

# ABM Speakers' Corner



Issue 1, March 2013

## Speakers' Prayer

*Almighty God, as we engage with our ABM family and friends around Australia, may the gifts that you have taught us give us the confidence to spread your word and bring our work into the hearts of all Australians.*

*Through Jesus Christ, Our Lord.*

*Amen*



### WELCOME

A very warm welcome to your first edition of Speakers' Corner for 2013. Your feedback is always most welcome. We would again like to hear what you think future Speakers' Corner editions should contain.

Thank you for your hard work, tireless efforts and support of ABM - we can't do it without you.

Yours in Christ.

*Michael Robinson*

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## Lent is upon us

The English word "Lent" derives from Old English *lencten*, that is, "lengthen"- in other words, the part of the year when the days are getting longer. We call it spring. The Latin name for this season is "Quadragesima," that is, "forty." Many may remember that in previous Prayer Books the three Sundays before Ash Wednesday were known as Septuagesima, Sexagesima, and Quinquagesima for- respectively and approximately-seventy, sixty and fifty days before Easter. At the time of Pope Leo the Great (c. 400-461), Quadragesima is the Sunday that is actually forty full days before Good Friday. But it doesn't stay that way.

When it is decided in seventh century Rome that Sundays can't be days of fasting (in Rome they were never days of fasting before then), the Wednesday before Quadragesima takes on the role of the first day of Lent. Ashes for everyone, not just penitents, get's going in the eighth and ninth centuries in the West. One notes, the historic gospel for the day is the one we still use. In this passage from Matthew, Jesus says, among other things, "When you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by men but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you" (Matthew 6:17-18).

Ashes did not make an official appearance in the Episcopal Prayer book until 1979. In the twentieth century, the Roman Catholic Church took the lead in restoring the integrity of the ancient fifty days of Eastertide and the Easter Triduum. The Roman Church decided not to give up Ash Wednesday for pastoral reasons and the rest of the Western churches followed its lead.

As the fourth century began the last great persecution of the Christian community in the Roman Empire was about to start. But within not much more than a decade, Constantine will be emperor and Christianity will be legal in the Mediterranean world. When I read the history of this period the words "improvisation" and "change" keep popping into my head. Across the fourth and fifth centuries, the Christian community will grow tremendously. It adapts, it does new things, to respond to the work God was doing in its time.

Christians in the first centuries usually fasted for one or more days before being baptized. Three-week periods of preparation before baptism at Easter were known in Rome. A forty-day post-baptism fast, in imitation of Jesus' forty days in the wilderness after his baptism, was practised in parts of the East. By the end of the fifth century, infant baptisms are normative everywhere. Babies don't fast. Instead, the various practices are transformed into a season of preparation for celebrating Jesus' death and resurrection.

Before the Church could figure out what we know as Lent, it had to figure out the prior question of what and when Easter would be. When Christians only met on Sundays, the first Easter seems to have been a celebration of Jesus' death-the original Good Friday. Another problem was when to have this celebration. There was an early and not insignificant group of Christians who celebrated what we know as Easter on the day of Passover itself. It wasn't until the Council of Nicaea in 325 that Easter Day settles on Sunday everywhere. The first day of Lent this year was Wednesday, February 13.

*With acknowledgements to "The Angelus" NYC*

## Vanuatu Field Visit - Lorevuilko, East Santo



After the 45 minute drive east of Santo, through the beautiful ocean views and splendour of surrounding blue holes, we arrived in Lorevuilko to be welcomed by the Parish Rector, Fr Charles. He happily welcomed our delegation which included myself, the ACOM CPP Coordinator and 2 local government officials from the departments of water and environment. We were provided with a tour of the grounds which serve as a vocational training facility, as well as housing AusAID/ABM funded water tanks and literacy program activities. Fr Charles was keen to explain how they have tied in literacy program activities with other training mechanisms and even seen past or graduated students returning to teach their peers basic literacy skills.

What impressed me most about Lorevuilko was the sense of community and banding together to educate fellow members of society outside of the funding and engagement of outside entities and NGO's. This community has taken the lessons they have learnt through the involvement and help of ACOM, AusAID and ABM and replicated their own practices to achieve more sustainable outcomes into the future. In this regard Fr Charles expressed his deep gratitude to ACOM Vanuatu and ABM for our continued support and expertise whilst also praising the participation of local government figures. As an organisation we look forward to working with Lorevuilko in the future and hope the stories of motivation and success carry on throughout the future years of our commitment.

**Sabene Gomes**  
**Pacific Programs Officer**



## LENTEN PEW REFLECTIONS BY REV. MATTHEW SMEDLEY

### Maundy Thursday – Thursday 28 March

- Exodus 12.1-4 (5-10) 11-14; Psalm 116.1-2, 11-18;  
1 Corinthians 11.23-26; John 13.1-17, 31b-35

In intimacy and love Jesus washes the disciples' feet and thereby sets the example. The new commandment is given to love one another so that everyone will know we are disciples of Jesus Christ by our love.

**Today's question:** How do I wash the feet of others?

- Pray that my discipleship may be known by the love I have for others.
- Give thanks for all who serve others in Christ's name, following his example.

**Text:** The Revd Matthew Smedley, Priest Associate, Holy Trinity, Dubbo  
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### ✠ Good Friday – Friday 29 March

- Isaiah 52.13 – 53.12; Psalm 22;  
1 Corinthians 1.18-31 or Hebrews 10.16-25;  
John 18.1 – 19.42

Jesus knows when all is finished, that he has done everything that needs to be done, and so declares, "It is finished." The blood and water come out, bringing us back to Ash Wednesday, and the paschal mystery of death and life.

**Today's questions:** How do I describe Jesus? What have I seen and what do I testify?

- Pray that I may never deny Jesus.
- Give thanks that Jesus' death on the cross brings peace and reconciliation between God and humanity.
- Give thanks for the work and witness of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem's Summer Camp program which seeks to bring peace and reconciliation between Christian and Muslim children in the Middle East.

**Text:** The Revd Matthew Smedley, Priest Associate, Holy Trinity, Dubbo  
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### Contact List

*This list only contains people who have given ABM written permission to have their contact details published. To be included, please e-mail your details to Michael Robinson (see address below).*

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<i>Canberra</i>	<i>The Rev'd Rebecca Newland</i>
<i>Grafton</i>	<i>Helen Newton</i>
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<i>Newcastle</i>	<i>The Rev'd Canon Katherine Bowyer</i>
<i>Perth</i>	<i>The Ven. Lionel Snell</i>
<i>Rockhampton</i>	<i>Mrs Sybil Pawley</i>
<i>SA Province</i>	<i>The Right Rev'd David McCall</i>
<i>Sydney</i>	<i>Mrs Edwina Waddy</i>
<i>Tasmania</i>	<i>The Rev'd Warwick Cuthbertson</i>

### List of Resources

#### For Education and Publicity

- Prayer Diary
- Project Book
- Annual Report
- ABM DVDs
- Partner Brochures
- Magnets
- Posters (Marks of Mission, Country overview)
- Banners

#### For Fundraising

- Duplex (Giving) envelopes
- Purses
- Bequest Forms
- Crosses
- Prayer Diaries
- Project Book
- Partners' Magazine

### CONTACT US AT ABM

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