



ANGLICAN BOARD OF MISSION

Working for Love, Hope & Justice

Pew Reflections REFLECTIONS ABM

2 February – 28 April 2025

Readings from
An Australian Lectionary 2025
(Year C)

Written by
Robert McLean
A member of the ABM staff

The Scripture is God's way of initiating a conversation; prayer is our response.

– Mark Batterson

It is a pleasure to present the August to October set of ABM's *Pew Reflections* for 2024.

We hope that these reflections will stimulate you to ponder more deeply as you read or hear what God is saying to the Church, and to you, through the Sunday and feast day readings. We hope that they will be a springboard for you to delve more deeply into the Holy Scriptures.

This is why we feast on the Word of God, to understand the love of God, shown in the flesh-and-blood person of God, that we might find our way back to God.

– Wendy Speake

In Christ,

Wilnor Flores
Church to Church Officer


Robert McLean

Born in New Zealand, Robert McLean was a chorister at the now ruined-by-earthquakes Christchurch Cathedral as a child. As an undergraduate, he studied history at the University of Canterbury and then took a post-graduate degree in theology at the University of Otago. Since coming to Australia almost twenty years ago, apart from a stint on the administrative staff of the National Council of Churches in Australia, he has worked in a variety of roles with the Anglican Church: as an assistant in nursing and as a recreational activities officer for Anglican Retirement Villages; as vergier and as parish secretary at St James', King Street; and for the past sixteen years at ABM. Till just over a year ago he lived in Fairfield, NSW, close to the many Assyrian, Chaldean and Coptic Christians who have made new homes in this wonderful country. NeoAramaic, the 21st-century version of the Aramaic of Jesus, is spoken in the suburb's streets and shops.

How to use ABM's *Pew Reflections*

ABM's *Pew Reflections* are designed for you to be able to easily cut and paste them into your pew bulletins and apply your own formatting. As every parish bulletin has its own house style it is important that you use a typeface that fits into yours but as a general guide they can be formatted like the two examples below. We try to ensure that they take up about half of an A5 sheet, though some writers are more concise than others.

Example 1



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Pew Reflections

Good Friday
– Friday 3 April 2015

- Isaiah 52.13 – 53.12; Psalm 22
1 Corinthians 1.18-31 or Hebrews 10.16-25
John 18.1 – 19. 42

Good Friday could be called 'Where is God day?' so often is that question posed by the various texts offered today. The answer, where it is given, is in suffering, disfigurement, on a cross, wherever we would not like to look.

- Pray for the lost and the dying. Pray too for ecumenical and interfaith relationships.
- Pray for ABM's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partners, giving thanks for the work they do to further God's mission in the world.

Text: The Very Rev John Roundhill, Dean of Bendigo
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Example 2

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Pew Reflections – February to April 2025

EITHER

Candlemas – the Presentation of Christ in the Temple – the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary – Sunday 2 February 2025

- Malachi 3.1-4; Psalm 24 *or* Psalm 84;
Hebrews 2.14-18; Luke 2.22-40

Simeon and Anna meet Jesus and his family in the Temple. For the old man it is the fulfillment of a long-held dream, an event promised by the Holy Spirit. For the prophet Anna it is a moment to praise God and to talk to others about Jesus.

- May we see the fulfillment of what God has promised us. May we also praise God and tell others about Jesus.
- Give thanks for the work and witness of the Church of Ceylon

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OR

Ordinary Sunday 4 C – Sunday 2 February 2025

- Jeremiah 1.4-10; Psalm 71.1-6;
1 Corinthians 13.1-13; Luke 4.21-30

Jesus manages to enrage a congregation at a synagogue by pointing out to them that God sent Elijah to the widow at Zarephath in Sidon (southern Lebanon) to announce a miracle and had sent Elisha to cure the Gentile leper, Naman the Syrian. God chooses whom God chooses.

- Pray for the departed, and those throughout the Bible lands who have had their families torn apart because of recent conflict, remembering especially the children and those who were attacked while under hospital care.
- Give thanks for the work and witness of the Church of Ceylon

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Ordinary Sunday 5 C – Sunday 9 February 2025

- Isaiah 6.1-8 [9-13]; Psalm 138;
1 Corinthians 15.1-11; Luke 5.1-11

Much is made of St Peter's denial of Christ just before the Crucifixion. In today's Gospel reading, however, we see another side of him: Jesus tell him to go out into the deep water and lay his nets. Peter, quite reasonably, explains to the rabbi that he and his team have been out fishing all night but have not caught a thing. Nonetheless, he obeys Jesus' command and has a catch so big that he realises Jesus' divinity and asks him to leave because he is but a 'sinful man'.

- Pray for those who think that they are not good enough for God, that they are so unworthy that God cannot love them.
- Give thanks for the work and witness of the Anglican Alliance for Development, Relief and Advocacy and its new Executive Director, Rob Dawes

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Ordinary Sunday 6 C – Sunday 16 February 2025

- Jeremiah 17.5-10; Psalm 1;
1 Corinthians 15.12-20; Luke 6.17-26

St Luke reports to us today that Jesus announces what appears to be a topsy-turvy world, one where the poor, the hungry, the sorrowful and the hated will be blessed by God – unlike the rich, the ones with full bellies, the ones who now laugh, and the well-regarded. This explanation of how God wants the world to work should cause us all to ask ourselves how we, individually and corporately, can create space for the poor, the hungry, the sorrowful and the hated to be welcomed among us.

- Pray that we can become ever more inclusive, both personally and as a Church.
- Give thanks for the work and witness of the Anglican Church of Melanesia.

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Ordinary Sunday 7 C
– Sunday 23 February 2025

- Genesis 45.3-11; 45.15; Psalm 37.1-11; 37.40-41; 1 Corinthians 15.35-50; Luke 6.27-38

Today's gospel continues on from last week's. Jesus now exhorts us to love our enemies, asking what good it is to love only those who already love us. He commands us to be merciful, just as God the Father is. And, perhaps most difficult of all, we are commanded to avoid judging others.

- Pray that we can love so extravagantly that there is absolutely no room for unrestrained judgementalism in our hearts.
- Give thanks for the work and witness of the Episcopal Church in the Philippines

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St Matthias' Day
– Monday 24 February 2025

- Acts 1.14-17; 1.20-26; Psalm 113 or Psalm 84; Philippians 3.13-21; John 15.9-17

Jesus calls his disciples to bear fruit – fruit that will last. What are the fruits that we bear in our lives? Are they long-lasting and of significance, or are they just frippery and fluff?

- Pray for all godparents, that some of the lasting fruit that they will bear will be the positive influence they have on their godchildren's lives
- Give thanks for the work and witness of the Church of the Province of Myanmar

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EITHER

The Last Sunday after Epiphany
– Sunday 2 March 2025

- Exodus 34.29-35; Psalm 99; 2 Corinthians 3.12 – 4.2; Luke 9.28-36 [37-43]

In the first part of today's Gospel reading, we learn of a profoundly spiritual experience – the Transfiguration – witnessed by Peter, John and James, where they see Jesus in the midst of Moses and Elijah, the two great Old Testament prophets, and hear the voice of God commanding them to listen to his Son. Peter tries to capture and constrain the experience, 'not knowing what he had said'. [Once down from the mountain, Jesus is back to the mundane work of dealing with people and their problems.]

- May we not try to capture the spiritual as an end to itself, but rather use it to empower us to be getting on with what Christ would have us do.
- Give thanks for the work and witness of the Church of South India

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OR

Ordinary Sunday 8 C
– Sunday 2 March 2025

- Isaiah 55.10-13 or Sirach 27.4-7; Psalm 92.1-4; 92.12-15; 1 Corinthians 15.51-58; Luke 6.39-49

Jesus warns us against the hypocrisy of pointing out others' mistakes while ignoring our own major flaws. He goes on to show the difference between those who hear his words but do nothing, and those who hear his words and respond with action. May we build for foundations for our own lives that are based on the rock of Jesus' words.

- Let us live our lives so that when the floods come the 'houses' we have built for ourselves remain impervious to the rising waters, firmly based on Jesus Christ.
- Give thanks for the work and witness of the Church of South India

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Ash Wednesday – Wednesday 5 March 2025

- Joel 2.1-2; 2.12-17 or Isaiah 58.1-12; Psalm 51.1-17;
2 Corinthians 5.20b-6.10;
Matthew 6.1-6 [7-15] 6.16-21

Almsgiving, fasting, prayer, and where our focus lies. These are the themes that Jesus brings to our attention as we begin the Great Fast. Whether we give something up – alcoholic drinks, perhaps, or take something on – like praying more regularly, reading our Bibles more regularly, and so on, the opportunity that Lent affords us to focus on what is truly important is not to be missed. May we all grow spiritually this Lent so that we can be more effective disciples for Jesus.

- Help us to follow you, Lord Jesus, wherever you go and help us to be useful to you and your kingdom.
- Give thanks for the work and witness of the Church of the Province of Central Africa.

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Lent 1 C – Sunday 9 March 2025

- Deuteronomy 26.1-11; Psalm 91.1-2, 9-16;
Romans 10.4-13; Luke 4.1-15

Today we see that at the outset of his ministry Jesus retreated to the desert to pray. But he was tempted by the devil, who offered things that appeared to be substantial but that were in fact hollow. Jesus did not let temptation derail him from taking the right path, and in that way he has become a model for us: though tempted and tested, we too can avoid temptation, even when it comes wrapped up in quotations from Scripture.

- Pray for all those who find themselves in positions where they are being spiritually abused, and for those who are perpetrators of spiritual abuse.
- Give thanks for the work and witness of the Anglican Church of Korea

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Lent 2 C

– Sunday 16 March 2025

- Genesis 15.1-12; 15.17-18; Psalm 27; Philippians 3.17 – 4.1
Luke 13.31-35 [or Luke 9.28-36 – see above for a reflection on this reading]

In Luke's account, Jesus foretells his own death when warned about Herod by some Pharisees. He also tells them that despite being the 'holy city' Jerusalem is the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! Their city is a void. He prophesises that they will say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord' when he returns to Jerusalem.

- May we recognise who Jesus is and welcome him into our hearts with cries of acclamation.
- Give thanks for the work and witness of the Episcopal Church of South Sudan.

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St Joseph's Day

– Wednesday 19 March 2025

- 2 Samuel 7.4-16 or Joel 2.27-32; Psalm 89.19-30 or Psalm 1; Romans 4.13-22 or Ephesians 6.1-4; Matthew 1.18-25

Matthew's Gospel tells us about the lead-up to Jesus' birth. This includes the discomfort he felt initially about Mary's pregnancy, but also his decency – not wanting to make a public show of who he initially thought was his unfaithful betrothed wife-to-be. Today we give thanks for Joseph's role as a stepfather, a role he took on under unique circumstances.

- Pray for all stepfathers, that they may be positive role models for their children,
- Give thanks for the work and witness of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia

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Lent 3 C

– Sunday 23 March 2025

- Isaiah 55.1-9; Psalm 63.1-9; 1 Corinthians 10.1-13; Luke 13.1-9

Today's Gospel reading tells us two things: that without repentance we will all perish, just as certainly as those who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them; and that the Lord wants us to have one extra chance to bear fruit. After that, if we are still fruitless we will be accounted for as being utterly worthless.

- May we all produce fruit in our lives that Jesus our Lord finds worthy of him.
- Give thanks for the Episcopal / Anglican Church of Alexandria.

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The Annunciation to the Blessed Virgin Mary – Lady Day – Tuesday 25 March 2025

- Isaiah 7.10-14; Psalm 40.6-13; Hebrews 10.4-10; Luke 1.26-38

Today we have a vision of contrasts: On the one hand, there is the otherworldly Archangel Gabriel, 'his wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame' as a popular carol puts it. His name means the power of God. On the other, Mary, an unmarried teen, completely human, outwardly nobody special. No wonder she 'was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be'. And yet, Mary held all the cards. Without her 'Yes' there would have been no Saviour born at Bethlehem. And so, all generations will call her blessed.

- What might God be calling us to do, despite our lowliness, insecurity and anxiety?
- Give thanks for the work and witness of the Anglican Church of Papua New Guinea, remembering especially today the Bishop-Designate of Port Moresby, the Very Rev'd Wilfred Kekea, as well as the recently-appointed new Principal for the Bishop Newton School of Theology, the Rev'd Dr Ishaya Anthony, as well as the other staff and students.

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Lent 4 C

– Sunday 30 March 2025

- Joshua 5.2-12; Psalm 32;
2 Corinthians 5.16-21; Luke 15.11-32

Today we read the familiar story about the Prodigal Son. For some of us it's easy to feel that we take on the role of the older son, always there, usually ignored. But the point of the story is to show us that God's love is there for us, no matter how much of a mess we have turned our lives into. When we're in the mud surrounded by the swine – a desperate situation for a pious Jew – we should remember that God is always willing to welcome us home with a warm embrace and a party.

- Pray that all who would benefit from returning to God would do so, firm in the knowledge that a warm welcome awaits.
- Give thanks for the work and witness of the Church of North India

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Lent 5 C

– Sunday 6 April 2025

- Isaiah 43.16-21; Psalm 126;
Philippians 3.3-14; John 12.1-8

Today we hear the story of a dinner party at the home of Lazarus, Martha and Mary. During the dinner, something odd happens: not only does Mary anoint the feet of Jesus – something a servant would normally do as people arrived for dinner, but she used a whole pound of the very costly unction, wiping his feet with her hair. The expense was about the annual wage for a labourer. Jesus commends her and reproaches Judas, who carped about the cost. Only the best is good enough for God.

- Give thanks for all those who give of their best to God, and pray that we might be numbered among them.
- Give thanks for the work and witness of the Church of Bangladesh

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Lent 6 C – Palm Sunday

– Sunday 13 April 2025

- *For the Liturgy of the Palms*
Psalm 118.1-2, 19-29; Luke 19.28-40
- *For the Liturgy of the Passion*
Isaiah 50.4-9a; Psalm 31.9-18;
Philippians 2.5-11; Luke 22.14-23.56 or Luke 23.1-49

Holy Week begins with Jesus taking his city not as a Roman governor would on a decked-out warhorse, but on a donkey, the beast of burden for all the poor. The crowd goes crazy, lining the streets with their clothes and palms and shouting Hosanna, which means 'save us'. By the end of the week things will be radically different. Jesus will die on the cross, virtually alone, nailed there by our sins. But one thing is certain: we will be saved.

- Pray for all who know the pain and desolation of being abandoned by friends and family. May they all find solace and comfort.
- Give thanks for the work and witness of the CAPA, the Council of the Anglican Provinces of Africa.

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Holy Monday

– Monday 14 April 2025

- Isaiah 42.1-9; Psalm 36.5-11;
Hebrews 9.11-15; John 12.1-11

At the dinner party where Mary anointed Jesus' feet with expensive ointment, crowds began to form wanting to see not only Jesus but Lazarus whom he had raised from the dead. The religious authorities were scared of this because many were leaving their ancestral religion to follow Jesus. For them the answer was simple – kill off both Jesus and Lazarus.

- Pray for victims of authoritarian regimes around the world that seek to quell dissent through illegal or immoral means. Pray, too, for the victims' families and friends.
- Give thanks for the work of and witness of Alongside Hope/Auprès de l'espoir (formerly the Anglican Church of Canada's Primate's World Relief and Development Fund)

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Holy Tuesday

– Tuesday 15 April 2025

- Isaiah 49.1-7; Psalm 71.1-14;
1 Corinthians 1.18-31; John 12.20-36

Jesus realises that he has come to fulfill the will of the Father, and knows it would be the wrong thing if he were to ask the Father for a way out. There are plenty of times when doing the right thing can be a costly exercise – just look at how whistleblowers can be treated. Nonetheless, as Jesus models for us, the right thing to do is precisely that, no matter the cost.

- Pray for the courage to do the right thing always, and pray for those whose doing of the right thing has caused them to lose their family, friends or freedom.
- Give thanks for the work of and witness of the Mothers' Union throughout the world.

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Holy Wednesday

– Wednesday 16 April 2025

- Isaiah 50.4-9a; Hebrews 12.1-3;
Psalm 70; John 13.21-32

Today has traditionally been known in Ireland as *Spy Wednesday* because it is the day when the Church reads the foretelling by Jesus that one of his disciples would betray him. Asking who this would be, Jesus tells Peter that the one to whom he will give some pita bread dipped into something like hummus is the one – Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. Judas then darts off into the darkness to meet up with the religious authorities as they plot to detain Jesus. It is a murky plot that will only end badly for the deluded disciple.

- Prevent us, Lord, from betraying you, or from entering into deeds that are murky and morally questionable. May we always walk in the light.
- Give thanks for the work and witness of the Church of the Province of South-East Asia

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Maundy Thursday – Thursday 17 April 2025

- 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

The New Commandment to love one another is what gives today its name as *Maundy* is a corruption of *Mandatum*, the Latin word for a command. And Jesus says that it is by our love that people will know that we are his disciples. How can we show more love in our own lives? How can we show more love in our parishes and throughout the whole Church? For if we do not have love for one another, who will see Jesus through us?

- Help us to radiate love so that the world can see you through us, Jesus.
- Give thanks for the work and witness of the Church of Pakistan

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✝ Good Friday – Friday 18 April 2025

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

Today we hear St John's account of the Passion from the events at the Garden of Gethsemane until Jesus is laid to rest in the tomb. At the centre of the dreadful events there is for us some hope. As James McAuley the Australian poet wrote: See our high priest make his great prayer, himself the victim, bleeding bare on the cross. Let our lives by giving declare Amen, Amen to that great prayer on the cross. May we die to sin and so share the triumph he enacted there on the cross.

- May we be dead to sin today and all days.
- Give thanks for the work and witness of the Episcopal Church of Jerusalem and the Middle East and for the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in the Old City.

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The Easter Vigil – Saturday 19 April 2025

- | | |
|--|------------------------------|
| • Reading | Responsorial Canticle |
| Genesis 1.1 – 2.4a | Psalm 136.1-9, 23-26 |
| Genesis 7.1-5, 11-18; 8.6-18; 9.8-13 | Psalm 46 |
| Genesis 22.1-18 | Psalm 16 |
| Exodus 14.10-31; 15.20-21 | Exodus 15.1b-13, 17-18 |
| Isaiah 54.9-14 | Psalm 30 |
| Isaiah 55.1-11 | Isaiah 12.2-6 |
| either Proverbs 8.1-8, 19-21; 9.4b-6
or Baruch 3.9-15, 3.32 – 4.4 | Psalm 19 |
| Ezekiel 36.24-28 | Psalms 42 & 43 |
| Zephaniah 3.14-20 | Psalm 98 |
| Romans 6.3-11 | Psalm 114 |
| Matthew 28.1-10 | |

Jesus' ministry among women is shown at its fullest today because the first people to know about the Resurrection were Mary Magdalene and the other Mary. Not Peter, not even John, but the two Maries, according to Matthew. It was they who first preached the Gospel of Jesus' rising from death to the world.

- We pray for all being baptised this weekend; and for those of us already baptised, we give thanks for those who led us to putting on Christ in the waters of baptism.
- Give thanks for the work and witness of the *Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui*, the Anglican Church in Hong Kong.

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Easter Day C – Sunday 20 April 2025

- Acts 10.34-43 or Isaiah 25.6-9;
Psalm 118.1-2, 14-24 or Hymn to the Risen Christ (APBA, p. 6)
1 Corinthians 15.1-11 or Acts 10.34-43;
John 20.1-18 or Luke 24.1-12

Jesus' ministry among women is shown at its fullest today because the first people to know about the Resurrection were Mary Magdalene and the other Mary. Not Peter, not even John, but the women – Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them, according to Luke. It was they who first preached the Gospel of Jesus' rising from death to the world.

- Give thanks for the ministry of women in the church – lay people, religious, deacons, bishops and priests.
- Give thanks for work and witness of the *Nippon Sei Ko Kai*, The Anglican Church of Japan

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Easter 2

– Sunday 27 April 2025

- Acts 5.27-32; Psalm 118.14-29;
Revelation 1.4-8; John 20.19-31

Today's reading shows us how important doubt is to faith. It is 'Doubting Thomas' who is the first to proclaim that Jesus is God, not the others. It is Thomas, who having weighed things up in his mind, and presented with the truth, who comes to a spiritual breakthrough. May we embrace doubt as something good and necessary for a robust, lively faith.

- Pray for those who experience long periods of questioning and uncertainty as they work through their faith.
- Give thanks for the work and witness of the Amity Foundation, China

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St Mark's Day

– Monday 28 April 2025

- Isaiah 62.6-12; Psalm 89.1-9;
Ephesians 4.7-16 or 1 Peter 5.5b-14;
Mark 16.1-15 or Mark 16.16-20

The manuscripts of St Mark's Gospel come to us with two endings – one shorter, one longer. Mark 16.1-15 contains both. In the shorter ending Jesus commands the disciples to go from east to west with 'the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation'. In Mark 16.16-20 we are told that 'the one who believes and is baptized will be saved'. The Church's mission, in part, is to proclaim and baptise – the Anglican Communion's First Mark of Mission.

- Pray for all who spread the Good News, all who offer baptism and all who have been or are to be baptized this year. May God keep them in the way they have chosen.
- Give thanks for the work and witness of *La Iglesia Filipina Independiente*, the Philippine Independent Church

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