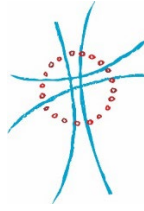


President's Address
and Synod Sermon
The Synod of the Diocese of Grafton
26-28 June 2026
Dr Murray Harvey
Bishop of Grafton



Above. The Consecration of The Rt Revd Tiffany Sparks as Assistant Bishop



I acknowledge the Bundjalung, Arakwal, Yaegl, Githabul, Gumbayngirr, Dunghutti and Birpai peoples, the traditional custodians of the lands on which the Diocese of Grafton is based.

I pay tribute and respect to the elders of these nations and peoples, both past, present and emerging, acknowledge their continuing connection to the land and waters, and thank them for their protection of the mountains, hinterland, waters and coastline since time immemorial.



The artwork "Eternal Goodness" by Wiradjuri artist Narelle Urquhart was created for the Anglican Diocese of Grafton. It depicts God's goodness through his Son Jesus for the people and land of the Northern Rivers.

The President's Address to Synod

Welcome to the 39th Synod of the Anglican Diocese of Grafton. As we gather and consider the matters before us over the next couple of days, the scripture readings from last night's Eucharist are hopefully still fresh in our minds. As the Anglican Church on the North and Mid-North Coast, we are called to bring the message of the gospel to our region, whether its message is in season, or out of season. **John the Baptist's ministry** was a profoundly social and economic call to repentance, demanding justice through equitable sharing, honesty in business, and ethical conduct. *Anyone who has two shirts should share* (Luke 3:11) ... *do not collect more money than you are required to* (13) *do not extort money and don't accuse people falsely* (14). His message, delivered to ordinary people, tax collectors, and soldiers, addressed the structural inequalities of his day. He *rebuked Herod for doing evil things* (Luke 3:19). Ours too is a call to speak the truth of the gospel to power. As one Christian writer recently penned, **social justice** is aggravating. It refuses to keep to its kennel and wanders into other peoples' gardens ... it is likely to bark and run into the street. Christians are to comfort the afflicted, yet the social justice imperative of the Gospel, like the ministry of John the Baptist, also afflicts the comfortable.

We live in challenging times, with populist politicians capitalising on discontent, grievance and the normalising of unacceptable behaviour. Social media, and even the mainstream media, are eager to turn difference into division, further polarising and inflaming an already fragmented landscape. Yet you and I both know that it's possible to support the suffering people of Gaza without supporting Hamas, to grieve for Iran without endorsing extremism, to feel comfort for Israelis without backing the Government of Israel. These positions aren't binary or mutually exclusive. Empathy isn't allegiance, it's humanity.ⁱ Yet it is becoming increasingly difficult to speak in this space – to hold complexity, conscience, and compassion, all at once. As an example, in last year's Synod Address I spoke about the dangers of white Christian nationalism (of the kind we're seeing in the USA). I was soon criticised for being unpatriotic.

Yet in such a circumstance it is even more important to be clear about the Gospel message and how it speaks in the public square. **The Five Marks of Mission** of the Anglican Communion,ⁱⁱ firmly rooted in the Gospel, are evidence that social justice is front and centre as one of our highest priorities. The Fourth Mark of the Five Marks of Mission calls us to transform the unjust structures of society, challenge violence of every kind, and pursue peace and reconciliation. This recognises that sin is not only personal but also systemic. This Fourth Mark calls the Church to move beyond individual acts of charity to address the root causes of suffering: the "unjust structures" that perpetuate poverty, oppression, and conflict. This is costly, because those responsible for systemic injustice and exploitation don't like being called out. Herod had John the Baptist beheaded. The call to justice is part of our Anglican DNA – as Archbishops Desmond Tutu and Trevor Huddleston showed the world in their opposition to Apartheid in South Africa all those years ago.

Last year the World Economic Forumⁱⁱⁱ asked people around the globe to rank the top **risks for our world**. We need to be aware of these and take them seriously because this is the wider context of our ministry, even here on the North and Mid North Coast. Geoeconomic confrontation (armed conflict) was number one, followed by deliberate misinformation, and thirdly, societal polarisation. While we are not immune from the first one, we are certainly being affected by conflicts elsewhere. We definitely see the second and third right here in Australia.

Australia is one of the few remaining liberal democracies, but we are not immune to anti-democratic forces or the fraying international rules-based order.

Our social compact and social cohesion is under pressure. This is showing up in growing economic pessimism, worry for future generations, concern about unfairness, declining sense of belonging, and low trust in political actors. Lower-income Australians and those with financial concerns tend to report lower trust and satisfaction with democracy. Renters are less satisfied than homeowners, and people in regional areas tend to be less satisfied than people in cities. Where there is fuel for discontent, there is increasing risk that populist politicians and ideologies will gain a foothold, harvesting hate, based on their narrative of grievance and fear, which are so easy to sell.

In such a time as this there are many challenges. In response, the church, and individual Christians, can play a key role. Firstly, we can **nurture belonging and engagement**. Our church communities are a place where people can belong and feel part of the community. Based on Australian research, while public opinion on religion in general is mixed, many Australians appreciate the role of their local or neighbourhood church and the role it plays in building community and meeting needs. Research^{iv} from 2024 shows that local congregations act as sources of social capital, increasing social cohesion and civic engagement.

More recent research helps us to ground these findings in the local experience of Anglican Parishes in regional and rural areas. In her recent study on the lived experience of rural churches, Dr Monica Short^v had conversations with graziers and farmers. The conversations illustrated that the church is an important and unique space where people in a community can explore existential crises and gain a sense of belonging, receive practical and pastoral care in family tragedies and in other issues confronted by modern farming families.

The National Council of Churches of Australia made a Submission to the Royal Commission on Antisemitism and Social Cohesion^{vi} and said this:

It is certainly within the ambit of the Churches to make a contribution, and they do so on many levels. The Christian faith with emphasis on love of neighbour and forgiveness, welcome, community, hospitality and inclusion overlaps with the language of social cohesion. Churches have a pro-social positive disposition and contribute to society through being good social citizens as well as the provision of high-quality services in education, welfare and healthcare over many years ... Christianity centred on love of neighbour provides the impetus to promote social cohesion and multiculturalism....Social cohesion is often strongest at the local level where people show up at times of crisis.

Secondly, we can live as people of **Christian character**. Being people of Christian character is foundational. Modelling godly character starts with showing the fruits of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) - love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control, but continues with other features of holiness such as humility, integrity, honesty, trustworthiness, and the ability to treat others with respect. Character reveals itself most clearly under pressure, and there's a lot of pressure in our time. It is seen in whether we keep our promises, whether we can acknowledge mistakes, whether we become defensive when challenged, whether we speak difficult truths with courage and kindness. Beating hate requires leadership. Bishop Mariann Edgar Budde, Bishop of Washington in the Episcopal Church of the United States, is admired by many. She writes that the failures of character are equally revealing: passive-aggressiveness, pride, contempt for others, impulsiveness, chronic

unreliability, anger, or the inability to accept correction. From her current experience in the USA she brings many insights. But none of us are free from these failures of character. Under strain, we can all revert to less healthy versions of ourselves. But Christian maturity and character requires that we learn to recognize those patterns and take responsibility for them.

Thirdly, we can help to protect the **public square**. The decline in traditional news media and the rise of online and social news sources have fragmented our fact base, making misinformation and extreme views more salient in people's daily lives. Sadly it's a generation of rage-media, where division sells. Let's not buy into it. Healthy public debate requires ensuring the sustainability of our news media and investing in institutions that produce trusted information. We can act responsibly in this space, contributing respectfully to public debate, and sending clear messages about welcome, inclusion and social action. We should carefully point out misinformation when we see it. After all, we are committed to the truth which sets us free (John 8:31-32).

A particularly worrisome feature of recent months has been the confusion around **Christian Zionism**. As stated above, and in my Synod Address of last year, it is possible to criticise the Government of Israel without being anti-semitic. Imagine if the Prime Minister of a Christian country claimed that criticising her country was "anti-Christian". This would be absurd. But apparently criticising the Government of Israel is being anti-Jewish. It is not anti-semitic to expect that Israel should comply with international law that applies to all countries. Zionism is not Judaism. It is a modern political movement that emerged in the late 19th Century, prior to the formation of the modern State of Israel. Christian Zionism is a damaging ideology that sows confusion and wounds Church unity. Many Jewish leaders, including the Jewish Council of Australia, oppose Zionism and have been critical of Israel's genocide in Gaza. The Heads of Churches in Jerusalem, including our own Anglican Archbishop of Jerusalem and the Middle East, condemned Christian Zionism in an open letter of January this year. They state strongly that it serves political agendas and jeopardises the ancient Christian presence in Israel, Gaza and the wider Middle East. We need to respectfully challenge the claims of Christian Zionism in our preaching and communications. I am grateful to the Dean and the Cathedral team who helped us express our grief and shock at the tragic events of the Bondi Beach terror attack in December, by holding a Prayer Vigil. This was well attended by a broad cross-section of the community. Similar events were held in our parishes and schools as we offered space and time for community grief. Sadly however, division sells, so sections of the media and some politicians rather disgustingly used this tragic Bondi event as an opportunity to sow yet more division and hate. As Anglicans, our mourning for the Jews murdered at Bondi was not at all at odds with our ongoing protest at the continued genocide of Palestinians in Gaza. Anyone who can't accept that empathy is the natural human reaction to *both* atrocities has got a problem with understanding what it is to be truly human. Let's work together for the peace and dignity of Palestinians and people of Jewish faith.

The Australian Bishops as well as other faith leaders have condemned the rise of **antisemitism** in our society. The National Council of Churches, in their submission to the Royal Commission on Antisemitism and Social Cohesion, reminded us of an earlier statement from the World Council of Churches^{vii}:

The churches have a continuing responsibility to confront the scourge of antisemitism, given the historic role of churches in promoting and disseminating it.

Our commitment as a Diocese to transforming lives through Jesus Christ involves **reconciliation** - walking together in truth, justice, and love with the traditional custodians of the lands of the North and Mid North Coast. Our [Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan](#) has been guiding us to listen deeply, learn humbly, and act courageously as we take meaningful steps toward healing and reconciliation. I thank the members of the RAP Working Group for continuing to lead and challenge us on this journey. Nationally, it's proving to be a tough journey. The loss of the Voice Referendum is a deep scar, and white supremacist groups are getting more confident. Reconciliation is no spectator sport.^{viii} I hope that the Federal Government's *Joint Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs' Inquiry into Racism, Hate and Violence Directed at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People* will provide the impetus to governments and all sectors of society, including churches, for a transformation to a more just and caring culture in Australia where First Nations people are heard and their rights protected. I commend the National Council of Churches' submission to you.^{ix} The church has a scriptural mandate for reconciliation and we need to continue act on it.^x

Almost 60 years ago the Synod of this Diocese made provision for the appointment of an **Assistant Bishop**, by adopting the *Assistant Bishops Canon 1966 Adopting Ordinance 1967*.^{xi} Yet no Assistant Bishop was appointed until this year. The Consecration of The Rt. Rev'd Tiffany Sparks in Grafton Cathedral on 12 March was a great joy for the whole Diocese. This significant occasion in Tiffany's life and in the life of the Diocese was well supported, with well over 300 people from around the Diocese and beyond attending. Many more participated online. Bishop Tiffany is an outstanding example of women in leadership in the church. Her consecration as a bishop has been an encouragement to women in ministry in this diocese as well as in the wider church.

Last year I spoke at some length about schools but this year there will be a special presentation later so I'll be more brief. Our **Anglican Schools** continue to play an incredibly important part of our diocesan life together, and I'm grateful to the Principals, Senior Staff, Chaplains, Chairs of School Councils for their collegiality, advice and support. We were greatly blessed when Stephanie Munday-Lake agreed to become the Chair of the Grafton Anglican Schools Commission. Under her leadership the Schools Commission is gaining more clarity about its role, purpose and vision. In a short time, our Executive Officer (Schools), Dr Susan Allan, made an incredibly positive contribution to the work of the Schools Commission. We were sad to see her leave this position but we welcome our new Schools Officer, Julie Irvine.

Anglicare North Coast has focused on being visible, developing innovative solutions, and on developing relationships with key stakeholders. ANC has been intentional about being a visible and credible presence. You may have heard and seen the ANC CEO, Mark MacNamara and staff, advocating on TV and radio. He regularly meets with local, State and Federal Government representatives. Regular Newsletters, flyers and social media posts give ANC visibility amongst stakeholders and others, as do community events and branding on vehicles, buildings, shirts, marquees. At South Grafton, ANC pioneered the largest modular built social housing development in the state and now we have four other similar developments underway as a result, including a Social and Affordable Housing development at Lismore. Mobile food distribution now reaches 30 regional and remote towns where communities have few options. Disaster readiness has been expanded, with a total of 200 trained staff and volunteers. ANC staff seek out like minded organisations to partner with and to complement capability gaps. My thanks to Mark MacNamara, his staff and the ANC Board for this incredible work.

Turning briefly to the **wider church**, I was glad to participate in the Consecration of The Rt Rev'd Dr Anne van Gend as Bishop of Dunedin in March 2025. Anne served with distinction in Grafton Diocese over many years. The little Brothers of Francis at Tabulam made her Crosier from timber at their Hermitage. The Crosier was presented to her during the service in Dunedin Cathedral. I was warmly welcomed by the Aotearoa New Zealand Bishops at a dinner in Dunedin the night before the consecration. I was pleased to once again be the Guest Preacher at St James King Street, Sydney. A significant event in the life of our National Church was the retirement of Archbishop Geoff Smith as Primate and as Archbishop of Adelaide. Together with others from our diocese, I travelled to Adelaide to participate in his farewell dinner and service. We are grateful for his ministry in our Diocese, years that were formative for him. I also travelled to Melbourne for the retirement of Archbishop Philip Freier as Archbishop of Melbourne, and later, for the installation of Ric Thorpe as the new Archbishop. The 2025 Bishops' meetings were held in Busselton WA in March and in North Sydney in October. The addresses in Busselton focused on the theme of trauma. The Secretary General of the Anglican Communion, The Rt Revd Anthony Poggo, joined us for the Busselton meeting. I attended the Anglican Schools Australia Conference in Brisbane in August. It was a joy to participate in the 175 Year celebration of the Anglican Board of Mission in October, including a service at St James King Street, Sydney and a Gala Dinner at Parliament House. In Grafton Diocese we have welcomed new clergy who have come to us from Melbourne Diocese, Armidale Diocese, and the Anglican Church of Nigeria.

Looking to the wider church, my role as the Australian representative on the Steering Group of the **Anglican Communion Health and Community Network** (AHCN) continues. As predicted, cutbacks in the funding of international aid for health and prevention programs has had tragic consequences. The Ebola outbreak in Congo's (DRC) Ituri Province shows us why we can't cut back aid in this way because aid helps to prevent global outbreaks and reduces the risk of deadly diseases spreading globally. AHCN is working with the WHO Faith Network and our partner faith-based health organisations (such as Christian Connections for International Health CCIH, the African Christian Health Associations Platform ACHAP, Caritas etc) to support health services in DRC, including the Anglican Church of Congo, which is an experienced and trusted primary healthcare provider. Efforts are centred around the supply of PPE and of other consumables and equipment. However, as with COVID-19, a key role for the church is to bridge a dangerous gap in public trust. We have engaged local faith leaders to strengthen community risk communication, fight denial, counter dangerous rumours, promote early reporting and dismantle stigma. An example of the consequences of community mistrust was the burning down of an Ebola treatment centre by a grieving family after they had been denied access to the body of their deceased relative. They were of course denied access due to the strict safe-burial protocols that are required to prevent viral transmission. Clear messaging and communication from trusted leaders is essential, and thankfully the Anglican Church of Congo is a trusted voice. Please keep Archbishop Ande in your prayers. He has called for prayers with practical action, that the Anglican Church there might be a beacon of hope^{xii}. A graphic summarises the work of AHCN from 2023 to 2025.

I thank the team at the **Bishop's Registry** for their work during the year. While much of our work goes on behind the scenes, we play a crucial role in supporting and facilitating ministry across all ministry units, including schools and Anglicare. Our Registrar / General Manager,

James Gale, has brought real energy and creativity to this role since his commencement in early 2025. He has bravely tackled contentious issues, named things that needed to be named, made much-needed improvements to systems and processes, and is carefully taking a more entrepreneurial approach.

When I became a Bishop and attended Bishop's training in Melbourne and in Canterbury, I was told that a trap many Anglican Dioceses fall into is to not have a clearly defined vision and values that impact the whole culture and leadership of a diocese. It was said that the Diocesan Bishop should use every opportunity to name the vision, foster a sense of purpose and direction, and articulate shared goals. I am grateful that Grafton Diocese is clear about its mission and purpose. [*Living Into God's Future – Restructuring for Mission and Ministry*](#) has helped us put mission front and centre as we share the good news of Jesus Christ, make disciples and grow faith communities. I hope we can be clear about our values and purpose, and live lives of character, speaking responsibly and maturely in the public square about the Gospel call, nurturing belonging and community, and acting for reconciliation and social justice. Let's honour those with whom and to whom we minister, and bring glory to God as we transform lives through Jesus Christ.

Dr Murray Harvey
Bishop of Grafton



Above Left: Bishops Sonia Roulston, Sophie Relph-Christopher, Tiffany Sparks, Denise Ferguson, Carol Wagner, Sarah Plowman at the Consecration service.

Above Right: Bishop Peter Stuart (Bishop of Newcastle and Principal Consecrator) and Dr Harvey at the Consecration Service. These and cover photo courtesy David Ford.



Above Top: The Rev'd Christopher Waterhouse welcomes the Bishop to St James King Street;
Above Bottom: Grafton delegates at the Anglican Schools Conference.



Above Top: The Registrar / General Manager, James Gale, with the Bishop;
Above Middle: Members of the Schools Commission at Lindisfarne Anglican Grammar School;
Above Bottom: At Archbishop Geoff Smith's Farewell Dinner in Adelaide. Mr John Bryen, ++Geoff Smith, Archdeacon Greg Ezzy, Dr Harvey.



Above Top: Anglicare Christmas Event at the Cathedral; *Above Middle:* After the Consecration of Bishop Anne van Gend, Dunedin Cathedral; *Above Bottom:* The Bishops of Armidale (+Rod Chiswell) and Grafton with Uncle Douglas Smith at the ABM Gala Dinner at Parliament House.

Activities

A snapshot of a few of our activities over the last 2 years



The Responses



Autumn 2023 & Feb 2024

Inaugural Steering Group meetings with representatives from around the Communion & external partners

2023



Pilot project & collaboration with Hope Africa focussing on Mental Health

October 2023



Webinar on Mental Health after COVID in Africa In collaboration with Hope Africa with 90 participants

Winter 2023



Supported the Episcopal Church & Anglican Church of Southern Africa & their advocacy for PEPFAR reauthorisation

June 2024



Hosted a conversation on NCD's across the Communion

October 2024



AHCN Summit with 19 people of 15 nationalities met in Hong Kong

March 2025



Flowers Foundation approved new funding for AHCN to start new health projects

2025



With partners in Philippines, Zambia, Bangladesh & USA developing WASH projects

2025



Working group together plans to launch 'Health-Promoting Churches'

Winter 2025



Working with Anglican Alliance to write health module in Agents of Change course

The Challenges

2023

Need more voices from across the Anglican Communion

2023

Many clergy & church members across the Communion asking for Mental Health support

October 2023

A political and funding crisis that threatened to collapse decades of progress in the global fight against HIV/AIDS

2024

Seeking to find new approaches to address the big issue of NCD's.

October 2024

Need to share ideas and find a global vision for the future of AHCN

Winter 2025

Seeking to fund more small health projects across the Communion

2025

WASH in many Anglican health facilities limits ability to offer high quality care

2025

Aware that there are many examples of Health promoting churches but need more & need to highlight them better

Winter 2025

Keen to equip more churches to be health promoting churches

Sermon Preached at the Synod Eucharist,
St John's Coffs Harbour, Friday 26 June 2026

The Birth of John the Baptist
Dr Murray Harvey, Bishop of Grafton



The Best Supper © Jan Richardson. janrichardson.com. Used with permission.

In the French historical novel *Les Misérables*^{xiii}, after nineteen years as a prisoner on the chain gang, Jean Valjean is released on parole with his yellow ticket-of-leave, which he must always carry with him, always branding him as a thief. Only the local Bishop invites him in and treats him with compassion. With no money and with little chance of turning his life around, in desperation, Valjean steals some silver from the Bishop's home.

In a dramatic scene, he is caught escaping and in possession of the Bishop's silver.

Policeman:

*Tell his reverence your story
Let us see if he's impressed
You were lodging here last night
You were the honest Bishop's guest.
And then, out of Christian goodness
When he learned about your plight
You maintain he made a present of this silver.*

Bishop:

*That is right.
But my friend, you left so early
Surely something slipped your mind*

[The bishop, hands Valjean two silver candlesticks]
*You forgot, I gave these also
Would you leave the best behind?
So, Messieurs, you may release him
For this man has spoken true
I commend you for your duty
And God's blessing go with you.*

This act of mercy—unexpected and radical—becomes the moment that severs Valjean’s past as convict 24601 and sets him on a path towards a new life. Valjean, who once knew only chains and numbers, now encounters grace so profound that it “raises him out of darkness.” The candlesticks themselves symbolize both light and guidance, illuminating a “higher plan” for a man who had believed his soul beyond saving.

The bishop’s gentle reproach reveals his *true* gift: *not just silver*, but an invitation to see beyond a condemned past.

“But remember this my brother, (he says to Valjean) see in this some higher plan. You must use this precious silver to become an honest man.”

In contrast to the Bishop’s merciful character and Jean Valjean’s vulnerable search for a new life, stands Javert. Once a prison guard and now a police inspector, Javert stands for the law, authority, the state, a hatred of rebellion. Empathy he sees as weakness. He’s not interested in mercy or even in peoples’ humanity – or even his own humanity for that matter.

Given our focus on John the Baptist tonight, perhaps you can see where I’m headed.

John spoke out against the ruler of the day and was eventually jailed and beheaded. Then, as and now, this is sometimes the cost of speaking truth to power. There are plenty of Javerts and Herods out there today – I don’t need even to name any – you will know about whom I am speaking. They think empathy is a sin, and treat people as mere commodities to be exploited.

Within living memory the Gestapo treated people as numbers. Today (sometimes) masked immigration agents and other agents of authoritarian states treat people in a similar way, without human dignity.

John the Baptist’s ministry was a threat. It wasn’t just a message to individuals to turn and repent, it was a profoundly social and economic call to repentance, demanding societal justice through equitable sharing, honesty in business, and ethical conduct. His message, delivered to ordinary people, tax collectors, and soldiers, addressed the structural inequalities of his day, instructing people to share food and clothing, avoid extortion, and act with integrity.

Luke 3:11-14: *Anyone who has two shirts should share with the one who has none, and anyone who has food should do the same.” (Luke 3:11) ... do not collect more money than you are required to (13) do not extort money and don’t accuse people falsely (14).*

What is repentance? There are many definitions, but helpful here is N.T. Wright^{xiv}. He sees repentance as *a serious turning away from patterns of life which deface and distort our genuine humanness.*

It's not just a private, internal sorrow for sin, but as a public, life-altering "U-turn". It is an active turning away from distorted patterns of living to fulfill humanity's original calling: reflecting God's image into the world. Repentance is a turning from all that distorts and defaces the image of God that we bear. John uses Isaiah's road-building imagery here: height and depth are to be levelled, the crooked and rough are to be made straight and smooth. This drastic transformation of a terrain that obstructs travel becomes a symbol of the preparation that the Lord's coming requires.

This is not just individual work. It calls for wider change.

This was too much for Herod. And for Pilate.

So with many other exhortations [John] proclaimed the good news to the people. But Herod the ruler, who had been rebuked by him ... because of all the evil things Herod had done, added to them all by shutting up John in prison. (Luke 3:18-20).

Their regimes, like many today, offered no freedom, but only slavery, oppression and death. They pursued not life and human freedom for others, only seeking life and freedom and flourishing for themselves.

Though inspired by historical events in France, the *Les Miserables* story is of course fictitious, as opposed to the story of John the Baptist which was real life. Yet the candlestick scene carries a deeply Gospel-based message for us all. God is a God of mercy and forgiveness. God offers us not eternal punishment, pointless imprisonment and ongoing condemnation.

God loves us; he might love us too much to leave us the way we are but he does love us, created in his image. He offers us salvation and eternal life. God's voice calls to us daily – an echo of John the Baptist's call all those years ago, crying out in the wilderness, to abandon sin and embrace the Kingdom of God wholeheartedly. To live the way of the Kingdom now.

The candle sticks in the *Les Miserables* scene were life changing. A really merciful act by the Bishop, showing in turn, God's mercy.

How do we show others the way of mercy and new life?

What are/were those candle sticks for you?

How have you been shown mercy in your life? What experience or encounter, symbol or word has touched you, and raised you out of darkness, set your life on a new course?

What caused you to turn to God, or to turn *again* to God?

Looking more broadly, what are those candle sticks for us as Anglicans on the North Coast, how do we show mercy?

Our ministry as Anglicans on the North and Mid North Coast is only effective if we each have given our lives to him and rely on his mercy and strength. Only effective if we offer all we do to his glory. At John the Baptist's birth Zechariah's mouth was opened and he began to speak. This marvellous thing, this miracle, was widely talked about, and the question was asked: what then will this child become?

We too are children of God. What then will we become through his mercy and in his hands?



The Anglican Diocese of Grafton
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End Notes to Presidential Address and Sermon

ⁱ Nicki Barber (2025) Instagram

ⁱⁱ www.graftondiocese.org.au/five-marks-of-mission-of-the-anglican-communion

ⁱⁱⁱ World Economic Global Risks Perception Survey 2025-2026

^{iv} The Australian Community Survey ACS by NCLS

^v Monica Short et al, *Practical Theology*. 15 May 2024

^{vi} National Council of Churches of Australia, 20 May 2026, *Submission to the Royal Commission on Antisemitism and Social Cohesion*.

^{vii} World Council of Churches (2022): *Confronting Racism and Xenophobia, Overcoming Discrimination, Ensuring Belonging*.

^{viii} Larissa Minniecon. Report to the Board of ABM

^{ix} National Council of Churches Submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs' Inquiry into Racism, Hate and Violence Directed at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People. 1 June 2026.

^x Five Scriptural Mandates include Right Relationship - Micah 6:8, Romans 12:10; Equality & Equity - Galatians 3:28, Acts 10:34–35; Historical Acceptance - Nehemiah 1:6–7, Psalm 51:3–4; Institutional Integrity - Isaiah 1:17, Luke 11:46; Unity - Psalm 133:1, Colossians 3:14

^{xi} <https://www.graftondiocese.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Ordinance-No.-8-of-1967-The-Assistant-Bishops-Canon-1966-Adopting-Ordinance-1967.pdf>

^{xii} Anglican Communion News Service, 18 May 2026, Ebola Outbreak in DRC: Archbishop urges need for prayers and practical action.

<https://www.anglicannews.org/news/2026/05/ebola-outbreak-in-drc-archbishop-urges-need-for-prayers-with-practical-action.aspx>

^{xiii} Victor Hugo (1862)

^{xiv} N.T.Wright (2006) *Simply Christian: Step-by-Step Basics of Christian Faith and Practice*