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## From the Editor

Angela McCarthy  
drpelican53@gmail.com

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## From the Editor

A new liturgical year opens and for some that means that they can once again joyously attend liturgy face to face; to come together as community to celebrate word and sacrament. COVID-19 has woven an intricate web around us all and given us ways to rethink aspects of community and how we need to behave. The anticipation of being together as family at Christmas still might be marred by locked borders and the Delta variant, so there is an anxiety prevalent in our communities. Therefore, the way in which we celebrate Advent and Christmastide must take these feelings into account.

This second fully online edition of *Pastoral Liturgy* is late going live because the Plenary Council had its first assembly during our publishing timeline. Since I am a member of the Plenary Council your patience is appreciated. Over 300 people gathered in the virtual world of Microsoft Teams for eight days. It is an understatement to say that it was exhausting but at the same time it was exhilarating. The conversations, the prompting of the Spirit, the gatherings for those who were not in lockdown; all proved that we belong to a wonderful Church. The voices of many from diverse views and spiritual backgrounds, men and women, clergy, and laity, all gathering for the good of our Church. With the power of the Holy Spirit evident in the discussions it is clear that we are moving in the right direction. What was presented during the first assembly is now in the hands of the Steering Committee and the Writing Committee. Material will be presented in February for the members of the Council to work on and appropriately respond. We look forward to sharing the gifts of the Spirit as we work together.

This issue of *Pastoral Liturgy* has a rich variety of material, and the editorial board is very grateful to those who give their time and expertise in articles, reviews and liturgical resources. We welcome Patricia Gemmell onto the team writing the reflections and thank her for her contribution to the Feast of the Immaculate Conception.

Some of our regular contributors of worthy articles have been very generous again too. Glenn Morrison has contributed a challenging prayerful poem 'Lost in Cyberspace'. Through the first assembly with more than seven hours a day in the digital world Morrison's thoughts deeply resonated.

Chris Kan, a member of our editorial board, has written about a very unusual topic that should not be unusual – depression and Christmas. These words are not often together in the same sentence, but Kan has placed some very thought-provoking ideas about how Christmas liturgies and other celebrations should encounter Christ in those suffering loss, pain and isolation. We know that domestic violence also increases at Christmas time and some in our community find it difficult to celebrate so integrating pain into our liturgies and wider celebrations needs careful consideration.

Professor Tom O'Loughlin from the University of Nottingham UK offers a piece of interesting and thought-provoking material around the concepts involved in choosing a new lectionary. The Australian bishops, as well as many other national bishop

conferences, have been considering a way forward. O'Loughlin has also recently published a more detailed analysis in the *Australian Journal of Liturgy*, "New Books, Old Assumptions: identifying the larger dimensions of the debate about 'which translation of the lectionary should we use?'" (Volume 17, 4, 2021). His wide expertise has enabled him to distil the needs of a liturgical community in whatever shape or form they exist, alongside the needs of our Tradition as well. Both articles are very well worth reading.

Every Advent we need to reconsider our liturgical intentions as it is too easy at times to just do what we did last year as we are very busy at this time of the year. Gerard Moore has provided a short chapter about Advent from his wonderful little book *Earth Unites with Heaven: an introduction to the liturgical year* (Morning Star Publishing, 2014). Reconnecting with origins and liturgical development really helps energise the liturgical energy.

Fr Tom Ryan has been a contributor to Pastoral Liturgy in many different ways over a very long time and he has been writing delightful reflections. In this one, he centres his reflection around Dag Hammarskjöld, the second Secretary-General of the United Nations. I first read his book, *Markings*, many decades ago and it occupied my mind and my spiritual reflections for along time. I still dip into it for material every now and then because his unique perspective offers a freshness as well as a constancy that is wonderful in its balance. Ryan's reflections give us a very good taste of it.

Fr Tom Scirghi is also a long-time contributor to this journal. He has worked at Notre Dame campus in Fremantle several times and his teaching and preaching abilities are excellent. He is always able to challenge us to shift from our comfort zone into something a little more delicate where we must think more deeply about what we are doing. In his reflection on work, carefully directed to the Australian environment, he develops scripturally and spiritually what we desire and what we need.

Another contribution from Professor Gerard Moore for this issue is an article about the organic development of liturgical change and how that should and could affect the Plenary Council's deliberations. As a member of the Council and still enthralled by the ideas that surfaced, I think that this article should be read by many members. There is a lack of clarity around what 'organic development' means and Moore clearly poses related questions.

Angela Gorman has provided us with two music reviews of recent publications with her usual attention to detail of a liturgical, pastoral and musical nature. She is an enthusiastic and expert contributor to the world of Australian liturgical music.

Book reviews by Tom Ryan, Glenn Morrison and me offer some of the recent gems that are available and worth our attention.

The liturgical resources once again include the ritual for the lighting of the Advent wreath as well as material for the Sundays and Feasts. We hope that you are able to enjoy them and use them to advantage in your parish, school or other setting.

May this Advent and Christmas season be fulfilling and full of beautiful celebrations for you all.

Dr Angela McCarthy