



Pilgrimage, place, and spiritual practice



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Editorial

This number of *St Mark's Review* surveys a range of important contemporary issues from various theological and historical vantage points. Three themes that thread through the articles relate to the translation of Christian faith in pilgrimage, place, and practice.

In the first article, Scott Cowdell considers our current context in terms of what Czech priest and Catholic theologian Tomáš Halík has called the “afternoon of Christianity.” In such a context, contends Cowdell, our challenge is to recognise that “even the bleakest of institutional circumstances are not hopeless, and that God is not absent, just hidden—though still discernible to the eye of faith.” Here theological dramatic theory—or “Theodrama”—can be a powerful resource to undergird eschatological confidence in both God and the ways in which He works out His purposes in “a great dramatic epic” on the stage of history.

In the next article, Christopher Murray explores the evolving role of pilgrimage in providing “meaning, identity, and a sense of transcendence for individuals in a modern and increasingly secular society.” Murray does this through an illuminating case study of ways in which a secular pilgrimage of Australian Federal Police to their national memorial is shot through with a sense of the sacred and the transcendent.

John Byrnes’ article explores the traditions of Anglicanism and Anglican identity that have been woven deeply into the religion and culture of the peoples of the Torres Strait. Byrnes shows how Torres Strait Island Anglicans forged a path of independence in both state (in a degree of independence from the Australian nation) and church (in this case, in relation to the Anglican Church after eighty years in the fold).

Daryn Graham offers a fresh appraisal of evidence in the New Testament to suggest that, contrary to received views, the Apostle Paul may have written the Romans while in Troas, and not in Corinth; and, further, that Romans may well have been the substance of the sermon that famously put Eutychus to sleep and led to his toppling out of a second-storey window on to the street below.

The subsequent three short pieces are obituaries for valued contributors both to St Mark's and to the wider church. Two biographical reflections celebrate the life and contribution of a beloved member of St Mark's scholarly community, the Rev. Canon Dr Robert Withycombe (1939–2023). An Anglican priest and church historian, Withycombe was, until his death in March 2023, a fixture at St Mark's as a scholar, lecturer, and warden. The first reflection is offered by former director Andrew Cameron and this author; the second by one of Withycombe's dearest and oldest friends, church historian Dr Brian Dickey. A third obituary, written by two Anglican priests and scholars, the Rev. Dr Ron Browning OAM and the Rev. Dr Duncan Reid, recalls the lasting impact of a giant theologian and interpreter to westerners of the Orthodox faith, Elder Metropolitan John Zizioulas.

In drawing from across the gamut of theological subdisciplines— theology, practical theology, and church history—the articles in this issue offer rich resources for critical reflection on a diverse range of contemporary issues, especially as we continue to grapple with the perennial challenges of embodying Christianity in pilgrimage, place, and spiritual practice. I commend them to the readers of *St Mark's Review*.

This number also reflects a change to editorial practice in moving *St Mark's Review* from a quarterly to a bi-annual journal. While the frequency of the journal's publication will change, what will not change is the journal's commitment to rigorous and creative theological reflection that brings the beauty, goodness, and truth of Christianity to bear on the pressing issues of our time and place.

Dr Michael Gladwin
Editor, *St Mark's Review*
July 2024

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