



# Called to Holiness in Australia

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# Forward

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## Holiness In Australia

*An agreed statement by the Australian Anglican and Roman Catholic National Dialogue.*

Australians generally are regarded as pragmatic people. There is a healthy regard for what people DO. We see this in our national awards. Recipients are largely scientists, sports people, medical and legal champions of various causes, philanthropists, political and entertainment identities. They have all contributed something specific and they have done this splendidly. They are rightly regarded as our national heroes.

To a lesser degree, however, Australians seem not so confident on scrutinising our deeper human attitudes. Here are the motivations, deep meanings and intentions that can produce these actions of greatness, or – most regrettably, – actions of immeasurable shame. What I am leads to what I do...Being leads to doing.

Every now and then, however, a personality bursts on the scene where both levels (the ‘being’ and ‘doing’) of enquiry are asked with equal vigour. In Australia, St Mary of the Cross MacKillop (1842 -1909, is one such example. What did she do? Why did she do these wonderful things? The answer to the ‘why’ questions here leads us into the topic of “Holiness”. It is not a word that restless Australians would readily use. It seems such a theological and technical word. Yet, it is a reality that interests Australians more and more, despite all our supposed secularist profiles.

This modest shared reflection of the Australian Anglican and Roman Catholic Ecumenical Dialogue probes the foundations of this concept of HOLINESS. There is much in common in both Anglican and Roman Catholic approaches to holiness. There are, too, some nuances that assist us to see the bright diamond of holiness from different perspectives.

The call from God to be holy is a universal call to everyone. This document considers this call from its biblical and theological foundations. Being an Australian document, it has practical sections to its considerations as well. To assist in small group ecumenical discussions each of its four chapters conclude with short questions.

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May I take this opportunity of thanking all those on both the Anglican and Roman Catholic delegations who have produced this ecumenical document. Quite apart from our scholarly discussions on every point raised, the very fact of our meeting together regularly from various parts of Australia surely gives enthusiasm and encouragement for local groups to do the same. Hopefully, this resource will assist such ecumenical gatherings.

May the commitment to ecumenism, especially among Australian Youth, continue to flourish in the years ahead. We recall the Lord Jesus prayed that “they may all be one” (John 17.21). Divided Christianity continues to be a grave scandal and an impediment to true evangelisation.

We find encouragement towards unity from our religious leaders. Pope Francis wrote: “Through an exchange of gifts, the Spirit can lead us even more fully into truth and goodness”. (Evangelii Gaudium, 2013, n. 246). The Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, stated: “We need each other, to stretch and challenge each other to an ever closer walk with God and evermore passionate fulfilling of his mission.” (St Philip’s Church, Leicester, U.K., 24 May 2013)

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## Introduction

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The quest for holiness is probably not what first springs to mind when we think of Australian culture. Other quests certainly seem to command more attention. For many Australians, the search for a job, or a home, is an urgent priority. At the wider cultural level, Australia has given birth to many quests – for an Australian identity, for reconciliation between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians, for a sense of accommodation with the land and, of course, for Olympic gold and for the Ashes.

The quest for holiness has not been conspicuous in the way we tell our national story. In the many attempts to paint a picture of the Australian character, or of the typical Australian, it seems that holiness does not come to mind. Of course, Australia has had its holy people. A few have come to wider notice – St. Mary MacKillop of the Cross is an example for Roman Catholics, and for Anglicans, those mentioned in the Calendar of the A Prayer Book for Australia. In any exploration of Australian holiness, these well-known lives deserve close attention. However, most of those who have set out on the quest for holiness in our land have lived lives unnoticed by the wider community, although they may well have been quiet and powerful witnesses in their own place.

It is worth noting at the outset that “holiness” is a religious word. It is used in many different religious traditions, including Judaism and Christianity, and it has become a classic word of the Christian tradition. In public discourse it has remained a religious word and has not escaped into a wider, secular usage, as have words such as “icon” and “awesome.” The related word, “sacred,” is now familiar to the wider community through such things as indigenous “sacred sites” – places set apart, places of spiritual significance.

In the eyes of the broader community, the quest for holiness remains associated with Christianity and other religious traditions. Holiness is a word that most Australians would find hard to pin down. They might well be embarrassed to use it of themselves. It has the whiff of the rarefied, even of superiority. It seems other-worldly, far distant from everyday realities.

Australians generally are more at home with the language of spirituality. The discussion of spirituality tends to leave out the word holiness, perhaps partly because it is seen as a word that belongs to a particular religion such as Christianity. It is thought of as a word associated with a church or an “institution,” whereas spirituality is seen as broader and as not necessarily connected to any particular religion.

However, we are conscious that both Anglicans and Roman Catholics embrace this unique word, holiness. We share a commitment to living holiness here and now, shaped by our own time and space. For us, then, it seems important to encourage the quest for holiness and to understand holiness in relation to the broader search for spirituality that is part of Australian culture. The aim of this shared statement, then, is to encourage an exploration of holiness by Anglicans and Roman Catholics at the parish level. In this way it is hoped that we might not only develop together in our understanding of what a holy person looks like, but also deepen our commitment to holiness as something worth questing for in this moment of our Australian story.

We begin this book with an exploration of some aspects of the quest for meaning and for spirituality that can be found in our Australian context and culture. Then, in our second chapter, we turn to the Bible, seeking to listen to the Word of God on the quest for holiness. Our third chapter takes up some theological insights, beginning with the universal nature of the call to holiness. Chapter four is about practical living, focusing on holiness in daily life. Along with these chapters there are some brief examples of Australians, Anglican and Roman Catholics, who have been recognized as people of holiness.

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# 1. The Quest for Holiness in Australia

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## The Search for Meaning and Love

One place to begin exploring holiness is in the deeply human search for meaning and for a love that can fill the endless yearning of the heart. Human beings search for meaning and for relationship. It is not simply an intellectually satisfying explanation for life that we seek, but a fully relational life, a life “well lived.” This is a life that is shaped by genuine meaning and fruitful in virtues we cherish – generosity, faithfulness, justice and peace-making, for example. The search for meaning and love touches on our felt need for individual integrity or wholeness. This search finds expression in a particular kind of restlessness in human beings. As Saint John Paul II wrote;

In this creative restlessness beats and pulsates what is most deeply human – the search for truth, the insatiable need for the good, hunger for freedom, nostalgia for the beautiful, and the voice of conscience.

The spiritual dimension within each one of us is a call to something beyond ourselves. It is a hunger of the heart, a longing for something more, a relationship which will complete us and fulfil our unspoken need. True religion is not the imposition of a set of rules, it is the discovery of a relationship which helps us make sense of life and leads us to the fullness of life. This restlessness for meaning, for a “well lived” life, is a place to start the quest for holiness, not only for it to make sense to Anglicans and Roman Catholics in their daily lives, but also to make it understandable to the wider Australian community.

It is our common conviction that this restless searching is God-given. It is a gift of the holy God who calls us into communion with God’s self. It is in the transforming relationship with the God who is a Trinity of love that we find meaning and fulfilment. Even when God’s revealing word is heard and accepted, our questing restlessness is not ended. There are rich depths in God to be explored as life then unfolds for us in all its joys and sorrows. Many theologians speak of this journey into God as continuing in a most beautiful way in our eternal life.

The quest for holiness finds its place in this drama of being drawn by God’s call and finding there a meaning and purpose that can shape a life that is fruitful and whole. An encounter with God – with the Holy One – begins a journey. God’s call does not leave us unchanged, but lays a claim upon us. The New

Testament describes the followers of Jesus as a holy people and demands that they live in holiness. The quest for holiness is simply the quest for God. Holiness is union with God. A holy life is a life lived in communion with God.

The Bible places great emphasis upon a concrete and sincere response to the holy God's call. This response involves a move away from that which is not God towards that which brings us closer to God. This is the conversion of mind, heart and life, to which Jesus calls us: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news" (Mark 1:14). In our everyday lives, we experience this call in the urging grace of God. Our conversion to God is a response to the prompting of grace, and is itself God's gift. This response is meant to shape our lives both inwardly and outwardly.

### Signposts in Our Land

How do time and place mark holiness? Anglicans and Roman Catholics believe that holiness has but one source – the Holy Trinity. However, the way holiness shapes our lives means there is no "one size that fits all." The extraordinary, varied lives of holy people in both our communities offer shining testimony to this. So time and place will affect the way holiness is shaped.

If holiness is a summons from God in the here and now, what are some of the situations where this summons might be heard in our land? What "signposts" in our Australian time and place might guide us to where the summons can be heard, lay a claim upon us and be responded to? Holiness cannot be a retreat into an imagined past or an escape into a false perfection. The former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, speaking on holiness to young people on a pastoral visit to New Zealand, has said:

So, a holy person makes you see things in yourself and around you you hadn't seen before. That is to say, it enlarges the world rather than shrinking it, which is why we say of Jesus he is the most Holy One, because he above all changes the landscape, casts a new light on everything. You can't look at anything the same way afterwards. In St. Paul in the Second Letter to the Corinthians again, when we're in Christ Jesus there's a new creation, nothing looks the same.

Clearly this is not the false holiness of the narrow-minded, but the true holiness of the generous, the compassionate, the large-hearted. It is the holiness of the God of Jesus. Where is there an openness to this kind of holiness in Australian culture? We suggest the following signposts that indicate an Australian restlessness that can guide us on the quest for holiness, as places where God's call might be heard in this land:

Indigenous Australians. The struggle for justice by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians has highlighted to the wider Australian community people in our midst who are unapologetic about "sacred space and time." Indigenous Australians bring this particular way of engaging with land as a place of transcendence to the wider Australian community to ponder. For indigenous Australians the encounter with the sacred occurs in the experience of the land to which they belong. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Christians, the land is made by God the Creator, and held in trust. Holiness involves respecting the land, being good custodians of it. It involves living in right relationship with God, with each other and with the land itself.

The Relationship to the Land. In the experience of the land, more recently arrived Australians have found themselves addressed by the transcendent. Dare we expose ourselves to the vastness and silence of the land? Can we allow the land to teach us about our smallness and vulnerability, to call us to humility before God and God's creation? The land has been something with which Australians have had to struggle – in drought, bushfire and flood. The dramatic landscape of Australia opens us to what is beyond us, to mystery and



transcendence, to the Holy, which then lays a claim upon us and can shape who we are.

**Our Isolation.** The isolation or “tyranny of distance” of Australia has shaped both the land and its peoples. Unique indigenous cultures have developed and survived for over 50,000 years on this island continent. Europeans, and then others coming from Asia, the Pacific, the Middle East, Africa, and North and South America, have felt keenly both their connection to the values and customs of their homelands and their distance from them. Would Australia be simply a place for transplanting such values and customs or would it be a place for something new? Anglicans and Roman Catholics initially lived their faith clothed in European traditions – models of holiness they had received and were taught. But soon they began to find new ways to live the Gospel in this vast land.

The isolation of many people within the country contributed to the development of community life and the culture of offering a helping hand to each other in times of need, especially in rural Australia. Some of this was taken up in the language of “mateship” and in the common understanding of the personal qualities of goodness and reliability that a true “mate” should have. The kindness, and particularly the self-sacrifice, of friend or stranger in time of dramatic need are signposts to the transcendent amongst us – we are humbled by the bravery, kindness and integrity of others in times of adversity. This is exemplified in the growing respect and devotion of people, particularly young people, for the Anzac tradition – a signpost of the search for transcendence in this land.

**The Lucky Country.** Australia was once described as the “lucky country.” Whatever that might mean, our nation is a materially prosperous country, which makes poverty and disadvantage all the more striking. This prosperity can blind us to the transcendent, to God. However, in taking a critical stance against a consumer society, we can embrace the central Christian values of leading a simple life and sharing our wealth with others. In response to affluence and wastefulness, the wisdom of Jesus has much to say about shaping a holy life that is not distracted by the fatal attraction of riches; a life that is close to the poor; a life that is free to love and serve. A serious questioning of our consumer society can open us to values of transcendence as we seek a life that is faithful to the way of Jesus in this context of ours.

**A Diverse Community.** Other world faiths have a growing presence in Australia. Their communal, often disciplined, approach to living their faith is not only a curiosity for us other Australians but also a challenge as we encounter them as neighbours and friends. The Jewish commitment to the all-holy God, the Muslim call to prayer and the fasting of Ramadan, the monastic traditions of Buddhism and the spiritual disciplines of Hinduism, offer examples of people seeking “holiness” that confront often secular Australians with the seriousness of engaging with the holy. Within Anglican and Roman Catholic communities, newly arrived immigrants bring another form of diversity, offering ideals of holiness that can be surprising, humbling and challenging.

## **Anglican and Roman Catholic Communities Together**

Anglican and Roman Catholic communities have a treasury of lived experience, wisdom and traditions about holiness. We confess that the church is the earthenware vessel in which these treasures are held. We are conscious of our failures and sinfulness, taken up later in this document. But we believe our churches are meant to be places where holiness is found, nourished and lived. This presents us with a challenge. A holy life, given for others in loving service or courageous witness, can be an intriguing and humbling inspiration for others. How do seekers see our churches? Do they find in them the beauty of Jesus Christ? How can our communities be better witnesses to holiness in this land?

The call to holiness is a divine invitation to enter into a relationship with the living God. It is a summons

to be heard and responded to here and now. This invitation is found in the human restlessness that seeks to find a meaning to life and to find the love for which our hearts are made. Anglicans and Roman Catholics together believe that this summons to holiness comes from an all-holy God, the divine trinitarian Communion of love. Holiness is our participation in this divine Communion. In this transforming relationship we can find meaning, purpose and the love for which our hearts long.

### **Questions for Reflection and Discussion**

1. Is “holiness” an awkward word for Australians? Why? Is it awkward for you? Why?
2. Can you think of someone you know who is a person of life-giving and Christ-like presence that you might call holy? How is this holiness a part of that person’s time and place?
3. Pope John Paul II has said: “Look, dear people of Australia, and behold this vast continent of yours! It is your home! The place of your joys and your pains, your endeavours and your hopes! And for all of you, Australians, the Way to the Father’s house passes through his land” (Canberra, 24 November, 1996). What do you think are some of the influences of our “home,” Australia, which frame the quest for holiness?
4. Are there traditions or disciplines of holiness in Anglican and Roman Catholic communities in Australia that we can discern and honour?



### **John Bede Polding 1794-1877**

John Bede Polding was born in Liverpool, England, on November 18, 1794. He was educated by Benedictines and joined the Benedictine community in 1811. Throughout his life Polding found in the Rule of Benedict a rich source Gospel-based wisdom. Polding arrived in Australia in 1835 as the first Roman Catholic bishop.

He had a passion for the reign of God and compassion for the people of God. He spoke out about injustices in society and gave a voice to those who had no voice: the poor, the convicts, the Aborigines and women. During his 40 years in Australia he traveled throughout the vast continent bringing Christ's healing, compassion and neighbourly love.

He established two religious communities for women: a Benedictine Community (1848) and the Sisters of the Good Samaritan (1857). Polding is also credited with laying the foundations of Catholic education in Australia. In many ways he had a vision far ahead of his time on issues such as the local church, liturgy, Aborigines, education and Christian culture. He was a man of spiritual depth and discernment in touch with the society in which he lived. He died on the 16th of March in 1877.



### **Mother Esther 1858-1931**

Mother Esther was born in England in 1858. In 1884 she was received as novice into the Community of St Mary the Virgin. While still only a novice, Esther fell ill and it was felt that a warmer climate would help her recover. It was suggested she go to Australia for twelve months.

Although a growing and prosperous city, many people in Melbourne struggled with poverty, disease and disadvantage. In 1884 some members of the Church of England formed "The Mission to the Streets and Lanes of Melbourne". In 1888 Sister Esther joined the work of the Mission.

Esther saw that the work of the Mission could be served by a Religious Community living among the poor. She still believed that God was calling her to the Religious Life so she was Solemnly Professed and so came into being the Community of the Holy Name.

She began the Rule of the Community by saying "The aim and object of this Community into which these Sisters have been called, is two-fold. First, the Glory of God and the perfection of those He calls out of the world to serve Him in the Religious Life, under the perpetual vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience. Second, the Community has been founded for active Mission work in the Church for the honour and love of our Blessed Lord Jesus Christ."

Sister Esther died in 1931. She left behind a Community which has continued to offer prayer and ministry to the sick, the poor and all in need.

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## 2. “Be Holy as I am Holy”: Holiness in the Bible

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In the Bible holiness is above all an attribute of God. God is praised in heaven as “Holy, holy, holy”, whether by the seraphim in Isaiah’s vision (Isa 6:3) or the four living creatures seen by John of Patmos (Rev 4:8). When people, places, times, and actions are said to be holy, this property is associated with God’s holiness. The Scriptures of Israel (our Old Testament) have much to say about the all-holy God. The New Testament reveals the Holy God as incarnate in Jesus Christ and develops Jewish notions of holiness for the Christian context. This chapter looks at biblical concepts of holiness in each Testament, considering especially human holiness in the Pentateuch, the letters of Paul, and the Gospels.

### Holiness in the Old Testament

It would be a mistake to look for a single conception of holiness in the books of the Old Testament. The various books, and the traditions within them, point to understandings of holiness that, while clearly connected, reveal subtle but important differences. The first five books (sometimes called the “Pentateuch” or “Torah”) can be a helpful place to begin an exploration of the different traditions of holiness, the elements that connect them, and those that distinguish them from one another.

What the various conceptions of holiness in the Pentateuch hold in common is the fundamental conviction that holiness belongs to God and that the call to holiness arises as the result of God’s own holiness. This idea is implicit in God’s words in the act of creation: “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness” (Gen 1:26). It is made explicit in Leviticus: “Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them: You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy” (Lev 19:2).

Differences arise with questions about precisely who is called to be holy, and what a human vocation to holiness might involve. The book of Deuteronomy attributes holiness to the people of Israel. For its writer (or, more likely, writers), the people of Israel are holy, just as God is holy, and this holiness has consequences for their actions. For Deuteronomy, the holiness of the people of Israel is the rationale for their obedience to God’s Law (or “Torah”). This can be seen in passages where a legal stipulation is followed by the words “For you are a people holy to the LORD your God” (e.g., Deut 7:6; 14:2, 21). A similar idea is found in the prophecy of Jeremiah.

In some texts attributed to authors of a priestly background, including those found scattered through Exodus and in the first half of Leviticus, human holiness is far more limited, restricted to the priests themselves. In later priestly texts (including the so-called “Holiness Code,” found in Leviticus 17–26), holiness is extended outwards from the sanctuary to embrace the entire Israelite community, as it does in Deuteronomy. However, instead of being understood as a given fact, holiness becomes an ideal to be achieved by the faithful observance of all God’s laws. These more priestly conceptions of holiness can also be found reflected in the prophecy of Ezekiel and Isaiah.

In each of these conceptions, holiness is restricted to Israel and is not extended to the peoples of other nations. A consequence of this, in each case, is that Israelites were expected to keep themselves separate from other peoples. The most pronounced expressions of this can be found in Deuteronomy (see especially Deut 7:1–6) and the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. However, other traditions exhibit a tendency to welcome closer contact between Israelites and other peoples, and to allow non-Israelites to seek a holy way of life for themselves. For example, later priestly texts make provision for some categories of non-Israelite men to “join” the Israelites by gaining access to observance of the Passover by means of circumcision.

Some late priestly passages suggest a holiness that transcends the particular holiness of Israel. As we have seen, Genesis 1 witnesses to God as the creator of the whole world and of humankind, male and female, in God’s own image (Gen 1:1, 26–27). Similarly in Exodus, God claims the whole world, although even in this context Israel is set apart as holy in a special sense: “Now therefore, if you obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession out of all the peoples. Indeed, the whole earth is mine, but you shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation” (Exod 19:5–6). Many Christian scholars, and also some Jewish ones, see in this verse a sense in which Israel is called, as God’s specially chosen nation, to exercise a vocation of ministry to all nations. These ideas carry through into the New Testament. Early Christians recognised that holiness extended beyond the land and people of Israel. They also recognised that certain groups had a special role to play in this, whether Israel (Rom 9:4) or the Church (1 Pet 2:9–10), drawing on the idea of a priestly people from Exodus 19:5–6.

## Paul

Our earliest New Testament texts are the letters of Paul, who preaches the gospel to Gentiles as well as Jews. Writing to local churches, he describes their members as “called” to be “holy ones” (Rom 1:7; 1 Cor 1:2). We often find this translated as “saints.” Although these churches are ethnically mixed, not entirely Jewish, Paul finds holiness language suitable in addressing them. For Paul, the separateness that tends to be associated with holiness is now based on faith instead of the boundaries set around Israel by the Torah. So Paul argues, against some other early Christian leaders, that the kosher food commandments which have kept Jews and Gentiles apart should not now prevent Jewish and Gentile believers from enjoying table-fellowship together (Gal 2:11–21). According to Acts 10–11, Peter received a similar insight in a vision from God.

Paul tells these believers that their nature has changed because of their faith and baptism. They are sanctified, that is, made holy (Rom 6:15–23; 1 Cor 1:30). They have received the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12:1–13). They are a temple, a divine dwelling-place, for God or for God’s Holy Spirit (1 Cor 3:16; 6:19). Paul explains that since they live by the Spirit now (Gal 5:16–26), they should conduct themselves in a holy way, following the ethical principles that he outlines for them. This marks their lives out from the unholy ways of the Gentiles who do not know God (1 Thess 4:3–8; 1 Cor 6:9–11). Paul certainly insists on justification by faith rather than works of the Law. But when he discusses life in Christ his holiness-language takes up in a new form the element of separateness and perfection in traditional Jewish ideas of holiness.

## The Gospels

The Gospels, written after Paul's letters, devote more attention to Jesus during his earthly ministry. They portray Jesus as holy, both as "God with us" (Matt 1:23) and as a fully human being living faithfully before God. So on the one hand, Jesus in the Gospels is "the Holy One of God" (John 6:69; Mark 1:24) and the divine Word made flesh (John 1:14). He even uses God's holy name "I am" in reference to himself (John 8:58 and 12:28; see Exod 3:13–14). His disciples call him "Lord," which is often a title of God (John 13:13). The divine power evident in his mighty works prompts his followers to wonder who he is (Mark 4:41) and to perceive his glory (John 2:11). His closest followers are privileged to see him in extraordinary radiance at the Transfiguration (Matt 17:2). In all these ways, Jesus gives us a picture of God's holiness visibly present in the world.

On the other hand, Jesus is fully human, and can therefore be a model for us of how to live in a holy way. The Holy Spirit comes upon him at his baptism and enables him to proclaim the good news (Luke 3:21–22; 4:18–19). He engages in deep prayer with God (Mark 6:46) and teaches his followers to pray with an acknowledgement of God's holiness: "Hallowed be your name" (Matt 6:9). He reaches out to the marginalised and ultimately gives his life for others in accordance with God's will (Mark 14:32–36). As a Jew embedded in the religious practices of his day, Jesus observes the religious festivals, despite personal risk (John 7:1–14; Matt 26:17–30). He is remembered as taking the Torah seriously but as interpreting it in the light of God's merciful love, expressed in rescue for the lost and salvation for the sick (Matt 12:9–14). He undercuts stricter views on purity by interpreting "neighbour" in the widest possible way, to include sinners, outcasts and people of all nationalities (Luke 10:25–37).

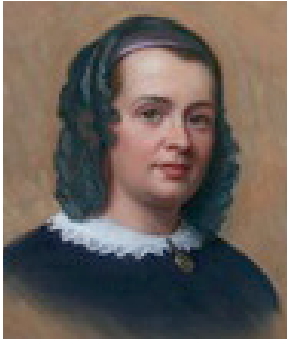
The early Christian communities for which the Gospels were written modelled their way of life on Jesus. They encouraged their members to take up their cross and follow him (Mark 8:34–35) and to spread the good news of God's reign as Jesus had done (Luke 10:1–12; Matt 28:19–20). Across the early Christian communities, the attitude to keeping the Torah probably varied. Contrast Paul's views in Galatians (see above) with Matt 5:17–19, for example. They realised, though, that the Holy Spirit was with them to help them discern how to behave, speaking truth to them (John 14:25–26; 16:13) and enabling them to declare it boldly (Mark 13:11; Acts 2).

In conclusion, the Bible speaks with a range of voices on holiness, but God is always at the centre. To be holy to God (or be made holy to God) is to live in association with God, and those who are holy (whether Jewish priests, the people of Israel, or the Church) are called to minister to others. Obedience to God is expected of those who are holy. In the Old Testament this is specified as Torah observance by Israel. The question of the Jewish Law for Christians is more complex because Christianity quickly comes to include significant numbers of Gentiles. A high standard of behaviour is still expected of believers, who are exhorted to pursue holiness, living purely and blamelessly in the face of suffering until the day of the Lord (Heb 12:1–17; Jas 1:12–27; Phil 1:9–11).

This chapter has been a brief study of holiness as presented in the Bible. For the most part, it has concentrated on biblical passages that mention holiness explicitly. Other texts speak of our transformation in Christ – which is what makes us holy. So Paul describes us as being drawn into the life of God. In Christ, the Holy Spirit dwells in us so that we cry out Abba/Father (Gal 4:6; Rom 8:15). He speaks of us as being conformed to Christ, so being transformed from one degree of glory to another (2 Cor 3:18). In John Jesus speaks of being born again of the Spirit (John 3:6), and says: "I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I in you" (John 14:20). In texts such as these we find the basis for the church's conviction that holiness is nothing less than our participation in the life of the Trinity. We are transformed and deified through the Word and in the Holy Spirit, becoming "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Pet 1:4).

## Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. In Leviticus 19:2 Moses tells the people of Israel to be holy because the LORD their God is holy. In Matthew 5:48, part of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus tells his listeners that they are to be perfect as their heavenly Father is perfect. Scholars believe that Jesus has in mind the passage from Leviticus.
  - i. Read these two verses in the context of Leviticus chapter 19 and Matthew chapter 5 to get a sense of what “holy” and “perfect” mean. Jesus doesn’t use the word “holy” here. Do you think he is talking about holiness?
  - ii. These two texts encourage us to imitate God. What does it mean for us to imitate God? You may find Ephesians 5:1 helpful in your reflections.
2. Both Exodus 19:3–6 and Ephesians 1:3–14 speak of being chosen for holiness.
  - i. What does it mean to be chosen to be holy?
  - ii. Who is chosen to be holy in these passages?
  - iii. How do you follow the call to be holy – as individuals, and as a worshipping community?
3. Read Colossians 1:9–12. What habits of life are recommended for a person following the call to holiness? How can we help one another to live holy lives? How does God help us with this?



### Caroline Chisholm 1808-1877

Caroline Chisholm was born at Northampton, 30 May 1808, and died in London, 25 March 1877, and yet regarded Australia as her adopted land.

She eased the path of thousands of migrants in this their new homeland. Her special concern for homeless girls and poor families during Australia's formative years caused her contemporaries to see her as 'the indispensable woman of the time'.

In Victoria her Shelter Sheds provided cheap and safe accommodation on the road to the Goldfields.

Caroline Chisholm was inspired at once by the command 'Love thy neighbour' and the warm human sympathy of her own nature. Her sense of the worth of every human being prevented any trace of condescension or discrimination in her work. Charity, she said, should reach out to all creatures, 'as long as they bear the stamp of humanity.'

She felt her work had been given her to do 'by One who never allows his servants to stand still for want of materials'. For thirty years she worked to assist single women and families to migrate and settle in Australia.

The idealistic and religious fervour for which she is now admired made her then a target for sectarian suspicion which added to the many difficulties she had to overcome.

Caroline Chisholm died in poverty and obscurity.

*"...on the Easter Sunday, I was enabled, at the Altar of our Lord, to make an offering of my talents to the God who gave them, and I promised to know neither country or creed, but to serve all justly and impartially."*



### William Wilkinson Wardell 1823 – 1899

Wardell was a civil engineer and architect, especially of churches, notable not only for his work in Australia, the country to which he emigrated in 1858, but throughout Great Britain.

In Australia, Wardell designed many public buildings. Most notable were St Patrick's Cathedral, Melbourne; Government House, Melbourne; St John's College, University of Sydney.

As a young man, Wardell studied under the Gothic architect Augustus Pugin. Pugin became his friend and mentor, and was to inspire him not only in architecture but also in his religious convictions. He believed that Gothic architecture, as symbolized by the great medieval cathedrals of England, fostered a spirituality that made it easier to communicate with God. For the remainder of his life he saw architecture as a means of praising God.

Wardell's conversion to the Roman Catholic faith was the result of a period of deep internal reflection. He always had a room in his home set aside as a chapel for personal devotion which he visited several times during the course of a day. A prayerful man he frequently prayed for help and guidance when working on plans of church buildings.

Wardell died in North Sydney on 19 November 1899.



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### 3. The Universal Call to Holiness

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As Anglicans and Roman Catholics together, we are committed to the belief that all Christians are called to live a life of holiness. And we hold that this call embraces all aspects of our lives. It is an invitation into a relationship of love with the living God that transforms everything. The quest for holiness is the quest for God. It is God's holiness in which we are called to participate. Such participation means nothing less than to be drawn into the very life and love of God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

This means that when we talk about Christian holiness we are not immediately speaking about moral perfection. In its deepest sense holiness refers to the glory (*doxa*) and the love (*agape*) of God given to persons without any merit on their part. It calls for a response on the part of those who invited into a closer relationship with God. They are to live up to their calling by leading a holy life.

#### All Are Called

One of the important emphases of the Reformation was the rediscovery of the great Christian truth that it is not just the clergy, or those in religious orders, but the whole of God's people who are called to this holiness. This was also a central teaching of the Second Vatican Council:

The forms and tasks of life are many, but there is one holiness, which is cultivated by all who are led by God's Spirit and, obeying the Father's voice and adoring God the Father in spirit and truth, follow Christ, poor and humble in carrying his cross, that they may deserve to be sharers in his glory. All, however, according to their own gifts and duties must steadfastly advance along the way of living faith, which arouses hope and works through love.

All are called to holiness, women and men, the young and the old, the single and the married, the laity and the ordained, those who are ill and those who are well. The call to holiness is not for any kind of elite. It is a universal call. The Council appeals to the text of Matthew, "be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt 5:48), in order to underscore the call to holiness as central to Jesus' preaching. It makes it clear that holiness is not attained through a person's own achievements but by God's grace in Jesus Christ, in whom we are made "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Pet 1:4). To be made holy is to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

## Holiness as Participating in the Trinity

Holiness comes from our union with Jesus Christ. By his passion, sacrificial death on the Cross and resurrection, Jesus enables persons, in the power of the Holy Spirit, to share in the holiness that he embodies and accomplishes for us. Christian holiness is established through our relationship with Christ who draws us ever deeper into relationship with the triune God. We know that Jesus lived in intimate union with the Father whom he addressed as “Abba”. Repeatedly John’s Gospel speaks of Jesus “abiding” in the Father, and speaks of the disciples sharing in this mutual indwelling. The profound relationship with God, which is at the heart of Jesus’ holiness, is also the source of our holiness as adopted daughters and sons.

The Spirit of the Risen Christ is the agent of this holiness. It is the Holy Spirit who enables us to be conformed to Christ. Pauline literature is filled with the language of the Spirit as life-giver. Called simply “the Spirit” or the “Holy Spirit” or “the Spirit of Christ,” this Spirit is seen by Paul as placing people in dynamic relationship to Christ. It is this Spirit who assures us that we are children of God who cry out “Abba!” (Rom 8:15; see Gal 4:4-6). These texts communicate a three-fold relationship with God that constitutes our holiness: Our relationship with Abba/Father, through Jesus Christ, in the transforming power of the Holy Spirit.

## Holiness as a Life of Love

This Spirit-led conformity to Christ involves us in a radical love that is cruciform, requiring a profound gift of self. “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me” (Matt 16:24). Holiness involves following Jesus poor and crucified. It involves us in his kind of loving. Love integrates the many strands of our being into an inner unity and unites a person to other persons and to God. It is in love that we become ourselves and in love alone that we find true fulfilment.

Paul tells us that “God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us” (Rom 5:5). This love always presses forward to a stage beyond what it has reached at a given moment. A person is called by God in his or her own uniqueness and cannot know beforehand what God may demand in the future. The more this love finds expression in a person’s life and grounds that person’s existence, the more holiness is perfected in his or her life.

Holiness, then, finds expression in the two commandments of love both of God and of neighbour. A person who loves God necessarily participates in God’s love for the world. Thus, love of God, sharing in God’s love for the world, is directed towards other persons. They are loved in the absolute love of God in keeping with the commandment which makes love of God and love of neighbour so united. The Holy Spirit is the source and the hidden depths of love of God and our neighbour. The love of God and love of neighbour is central to the Gospel and proclaimed in the life of the Church. Along with our human neighbour, love of God involves us in love and respect for God’s other creatures. We are learning again in this time that love of God involves love for the land, the seas, the rivers, the forests and all the creatures that inhabit them.

## Holiness and the Church

The church is the concrete, historical People of God who have been called together to be the ecclesia, the community of the disciples. This community of disciples is holy because it embodies Christ and his Spirit. The written Word of God is a fundamental source of holiness for the members of the church. Thomas Cranmer has said “that much fruit and holiness must come and grow unto thee by the reading n[of Scripture].” Jesus’ declaration “Sanctify them in the truth, your word is truth” (John 17:17) testifies to the relationship between holiness and daily reading of the Bible. Through prayerful immersion in the Scriptures, the Christian sees holiness displayed in the acts of God towards us, above all in Jesus and the Spirit, and is drawn into the communion of the Trinity.

The Church is tangibly graced and made holy by Christ anew each day in the sacraments, notably in baptism and in the eucharist. In the last analysis it is Christ himself who baptises and who breaks the bread in the eucharist, thereby making holy the whole Church and bestowing the Spirit on the Church in a new way. In reading and proclaiming the Word of God, and in celebrating the sacraments, the church partakes of Christ Jesus in the power of the Spirit. By these God-given means of grace, it participates in the holiness of God. In this sense the Church is always holy.

This holiness that comes through Christ and the Spirit, present in Word and in Sacrament, does not mean that the life or witness of the church is free from sin or terrible failure. Recent accounts of sexual abuse, and its cover-up, by ministers of the church are fresh in our memory. Furthermore, none of us can claim to live up to the grace given to us. The more Christians try to live as persons made holy by God, the more painfully they become aware of their own powerlessness, weakness and guilt. All of us are continuously in need of God's mercy and rely daily on God to "forgive us our debts" (Matt 6:12). We are sinners. If the church is really the people of God, its holiness cannot be independent of the holiness of the women and men who are its members. The conclusion is inescapable that as the holiness of those living in grace enhances the holiness of the church, so the sinfulness of its members must also diminish the witness to holiness of the church. This is what the Second Vatican Council had in mind when it said that the church is at once holy and also in need of purification, penance and renewal. This suggests that holiness requires the ongoing conversion of all members of the church.

While some Anglicans see conversion as a singular event, Anglicans and Roman Catholics agree that the process of sanctification or being made holy is ongoing and continuous. So for them, the church is truly holy, regardless of, and distinct from, the individual holiness or sinfulness of its members. The holiness of the church is declared by God to those who know and follow the Lord Jesus through the actions of the Holy Spirit. This distinction allows both the declaration of holiness and the daily tension experienced by all believers in their pursuit of holiness.

Holiness, then, is a matter of "walking in love" (Eph 5:2). We are called to follow this path in the ordinary moments of our everyday lives. Christian holiness is not a road running parallel to the road of a person's ordinary life and work, but is engaged in and through a person's state of life with its daily tasks, in and through the concrete circumstances and events of his or her existence. All Christians are called to grow in holiness according to their own special calling, in ways that are proper to each.

### Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. What do you think of the idea that we are all called to a holy life? Do you see this as something that is real for yourself? Can you describe ways in which this teaching might make a difference in your life?
2. What do you think of what has been said here about being drawn into the life of the Trinity? How do you see yourself as connected to the three divine persons? How is this reflected in your way of praying?
3. What do you think of the relationship between holiness and love? Is holiness the same as authentic loving – or are there some differences?
4. Do you think our churches are attractive signs of holiness in Australian culture? What would make our churches more effective signs?



### Gerard Tucker 1885 - 1974

Tucker was born on 18 February 1885 at South Yarra, Melbourne. In 1908 Gerard while at St John's Theological College, Melbourne he, with four other students, approached the Anglican Archbishop of Melbourne offering to work as celibate priests among the poor in the inner city. The idea was rejected as impractical, but it foreshadowed Tucker's later achievement.

He was ordained priest in 1914. On the outbreak of World War I enlisted as a private soldier. He was appointed chaplain to the Australian Imperial Force and served in Egypt and France.

In Newcastle, New South Wales, he founded the Brotherhood of St Laurence in 1930. Its four original members pledged to remain unmarried while part of the brotherhood, to live frugally and to practice an active community life. From 1932 The Brotherhood's newsletter, *Quarterly Notes*, aired many important social issues.

In 1933 the Brotherhood of St Laurence moved to Melbourne. His first project was a hostel for homeless, unemployed men. By 1944 a settlement at Carrum Downs provided housing and activities for the elderly and later expanded to include self-contained flats for the infirm, as well as a cottage hospital. Other major welfare schemes initiated by Fr Tucker included a hostel for homeless boys, a club for elderly pensioners, a seaside holiday home for poor families and an opportunity shop. He became familiar to the people of Melbourne as he campaigned for the abolition of slums.

In 1949 he embarked on a project to encourage people to send a shipment of rice to India for famine relief. From this in 1961, Community Aid Abroad, became a national organization. He on 24 May 1974.



### Mary Glowery 1887-1957

Born on 23 June 1887 in Birregurra, Victoria. She began studying for a Bachelor of Arts. However after a great deal of prayer and the encouragement of her father, Mary switched to Medicine, an unusual choice for a woman in those days. In 1910 she graduated with a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery.

Mary built a successful private practice with rooms in Collins Street. During this time she also worked at Victoria's St Vincent's Hospital, as the hospital's "Physician to Outpatients."

Mary's religious vocation came in 1915 after attending Mass at St Patrick's Cathedral, when by chance she happened to read a pamphlet about the urgent need for medical missionaries in India. A conviction grew within her that that God was calling her to a life of medical mission work in India.

In 1916 she was elected founding president of the Catholic Women's League of Victoria and Wagga Wagga. This group sought to change society through prayer as well as action. During this time, she also studied for a higher medical degree with an emphasis on obstetrics, gynecology and ophthalmology, and in 1919 graduated as Doctor of Medicine.

In 1920 Mary sailed for India where she joined the Congregation of the Society of Jesus, Mary and Joseph in Guntur. The remainder of her life until her death in 1957 was spent ministering to the spiritual and medical needs of the people of India, particularly the poor. In 1943 she founded the Catholic Hospital Association of India (CHAI) and several years later established a Catholic Medical College in India to train health professionals.

Throughout her life she was said to radiate Christ by word and example. She died in Bangalore on 5 May 1957. In 2008 the Cause for her Canonisation commenced in Bangalore.

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## 4. Holiness in Daily Life

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Discipleship lies at the very heart of the Christian's response to the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. As we have already said, the call to discipleship is grounded in our baptism. Over and over we are challenged to discipleship by the Word of God proclaimed in the Scriptures. This call is nurtured by our participation in the Eucharist and in a life of prayer and worship. Personally, communally and institutionally we are summoned to follow Christ: "Live as a disciple of Christ, fight the good fight, finish the race, keep the faith" (2 Tim 4:7).

### A Disciple's Life

For each of us, individually and collectively as a community, the call to discipleship is a call to holiness of life. Following Jesus makes a radical difference, not only in what we believe, but in how we live. It makes a difference in how we interact with each other, in how we care for the rest of God's creation, in the choices we make, in the actions to which we commit ourselves, and in the way we pray and worship.

As Christians, holiness is simply our union with Christ, the image of the invisible God (2 Cor 4:4; Col 1:15). It is being guided by the Holy Spirit in all aspects of life along the way of Jesus. While the call to holiness arises in a quite personal manner, it always has a communal, ecclesial dimension. Each of us is called to be conformed to the holiness of Christ the image of God: "And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit" (2 Cor 3:18).

In union with Christ and prompted by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us (Rom 5:5), we enter ever more deeply into relationship with the Abba/Father (Rom 8:14-16). In that living and loving intimacy with the Trinity of Father, Son and Spirit, we pray to Our Father, as Jesus prayed, that God's name be held holy, that God's reign will come, and that the will of God be done in our every living moment.

What then is a holy life? The call to holiness is ultimately a call to grow into the likeness of God whom "we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28). It is to take seriously the biblical command: "You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy" (Lev 19:2). As 1 Peter insists, this command involves holiness in our conduct: "Like obedient children, do not be conformed to the former desires that you formally had in

ignorance. Instead, as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct; for it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy’” (1 Pet 1:15-16).

If holiness is nothing other than union with God, then, on the one hand, it necessarily involves separation from what is not of God, and leaving what obstructs or distracts from God’s presence, action and grace in our lives. On the other hand, it involves embracing what is of God, and choosing to follow what leads us more deeply into the love of God. It means learning to love all that God loves. The call to holiness requires a commitment to prayer, an attitude of hospitality, an active concern for others, a surrender to the will of God, and a disciplined Christ-like way of life that is worthy of our calling (Eph 4:1-3).

### **Holiness as This-Worldly**

By no means does the life and prayer of true holiness take us out of the world, for it hopes and trusts that God, who so loved the world that he sent his only Son, is always and everywhere steadfastly at work in the world. It urges the followers of Christ, the Son of the Father, to collaborate with the will of God in action and in prayer. We receive our daily bread in order that we will be agents of our Father’s mercy and compassion, grace and peace, forgiveness, reconciliation and love.

Holiness ultimately arises out of love—the love of God for us, first of all, and then our love for God and all things and everyone in God. It is in God’s love for us and our love for God and all that God loves that holiness is manifest. In I John we find: “everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. . . Beloved, since God loved us so much, we ought also to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is perfected in us” (1 John 4:7-12). And holiness, like love, is patient; it is kind; it is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things” (1 Cor 13:4-8).

Sharing in the mind of Jesus, inspired by his Spirit and attuned to the will of the Father, Christian holiness sees the world with faith, hope and love. It radiates a message of unquenchable hope into the world of suffering, depression and disillusionment. It refuses to be defeated by the apparent failures, disappointments and evil. It waits in joyful expectation for the fullness of life which lies hidden in the future. It trusts in the promise that in the end God, who is the unseen source and form of all holiness, its wellspring and goal, will be all in all (1 Cor 15:28).

Just as holiness does not take us out of the world, neither does it separate us from others. On the contrary, it is impossible to insist that one loves God if in fact one loves no one. Indeed, Christian holiness is intrinsically corporate and communal. Jesus prayed to the Father that all of his disciples would be one (John 21:17). The life and prayer of true holiness draws us into closer and ever more fruitful relationship with each other as Christians. The closer our union with the Father, the Word and the Spirit, the more deeply and easily will we grow in mutual love and in that unity for which Jesus prayed.

### **Practical Loving**

Christian holiness unfolds in the very current of this life and grows in the generosity of love. Holiness is first of all a profound union with God, lived out in prayer and in a reflective, contemplative stance in the whole of life. We can discern the working of the Holy Spirit in many areas of life. These are just a few examples:

- in living the gospel joyfully in the demands of daily life;
- in the fidelity and generosity demanded in marriage and family;
- in the radical demands of nurturing and supporting one's children or in caring for one's elderly or frail parents;
- in those who dedicate themselves to caring for the suffering, the incurably ill and the dying, or those who have patiently accepted great suffering in their lives;
- in those whose quiet prayerful lives are a prophetic witness in a world of busyness
- in those involved in the work of reconciliation, in interfaith and ecumenical relations, or in peace-making and disarmament;
- in those who work for justice, standing up for the disadvantaged, reaching out to asylum seekers, or advocating for those in need;
- in those committed to a more responsible form of ecological living and care for creation.

Holiness is revealed in compassion for and solidarity with the unloved, the unwanted, the marginalised and the disenfranchised. It radiates a passionate and compassionate concern for others. It is manifest in the sheer goodness and grace of all those involved in the ordinary work of and for the world, who go about their business and the ordinary duties and responsibilities of family, workplace and community with dedication, courage, generosity, and faith, hope and love. It is modelled par excellence in the lives of those many holy men and women from every age whom we recognize as exemplars of Christian life. Through their fruits, we know them. In our lives, and in our church communities, may we emulate them.

### Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. Returning now to a question asked earlier, it might be good to ask again: Of the many people you have met in your life, whom do you recognise as a holy person? What particular qualities radiate from them? What do you admire in them? What do you see of Jesus in them? What do they inspire in you?
2. Christian holiness is intrinsically corporate and communal. In what practical ways could your faith community together grow further in holiness?
3. Jesus also prayed to the Father that all of his disciples would be one. In what ways and in what kinds of activities could Christian communities in your local area work together to grow in holiness?
4. In the light of these studies, are there any changes you would like to make in your life?





### **Eliza Marsden Hassall 1834-1917**

Eliza was born on 2th November 1834 at Denbigh, Cobbity, New South Wales. Born into a family strongly committed to the church, she assisted with the Sunday schools and ministered to local the families. She became interested in promoting overseas missions.

In 1855 she took up working for the British and Foreign Bible Society. In July 1880 she helped to found the New South Wales branch of the Young People's Scripture Union, of which she became secretary.

In 1893 in response to a request from the Church Missionary Society she established Marsden House, Ashfield, Sydney (the Marsden Training Home for Women Missionaries). Its first recruit, Amy Isabel Oxley, went to China in 1896. The training home's curriculum comprised Bible studies and missionary geography. In 1898 the home further expanded. Eliza was made an honorary life member of the Church Missionary Society, London. She retired in 1903. The Deaconess Institute at Redfern took over the training of women missionaries.

Eliza died on 26th December 1917. In her time almost three-quarters of Australian missionaries overseas sent by the Anglican Church in Australia, were women. She had contributed significantly to their recruitment in Sydney. She is commemorated in the Calendar of The Prayer Book for Australia on 2nd January.



### John Brown Gribble 1847-1893

John Gribble was born on 1st September 1847 at Redruth, Cornwall, England. He arrived in the Port Phillip in 1848 with his parents, settling in Geelong, where he himself married in 1868 to Mary Bulmer.

In October 1876 Gribble was admitted into the ministry of the United Free Methodist Church, but soon joined the Congregational Union of Victoria and became a missionary at Rutherglen and Wahgunyah near the Murray River. His travels led him into the Riverina and contact with Aboriginal tribes. From these encounters he wrote his first work, "*A Plea for the Aborigines of New South Wales*". He settling down at Warangesdah Aboriginal Mission, Darlington Point which he and his wife founded in 1879. After a visit to this mission, the Anglican Bishop of Goulburn, Mesac Thomas, decided to sponsor this work and received John into the Anglican Church, ordaining him priest in 1883. With help from the Government, the Anglican Diocese and the Aborigines Protection Board, the mission flourished.

In 1884, John was invited by Bishop Henry Parry of Perth to work in Western Australia. In 1885 he established a mission on the Gascoyne River, an initiative that was strongly opposed by the settlers who exploited aboriginal labour. In 1886 he published a further work, "*Dark Deeds in a Sunny Land*" which fiercely criticized all those who exploited aboriginal people. The book caused him much grief from his opponents. In 1887 the mission was abandoned and he moved back to New South Wales, where he opened another mission on the Darling River. Serving as Rector of Temora and Batlow, he continued to devote much time to the Indigenous people.

In 1892 he moved to Yarrabah, near Cairns in Queensland to open a mission. Falling ill from malaria he retired to Sydney and died on 3rd June 1893.

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