



St Mark's Review

A journal of Christian thought & opinion

No. 228, May 2014 (2)

Taking Stock

The joy and challenge of ordained women
in the Anglican Church of Australia



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Passover Moon

Passover moon reddened doors
Brush with hyssop and with blood
Oh perfect lamb, oh bitter herb
Death walks the streets and seeks to visit
Young son sleeps then is gone
Cry out woman for your arms are empty
 Death has her prize
 But captives ransomed

Passover moon reddened Lord
Offer hyssop dipped with wine
Oh perfect lamb, oh bitter herb
Death walks the streets and seeks to visit
 Sacrificed the Begotten son
Cry out woman for your arms are empty
 Death has her prize
 But captives ransomed

Passover moon reddened flaws
Take the bread take the wine
Oh perfect lamb oh risen Lord
Death walks the streets and seeks to visit
 But now the battle truly won
Cry out woman for your heart is full
 Death took her prize
 But became the fool

Editorial

This collection of articles arose from a celebration. In 2012, women had been ordained to the priesthood of the Anglican Church of Australia for 20 years and numerous events were held across the country to mark the anniversary. These included a conference organised by MOWatch, the daughter body of the Movement for the Ordination of Women (MOW), which reflected on the experiences of women clergy and the state of the church after their admission to all levels of ministry and leadership, at least in most dioceses. These reflections also gave testimony to continued gender-based challenges and resistance to ordained women's ministry and leadership. Questions arose: how can we move to a more healed and integrated church?

Following the conference a number of women discussed the possibility of surveying the Anglican ordained women in Australia to learn more of their experiences in ministry. A publication was suggested to contain the survey results, some reflections on the past 20 years and some commentary on future directions. Two themes emerged strongly: leadership and reconciliation. This special edition of *St Mark's Review* is the fruit of these conversations.

A national survey of all ordained women in the Anglican Church of Australia was conducted, entitled 'Taking Stock'. The first section of this edition of *St Mark's Review* is dedicated to the survey results. It is accompanied by papers from Dr Janet Scarfe and Professor Gary Bouma, both of whom undertook surveys in the 1990s. Inasmuch as it is possible, with different surveys adopting differing questions and methodologies, they compare the 2013 results with those of the earlier surveys, highlighting some trends.

The second section contains reflections on leadership. Carolyn Tan, a Perth lawyer and lay member of the General Synod Standing Committee, writes on leadership in both the secular world and the church, noting the various axes on which power is exercised: male/female; clergy/lay. Sarah

Macneil draws on her own experience as an ordained woman over the last two decades and urges the church to be more conscious of the dynamics of power relationships in its life. Kay Goldsworthy, the first woman to be consecrated as a bishop in the Anglican Church of Australia, remembers the journey to 2012. She then points to a new generation of women who are priests and to their task of working out what it means to be a woman in ordained ministry today.

In the third section, four writers consider the theme of reconciliation. In an interview, Karen Kime, Archdeacon for Indigenous Clergy in the Diocese of Canberra & Goulburn, speaks of the cultural gulf she has experienced as an indigenous woman in Australian society and in the Anglican Church and of the need for reconciliation to be a long-term goal. Rebecca Newland describes the theology underpinning the very practical steps taken towards unity when the inner city congregation of St Philip's in O'Connor (Australian Capital Territory) practically doubled overnight with the arrival of a large group of Sudanese refugees.

Cathy Thomson continues the reconciliation theme with a thoughtful paper on differing readings of what reconciliation might involve, challenging readers to examine their own assumptions about what it means. Sarah Bachelard rounds off the collection with her essay on 'insiders' and 'outsiders' arguing that new forms of institutional belonging are needed to reflect God's transforming and reconciling life. True reconciliation cannot occur without inner transformation, both of the individual and the community.

The contributors offer this special edition of *St Mark's Review* in the hope that it will inform and challenge our readers as well as celebrate the richness and diversity of the ministry of women as deacons, priests and bishops in the Anglican Church of Australia.

Heather Thomson and Sarah Macneil