



## A WORD FROM OUR ACTING DIRECTOR

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Faith in Christ is here to stay.

Even though the pandemic years and their sense of crisis have receded into the past, shocks and difficulties continue to assail us—wars rage overseas and divisions persist within our common life. In such times it is easy to go inward, hunker down, cut ourselves off. And then, it becomes hard to reengage with others. That kind of post-pandemic 'overhang' affects each of us personally. It also affects churches, workplaces and communities as they try to rebuild. I have found that reconnecting with God, and with others, has been the most stabilising way to reintegrate after the years we've had. Learning at St Mark's can be part of that, and has

helped many people during the past few years. The help has been both 'everyday' and profound.

Every day our rhythms of learning at St Mark's have been an anchor: our livestreamed chapel services, lectures, and tutorials bring together on-campus and online students; our library support is delivered to your door if needed; close personal support from faculty reaches into homes across Australia and beyond—it adds up to become community. More profoundly, to delve deeply into Christian traditions that reveal and discover who we are meant to be—the person God 'dreams' for us to be, if I can put it like that—revolutionizes



our lives. St Mark's has been a national leader in theological distance and online education longer than any other theological college in Australia. That strength has come into its own, with the aid of Charles Sturt's fantastic infrastructure. Our partnership with Charles Sturt University also means our high-quality tertiary theological education is probably Australia's most affordable (with FEE-HELP eligibility, fee-free MPhil and PhD courses, and BTh fees around 30 per cent less than our nearest theological college). It's also probably the most flexible (online or on-campus, hybrid, full-time or part-time).

When we engage by these means, we learn about times and places where people had it tough. We hear of Christians enduring the callousness of ancient Rome, or the pains of medieval Europe, or recent colonial excess; they made it, because they learnt from Christ's endurance of his Cross, and what it was like to have the Spirit. Our learning gives a kind of perspective that enables us to transcend the anxieties of our present day.

For anyone who wants in to Christian faith, there comes hope. We take all comers at St Mark's. You may be a convinced Christian or an agnostic seeker. You may be a highly motivated

member of a Christian denomination, someone wanting 'tools' for ministry of some kind (whether lay or ordained), someone who just wants to deepen faith and understanding in their relationship with God, or someone who put faith aside years ago and is cautiously looking at it all again. You may just be someone with an interest in the beliefs, practices, and influence of the world's largest and most dynamic religion. You may be none of the above. But whoever you are, hope is on offer, because the Christian story does not stop in the past. It reaches into the present and the future, way beyond our cultural moment. It offers a new present start now, whoever we have become. Christ offers a way to become that person God has created us to be—someone stabilized and confirmed within God's all-embracing love and kindness, and in a community of others who are learning to care. We would love to share that story with you, in an environment that is 'centrally orthodox,' biblically based, practical, missional, ecumenically collaborative, and scholarly.

**Come and join us.**

*Michael*