



Dunedin Methodist Parish

Finding Good in everyone Finding God in everyone

www.dunedinmethodist.org.nz

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PARISH BULLETIN

3rd July 2011

WORSHIP FOR SUNDAY 10th JULY 2011

9.30am	Mornington	H Watson White
9.30 am	Mosgiel	S Pole
11.00 am	Glenaven	H Watson White
11.00 am	Wesley	S Pole
1.00pm	St Kilda	TBA
6.00pm	Broad Bay	No Service

DUNEDIN METHODIST PARISH WEBSITE – AN UPDATE

Take another look at our Dunedin Methodist Parish website at www.dunedinmethodist.org.nz and look under Recent News for the latest Parish Bulletin, under Latest Articles for sermons, Connections articles, or browse the photos. Joan was responsible for looking out for items, taking many of the photos and putting all this information on the web so it is another of her lasting legacies to us.

The website was developed by Blair Hughson (Core Development) and he is the webmaster and host of the site. Jenny Winter is the overall coordinator for the parish and now Mary Thompson (Mornington) will be the administrator that adds new information to the website.

To keep the website relevant and vibrant it needs contributions from parish members; articles, sermons, photos should be in electronic form and emailed to Mary Thompson at maryt@actrix.co.nz Please also make suggestions for other things you might like to see on the website.

**OTAGO DISTRICT METHODIST WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Held at Wesley Methodist Church,
Saturday 9th July 2011



**NOTE CHANGE
OF DATE**

10.30	Welcome
11.00	AGM
12.30	Lunch - finger food lunch Soup, tea/coffee provided
1.30	Speaker

*Our Speaker will be Leanne McKinlay from Mosgiel.
Helping in Christchurch.*

MOSGIEL METHODIST WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP AGM

Will be held on Tuesday 5th July at 1.30pm. The Rev. Siosifa Pole will speak to us. All Welcome.

MORNINGTON WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

The next Meeting will take place on the 11th July at 2 p.m. in the Church Lounge. The Speaker will be Rev. Brian Williscroft - the subject - Chaplaincy.

GLENAVEN INVITES YOU to a pot-luck lunch following the 11-12 service on Sunday 10 July. All welcome -- with partners, friends or families -- to our 105-year-old church in Chambers Street, North East Valley, behind the rainbow sign. Join us at our round tables under the heatpumps for a bit of midwinter warmth. Hot and cold drinks provided; please bring finger-food to share. Inquiries: Helen Watson White, 467 2936

MEMORIAL SERVICE

The memorial service for Phyllis Irwin will be held on Friday 22nd July at 10.30am in the Baptist Church Hall, North East Valley. The date chosen would have been her 98th birthday celebration. For further information contact Shirley Ungemuth.

MORE PICTURES from Mornington's PEACE TREE planting - NEW STOLE Greg Hughson shos his new ecumenical peace stole to Ciss Lewis and Shirley Parslow. **BROTHERLY LOVE** - Sekonai Pole lends a hand to Naomi Jnr as a much younger sister plants a tree for peace.



PRAYER REQUEST

This is a request for the whole parish to be prayerful for our ministry. We are under difficult situation that beyond our human capacity to handle. I think it is about time to be pause and offer to God all our thoughts. Each of us might have different attitude to prayer but we can't deny the fact that it is a vital part of our Christian tradition and of course our Methodist tradition. Jesus was a man of prayer and so with John Wesley. As a superintendent of the parish I ask that you pray for the sick and the frail, the weary and the broken, and the difficult issues that we struggle with in the parish. I don't mind what way that you pray as long as you offer to God what is in your mind.



It's a year or two since I did a movie review, and this isn't one anyway. Not really. But I doubt I was the only one in the Parish who watched the 2008 film *DOUBT* on TV1 last Sunday night, and I bet I wasn't the only one who came away morally challenged and/or emotionally disturbed.

For those who missed it I recommend you enquire at your video store. But here's the plot.

It's 1964 and the scene is the St Nicholas Parish Elementary School in New York's working class Bronx district. A liberal priest, Father Flynn, (Philip Seymour Hoffman) is doing his best to relax and modernize the school's strict and very austere regime, which for her part is zealously upheld by the Principal, Sister Aloysius Beauvier (Meryl Streep).

The ramrod straight senior nun rules the school with a rod of iron, and is opposed to every modern innovation, (including ball point pens) as the encroachment of dangerously permissive liberal thinking that threatens traditional Catholic teaching,

At the heart of the movie is the battle of wills between these two, but the context is crucial. The winds of political change are sweeping through America, and Father Flynn is a committed advocate for reform, preaching arresting and provocative sermons to a packed Church. His sermon on honest doubt as a means to credible faith is a masterpiece of forward thinking, and the look of horror on the face of Sister Aloysius speaks volumes. Symptomatic of the times, St Nicholas' has just admitted its first black student, Donald Miller, an altar boy in the parish church, who early in the movie professes to Father Flynn he would like to become a priest. Flynn takes an apparent interest in the boy, and in as much as he can he provides him with encouragement and protection from the racial bullying he inevitably attracts from the students of predominantly Irish or Italian descent.

But other winds are fanning the Catholic Church. The ogre of priests preying on the young, girls and boys, is beginning to rear its ugly head, and the eagle eye of Sister Aloysius is vigilant for the slightest vestige of impropriety in her tightly controlled domain. Alarm bells ring when a young and innocent novice nun, Sister James, observes an unusual and unexplained behaviour by Father Flynn, placing an undershirt in Donald Miller's locker, followed soon after when the boy is summoned from her class by the all-powerful priest and returns some time later with the smell of alcohol on his breath. As is her duty, she reports both events to her superior, notwithstanding an early indication the lad may have yielded to a temptation to get into the communion wine.

The result is explosive for all concerned. Sister Aloysius needs no further convincing that Father Flynn is a paedophile. The righteous certitude of the woman is all-encompassing, and without a shred of evidence she confronts the priest with an ultimatum that he must go or be publicly exposed - this despite the fact that Sister James protests her belief in his innocence until proven guilty, and even the fact that the boy's mother is adamant the priest is good for a son who has been raised in a home where he was repeatedly beaten by a violent alcoholic father.

In all this drama, Father Flynn is an enigma - the total antithesis to his black-robed accuser. He is angry at Beauvier's allegations, but despite every provocation he maintains his personal dignity, and the humanity of the man is always in evidence. As compared with the severity of the nun, he is a man who enjoys the company of his fellow priests, eats and drinks extravagantly at times, constantly aggravates Sister Aloysius by urging the inclusion of popular secular carols into the school's nativity play, and worst of all, flaunts his public use of a ballpoint pen! Yet he does nothing to confirm or deny the potentially damaging suspicions of an improper relationship, the movie ending unsatisfactorily with the priest's removal from the parish. The viewer is left with the question. Is he the victim of unfounded suspicion, or yet another priest brought down by the rotten culture of sexual abuse?

And is Sister Aloysius satisfied she has done her moral duty? Yes, and No. The offending priest has been removed, but a tortured woman remains. "I have doubts" . . . she confides to a bemused Sister James, . . . "I have such doubt." Again we are left with a tantalizing unanswered question - doubt about what? Doubt about the guilt of a hounded priest, or doubt of her chosen role of relentlessly opposing every reform the Church was (reluctantly) beginning to embrace from Vatican 2?

This is already more of a film review than I had intended.

Streep and Hoffman are both magnificent in their roles. But as to what this striking presentation of moral dilemmas may have posed to its New Zealand audience I suspect few of us would be in agreement. People will have applied it to their own context, as I do to mine.

* The Church, of all organisations, needs to be vigilant against the abuse of power. The irony is that Sister Aloysius reveals herself early in the movie as being resentful of the hierarchical exercise of power in which

she as a woman was subservient to the long chain of male authorities above her, among whom Father Flynn is her immediate superior in the chain of command. It grated on her, but she could do nothing to change it. Yet, at the first hint that Father Flynn was vulnerable to suggestions of impropriety, Sister Aloysius herself never hesitated to take an opportunity to exploit his vulnerability to rid herself of him. She was adamant, dogmatic, bristling with righteous certainty. The irony is unavoidable. She herself was a product of a Church that applied trickle-down authority, and when opportunity presented she used it without compassion or justice. She knew no other way.

* In such a Church there is too often seen to be no need for transparency or openness. It was sufficient for Sister Aloysius to create a perception of impropriety to destroy Father Flynn, and even the perception of guilt in the climate of fear and suspicion that was beginning to enshroud all priests, was nigh impossible to defend. Whatever the rights or wrongs of the allegations against him, his loss to the Parish was tragic.

The Catholic Church is an obvious candidate for the stick among those advocating the democratization of the Church. But Catholics do not have a monopoly on the abusive application of power, the power to allege but not provide evidence, the power to rule but not to tolerate challenge. Sometimes, sad to say, similar abuse sneaks in very close to home.

Ken Russell

