

# From The Rector's Desk – Summer 2019

*by the Rev. Daniel Fournier*



*The Reverend Daniel Fournier in Australia*

For many, summer time brings to mind an image of relaxation, beaches, camping, trail hiking, getting together with family and friends, and vacation. In general, summer is a chance to enjoy a different pace of life that is regenerative. As most of you know, over the last few years, Joan and I have not taken summer holidays and vacation time but elected to holiday either in the fall or in the spring right after Easter. This was the case for us this year. Thus, I have written a little bit of a different article this edition, sharing with you my reflections of my holidays touching upon some highlights.

## **Adventure Story 1: Arrival in Sydney – Solutions to Jet Lag (Anzac Day)**

When we have traveled to Australia before, we would arrive in Melbourne after being in transit for nearly 30 hours and then launch into any planned activities upon arriving at our final destination, such as going to a BBQ to meet family and friends. That is one way to deal with jet lag because one is so tired and the excitement picks one up.

This time we managed our traveling differently first by starting our long traveling day in Vancouver, flying this time to Sydney and staying there for the next two days to get acclimatized and rest a little. With this approach, we were only in transit 18 hrs. This was a good choice considering that we were just coming off the busiest church week of the year, Holy Week.

Sydney, Australia is one of the great cities of the world with a myriad of adventures, sights, and sounds to experience. The day after our arrival was April 25<sup>th</sup>, which in Australia is no ordinary day. April 25<sup>th</sup> in Australia is ANZAC day, a national day of remembrance in Australia and New Zealand. It broadly commemorates all Australians and New Zealanders "who served and died in all wars, conflicts, and peacekeeping operations" and "the contribution and suffering of all those who have served". In particular, Anzac Day commemorates Australian and New Zealand forces landing in Gallipoli on April 25<sup>th</sup>, 1915 to a ready opposing force. The Anzac forces took heavy losses but forged on for 8 months. Importantly, Anzac Day is a day of Australian identity and pride as this young nation entered the world stage as an important member of the Commonwealth. Joan and I witnessed this celebration and the pride displayed during the 3-hour parade through the streets of downtown Sydney.



*ANZAC Day Parade in Sydney*

## **Adventure Story 2: "Driving on the Proper Side of the Road"**

Just recently, a parishioner said to me that a friend from England told him that Canadians drive on the right side of the road, but the British drive on the proper side of the road. And so I suppose the Australians do as well. After our two-day rest, we picked up a rental car and made our way out of Sydney on route to Canberra (Australia's capital city) for an overnight stay. Then the next day to

Cobram/Barooga, the location where the Shannons (our daughter and her husband are both named Shannon), and John and Trish (Joan's brother and sister-in-law) live. It takes some getting used to, driving from that perspective. At first, it was a little tricky driving a strange car from what we would think is the passenger side. The car was at first a little difficult to centre and so I did rub up the rims a little. (The rental car company did not even flinch even though I brought it to their attention.) The miracle is that we made it to our destination with no real difficulty – despite our Australian family's concern. I became very comfortable driving in Australia and others became comfortable with my driving as well.



*Daniel and Joan  
with Isabelle and Eloise*

### **Adventure Story 3: The Precious Little Ones – Grandchildren are such Blessings**

It is an understatement to say that being with and spending a good amount of time with our grandchildren was the highlight of our trip. Isabelle is now 6 and Eloise is 4. They are at that age where our visit was very exciting for them. We were able to participate in their busy day-to-day activities and this was so joyous. Isabelle is in Foundation (Kindergarten). One of the joys of our time was attending the Mother's Day Open House and assembly, and being "shown off" to the school by Isabelle. And meeting her where the school bus dropped her off was a delight as she was so excited to see us waiting for her.

A fun story is when I took Isabelle out shopping for her mom's Mother's Day gift. Let's just say she enjoyed Grandpa's generous mood as her own generosity got a little out of control. What was supposed to be one gift, ended up being six.

Eloise was also very much a sweet little girl as she took a couple of sick days from attending Trikki-Kidz (her pre-school). A lovely moment was doing a Lego project with her. She has been learning Italian (as there are many Italians in the region) and can count to 20. She can also name all the capitals and states of Australia and point them out on a map. She is a very bright one. Other days, I would pick her up from Trikki-Kidz, which she loved.

It was so good to have a car for the month, as it was helpful to be able to support the Shannons in their busy lives. Shannon (girl) is a teacher of grades 3 and 4, a technology education teacher, and a pastoral support person for a Catholic Primary School. Shannon (boy) works for a cheese manufacturing plant (Bega Foods) and works alternating shifts from one week to another.

### **Adventure Story 4: Hospitality beyond Imagining – and a Birthday Reunion**

My wife Joan and her brother are what some call "Irish Twins" – born exactly one year apart (Joan being the older one). It was determined that they had not actually celebrated their birthdays together in 58 years. Finally, a celebration happened. Friends and relatives were invited, and a big party ensued.



*Joan and her brother, John,  
at their birthday celebration*

A pretty special event indeed. This was just a sample of the little get togethers that took place and the manner in which these events are celebrated, always full on with enormous hospitality and all the stops pulled.

Shannon (boy) is a chef aside from his day job. He also likes to exercise his guests' palates. He knows that Joan is not a big fan of curry. A few years ago Joan had an adverse reaction to curry when we celebrated our son TJ's first Master's degree in Language Studies at a Tibetan restaurant. When we arrived back from a weekend in Melbourne, Shannon had prepared a meal of curried lamb. Girl Shannon was worried how that might go. Joan did her best to participate but the curry was quite strong. The next evening, we were invited to a friend's home with whom we visit each time we are in Australia. Usually they have a roast lamb or steak meal to present. As we sat at table that evening, our host Marie (who had been slaving all day preparing this special meal) said, "I hope you like curry. We have curried chicken and vegetables." Knowing Joan's aversion to curry, the rest of us could hardly contain ourselves. Bravely and with great honour, Joan did partake but this did not make her a curry convert.



*Silo Art  
and  
Wisdom*



#### **Adventure Story 5: Grain Silos Tour – Heritage, Farming, and Art**

While the kids were in school, we ventured on a number of local and regional outings, going to Albury, Rutherglen, Yarrawonga, Beechworth, Echuca, Bendigo, and also a couple of days in Melbourne. One of the most interesting day trips was going on a tour of grain silos and water towers that have been painted with incredible artwork. These have been popping up all over Australia. We toured the Devenish region to witness this. In one little town, there is a Uniting Church (United Church) with an incredible image of a woman personifying the biblical image of Wisdom.

#### **Adventure Story 6: Sheep Shearing and the Outback (Sort of)**

Joan and I had hoped to go to the Outback, to Uluru (the massive red rock and holy place for Australia's indigenous peoples), but discovered you have to book a year in advance to go there.



*Emus at Hay*

We did get to the pseudo outback, which was about 3 hours north from where our family lives, to a place called Hay. There we found many emus, standing around 6 feet tall in very flat barren land. There we experienced an entire education on sheep shearing. Shear Outback is a sheep-shearing museum and includes a

demonstration on the life of the sheep shearer. Some of these men and women are able to shear 300 plus sheep in a day. It was a very interesting demonstration and it taught me that one had to have incredible skill to work in this trade. The museum featured the historical tools of the trade and an explanation of the lifestyle of the shearer from morning to night.

### **Adventure Story 7: Tears**

All wonderful and beautiful things come to an end – till the next.... This was the hardest part of our trip, hearing little voices asking how many more sleeps till we have to go. “Oh, I wish it was longer.” “Oh, I wish I could be in Canada.” Then on the day we were leaving seeing these huge tears running down their cheeks as we were saying goodbye. I still get a lump in my throat thinking about it.

It is a very good thing that we did take holidays when we did, as this summer has become a vitally busy one for our ministry and this parish. I count my blessings of being able to see my family in Australia, to enjoy great experiences and then I count my blessings of being here in this wonderful parish and being able to serve and care for the hearts and souls of very dear people. Thank you, God for your blessings. People of St. Luke, thank you for your blessings.

*Photo credits for the pictures in this letter: Daniel Fournier, Trish Scandrett, and Catherine Hyde*

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