your copy via: www.entbook.com.au/9s30184 or contact the Parish Office. *Please see flyer on notice boards for details.*



CATHOLIC THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE



UNIVERSITY OF DIVINITY

CATHOLIC THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE – Study Tour/Pilgrimage: "The Experience of Catholic Culture", 21st September – 21st October 2017 to Ireland, England, Germany and Italy. This Tour is confirmed but there are still a few places available. Details on College website at www.ctc.edu.au/studytours Contact: Rev. Dr. Max Vodola or Dr. Frances Baker rsm on Ph. 9412 3333

NOTICE BOARDS – *Please check flyers for various notices.*

WELCOME BEFORE BAPTISM

Dear Parents, as you prepare for your child's Baptism, the people of St. Andrew's rejoice that you have chosen to baptise your child, and we pray that in the coming years you and your family will continue to know and grow in the love of God that is everlasting.

END OF LIFE CHOICES: A CONVERSATION – Thursday, 29th June 2017, 5.45–7.45pm, Collins Street Baptist Church, 174 Collins Street, Melbourne The Victorian government proposes to introduce legislation enabling voluntary euthanasia and assisted suicide in Victoria. This is a very significant issue deserving considered public discussion. The conversation will take place between Professors Peter Singer (Princeton University and the University of Melbourne) and Margaret Somerville (University of Notre Dame, Sydney and formerly McGill University, Montreal). This talk is being organised and presented by the University of Divinity.
Details: Meg Nelson at mnelson@divinity.edu.au

WHEN LIFE IS ENDING – DISCUSSING DYING, ASSISTED SUICIDE & EUTHANASIA – The Victorian Government is seeking to introduce euthanasia and assisted suicide later this year. The proposed changes will impact everyone, not just the terminally ill. To help inform parishioners about the key issues involved, Archbishop Hart recently launched a resource titled – *When Life is Ending*. Written by Dr. Caroline Ong RSM MBBS FRACGP MA a religious sister who is also a GP and bioethicist, it seeks provide information that will be helpful to all seeking to oppose the proposed legislation. Please take copies home and pass it onto family and friends. For additional copies contact the Life, Marriage & Family Office on: lmf@cam.org.au or 9287 5587



LIFE AND DEATH DECISION INSPIRED BY FAITH IN GOD

Author: GEOFFREY KING SJ – Geoffrey King is a Jesuit Priest and acting Dean of the united faculty of theology, a college of the MCD University of Divinity (originally known as the Melbourne College of Divinity). Date: 04/04/2013 (Publication: The Age Section: News Page: 34).

Despite suffering motor neurone disease, I won't take my own life as Beverley Broadbent did. I read with great interest, and I hope empathy, the story about Beverley Broadbent ending her life. I think I can appreciate her choice to end her life while still able to enjoy living. But it is not a choice that I intend to make.

It is, nevertheless, a choice that confronts me. I was diagnosed almost two years ago with motor neurone disease, admittedly with a rare variant of the disease that typically progresses more slowly than the more common forms.

Already my legs are virtually useless and I spend about 14 hours a day in an electric wheelchair. I need help to get into and out of bed and to get to the toilet. More recently I have noticed the beginning of weakness in my right arm - a sign of things to come, as all of my voluntary muscles begin to shut down.

At present my determination is to live as fully as possible within these already significant limitations. I am acting dean of the united faculty of theology within the MCD University of Divinity. I am teaching one course within that faculty. As a Catholic priest I celebrate Mass several mornings a week in the church at Richmond where I live, and on Sundays at Werribee. I go to the MCG when Collingwood is playing. I go to concerts in the city, and to exhibitions at the NGV. I frequent cafes that serve good coffee. I do most of the food shopping for my small community.

For some of this I need to use a maxi taxi. But more commonly I travel simply by wheelchair or by train, courtesy of a free myki pass and the help of train drivers who put out a ramp for me. When my arms and upper body become weaker, all this will be more difficult, ultimately impossible, but I have managed thus far to adapt in ways that would a few years ago have seemed improbable to me, and I hope such adaptation can continue.

Why, however, do I choose to press on into the more horrendous parts of this motor neurone journey, rather than seeking to take Beverley Broadbent's path? Ultimately for me this is not a matter of reason, but a matter of faith. I believe in a creator (and creative) God and I believe in the paradoxical power of the cross.

For me, life is a gift from God. So far it has been an extraordinarily generous gift. I have been able to do things, and to experience things, and to go to places (places of the heart as well as geographical places) that I would never have conceived of when I was, say, 20. I have had a wonderful life, and for this I am immensely grateful. I have now entered into much darker places, but even here I find new life: there is a sense of adventure, for example, in finding how to do even simple things from the constraints of an electric wheelchair. I know that I shall never again go for 40-kilometre walks along Washington's C&O Canal, nor wander around the Parthenon on a misty morning, nor drink a dark lager in Munich's Augustiner Bierhalle, nor go to an outdoor concert at night in the Roman Forum, nor even catch a ferry on Sydney Harbour. There is deep regret in all of that, but it is far outweighed by a sense of gratitude that I have been able to do these things in the first place.

And then there is the cross. I do not believe that suffering is meaningless, but that, like Christ's suffering, it can be redemptive. Of course, we should do all we reasonably can to prevent suffering, but we will still be confronted with it. This awful disease puts me in solidarity with others suffering around the world. It has enabled me to enter into the world of the disabled, such as the other wheelchair passengers I meet on the train. With them I see the world with new eyes. And in small ways I have become an advocate for the disabled and for disability access. I have been inspired by the peacefulness of other motor neurone sufferers, some of them much more disabled than I am.

I have also discovered how much people love me. Prayers, good wishes, and material help have come from places expected and quite unexpected. Through my blog (geoffreysj.com), I have met new friends and reconnected with old ones. Having motor neurone disease, then, has enabled me to live life in new ways. I actually see it as a gift, a very challenging and mysterious gift, from a life-giving God.

None of this is to pretend that motor neurone is not an absolutely awful disease, that the later stages in particular are about as nasty as it gets. As a friend remarked, getting motor neurone disease is drawing the shortest of short straws. I just hope that I can maintain my positive attitude as things get a lot tougher. Nor do I want my life to be artificially prolonged, by being kept going on a ventilator, for instance, as my breathing muscles fail. At that point I want to be allowed to die, but for me that is very different from taking positive steps to end my life.

None of this is meant as a direct comment on the politics of euthanasia, nor is it an attempt to rebut the views of Beverley Broadbent. My attitude is based on my Christian faith. I do not want to impose my views on those who do not share that faith. But it is the statement of someone who wants to live life to the full, who has found some of that fullness in the unlikeliest of places, and who trusts the amazing grace that has brought me safe thus far to lead me on.

(Fr. Geoff King passed away peacefully on 7th May 2015)