

*WILL YOUR  
ANCHOR HOLD?*



*Daily Devotionals  
For  
Naval Personnel  
By*

## *Chaplain Alan Asplin RANR*

### *THE NAVAL PRAYER*

*O Eternal Lord God, who alone spread out the heavens and rule the raging of the sea, who have compassed the water with bounds until day and night come to an end: be pleased to receive in to your almighty and most gracious protection the persons of us your servants, and the fleet in which we serve. Preserve us from the dangers of the sea, and from the violence of the enemy; that we may be a safeguard unto our Sovereign ....., and his/her dominions, and a security for such as pass upon the seas upon their lawful occasions; that the inhabitants of our land may in peace and quietness serve you our God, and that we may return in safety to enjoy the blessings of the land, with the fruit of our labours, and with a thankful remembrance of your mercies to praise and glorify your holy name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

### *THE NAVAL HYMN*

*Eternal Father, strong to save,  
whose arm has bound the restless wave,  
who bidst the mighty ocean deep,  
its own appointed limits keep:  
O hear us when we cry to thee  
for those in peril on the sea.*

*O Christ, whose voice the waters heard  
and hushed their raging at thy word,  
who walkedst on the foaming deep,  
and calm amid the storm didst keep:  
O hear us when we cry to thee  
for those in peril on the sea.*

*O Holy Spirit, who didst brood  
upon the waters dark and rude,  
and bid their angry tumult cease,  
and give for wild confusion, peace:  
O hear us when we cry to thee  
for those in peril on the sea.*

*O Trinity of love and power,  
our brethren shield in danger's hour  
from rock and tempest, fire and foe,  
guard them wherever they may go:  
thus evermore shall rise to thee  
glad hymns of praise from land and sea.*

### *THE SAILORS PSALM (PSALM 107.23-32,43)*

*Some went down to the sea in ships, doing business on the great waters;  
they saw the deeds of the Lord, his wondrous works in the deep.  
For He commanded, and raised the stormy wind,  
which lifted up the waves of the sea.  
They mounted up to heaven, they went down to the depths;  
their courage melted away in their evil plight;  
they reeled and staggered like drunken men, and were at their wit's end.  
Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble,  
and he delivered them from their distress;  
he made the storm be still, and the waves of the sea were hushed.  
Then they were glad because they had quiet;  
and he brought them to their desired haven.  
Let them thank the Lord for His steadfast love,  
for his wonderful works to the sons of men.  
Whoever is wise, let him give heed to these things;  
let men consider the steadfast love of the Lord.*

### *THE LORD'S PRAYER*

*Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Lead us not in to temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
[For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.]*

## *INTRODUCTION*

*Maintaining your spiritual life in the military environment is not easy. It's difficult enough in the Australian cultural environment today. In a 'post-modern,' 'post-Christian,' supposedly 'tolerant' multi-cultural society, Christianity is the least tolerated of religions. Couple this difficulty with the demands of a highly operational, high-tech, minimum manned Navy, and the demands this places upon us, and it's no wonder that we can find it very difficult to give God a second thought throughout the day. Hence this book. Hopefully it will help you and encourage you to spend a few minutes each day with God; preferably before the working day gets started.*

*The title of the book is inspired by a grand old hymn of the same name that is full of nautical imagery. It speaks of the worthwhile struggle to keep faith in God amidst all the difficulties of this life. The writer of the hymn got his inspiration from Hebrews 6.19 – 'We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure.' The writer of Hebrews was speaking about the certainty of God's promises to those who put the trust in Him.*

*For each day of the year you will find a quotation and a Bible verse (or two), with a short commentary on them and then a prayer for the day. Also included you will find the Naval Prayer, the Naval Hymn, the Sailors' Psalm and the Lord's Prayer. My hope and prayer is that this resource will assist you in maintaining your spiritual life and witness as you serve in the defence of our nation in the Royal Australian navy.*

*May the God of peace and love be with you each and every day.*

*Yours in Christ,*

*Alan.*

*"Will your anchor hold in the storms of life,  
When the clouds unfold their wings of strife?  
When the strong tides lift, and the cables strain,  
Will your anchor drift, or firm remain?"*

### *DEDICATED TO*

*Principal Chaplain Michael Holz*

*who inspired this work*

*and*

*My wife Etti*

*Who represents all those special people*

*- the families of defence personnel*

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**JANUARY**



*1 January - New Year's Day*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

*"In order to realise the worth of the anchor,  
we need to feel the stress of the storm."  
(Corrie ten Boom)*

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"We have this hope (of salvation) as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure."  
(Hebrews 6.19)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

The hymn, 'Will your anchor hold...', is a favourite of mine because of its nautical theme and language and also because of its emphasis upon the saving work of Jesus Christ. I can also imagine it being played by Naval bands as a rousing marching tune. The chorus reminds us that the anchor for our soul is faith in Jesus Christ. As we begin another year it is good to remind ourselves of the worth of that anchor if we are to weather the different kinds of storms we will face throughout the coming weeks and months. May we always be conscious of the presence of God each day and reliant upon his power to help us live as we ought to his praise and glory.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Thankyou, Heavenly Father, for all the blessings I received last year. As another year begins help me not rest on my oars because of past achievements. In this New Year, continually inspire me to aim still higher, to do even better, without becoming conceited or complacent. Help me to focus, not on what I have done but on what I might yet do. To save me from foolish pride keep me mindful of the many times I've failed. As we begin, refreshed in body, mind and spirit, keep me always conscious of your presence. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

*2 January*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"England expects every man to do his duty."  
(Lord Horatio Nelson)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"So you also, when you have done everything,  
you were told to do, should say,  
'We are unworthy servants;  
we have only done our duty.'"*  
(Luke 17.10)

## TO THINK ABOUT

Nelson sent this famous signal to his fleet as the Battle of Trafalgar was about to begin. It speaks to us today about the deal we sign up for when we join the Navy. Sadly there are those few sailors who believe they have a right to pick and choose where they will serve or if they will deploy or not. Jesus spoke also about the same issue when it came to following him. We should not expect or demand commendation for doing only what is required of us if we sign up to follow him; even more so than signing up to serve our country.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Almighty Father, so live in me that I may go forward with the light of hope in my eyes, the fire of inspiration on my lips, and your love in my heart. Keep from me any restlessness and anxiety of spirit. May your peace and power uphold me and keep me faithful. Grant me the resolve to seek your glory and the good of others. Watch over our soldiers, sailors and airmen; keeping them from all danger, wherever they may be. Comfort their loved ones separated from them by operational requirements. Lead us all into a deeper fellowship with you through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*



*3 January*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"The advantage of exercising every day  
is that you die healthier."  
(Anon)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"For physical training is of some value,  
but godliness has value for all things,  
holding promise for both the present life  
and the life to come."  
(1 Timothy 4. 8)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Passing the annual fitness test is an important part of our being ready for sea. Indeed, physical fitness is an essential thing if we are to cope well with the demands of the sea going environment. Some people even go to great lengths and become 'gym-junkies' and spend a great deal of time and money on equipment and clothing, etc. When you spend money on your body, remember that it is your body which will be buried, no matter how fit you are, and so your investment will be buried with it. How much time though do you spend on developing your spiritual life, your relationship with God, which promises not only eternal life but a quality of life here and now that is of much greater value for the whole of your being than just physical fitness?

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Almighty Father, as all the treasures of wisdom, truth and holiness are found in you, may the fullness of Christ's character be increasingly formed in my life. Through fellowship with him, may I exhibit: a thankful and uncomplaining heart; courage, whether in suffering or in danger; boldness in standing for what is right; strength to resist temptation; bodily discipline; strict truthfulness; silence, that I may refrain from hasty speech; forgiveness towards any who wrong me; steadfastness in desiring your will for my life. Keep me from fretting over lesser matters or getting anxious about things beyond my control. Let me proceed with a quiet mind, refreshed and ready for the challenge of this day. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

*4 January*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Honour's the moral conscience of the great."  
(William Davenant)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Give everyone what you owe him:  
...if honour, then honour."*  
(Romans 13.7)

## TO THINK ABOUT

The first of Navy's values has an ancient pedigree. In the biblical sense, from the Hebrew and Greek, it is a serious word that conveys the notion of the importance or value of someone. Honour is an enviable esteem in which someone is held. That person is worthy of being venerated or worshiped; hence the titles of people who hold high public office, e.g., 'His worship, the mayor.' To be honoured is a valuable reward for doing a great job, for service to one's community, and for displaying great character. Christians should aim to be, by their lifestyle, people deserving of honour, because they model the One most deserving of our worship, Jesus Christ our Lord.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Dear Lord and Father, thank you for your provision for my daily needs - food, clothing, shelter and relationships. I acknowledge my total dependency on you for all these things. It's easy to leave you out of the equation and to believe that I can satisfy my needs by my own efforts. May my confidence always be in you and not in myself. As I face my duties and responsibilities, help me to do so with a sense of delight and not just a sense of duty. I know that I have to live a disciplined life in order to be a dependable team member. I also see that the strength for this discipline must come from you and not my just my own inner resources. Help me to rest in you. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

*5 January*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"An honest man's the noblest work of God."  
(Alexander Pope)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"And my honesty will testify for me in the future. . . ."*  
(Genesis 30.33)

## TO THINK ABOUT

What is friendship really all about? Some people use 'friendship' just to manipulate other people or to ingratiate themselves or for some personal gain. The Bible suggests that true friendship is about caring for another person. Friendship calls for honesty exercised in the best interests of another. Friendship also appreciates such honesty from others, even when it hurts. Total honesty is essential in every relationship, including the honest confrontation of those who do wrong. The person who really cares for us shows that by telling us the truth in love. The honest person makes the truest friend.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Dear Lord, thank you for every spiritual blessing I enjoy through faith in Jesus, your Son. Help me to set out today with the same enthusiasm I have for my recreational activities. Help me to see my tasks and responsibilities as exciting challenges rather than as a burden or as a drudgery. I know that seems a tall order at times, but I also know that I achieve more and that time passes more quickly if I have a good attitude to my work. Help me to remember the needs and the challenges my shipmates face in their work. By my cooperation, courteousness and consideration may they have the same kind of day that I pray for myself, and when our day ends may we all finish it with a sense of satisfaction and thankfulness to you; for I ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.*

*6 January*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Courage is fear that has said its prayers."  
(Anon)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Be strong and courageous.  
Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged,  
for the Lord your God will be with you  
wherever you go."  
(Joshua 1. 9)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

God provides the resources we need to accomplish any task he sets before us. Most of us have heard the story of David and Goliath and how David was able to defeat the giant because of his courage and faith. God is still able to do far more with one person willing to try than with a whole army of hesitant soldiers. Joshua was appointed to lead Israel after the death of Moses, a most daunting task which required great courage. He succeeded because of his faith in God. Most heroes when asked about their feats of courage will admit that they experienced fear even as they performed their heroic acts. Courage does not mean the absence of fear only the overcoming of it. For us today the knowledge of Jesus' victory on the cross gives us the courage to face and fight any enemy – both physical and spiritual.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Dear God and Father, thank you that I am refreshed to face the duties and responsibilities of this new day. Help me to tackle my work, not as a chore, but as another adventure in my life journey; that will enable me to grow in true self-understanding and to make a positive impact for good in my workplace and on those about me. I commend to you, for greater wisdom and integrity those in positions of leadership who have responsibilities affecting the lives of those are under their authority. May their motivations and decisions be in accord with what is in the best interests of all and the fulfilling of Navy's mission. At the end of the day may our conduct have brought glory to your holy name; for I ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.*



*7 January*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Be so true to thyself,  
as thou be not false to others."  
(Francis Bacon)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"I know, my God, that you test the heart  
and are pleased with integrity."*  
(1 Chronicles 29.17)

## TO THINK ABOUT

A survey conducted some time ago showed that the most valued attribute in a leader was *integrity*. Integrity means behaving in ways that match up with what you say you believe and demonstrating social responsibility. People with integrity are 'wholesome' in the sense that they can be trusted and therefore nurture relationships in a community. When a person lacks integrity they have the opposite effect, in that relationships and communities *disintegrate*, because of a lack of trust. In the defence community we can see the importance of integrity at all levels if we are to be effective in our work. We need to be able to trust those with whom we live and work and they need to be able to rely on us absolutely – our lives depend on it! And because integrity builds positive relationships, God is pleased with us when we demonstrate this virtue in our lives.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Father God, as this day begins I give my thanks for life, and health, and all good gifts. Bless the relationships that are mine this day, and let me show love and gentleness and good cheer to all. Save me from being touchy; from stubbornness in any situation; and from impatience. Let me spare time for the interests of others. Let me show tolerance for the ideas of others. Apart from my own earnings and use of money, let me be aware of the needs of others. Let the sanctity of others' lives be very real to me. Let the tyranny of things not overwhelm me. Let the lasting truth and goodness and beauty of your kingdom have first place in all my plans. In Jesus name I pray. Amen.*

*8 January*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"I will follow thee to the last gasp  
with truth and loyalty."  
(William Shakespeare)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"O Lord God of our fathers  
Abraham, Isaac and Israel,  
keep this desire in the hearts of your people for ever,  
and keep their hearts loyal to you."  
(1 Chronicles 29.18)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Loyalty means that we see as important the keeping of promises and the fulfilling of our duties to those in authority over us and to those with whom we have a close personal relationship. It is an important aspect of our own self-identity because our basic loyalties enable us to clarify to whom we see ourselves as belonging to in the world. The most important relationship that we can have is with God himself, through faith in his Son Jesus Christ. God desires that we are loyal to him first and foremost. If we are loyal to him and follow his desires for our lives then we are much more likely to be loyal in our other relationships.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Dear Father in Heaven, as I begin my day and distracting thoughts push into the forefront of my mind; help me to remain focussed for these working hours, and to put in the effort that is required to do my duty effectively. Keep me from squandering any opportunities for service, so that I don't, in any way, diminish what might be accomplished in my shipmates and myself. I commend to you, Father, any who find themselves in a new situation; asking that you uphold any that may be bewildered by their new experience; and giving them the strength to cope with the demands of a busy and strenuous schedule. I ask you to bless also those responsible for them, and ask that they might conscientiously exercise their duty of care. I ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.*

*9 January*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

*"It mus' be now de kingdom coming,  
An' de year ob Jubilo!"  
(Henry Clay Work)*

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"...for dominion belongs to the Lord  
and he rules over the nations."  
(Psalm 22.28)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

The poetry of the Psalms is not in rhyme or meter but in parallel thoughts. So whichever way you look at this verse it says, 'God Rules! OK?' It's a good thought to keep in mind that the universe belongs to God, its creator, and not to us. We get a proper perspective on our self-importance when we remember that God is Lord over all, controlling every aspect of our lives. It is not evident to everyone that this is so but a day is coming, as the old Negro spiritual says, when God's rule over his realm, his kingdom, will be manifest for all to see.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, you have set me to live in your wonderful world with all its opportunities. May I play my part well. You have set me tasks that will test my courage – either morally, mentally, or physically; you have surrounded me with friends and colleagues who can help me in this regard; and whom I too can help. Make me strong when such tests come my way. Some of the things I have to do today come easily to me now – may I not grow careless in doing them; some of the things I have to do today are still hard for me – may I not give up trying just because of that. Most of the people I shall meet today are friends and colleagues – may I not for that reason be unfriendly to others. I thank you that not one hour of this day will pass without your presence and that you are ever ready to help me. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

*10 January*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Alas for the rarity  
Of Christian charity  
Under the sun!"  
(Thomas Hood)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Then the righteous will answer him,  
'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you,  
or thirsty and give you something to drink?' ...  
The King will reply,  
'I tell you the truth, whatever you did  
for one of the least of these brothers of mine,  
you did for me.'"  
(Matthew 25.37, 40)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

What a remarkable statement of our Lord to make; to say that in helping someone in their time of need we are looking at Jesus and ministering to him! The lesson is this – that God will judge us according to how we react to human need. It does not depend on how much knowledge we have acquired, or the fame we have attained, or the fortune we have amassed, or even the church work we have done, but on the help we have given to alleviate human need. But we mustn't think that in helping others that we are piling up eternal merit; like collecting gold stars on a chart. We help because we can't help ourselves; we're so grateful to God for Jesus' death on our behalf.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Heavenly Father, thankyou for another day and all its opportunities. Thankyou for the happy things which will come to me quite unexpectedly; for the things which will turn out to be not nearly so bad as I imagine; for difficult things which will become quite manageable when I face up to them. Help me so that, at the end of the day there will not be a request which is still unanswered; a promise which is still not kept; a decision which is still delayed; a bad habit which is still not given up. Make me honest enough to see myself as I am and humble enough to seek your help, so that, by your grace I may end this day more Christlike than I began; through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

*11 January*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"But man, proud man,  
Drest in a little brief authority, . . .  
Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven  
As make the angels weep."  
(William Shakespeare)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"When Jesus had finished saying these things,  
the crowds were amazed at his teaching,  
because he taught as one who had authority,  
and not as their teachers of the law."  
(Matthew 7.28,29)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Authority is not something that sits easy with the heart of sinful man. We all recognise the necessity of it for governing human affairs. We least like it when it is exercised over us. It is especially part of the Australian psyche to baulk at and to resist those who exercise authority over us. Because of our convict beginnings it is in our blood to resist them, if not actively, at least passively. The evidence for this is in those who are our folk heroes, such as bushrangers like Ned Kelly. What a contrast the Christian lifestyle provides. And what a change comes over the Australian when he/she is converted. The Christian's attitude to authority is like that of Christ, who willingly submitted himself to the authority of his heavenly Father, even to death on the cross.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Eternal Father, equip me with those gifts of yours which will enable me to live well today and every day. Grant to me a faith that can accept things it cannot understand, and which will never turn to doubt. Grant me the hope that still hopes on, even in the dark, and which never turns to despair. Grant to me the loyalty that will be true to You, even if all else deny You, and which will never stoop to compromise. Grant to me the purity which can resist all the seductions of temptation and which can never be turned from the straight and narrow way. Arm my will with your strength and fill my heart with your love, so that I may be strong to obey you and loving to serve my neighbour as myself, and so be like Jesus. This I ask for His sake. Amen.*

*12 January*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Ever notice that everybody wants to go to heaven  
and nobody wants to die?"  
(Anon)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Sovereign Lord,  
as you have promised,  
you now dismiss your servant in peace."  
(Luke 2.29)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

What's the most important thing you hope to achieve before you die? What would have to happen for you to make you feel ready to die? Some people can't even face the prospect of their death. I had a neighbour once who was so terrified by the subject that she would literally run away from a conversation if death were mentioned. In the verse above, we have the words of Simeon, who tells God that he is now ready to die. So what kind of man is this that he can speak as if the grave has no terrors for him? Simeon is content to die because he has seen the Saviour, Jesus Christ, and he trusts in God's promise of salvation through him. If we have met the Saviour then we also should have no fear of death because God has promised that anyone who repents and believes in Jesus will be saved.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*My Lord and Father, I humbly thank you for the mercy of another day, for life, health and strength, and for anticipated blessings. May I be continually mindful of your love so that no thanklessness or hardness of heart sours any of the good things you bestow on me. Grant me the strength to walk steadfastly in the path you have marked out for me; cheerfully resigning myself into your hands. May I always remember that no matter what trials I may face you are with me to uphold me. By your grace, use me to bring comfort and support to all those I come across who may be facing troubles or difficulties. I commend into your hands all whom are dear to me. Notwithstanding my desire to do the right thing, I ask you to keep me from failing to honour you in my life today. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

*13 January*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"None of us knows what the  
next change is going to be,  
what unexpected opportunity  
is just around the corner, waiting  
to change all the tenor of our lives."  
(Kathleen Norris)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*'After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector  
by the name of Levi sitting at his tax booth.  
'Follow me,' Jesus said to him,  
and Levi got up,  
left everything and followed him."  
(Luke 5.27,28)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

When Jesus calls Levi he claims his heart's allegiance and we see a radical change take place in that person's whole life from that moment on. Things will never be the same again. In leaving his tax booth he surrenders all of his former way of life; he well and truly burns all his bridges to the past. Change and the fear of change; growth or stagnation – these are the options even we face. I read once that our 'attitudes are fixed from our mid thirties!' I would add, 'unless God...' When we encounter Jesus and respond to his claim upon our heart's allegiance then 'all things are possible.' There is no need to be afraid and a great deal to be gained by gladly surrendering our heart to Jesus.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Merciful Father, as I embark upon another day I pause to reflect upon your greatness and your compassion, and upon my frailty and finitude before you. I acknowledge that without your blessing I will not be able to fulfil your purposes for my life; nor receive each circumstance as an opportunity for service; nor perform without omission my daily duties. Help me not to tarnish the Christian ideal, but to be scrupulously honest in all my dealings and transparently sincere in all that I say and do. Help me to be brutally honest with myself and willing to make those changes necessary in my life that will transform me into a greater likeness of Jesus, in whose name I pray. Amen.*

*14 January*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"I avoid looking forward or backward,  
and try to keep looking upward."  
(Charlotte Bronte)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Acknowledge and take to heart this day  
that the Lord is God in heaven above  
and on the earth below.  
There is no other."  
(Deuteronomy 4.39)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

What disciplines have you developed to keep you on track in your spiritual journey? Moses was concerned to keep the Israelites motivated as they prepared to enter the promised land. He made it clear that they needed to look back to remind themselves where they'd come from as well as looking forward to what God had in store for them. In looking back they would see what God had done and discover how great God is and what they meant to him. When we remember Christ's suffering and triumph for us we realise how precious we are to God and we look up to him and give him the central place in our lives. Looking up to God will keep your faith fresh and keep you motivated to follow him.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Heavenly Father, help me today to go forward with peace of mind and tranquillity of heart. Save me from rushing into things unprepared and without considering the consequences for others. Save me from 'foot-in-mouth' disease; from embarrassing both others and myself. Save me from impatience with people and in my work; which results in strained relationships and botched outcomes. Teach me to take stock of every situation; to think through the issues and to prepare a plan of action, that will lead to the successful completion of every endeavour. Help me to live in the certainty that everything will work out if only I learn to be patient and to put my trust in you. Remind me, each moment of the day, to go forward with rather than ahead of you; for Jesus' sake. Amen.*



*15 January*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Live your life while you have it.  
Life is a splendid gift –  
there is nothing small about it."  
(Florence Nightingale)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Give, and it will be given to you.  
A good measure, pressed down,  
shaken together and running over,  
will be poured into your lap.  
For with the measure you use,  
it will be measured to you."  
(Luke 6.38)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Our natural inclination is to get back at those who do the wrong thing by us. But there is a way to break patterns of hostility and self-destructive behaviours, and to enrich the quality of our life. And that way is to take the initiative and begin, now, to give love where there is hate, compassion where there is hostility, devotion where there is antagonism, and do good where there is evil. Breaking the cycle of blow for blow, and pain for pain, will establish the measure by which, in time, it will be measured back to us. The larger the measure of love we use, the greater the possibility of receiving love in return. The splendid gift of life is too short to waste, so let's live the good measure of transforming change as befits our calling as God's children.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Dear Lord, help me today to know that which is worth knowing; that which is worth loving; that which is worth doing. Take me just as I am, where I am, and use me in your service. Help me to control my tongue and not succumb to careless or harmful talk. May my hands be used to help others and may my 'grey cells' carefully think things through. Protect me in all my comings and goings today – at home, at work, and at play. Teach me to choose always things that are good and true – no matter what others may say. Let me keep on following your lead and never give up; for Jesus' sake. Amen.*

*16 January*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"It doesn't take monumental feats  
to make the world a better place.  
It can be as simple as letting someone  
go ahead of you in the grocery line."  
(Barbara Johnson)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Be kind and compassionate to one another,  
forgiving each other,  
just as in Christ God forgave you."  
(Ephesians 4.32)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Becoming a Christian is not just a matter of 'turning over a new leaf,' or like making new year's resolutions, but about being a new person who has been changed from within by the power of the Holy Spirit. This doesn't mean that the old nature has gone completely, and there remains a choice to be made when faced with the temptation to behave as we once did. If we need an incentive, to remind us of our new status, then we need only look to Jesus and his attitude towards us. Look to see the changes taking place in you – this is who you are in Christ!

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Heavenly father, I thank you that I am able to work today. Thank you for all the times you will guide me to do what I ought to do; and when you will strengthen me to resist the temptation to do what I ought not to do. Thank you for those people you will enable me to help today and for anyone that I'll get to know a little better. Thank you for those people who will help me today; those with an encouraging word; those who'll go out of their way to help me; for anyone who'll make me feel that after meeting them life is better than I thought. Help me to finish well today, to sleep well tonight, and to be ready and eager to face tomorrow; through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

*17 January*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Never fear shadows.  
That just means a light is  
shining somewhere nearby."  
(Anon)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"When Jesus spoke again to the people,  
he said, 'I am the light of the world.  
Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness,  
but will have the light of life.' "*  
(John 8.12)

## TO THINK ABOUT

There are two things that light does and Jesus has both in mind. First, it enables us to see. Enter a dark room and you see nothing; switch on the light and you see everything in the room. Jesus gave light to the blind when he restored their sight. Second, light guides us. The lights at the harbour's mouth are there to guide ships safely into port. Christ is the light of the world, for he enables us to see what is in the world; i.e., what we are like. And because he is light he guides us through the world; i.e., how we should behave. Christ as the light guides us to another and better life. Each of us must decide to trust and follow him, just as the ship's captain trusts and follows the harbour lights to bring him safely into port.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Dear God, my Father, help me to learn the lessons that life is seeking to teach me. Save me from making the same mistakes over and over again, save me from falling to the same temptations time and time again. Save me from doing things that I shouldn't do, until the doing of them has become a habit that I cannot break. Save me from failing to realise my own weaknesses, and from refusing to see my own faults. Save me from persisting in courses of action that I ought to have learned long ago can lead to nothing but trouble. Save me from doing things that I know annoy other people. Help me daily to grow stronger, purer and kinder. Help me daily to shed old faults, and to gain new virtues, until, by Your grace, life becomes altogether new. Hear my prayer for Jesus sake. Amen.*

*18 January*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Don't search for truth,  
just let go of your opinions."  
(Seng Tan)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Jesus answered,  
'I am the way and the truth and the life.  
No one comes to the Father except through me.'"*  
(John 14.6)

## TO THINK ABOUT

The greatest spiritual danger in today's religiously tolerant society is to believe that there are many roads to God, all equally good. Jesus made it unequivocally clear that there is just one way that leads to God, and he is that way. Other religions offer paths to follow or exhibit moral insight or hint at life after death, but only in the person of Jesus Christ can anyone find THE way to God, THE truth about the universe, and THE life that is eternal. Only through Jesus can anyone approach God. All other ways are 'dead' ends.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Eternal Father, Disposer of all the affairs of the world, there is not one circumstance so great as not to be subject to your power, nor so small but it comes within your care. Your goodness and wisdom show themselves through all your works and your loving-kindness and mercy are manifest in an infinite number of providential acts. In light of this I give you heartfelt thanks and praise, readily submitting myself to your pleasure and sincerely resigning my will to yours, with patience, meekness and humility. Guide me through the day, in all the changes and chances of this fallen world, such that I may bring no dishonour to your holy Name. And when my busy day is over and my work is done; then, in your mercy, grant to me your peace, and a good night's rest. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

*19 January*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"A belief is something you hold;  
a conviction is something that holds you."  
(Jerry Bridges)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Brothers loved by God,  
we know that he has chosen you,  
because our gospel came to you  
not simply with words, but also with power,  
with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction."  
(1 Thessalonians 1.4,5)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Military recruiters from the Army, Navy and Marines, turned up at a US high school to give presentations to the senior students. The Army and Navy recruiters went way over their allotted time, leaving the Marine only two minutes for his talk. At the lectern he stood silently for a full minute and then said, 'I doubt whether there are two or three of you in this room who would even cut it in the Marine Corps. But I want to see those two or three immediately after we are dismissed. He then turned and sat down. After the students were dismissed the marine was mobbed by those who were interested in the Marine Corp. The recruiter knew that conviction come from appealing to the heroic dimension in every heart. The Apostle Paul commended the Thessalonian Christians for the way they had been convicted of the truth of Jesus and had responded by imitating Him with their lives.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Lord of life, I give you thanks for this new day and for the strength and energy of my life. I praise you for the beauty of the world about me; for the work you have given me to do; as well as for the activities which fill my leisure times; and for all good and pure pleasures in life. I ask that you would make me tender-hearted to all those for whom this day brings no joy; for those affected by illness or injury; those who carry a heavy workload or are engaged in onerous tasks. Work in me, by your Holy Spirit, such that I may encourage and comfort them by what I say, and lend, wherever possible, a helping hand. Let there be nothing in me that will diminish the promise and opportunities this day offers. Be glorified in and through my life today, Lord, for Jesus' sake. Amen*

*20 January*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

*"Nothing great was ever achieved  
without enthusiasm."  
(Ralph Waldo Emerson)*

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gifts  
as you eagerly await for our Lord  
Jesus Christ to be revealed."  
(1 Corinthians 1.7)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Properly harnessed, eagerness and enthusiasm are great qualities to have and much can be achieved by them. Certainly nothing great is ever achieved without some passion for the task or the adventure before you. What about the greatest task a Christian can embark upon, the transforming of our life so that it resembles more and more the life of our Saviour, Jesus Christ? For that we need something more than just enthusiasm; we need the spiritual reserves that God has provided for us. We have spiritual gifts to enable us to grow and serve, that we might increasingly overcome the moral and spiritual deficiencies in our lives and achieve what God intends for our lives.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Dear Lord, I thank you for the health of body, mind and spirit that I am privileged to enjoy; and for the skills and abilities I have for my work. Help me to remember those who are not so fortunate. In all my labours help me not to indulge in those things that would jeopardise my fitness to do my best. In my work help me to accept the discipline which I know that I need but which I'm tempted to avoid if possible. Grant me pride in my work and such self-respect that I will never be satisfied with producing anything of a shoddy or inferior standard. Help me at all times to be absolutely honest; and concerned to do as best I can, rather than considering my own advantage or how long it is going to take me to do it. At the end of the day may my conscience be satisfied in a job well done. This I ask in Jesus' name. Amen.*

*21 January*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"The person who kneels to God  
can stand up to anything."  
(Louis H. Evans Jr)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"All men will hate you because of me.  
But not a hair of your head will perish.  
By standing firm you will save yourself."  
(Luke 21.17-19)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Do you get a bit of a bagging from your shipmates for being a Christian? Are they ever ready to rubbish your religion and call you a hypocrite because of your imperfections? Jesus anticipated and prepared you for it two thousand years ago! He said that if you are going to follow him then it's what you must expect. You may even be called upon to suffer physically for your faith in Christ at some time. So, don't be surprised by whatever level of persecution you face, just remember his promise to you. When you need some help to stand firm, then fall to your knees before God in prayer and he will lift you up and sustain you.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O Lord, let me be kindly disposed to everyone today – ready to share of myself in both work and play. Let me think nothing that will spoil any relationships today; let me do nothing that will make life difficult for others; let me say nothing that I'll be sorry for later on. O Lord, let me not think only of my own concerns but also of the concerns of others. If I should get too rushed to think properly; if I should get more set on making my day easy rather than helping those around me; if I do get too wrapped up in my own things; gently remind me Lord. May this day truly reflect your power at work in my life; for Jesus' sake. Amen.*

*22 January*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Worry is interest paid on trouble  
before it falls due."  
(Anon)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Cast all your anxiety on Him  
because he cares for you."  
(1 Peter 5. 7)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

We are all prone to worrying about things unnecessarily. We take our eye off the ball and focus on peripheral issues and problems, etc., etc., and then molehills suddenly become mountains. But is our worrying really going to achieve anything other than an acid stomach? This verse reminds us of the best course of action when things get on top of us. Let God do the worrying for you, because after all, he does care for you. If we know that God is watching out for us, we have nothing left to worry about, and we can get on with the business of demonstrating the reality of our faith by living worry free and facing life with a positive frame of mind.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Dear Father God, in the midst of all my work this day, help me to keep the best interest of others in my mind and in my heart. Keep me from hurting or disappointing or drifting apart from those I love. Bless them and keep them safe. Keep me from being selfish or demanding with my friends and using them for my own ends. Help me always to try to enrich their lives, as I wish that they might enrich mine. Make me easy to work with and not one who makes the work of others harder, by dodging or shirking what I ought to be doing. Help me to be quick to show others how to do things when they are in difficulty, and even willing to help them to do it. Help me to be mindful of all those in pain, in sadness, in loneliness in trouble, in disgrace. Bless especially those who find themselves in difficulties where their fellow men and women can do little to comfort or to support them. Help me to keep in mind, "There, but for the Grace of God, go I." Bless me with the assurance of your love and your care. This I ask for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.*



*23 January*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Does God seem far away?  
Guess who moved."  
(Anon)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"For although they knew God,  
they neither glorified him as God  
nor gave thanks to him,  
but their thinking became futile  
and their foolish hearts were darkened."  
(Romans 1.21)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

In life we make choices. In our dealings with God we choose, either to say yes, or no, to his call on our lives. When things go wrong, it is often because we have made the wrong choice and said no to God's way of doing things as prescribed in the Bible. Then we cry out, 'Why me?' or 'Where is God?' Hopefully, these will be intermittent lapses of judgement in your spiritual journey, but if you increasingly say 'no' to God then a gradual, subtle change begins to take place in your life. It gets easier to resist God's will and you become a little harder in your attitude to him and you begin to spiral downward, morally and spiritually, until God seems far away. And if this direction is not halted and reversed, the Bible tell us that God will eventually abandon us altogether to our choice. Make sure you always say yes to God, you'll never regret it!

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Father God, grant to me all through this day to do the right thing; to follow Your will and not my own desires.*

*Help me to do with diligence the tasks I do not wish to do, and to meet with graciousness the people I do not like to meet; and in all things to set duty above pleasure. Grant that conscience may be my master and that my desire would be to do things well enough to pass your scrutiny. Help me avoid seeking to do as little as possible and getting as much as possible. May I not seek to avoid my work nor leave to others that which I should do. Keep me from avoiding the decisions I ought to make and evading the responsibilities I ought to shoulder. So grant that at the end of the day I may know the deep contentment of work completed and of duty done; through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

*24 January*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Learn to say no;  
it will be of more use to you  
than to be able to read Latin."  
(Charles Spurgeon)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"When tempted, no one should say,  
'God is tempting me.'  
for God cannot be tempted by evil,  
nor does he tempt anyone;  
but each one is tempted when,  
by his own evil desire,  
he is dragged away and enticed."  
(James 1.13,14)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

There are so many things in the world which tempt us, not all of them necessarily bad. It's how we respond to the temptation that is important. How we respond indicates something about our character. Temptations are opportunities to display the reality of our faith. Our natural inclination is always to shift the blame and to absolve ourselves of any responsibility for the things we do wrong. God forbid that we should go that step further and to blame God for our moral failures! It's bad enough that we might blame the devil, who is evil, but to charge God reveals just how far we have failed the test when temptation came our way. We need to learn to say no more readily when faced with temptation and avoid having to confess another sin to our heavenly Father.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Almighty Father, under whose mighty and gracious protection I live, I give you thanks, in anticipation, for all your mercies to me this day; especially those things necessary to my health and well-being. Lift my soul above selfish thoughts of what I may get from you, and trusting only in your love and faithfulness, help me to give myself to your service by living in obedience to your commands. Help me to live calmly and contentedly, striving to keep my conscience clear of anything contrary to your perfect will, and looking continually to you for help. Grant me the grace to alleviate, if at all possible, any difficulties that others may face today, rather than add to them by my insensitivity. Help me come to the end of the day knowing that I have done all within my power to imitate in thought, word and deed, Jesus, my Saviour, and to bring glory to your holy Name. Amen.*

*25 January*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"O my soul,  
be prepared for the coming of the Stranger,  
Be prepared for him who knows how to ask questions."  
(T.S. Eliot)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Do not be deceived.  
God cannot be mocked.  
A man reaps what he sows."  
(Galatians 6.7)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

'A man reaps what he sows' is written into every aspect of life. If the farmer wants a harvest, the kind he gets depends upon the kind of seed he plants - its quality and quantity. If he wants a good crop then he needs to plant the right seed, of the right quality, and plenty of it. Precisely the same principle operates in the moral and spiritual dimension of our lives. The fruit of our lives is shaped by our conduct. The harvest we reap depends on where and how and what we sow. The sowing is our thoughts and deeds, how we live our lives. More importantly is the question of how we relate to God. Are we 'fair dinkum' about our relationship with him or not? Will we reap eternal life with him or not?

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Eternal Father, as I turn my thoughts to you at the beginning of this new day, I rejoice to know that all day I shall be under your watchful care. I commend myself - body, soul and spirit - to your loving protection. I thank you that I can proceed with that peace in my heart which is beyond all understanding and which comes from you. Don't let me spoil these blessings with restless imaginings, neither anxious, fretful or shameful thoughts, which advertise a lack of faith in your grace, mercy and power to strengthen me and keep me secure in all situations. I would commend into your care all my shipmates, asking you to do also for them that which I have asked for myself; and to make yourself very real to them, being present in their hearts by your Holy Spirit. I ask these things in the precious name of Jesus. Amen.*

*26 January – Australia Day*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

“How sweet and gracious, . . .  
Is that fine sense which men call Courtesy!  
It transmutes aliens in to trusting friends, . . .”  
(James Thomas Fields)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*“Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens,  
but fellow citizens with God’s people  
and members of God’s household.”  
(Ephesians 2.19)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Today is a day of celebration with lots of special activities and fireworks to mark our foundation as a nation. Most of us know what it means to be an ‘Aussie’ but there are some who today are experiencing the confusion and trauma of being aliens or refugees in this country. They live in two worlds – the one they come from and the one to which they have come. Christians, likewise, live in two worlds and have dual citizenship! Whilst residing in Australia, we are conscious that we are sojourners and aliens, belonging to another country. We are citizens of heaven towards which we are journeying and that our ties here are loosening, like a ship slipping from its berth. Enjoy your celebrations today and at the same time reflect upon the celebrations to come when you reach your home port – Heaven!

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Dear Lord and Father, I praise and thank you for the blessing of life and the privilege of serving you in this nation of Australia. Have regard for this land, that by your Holy Spirit, it may become a place and a people to serve you to the end of time. Guide the governing of our commonwealth, and grant that all who live beneath its flag may work for the good of others according to the example of Christ, who died in the service of mankind. As a nation may our values and virtues ever rest on the sure foundation of your Holy Word. May we show humility in the hour of success and patience in times of adversity. May our honour always lie in seeking the honour and glory of your great name. I ask these things through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

*27 January*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep,  
to gain what he cannot lose."  
(Jim Elliott)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Do not lay up for yourself treasures on earth,  
where moth and rust consume  
and where thieves break in and steal.  
but lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven."  
(Matthew 6.19)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

We all know the battle it is to control corrosion on our ships and aircraft in the salty environment in which we operate. At home we put 'Damp rid' in our wardrobes to protect our clothes. Some say that a dog is the best security against burglars. Don't Jesus' words ring true about the condition of our world! Many people are gripped by anxiety about the uncertainty of life and go to great lengths to ensure their safety and security by amassing and protecting as much money and possessions as they can. Jesus said that it's simply unnecessary to be concerned about our basic needs being met. The Christian, who has a personal relationship with God, relies on him to provide the essentials of life and is therefore free to concentrate on developing that relationship and pleasing God.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Dear Lord and Father, guide me today and strengthen me not to spoil anything for others or myself. I'm glad that every hour of my life you desire only the best for me, even when I'm taken outside my comfort zone. I thank you that on any day I meet far more friendly people than unfriendly; far more generous people than selfish; and far more happy people than sad. I thank you that today I'll see far more interesting things than dull; far more beautiful things than ugly; and far more lasting things like courage and kindness in human lives. Be especially near to any for which this day holds no promise, especially those who grieve and mourn over lost loved ones; and help me to be able to comfort, where possible, anyone known to me. I ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.*

*28 January*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"I can resist everything except temptation."  
(fridge magnet)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Then Jesus was led by the Spirit  
into the desert  
to be tempted by the devil."  
(Matthew 4.1)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

We may smile at the humour of the fridge magnet but we also recognise the problem and power of temptation in our lives. In overcoming the myriad temptations that confront us each day it is helpful to see how Jesus combated this frustrating human condition. In the desert Jesus counters each of the devil's attacks with the response – 'It is written.' Finally he says, 'Away from me, Satan!' Jesus faced the devil's temptations and counters them from the Scriptures. He takes God at his word and resolves to live in obedience to him. When we know our Bible we have the strength to defeat Satan and dismiss him and so overcome temptation.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Dear Lord, I'm setting out today with such good resolutions and such high intentions to make this a good day; but without your help it won't work out that way. Help me so that at the end of the day I won't need to be sorry for all the time I wasted; for all the people at whom I snapped; for all the silly and thoughtless things I did or said; or for being needlessly annoying, bad-tempered and unkind. I thank you that you understand how difficult life can be at times, because your Son once walked this earth and experienced its trials. Help me to be like Jesus in my dealings with others this day, for I ask it in His name and for His sake. Amen.*

*29 January*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"As long as the day lasts,  
let's give it all we've got"  
(David O. McKay)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Be very careful then, how you live- not as unwise but as wise,  
making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil."  
(Ephesians 5.15,16)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

We certainly live in evil times in many ways. Why else are we engaged in the war on terror in Afghanistan and the Gulf? There are many hateful people out there in the world and we are encouraged by our government to 'Be alert, but not alarmed.' These Bible verses are from a passage that encourages us to get in tune with God and to resist the latent evil within each one of us. When we are alert to God's call on our lives there is also no need to be alarmed by the world in which we live.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, my Father, help me to obey Your Law, and to do for others all that I would wish them to do for me. Grant to me the will to help others, as I would wish them to help me when I am in difficulty or distress. Help me to forgive others, as I would wish them to forgive me when I make mistakes. Help me to make the same allowances for others, as I would wish them to make for me. Help me to have the same sympathy for others, as I would wish them to have for me when I am sad. Help me to have the same respect and tolerance for the views and beliefs of others, as I would wish them to have for mine. Help me to try to understand others, as I would wish to be understood. Help me so to empathise with them that I may see things with their eyes, and think things with their minds, and feel things with their hearts. So grant that I may be as kind to other as I would wish them to be to me. I ask this through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

*30 January*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"It is easier to get older than it is to get wiser."

(Anon)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom,  
and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength."*

*(1 Corinthians 1.25)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

To many the teachings of the Bible are dismissed as foolish or irrelevant in today's world but that kind of attitude is a bit like an ant, about to be trodden on, shaking its fist at the elephant. We know who's going to win. In many ways we each act as if God doesn't matter and that is foolishness on our part. How much better to get with the strength by putting our trust in God for life and eternity.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Father God, by whom the world is governed and preserved, I come before you with a thankful sense of your providential care. I thank you that you have protected me and all my shipmates, friends and loved ones, through the dangers of the night. Continue your goodness to us through this day and preserve us from all dangers of both body and soul. May I remember that every day is your gift, to be used in your service and that of my shipmates, family and friends. Enable me to resist all evil, and dispose me to follow the guidance of Your good Spirit, not trusting to my own strength or wisdom, but looking to you for grace to establish in me every good work and word, through Jesus Christ, your Son, my Lord. Amen.*



*31 January*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"A man of courage is also full of faith."  
(Cicero)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching,  
rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness. . . ."*  
(2 Timothy 3.16)

## TO THINK ABOUT

Just as we train for operational and mission readiness with an intense period of physical and mental preparation, to equip us for any eventuality; so also we need to prepare for eternal realities. If we live life here in the light of eternity then surely we should be preparing for that eventuality? The Bible provides our SOP's to equip us for daily living and spiritual growth.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Most loving and merciful Father, give me grace to put my trust in you. I pray for faith to believe that you rule the world in truth and righteousness. If I seek first your Kingdom and righteousness I need not worry about the necessities of life because you continually care for me. Help me to surrender to you all fears and anxieties and replace them with a cheerful and buoyant spirit. Grant me peace of mind, knowing that I live in your love. I remember with thanks and gladness all that you have been to me, not only according to my needs, but also out of your abundant kindness and generosity. Father, forbid that I should become careless of my great privilege and take for granted my relationship with you. Help me to reciprocate your love for me by loving service of my family, friends and shipmates. I ask these things in the precious name of Jesus. Amen.*







**FEBRUARY**







*1 February*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"(God) has also set eternity in the hearts of men..."  
(Ecclesiastes 3.9)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.  
Six days you shall labour and do all your work,  
but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God.  
On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter,  
nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals,  
nor the alien within your gates."  
(Exodus 20.7-10)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Many see the Ten Commandments as onerous, legalistic restrictions upon their freedom but actually they are principles for promoting and maintaining good relationships – with God and our fellow man. The emphasis is not on the 'not' but on the 'shall.' If you are keen on having good, loving relationships then the commandments spell out what you'll want to do. The Fourth Commandment is a reminder that because our lives get so busy it's easy to leave God out of the picture. Therefore, we need to take time out to maintain our relationship with Him by spending time with Him. This is best done by congregating with other Christians at some time each week to give God his worth (worth-ship = worship).

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Heavenly Father, what a priceless privilege it is to serve you. You have given me my personality and various gifts, abilities and responsibilities, and set me where I am to make a contribution for the good of all. There are great temptations to misuse or misdirect my privileges and, at the same time, to set my expectations of others too high. Lord, I need you to help me to be an authentic, servant-hearted person, who is easy to get on with. So help me to have right motives and an eager heart that reflects my faith in you, for Jesus' sake. Amen.*

*2 February*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Fresh air and innocence are good if you don't take too much of them – but I always remember that most of the achievements and pleasures of life are in bad air."

(Oliver Wendell Holmes)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial,  
because when he has stood the test,  
he will receive the crown of life that  
God has promised to those who love Him."*

*(James 1.12)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

I once asked a sailor, "Any problems?" he replied, "No sir. Only Challenges!" what a great attitude. We learn much more in life from overcoming our difficulties and failures than we do from easy success. How do you cope with the 'bad air' in your life? For the Christian though, after the trials of life, there is the added blessing of eternal life with God.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, thank you for this moment to draw aside to steady my heart in preparation for this day. As I prepare to embark on the tasks before me, keep me mindful of how easy it is, if I am not careful, for things to creep in to spoil it – for you, for me, for others. I know how easy it is for me to be foolish, careless and selfish. Save me from wasting any opportunity to make this a really fulfilling day, in which we get the very best out of it, for others and myself. And help me to do it all for your sake, and for your glory, in Jesus' name. Amen.*

*3 February*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"No longer talk at all about the kind of man a good man ought to be, but be such."  
(Marcus Aurelius)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"...let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds  
and praise your Father in heaven." (Matthew 5.16)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Jesus called his followers to be like lighthouses or beacons of goodness to the world. Just as lighthouses or beacons warn people of danger and guide them into a safe haven, so the example of Christians is to be so in the moral and spiritual realm; leading them home to God.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Dear Lord, I thank you for time together and for your presence throughout this day. There are tasks and goals ahead that seem daunting, but with your help I will manage to do and achieve them and they'll not be so insurmountable after all. I thank you for the pleasure I will find in the company of shipmates and friends who grow dearer to me everyday, and without whom life would never be the same. I thank you for their generous love which I have done so little to deserve. Help me, all day, to count my blessings, and especially your love for me. Hear this my prayer for Jesus' sake. Amen.*



*4 February*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"A man without self restraint is like a barrel without hoops, and tumbles to pieces."  
(Henry Ward Beecher)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training.  
They do it to get a crown that will not last;  
but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.  
Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly;  
I do not fight like a man beating the air.  
No, I beat my body and make it my slave  
so that after I have preached to others,  
I myself will not be disqualified for the prize."  
(1 Corinthians 9:25-27)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

St. Paul uses the analogy of athletes training for the Greco-Roman games to make a spiritual point. He has to discipline himself in order to practice what he preaches. Without that his spiritual life is no different to shadow boxing or running in circles and he disqualifies himself from a place on the winners podium in heaven.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, My Father, grant me your blessing as I begin this day. Give me lips that always speak the truth in love. Bless me with a mind that seeks the truth; and faces the truth even when it hurts and condemns me, and grant that I may never shut my eyes to that which I do not wish to see in me. Give me hands that work with diligence, but which yet have time to help another with their task. Give me the resolve to stand for principle, yet free from stubbornness and from magnifying trifles. Grant me grace to conquer my temptations and to live in purity; yet without that self-righteousness that would look down on anyone who has fallen by the way. All through the day grant me the strength and the gentleness of my blessed Lord. This I ask in His precious name. Amen.*



*5 February*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Enthusiasm is the best protection in any situation. Wholeheartedness is contagious. Give yourself, if you wish to get others." (David Seabury)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Then the Philistine (Goliath) said, 'This day I defy the ranks of Israel! Give me a man and let us fight each other.' On hearing the Philistine's words, Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified... David said to the Philistine, 'You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.'... So David triumphed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone; without a sword in his hand he struck down the Philistine and killed him... When the Philistines saw that their hero was dead, they turned and ran. Then the men of Israel and Judah surged forward with a shout and pursued the Philistines...' (1 Samuel 17.10,11,45,50-52)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Young David was the only man among all the Israelites with the wholehearted enthusiasm of faith that the job of beating the Philistines could be done – and he triumphed. It wasn't until David gave himself to the challenge that the rest surged forward. He went on to become King of Israel. Read the whole story in 1 Samuel 17!

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Loving Saviour, abide in me that I may abide in you. Let your Word dwell in me richly in all its wisdom, that I may be full of thoughts of you and that I might keep my ideals bright in the midst of the work-a-day world. Defend and keep me from all the deceptive attractions this world has to offer, the deceitfulness of my own heart, and the wiles of the Evil One. Watch over me such that in times of temptation I do not succumb, nor become so choked with the cares, riches and pleasures this world has to offer that I am reduced to mediocrity. Renew my mind to know your perfect will so that I don't become conformed to this world's standards. Lead me on in the power of your Holy Spirit and in Jesus' name. Amen.*

6 February

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"The only way to compel men to speak good of us is to do it."  
(Voltaire)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"For it is God's will that by doing good you  
should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men."  
(1 Peter 2.15)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

People may say negative things about you but the only way to dispel the effect of such comments is by your manner of living. The Christian's freedom is not for a life of self-indulgence but for service to God.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O Lord my God, I thank you that I begin another day still surrounded by your wonderful love and standing in your strength and not my own. I pray not only for myself but for my family, friends and shipmates, asking you to watch over them and keeping them safe from all harm. Keep me Lord from: a lying tongue and churlish speech; fretfulness or vindictiveness; an unwillingness to be a team player; a readiness to shirk my share of the load; neglected opportunities and wasted talents; being 'two-faced' or 'double-minded'; a lack of appreciation and acknowledgment of your countless blessings to me. Let me begin, continue and end this day with peace of heart and mind because of my faith in you; and dedicated to the service of others; for Jesus' sake. Amen.*

*7 February*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Make yourself an honest man, and then you may be sure  
that there is one less rascal in the world."

(Thomas Carlyle)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye."*  
(Matthew 7.1-5)

## TO THINK ABOUT

We often complain about all the bad people in the world, and even ask why doesn't God do something about them. Have you ever considered that if he did, you may be one of the first to get 'zapped'? Jesus' comment reminds us where to start in the clean up of 'man's inhumanity to man.' Something to think about, eh?

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Dear Lord, I thank you for sustaining me by your grace, through all the varied circumstances of life. I thank you for your mercy that takes me through the day dealing with people who aren't always agreeable, and encountering circumstances that leave me exhausted. Thank you for the strength that comes from knowing you, through faith in Jesus Christ; which carries me through failure and disappointment, victory and joy. Enable me to continue to trust in you to lead and guide me throughout this day and to bring glory to your name, for Jesus' sake. Amen.*

8 February

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"A lot of money is tainted: 'Taint yours and it 'taint mine."  
(Anon)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil." (1 Timothy 6.6-10)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

The last sentence is the one that is oft misquoted, saying, 'Money is the root of all evil.' However, you will notice that the correct rendering is the 'love' of money. We all need money to live and we often wish we had more but if we are not careful we can become obsessive about accumulating more. The question then becomes, how much is enough? For some it then becomes a matter of getting money by less than honest means. A bigger issue is the one about what it is that makes us content in life. Can the things which make us content only be purchased with money? Perhaps we can be content with 'tainted' money?

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Heavenly Father, don't let me begin this day in a scramble so that I have no time for you, no thought of you. I can't manage without your loving care. I have your good gifts of breath, and sight, and hearing, and feeling; I have the power to think and to act, and to help others around me, and to worship you. I'm glad that you know what I most need in my life; and that you have created me, a unique person, with particular gifts and abilities. So help me today to fulfil my potential in your divine purposes to the praise and glory of your Holy name. Amen.*

*9 February*

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"What lies behind us and what lies before us  
are tiny matters compared to what lies within us."  
(William Morrow)

FROM THE BIBLE

*"Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight.  
Everything is uncovered and laid bare  
before the eyes of him to whom we must give account."  
(Hebrews 4.13)*

TO THINK ABOUT

The things we have done and will yet do, do matter. We may be well able to hide our darker deeds from others and even delude ourselves about how good we really are, and that our failures don't really matter, but we cannot hide anything from God. The bigger problem, which lies at the root of what we do, is what lies within us – a flawed human nature. And the only solution for that is faith in God who has paid the account for us in Christ's death upon the cross.

PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, I thank you for today. I thank you that I am able to do the work that earns the pay to support myself  
and those whom I love, who are dependent on me. I thank you for the people I'll meet, and whose company I will enjoy. I thank you for any new thing that I will learn; for any useful things I'll be able to do; for anyone I'll get to know better and get closer to today. Help me to be glad to meet this new day and to face each moment with a calm and quiet spirit, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

*10 February*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"The vocation of every man and woman is to serve other people."  
(Leo Tolstoy)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Jesus called ( the disciples) together and said, 'You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for all. " (Mark 10.42-45)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Someone has said, 'Even if you win the rat race, you're still a rat!' We've all known a few 'rats' in our experience; people clawing their way to the top, who don't mind who they hurt on the way. They may succeed for a while, but any temporal power is only ever fleeting and in the end unsatisfying if accomplished in such a manner. Mind you, there are also those who get to the top and are truly great because they do it with the spirit of service. In God's economy, greatness is measured by our willingness to serve others; and in the end it is also much more personally satisfying, both temporally and eternally.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*God, my Father, whose love is over every person whom you have made, I ask you to bless all men and women everywhere. Bless me in my service, to serve with diligence; and bless those who are over me to direct and control with justice and mercy. Bless those who are rich, and help them to remember that they hold all their possessions as stewards for you. Bless those who are poor and grant that others may be kind to them. Bless those who are strong and fit and grant that they may never use their good health selfishly. Bless those who are weak and ailing and keep from them discouragement and discontent. Bless those who are happy and help them not to forget you in the good times. Bless those who are sad and ease their pain by comforting the loneliness of their hearts. Bless me and grant that I may go out to live as one who has been with Jesus. This I ask for your love's sake. Amen.*

*11 February*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Into each life some rain must fall, some days must be dark and dreary."  
(Henry Wadsworth Longfellow)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"(God) causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good,  
and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous."  
(Matthew 5.45)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Whenever the weather is inclement or if some outdoor event is planned, I'm often asked to do something about it. As far as special favours regarding the weather are concerned, Jesus' words above apply. What may be convenient for us is not necessarily so for others and vice-versa. In life god doesn't play favourites or show any partiality. Life is not all sunshine and happiness and every life has its share of gloom and troubles. The important consideration is how we cope with whatever comes our way. Aim to make your days have good outcomes whatever the 'weather.'

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Dear Heavenly Father, I give you hearty thanks for my night's rest and for the gift of a new day, with its opportunities for pleasing you. Grant that I may pass the hours in the perfect freedom of your service, that I may conclude this day in thankfulness to you. Let me learn from the experiences of today the lessons that you mean to teach me. I ask that you would fill my soul with yourself, to be near me hour by hour, strengthening me with your strength, and guiding me by your hand. Grant that I may desire wholeheartedly, 'Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable, and whatever is excellent or praiseworthy.' In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

*12 February*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"I believe in the Sun even when it's not shining.  
I believe in love even when I feel it not.  
I believe in God even when he is silent.  
(Written on a wall in a concentration camp)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Now faith is being sure of what we hope for  
and certain of what we do not see...  
And without faith it is impossible to please God,  
because anyone who comes to him must believe  
that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him."  
(Hebrews 11.1,6)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Biblical faith is based on certainty. It is not some vague hope like, 'I hope I win the lottery' or 'I hope the weather's fine for the footy this weekend.' True faith is based on the promises of God, as revealed in the Bible, and in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. With such faith we are enabled to 'hang in there' even when God seems a million miles away (like he was to the writer in the concentration camp) because we know him and trust in his promises.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Gracious Lord, make me conscious of your presence and grant me peace of heart before I embark upon the business before me today. Let all the anticipated excitements and anxieties give place to a time of meditation upon your love for me. Help me to remember that at no time will I be called upon to stand in my own strength alone; and at no moment when I get too busy with my petty concerns will you forget me. Help me not to forgetful you or be wilfully disobedient to your commands or to think only of myself. Let me think of you and rejoice that your love for me blots out all my failings and shortcomings. By your Holy Spirit may I be more and more conformed to the image of Jesus Christ my Lord, in whose name I pray. Amen.*



*13 February*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"The best portion of a good man's life is his little,  
nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and love."

(William Wordsworth)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"...continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God  
who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose."*

*(Philippians 2.12,13)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

In an effort to know God's will for their life, people try praying harder, meditating on Scripture, or briefly living a good life. Some people have the notion of a 'grand mission' that God wants them to discover and fulfil. But finding God's will is not a biblical idea. Everyone craves wisdom, particularly divine wisdom, for the great issues of his or her life. Christians have access to God through Jesus Christ and guidance from the Holy Spirit. Rather than making decisions based on the notion that God has a hidden will he wants us to discover, it is the closeness of our walk with God which will provide a solid foundation upon which to base decisions. The Bible is peppered with guidance on how God wants us to live. Provided we do not contravene God's directions for living revealed in the Bible we have freedom to choose our course in life as servants of God.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Dear Father, I am no stranger to failure and disappointment, most notably in myself. Lord, I am often incapable of fulfilling my own promises or living up to my own expectations. At times the memory of these things is painful. But I thank you for the transformation in me, made possible by knowing that you understand my frailties and are far more forgiving of me than I am of myself. I thank you that I usually learn far more from my mistakes than I do from my successes and these hard lessons lead me to greater maturity. Help me find encouragement in the fact that you continually strengthen me to try again, and that you have the power to redeem the consequences of my past. In the precious name of Jesus I pray. Amen.*

*14 February*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"You can't cross a chasm in two small jumps."  
(David Lloyd George)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Now fear the Lord and serve him with all faithfulness...  
But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you,  
then choose for yourself this day whom you will serve...  
But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."  
(Joshua 24.14,15)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

If you're going to jump a chasm it has to be done in one leap. Anything less will be disastrous. If you're going to have a real relationship with God we have to make a choice – all in, or not at all. No half measures, no fence sitting.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Dear Lord, I can't know what you have in store for me today – only that your love for me never ceases, your care for me never ceases, your power to help me live well never ceases. You have given me all that I need for this day – the necessities for life: food clothing and shelter; a healthy body and an active mind; and people with whom I can have meaningful relationships. For these and many other blessings I give you thanks. Be especially close to those who feel that nothing much ever happens. Be especially close to the crippled and hurt; those suffering in home and hospital; the homeless, and the puzzled, and the discouraged. Help me to live well today, as Jesus always did. I ask it in his precious name. Amen.*

*15 February*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"We cannot discover new oceans until we have courage to lose sight of the shore."  
(Anon)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. 'Good teacher,' he asked, 'what must I do to inherit eternal life?' Jesus looked at him and loved him. 'One thing you lack,' he said, 'Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.' At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth." (Mark 10.17,21,22)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Although a morally good person, the security of the rich young ruler's life was tied to his wealth and possessions. Jesus Challenged him to 'lose sight of the shore' (his money and things) and discover the 'new ocean' of being a disciple of Jesus. It takes courage to be a Christian. He couldn't do it.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Dear Father, thank you for my night's rest and fresh energy for another day. Help me to proceed with high hopes and good resolutions and end with a sense of achievement and satisfaction. May it not turn into a day I'd rather forget; one where I am easily irritated, annoyed, worried, flustered or upset, impatient with people and quick in temper and tongue; and where I have been unkind or inconsiderate. Help me not to make excuses or put the blame on others if I should fail in my responsibilities today, and not be too discouraged by my failures but resolving to do better tomorrow. This I ask for Jesus sake. Amen.*

*16 February*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"The rung of a ladder was never meant to rest upon,  
but only to hold a man's foot long enough for him  
to be able to put the other somewhat higher."  
(Thomas Henry Huxley)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven.  
And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said,  
'Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.'  
At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne  
in heaven with someone sitting on it." (Revelation 4.1,2)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Life here on earth is training time for eternity. I read in the paper once where an old man (100+) was asked the secret of his longevity. His reply – 'Keep breathing.' Even if we live to be 100+, it is still only 100+. Life here is brief. The call of God to each of us is 'come up higher.' God has given the invitation but we still have to RSVP. Resting on the bottom rung, by declining the invitation, means we will miss out on seeing the 'throne in heaven.' Do you have the courage to 'step out' and 'step up'?

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, my Father, who has made all things and made them well. I thank you for this world which you have made; for night and day; for light and dark; for sunset and dawn. I thank you for those who today will teach me, for those to whom I will go for advice, and for those on whose wisdom and experience I will draw. I thank you for those whose love and friendship every day gives strength to my life. Above all else I give you thanks for Jesus Christ, my Lord and Saviour. Grant that all through today I may not forget his constant presence. This I ask for his love's sake. Amen.*

*17 February*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"He that cannot forgive others, breaks the bridge over which he must pass himself;  
for every man has need to be forgiven."  
(Lord Herbert)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may  
have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you."  
(Colossians 3.13)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

The worst part about nursing grudges and failing to forgive those who have offended us is that it gnaws at our own vitals. The medical world has long acknowledged the link between anger/hatred and physical/mental illness. It may just be one of the ways God allows our unforgiveness to come back on us to repay us. Besides, since when has any of us been perfect and not needed to forgive ourselves at some time? Today would be a great day for 'deleting' any grudges from your memory bank.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Merciful Father, I thank you for the times of rest and recreation which refresh me for your service. Keep from me all temptations that are injurious of body, soul and spirit. Lead me in ways that are pleasing to you. Give me a willing heart and a ready hand and teach me to use my gifts and abilities to your praise and glory; acknowledging that they come from you. Help me to remember that you are always at hand; that there are no secrets hidden from you, but that all my thoughts, words and actions are known by you. Being conscious of your presence to help at all times make me truthful in speech, pure in thought, and honest in every act. Bless all that are dear to me, according to your great mercies, such that their lives may be a testimony to your love, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

*18 February*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

*"Life is either a daring adventure or nothing."  
(Helen Keller)*

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ.  
What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness  
of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things...  
I press on towards the goal to win the prize  
for which God has called me heavenwards in Christ Jesus."  
(Philippians 3.7,8,14)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Helen Keller should know. Born blind and deaf, and therefore unable to speak, she grew in her early childhood to be an uncontrollable savage. It could have ended very badly but for a teacher who turned her around and helped her to grow as a person, in spite of her disabilities. She even had a movie made about her life. Many others have followed a similar path, turning adversity into an adventure. The Apostle Paul was willing to lose his privileged past and to consider it nothing for an even greater adventure – the journey toward heaven!

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Dear Father God, to whom I owe the gift of this day's life, grant also that I may use it as I ought. Forbid that I should stain my life with any evil thought or darken it with any shameful deed. Let your Holy Spirit breathe into my heart today all pure and heavenly desires. May your justice and righteousness overrule my errant will, and establish in me humility of heart, gentleness of bearing, modesty of speech, helpfulness of action, and promptness in doing your will. Give me the faith to lay hold of your holiness and to rejoice in the righteousness of Christ my Saviour, that I may become more and more conformed to his likeness, and less and less prone to sin and negligent of spiritual growth. All this I ask for the sake of Jesus, my Lord. Amen.*

*19 February*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"The more you depend on forces outside yourself; the more you are dominated by them."  
(Harold Sherman)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"The King, moreover, must not acquire great numbers of horses for himself  
or make the people return to Egypt to get more for them.  
for the Lord has told you, 'You are not to go back that way again.'  
He must not take many wives, or his heart will be led astray.  
He must not accumulate large amounts of silver and gold."  
(Deuteronomy 17.16,17)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Too often in her history, Israel lost the plot by forming forbidden alliances with other nations. Compromised by her associations she often became subject to her former allies. Without a sense of purpose in life we too can end up unduly influenced by others and their agendas. There is only one dependable relationship outside of yourself worth submitting to, and that is a relationship with God that allows you to develop into the person God intends for you to be.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Father, I thank you for the real hope that is found only in your Son, Jesus Christ. In this world we have no guarantees apart from those promised to those who put their faith in you. I pray today especially for those who find themselves adrift on the sea of life; who see no beacon lights to guide them; whose spiritual GPS is malfunctioning. Change this painful situation into a safe haven where you are near and very real to them. Calm their fears and quiet their spirits, and help them to see that their trials are meant to help them focus their purpose and direction and to pilot them home to you. I ask all this in the name of the captain of my salvation, Jesus Christ. Amen.*

*20 February*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"The block of granite which was an obstacle in the path of the weak,  
became a stepping stone in the pathway of the strong."  
(Thomas Carlyle)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"But (God)said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you,  
for my power is made perfect in weakness.'  
Therefore I will boast all the ore gladly about my weaknesses,  
so that Christ's power may rest on me.  
That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses,  
In hardships, in persecutions in difficulties.  
For when I am weak, then I am strong."  
(2 Corinthians 12. 9,10)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

I take Carlyle's point that for some people obstacles in life are challenges to be met and overcome and yet for others the same obstacles become insurmountable. But in the spirit-ual realm – self reliance is a decided hindrance to divine power. Jesus was a stumbling block to the powerful in the world – the Jewish leaders. He upset the comfy arrangement they had with the occupying Romans. The leaders were not really strong because they were subject to Rome. Those who are truly strong are those who are willing to acknowledge their dependence upon God, because then they are open to God's unlimited divine power work-ing in their lives. Are you able to sense God at work in your life, because you have allowed him into your life?

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Father, I thank you for bringing me safely through the night to another day full of promise. Help me to live well today, full of love, and joy. Help me not to make the same old mistakes again. Help me to be humble enough to ask for help when I need it. Save me from taking pleasure in anything that might hurt another or from acting thoughtlessly in any part of my life today. Keep me from over-confidence in my own power to cope with things. I need your wisdom to know how to live, your love to live with eternal realities uppermost in my mind, and your will for good to strengthen my will. I trust you to supply all my needs, in Jesus' name. Amen.*



*21 February*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Hold yourself responsible for a higher standard than anybody expects of you.  
Never excuse yourself. Never pity yourself. Be a hard master to yourself  
— and be lenient to everybody else."  
(Henry Ward Beecher)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"When they kept on questioning him, (Jesus) straightened up and said to them,  
'If anyone of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.'"*  
(John 8.7)

## TO THINK ABOUT

The religious leaders of Jesus' day were undoubtedly zealous to live very moral lives but in the process they became very self-righteous. In condemning the woman caught in adultery they forgot the truths that nobody is perfect and that God is merciful and forgiving to the repentant; consequently, in their drive for a higher standard, they had lost the ability to be lenient with others who may have fallen along the way. Today, and always, be prepared to give others a hand up, while at the same time watching our own step.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Heavenly Father, thankyou for today and all its opportunities. Help me to use those opportunities in such a way that at the end of the day I will not look back and think of: the things I could have done better; the people to whom I could have been much kinder and so much more courteous; the things that I wish I had not done and the words that I wish I had not said; the things I failed to do and which I may never have the chance to do again; the fine impulses that I didn't act upon. Grant me the strength and grace to do what I know I ought to do and to live in the way I know I ought to live, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

*22 February*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"The best and noblest lives are those which are set to high ideals."  
(Rene Alemeiras)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Since, then, you have been raised with Christ,  
set your hearts on things above,  
where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.  
Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things."  
(Colossians 3.1,2)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

A Christian aspires to be like Jesus Christ and so his or her ideals are those set by God in the Bible. The focus is always the place of perfection – heaven! It is a journey for 'becomers' – becoming more Christlike as we progress through life here on earth.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, my Father, help me to work faithfully and well today. May I not put off until tomorrow any task that should be done today. May I not do grudgingly that which should be done with a smile. May I never be content to render to anyone anything less than my best. Help me to be as kind to others as I would want them to be with me. Help me always to be honest, never guilty of any mean action or sharp practice, and never seeking unfair advantage over others. When the day is over and my work is done may I hear you say, 'Well done!' Hear my prayer for Jesus' sake. Amen.*

*23 February*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

*"An effort made for the happiness of others lifts us above ourselves."  
(Lydia M. Child)*

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"And now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability."  
(2 Corinthians 8.1-3)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

The Macedonian churches were poverty stricken but when they heard of the plight of the Christians in Jerusalem they were moved to give beyond their means. In so doing they were lifted above themselves and experienced the joy and happiness that comes from considering the welfare of other before themselves.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O Lord, my God, I ask that you help me to be patient in any difficulties today, humble in success, resistant to temptation, and victorious over my habitual weaknesses. Grant me remorse for my sins, thankfulness for your benefits, fear of your judgements, love of your mercies, and consciousness of your presence always. Make me humble to my superiors and friendly to my equals, ready to please all and loathe to offend any, loving to my friends and charitable to any adversaries. Give me holiness in my thoughts and righteousness in all my actions, such that I manifest the reality of my faith in you, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

*24 February*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

*"Life is a long lesson in humility."  
(James M. Barrie)*

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"For by the grace given to me I say to every one of you;  
do not think of yourself more highly than you ought,  
but rather think of yourself with sober judgement,  
in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you."  
(Romans 12.3)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

The great Apostle Paul would know all about the necessity of humility. Even with an enviable pedigree and qualifications he learned that such things are not the most important things in life. After his conversion he learned that it was by the grace of God that he was what he was and not by any merit of his own. Having a proper estimation of ourselves also saves us from the embarrassment of being 'cut down to size' by others who really know us. There is a world of difference between self-confidence and self-importance!

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Heavenly Father, I praise you that day by day you richly fill my life with various blessings. With a liberal hand you have showered upon me – good health and safe keeping, strength for work and time for leisure, loved ones and friends with whom to share, and your beautiful creation to enjoy. Most of all you have shown your great love for me in the death and resurrection of your Son, Jesus Christ. By His death I have the forgiveness of my sins and by His resurrection I have the assurance of eternal life. Strengthen me to give myself in obedient service to you and in loving service of my fellowman; that will bring honour and glory to your name. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

*25 February*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"He who stops being better stops being good."  
(Oliver Cromwell)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"...for Demas, because he loved the world,  
has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica."  
(2 Timothy 4.10)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Demas' name lives permanently in the Bible as an example of one who made a good beginning but who got sidetracked by the sensual attractions this world has to offer. The eternal perspective was sidelined by the temporal. Instead of getting better he ceased being good; instead of commendation he earned notoriety. We need to keep God close beside us each day.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Lord, as I begin this new day, let me not be slow to praise you – for the health of my body; the eager freshness of my mind; for the free-will that I can set to do good things. Don't let me spoil anything today by thinking only of my self and not of others and their needs. Don't let me be inconsiderate at home or at work, but all the time consider the needs of others as greater than my own. Don't let me willingly hurt the feelings of any friends or loved ones that put their faith and trust in me. Help me to keep my temper, to work hard and play fair. Bless this day with joy and peace for Jesus' sake. Amen.*

*26 February*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

*"Years wrinkle the face, but to give up enthusiasm wrinkles the soul."  
(Watterson Rowe)*

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Above all else, guard your heart,  
for it is the wellspring of life."  
(Proverbs 4.23)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

I see a lot of wrinkled faces and souls where I live; retirees whose days consist of buying the paper and a scratchie, checking the lotto results and going to the club – waiting to die! The Bible sees the heart as the centre of our personality, the 'wellspring of life' and it needs to be guarded from a purposeless, aimless existence. A vital, enthusiastic relationship with God is essential if our lives are to count for anything; if we are to go out with a bang rather than a whimper.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, my Father, today I bring to you my life and all that is in it. I bring to you my sins for your forgiveness; my hopes, my aims, my ambitions for your blessing; my temptations for your strength; my tasks, my duties, my responsibilities for your help; my loved ones, my friends and colleagues for your care and protection. I bring everything with a thankful and a grateful heart for all you have done for me. So grant that I may pass this day without fear or anxiety of any kind, knowing that your everlasting arms are underneath and round about me, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

*27 February*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"There is no witness so terrible – no accuser so powerful  
as conscience that dwells within us."  
(Sophocles)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent.  
It is the Lord who judges me."  
(1 Corinthians 4.4)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Our conscience is not a perfect moral arbiter. It only tells us when we have violated our own moral standard. The Apostle Paul recognised that the ultimate judge of our attitudes and behaviours is not ourselves, even if our conscience is clear; but God, the perfect judge, with whom we must one day all reckon with.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, my Father, help me to treat everyone as I should. Help me to be a good example to those who are younger than I am or junior to me; to be respectful to those who are older than I am or senior to me; and to be at all times courteous to my equals. Help me to be obedient to those who are set in authority over me and to be just and fair to any over which I have control. Help me to be sympathetic to those in distress, to be helpful to those in trouble, and to be kind to those in need. So make me to go about doing good as my Master did. This I ask for his sake. Amen.*

28 (29) February

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Men are willing to pay a high price for damnation  
when salvation is free."

(Anon)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"The Lord is my strength and my song;  
he has become my salvation.  
He is my God, and I will praise him. . . ."*  
(Exodus 15.2)

## TO THINK ABOUT

Because of his love it is God's purpose to bring people into relationship with himself. We need to be open to his guiding and leading in this. The changing of our nature is achieved by God alone. He gives us strength of character and awakens our spiritual life. He brings us into a personal relationship with himself. Our grateful response to God's calling us into relationship with himself is expressed in a life lived in thankfulness and praise to him. Salvation is not a spectator sport. It has no meaning, no reality, no effectiveness for us unless we participate.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Dear Father God, hear my prayer and keep me from the natural inclinations of my heart. Let me choose to labour in union with your holy will and in the power of your Holy Spirit, accomplishing in my work far more than I would otherwise realise. Save me from thinking or acting unwisely today. Help me to do my work as best as I am able. Bless all that are in any way connected with me – my family, friends and shipmates – according to their greatest need. Have mercy on all who are homeless, bereaved, and in misery or who are alone in this broken and divided world; giving them some token of your love and some sign of hope. Lead us all into your eternal Kingdom, through Jesus Christ my Lord, in whose name I pray. Amen.*





**MARCH**







*1 March - Deployment*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"The measure of a life, after all,  
is not its duration but its donation."  
(Corrie ten Boom)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"For whoever wants to save his life will lose it,  
but whoever loses his life for me  
and for the gospel will save it."  
(Mark 8.35)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

What are the requirements for a full and purposeful life? Stop making yourself the focus of your life and actions, and instead orient your life to God. Sadly, most people have the attitude that says, 'what about me!' and they miss out on so much in life as their life implodes. Instead, surrender yourself, lose your life in service to Christ, and discover in serving the new and better person you will become.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Heavenly Father, thank you for the privilege of living in Australia when so many nations are torn apart by war and civil strife. May I not take for granted the freedoms and the peace I enjoy. It has been said that for evil to succeed it only requires that good people do nothing. Help me to see the importance of my work in the defence force, however insignificant it may seem to me in the scheme of things, as contributing to the stand against evil in the world. Watch over my shipmates deployed far from home. Keep both them and their loved ones safe from harm and when they feel anxious help them to "cast all their cares on you, for you care for them". All this I ask in Jesus' name. Amen.*

On this day in 1901 the Australian Navy was founded when the States transferred their Naval forces and everyone employed in them to the Federal government. On this day in 1967 the Australian White Ensign was hoisted in all RAN ships and establishments. The British White Ensign had been used since 1913. *"A pennant universal, subtly waving all time, o'er all brave sailors, all seas, all ships."* (Walt Whitman).

*2 March*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"I was shipwrecked before I got aboard."  
(Seneca)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Surely I have been a sinner from birth,  
sinful from the time my mother conceived me."  
(Psalm 51.5)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

There is a dark side to all our natures; a side expressed in wilful and rebellious attitudes and behaviours deeply rooted in us from the beginning of our lives. In our hearts we are conscious that in so many ways we fail to live up to God's established standard. If our life is 'shipwrecked before we get aboard,' then our only hope is to seek forgiveness of God and trust in him to do a creative work of refloating the hulk of our life and navigating it safely to its journey's end.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Almighty Father, I give you thanks for all your mercies to me: for bringing me safely through the night, for providing all the necessities of life and for meaningful work to come to. As I face another day grant that I may pass the test and develop perseverance if there must be any trials of difficulties. Save me from being double-minded and unstable when it comes to making difficult decisions. Keep me from succumbing to any temptations that would entice me and drag me down and destroy my personal integrity. Teach me to be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry. In every circumstance help me to be impartial and sincere in the humility that comes from godly wisdom. In Jesus' name I pray.*

*3 March*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Truth forever on the scaffold,  
wrong forever on the throne"  
(James Russell Lowell)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"God is not a man, that he should lie,  
nor a son of man, that he should change his mind."  
(Numbers 23.19)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

'We are bombarded with advertising messages today and it's all hype.' So says one person, reflecting the thoughts of many. Our cynicism regarding politicians is a consequence of our distrust of them, because of their readiness to use 'spin doctors' and 'word-smiths' to disguise the lie as a truth. With so much confusion in our world over what is true or false, it is comforting to know that we have a God who is 'Truth.' We can trust in Him and his Word for guidance in our daily lives and for our eternal well-being.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Almighty Father, let me do my best at work and play today and not be inattentive nor selfish. Save me from quarrelling with anyone, or being mean. Don't let me waste my time or that of others. Help me to help others in what we have to do that we might share in unexpected and undeserved joys that lighten the routine of the day. Save me from being in such a hurry that I have no thought of you this day nor any appreciation of your beautiful world in which I live. May I come to the end of this day with a humble, thankful heart for all its blessings. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

*4 March*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Star of eternity! The only star  
by which the bark of man  
could navigate the sea of life,  
and gain the coast of bliss securely."  
(Robert Pollock)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"I, Jesus, have sent my angel  
to give you this testimony for the churches.  
I am the Root and the Offspring of David,  
And the bright Morning Star."  
(Revelation 22.16)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

'When all else fails, read the instructions.' How often do we launch into things believing that we know what we're doing. What could be simpler than putting together the kit wall unit that we've purchased, or connecting up the various components of our new computer? It's only after the frustration of failure that we seek help from the 'so simple a child could do it' instructions. The same applies in the construction of our lives; we fail to read the maker's instructions – The Bible – and so our lives get into a pickle. Need light shed on direction for your life? Turn to the 'bright Morning Star,' the 'Star of eternity,' Jesus, who is at the very centre of the Bible, every day, to 'navigate the sea of life' as you head for eternal bliss with him.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, my Father, as I begin another day, may it be without tension of body or restlessness of mind and without thoughts which worry and perplex me. Help me to rest any foreseeable problems and myself in the clasp of your everlasting arms. Let your Spirit speak to my mind and govern my heart throughout the day so that at its end, I will see that I have received: light for my way; strength for my tasks; peace for my worries; forgiveness for my sins. Grant me to lay down to sleep tonight with a glad and grateful heart. This I ask through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*



*5 March*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"What is a weed?  
A plant whose virtues have not yet been discovered."  
(Ralph Waldo Emerson)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"The Lord does not look at the things man looks at.  
Man looks at the outward appearance,  
but the Lord looks at the heart."  
(1 Samuel 16. 7)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Sometimes when we think about those people who seem to be very successful in life - the tall poppies, the corporate high fliers, etc. - we can also at the same time wonder about our own lack of success by comparison and feel inferior. It's good to know that God has a different standard for judging our worth as a person. Whereas we tend to look at things like rank and wealth and achievements, God looks to what's in our heart. Is it oriented toward God and his desire for our lives? Do we seek to live in imitation of his character? If so we are pleasing in his sight. Others may think us a weed compared to the world's tall poppies but God sees our undiscovered virtues and his Spirit rests on us.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, my Father, remind me that whatever happens to me today I may take to you. If I shall have decisions to make, help me to ask your guidance, and grant me humility and obedience to take it when you give it to me. If I shall have problems to solve, help me to ask for your strength, so that I may be able to do the things that I could not do myself. If I have temptations to face, may I seek your grace, remembering that Jesus, who was also tempted, is able to help others who are tempted. Help me all through today to decide everything by your will and to test everything by your presence, so that I may come to the day's end without mistakes and without regrets: through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

*6 March*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"The winds and waves are always  
on the side of the ablest navigators."  
(Edward Gibbon)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"For everyone who has will be given more,  
and he will have an abundance.  
Whoever does not have,  
Even what he has will be taken from him."*  
(Matthew 25.29)

## TO THINK ABOUT

God has entrusted each one of us with resources of gifts and abilities which he expects us to use in his service. While he trusts us with them and gives us the freedom in how we use them, he also holds us accountable. Some people are afraid to risk stepping out for God, while others experience the joy of acting in faith to serve God. What we do with our lives really does count. The person of faith is like 'the ablest navigator' and the difficulties and challenges of life are used by them to grow as a person and in their relationship with God.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Lord God, I give you thanks and praise for your love for me proven by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ. Help me to live this day in true thankfulness and in anticipation of all your promises for those who love you. Protect me through this day from all worldly danger, and taking from me all care for worldly vanities, make me content with my daily necessities. Keep my heart from delighting in the honours, treasures and pleasures that this world has to offer, and engender in me a desire for service. Mould me according to your own image, willing to obey your commands, and ready to follow your gracious leading. Make me kind to all, gentle and unselfish, careful not to hurt anyone by word or deed, but concerned to do good and make others happy. Inasmuch that my strength comes from you, mercifully grant that your Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule my heart; to your glory and praise. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*



*7 March*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Eternity is not something that begins after you are dead.  
It is going on all the time. We are in it now.  
(Charlotte Perkins Gilman)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"I tell you the truth,  
whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me  
has eternal life and will not be condemned;  
he has crossed over from death to life."  
(John 5.24)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Many people believe that after you die you go to a happy place called heaven and that you'll be there forever with your loved ones. Jesus' words remind us that eternity is more than just a place; it requires a relationship with him, and inaugurates a quality of life which springs from that relationship which begins from the moment we put our faith in him. Our lives are forever changed from the moment we believe. Accompanying that change is the assurance that we will enter into his presence in heaven when we die. Conversely, without that relationship with Jesus there is no eternal life, only the continuing separation from God forever!

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Dear Lord, I come to acknowledge you before I set out to face the business of another day. I thank you for the assurance that I shall not be called upon to face any task alone or in my own strength but shall at all times be accompanied by your presence and fortified by your grace. I thank you for the many spiritual presences with which I shall be surrounded as I go about my work; especially for my guardian angels assigned by you to watch over me. Let the consciousness of their presence follow me throughout this day, cheering me in any moments of difficulty, protecting me in any moments of temptation, and encouraging me to do the right and good thing at all times. Let your power be at work in me today to make me a most worthy follower of Jesus, in whose name I pray. Amen.*

*8 March*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"It is hard for an empty sack to stand upright."  
(Benjamin Franklin)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"If a fellow Hebrew, a man or woman,  
is sold to you and he serves you six years,  
in the seventh year you must let him go free.  
And when you release him,  
do not send him away empty-handed."  
(Deuteronomy 15.12,13)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

The depth of a person's relationship with God is displayed in the way he or she treats others. This principle is particularly evident in the many statements in the Bible explaining how to treat those less fortunate than ourselves. Those in need are to be willingly helped. It requires more than sympathy or pious platitudes. Helping those in need to 'stand upright' is an act of worship which is especially pleasing to the Lord. And who knows the day when we may find ourselves in trouble and needing a helping hand?

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Heavenly Father, thankyou for bringing me safely through the night to this new day full of hope and promise. I commend my life into your hands. Help me not to waste any of the blessings which will come my way, nor flee from any challenges and difficulties I may have to face. In turn, may I not put a stumbling block in anyone's path to discredit my efforts. Help me to work hard, with understanding, patience and kindness; to speak truthfully and sincerely. If my efforts go unnoticed or unrewarded, may I still labour on cheerfully and bigheartedly, seeking to benefit all about me. Help me to learn the lessons that in giving of myself I find myself most rewarded and most resembling my Lord Jesus Christ, in whose name I pray. Amen.*

*9 March*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Don't give up afore the ship goes down."  
(James Russell Lowell)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have,  
so that no one will take your crown.  
Him who overcomes I will make  
A pillar in the temple of my God."  
(Revelation 3.11,12)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

We are all conscious of our weaknesses and our limitations. There are times in life when we feel like being a Christian is just too much trouble, especially if we are facing a hard time in the workplace for being a follower of Jesus. But he understands our vulnerability only too well and is never contemptuous of our weaknesses. So don't think to shrink away from your faith when you feel it's getting a bit too hard. Jesus goes with us and before us into the world and if we daily hold on to him we will find strength to carry on in the assurance of his love for us.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O Lord, save me this day from lack of love – from silly pride and snobbery. Save me from indifference to the needs of others, and their ideas. Save me from procrastination and all that hinders good and beautiful things being done. Let my talents and experiences be used to enrich the lives of others. Keep my standards high, my love warm, and my laughter clean; for Christ's sake. Amen.*

*10 March*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"And the beauty and the mystery of the ships,  
and the magic of the sea."  
(Henry Wadsworth Longfellow)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"The seas have lifted up, O Lord,  
the seas have lifted up their voice;  
the seas have lifted up their pounding waves.  
Mightier than the thunder of the great waters,  
mightier than the breakers of the sea —  
the Lord on high is mighty."  
(Psalm 93.3,4)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

We who go down to the sea in ships know only too well the awesome power of the sea. Recall those images of the 1999 Sydney to Hobart yacht race, or the rescue of a yachtsman in the Southern Ocean, and the pursuit of a fishing vessel in the same ocean. Think of the worst storm you've been in at sea! Surely, when you have been at sea you have considered its vastness and how small you are by comparison. Yet all of this cannot begin to compare with the power and greatness of our God, who reigns over the universe he created. He rightly deserves our praise and worship!

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, grant that I may never find any colleagues request for help a nuisance when they want me to help them with their work; and when helping them takes up my valuable time. May I neither be too immersed or too busy in my work or too fond of my own agenda to listen to those who need help. Make me willing to show them how to do things, even if they are the kind of people who make life difficult for others. Help me to help, not only when it is pleasant or convenient but when helping is difficult and I don't want to do it. Help me to trust that you will help me to make up time and to complete my tasks, because you care for me. This I ask through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

*11 March*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"The law has no power to command obedience  
except that of habit."  
(Aristotle)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"In those days Israel had no king;  
everyone did as he saw fit."  
(Judges 21.25)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

We all do it if we think we can get away with it – bending the rules! As a society we mirror the final period of the Judges. That period began with religious decline, moved to moral failure, and ended in anarchy. Israel's history shows the impact on society as a whole when God's rule over our lives is rejected. If we claim to be God's person we are not free to do as we like, even bending the rules, but are free to serve him wholeheartedly. It is useless for us to claim a relationship with God and the Bible as our authority if, at the same time, we undermine its teachings by our behaviour. Our lives even more than our words must witness to God's rule over our lives.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, my Father, be my guide and direct me through today. Help me to think rightly, and so guard my heart and mind that no evil and no bitter thought may gain an entry there. Help me to live as befits one who has begun this day with you and who goes out to live every moment of it in your presence. Grant that today my life may shine as a light of love and goodness in the world, bringing credit to the name I bear and honour to my Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, whom I seek to serve. This I ask for his love's sake. Amen.*

*12 March*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"The man who in this world  
can keep the whiteness of his soul,  
is not likely to lose it in any other."  
(Alexander Smith)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Who can say,  
'I have kept my heart pure;  
I am clean and without sin?'"*  
(Proverbs 20. 9)

## TO THINK ABOUT

Who can say that they are perfect? According to the Scriptures there is no one on the face of the earth who can. So how does a person attain and keep a 'whiteness of his/her soul' that will take them into eternal life with God? Again, according to the Scriptures, this status of 'whiteness,' known as 'righteousness,' is attained only through faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Furthermore, it is a gift of God which is credited to us even though we remain imperfect in ourselves. Praise God for his undeserved, unmerited favour toward us through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Dear Lord, thank you for this day and the promise it holds for great things, for strengthened relationships, for objectives accomplished, for personal growth and self-sacrificing service in your name. Thank you for your goodness and kindness to me in providing for all my needs of body, soul and spirit. Grant to me a cheerful disposition in all circumstances that conveys a joyful sense of appreciation for all my blessings and a contentedness with all that you have allotted to me. Plant in my heart such gentleness, love and patience, that in trying moments I may respond in such a way as to always promote peace and harmony rather than acting according to my natural inclinations. Guide me in all the perplexities of modern living, such that none of my actions will cause me to be ashamed before you. Grant this for the sake of Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

*13 March*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"I have learned from experience that  
the greater part of our happiness or misery  
depends on our dispositions  
and not on our circumstances."  
(Martha Washington)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Then I realised that it is good and proper  
for a man to eat and drink, and to find satisfaction  
in his toilsome labour under the sun during the few days of life  
God has given him – for this is his lot."  
(Ecclesiastes 5.18)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

You probably know the puzzle of the half glass of water – is it half full or half empty? The point is made that it can indicate your disposition toward life. If you are offered a half glass of water then what is your perspective? The optimist sees a half full glass while the pessimist sees a half empty glass. One sees what one has the other what one doesn't have. Life deals up all kind of things, both good and bad. How do you deal with what life throws at you? The wise person accepts the challenges that come their way, believing that they have been allowed by a gracious God, and is able to face life with a positive disposition, secure in their relationship with him.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Almighty Father, Creator of all that is, I lift up my heart in gratitude for all the good things of life; for the mere joy of living and a glad heart to enjoy it. Yet never let me think that I am here to stay but remind me instead that my time on earth has a 'use by' date known only to you, and that life here is but preparation for the hereafter. Preserve me from so relishing the joys of earth that I have no longing for the purer joys of heaven. Give me the grace to accept it from you that this world is not my true home. I thank you that you have so set eternity within my heart that nothing on earth can completely satisfy me. I thank you that even the best of present joys are mixed with trials and temptations, so as to lead my mind to contemplation of a more perfect future – the certain hope and promise of eternal bliss – through Jesus Christ, my Lord. Amen.*

*14 March*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Joyous we too launch out on trackless sea,  
fearless for unknown shores."  
(Walt Whitman)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"And now, compelled by the Spirit,  
I am going to Jerusalem,  
not knowing what will happen to me there."  
(Acts 20.22)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

The Christian is something of a fearless adventurer. Because we march to the beat of a different drum – the call of Jesus Christ upon our lives – we launch out in his service. To live the Christian life, obeying Jesus' commands, will often mean stepping outside of our comfort zone. We do this, not because the world is a 'trackless sea,' but because we know the destination is a 'known shore' and we have a guarantee of safe arrival, even if the journey gets a bit lumpy and bumpy along the way.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Loving Father, thank you for the joy of this day and for the pleasure of a relationship with you. Thank you for my family and a few good, caring, loving friends. In the knowledge of your love for me, grant to me a quiet-ness of spirit and contentment at all times. As I face the inevitable fact that things don't always go to plan; and there are those moments when it will not be at all fair; I will need your incomprehensible peace to carry me through. Enable me to see beyond the present and to focus on the invisible, and to recognise that you are always there. Remind me, too, that your ways are higher and far more profound than mine are and that you are in full control and have my best interest at heart. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*



*15 March*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"The best way out is always through."  
(Robert Frost)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Even though I walk through the valley  
of the shadow of death,  
I will fear no evil,  
for you are with me:  
your rod and your staff,  
they comfort me."*  
(Psalm 23.4)

## TO THINK ABOUT

I once saw a boy doing a swimming test who gave up within a couple of metres of the end of the pool. So near yet so far. I've known other people who have always fled in fear from the least sign of trouble in their lives. The Bible gives us many incidents of people who gave up the struggle to live by faith because of the circumstances before them. David, with the eye of faith, saw that 'the best way out is always through.' With God on your side we need not fear, even as we face death, because we are eternally secure in him

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*In your great mercy, Lord, grant that this may be a good day in this place. Save me from becoming too casual with others, from a lack of self-discipline and from discourtesy. Bless all those who will come into my work-space, all those with whom I'll share a meal or a brew and all those with whom I'll communicate, by phone, fax, e-mail, etc. Help me to enrich all their lives by my conduct today. Make me discreet in my conversation, and friendly and loyal to all. And to you I would give all the glory and praise. Amen.*

*16 March*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Life is just one damned thing after another."  
(Frank Ward O'Malley)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Then Job replied:  
'If only my anguish could be weighed  
and all my misery put on the scales!  
It would surely outweigh the sand of the seas –"  
(Job 6.1)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

You may have read the quip – 'Cheer up. Things could get worse! So I cheered up and sure enough things got worse!' Sometimes life can seem to get on top of us. Job had more reason than most to be feeling a little depressed, with the loss of everything he had, including his family through tragic circumstances. His assessment of his situation was no exaggeration. How do we cope and win through in such times? Only by having faith in Jesus Christ. Our circumstances, our pain and anguish may remain undiminished but we can trust the future to a promise keeping Saviour who has said that he will never leave us nor forsake us, and who will one day take us to be with him forever.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Father, thank you for calling me to be your child and thank you so much that you gave me the grace to answer your call. I pray that I would continue to be changed by your Holy Spirit and that I might obey your Son in all things. I ask that your grace and peace would be mine in full measure. Keep from me today those things that are bound to cause trouble and help me to live as one who has been with Jesus. This I ask for his sake. Amen.*

*17 March*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"We sailors are jealous for our vessels.  
Abuse us if you will, but have a care  
For what you may say of our ships."  
(David William Bone)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"This is what the Lord Almighty says:  
'I am very jealous for Zion;  
I am burning with jealousy for her.'"*  
(Zechariah 8.2)

## TO THINK ABOUT

We may not be a member of the ship's company of the Gloucester Cup winning ship, and we may even make disparaging comments about our ship or base amongst our shipmates, but let anyone else say something against us and see how quickly we get our hackles up and leap to defend our reputation. We are naturally jealous for that which is our own. Think how amazing it is that our heavenly Father is even more jealous for his adopted children than we can even begin to imagine. If people slander or libel us, or even attack us, for being Christians, remember how precious you are to God.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, my Father, I know that every day comes to me from you filled with new opportunities to do some useful work, to learn something new, to add something to my store of knowledge. May I give you the credit for my successes today and not take that credit for myself. I know that today will bring me opportunities to lend a helping hand to any whose need is greater than my own. Help me to be among my family, friends and colleagues as one who serves. I know that today will I have the opportunity to build deeper relationships with others and with you; grant that I may take the opportunity to be bound more firmly in comradeship with others and in love to you, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

*18 March*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

“For after all,  
the best thing one can do when it is raining,  
is to let it rain.”  
(Henry Wadsworth Longfellow)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*“Then a new king,  
who did not know about Joseph,  
came to power in Egypt.”  
(Exodus 1. 8)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

I’m often asked to speak to ‘The Boss’ about the weather; especially when it’s raining at an inconvenient time for some navy activity. As if God is going to change things just to suit us! Accepting what can’t be changed, and living with it, can be difficult for us, and a test of patience (a fruit of the Spirit). We can be assured, however, that God’s timing in the working out of his purposes is perfect, down to the minutest detail. For a while the Hebrews chafed under the despotic rule of Egypt’s new king but it was the occasion for God to demonstrate his power and authority in creating his chosen people, the Israelites, as instruments in his eternal plan of salvation for mankind. Next time it rains inconveniently for you, reflect upon God’s mighty purpose in saving you, and let it rain!

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O Lord, I give you thanks and praise for all your mercies to me. Give me faith and love for another day. Bless my comings and goings, my thoughts, word, and deeds, and let me begin and end this day in your company. Make my way plain before me and support me in any difficulties I shall face. I offer myself to you to do whatever seems best for me and for others, according to your good and perfect will. Keep under your merciful protection my family, friends and shipmates granting them whatever may be best for them, not only for the present but also into eternal life in your glorious presence; through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

*19 March*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

*'Obstacles are those frightful things you see  
when you take your eyes off the goal.'  
(Hannah Moore)*

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Do not be anxious about anything,  
but in everything, by prayer and petition,  
with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.  
(Philippians 4.6)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

In any endeavour we have to assess what is required in order to achieve the desired outcome. It is naïve to blunder in without 'counting the cost.' We are familiar with the need for a 'risk assessment' to determine whether or not, or how, we should proceed with a task. Sometimes though we allow the 'risks' to get the better of us and make us think that a task is too difficult, or costly, etc. Let us not forget, as Christians, that we have a God who can meet all our needs in super-abundance. So, we boldly ask our heavenly Father for help and cease worrying, regardless of the outcome. In the final analysis we are secure in Him and need not be frightened about anything.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Most Gracious Father, thank you for the health and vigour to face the duties and the doings of another day. Go with me to protect me from every evil that I encounter and keep me safe in all the trials and temptations I'll face today. You have graciously called me to be your servant; grant me the spirit to hold myself in readiness and keep myself in continual training to live according to your will. Let me keep the edges of my mind keen; my thinking straight and true; my passions in control; my will active; my body fit and healthy; myself to doing your will in simplicity and uprightness of heart. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

*20 March*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Better put a strong fence 'round the top of a cliff,  
than an ambulance down in the valley."  
(Joseph Malins)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"We know that the law is good  
if a man uses it properly."  
(1 Timothy 1.8)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

It is an old adage that 'prevention is better than a cure.' Some years ago a young boy fell to his death from the cliffs at North head in Sydney. Subsequently a fence was erected along the cliff top to, hopefully, prevent a recurrence of the tragedy. As a society we formulate laws, rules and regulations for the protection of our community and the individual members of that community. They form a protective 'fence' for our general well-being. We can't prevent people from 'climbing the fence' if they so choose but they must be prepared to accept the consequences of their actions. God has given us commands for maintaining the well-being of our relationship with him. As the response of faith, obeying his commands is the 'strong fence' to keep us from self-destruction in 'the valley of the shadow of death.'

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Lord God Almighty, if I wish to attain wisdom, understanding and insight; and if I wish a disciplined and prudent life, doing what is right and just and fair; and if I wish to influence others for good, then I need to pay attention to what you have to say. You have said that the beginning of wisdom starts with reverence for you is; so help me to live in obedience to your will that my wishes may become a reality in my life. And help me to remember that it is possible only with the strength that you provide through faith in Jesus Christ; in whose name I pray. Amen.*

*21 March*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Let nothing disturb thee,  
Nothing afright thee;  
All things are passing."  
(Henry Wadsworth Longfellow)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed.  
Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened.  
But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord."  
(1 Peter 3.14,15)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

What are we to do when things get scary in our lives; especially in those moments of physical danger or mental anxiety where no obvious course of action comes to mind? Do you turn instinctively to God in prayer? Remember that if you are 'in Christ' you are secure no matter what the outcome. All too often when trials and difficulties confront us we try to resolve things in our own strength and turn to God as a last resort. Resolve in your heart to develop the habit of turning to Jesus for help as a first response and 'let nothing disturb thee.'

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O Lord, in this age of rapidly changing technology and with a smorgasbord of management programs, it is easy to forget that people matter more than these things. In this age of haste, where there is much coming and going and my days are crowded with interests it is hard to be still. Hush my heart, that I do not burden you with words. Speak to my inmost needs; lead me into your will and into your truth. And when I know your way give me a ready obedience. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

*22 March*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Six days shalt thou labour  
and do all thou art able,  
And on the seventh –  
holystone the decks and scrape the cable."  
(Richard Henry Dana)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Then I heard a voice from heaven say,  
'Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.'  
'Yes,' says the Spirit, 'they will rest from their labour,  
for their deeds will follow them.'"*  
(Revelation 14.13)

## TO THINK ABOUT

We are used to there not being any weekend routines at sea when in defence watches. Every day is a full working day, so 'seven days shalt thou labour.' Many years ago on a trip to the USA, in cruising watches, we crossed the International Date Line during the week and so gained an extra weekday but on the return trip we crossed the Line on the weekend and so lost a 'Sunday sea routine' day! Isn't it great to know that in heaven we will rest from our labours forever!

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*May the strength of God pilot me,  
may the power of God preserve me,  
may the wisdom of God instruct me,  
may the hands of God protect me,  
may the way of God direct me,  
may the shield of God defend me,  
may the host of God guard me against the snares of the evil one  
and the temptations of the world,  
may your salvation, Lord, be always mine, now and for ever. Amen.*



*23 March*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"There is the national flag.  
He must be cold indeed,  
Who can look upon its folds rippling in the breeze  
without pride of country."  
(Charles Sumner)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"In that day the Root of Jesse  
will stand as a banner for the peoples:  
the nations will rally to him,  
and his place of rest will be glorious."  
(Isaiah 11.10)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Who can forget Cathie Freeman getting into trouble at the Commonwealth games in Canada for doing a victory lap around the stadium draped in the national flag? How often now do we see Australians at international sporting and other events similarly draped with the national flag. We rightly take pride in our national flag as a symbol of who we are as a people. Do you take as much pride in Jesus as a symbol of who you are as a Christian person? One day the only thing in which anyone can glory will be a relationship with Jesus.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, my Father, may I walk with wisdom all this day and never flirt with temptation, or play with fire. Keep me from needlessly or thoughtlessly putting myself into a position where temptation is able to exert its power over me. Keep me from allowing my eyes to linger or my thoughts to dwell on forbidden things, lest their fascination be too strong for my resistance. Help me to walk every step of today looking always to Jesus. May his light be my guide, his presence my defence and his love my strength and inspiration. This I ask for his love's sake. Amen.*

*24 March*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Give me a spirit that on this life's rough sea  
Loves t' have his sails fill'd with a lusty wind,..."  
(George Chapman)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"For God did not give us a spirit of timidity,  
but a spirit of power, of love, and of self-discipline."  
(2 Timothy 1. 7)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Amongst sailors there are those who love the 'roughers' and those who love the calmer waters. Rough seas certainly make the working environment more 'exciting' but those who are inclined to 'mal de mer' much prefer sea state 1. Timothy was by nature a 'sea state 1' person in terms of his owning up to being a Christian in a hostile world but he was being encouraged to develop a liking for the 'roughers.' We're reminded that God's Spirit helps us in this regard to stand up and be counted as one of Jesus' followers.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Heavenly Father, you see all my weaknesses and understand the difficulties I face daily. Hear my prayer for your strength, direction and help. You alone know what is best for me. May I not dispute your wisdom or your goodness. So prepare my heart that no adverse situation would catch me unawares so as to put me off course. Dispose me at all times to a readiness to face whatever you shall place in my path. Grant that I may not murmur nor be exasperated by your character building opportunities planned for me. May the values of the world not mould me today but may I be so strong as to help mould the world. Lord, in your mercy, hear my prayer. Amen.*

*25 March*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Never be afraid to trust an unknown future  
to an all-knowing God."  
(Corrie ten Boom)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"That is why I am suffering as I am.  
Yet I am not ashamed,  
because I know whom I have believed,  
and am convinced that he is able to guard  
what I have entrusted to him for that day."  
(2 Timothy 1.12)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

I believe the reason we lack such faith in God when faced with dangers and difficulties is that our view of God is too small. We tend to think of him in 'too human' terms, much like the gods of the Greeks and Romans with all their human foibles and frailties. We make him somehow smaller than his creation and forget that the God of the Bible is awesome; someone who is bigger than the universe we inhabit. Are you convinced that God knows your future down to the very last detail and that nothing happens to you without his express knowledge? Believe that he does and rest securely in him.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Divine Father, hear now your humble servant who needs your help. As I embark upon a new day, help me to come to its end unashamed and unburdened by memories of things undone that ought to have been done and things done that ought not to have been done. By your Holy Spirit keep me pure and holy. And if I should fail let me not plead extenuating circumstances; the frailty of my nature; the strength of temptations; or the persuasions of others that led me astray. May I acknowledge only my own wilfulness and seek your forgiveness; through Jesus Christ, my Lord. Amen.*

*26 March*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"The doubting mind sees many ghosts."  
(Chinese Proverb)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"'Have faith in God,' Jesus answered.  
'I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain,  
'Go throw yourself into the sea,'  
and does not doubt in his heart  
but believes that what he says will happen,  
it will be done for him.'"*  
(Mark 11.22,23)

## TO THINK ABOUT

On one occasion a man said to Jesus, 'I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!' He expressed the condition of most people. We are conditioned by life circumstances to be sceptics; not trusting people too much. Some people are so scarred by their experiences that they simply cannot trust anyone. Yet, if we have faith in God, Jesus says, we will be able to accomplish extraordinary things. Perhaps we need to pray, 'Lord, help me overcome my unbelief and cast out the ghosts of doubt. Amen.'

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*God, my Father, I thank you for the salvation which is mine through faith in your Son, Jesus Christ's death and resurrection on my behalf. Fill me with knowledge of your will through spiritual wisdom and understanding that I may live a life worthy of your trust and pleasing to you in every way; bearing fruit in everything I do and being strengthened for service. In my dealings with others help me to manifest compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Help me to bear with the weaknesses of others, keeping in mind my own fallibility and shortcomings. Help me to shed those beliefs, attitudes and actions, which are contrary to your will and detrimental to my relationship with you and my fellowman. In all things lead me to a deeper knowledge and love of you, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.*

*27 March*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Why stay we on earth except to grow?"  
(anon)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"The righteous will flourish like a palm tree,  
they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon."  
(Psalm 92.12)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

For some people their life as a Christian is like 'Groundhog Day;' with no evidence of any progress towards becoming more like Jesus. If we don't attend a church, participate in fellowship with other Christians, read our Bible daily and spend some time in prayer then we certainly will not grow as a disciple of Christ. Some people insist that these things are not essential but the Bible itself will tell them that they are only deluding themselves. Even in our professions we know the necessity of developing skills if we hope to advance. So it is in our spiritual life if we are to grow in holiness and reflect the life of Christ in us.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Gracious Father, whose mercy is without measure, I hush my heart in your presence. As the sounds of the world about me reach my ears, so make my sense of your strength and nearness be real. As the claims of those about me are made once more let me not fail them or you. You have created me for purposes beyond my personal comfort zone, grant me the courage to step out and to fulfil those purposes as you reveal them to me. You have set eternity within my heart and shown me faith, hope and love. You have lifted me up, and forgiven me countless times and set my feet upon the way once more. Let me be quick and ready to exhibit the patience and gentleness you have shown to me; for Christ's sake. Amen.*

*28 March*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"They also serve who only stand and wait."  
(John Milton)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"...it is good to wait quietly  
for the salvation of the Lord."  
(Lamentations 3.26)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

On one trip overseas tugs approached our ship in the port we were visiting to assist the Captain berth but he waved them off. They stood by waiting, in case they were needed. They weren't, but they were available. As sailors we often find ourselves called to be available, and we stand around waiting, waiting, waiting!! only to be dismissed as not needed. It can seem like that in the spiritual realm too. We dream of serving God in some great project or adventure only to find that our lives are much more ordinary and unspectacular. Being available for God is just as important as accomplishing great things.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, before I start work this morning help me to count my blessings. I thank you that I have a job to go to and work to do and the health, strength and the skill to do it. I thank you for the friends whom I will meet at work, at my meals, and when my work is done. I thank you for everything in which I will find pleasure today, for work, for games, for books, for pictures, for films, for music, for talks with my friends and for times with those whom I love. I thank you for Jesus and for the promise that He is always with me. Help me in that promise to find my inspiration to goodness, and my protection from sin. Hear my prayer, for Jesus' sake. Amen.*

*29 March*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

*"It is always with the best intentions that the worst work is done."  
(Oscar Wilde)*

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"A perverse man stirs up dissensions,  
and a gossip separates close friends."  
(Proverbs 16.28)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

At an annual E&D seminar, the issue was raised of rumours and how damaging they can be. In fact they can be lethal. A few years ago a sailor, at sea, e-mailed his mate in Australia and informed him that his wife, who was on the same ship as the sailor, was 'fooling around.' The mate attempted suicide as a consequence. His wife had to be flown home and morale on the ship was affected. Whether with the best intention or from perversity the worst work was done and relationships were damaged, probably irreparably. We need to think seriously about the things you say about others. I wonder how that sailor felt, knowing that he had almost caused the death of his mate?

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, my Father, I am ashamed when I remember how so often I hurt those whom I ought to cherish most of all - my loved ones; and how I behave at times towards friends and colleagues in ways that I would hate it if it were done to me. Grant that it may not be so today. Instead, may I so speak and act such that I bring nothing but happiness to those whose love is my privilege, and whose friendship is my joy, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

*30 March*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"It is easier to get older than it is to get wiser."  
(Anon)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Instruct a wise man and he will be wiser still;  
teach a righteous man and he will add to his learning."  
(Proverbs 9. 9)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

We all know people who don't seem to have learned much from life. For them life appears to have been a perpetual 'Ground Hog Day.' It certainly is easier to get older – you just have to keep breathing! And that comes naturally. But to get wiser and better as the years go by takes effort. The Bible says that true wisdom begins with believing in and acknowledging God (Proverbs 9.10). With God in the picture we have a proper understanding of our world and our place in it, and we grow to fulfil the purpose God has for our life. Life becomes not just a succession of days but a grand journey reaching into eternity!

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*My God and Father, I firmly believe that you are present now, that you see me and observe my behaviour, and know all my thoughts and motives. Forgive me for my forgetfulness of you, and for those things I have done, said or thought which are displeasing to you. Help me to step out today always conscious of your presence, and seeking only your approval in all things; having neither fear of the censure of others nor craving their praise. Prepare me for whatever you have in store for me today – whatever you may see fit in fulfilling your purposes for my life. I ask it in the precious name of Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*



*31 March*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"The gem cannot be polished without friction,  
nor man perfected without trials."  
(Chinese Proverb)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another."*  
(Proverbs 27.17)

## TO THINK ABOUT

When I was in theological college I had a Nigerian friend who would pop over to my place for a chat when he needed to work out some theological issue. It seemed like it was always at an inconvenient time for me. So he would ask his questions and we would bounce ideas around and after a while he would have his answer. I would also have had to think through the issue and clarify answers for myself. His timing may have been a trial of patience at times but overall we both benefited from the experience.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Loving Father, grant me throughout the day a strong and vivid sense of your presence; when I am with others and when I am alone; when I'm 'on the go' and when things are slow. Let no thought enter my heart, no word come from my mouth, no act spring from my body, that could not bear your scrutiny and approval. Keep me from self-deception and pretence, from doing things only to win the approval of others or to make myself look better than I am. May my motives be honest and my concern for others genuine. I commend to you my family, friends and shipmates for your blessing and protection this day. I ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.*





**APRIL**

DUMMY LOG. IN USE







*1 April*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Two roads diverged in a wood, and I...took the one less travelled by.  
And that has made all the difference."  
(Robert Frost)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"In the way of righteousness there is life:  
along that path is immortality."*  
(Proverbs 12.28)

## TO THINK ABOUT

Many years ago I saw a documentary about three men who drove a small 3 cylinder Dutch car (DAF) across the Sahara, from south to north. They departed a small town in Chad and drove along a made road for a little way. When the road ran out the way was marked by posts in the ground. When you reached a post you then had to get a visual sighting of the next post, some distance away. Then the posts ran out!...and they were faced with the vastness of the desert. Jesus spoke about two roads as metaphors for life. The broad way, ignoring moral signposts, gradually leads to destruction. The narrow way, the road less travelled, God's way, leads to life, here and hereafter (Matthew 7.13,14).

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Almighty Father, I thank you that I need not be anxious about anything and that I can present my requests to you and you will hear me. Give me a quiet confidence and trust in your unchanging nature and in your will for my life. In a world of constant change help me to remember that you are the same yesterday, today and forever. Grant me tranquillity in the midst of all the claims upon my time and energy. Grant me discernment to know what is true, what is noble, what is right, what is pure, what is lovely, what is admirable, what is excellent or praiseworthy; and the will to put it into practice. I thank you that you have met and will continue to meet all my needs according to your glorious riches in Christ Jesus; in whose name I pray. Amen.*

*2 April*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"I love the man that can smile in trouble,  
that can gather strength from distress,  
and grow brave by reflection."  
(Thomas Paine)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds,  
because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance.  
Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature  
and complete, not lacking anything."  
(James 1.2-4)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

What is it that enables a person to complete well the hurdle race that is life? There must be some basis for the smile, the strength, the bravery. For some it is self-confidence, but that has limits. For others it is some philosophy or ideology, but they will only take you so far. As far as I can tell there is only one basis for confidence in this life and the next, and that is faith in a person – Jesus Christ – God who became man to lead us back to God our Father.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, I rejoice at all the opportunities I have for relating to all those people with whom I work. Let none in need of friendship or any help I have to give find me unfriendly or unwilling. Quicken my imagination, and my sympathy that I may begin to see what life is for each person and what it might become. Create in me a steady belief in things good and true and lovely that all who come my way may get a glimpse of your kingdom on earth. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

*3 April*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"A good name is seldom regained.  
When character is gone, all is gone  
and one of the richest jewels of life  
is lost forever."  
(Joel Hawes)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Do not be misled: 'bad company corrupts good character'."*  
*(1 Corinthians 15.33)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

How often do we hear of parents saying that they are concerned for their son or daughter because they are hanging out with the wrong company; whereas before they were doing fine, etc., etc...We may smile wryly at the situation but the quotations above come true, usually not in one step but by degrees. The corruption of character is a bit like rust, slow and hidden at first but once it takes hold... Our credibility is dependent upon our character and reputation. Once our good name is besmirched our reputation changes and our credibility is out the window. You cannot put a price on a good name.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, help me to make today a day in which I will have nothing to regret. Help me to do my work as well as it can possibly be done, to treat everyone with perfect courtesy and kindness and to conquer every temptation and to say no to everything that is wrong. I pray that my love for you may grow more and more in knowledge and depth of insight so that I may be able to discern what is best and so may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ's return. Help me live to your praise and glory. This I ask in Jesus' name. Amen.*

*4 April*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Pride is a fruitful source of uneasiness.  
It keeps the mind in disquiet.  
Humility is the antidote to this evil."  
(Lydia Sigourney)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Rejoice greatly; O Daughter of Zion!  
Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem!  
See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation,  
gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey."  
(Zechariah 9. 9)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Six days before his crucifixion, Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, while people strew his way with palm fronds and hailed him as their Messiah. Jesus' choice of entry was deliberate – to fulfil the prophecy of Zechariah. More importantly though to demonstrate the nature of his rule as Messiah. Most people expected him to turn up as a liberating king who would boot out the Roman occupiers. His failure to do so was behind the reversal in the people's mood that led to his execution on Good Friday. Instead of coming as a proud ruler he showed that the nature of real power lies in humility. He accomplished God's purpose not with a sword but with service and sacrifice, that resulted in eternal benefits for us – reconciliation with God.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Eternal God, may I count it a day wasted when I do not learn something new and when I am not a little further on the way of goodness and to you. Help me try to do my work better and to add something to my store of knowledge every day. Help me to try to get to know someone better every day. May I learn more self-mastery and self-control and be better able to rule my actions and emotions. May I leave my faults further behind and grow more nearly into the likeness of my Lord. At the end of every day may I be nearer to you than when the day began, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*



*5 April*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Physical courage, which despises all danger,  
will make a man brave in one way;  
and moral courage, which despises all opinion,  
will make a man brave in another."  
(Charles Caleb Cotton)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Be on your guard: stand firm in the faith;  
be men of courage; be strong.  
Do everything in love."  
(1 Corinthians 16.13,14)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

There are people who are prepared to jump off mountain tops with only a parachute, or off bridges with a bungee strap around their ankles – brave or foolhardy, you be the judge? There are those who have done heroic things in battle and even sacrificed their lives in war. Every day there are ordinary people who do physically brave things under extraordinary circumstances, such as rescuing a drowning person. Not quite so common is the moral courage to always do the right thing; to stand up for principles and beliefs when others pressure us to compromise the truth. It is not easy to be a whistleblower or to stand alone on moral issues. In the world physical courage has much greater kudos than moral courage. Both are required for the Christian life. Making a stand for the faith, for truth and justice, will often bring us into conflict with the prevailing philosophy of our society or culture.; hence St. Paul's exhortation. Note the response required when faced with physical and moral danger.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Merciful God and Father, I commend all that I have and all that I am into your almighty hands and pray that you would preserve me by your Spirit from any wrongdoing, misfortune and heartache. May I run with patience the Christian race, abounding in good words and works. Keep me humble, thankful and watchful that I may pass this day in peace and happiness, without stumbling and without stain, and doing all things in a manner pleasing to you, for the sake of Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

*6 April*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"To rule self and subdue passions  
is the more praiseworthy  
because so few know how to do it."  
(Francesco Guicciardine)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Like a city whose walls are broken down  
is a man who lacks self-control."*  
(Proverbs 25.28)

## TO THINK ABOUT

Aristotle's Ethic of Virtue lists a number of virtues that characterise the ideal person. These virtues were what the moral person aimed for. Each virtue was the mean between two extremes. So 'courage' is the mean between foolhardiness and cowardice; 'temperance' the mean between abstinence and excess; etc. So, Aristotle's moral system was about becoming a well-balanced person who could control one's behaviour. The Bible has a lot to say about human nature and the control of our natural inclinations. The battle takes place within, between the spirit and the flesh, and is far more intense than any external conflicts we may face in life, because it is a lifelong struggle. We win the battle only in conjunction with the indwelling Spirit of God.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Gracious Father, grant that my life today may not obscure the evidence of your indwelling Spirit, but rather make it more plainly visible to the eyes of all those with whom I come into contact. Help me to stand today for whatever is pure and true and just and good. Let me put rightness before self-interest and others before self. Let me put the attainment of noble ends above the enjoyment of present pleasures. Let me put principle above reputation. Give to me today a heart like Jesus' - brave, true, tender and generous and fixed on you; for His name's sake. Amen.*

*7 April*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"We are fallible. We certainly haven't attained perfection.  
But we can strive for it and the virtue is in the striving."  
(Carlos P. Romulo)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Finally, my brothers, goodbye. Aim for perfection,  
listen to my appeal, be of one mind, live in peace.  
And the God of love and peace be with you."  
(2 Corinthians 13.11)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

One essential message of the Bible is that we ourselves are not perfect. Many years ago there was a Christian bumper sticker which read, 'Christians aren't perfect, just forgiven.' However, besides being forgiven by God when we turn to him and put our faith in Jesus Christ, we are declared 'perfect' in his sight by virtue of Christ's death for our sins. How do we thank God for his forgiveness? Aim for perfection! Enjoying the status of 'perfect' should lead to our striving to live up to it. We won't reach it this side of eternity but 'the virtue is in the striving.'

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Dear Lord, I come into your presence to acknowledge you as my creator and redeemer and as the One who holds my life in the palm of your hands. Thank you for your love for me and for sustaining me throughout my life, in good times and bad. I commit my day to you for your blessing and guidance in all the relationships and tasks before me. Keep me from proceeding only in my own strength that I am prone to do and help me to remember that 'I can do everything (only) through (you) who gives me (your) strength.' May the witness of my life today reflect the imprint of your hand and not the pride of my own self-importance. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

8 April

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"I wonder why it is that we are not  
all kinder to each other than we are.  
How much the world needs it!  
How easily it is done!"  
(Henry Drummond)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong,  
but always try to be kind to each other  
and to everyone else."  
(1 Thessalonians 5.15)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Why is it that we have to be encouraged to be nice to each other? If what the humanist philosophy says is true – that we are all basically good – then it shouldn't be necessary to remind ourselves to be kind to each other. Perhaps what the Bible says is a more realistic view – that we are all essentially flawed (what the Bible calls 'sinful') – and therefore need to be changed. If we are all essentially 'good,' then why was it necessary for Jesus to die on our behalf?

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, my Father, I want to be honest with you in this quiet moment. I know I cannot hide my thoughts from you or my motives or my weaknesses. Nor do I want to hide any of these things because my only hope is you. You knew me before I knew myself and you have never for a moment ceased to love me. You have watched me take my own foolish way and been ready with forgiveness when I have returned to you. You have encouraged and supported me when the days were long and the task difficult. You have quickened in my heart hopes and dreams for the future and restored them when I have stumbled along the way. Being certain of your forgiveness and mercy let no failure of yesterday hold me back today but let me face life with a confidence born of my faith in you, for Christ's sake. Amen.*

*9 April*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"There is but one virtue –  
the eternal sacrifice of the self"  
(George Sand)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Jesus said: Now is the judgement of this world,  
now shall the ruler of this world be cast out;  
and I, when I am lifted up from the earth,  
will draw all men to myself."  
(John 12.31)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Jesus spoke these words sometime after his triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday and just before the Last Supper. He was speaking of his impending crucifixion and resurrection and what it would accomplish. He was about to pay the penalty for the vast weight of the world's sin and by rising again to life to defeat Satan and the power of death. And all for your benefit and mine; that we might be reconciled to God through faith in Jesus Christ and have eternal life with him. Jesus voluntarily sacrificed himself for us and calls us into a life of sacrificial service for our fellow man.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, as this day begins for me I want to remember before you those for whom it will be hard and sad and difficult. Bless those who have no work to do and for whom the hours will be empty. Bless those who today will have to watch a love one pass from this life or who will lay a dear one to rest. Bless those who will go out to sadness and come home to loneliness. Bless those who will be stricken with illness or who have to undergo an operation today or who must spend it waiting for one. Bless those who will receive bad news and to whom this day will bring disappointment and heartbreak. Grant that all in sorrow, in difficulty, and hardship may find in you a refuge and strength, and a very present help in their trouble. This I ask through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

*10 April*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"The aim of justice is to give everyone his due."  
(Cicero)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"For if, when we were God's enemies,  
we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son,  
how much more, having been reconciled,  
shall we be saved through his life."  
(Romans 5.10)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

When we say God is holy, besides being separate from his creation, we mean that he is perfect in every attribute, such as love, power, justice, etc. Because he is perfectly just he cannot abide injustice, and so must deal with it. Since none of us is perfectly just, God must deal with that and give everyone his due. God's penalty for injustice, as for all imperfections, is death – physical and spiritual. But because of his love for us, God has taken the penalty upon himself and offered us a pardon. The penalty has already been borne (paid in full) by Jesus on the cross. All that is necessary for us to do is to acknowledge our guilt, believe that we are pardoned by God, and turn our lives over to him for remodelling into the image of his Son, Jesus Christ.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, my Father, save me from those thoughts and feelings that only succeed in making life wretched and unhappy for myself and others and help me at all times to do the best I can with the resources I have. Save me from vain regrets about things that cannot be altered and give me grace to accept the situation in which I find myself and there to serve you with my whole heart. Lead me to repentance and faith so that, cleansed from self and cleansed from sin, my life may bring joy to others and contentment to myself, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

*11 April*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Jesus Christ conquered the power of death  
and opened the way for us to eternal life."  
(Anglican Prayer Book)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"He is not here, he has risen."*  
(Luke 24.6)

## TO THINK ABOUT

The one distinctive that separates out the Christian faith from all others – we have a founder who could back up his claims by fulfilling them. Every other religious founder still lies in the grave. Jesus' resurrection has been unable to be refuted by some of the greatest minds in history. The evidence is compelling and has stood the test of countless efforts to prove otherwise. If Jesus accomplished what he said he would do then we need to listen to him!

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Loving Father, I give you thanks for another day in which to serve you and others according to your will for my life. I commend to your loving kindness all my family, friends and shipmates, asking that you would watch over them to keep them safe and that they would think and speak and do only what is pleasing to you. Grant to me a mind that delights to do your will, being obedient to your Law written on my heart. Give me courage and resolution to do my duty and a heart set on doing all the good it possibly can in the remaining hours of today. I ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.*

*12 April*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"He who sacrifices his conscience to ambition  
burns a picture to obtain the ashes."  
(Chinese Proverb)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"To the pure, all things are pure,  
but to those who are corrupted and do not believe,  
both their minds and their consciences are corrupted."  
(Titus 1.15)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

You may have seen the classic movie 'The Portrait of Dorian Grey.' The basic premise of the film is that the main character sells his soul for the promise of immortality and that all the ageing of his dissolute life goes into his portrait, providing he never sees the portrait! You know the rest... St. Paul's comment – 'So I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man.' (Acts 24.16) – reflects an ambition that results in true everlasting life rather than the ashes of a seared conscience.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Eternal Father, you are not such that I can see with my eyes or touch with my hands, yet strengthen in me my conviction of your reality and power. May I not begin my work today believing only in the world of sense and time, but remembering that the world I cannot see or touch is the most real of all. My life today will be lived in time but eternal issues will be concerned in it. My personal needs will clamour for attention but it is for the needs of my soul that I must care most. My business will be with things material but behind them let me be aware of things spiritual. Let me keep steadily in mind that the things that matter are not money or possession, not power or influence, not bodily comfort and pleasure but truth and honour and meekness and helpfulness and a pure love of yourself. Make me wise to see all things today in the light of eternity and make me brave to face the life-changes such a vision may entail, through the grace of Christ my Saviour. Amen.*



*13 April*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Delusions, errors and lies are like huge, gaudy vessels,  
the rafters of which are often rotten and worm eaten,  
and those who embark in them are fated to be shipwrecked."  
(Buddha)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*Who can discern his errors?  
Forgive my hidden faults."*  
(Psalm 19.12)

## TO THINK ABOUT

It is easy to recognise the obvious, glaring faults of others, but not always the subtleties of character flaws, such as flexibility with the truth. We know those who are hopeless at telling lies and are easily found out but we may not be so adept at sussing out the skilled deceiver. We need not worry too much about them because they eventually succeed in destroying themselves. Of greater concern should be our own integrity; for as the Psalmist reminds us, our capacity for self-delusion is enough to worry about. In the end, without God, we all live a grand delusion, and without his forgiveness we are 'fated to be shipwrecked.'

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Dear Father God, I want my life to count for the utmost. However, I know this cannot be achieved unless I turn my life over to you for your guidance and direction. Help me to put my full trust in you for my well-being believing that we will work matters out together. Father, I live in a world that judges things by different standards to yours and I see so clearly that it is possible for the good to displace the best in my life. I don't want to do things from a sense of duty I want to do them with a sense of delight. I know I have to live a disciplined life in order to be dependable but I also see that the strength for this discipline comes from you and not my own inner resources. Work in me today, Lord, to accomplish those things necessary to cultivate the virtues of Jesus Christ; in whose name I pray. Amen.*

*14 April*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Anger, if not retrained, is frequently  
more hurtful to us than the injury that provokes it."  
(Seneca)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"You have heard that it was said,  
'Eye for eye and tooth for tooth.'  
But I tell you, do not resist an evil person.  
If someone strikes you on the right cheek,  
Turn to him the other also."  
(Matthew 5.38,39)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

We're familiar with the constant procession of 'eye for an eye' retaliations in the Israeli/ Palestinian conflict. We cannot imagine the pain and anguish that those who have lost loved ones in this way go through. But what we can see is that all the unrestrained anger that is released in suicide bombings, riots, counter attacks, etc, is just making the solution to the conflict all the more difficult and hurtful to both sides. At a personal level, how do you cope with those who have 'done you wrong'? Revenge and retaliation are ultimately not satisfying because we only hurt ourselves more by becoming less than we could be.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O Jesus,  
be the canoe that holds me in the sea of life.  
Be the steer that keeps me straight.  
Be the outrigger that supports me in times of great temptations.  
Let thy Spirit be my sail that carries me through each day.  
Keep my body strong  
so that I can paddle steadfastly on,  
in the long voyage of life.  
(A Vanuatu prayer)*

*15 April*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Do all the good you can, in all the ways you can,  
to all the souls you can, in every place you can,  
at all the times you can, with all the zeal you can,  
as long as ever you can."  
(John Wesley)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"He who seeks good finds goodwill. . . ."*  
(Proverbs 11.27)  
*"...those who plan what is good find love and faithfulness."*  
(Proverbs 14.22)

## TO THINK ABOUT

Water runs downhill – scientific fact. It also seeks the path of least resistance and so always meanders about on its downhill course. Our journey through life is a lot like that. Generally speaking, we seek the easy path and make moral compromises in order to get what we want: the white lie, the less than honest deal, the outright deception, etc. The famous Hanging Gardens of Babylon (one of the wonders of the ancient world) were watered by an ingenious pumping system that brought water uphill from the river. It involved a lot of planning and effort but the result was well worth it. It takes effort to be really 'good' but the benefits are so much more worthwhile than the downhill meander.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O Lord, give me all through today a strong sense of duty so that I will not be able to shirk any task nor evade any decision nor avoid any responsibility. Help me to do my duty to myself so that I will never lose my self-respect. Help me to do my duty to others so that I may be among my fellows as one who serves. Help me to do my duty to you by giving myself to you body, soul and spirit, so that you can use me as you wish. At the same time give me joy in all things so that my duty may not be a grim and joyless thing but so that I may do everything as unto you. This I ask for Jesus' sake. Amen.*

*16 April*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

*"Eat well, stay fit, die anyway."  
(Anon)*

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"For God so loved the world that he gave  
his one and only Son (Jesus Christ),  
that whoever believes in him shall not perish  
but have eternal life."  
(John 3.16)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Have you ever pulled something out of the fridge only to find it's past its 'use by' date? Frustrating isn't it; especially if you really fancied eating it? Food scientists have developed over the years a number of 'long-life' products that can be stored without refrigeration until they're opened. Once opened though these products have a fairly short life span of about a week. The food boffins are continually seeking ways to extend the range and 'shelf-life' of foodstuffs. Medical science is also seeking to extend the human 'use by' date. But all 'shelf-life' and 'use by' dates are only ever extensions. The dream of immortality on earth is just that – a dream – and an avoidance of the reality of death. God tells us that our time on earth has a 'use by' date, and the few short years we have here are but preparation time for eternity – either with or apart from God. The only truly 'long-life' product is the life that has put its faith in Jesus Christ for eternity.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Eternal God, help me use wisely and well the time that you have given me. Help me not waste time on the wrong things and things that do not matter. Help me not spend time in idleness so that the hours go back to you unused and useless. Help me not put off until tomorrow that which should be done today and always to remember that I do not know if for me tomorrow will come. Help me to do with all my might each thing which my hand finds to do and to do it as for you that I may finish the day with nothing left undone and nothing badly done. I pray in the name Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

*17 April*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"To live in fear of death is many times to die."  
(Anon)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall lack nothing."*  
(Psalm 23.1)

## TO THINK ABOUT

*The Pilot's Psalm – Psalm 23 paraphrased in 1874 by Captain John H. Roberts*

The Lord is my Pilot, I shall not drift.  
He lightest me across the dark waters.  
He steereth me in deep channels.  
He keepeth my log;  
He guideth me by the star of holiness  
For His name's sake.  
Yea, though I sail mid the thunders and tempests of life,  
I will dread no danger; for Thou art near me;  
Thy love and Thy care they shelter me.  
Thou preparest a harbour before me in the homeland of eternity;  
Thou anointest the waves with oil, my ship rideth calmly.  
Surely sunlight and starlight shall favour me  
on the voyage I take;  
and I will rest in the port of my God forever.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Dear Father God, in whom I live and move and have my being, I offer and present to you my body, soul, thoughts, desires, words and deeds. I am not my own and I desire that you would be glorified in and through me. Since I would demonstrate the reality of my faith in you by walking through life cheerfully and hopefully, inspire in me a love of what is right. Help me to resist what is evil and to hold to that which is good. Give me a wise and understanding heart to do your will. Grant to me a spirit of graciousness and true humility and an attitude that esteems others as better than myself. Help me to alleviate any difficulties others may be facing and do good to all as I have the opportunity, remembering the words of Jesus, who said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' Hear my prayer, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

*18 April*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Going to church doesn't make you a Christian  
any more than going to a garage makes you a mechanic."  
(Anon)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourself. Do what it says.  
Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man  
Who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself,  
goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like."  
(James 1.22-24)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

A priest and a soap manufacturer were walking together. The soap manufacturer was a sceptic. Turning to the priest he said, 'What good is the Bible! Look at the trouble and misery in the world after thousands of years of the Bible. If the Bible were true why should this be? The priest did not reply immediately. As they walked they came across a child, filthy with mud and grime, playing in the gutter. The priest said, 'Look at that child. You claim that soap makes you clean. We've had soap for generations, yet look how dirty that child is! Of what value is soap? The soap manufacturer protested, 'But soap cannot do any good until it is used!' 'Exactly,' replied the priest. 'That's the same with the Bible. YOU HAVE TO USE IT.'

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Ever-present Father, beneath whose all-seeing eye my life passes, grant that in all my deeds and purposes today I may behave with true courtesy and honour. Help me to aspire to that ideal of person-hood such that Jesus Christ displayed in His life on earth. May His question 'What are you doing more than others?' inspire me to live such that I seek more and more His character formed in me, until all my walk and conversation be such as becomes a follower of Jesus Christ. In whose name I pray. Amen.*

*19 April*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Remember that the Ark was built by amateurs  
and the Titanic was built by professionals."  
(Anon)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Many are the plans in a man's heart,  
but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails."  
(Proverbs 19.21)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

One thing is certain in this world – change! And that means uncertainty in our lives, whether we like it or not. At times, organising even one day can seem like trying to catch the wind. From daily routines to life plans there must always be the proviso 'subject to unforeseen circumstances.' It's fairly obvious that we are not now, nor ever were, in total control of our lives. The Bible assures us that God is in control and that nothing catches him unawares. It is not mere chance or blind fate that determines the changes that affect our world and our own individual lives. A sovereign God is in charge, overseeing all that goes on. It is a great comfort to know that in the midst of all the changes and chances of this mortal life a loving God is in charge.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Dear Heavenly Father, thankyou for watching over me during the night and bringing me safely to this day. Thankyou that I can begin my day with you and know that you are with me throughout the day. You have said that I can cast all my cares on you because you care for me. I commend into your loving care all my loved ones, friends and shipmates asking you to watch over and protect them from all danger, especially anything that may harm their minds and spirits. Enable me to place my full trust in you to help me today. Grant me the moral courage to be inwardly and outwardly different. Help me to resist any pressures to accept the standard of the lowest common denominator and instead to lift my own and other people's sights to better things whenever possible. In Christ's name I pray. Amen.*

20 April

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Shin: A device for finding furniture in the dark."  
(Anon)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you:  
God is light; in him there is no darkness at all."  
(1 John 1.5)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

For many people life is a bit like finding your way through a dark room. The crises in their lives are like the furniture that is stumbled upon, and because of that, all the more painful. It's much easier to go through a room with the light on and so avoid any obstacles that can cause us pain. Journeying through life with God is like being in a lightened room. It doesn't mean that there are no obstacles in life but we can avoid so many of life's unnecessary crises and the subsequent pain.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Dear Father, when I awoke this morning thoughts of what I mean to do came to mind. Forgive me that my first thoughts are not of you nor my first response to you. You know what this day holds for me; the people I shall meet and the choices I shall need to make. Give me a new dependence on your guidance lest I spoil any good thing or discourage or hurt any person. I bless you for all the good things in my life and for the beauty of your world I have to enjoy. Keep me sensitive to the moods and needs of those about me, to new truth and to things long accepted and well tried. Guide me through this day and bring me to its end with satisfaction and gladness, for Jesus sake. Amen.*



*21 April*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

*"No man is born unto himself alone.  
Who lives unto himself, he lives to none."  
(Francis Quarles)*

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Now the body is not made up of one part but of many.  
...God has arranged the parts, every one of them,  
just as he wanted them to be.  
If they were all one part, where would the body be?  
As it is, there are many parts but one body."  
(1 Corinthians 12. 14-20)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Nobody is a whole crew. Each one is a member. Take away one person and it isn't long before we feel the loss. We need each other. To make life work we've got to lean on and support, relate to and respond, give and take, confess and forgive, reach out to and rely on, etc. Inter-dependence is God's plan for people. Because we are each so different, thanks to the way God has made us, we also need one another to complement those differences. We also need to remember that not one of us is a complete, independent, self-sufficient, super-capable, all-powerful hot-shot. In Defence we all recognise the importance of teamwork; so also for life in God's purposes.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O Lord, help me not to shirk any duty I should face or word that I should speak. Don't let me avoid any person whom I ought to meet nor any decision that I ought to take. May I postpone no task that I ought to do, nor delay unnecessarily the answer to any request. Help me to do each thing as it comes to me and to do it faithfully, wisely and well. Keep me from rushing into things about which I ought to think before I act. All through today grant me the wisdom which will keep me from all mistakes and save me from all regrets; through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

*22 April*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Keep your eyes on the goal."  
(Anon)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith,  
who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame,  
and sat down at the right hand of God.  
Consider Him who endured such opposition from sinful men,  
so that you will not grow weary and lose heart."  
(Hebrews 12.2,3)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

We can all recount stories of people who have overcome seemingly insurmountable odds and/or disabilities: athletes, mountain climbers, solo yachts 'persons', people with physical or intellectual handicaps, etc. In each case it is evident that they displayed great courage and endurance and put in a supreme effort. Why? Because they had a goal and they kept their eyes on the goal and the joy to be found in accomplishing the goal. The Christian's goal is heaven and we are to follow the example of Jesus. He kept his eyes on the goal, not the going. He saw the prize, not the process; the treasure, not the trial; the joy, not the journey.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O Lord my God, who has promised that you are with me always, help me never to forget your presence all this day. Grant that all day every word I speak may be fit for you to hear, that every deed may be fit for you to see, that every thought of my mind and every emotion of my heart may be fit to bear your scrutiny. Grant that every task may be so well done that I can show it to you. Grant that every pleasure may be so honourable and clean that I can ask you to share it with me. Bring me to the end of the day with nothing left undone and nothing badly done, with nothing to regret and nothing to make me ashamed; through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

*23 April*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"The advantage of exercising every day is that you die healthier."  
(Anon)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"The fear of the Lord adds length to life. . . ."*  
(Proverbs 10.27)

## TO THINK ABOUT

Is there a link between religious faith and good health? There is a growing body of research to suggest that nurturing the spirit may be the key to overall good health – and more important than keeping fit and eating properly! Recent studies show that, among sports people, the healthiest group had a good relationship with God and had a sense of a higher purpose in life. Those who don't believe in God, even if motivated and with a purpose in life, have the worst health. The healthiest people were very spiritual! Studies also showed that those who attend religious services have stronger immune systems and live longer than those who don't. So! Can you afford not to attend church or spend a few minutes with God each day? Your health and life may depend upon it.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Almighty God, grant me a desire to walk along the path of life appointed for me, as Jesus would, in steadfast faith, in meekness of Spirit, in lowliness of heart, in gentleness of love. Because outward events have so much power in scattering my thoughts and disturbing my inner peace I ask that your gracious Spirit would calm and settle my soul at such times. My life is in your hands to do with as you will for I don't know what's best. Preserve me today and strengthen me to bear whatever you see fit to lay on me, knowing that it will be eternally profitable for me. Let not the care and duties of life press on me too heavily but lighten them such that I may serve with a quiet spirit, thankful for all your mercies; through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

*24 April*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

On this day in 1860 HMVS Victoria participated in the Maori War in New Zealand.  
It was Australia's first commitment of Defence Force personnel overseas.

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"You will hear of wars and rumours of wars,  
but see to it that you are not alarmed.*

*Such things must happen,  
but the end is still to come."*

*(Matthew 24.6)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Jesus' disciples had just asked him what signs would signal his return to earth at the last day. So that they wouldn't get confused by misinterpreting the signs of the times, he reminded them of the usual condition of the world. War is just an unfortunate part of the human condition, along with many other distressing things, such as famines and earth-quakes, etc. The important thing is to be ready to meet Jesus at any time, whether we die before he comes back or are still alive when he returns.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Loving Father, you are Almighty God, creator of all, who upholds the universe by your power and yet deigns to call me your child and friend. When I consider my frailty and mortality before you I am truly humbled but unafraid because of my faith in your Son, Jesus Christ. You hold in your grasp the threads of my life today and you alone know what lies before me but because you are my Father I know that all is well. Control my thoughts and feelings today. Direct all my energies. Instruct my mind. Sustain my will. Take my hands and make them skilful to serve you. Take my feet and make them swift to do your bidding. Make my work an eloquent testimony to your power at work in my life such that it brings glory to your Holy Name. Amen.*

*25 April – ANZAC Day*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"We will remember them."      "Lest we forget"

## FROM THE BIBLE

*(Jesus said) "Greater love has no-one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends."  
(John 15.13)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

### THE SAILOR'S ODE

They have no grave but the cruel sea,  
No flowers lay at their head,  
A rusting hulk is their tombstone  
afast on the ocean bed.  
They shall not grow old,  
As we that are left grow old.  
Age shall not weary them  
Nor the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun  
And in the morning  
We will remember them.  
**We will remember them.**  
Lest we forget.  
**Lest we forget.**

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O Lord our God, we offer to you our heartfelt thanks for all your mercies to this nation, for the devoted lives of those who have made us great and free, for deliverance from civil strife and bloodshed, from the craft and power of foreign foes; for the brave and the faithful dead, who willingly laid down their lives on the battlefields of war, or succumbed to the perils of the deep or of the air. We bless you for their dauntless courage in defence of this country. May our remembrance of their sacrifice be a reminder to present and future generations of the cost of our freedom and of all the benefits we enjoy, and an incentive to sacrificial service of our fellow man. Help us to treasure our great inheritance,, that your blessing may rest on our land 'till the kingdoms of the world become the kingdom of your Son; to whom with you and the Holy Spirit be all glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*

On this day in 1915 the Anzacs landed at Gallipoli. At the same time the Australian submarine AE2 penetrated the Dardanelles with orders to create havoc in the Sea of Mamara. This she did, thereby delaying Turkish reinforcements and saving the allied forces at Gallipoli from even greater carnage.

*26 April*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"he who dies with the most toy wins."  
(Anon)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"...a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."  
(Luke 12.15)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Our thought for the day reflects the attitude of Gordon Gecko in the film 'Wall Street,' who said, 'Greed is good.' The reality is that when you die you leave all your toys behind. They are not much use to you. The only winners are your beneficiaries. This world encourages us to look after number one; to put ourselves first. Few of Christ's teachings are more difficult to comprehend and accept than his statement that the only way to 'win' is to surrender our lives to him. It is the first step in a real relationship with God. Life is not about the getting of things (accumulating 'toys') but about an eternal relationship with God.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Loving Father, after a refreshing night's rest help me to work faithfully and well today. Thankyou for yesterday's opportunity to remember those who served and those who made the ultimate sacrifice that I might enjoy the freedoms I have today and the blessing of living in such a privileged nation. Help me to count my blessings daily, and to consider the situation of so many others in many parts of the world when I start taking things for granted or grumbling about my circumstances. May I not see my work as a chore but as a gift and challenge from you for my growth and development as your child, helping me to fulfil your purposes for my life. Bless this day and all those I encounter in it, for Jesus' sake. Amen.*

*27 April*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Of all earthly music, that which reaches furthest  
into heaven is the beating of a truly loving heart."  
(Henry Ward Beecher)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*Jesus said, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,  
and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.  
This is the first and great commandment."  
(Mark 12.29)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

It's amazing how often science 'discovers' things that God has already revealed to us in the Bible. In 1995, scientists discovered that the heart is not controlled solely by the brain but is able to produce a change in the heart. In the Bible the heart is equated with the centre of our emotions, the seat of our soul. Some Psychiatrists, because of the universality of religious belief, have postulated that it may possibly be genetic. The Bible links heart and mind in a consciousness of God. And what of our strength? We know that our strength varies according to our stage in life and that God has determined a limit to our stay here on earth. For the duration of our life here we are called to dedicate ourselves in heart, soul, mind and body, to the service of God our creator who knows more about what makes us tick than scientists ever will.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Loving Father, I pray that in your mercy you would strengthen my faith so that I might be strengthened in areas in which I am lacking. Increase to overflowing my love for other Christians and also for those who do not believe, so that in me people may see something of your love for us. Strengthen and refine my heart so that I will be blameless and holy in your presence when the Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones. In Jesus' name  
I pray. Amen.*

(1Thess3.10-13)

*28 April*

"We live by mending, and the grace of God is the glue."  
(Eugene O'Neill – American Playwright)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"O Lord my God, I called to you for help and you healed me."*  
(Psalm 30.2)

## TO THINK ABOUT

Leunig, the cartoonist, describes our human condition in terms of 'life-ache.' As we go through life we experience many tragedies and setbacks of varying magnitudes. Some we bounce back from more easily than others and others we seem unable to surmount. The latter become underlying, festering sores in our psyche, which eventually manifest them-selves in physical ailments. We need the healing, or mending, of these hurts. But how? God helps those who are willing to be helped. His love, his 'undeserved favour' – for that is the meaning of 'grace' – is available to all who call upon him in faith.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, My Father, may I be patient today with things and with people. If any task will be difficult, grant me perseverance that will not admit defeat. If any problem will be hard to solve, help me not to abandon it until I have found the solution. If things will not come right the first time, help me to try and to try again until failure becomes success. Help me today never to lose my temper with people however unfair, unjust, annoying and unpleasant they may be. Help me to have time to listen to anyone who wants to talk to me about a worry, a problem, or a need. Help me to be patient with those who are slow to learn and slow to understand. Help me today to work as Jesus worked and to love as he loved. This I ask for His name's sake. Amen.*



*29 April*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"There's no such thing as a free lunch."  
(Anon)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"We have complete freedom to go into the most holy place  
by means of the death of Jesus."*  
(Hebrews 10.19)

## TO THINK ABOUT

Most of us at one time or another will be involved in a 'Freedom of Entry' ceremony. It follows a medieval custom where armed groups were granted the special privilege of marching through a town, in return for assisting in the defence of the town. Many people make all sorts of efforts to get into various organisations, especially if they convey some special privileges or perks. Usually there are certain hurdles to be jumped. Rarely is there any truly unconditional 'freedom of entry.' Even in matters of religion there are hoops to jump through in order to gain access to the gods. All except one faith – Christianity! The great news that the Bible teaches is that we can have direct access – freedom of entry - to God himself through faith. The death of Jesus Christ upon the cross makes it possible. If there is a hurdle, it is a self imposed one. We have to confess our inability to earn this favour and acknowledge that it is a free gift from God.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Loving Father, as you have preserved me for another day so enable me by your grace to live for you and to set my course by eternal realities. Except you direct me I cannot stand but instead succumb to the inclinations of my sinful nature; for no position, no qualification, no calling, no function, can prosper or be properly performed without your continual aid, direction and providence. Therefore, guide me by your Spirit, increase my faith and give me wisdom and ability in all things to execute your of me calling as I ought. Be present with me and grant that all things I may take in hand begin in knowledge, proceed with proper respect for you, and end in love, that my life's course may be blessed by you; for the sake of Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

*30 April - Deployment*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"...the Middle East has been a frequent operating environment in both World Wars and most recently on a semi-permanent basis since 1990." (Philip Spedding)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven:  
...a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace." (Ecclesiastes 3.1, 8)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

### **BEACH BURIAL** (by Kenneth Slessor) [an Australian poet, writing about WW1]

Softly and humbly to the Gulf of Arabs  
The convoys of dead sailors come;  
At night they sway and wander in the waters far under,  
But morning rolls them in the foam.

Between the sob and clubbing of the gunfire  
Someone, it seems, has time for this,  
To pluck them from the shallows and bury them in burrows  
And tread the sand upon their nakedness.

And each cross, the driven stake of tidewood,  
Bears the last signature of men,  
Written with such perplexity, with such bewildered pity,  
The words choke as they begin –

*"Unknown seaman"* – the ghostly pencil  
wavers and fades, the purple drips,  
the breath of the wet season has washed their inscriptions  
as blue as drowned men's lips,

Dead seamen, gone in search of the same landfall.  
Whether as enemies they fought,  
Or fought with us, or neither; the sand joins them together,  
Enlisted on the other front.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Almighty Father, you alone give us life and bring us to the close of life. I commend into your keeping all those deployed on peacekeeping operations, whether UN, ADF, or allied military personnel. Watch over them and keep them from harm. Melt the resolve of all those with evil intent, who bring grief and misery to so many, leading them to put aside their weapons and to seek peace and reconciliation instead. Grant to the families and friends of those who are deployed your peace, that they may not be unduly distressed. Teach them to 'cast all their cares on you, for you care for them'. I pray for a speedy and satisfactory resolution of each situation and a safe and joyful return home for all concerned. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*







*1 May*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"He who would eat the fruit must climb the tree."  
(Scottish Proverb)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Blessed are all who fear the Lord,  
who walk in his ways.  
You will eat the fruit of your labour:..."*  
(Psalm 128.1,2)

## TO THINK ABOUT

Rewards don't usually come without effort. In our relationship with God it is always true that without making the effort of getting to know him, through the Bible, we remain strangers to him and he to us. If we want the reward, the fruit, of a good relationship, then we must take the time to get to know him and to do what pleases him.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Almighty and everlasting God, I pray for all those who have been elected to the responsibility of government in this country. I commend to you the Prime Minister, the Premiers of the States, the Chief Ministers of the territories and all who serve under them. Grant a sense of dedication, integrity and commitment to high principle to all that have the responsibility of making decisions that will affect the lives of others. I pray for a sense of responsibility for all citizens of this nation and that submission to lawful authority may prevail over lawlessness and anarchy, for the good of all and the wellbeing of this nation. In Jesus name I pray. Amen.*

*2 May*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

*"If you always do what you've always done,  
you'll always get what you've always gotten."  
(Carlos Raimundo)*

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Jesus said: 'I tell you the truth, unless you change and become  
like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.  
Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child  
is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.'  
(Matthew 18.3,4)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

For some things in life change is not always necessary. If something works well, with good outcomes, then why change it. But often, in the area of human relationships, certain behaviours can be destructive or prevent healthy growth. In our relationship with God we tend to do what we've always done, and that is to ignore him and leave him out of the picture most of the time, and then wonder why we have so many problems in our human relationships. We all need to change, becoming child-like in our trust of him, submitting our lives to his care just as a young child does with their parents. That opens the way to a change for the better in our relationships rather than what we've always gotten.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, you have created this world with exceeding beauty – let there be nothing in my thoughts or actions today that will mar that beauty. Where I can, enable me to replace selfishness with imagination and generosity, roughness with gentleness, half-truths with your shining truth. Save me from the temptation to seek gain without service, and excitement without considering its cost to others. Enable me to stand for the difficult right against the easy wrong and the constructive plan that builds up life rather than that which undermines and destroys. Enable me to say and do things that will make a difference in the lives of those I meet. Let your will be done more and more in my life, for Jesus' sake. Amen.*

*3 May*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"The human being can only be understood as a whole."  
(Hippocrates)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"...for they (God's Words) are life to those who find them  
and health to a man's whole body."  
(Proverbs 4.22)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Hippocrates, from whom Doctors' get their oath, understood well that you could not just compartmentalise us into body, mind, soul, spirit, etc. Although the study of these categories is helpful in understanding how we work as human beings; it is only as an integrated whole that we can be properly understood. The wellness of our body is related to the wellness of the mind, etc., and vice-versa. Most importantly, for overall wholeness, it is important that we follow the maker's instructions. Just as a fine piece of machinery will lose efficiency or break down if not operated according to the manufacturer's instructions, so also the human being likewise fails to reach its full potential when operated apart from God's SOP's.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, you have given me another day of life. Unless you help me, I know that this day may go all wrong. Help me control my tongue. Keep me from saying things that make trouble and from involving myself in arguments which only make bad situations worse and which get me nowhere. Help me to shut the door of my mind against all envious and jealous thoughts and against all bitter and resentful thoughts and against all ugly and unclean thoughts. Help me to live today in purity, in humility and in love. Grant that no wrong thought may enter my mind and no wrong word come from my mouth; through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

*4 May*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"A problem well sated is a problem half solved."  
(Charles F. Kettering)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Plans fail for lack of counsel,  
but with many advisers they succeed."*  
(Proverbs 15.22)

## TO THINK ABOUT

Problems, more often than we like to admit, have a tendency to generate tunnel vision in us. We can't see the wood for the trees, and the problem seems larger and more complex than it actually needs to be. If we could only turn from tunnel vision to see outside the square; to think laterally, or better still, to share the challenge of a solution with others. Once the issues or symptoms are identified then solutions to a problem can be formulated and action taken. Don't stew over problems in isolation but employ the synergy that is generated in a problem/challenge shared. Better still is to seek God's help and the immeasurable resources at his disposal.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, my Father, save me from all the sins into which I so easily and so continually fall. Save me from demanding standards from others that I never even try to satisfy myself. Save me from being very easy on myself and very hard on others. Save me from making excuses for things in myself that in others I would condemn. Save me from being wide-open-eyed to the faults of others and blind to my own. Save me from taking for granted all that my loved ones do for me and from never realising how much they do and how much I demand. Help me to try to do to others what I would wish them to do to me and so help me to fulfil the law of Jesus Christ. This I ask for His name's sake. Amen.*



*5 May*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"‘I don’t know’ – The only place where I can learn."  
(Carlos Raimundo)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"the lips of the righteous nourish many,  
but fools die for lack of judgement."*  
(Proverbs 10.21)

## TO THINK ABOUT

It is said that we learn more from our failures than our successes. From my observations in life and from bitter experience I believe that this is true. Failure tends to humble us and force us into self-examination of our gifts, our abilities, our limitations, etc. It is a hard thing for our proud, independent spirit to come to the point of saying ‘I don’t know,’ and then having to start from scratch to grow as a person. An added bonus is when we find mentors who can guide us as we navigate life’s shoals and reefs, and we do not have to rely solely upon ourselves. I’ve known many gifted, intelligent people – the sort who don’t have to try at school; who could breeze through exams without having to study – who have squandered their gifts and abilities in life because they never learned to apply themselves to the task of living in the real world. In a sense they have ‘died from lack of judgement’ because they never came to that point where they could say, ‘I don’t know,’ and then begin to really learn.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Heavenly Father, I give you thanks for the light of another day, for the work I have to do and for the strength to do it. Grant that I may pass this day in gladness and peace without stumbling and without stain. Guide me by your truth, uphold me by your power and purify me by the continual indwelling of your Spirit. Grant that by every opportunity I have I may grow in wisdom, and knowing the things that bring me your peace, obtain the strength to persevere. You know what is best for me, mercifully grant that it may happen to me such that it is pleasing to you and seems good in your sight. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.*

*6 May*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Provision for others is a fundamental responsibility of human life."  
(Woodrow Wilson)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless;  
maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed."  
(Psalm 82.3)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

So many despots! So many human rights abuses! So much corruption in high places! How can I do anything to solve the problems of the world, you say? Understand that God doesn't expect you to on your own but you can do something. There are countless organisations, both secular and religious, that work to alleviate human suffering. Perhaps you could join one of them or support them financially? You could lobby politicians to initiate changes to domestic and foreign policy? Perhaps you might even be able to do something practical for someone in your own street who is doing it tough? You can make a difference and fulfil your responsibility to imitate Christ.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, help me today to live as your person – responsible, glad and fearless. Deliver me from all pretence, from all pettiness and from all stupid pride. Let me add my skills and my strength to those who serve you in the naval community. I ask your special blessing on those who have to do dull work necessary for our well-being. I ask your blessing on all that carry heavy responsibility requiring of them constant decisions. In your mercy lead us all today into a fuller experience of life and save us from a wasteful round of things of no lasting value. In the name of Christ I pray. Amen.*

*7 May*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Purity of soul cannot be lost without consent"  
(Augustine)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"A wise man fears the Lord and shuns evil,  
but a fool is hotheaded and reckless."*  
(Proverbs 14.16)

## TO THINK ABOUT

Augustine should know! In his youth he was a 'wild child,' living a depraved and debauched lifestyle. After his conversion he could admit to his rebelliousness and the detriment to his own life that his choices had become. Fortunately his life was turned around after his conversion to Christianity and he became one of the great apologists for the early church. (Apologetics = Argue [defend] the case for...). Our foolish/reckless/rebellious behaviours are choices we make out of disrespect for God, others and ourselves; just as 'shunning evil' is a choice motivated by our respect for God, others and ourselves. It's your call!

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Father, thank you for the value you placed upon my life that you considered it worth the death of your own dear Son. Help me to fully appreciate the significance of that for my life, especially as I live here in anticipation of eternal life. Your creation has been corrupted by mankind's rebellion towards you and this is reflected in 'man's inhumanity to man.' Each day in the news we 'hear of wars and rumours of wars;' of 'Nation rising against nation', of 'famines and earthquakes.' And then there is the endless litany of assault, murder, drugs, rape and robbery in our own nation. Some-times it seems like the only news I ever hear is bad news and it takes real effort not to become depressed. At such times help remember that you are in control and that your purposes are being worked out in the world to restore your creation and to redeem those who put their faith in your Son Jesus Christ. Help me to rise above the world's corrosive influences and give me the courage to be inwardly and outwardly different and to do what I can to raise this world's standards for the glory of Your Holy Name. Amen.*

*8 May*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"When I don't know what I'm doing - I'm doing research."  
(Anon)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Trust in the Lord with all your heart  
and lean not on your own understanding;  
in all your ways acknowledge him,  
and he will make your paths straight."  
(Proverbs 3.5,6)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

We like to think that we have a grip on life and are in control. More often than we'd like to admit circumstances prove otherwise. Despite our best intentions, especially in relationships and life choices, we find ourselves 'doing research.' The Bible tells us that our understanding of what is right and wrong, good and bad, is skewed and the inclination of our heart is to act contrary to what is best for us and for others. The best thing we can do for a great life is to agree with God's way of being and doing; it's much better than 'doing research' and a lot less stressful.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, I bring to you my first thoughts as so many claims lay hold of me as the day advances. I thank you for keeping me safe, for rest and for those who face this new day with me. You know my background and my temperament and my skills, so take my energies, purify my motives and direct my plans. I give you thanks that no day is ever quite the same, no time shared with others is without surprises and no task accomplished without some enrichment of my life. I ask your continual blessing on all those in my thoughts just now and for myself. In Jesus' name I pray.  
Amen.*

*9 May*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"The best helping hands are at the ends of your own arms."  
(Anon)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life,  
to mind your own business and to work with your hands,  
just as we told you,  
so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders  
and so you will not be dependent upon anybody.'  
(1 Thessalonians 4.11,12)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Respect is an important issue in contemporary Afro-American culture, as expressed in their language and music. It seems that the worst a person can do is to 'dis' (show dis- respect for) someone. Often the respect that is craved from others is demanded without being deserved. Respect is something which we earn by our manner of living. If we don't want people 'dissin' us then we may need to examine our attitudes and behaviour and make some changes. The Christian's lifestyle ought to win the respect of others and make it very difficult for anyone to 'dis' them.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, my Father, give me courage today to do the things I am afraid to do; conscientiousness to do the things I do not want to do and grace to get alongside the people I do not like and who do not like me. Grant that even in the dull routine of the day's work I may find a thrill because I remember that I am doing it with you, so that even the uninteresting may become interesting and that even things which seem not to matter may become important. Help me to be happy all through today and to make others happy too. This I ask for Jesus' sake. Amen.*

*10 May*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Wisdom is being able to foretell a mistake and avoid it.  
Experience is recognizing the same mistake every time you make it."  
(Anon)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Blessed is the man who finds wisdom,  
the man who gains understanding,  
...She is a tree of life to those who embrace her:  
those who lay hold of her will be blessed."  
(Proverbs 3.13,18)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

The wise person lives according to our Maker's SOP's and is far less likely to 'stuff up' their own life or the lives of others. It is only when we decide to go our own way that we continually experience the same old mistakes; even to the point where we pay no heed to the adage – 'When all else fails, follow the manufacturer's instructions.'

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, my Father, help me so to live that I may bring help to others, credit to myself and to the name I bear and joy to those who love me and to You. Help me to be cheerful when things go wrong, persevering when things are difficult and serene when things are irritating. Enable me to be helpful to those in difficulties, kind to those in need and sympathetic to those whose hearts are sore and sad. Grant that nothing may make me lose my temper or take away my joy or make me bitter towards anyone. So grant that all with whom I work and all whom I meet may see in me the reflection of the Master whose I am, and whom I seek to serve. This I ask for your love's sake. Amen.*

*11 May*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"The boxer is not afraid of being knocked down –  
he's afraid of not being able to get up again."  
(Anon)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"I sought the Lord, and he answered me;  
he delivered me from all my fears."  
(Psalm 34.2)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

'Resilience' is a popular word in our culture today. It refers to the ability to 'bounce back' after the normal or even abnormal setbacks that we face in life. It begins with the acceptance that setbacks, of all kinds, are to be expected. We each have a different measure of 'elasticity,' determined by our personality and life experience; and there are various strategies that we can employ to help us bounce back. People of faith have always found that their chief source of comfort and strength, in facing life's challenges, has been to turn to God in prayer and to rely on him to make them resilient.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Lord God, bless all the work I have in hand today. Let it begin, continue, and end in you. Let no weakness of mine hinder its usefulness but let your blessing be with me in all my comings and goings. In all my work and workplace relations I wish to glorify you and testify to your power and strength and to help those who put their faith in you. In my work there must be some failures but don't let me become discouraged if this occurs. Although success may be difficult and my efforts appear in vain, by your grace may I rise up again and again. So help me in this and all work done for you, for the sake of Jesus Christ my Lord and Master. Amen.*

*12 May*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Life is like a game of cards.  
It's not so much about what your holding  
but how you play what you've been dealt."  
(Anon)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"O Lord, . . . Forgive and deal with each man  
according to all he does, since you know his heart  
(for you alone know the hearts of men). "  
(2 Chronicles 6.14,30)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

We each play the game of life and we are aware that often we play many hands leading with the wrong card. Hopefully, we manage to make a good fist of life overall, playing with what we've been dealt. What is most important though, in the end, is the motivation of the heart. For those who have received God's forgiveness through faith in Jesus Christ the outcome is assured, no matter what we have been dealt in life, because we have played with the right motivation of heart.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Dear Father God, you have proven your love for me by sending Jesus Christ to die for me upon the cross and by the presence of the Holy Spirit within me. Grant that I may be truly grateful in my remembrance of that you have done and motivated in my service for you by all that you have in store for me henceforth and into eternity. Help me to emulate Jesus': eagerness to serve, rather than be served; sympathy with suffering of every kind; bravery in the face of his own suffering; steadiness of purpose in keeping to his appointed task; simplicity; self-discipline; serenity of spirit; and complete reliance upon you. In each of these ways give me grace to follow in his footsteps and may all of my actions and my conversation reflect my faith in him; in whose name I pray. Amen.*



*13 May*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things you didn't do than by the things you did do."  
(Anon)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"What strength do I have, that I should still hope?  
What prospects, that I should be patient?"  
(Job 6.11)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

'Ave a go, ya mug!' is a common Aussie cry from spectators to a sportsperson in the field who is performing below expectations. Could that be said about your life? Another common phrase – 'One day, when...' (add excuse/reason for not doing something now). Job's lament came after disaster came upon him and he lost everything; but he had achieved much in his life up to that point. Imagine the same lament coming from your lips, having done nothing with your life! Fortunately for Job his prospects were eventually reversed. What don't you want to be disappointed by in your future?

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Dear Gracious Father, I am so often my own worst enemy. I focus more on my failures and limitations than on your rescues and ambitions for me. I forget that you gave powerful plans for my good if only I turn my attention back to Jesus. Forgive me for the wasted hours seeing only problems rather than challenges and the forgetfulness of your love for me. Renew your work in me that I may: grow up into his kindness; model his meekness; walk with his humility; and reflect his grace. Lift me beyond thinking only of myself to focus upon the needs of others and perhaps even help someone else to aim for, and possibly reach, their full potential. These things I ask in Jesus' name. Amen.*

*14 May*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"If you set off in search of the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow  
make sure that you know which end it's at."  
(Anon)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth  
and do not need a thing.' But you do not realise  
that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked."  
(Revelation 3.17)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

When we have material abundance our spiritual life is endangered. Human nature tells us that it is because of our own self-sufficiency and cleverness that we are so comfortably off. We begin to forget what God has done for us and we turn away from dependence upon him. Gradually we slip away and increasingly begin to reject God's rule in our lives. It is not long before we are in danger of forfeiting our relationship with God eternally. Guard against the neglect of your spiritual relationship with God because of the abundance of your wealth and possessions.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O Lord of my life, bless my comings and goings today. Grant me what I need to do well what I have to do and instil in me a readiness to meet people halfway. O Lord, it is much easier to deal with things than with people; it is much easier to make promises than to perform them; it is much easier to feel oneself involved in large issues than to be bothered with tedious small ones. Give me a clear idea of what I am about and patience to follow through to the end what I begin. Help me to manage the awkward person and be patient with the arrogant person and encouraging to the one who is faltering. You now each of those with whom I come into contact every day and you care about them much better than I do. Let me help you and advance your good purposes for them today and have mercy upon me for Christ's sake. Amen.*

*15 May*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Live well, laugh often, and love much."  
(Anon)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience,  
kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control."  
(Galatians 5.22,23)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Nine qualities that the Holy Spirit dispenses to those who wish to live well and pursue Christ-likeness! All positive attributes which seem at odds with what we see all too often in the world around us. Indeed, they are contrary to our natural tendencies revealed in vv19-21. Reflect on the Spirit's gifts and those opposite attitudes and behaviours and decide for yourself which are better for living well and which you would rather have.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God my Father, I thank you that I am able to go to my work. I thank you that I can move and walk, and see and hear, and think with my mind and work with my hands. As I think of the health which I enjoy, I remember those who are blind and deaf, lame and helpless and bedridden, those who have lost their reason and whose minds are darkened and whose senses have gone. I remember those who long to work but are unemployed, whose talents and gifts and skills are wasting in an idleness that they hate. Help me to live today in such a way that I may show my gratitude for all the gifts and blessings you have given me; through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

*16 May*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

*"If you fall seven times, stand up eight."  
(Anon)*

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"As you know, we consider blessed those who have persevered.  
You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what  
the Lord finally brought about."  
(James 5.11)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Perseverance is not something we associate with today's fast food, instant gratification mindset. If it can't be had right now we go somewhere else for something else that can be had instantly. Consider poor old Job; he was certainly knocked down and almost out for the count. He certainly had a gripe or two with God about his circumstances. However he did not waver in his faith, believing that he would be vindicated by God in the end. He persevered and was restored to his former condition but not before he acknowledged his dependence upon God.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, my Father, before I begin my duties and tasks of today, I ask you to direct, control and guide every hour. Grant that I may not for one moment forget your presence nor take any step nor come to any decision without your guidance. Before I act may I always seek to find your will for me. Be on my lips that I may speak no evil word. Be in my eyes that they may never linger on any forbidden thing. Be on my hands that I may do my own work with diligence and serve the needs of others with eagerness. Be in my mind that no soiled or bitter thought may gain entry to it. Be in my heart that it may be warm with love for you and for my family, friends and colleagues. Help me to begin, continue and end this day in you; through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

*17 May*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Only two things are infinite,  
the universe and human stupidity,  
and I'm not sure about the former."  
(Albert Einstein)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"The fool says in his heart,  
There is no God."  
(Psalm 14.1)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Every societal group develops its own ethos; its own moral value system. In order to prevent or control aberrant behaviour, that might threaten the group's social cohesion, they also develop sanctions for breaches of the moral code. But as the saying goes, 'You can't legislate against stupidity.' The Hebrew word for 'fool' denotes one who is morally deficient. By denying God's existence one is able to be God in their own eyes; and when it comes to moral choices then relativity rules and absolute values disappear. The logical conclusion is that eventually you end up with a moral vacuum and anarchy. How stupid is that!

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Loving Father, unto whom my heart is open, you can govern the vessel of my soul far better than I can. Command the stormy wind and troubled sea of my heart to be still and at peace in you, that I may look to you undisturbed. Let me not be carried hither and thither by the spume of wandering thoughts but focussed and calm in the sheltering haven of your Holy Spirit. Enlighten my understanding with knowledge of what is right and govern my will by your laws, that no deceit may mislead me and no temptation corrupt me; that I may always endeavour to do good and hinder evil. I ask these things for the sake of Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

*18 May*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"I find that the harder I work,  
the more luck I seem to have."

(Thomas Jefferson)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"How long will you lie there, you sluggard?*

*When will you get up from your rest?*

*A little sleep, a little slumber,*

*a little folding of the hands to rest –*

*and poverty will come on you like a bandit*

*and scarcity like an armed man."*

*(Proverbs 9.10,11)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Many people today consider lifestyle much more important than their job. The prevailing attitude is that we need only do what is necessary at work in order to sustain one's leisure time activities. The Protestant work ethic is very much derided today and practitioners are portrayed as workaholics. Besides, doesn't God provide all that we need – our daily bread? Certainly the Lord knows our basic needs and he acts to meet them. However, he expects us to work for what we get. God does meet our needs day by day, so that we will continue to depend on him and nurture our relationship with him daily. The Bible often contrasts the benefits of hard work and the disaster courted by laziness. The one who works hard will benefit and the harder one works the probability of even greater benefits increases. On the other hand the situation of the lazy man teaches an important lesson. It's dangerous to think that we can take life easy and focus only on the leisure time. This soon becomes a lifestyle that guarantees poverty as time progresses.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Almighty Father, in this moment of quiet I seek communion with you. Before I immerse myself in the feverish activity and the clamour of the day I turn to you and seek the quietness of your presence. May there fall upon me now a great sense of your power giving me peace of mind and a tranquil heart. I am content to trust my life into your hands believing that I can cast all my cares on you. I am content to surrender my will to your control believing that you have good plans for my life. I am content to leave all those I love in your care believing that your love for them is greater than my own. Thank you, Lord, that I can go forward today in complete assurance of your love for me. In the name of Jesus Christ I pray. Amen.*

*19 May*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Kites rise highest against the wind - not with it."  
(Winston Churchill)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall;  
but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength.  
They will soar on wings like eagles;  
They will run and not grow weary,  
They will walk and not be faint."  
(Isaiah 40.30,31)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

'Life wasn't meant to be easy,' the Bible says so! How we handle adversity and challenges determines what sort of person we become. The promise is there too, that with God in the picture, despite the setbacks and trials, we will overcome and become the person God intends us to be.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Loving Father, may your Spirit find in mine a quiet submission to your will for me. Occupy the compartments of my life hiding resentments, anger, or grudges, flooding them with your presence and sweeping away any flotsam and jetsam of blame, revenge and self-pity. Help me to jettison the dead weight of ugly and unfair treatment, the memory of harsh words and tally of hurts. Shore up the bulkheads of my motives and actions to resist the pressure and turmoil of offence that would sweep away forgiveness and hope. As Jesus, who could sleep during the storm upon Lake Galilee because of His faith in you, so help me to rest in you and to trust my wellbeing into your care. All this I ask for Jesus' sake. Amen.*

*20 May*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Remember that opportunity is a dare – not a door."  
(Anon)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Here I am! I stand at the door and knock.  
If anyone hears my voice and opens the door,  
I will come in and eat with him and he with me."  
(Revelation 3.20)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

"Opportunity knocks," conveys the image of a door ready to be opened, as if it were just a matter of walking through. But how often have we missed opportunities because we didn't recognise them or have the courage to take them up? Jesus' challenge is just like that. Most are not even aware of the opportunity of having a personal relationship with God, or if they are, lack the courage to take up the invitation. And it is not a risky dare but a promise of intimate fellowship with God.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O Lord, enable me to learn today some things I never knew before and to more fully appreciate those people round about me. Bless all those who touch my life this day with a friendly smile, a good idea, or the sharing of a skill. Clarify my sense of values and keep me strong to make the best choice in every situation, even if it means taking the harder path. Where opportunity for growth as a person arises save me from taking the easy way out. Grant to me a sense of the larger purposes of life beyond dull routine and fruitless pursuits. So may this day be enriched for me in giving of myself for others about me. Grant me the power to respond to you today with utmost sincerity.*

*In Jesus name I pray. Amen.*



*21 May*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

*"If you allow others to anger you,  
then they have conquered you."  
(Anon)*

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"A fool gives full vent to his anger,  
but a wise man keeps himself under control."  
(Proverbs 29.11)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

The Bible also says, 'In your anger do not sin.' Unlike the 'Thought for the Day' it recognises that our anger may be legitimate, because of what someone has said or done to us or to others. There are legitimate avenues for expressing anger but to lose our temper and give vent to our anger in inappropriate ways, such as verbal or physical abuse, makes us no better than the offender. In fact, our response may be even greater than the offense. Then we truly are foolish and have been conquered.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*that they do for me and always ready to speak a word of praise and of appreciation. May I take no service for granted or allow any help to pass unnoticed. Make me quick to notice when people are upset or depressed and give me the ability to speak the word which will help and cheer them. Help me to think far less of myself and far more of others and so find my happiness in making others happy. This I ask for Jesus' sake. Amen.*

*22 May*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap,  
but by the seeds you sow."  
(Anon)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Remember this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly,  
and whoever sows generously will also reap generously."  
(2 Corinthians 9.6)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

If you've seen the movie 'Remember the Titans,' you'll remember 'Radio' the retarded young man. When given a stack of Christmas presents he immediately distributed them to others. He was always sowing goodwill generously and became famous for it. There are 'givers' and 'takers' in this world. Those who are always taking may reap a lot initially but, like emptying a removal carton, they then reach empty – empty, shallow, lives and relationships. We get out of relationships what we put into them. Most important is what we put into our relationship with God.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, my Father, who desires me to love and serve others grant to me the gifts and graces that will make me easy to get along with. Grant me courtesy that I may live every moment as if I was living at the court of the King. Grant me tolerance that I may not be so quick to condemn what I do not like and do not understand. Grant me considerateness that I may think of the feelings of others even more than my own. Grant me kindness that I may miss no opportunity to help, to cheer, to comfort and encourage another. Grant me honesty that my work may be my best, whether there is anyone to see it or not. Grant me to live such that the world may be a happier place because I passed through it; through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

*23 May*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"The meaning of life is that nobody knows the meaning of life."  
(Woody Allen)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"I have come that they may have life,  
and have it to the full."  
(John 10.10)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Woody is right if you live in a world without God. We are just chance happenings that appear for a while, like a blip on the radar screen, and then vanish, like a mist. God has said that he created us for the express purpose of a personal relationship with him and to enjoy his creation, of which we are a part. Jesus came to reiterate that purpose and lead us back into that fellowship with God from which we have strayed. Still in the dark, like Woody? Take Jesus' words to heart and know the fullness of his offer.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Ever-present Father, my strength and my helper, I bring to you all my needs. You are the author and source of all good from whom comes every good and perfect gift. May your mercies incite greater thankfulness and a complete trust in you. I thank you that you will not let me be tempted beyond what I am able to resist. Help me in any difficulties to look to you for needed strength to do what is right. I commit myself into your hands this day. May I remember that your eye is upon me, you see all I do and know all I think and that you care for all my joys and sorrows. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

*24 May*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Wise men talk because they have something to say;  
fools talk because they have to say something."  
(Plato)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"An evil man is trapped by his sinful talk,  
but a righteous man escapes trouble.  
A gossip betrays a confidence;  
So avoid a man who talks too much."  
(Proverbs 12.13 & 20.19)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

You know those people whose brain seems to consist of a loop tape connected to a mouth with no 'off' switch? Frustrating aren't they? Then there's commercial talkback radio! Endless prattle about nothing from 'shock jocks' with delusions about their own self importance and their clueless fans who feel that they must say something. In musical notation there are certain marks called 'rests,' which indicate varying lengths of time where no note is played. They are just as important in a music score as the notes in creating the overall effect. How important and pleasant silence can be; the relief when we don't feel that we have to, or need to, say anything.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Almighty and eternal God, you alone know what lies before me today. May I stay close to you in every moment. Let me not embark on any undertaking that is contrary to your will for my life and which is injurious of my relationship with you. Suggest, direct, control every movement of my mind such that my service today, as an instrument of your grace, will benefit all whom I come into contact with. To your loving protection I commend all those who are dear to me; grant them a satisfying sense of your reality and power. Watch our Defence Force personnel, especially those at sea and in any other dangerous work place, and bring them safely to the end of this day. Grant these things, Lord, for Jesus' sake, in whose name I pray. Amen.*

*25 May*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"I grow old ever learning new things."  
(Solon)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"If the axe is dull and its edge unsharpened,  
more strength is needed but skill will bring success."  
(Ecclesiastes 10.10)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

An enthusiastic young student in theological college was making plans to fill his week with parish activities as well as do his studies. We were only required to do a day and a half. I reminded him that there would be more than enough to do once he graduated and that his prime reason for being in college was to 'sharpen the axe.' His enthusiasm was commendable but without the requisite knowledge and skills he would burn out in a very short time. 'Sharpening the axe' may take time initially but in the end it makes the outcome more efficient and profitable. And those who profit most out of life are those who are sharpening the axe by 'ever learning' and growing in their relationship with God.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Dear Lord, I recognise that I need your help to live well today and so glorify you. I find it easy to get hot and bothered by things that don't really matter. I need a sense of proportion to distinguish what is important and what is not. I find it easy to take myself too seriously and to make my work a drudge. I need a sense of humour and to be able to laugh, especially at myself. I find it easy to think that my contribution in the work-place doesn't seem to make much difference. I need to be able to look on each task as something worthwhile for the benefit of all. I find it easy to thoughtlessly and inadvertently overlook how others may be thinking or feeling. I need a greater sensitiveness of spirit to help me avoid hurting people needlessly. Help me to model the life of Jesus today and bring his blessings into people's lives. This I ask in his name. Amen.*

*26 May*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

*"Anyone can hold the helm when the sea is calm."  
(Publius Syrus)*

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"If you have raced with men on foot and they have worn you out,  
how can you compete with horses?  
If you stumble in safe country,  
how will you manage in the thickets by the Jordan?"  
(Jeremiah 12.5)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Poor old Jeremiah was having a real 'pity party' whinge to God about how tough the job was that God had given him to do. Note God's reply! You signed up for the deal? Then get on with it! Any application in your life right now?

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O Lord, it is wonderful to know that in your hands are the issues of life and death. I don't want to take for granted any of your good gifts - the air I breathe; the strength of my body; the quickness of my mind - without thanking you. I don't want to become casual about the pleasant things about me - my home, family, friends and colleagues and the natural beauty of your world. Let no sense of well-being lead me into a foolish dependence on my own wisdom and my own strength. Without your love and strong keeping, I have no security. Keep me safe, in Jesus' name. Amen.*

*27 May*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Live not as though there were  
a thousand years ahead of you.  
Fate is at your elbow; make yourself  
good while life and power are still yours."  
(Marcus Aurelius)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Now listen, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city,  
spend a year there, carry on business and make money. 'Why, you do not  
even know what might happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist  
that appears for a little while and then vanishes.'"  
(James 4.13,14)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Human arrogance looks ahead and assumes that the future is secure; that our job is secure, that the body will remain fit and well, that friends and loved ones will always be there. We are, after all, 'bullet-proof,' aren't we? The humble person lives with an awareness of their frailty and mortality. The Bible reminds us to be sure to have a realistic view of every plan we make and every intention we express, and to add the postscript – if God wills!

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Father, I thank you for calling me to repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus and for your promises to those who believe. I pray that I may be counted worthy of your calling and that by your power you may fulfil all my good purposes and every act prompted by my faith. I pray this so that the name of my Lord Jesus may be glorified in my life and so that I may be glorified in you, according to your grace and that of my Lord Jesus Christ, in whose name I pray. Amen.  
(2Thess1.11-12)*

*28 May*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Success isn't about where you are in life.  
It is about the obstacles you overcome."  
(Anon)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Then the man said, 'Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel,  
because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome.' "*  
(Genesis 32.28)

## TO THINK ABOUT

Jacob's name means 'usurper.' He had to run for his life after swindling his brother Esau out of his inheritance. Now, many years later, he was returning home to an uncertain reception from his brother. He was coming home a rich man but unchanged in his character. The night before meeting his brother, Jacob faced up to the demon of his own nature and his relationship with God, emerging in the morning a changed man with a new name – Israel. Of greater value than his success in life was his coming to an understanding of himself and his place in God's purposes.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, my Father, you ask me to be a light in the world, help me throughout this day to be a help and an example to all whom I meet. Help me to bring comfort to those who are feeling down and strength to those struggling with problems. Help me instil courage in those who are afraid and give guidance to those who do not know what to do. Help me to bring cheer to those who are discouraged and encouragement to all that cross my path today. Grant that as I move among friends, colleagues and workmates this day they may catch a glimpse of the Master whose I am and whom I seek to serve. This I ask for his love's sake. Amen.*



*29 May*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

*"It would be impossible to alter our life  
without first altering our thinking."*

*(Anon)*

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world,  
but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.  
Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is  
- his good, pleasing and perfect will."  
(Romans 12.2)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

The average Aussie life span is about 80 years. That's how long you will live if you are typical. Have you ever considered, what on earth am I here for? What is the purpose of my life? If you are like most people you've probably not given it much thought and you are just drifting through life 'going with the flow,' unwittingly squeezed into the mould of society's values, beliefs and attitudes. God challenges us to break out of that mould and to have our minds liberated by and changed to his point of view. The true worship of God is a life in accord with his ways and in service of our fellow man.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Almighty God,  
Lord of the storm and of the calm,  
the vexed sea and the quiet haven,  
of day and night, of life and death;  
grant that my heart may be stayed upon your faithfulness,  
your unchangingness and love, that, whatsoever happens to me,  
however black the cloud or dark the night,  
with quiet faith trusting in you,  
I may look to you with untroubled eye,  
and walking humbly towards you,  
abide all storms and troubles of this mortal life,  
trusting that you will turn all to my soul's true good,  
asking it for your mercy's sake,  
shown in Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

*(adapted from a prayer by Rev. George Dawson, AD 1821)*

*30 May*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Every man's memory is his private literature."  
(Aldous Huxley)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"The memory of the righteous will be a blessing, ..."*  
(Proverbs 10.7)

## TO THINK ABOUT

Memories are so important. They are our mental record of our past, of the things that have shaped us and made us who we are – both the good and the bad things. Memories are especially important when we lose someone we love. Although the person is no longer physically with us, they live on in our memory. At funerals we tell 'warries' about them to one another; we make public our private literature, as we recall the impact they have made on us. Some people make an extra special impact upon our lives and the memory of them becomes a special blessing to us in time of grief. The 'righteous' – those who are God's people – will make a positive impact on people's lives such that they will be fondly remembered for the blessings they brought into those lives.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Dear Father, I come before you at the dawn of a new day with its open doors of possibility and opportunity. Stir up in me the desire to seize and explore every opportunity for personal development in my work and my relationships. If there is any unfinished business in my dealings with others, any unkept promise, any discord, any indifference on my part, then spur me on, as far as it lies within my power, to rectify such situations so that peace and harmony prevails. Where a word from me can encourage a flagging spirit and cheer a despondent heart and where a deed of mine can make this place a better place to live and work, so help me to speak and to do. Grant me the humility and grace to be worthy of Him in whose name I pray, Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen*

*31 May*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"There are moments when everything goes well,  
but don't be frightened, it won't last."  
(Jules Renard)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health  
and that all may go well with you,  
even as your soul is getting along well."  
(3 John 1.2)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

There is no basis for us to expect that everything will go as we want or plan for in this life; yet we still get upset when things don't turn out well. We live in a world that is out of kilter with its creator as a consequence of our behaviour. The best we can do is to turn our lives over to God to ensure our spiritual well-being and to pray that he may also bless us with good health and moments when everything does go well.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Almighty Father, I thank you for the health and strength you've given me to be able to work and for a job to come to. When I think of those who are unable to work because they are unwell or infirm in body, mind, or spirit, or those who would like to work but cannot find employment and are feeling useless and unwanted, I realise how fortunate I am. Help me not to forget this when my work seems dull or boring, difficult and demanding or unappreciated and inconsequential. Remind me that blessings can be found in the least likely circumstances, like gold specks in mine tailings, if only I care to find them. Help me to remember all your blessings to me and to be grateful for them. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*











*1 June*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"If we would build on a sure foundation in friendship  
we must love friends for their sake rather than our own."  
(Charlotte Bronte)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"A friend loves at all times,  
and a brother is born for adversity."  
(Proverbs 17.17)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

In the ancient Greek myth Pygmalion creates a statue of his ideal woman, which the gods brought to life for him. The musical 'My Fair Lady' is based on the story. The character Henry Higgins believes the cockney flower girl Eliza Doolittle can be made into a lady by training her in phonetics and etiquette. The Pygmalion effect can have sinister overtones in relationships when one person sees another as 'a project' and sets out to change their essential nature; usually with disastrous consequences. There has to be a lot of give and take in relationships. There will be change in us as the rough edges are knocked off by our interaction. When we enter into a relationship with God, we come as we are. He doesn't expect or wait for us to be perfect. There will be changes though in the way we think and behave as we seek to become more like Jesus, but our uniqueness as an individual will remain. God is not about making us all identical but developing our gifts and talents for our benefit and his glory.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, guide me today as I step out to meet my responsibilities. Bless all that are unsure of themselves by helping them to grow in confidence and so reach their full potential. Help me to be the person I pretend to be - honest, loving and full of goodwill. In this time of great changes and uncertainties in the workplace and in the world at large enable me to look on the bright side of things. Enable me to see the best in the people I meet and to respond to people as you would. Save me today from speaking too hastily and from repeating things spoken in confidence and from finding malicious pleasure in criticism. Help me to live today such that I will become more like my Saviour, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.*

*2 June*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"This I like, active service or none!"  
(Horatio Nelson)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"We hear that some among you are idle.  
They are not busy; they are busybodies.  
Such people we command and urge  
in the Lord Jesus Christ  
to settle down and earn the bread they eat."  
(2 Thessalonians 3.11,12)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Lord Nelson was obviously an 'action man' type of person who couldn't abide sitting on his hands doing nothing. Christians are also meant to be people of action. Not a frenzied kind of busyness but getting on with the business of living and modelling what it means to be members of God's family. In the early church there were some members whose expectation of Christ's imminent return led them to sit on their hands. Their attitude was, 'What's the point of working and planning for a future here on earth?' If we are to have any effect on unbelievers then it does no good if we are 'too heavenly minded to be any earthly good.'

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O Lord, I thank you for the faith that you have given me and I pray that I will serve you in the same way that godly men and women have served you throughout the centuries. I ask that you would rekindle your gifts to me and fill me, not with timidity, but with a spirit of power and love and discipline. Never let me be ashamed to testify to the Lord Jesus but instead help me to grow so that I would be willing even to suffer for the Gospel, according to the power of Jesus Christ, my Saviour. Amen.*  
(2Tim1.3-10)



*3 June*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"There is never a convenient place to fight a war  
when the other man starts it."  
(Arleigh Burke)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"If it is possible, as far as it depends on you,  
live at peace with everyone."  
(Romans 12.18)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

It is a sad thing that there are some people who just can't get along peaceably with others. Something in their personality or their history makes them grumpy, aggressive, disagreeable people. If you've come across someone like this, even with the best will in the world, there are times when you feel you just want to hit them. But we are to resist the temptation and follow the example of Jesus. We are to go to whatever length is necessary to maintain the peace, short of defending ourselves against physical assault. Living in a mess-deck or labouring in a workspace with a thoroughly obnoxious person? Then look to Jesus, the Prince of peace, for the strength to persevere and to be an agent for peace among your shipmates.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Eternal God and Lord of life, I don't know what will occur today nor what will happen to me. Whatever comes be with me to guide and strengthen, to comfort and control. If temptation comes to me give me grace to overcome evil and to do what is right. If I have to make any important decisions give me grace to choose the right way and to refuse the wrong. If things go well today keep me from all pride and from thinking that I don't need you. If I shall know sorrow, failure, disappointment, loss, keep me from despair and help me never to give in. You who are the Light of the World, be with me today whatever light may shine or shadow fall that I may ever live and walk as a child of the light, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

*4 June*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Put your trust in God, my boys,  
and keep your powder dry."  
(Oliver Cromwell)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Be dressed ready for service  
and keep your lamps burning. . . ."*  
(Luke 12.35)

## TO THINK ABOUT

A religious man was sitting on the roof of his house, waiting to be rescued, as swirling flood waters surrounded him. Eventually a boat came past and offered to help but he refused, saying, 'God will rescue me.' Another boat came past as the floodwaters rose and he responded the same way. As he stood on the roof with the water rising about him a helicopter came over and again he refused help, saying, 'God will rescue me.' After drowning he stood before God in heaven and asked God, 'Why didn't you save me?' God replied, 'I sent two boats and a helicopter; what more did you want?' It is well to have faith that God cares for us, watches over us, and will provide what we need, but he also expects us to play a part in being prepared to deal with what life throws at us and prepared for his return.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Lord God, I give you thanks because you do all things for the good of my life that I may always put my trust in you. You have refreshed me overnight and brought me for your service today. Grant to me grace and power to live and be counted worthy of my calling as your child. Help me to keep your commandments and be a faithful servant by doing the right thing and shunning evil. Keep me from hasty speech, bad temper, slothfulness, discontentedness and impatience. Grant me your strength that these things may be so for the sake of Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

*5 June*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Showing kindness to others  
is one of the nicest things  
we can do for ourselves."  
(Janette Oke)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"A generous man will prosper;  
he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed."  
(Proverbs 11.25)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Don't you just feel good after you've helped someone. Even when we may have had to help someone we didn't particularly like it still lifts our spirit. Being generous is not always about money but also time and effort. Prospering is, likewise, not always about profit but also about body, mind and spirit. When we give time and effort to help others we feel good about ourselves and that means less stress and less wear and tear on the body. To serve with the motive of being refreshed may seem a little selfish, but it is so we are able to be even more productive in serving others with our lives. Besides, if God is with us, we are called to copy Jesus' example, 'who went around doing good... because God was with him.'

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Heavenly Father, be with me throughout the day and bless me with consciousness of your presence. Let me not be deceived into a false reliance upon my own strength because of my good health and present prosperity. All good things come to me from your hand and are mine to hold in trust and continued dependence on you. I rededicate to you all the power of my body and mind, all my possessions and my influence with other people. Let me be the channel through which some little portion of your divine love and compassion reaches the lives of those I meet. Remember all my loved ones, friends and colleagues, especially those who may be having a difficult time. Give me grace to serve them in the precious name of Jesus. Amen.*

6 June

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"It is always well to moor your ship with two anchors."  
(Publius Syrus)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"We believe that Jesus died and rose again  
and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus  
those who have fallen asleep in him."  
(1 Thessalonians 4.14)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

A faith which has the two anchors of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is well moored. Some people are happy to accept one or the other facet of Jesus' saving work but as such have an incomplete understanding of what he came to accomplish for us. Some deny that he died on the cross. This is rationalised in several ways and even provides the basis for stories like 'The DaVinci Code.' Without his crucifixion and death our sins have not been dealt with and we remain unforgiven. Some maintain that his resurrection is a 'spiritual' thing rather than an actual bodily resurrection. If so then there is no basis on which to hope for our own resurrection body at Christ's return. Praise God for the twin anchors on which we moor our faith – the forgiveness of sin and the gift of eternal life.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Dear Father God, thankyou for the gift of faith in you and for the salvation you gave provided in Jesus Christ, my Lord. Thankyou for enabling me to live for you in the power of the Holy Spirit. Keep me from any behaviour that will cause others to doubt the reality of my faith in you. I find it so easy to inflate the importance of my work. I easily become frustrated when the needs and demands of others hinder my plans. I tend to magnify my difficulties and to believe that I'm not being treated as well as I should be. Save me from such foolish thoughts and from expressing them openly before others. Help me to keep a realistic view of my own importance and so glorify you with my life. These things I ask for Jesus' sake. Amen.*

*7 June*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

*"Success is the child of audacity."  
(Benjamin Disraeli)*

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"One day Jonathan son of Saul said to the young man bearing his armour,  
'Come, let's go over to the Philistine outpost on the other side.'  
But he did not tell his father.... Jonathan climbed up, using his hands and feet,  
with his armour-bearer right behind him. The Philistines fell before Jonathan,  
and his armour-bearer followed and killed behind him. In that first attack Jonathan  
and his armour-bearer killed some twenty men in an area of about half an acre."  
(1 Samuel 14.1,13,14)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

How do react under pressure? Jonathan's father, King Saul, had failed several times under pressure because of a lack of moral character and because he lost sight of the fact that God is more powerful than any opposition. Because of his faith in God, Jonathan, with his armour bearer, successfully attacked an enemy frontline post even though they were outnumbered and lightly armed. We can be more certain of success, tackling the demons in our own life and the problems which confront us in life, with a strong faith in our almighty God, who raised from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, let this be a good day for me and my shipmates in your beautiful creation even if, for most of the day its beauty is hidden by the confines of my work-space. Help me to appreciate more fully the R & R value of your creation in enabling me to perform my work well. Save me from taking it for granted and from becoming complacent and, if I have become jaded and indifferent, refresh me and renew my former sense of wonder. Let me remember the need for courtesy, discipline, enthusiasm, unselfishness, patience and guidance. Bless my relationships with all that I come into contact with so that all our lives may be enriched. I thank you with all my heart for all your mercies to me and may I be conscious of your presence throughout the day. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

8 June

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"I was too weak to defend, so I attacked."  
(Gen. R.E.Lee)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Beat your ploughshares into swords  
and your pruning hooks into spears.  
Let the weakling say, 'I am strong!'"*  
(Joel 3.10)

## TO THINK ABOUT

General Lee was following the old adage, 'the best defence is offence.' But that is the way of man in this world. Ghandi introduced another way with his non-violent 'passive resistance.' These days it is called 'people power,' when large crowds turn out to oppose tyranny and corruption. But even non-violent resistance does not change the heart of man and often one tyranny is exchanged for another. Jesus tells us that conflict among us is the norm until his return in glory. It is only after his return that the spirit that makes for war will disappear altogether. Meanwhile the world is to see a glimpse of that in the behaviour of his people. Although this may make us appear weak in the world, in moral and spiritual terms we are strong in him who is our strength and our salvation.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, my Father, keep me from behaving in any way that denies my faith in You. Keep me from behaving as if I will be the only one who's going to be busy and has a lot to do. Keep me from behaving as if I am the only person for whom things are difficult and hard and as if life is more unkind to me than anyone else. Keep me from behaving as if I am the only person who is ever misjudged or misunderstood and as if I am the only person who ever gets a raw deal. Keep me from magnifying my troubles and forgetting my blessings. Help me always to keep things in their right proportions by thinking far more of others and far less about myself. This I ask for your love's sake. Amen.*

*9 June*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"I never knew a sailor who found fault  
with the orders and ranks of the service; . . ."  
(Richard Henry Dana)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"The Centurion replied, 'Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof.  
But just say the word, and my servant will be healed.  
For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me.  
I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes.  
I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."  
(Matthew 8. 8, 9)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

We all understand the necessity of the orders and ranks of the service, even if at times we grumble about having to perform certain duties and take orders from certain people we may have personal difficulty with. The Centurion was an officer of the mighty Roman army making a humble request of Jesus, a Jew. Even he could see that all human distinctions disappear at the feet of Jesus, and everyone becomes a suppliant no matter how high his or her position in the world. In acknowledging Jesus the Centurion affirmed a great truth. The most important rank a human being can carry is that of subject to the King of kings.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, my Creator and my Father, who has given me the gift of life, bless this day as I go to my work. I thank you for skill of hand and accuracy of eye and mind to earn a living and manage my home. I thank you for the friends and shipmates that you have given me, whose company I find enjoyable and which gives me great encouragement. Help me today to be so cheerful that it may make others happier to meet me. Help me to be true to you that I may be strong for others who are tempted. Grant that the reflection of Jesus may be upon me all day. This I ask for his sake. Amen.*

10 June

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"In spite of the cost of living,  
it's still popular."  
(Kathleen Norris)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"For to me, to live is Christ  
and to die is gain."  
(Philippians 1.21)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Some people will pay anything to stay alive. They will even mortgage the house to get the treatment or medicines they think will cure their terminal illness. You will not find many people volunteering to die because the price of oil has gone up or the stock market has crashed. The vast majority of people want to live. When St. Paul was in prison facing the very real possibility of execution for being a Christian, he wrote to the Philippians to encourage them to keep the faith. As far as he was concerned, Paul was in a win-win situation. If he was executed then he would be in heaven with Jesus. All his worries would be over! If they let him go he could continue with his ministry of proclaiming the good news about Jesus. Make pleasing Jesus your sole desire, and you declare independence from all circumstances that fret the lives of those desperate to stay alive without him.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Heavenly Father, I give you heartfelt praise and thanks for all your grace, love and goodness which you have bestowed on me to this present hour. I thank you for preserving me through the night and for your provision for all my daily needs. It's great to be able to trust myself into your care and I ask that you would defend and protect me from all danger today. Lead me by your Holy Spirit in all goodness and teach me to do those things that are pleasing to you. Help me not to offend against your holy will and to keep my conscience free from stain. Strengthen me in all my doings and undertakings, especially in unexpected troubles or difficulties, and make me conscious of your presence at all times. I ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.*



*11 June*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"The same reasons that make us quarrel with a neighbour  
cause war between two princes."  
(Michel De Montaigne)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"What causes fights and quarrels among you?  
Don't they come from your desires that battle within you?  
You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet,  
but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight.  
You do not have, because you do not ask God."  
(James 4.1,2)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

It's easy to blame circumstances and other people for conflicts. Sometimes others really are to blame, always looking for a chance to argue or fight. But the first place to look when we feel hostility is within ourselves. When someone is a threat to something you want or you become jealous of what they have, it colours the way you respond to them and interpret their behaviour. We can't do much about the feelings of others toward us but we can do a lot to deal with the strife within ourselves. We can examine our motives to see if they align with godliness. We can determine not to respond with sinful means of getting our own way. And we can pray for God's help in working out our differences with other people. Finally, we can ask God to give us what we need, rather than what we want.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Eternal father, I thank you that I can begin my day with you but let me not spend the rest of it in forgetfulness of you. I praise you for all your protection and goodness towards me. I thank you that I can go forward in quietness of spirit which will last throughout this day. Keep me from anything that threatens my spiritual welfare and my eternal destiny as your child. I ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.*

*12 June*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

*"A collision at sea can ruin your entire day."  
(Thucydides)*

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"So Paul warned them, 'Men, I can see that our voyage is going to be disastrous and bring great loss to ship and cargo, and to our own lives also.'  
But the centurion, instead of listening to what Paul said, followed the advice of the pilot and of the owner of the ship."  
(Acts 27.10.11)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

What an understatement by Thucydides! The ship Paul was travelling on as a prisoner was eventually wrecked on Malta, two weeks later. Some storm! Paul spoke out, warning of the danger they were in, because he had experience of sea travel and its seasonal nature in those days of sail. But he was ignored by the ship's captain and the centurion in charge of the prisoners. Paul's confidence and the accuracy of his prediction established a personal influence that he was able to use later to save the lives of all onboard. Paul spoke out confidently because of his relationship with God. Don't hesitate to speak out for what is right. If we trust God, as Paul did, we can speak out with confidence and be heard.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, my Father, today spreads before me like a blank canvas to which we will add the colours and shapes that by day's end will hopefully make a meaningful picture of my life this day. To the background of my duties and responsibilities help me add the right tones of temperament and motivation, the bold colours of creative energy and enthusiasm and the subtle finishing touches of humility and service. As the Master artist, Lord, lead and guide me in my endeavours that when my work is done I may sense your satisfaction with my efforts and know that together we have created a beautiful masterpiece which is of lasting value. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

13 June

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"I cannot trust a man to control others  
who cannot control himself."  
(Gen. R.E.Lee)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Since an overseer is entrusted with God's work,  
he must be blameless – not overbearing, not quick-tempered,  
not given to much wine, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain.  
Rather, he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good,  
who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined."  
(Titus 1.7,8)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

How can you trust anyone who is unable to control his desires and emotions to occupy a position of influence over other people? We hear so much about 'diminished responsibility' and 'mitigating circumstances' in the courts of this land. People try to shed any degree of responsibility for their perverse actions, blaming their behaviour on other people and factors beyond their control. The truth is that we all, at some time or other, try to absolve ourselves for our failure to do the right thing. Whilst admitting that none of us is perfect, we have to recognise that God has created us as responsible beings and one of the fruits of the Spirit is self-control. If we seek to advance in our naval career we are required to attend various leadership and management courses. Those responsible for training us look for certain qualities that identify us as suitable for the control of others. One of the most important is the ability to take responsibility for one's actions. Among our peers, Christians should be able to model the self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined life.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, give me strength today for anything that is hard to face or difficult to do. Give me enthusiasm to share with others the tasks that we shall do together. Give me integrity and unselfishness, that the rewards may be fairly shared. Give me humility when things go exceptionally well and patience when results are long in coming. If I am subject to criticism help me to take it well and show me where I can do better. Show me where another could develop new strengths if they could have more help from me. Show me where a little humour would help when spirits are ruffled and tired. So let me serve you well, and those who depend on me. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

*14 June*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

*"I am not come forth to find difficulties,  
but to remove them."  
(Horatio Nelson)*

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Now what I am commanding you today  
is not too difficult for you or beyond your reach...  
No, the word is very near you; it is in your mouth  
and in your heart so that you may obey it."  
(Deuteronomy 30.11,14)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

One of the important factors in the defeat of the Spanish and French fleet at Trafalgar was the training and discipline of the British sailors. Whilst the French and Spanish cooled their heels in port, Nelson had his fleet constantly exercising off the Spanish coast. Nelson was determined to remove any difficulties that might hinder his chances of victory. On the day of battle, Nelson expected that everyone would do his duty, and as a result of the gunnery and ship handling training that he had put his people through the battle was won. In the spiritual realm it is necessary to train ourselves if we are to be successful in the daily battle with sin, the flesh, and the devil. If we cool our heels in regard to Bible reading, prayer, and fellowship with other believers, then we will soon be overcome by the enemy. It's not too difficult to maintain our faith and grow in godliness. A bit of training each day in the form of some devotional time can make all the difference in defeating the enemy.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Father, thank you for calling me to be your child and thank you so much for giving me the grace to answer your call. I pray that I would continue to be changed by your Holy Spirit and that I may obey your Son in all things. I ask that your grace and peace would be mine in full measure. I rejoice that my life is shielded by your power for an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. May my faith remain genuine through all the trials of this life and result in praise, glory and honour when Jesus Christ returns, for I ask it in his precious name. Amen.*

(1Pet1.1-7)

*15 June*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"The basic experience of everyone is  
the experience of human limitation."  
(Flannery O'Connor)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness,  
and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control;  
and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness;  
and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love."  
(2 Peter 1.5)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

We are limited in many and various ways as human beings, but with God there is a power available to rise above ourselves. If we concentrate on living godly lives we will find that God enables us in so many ways. But we must make every effort. I had an exercise bike for many years. They are good for developing aerobic capacity and stamina. But it does no good unless it is used regularly. Our relationship with God is something like this. The resource we need is always there for us. But to profit from what God has provided, we have to put in the effort. The bike is gone because I didn't use it. Our godly life dissipates unless we make the effort to maintain it. Make every effort!

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Father God, I thank you for the usefulness of your Word in teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness. I ask that it may so impact my life that I may be thoroughly equipped for every good work which you have prepared in advance for me to do. I ask that the way I live would be witness to a true faith in you. May I be conformed to the likeness of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. May my life stand out like a beacon in the darkness of this world. In my home, my workplace or wherever else I may be, direct my words and deeds so that they speak of you. Help me to share the hope of your Gospel to the praise and glory of your holy name. Amen.  
(2Tim3.16)*

16 June

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"A taut ship's a happy one."  
(an old Navy saying)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"All the believers were one in heart and mind. No-one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, and much grace was upon them all. There were no needy persons among them."*  
(Acts 4.32-34)

## TO THINK ABOUT

An important aspect of discipline is in setting the boundaries and in enforcing them. Children grow up constantly testing the limits of behaviour set for them. When the boundaries are vague or their enforcement is uneven then problems arise; confusion for the child and frustration for the parent. In the military environment the old adage above is true. When a ship is well run according to SOP's and the DFDA, then there is less likelihood of morale problems because everyone knows where they stand and what is expected of them. The early church flourished and grew because they were one in heart and mind, motivated by their common bond in Jesus Christ. As Christians we can be an influence for good among our shipmates by being well disciplined and happy as we fulfil our duties.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Gracious Lord, I don't know what will befall me today, only that it has been foreseen, determined, desired, and ordered by you, and that is enough for me. I ask in the name of my Saviour, Jesus Christ and through His infinite merits, patience in all my circumstances, perfect submission to you for all that you desire or permit, and guidance in all that I undertake. I commend to your loving care all that are near and dear to me; my family, friends and relations, shipmates and any that depend on me. You know all their needs and the special trials they'll face today. Help them to rise above their circumstances, to be stronger and better for the proving. May we come to the end of the day with a good conscience and peace of mind. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

*17 June*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"What is necessary to be performed in the heat of action  
should constantly be practiced in the leisure of peace."  
(Vegetius)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"In the last days...  
Nation will not take up sword against nation,  
nor will they train for war any more."  
(Micah 4.1,3)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

We spend a lot of time training for war as members of the navy but we each hope that it won't be necessary to go into combat. Training is the necessary prerequisite of readiness for war, if it should come. Terrible things do happen in this world because of selfishness and greed among people and nations. But it was not meant to be so and will not always be so. In God's time a day is coming when war will be no more and there will be lasting peace. Life in God's new creation will be all that he intended it to be. We need to hold onto this. However dark life may be or become, a bright future lies just ahead.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Almighty Father, your Son Jesus Christ, moved placidly and unhurriedly amid the maddening crowds as He fulfilled His ministry on earth. He did not allow people or circumstances to unsettle Him or cause Him to lose His self-control. Although He was always ready to help others in their time of need he never lost sight of what He'd come to do. So grant that nothing may be able to unsettle me, that I may 'keep my cool' and take things in my stride. May I end this day stronger in my resolve to imitate my Saviour and with your peace in my heart. This I ask for Jesus' sake and in His Name. Amen.*

*18 June*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

“[Esprit de corps] is the soul of the Navy...”  
(RADM C.F. Goodrich USN)

## FROM THE BIBLE

“... for God is present in the company of the righteous.”  
(Psalm 14.5)

## TO THINK ABOUT

We are familiar with the need for teamwork if we are to be effective both as individuals and as part of a department or ship's company. It is common today for departments to go away for a day or few for 'team building exercises' and/or 'adventure training.' Such 'bonding' sessions help the group to think and act as one; giving a sense of common identity and purpose, which is so important in the profession of arms. Among God's people, where they act in unity there is the added dimension of the presence of the Spirit of Jesus, further empowering them to serve him better. Make it your aim to seek out fellow believers where you are and to spend time in fellowship together.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, assist me in all that concerns my life today. Guide me in my choices, that I may do nothing in the present that I shall be sorry for in the future. Give me strength of body and freshness of mind that I may miss no chance of effective service. Grant me a teachable spirit – a grateful spirit – a happy spirit. Forgive me my failures and my follies, for at times I give my best energy to the wrong things. Grant that none of yesterdays failings may hinder me from doing better today. Let me depend on the power of your Holy Spirit at all times, for Jesus' sake. Amen.*



19 June

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"He who makes excuses, accuses himself."  
(French Proverb)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgement on someone else,  
for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself,  
because you who pass judgement do the same things."  
(Romans 2.1)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

One of the hardest things we have to learn is that when we point the finger at someone else, there are three pointing to ourselves. By pointing at another person's behaviour and saying, 'That's wrong,' we are admitting that moral standards do exist. So when we judge others we're saying it's right to judge people's behaviour. The problem is that the moment we do, our own actions are liable to scrutiny. More importantly, God measures our actions by far more demanding standards than we set for ourselves – his truth and righteousness.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, my Father, may I be more appreciative of others. Help me never to fail to say thanks for everything that is done for me and never to take anything for granted just because it comes to me unfailingly every day. Help me always to be ready to speak a word of praise whenever a word of praise is possible and sometimes even when it's not possible. Help me to be quick to notice things, to see when someone is depressed and discouraged and unhappy or when someone is lonely and shy and is left out of things and to have a word of encouragement for them. Help me all through today to see people with your eyes, for I ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.*

20 June

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Take your work seriously,  
but never yourself."  
(Dame Margot Fonteyn)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"And those who walk in pride he is able to humble."*  
(Daniel 4.37)

## TO THINK ABOUT

The RAN has a well deserved and enviable reputation for its professionalism. We take what we do very seriously and, in boxing terms, 'punch well above our weight.' Fortunately, to keep us humble, we have a unique characteristic in our national psyche – a deprecating sense of humour. Aussies are known for that peculiar habit we have of sending ourselves up. You have to be able to take a joke against yourself if you're going to survive the mess-decks. The person who gets too full of themselves is soon brought crashing back to earth by being the butt of some withering humour. Best to be humbled with humour than by humiliation I guess. In our lives, how often it takes just this – some humiliating disaster – before we are ready to seek God.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, my Father, bless and keep me all through today. At my work make me diligent, always showing myself to be a worker who has no need to be ashamed. Make me kind and considerate, always trying to make the work of others easier and not harder. May I be courteous and kind in my dealings with my shipmates. In my dealings with myself make me honest to face the truth and to find delight only in such things as bring no regrets to follow. In every moment of this day help me to remember that you see me, that in you I live and move and have my being. May I cause you no sorrow today, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

21 June

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"There are no atheists in the foxholes."  
(CHAP W.T.Cummings, USA)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"He has made everything beautiful in its time.  
He has also set eternity in the hearts of men;  
yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end."*  
(Ecclesiastes 3.11)

## TO THINK ABOUT

The punchline to a sermon on 'God's mysterious Ways' in a movie was, 'God is mysterious – live with it!' In the natural world there is the assumption that there is more to life than just food and drink, and yet the God-denying man cannot figure out what it is. God remains a mystery, and there is no evidence from nature to support the conviction that human beings are different from the animals. The religions of the world offer no certain knowledge about life after death, and yet in their hearts men and women long for something more. Thankfully as Christians we can live with God's mysterious ways. We don't know all the answers either, but we know who does because he has revealed himself to us by Faith. We can with confidence look beyond the grave, knowing what eternity holds for us.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Holy Father, I thank you once more for the quiet rest of the night that has gone by, for the new promise that has come with this fresh morning, and for the hope of this day. While I slept, the world in which I live swept on, and I rested in the shadow of your love. May I trust you this day for all the needs of my body, soul, and spirit. Keep me sensitive to your grace around me. May the familiar not be taken for granted. May I see your goodness in the provision of my daily bread and the comfort of my lodgings and direct my thoughts to your great mercies in Jesus Christ. Amen.*

22 June

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Frigates are the eyes of a fleet."  
(Horatio Nelson)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"On that day I will strike every horse with panic and its rider with madness, declares the Lord. I will keep a watchful eye over the house of Judah, but I will blind all the horses of the nations. Then the leaders of Judah will say in their hearts, 'The people of Jerusalem are strong, because the Lord Almighty is their God.'"*  
(Zechariah 12.4,5)

## TO THINK ABOUT

The Israelites were not a nautical people but rather agrarian or desert people. For them land warfare was the greater reality, of which the cavalry attack was what the Israelites feared most. In this prophecy, God promises to so confound the enemy cavalry as to prevent them from doing any injury to his chosen people, to whom he has promised supervision and protection. If, to them, God had seemed inattentive and unconcerned about their plight, he assures them of his special attention and protection. We tend to forget that even amidst any troubles we may face, there is a difference of privilege and strength given to God's people. You may feel that it is presumptuous or arrogant to consider that you have a special status among the people of the world, but that is what God says about you. So, next time you are feeling the heat of difficult circumstances, remember that God is watching over you and will bring you through, stronger and better for it.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, my Father, thank you for giving me an appreciation of all those I live, work and play with. I know that without them my life would be lonely and lack the creative stimulus provided by the dynamics of human relationships. Help me to be conscious of the need to express my appreciation of others for all that they contribute to my life. Let me not forget to thank them for all that they do, nor begin to think of their contribution to my life as my due. I know that often I need to be more aware of how other people are feeling and ready to give a word of praise or encouragement for those who may be feeling down or to assist them in a difficult task. Help me to go forward with an "other-person centred" focus and to end this day confident that I have enriched the lives of others in some way. This I ask for the sake of Him who gave His life for me; Jesus Christ, my Lord. Amen.*

23 June

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Our life is closed, our life begins,  
the long, long anchorage we leave.  
The ship is clear at last, she leaps!  
She swiftly courses from the shore,  
Joy, shipmate, joy."  
(Walt Whitman)

## FROM THE BIBLE

".... yet I will rejoice in the Lord.  
I will be joyful in God my Saviour."  
(Habakkuk 3.18)

## TO THINK ABOUT

There is a strange sensation associated with going to sea. Once the brow is off the ship, the mooring lines slipped, and the ship moves away from the wharf, we begin a closed life. Even though we have the advantage today of mobile phones and emails, there is still that sensation of being isolated from the land-lubber life we've left behind. Suddenly our world becomes the steel cocoon of the ship. At the same time there is also the excitement of what lies before us, and we quickly focus our attention on that. Did we not join the navy for the adventure it promised? Becoming a Christian is a bit like that. We've left the old life behind and now have a new, exciting, adventurous life, in Christ. Even though, at times, we may feel apprehensive about cutting some ties with the past, we rejoice in our new life because of the benefits we enjoy as members of God's family.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Eternal Father, forgive me that so often I'm in such a hurry that my day begins in a scramble without proper time for you; that my personal affairs seem more important than anyone else's; and that I wade into my work with its human relationships without proper care. Forgive me if I am ever over-confident or unreliable or over-critical. If there are decisions I have delayed, let me act today. If there are letters still unanswered let me write at once. If there are habits I mean to give up let me start now. Help me to command my temper and my tongue this day – for Christ's sake. Amen.*

*24 June*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"When crew and captain understand each other to the core,  
It takes a gale and more than a gale  
to put their ship ashore."  
(Rudyard Kipling)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"This is what the Lord says:  
Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom  
or the strong man boast of his strength  
or the rich man boast of his riches,  
but let him who boasts boast about this:  
that he understands and knows me."  
(Jeremiah 9.23,24)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

It's great to serve in a ship or establishment where crew and captain understand each other and work well together. It makes a big difference to 'productivity' when morale is good. As a Christian in any workplace, good or bad, we have a responsibility to 'add value' to all that goes on. However, we need to be discerning about our participation in what takes place. The Bible warns us that the whole system of values adopted by our secular society is basically worthless and we are not to be deluded by that. It should trouble us as to how far we go along with the mind-set of the world. You should know this – that you can't rely on your wisdom alone. All you can do is to struggle to follow God's advice in his word. We have special need for divine wisdom to see through the wisdom of the world and to make a positive and godly contribution to those around us.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY.

*O God, I have come into the quietness and stillness of your presence to begin the day so that I may take with me a quiet serenity which will last me through the rough and tumble of the day. I have come to find wisdom so that I may not make any foolish mistakes. I have come to find peace so that nothing may worry me or upset me. I have come to find love so that nothing may make me bitter or unforgiving or unkind. I have come to begin the day with you, to continue it with you, and to end it with you so that it will be a day which will have in it nothing to regret. Hear my prayer for Jesus' sake. Amen.*

*25 June*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"A ship in port is safe,  
but that is not what ships are for.  
Sail out to sea and do new things."  
(Grace Hopper)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"The Lord is my light and my salvation —  
whom shall I fear?  
The Lord is the stronghold of my life —  
of whom shall I be afraid?"  
(Psalm 27.1)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

We often find it difficult as Christians to step forward and be counted. After all, we are a small percentage of the ship's company, and there are always those who are vociferously opposed to religious or 'spiritual' things. The mess-deck can get quite uncomfortable if we seek to express our beliefs or live out our Christian faith. The Bible urges us to be wise in how we relate to unbelievers but not silenced by the fear or threat of them. Remember that the Bible tells us that it is they who are really afraid of God and death. Their opposition to us is just bravado to mask those fears. Don't be afraid to step out as a Christian and show unbelievers that there is a 'fear free' life available to those who put their trust in the Lord.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, my Father, who always makes the light to shine out of darkness, I thank you for waking me to see the light of this new day. Grant to me the desire to waste none of its hours, to soil none of its moments, to neglect none of its opportunities and to fail in none of its duties. Bring me to the end of this day undefeated by any temptation, at peace with myself, at peace with my shipmates, and at peace with you. This I ask for the sake of the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

26 June

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"A sailor's liberty is but for a day;  
yet while it lasts it's perfect."  
(Richard Henry Dana)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"As for God, his way is perfect:..."*  
(Psalm 18.30)

## TO THINK ABOUT

After a long period at sea it's always great to get into port for some R & R. No doubt you can recollect some memorable times ashore and even days that were 'perfect,' in the sense that everything went well and you felt happy and relaxed at the end of the day. Next came the reality check – back to sea and duty! Don't you just wish the 'perfect' days could continue indefinitely? We are thankful for a perfect day but God is perfect everyday and everything he does is perfect! Praise God that in all the imperfect days of our lives he is watching over us and working out his perfect purposes for our lives.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Loving Father, you have sent the Spirit of truth to me to guide me into all truth. So rule in my life by your power, that I may be truthful in word, deed, and thought. I live in a world that thrives on being economical with The Truth and which questions, as Pilate did, "What is truth?" Keep me, by your grace, so that no fear or desire may ever make me false in act or speech. Help me to cast out whatever in me loves or makes a lie, and bring me to the perfect freedom of your Truth; through Jesus Christ your Son, my Lord. Amen.*



*27 June*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"We are as neare to heaven  
by seas as by land."  
(Sir Humphrey Gilbert)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves,  
'Quiet! Be still!' Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.  
He said to his disciples, 'Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?'"*  
(Mark 4.39, 40)

## TO THINK ABOUT

Sir Humphrey Gilbert spoke these words during a North Atlantic storm in 1583, just before the loss of his ship, the 'Squirrel'. He is right in his judgement that all places are equidistant from God, and therefore, we needn't be afraid that he will somehow misplace us or lose us. Jesus demonstrated his authority over his creation when he stilled the storm on Lake Galilee (just a little larger than Jervis Bay) and challenged his disciples to keep their faith in him to watch over them and protect them. So, whether you are at sea or ashore remember to keep near to God through your prayer and Bible reading, and be assured that he is close to you at all times to strengthen you and uphold you.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O Lord, I come before you to set my day off on the right foot; conscious of my need of you each and every moment of the day. I give you thanks for the peace of mind and serenity of heart that comes from knowing you and the for the assurance that nothing which might happen today is outside of your knowledge and control. Guard my mind from foolish mistakes and needless anxiety. Guard my actions so that I do not bring dishonour to your name. May my life this day begin, continue and end with you and express the reality of your presence in my life, bringing praise and glory to your name, for Jesus' sake. Amen.*

28 June

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Mountains can be crossed wherever goats cross,  
and winter freezes most rivers."  
(Frederick the Great)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed,  
you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there'  
and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you."  
(Matthew 17.20, 21)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

We must remember that Jesus often used hyperbole (extreme exaggeration) in order to make a point. I believe he is doing that in this statement regarding faith. Are you aware of any recorded instances of a Christian with strong faith actually moving a mountain in one go? Someone has said that mountains are moved one shovelful at a time. Mt. Newman in WA is a case in point; once a mountain but now a hole in the ground. In other words, when we face seemingly impossible odds we can, in Christ, find a solution and the strength to implement it, one step at a time. Next time you face a problem of any kind, especially one that seems impossible, don't give up but give it up to God and you'll find a way through.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O Lord, I am glad that I can come into your presence each day through prayer. I do not easily find fitting words for what I want to say. I do not quieten my spirit often enough for what you would say. Often my attention wanders and my vision is always limited. Mostly I am so wrapped up in my own small concerns. Please forgive me. I thank you that you show such compassion for the frailties of people like me. Remind me constantly of your unseen presence and enrich today's experiences and everything you've blessed me with. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

*29 June - Deployment*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"The anchor heaves, the ship swings free,  
The sails swell full. To sea, to sea!"  
(Thomas Lovell Beddoes)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"But Jonah ran away from the Lord and headed for Tarshish.  
He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port.  
After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish  
to flee from the Lord."  
(Jonah 1.3)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

It takes all sorts! Some go to sea because salt water runs in their veins and others because they love the adventure? Some are running away from their problems, or so they think, and others run into problems because they are not suited to the life at sea. What's your spin on going to sea? Jonah had been given a job by God that he didn't fancy, so his solution was to run away to sea to escape from his responsibility. It didn't work! God fixed it so that he performed the task he was originally given, but Jonah wasn't very gracious about it. How do you face up to tasks and responsibilities that you'd rather not have to do? Like Jonah, or graciously as one seeking to imitate the Saviour, Jesus Christ?

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Eternal Father, I give you thanks and praise for keeping my life in your care, and for your goodness which is extended to me daily. I pray for your grace and mercy towards those who are deployed overseas, especially in protecting them as they fulfil their special duties. Grant to each one a consciousness of your presence, a dedication to the professional standards expected of them. Keep them from any complacency that may endanger the lives of others or themselves. Give them grace to seek for their lives what is pleasing to you and in the little daily duties may they bend their wills to yours. In whatever they are called to do uplift them for service and empower them to glorify you by their example. Continue to uphold those who wait at home anticipating their safe return and grant to them a calmness of mind and spirit because they put their trust in you. I ask it through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

30 June

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"I am not afraid of storms  
for I am learning how to sail my ship."  
(Louisa May Alcott)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Then he got into the boat and his disciples followed him.  
Without warning, a furious storm came up on the lake,  
so that the waves swept over the boat.  
But Jesus was sleeping."  
(Matthew 8.23,24)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Jesus could calmly sleep through a furious storm while his disciples, at least four of whom were fishermen and used to a bit of 'roughers', were terrified. Jesus' question after he had stilled the storm was: 'Why are you so afraid?' We can ask ourselves the same question when we face dangers or difficulties today. If we only look at our problems as pounding waves and shrieking winds then we certainly will be afraid. But if we stop to remember that we are not alone, that Jesus himself is with us, we have no need to face anything or go through life 'so afraid.' Jesus has all power and he can use it to rescue those who trust in him. Nothing can touch us that he does not permit.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Heavenly Father, I come before you to set my course and fix my purpose by your SOP's. I cannot live without your blessing upon my life. Conscious of my own frailty and fallibility I ask for your strength and wisdom. Help me always to be of good cheer and never disheartened by difficulties and setbacks. Grant me the grace to be an encourager of others, keeping me from being negative or despondent among them. Help me to be a blessing to everyone I meet, making life easier, never harder for those who come within my influence. Help me to be as Christ to others that they may see something of his love for them in my life, and learn to love Him in return. I ask these things in Jesus' name and for His sake. Amen.*





JULY







*1 July – Reserve Forces Day*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"The reservist is twice the citizen."  
(Sir Winston Churchill)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Yet I reserve seven thousand in Israel -  
all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal  
and all whose mouths have not kissed him."  
(1 Kings 19.18)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

If one cares to read any military histories it soon becomes obvious that reservists have played a significant role in many crucial operations and campaigns. At times when our regular forces have been stretched to their limits and beyond it has been the reservist who has, like the proverbial cavalry, come to the rescue. They have filled the gaps and bolstered our numbers. Even today we can be thankful for their contribution, and we celebrate that on this occasion. However, there are no reservists in God's army. We can't be weekend Christians or part-timers or even just fill-in in times of need. It's all or nothing! God reminded Elijah that even if the number of people committed to him seemed negligible, there would always be a core of dedicated 'regulars.' Make sure that you are one of those regulars, fully committed to serving the Lord.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Gracious Lord and Father, today we remember the contribution that the military reserves have made to the defence and welfare of this nation in times of war and national emergency. In many situations in the past they were the first into action and distinguished themselves by their courage and tenacity in the face of impossible odds. We give thanks for their ready availability and their willingness to fill the gaps when our regular forces were stretched beyond their limits. In gratitude for their labours we pray for your blessing upon those who have served this nation well in days gone by. We also ask for the same sense of dedication among those who serve in our reserve forces today. Grant to all an appreciation of the contribution that reservists make as an integral part of today's defence force. And help us Lord, to be a people who desire peace and justice, only turning to armed conflict as a last resort. We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.*

*2 July*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Old ocean's grey and melancholy waste."  
(William Cullen Bryant)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth,  
for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away,  
and there was no longer any sea."  
(Revelation 21.1)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

On those grey days, when it's overcast and the sea is oily and lumpy, the mood on board ship can be a bit melancholic. To look out on a vast grey ocean all around inclines to lower one's spirit. Quite different are those days when it's sunny and bright and the sea is a sparkling blue. It lifts our spirit and we become more cheerful. Even more of a contrast will be that between this world and that which is to come. The grey and melancholy waste of this sinful, chaotic world is to be replaced one day by that bright and joyful experience of God's perfect, eternal kingdom. Like the apostle John, cultivate an anticipation of that day and the joy it inspires, to carry you through this world.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Lord God, thank you for all the blessings of the hours spent away from my workplace; for time with family or friends or by myself in rest and relaxation. Thankyou for the shelter and comfort of my accommodation; for my warm bed and refreshing sleep to restore my strength for each day; for the hobbies, sport and other interests I am able to pursue; all of which, with my work included, contribute towards wholeness of body, mind and spirit. Bless those who may not enjoy such blessings because they are finding it difficult to get a proper balance in their lives; either because of circumstances beyond their control or because they are not equipped to make right choices. Give them good circumstances and wisdom beyond their experience that they may share in the same blessings I enjoy because of my faith in you. I ask it in the precious name of Jesus. Amen.*



*3 July*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Eternal peace lasts only until the next war."  
(Russian Proverb)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"That day Moab was made subject to Israel,  
and the land had peace for eighty years."  
(Judges 3.30)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

The Bible portrays Israel's history as studded with alternating periods of war and peace, dependent upon her obedience to God. The history of the world is also pock-marked with human conflict. Peace is a tenuous thing dependent upon so many factors, not the least being our fatally flawed human nature that rebels against God and his claim upon our lives. Eternal security and peace is offered by God to all but only received by those who believe in Jesus Christ. Even if we were to spend the rest of our life here in relative security from worldly foes, it is only for this lifetime. Unless we have peace with God now, we won't have it in to eternity.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, grant that today I may not disappoint any friend, nor grieve any loved one, nor fail anyone to whom I have a duty, nor shame myself. Grant that I may do my work with honesty and fidelity and take my pleasure in happiness and purity. Grant that today I may lead no one astray nor make goodness and faith harder for anyone. Help me today to be a help and example to all and to bring strength and encouragement wherever I may be. I ask this through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

*4 July*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"The luminous self-possession of ships on ocean"  
(Stephen Spender)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"And now, dear children, continue in him,  
so that when he appears we may be confident  
and unashamed before him at his coming."  
(1 John 2.28)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

When God created the world he instructed man to 'fill the earth and subdue it.' We were made to rule in this world as God's agents. So it is no surprise to see a ship, alone on the ocean, as if it ruled the sea. Yet it still amazes me, when we come upon another ship miles from our natural habitat the land, to think that we could assume such mastery over the elements. What confidence we have in our abilities as a race! Let us make sure though that our 'self-possession' is in the Lord and not in our own strength and abilities as most think. Remember that we were created to serve our Lord and God and not to rule arrogantly for our own aggrandizement.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Gracious Lord, thank you for the blessing of another day in your service. Bless all who are near and dear to me - family, friends and shipmates. Bless those who are deployed or posted far from home; granting them protection in all danger. Watch over their loved ones and ease their anxieties. I pray for the grace of your Holy Spirit to give me more love for you and for my neighbours and more joy in serving you each waking moment. May I increasingly know what it means to be filled with the Holy Spirit. I ask it for the sake of Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

*5 July*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Every formula which expresses a law of nature  
is a hymn of praise to God."  
(Maria Mitchell)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"By faith we understand that  
the universe was formed at God's command,  
so that what is seen was not made  
out of what was visible."  
(Hebrews 11.3)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Some people get themselves in a right stew over the relationship between science and religion. They think that the biblical account of creation is a primitive scientific account and that subsequent scientific discoveries about the universe disqualify any belief in God. The creation story is a theological statement about the origins of the universe. We must not forget that everything the scientist learns is only an uncovering of what God put in place at the beginning. Every time man discovers something new in any field of science it should cause us to praise our creator God and stand in awe of him.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Dear Father, I thank you that I'm blessed with direct access to your presence in prayer because of my faith in Jesus. I thank you that you hear and answer my prayers. I thank you for the Holy Spirit's presence in my life, empowering me to live for your glory. Give me fresh zeal for my work so that I may not be satisfied with a time-serving mind-set. At the end of the day may I be satisfied that I've worked well, not wasted any of its moments and confident that I've helped to make this place better and happier for my contribution. I ask in the name of Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

6 July

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"While the hollow oak our palace is,  
Our heritage the sea."  
(Alan Cunningham)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Your statutes are my heritage forever;  
they are the joy of my heart."  
(Psalm 119.111)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

That we are a maritime nation is our heritage as a people; both from the fact of our being an island continent and also our beginnings as a colony of that great maritime nation, Great Britain. We are further defined as a maritime people by the fact that about 95% of our population lives on or near the coast. These are our inherited circumstances or benefits; the meaning of 'heritage.' Being in the navy is, in a sense, only doing what comes naturally, and our ships are our palaces! Just as we are called to treasure our heritage in the sea, so we are called as Christians to treasure God's Word to us. God's Word become flesh – Jesus – shows us what God is like, and His Word – The Bible – instructs us how to live in fellowship with him. That we are inheritors of God's kingdom through faith in Christ brings joy to our hearts.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, I have many things on my mind just now, all the tasks ahead of me today but none of them come as a surprise to you. I wait quietly before you as I prepare for this new day. Help me to think clearly and sensibly and with a true perspective of the world. Give me ready skills for each moment and let my goodwill towards others find a practical outlet. Save me from the burden of things that don't matter and from a selfish absorption in my own affairs. Garrison my heart with a quiet trust in you. Bless my family, friends, shipmates and all who make claims on me. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

*7 July*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Let us build up physical fitness  
for the sake of the soul."  
(Plato)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Never be lacking in zeal,  
but keep your spiritual fervour,  
serving the Lord."  
(Romans 12.11)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

'Healthy body, healthy mind & soul' might seem to be the message of both Plato and St. Paul. It's certainly the message of many religions and philosophies. Tai Chi and Kung Fu are both considered 'spiritual' activities and have their roots in Asian religions. While it is certainly true that keeping physically fit is beneficial for aiding intellectual ability, research has also shown that 'religious faith' is important in maintaining physical well-being. Most religions and philosophies, however, make a distinction between body and soul, with the body being material and corrupt and the soul spiritual and pure. The goal in life is to subdue the flesh and liberate the soul. The Christian faith teaches that the body and soul are indivisible. Indeed, our hope is the resurrection of the body into eternity. We will be embodied souls in God's eternal kingdom. Physical zeal and spiritual fervour are two sides of the same coin. Christians are made whole in Christ, not divided as in false religion.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, my Father, give me patience all through today. Help me to work at a job until I finish it or get it right, no matter how difficult or how boring it may be. Give me patience with people so that I will not become irritated or annoyed or lose my temper with them. May I not give up hope when hopes take a long time to come true, so that I may accept disappointment without bitterness and delay without complaint. Hear my prayer for Jesus' sake. Amen.*

8 July

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"There's a Providence sits up aloft,  
To keep watch for the life of poor Jack!"  
(Charles Dibdin)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"The Lord will keep you from all harm –  
he will watch over your life;  
the Lord will watch over your coming and going,  
both now and for evermore."  
(Psalm 121. 7, 8)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Someone cares... even if at times it doesn't seem like it. Sailors in days long gone, in the days of 'wooden ships and iron men,' were often not much more than chattels, and it must have really seemed as if no one cared. In such times their only hope must have been that God did. And they were right! God created us and loves us deeply and watches over us. He desires only the best for us, especially that we enjoy a relationship with him now and into eternity. If we put our faith and trust in him, he will bring us safely into his presence at the end of our days here, whether sooner or later. Today we have many provisions for our well-being in the service but these can lessen our dependence on God if we are not careful. Be mindful always that God is watching over you, not 'from a distance' but alongside you and give him thanks and praise.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Merciful Lord, renew my spirit and draw my heart to yourself that I may begin this day with thanks and praise for your endless goodness and mercy to me. Give me grace to discharge my respective duties with fidelity and cheerfulness. Make me diligent in business and fervent in spirit serving you. May I see my work not as a burden but a delight, that I may not serve unwillingly but instead cheerfully and gladly as your child. Help me to stand fast in the face of any and all trials and temptations, and to look to you for needed strength and wisdom to deal with them. These things I ask in Jesus' name. Amen.*

*9 July*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Alone, alone, all, all alone;  
Alone on a wide, wide sea."  
(Samuel Taylor Coleridge)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed."*  
(Luke 5.16)

## TO THINK ABOUT

There is a vast difference between being lonely and being alone. Some people can testify to feeling lonely even in a crowded room. Others get agitated if left to their own company and crave being in the presence of others. Others still are quite satisfied with their own company and prefer to be alone. Most of us know the sensation of our little ship being 'Alone on a wide, wide sea,' as if we were the only people in the whole world. The reality is that we live in a busy, busy world and sometimes it is nice to find a quiet spot to ourselves to catch our breath or our thoughts. At sea it can be difficult to find that quiet spot to compose ourselves and reflect on things, more so than ashore. Most importantly we need to find a quiet spot to spend some time with our Lord in Bible reading and prayer. Even Jesus needed his quiet time away from the crowds. A few moments solitude with Jesus will ensure that during the day, whether we feel lonely in a crowd or crowded by others, we will not be alone because he is with us always.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Lord God, giver of every good thing, thank you for my life and the opportunity to use it well today. Help me to approach this day as an adventure, even though there may be little difference from any other day in my daily routine and the tasks before me. Grant to me an attitude of mind and disposition of heart that will transform any mundane duties and responsibilities from chores and impositions into a joy and a pleasure. Bless me with your ability to see people and things differently, so that today I become aware of progress in my life towards what you have in mind for me and by your help I become a little more like Jesus, in whose name I pray. Amen.*

*10 July*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"You cannot make yourself feel  
something you do not feel,  
but you can make yourself  
do right in spite of your feelings."  
(Pearl Buck)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"And as for you, brothers,  
never tire of doing what is right."  
(2 Thessalonians 3.13)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

We live in a society where subjective feelings are predominant over objective facts. If it feels right then it is OK and must be right. This belief means that whatever my mood is sets the agenda for my actions. So if today I'm feeling good I'll act one way, but in the same circumstances tomorrow, if I'm feeling low, I'll act differently. And both are right? I might as well let the weather determine how I should behave in making ethical decisions. There are objective truths about what is right and wrong in the world and in God's sight it doesn't matter how I feel in any situation. The only thing that matters is that I do the right thing according to what God has said, in spite of my feelings.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, hear my prayer as I begin my day's work. Help me to remember how available Jesus was to the sick and the worried and the sad and how gracious he was always in his dealings with them – so full of respect for each person that no problem brought to him was beyond his power. Let His spirit be in all my dealings today. Bless my shipmates and watch over our friends and loved ones, keeping them safe from all harm. Grant to all wisdom, patience, the desire to show mercy, and to walk humbly before you all our day. For Jesus' sake. Amen.*



*11 July – Naming of the Royal Australian Navy*

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"It is upon the Navy, under the good Providence of God,  
that the wealth, safety and strength of the kingdom do chiefly depend.."  
(Preamble to the Articles of War)

FROM THE BIBLE

*"Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen.  
He named it Ebenezer, saying, 'Thus far has the Lord helped us'."*  
(1 Samuel 7.12)

TO THINK ABOUT

Today marks the anniversary of the granting of the title 'Royal Australian Navy' by King George V, to Australia's naval forces. The granting of the title recognised the progress made, since the formation of the Commonwealth Naval Forces at Federation in 1901, to establish the fledgling navy as an effective fighting service. Since then we have earned a reputation as a very professional, world class navy. The preamble to the Articles of War brings home to us the great responsibility we have for the defence of our country. Note, however, that the most important element is to acknowledge that ultimately our preservation depends upon God. Samuel set up a memorial stone acknowledging God's part in it when he became ruler of Israel and defeated their enemies. Consider the naming of our navy as a reminder to you of your dependence upon God for all your blessings.

PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*On this day in 1911 an order was approved by the King for the naming of Australia's naval forces as the 'Royal Australian Navy' and its ships as 'HMAS....'.*

*Lord God, I remember today the background to the formation of the navy in which I serve – a time of rising threats to world peace. I remember the distinguished service performed by our fledgling forces in World War I – how they acquitted themselves so well in restoring peace and making the sea safe for all to go about their lawful business. So help me and my shipmates to live up to the fine traditions of naval service that we have inherited. Grant to us a dedication to our calling, not because we glory in war but from a hatred of evil and oppression and a love of freedom and prosperity for all. Assist us in our commitment to the preservation of peace in our region, that we may be peacemakers, even as our Lord Jesus Christ came to make peace and reconcile us to yourself. In His name I pray. Amen.*

*12 July*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"The wonder is always new  
that any sane man can be a sailor."  
(Ralph Waldo Emerson)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"For he spoke and stirred up a tempest that lifted high the waves.  
They mounted up to the heavens and went down to the depths;  
in their peril their courage melted away."  
(Psalm 107. 25, 26)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

It is a wonder that any sane person would go to sea. When you consider what we put up with at sea: the cramped living conditions; lack of privacy; the constantly changing sea state, etc. I'm sure you can think of many more. Why would anyone want to leave the comfort of their cosy home and community for the hardships of life at sea? It's truly amazing what we'll put up with in serving our country and how we're able to justify our choice. Can we say the same thing about serving Jesus? How willing are you to put yourself out and bear discomfort for him? Jesus didn't promise an easy ride for those who choose to be his disciples. Quite the contrary, he promised us a very difficult time. Are you ready for it?

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Lord God, who bids the light to shine out of darkness, who has again woken me to praise your goodness and to ask your undeserved favour upon me; accept now my thanks and praise and grant me those things necessary for today. Fit and prepare me for the work before me, that I may faithfully perform my appointed tasks. Bless the work of my hands and my mind. I want and need your guidance and direction in all that I do. Let your wisdom counsel me, your hand lead me, and your strong right arm support me. I put myself into your hands to be conformed to the image of my Saviour. Enable me in some measure to live as he did and to act in all circumstances as he would have. I ask it for His sake. Amen.*

*13 July*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Sailors are too sanguine to despair,  
even at the last moment."  
(Frederick Marryat)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess,  
for he who promised is faithful."  
(Hebrews 10.23)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

It's hard to believe that sailors can be more 'habitually hopeful' that things will improve, even when the chips are down, than some Christians. To think that some could surrender their faith when the going gets tough is an unfortunate reality of life. It says something about the sincerity of their commitment to Jesus in the first place. Like those that the writer of Hebrews was speaking to, we will be in danger of giving up if we take our eyes off Jesus and focus instead upon our circumstances. The remedy is to keep that focus on Jesus and the hope we have of sharing eternal life with him.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Loving Father, I give myself to your service today, thankful for every spiritual blessing I enjoy as your adopted child through faith in Jesus Christ. Help me to devote myself to prayer, being watchful over my conduct, wary of the tricks of the evil one, and avoiding the seduction of the world's false values. I pray that you would open doors for the gospel message and that I would present it clearly. Help me to be wise in dealing with outsiders and to make the most of every opportunity. Finally, Lord, help me to stand firm in your will for me that I might mature as your child and be fully assured of my salvation; through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

*14 July*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"I love the sea as I do mine own soul."  
(Heinrich Heine)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"There is the sea, vast and spacious,  
teeming with creatures beyond number —  
living things both large and small.  
There the ships go to and fro,  
and the leviathan,  
which you formed to frolic there."  
(Psalm 104.25,26)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

My fascination with the sea is genetic, I think? As a child I can remember that I had lots of uncles and older cousins who were matelots in the RN and a great-great-grandfather who built square rigged ships. Other ancestors go back to the time of Sir Francis Drake and the Spanish Armada. Even though I get sea-sick I just love being at sea or near the water. For me it is also where I am especially conscious of the wonder of God's work in creation. The vastness of the ocean makes me most aware of my finiteness; how small I am in the scheme of things. And yet God, out of his great love, chose to redeem me and adopt me as his own! What circumstances lead you to reflect on the greatness of God's creation and to contemplate his decision to adopt you for his own?

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Gracious God, give me the inward strength today to live as I ought to live. Rarely do I live and serve at my full potential and come to the end of the day with all that I promised to do done. But I come again asking for what I shall need in any situation today to serve you with a single mind. And what I dare to ask for myself I also ask for all with whom I shall have dealings today. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

*15 July*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Goals are access lines to the future.  
They allow us to run the race  
With the finish line firmly established."  
(Emilie Barnes)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"...for you are receiving the goal of your faith,  
the salvation of your souls."  
(1 Peter 1. 9)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

People have all sorts of goals in life: to be successful in their career, make a lot of money, have a great home and family, etc. Once you've set your goals in life you need to work out your strategies for achieving them. However, all earth bound goals have a 'use by date' and there are no guarantees that you will be successful. St. Peter, writing in the context of persecution and suffering at the hands of the Romans, reminds us that there is a goal that cannot be thwarted. If we have put our faith in Jesus Christ then salvation (eternal life) is guaranteed. There is another goal that is a natural consequence of faith in Christ, and that is living to please God in this life. We will stumble and fall from time to time as we seek to fulfil this goal but we shall certainly cross the finish line to spend eternity in perfect fellow-ship with God.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Almighty Father, thank you for another day in which to grow in my relationship with you. I know that many things will crowd in that will make it difficult for me to be conscious of your presence and your influence in my life. Help me not to get so busy in my work and in my dealings with others that I fail to hear your voice and heed your guidance. Help me to remember and act upon the truth I know and have experienced – that each day proceeds better and I accomplish much more when I include you in my day from beginning to end. Thank you Father, for all that this day will bring. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

*16 July*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

*"Ships are to little purpose  
without skillful Sea Men."  
(Richard Hakluyt)*

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Do you see a man skilled in his work?  
He will serve before kings:  
he will not serve before obscure men."  
(Proverbs 22.29)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Regularly in publications like 'Navy News' we read of dedicated personnel, who've performed extraordinary duties both at sea and ashore, being presented with awards and commendations for their endeavours. One article, speaking about the efforts of one of our ships in the gulf mentioned her 'can do' reputation and said, 'The ship and her company are not only ambassadors when it comes to promoting the professionalism of the RAN, but also ambassadors for the character and reputation of Australians in the region.' But there is a higher accolade to which Christians aspire, that will transcend any earthly good report, and that is to hear the Saviour's words for faithful service of him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant!'

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Merciful Saviour, I come to you as one who by faith believes and speaks to you as if you were physically present. I thank you for your mercies, for the safety and rest of the night and for the hopes and duties of the day. I cannot know what the day will bring but I know that it will most surely bring your love and grace for me and continual opportunities for doing your will and giving myself up to your use. Knowing you, I know all I need to know of this unknown day. May this day be a day of peace and happiness where I reside, work and play and in my heart. Let nothing take me unawares, inasmuch that I rest in you, my Lord and Saviour. Amen.*

*17 July*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"All you that would be seamen  
must bear a valiant heart."  
(Martyn Parker)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"But now I urge you to keep up your courage,  
because not one of you will be lost;  
only the ship will be destroyed."  
(Acts 27.22)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Notwithstanding the possibility of action in 'war-like' operations it can still be very scary at sea. Many years ago SYDNEY, the 'Vung Tau Ferry,' was caught in a really bad storm off Byron Bay, en route to JB. The ship went up and down in the one spot for three days, just making enough headway to keep steerage. Waves broke on the flight deck as she ploughed into waves and the props came out of the water. Spray from the waves was carried over the GDP. Internally lockers and fittings were torn from their mountings and the ship became a shambles. It took a week to put her back in order after she reached JB. She took such a pounding that at times I wondered if the old girl would founder. Truly a scary time. St. Paul spent fourteen days in a violent storm on the Mediterranean Sea and eventually the ship was wrecked on Malta but all survived. He had confidence in God's promise to him that he would be preserved in spite of the danger. We may face many dangerous circumstances during our naval careers but if we have faith in God we can pass through them with a valiant heart, knowing that we are secure in him.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Heavenly Father, as I come before you each day I am conscious of what lies before me and of what I need to accomplish. In a task oriented workplace it is easy to forget that others have concerns and needs which I am often unaware of and which are significant for them. Grant to me a greater sensitivity to those around me, understanding that I can still accomplish my goals without unnecessarily adding to another's burdens. Help me to treat others as I would wish them to treat me. Help me to do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit but in humility consider others better than myself. Help me to look not only to my own interests but also to the interests of others. Grant to me a Christlike attitude in all things, for I ask it in His precious name. Amen.*

*18 July*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"A man is no sailor if he cannot sleep when he turns in,  
and turn out when he's called."

(Richard Henry Dana)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"...I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.  
I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty.  
I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation...."*  
(Philippians 4.11,12)

## TO THINK ABOUT

Supposedly sailors will be tired from their labours after working and watch-keeping and therefore have no trouble falling asleep, and then have no trouble turning to when on watch because of their keen sense of duty. We know there are good times and bad times; that life circumstances vary. Hopefully we learn to take the rough with the smooth and develop a level of contentment with our lot. Let's face it; sometimes there's not a lot we can do about our circumstances. But rather than adopting a fatalistic view of things we can learn to be like St. Paul. His independence from circumstances grew out of the conviction that his God met all his needs. If you remember that God has endless resources to meet our needs, we too can grasp the secret of being content, whatever our circumstances.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, let me fear nothing today but that I may grieve you, and seek nothing but to glorify your name. Clear my vision that when I come to the crossroads of choice I may see what to do. Give me the courage to go forward into action when that moment comes. Strengthen all involved with me in my undertakings, and let me show them consideration. Bless all who support me within the ties of family and friendship. Let no desire to curry favour make me too intent on pleasing others. Enable me to carry responsibility with humility and with true dignity, in the spirit of Christ. Amen.*



*19 July*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Even the bravest cannot fight beyond his strength."  
(Homer)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power."  
(Ephesians 6.10)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Early in the movie 'The Last Samurai' the hero finds himself fought to a standstill against a superior force. He is lying utterly exhausted on the ground at the mercy of his enemy but his life is spared because of his courage. We may not have been called to desperately defend our life yet and hopefully will never have to, but there are times when we have come to a point of exhaustion, either mentally or physically, where we couldn't go on. The Bible recognises that in our own strength we have limits. What do we do when we reach those limits? Beyond our strength is the Lord's domain and we are urged to operate in his strength in serving him. We will be more effective in our service if we seek that assistance in the first place, rather than the last when we have come to a standstill.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Eternal and ever blessed God, whom to know is life eternal, help me daily to know you better, that daily I may more fully enter into real life and may more fully know the meaning of life. Grant that I may daily serve you more faithfully so that in doing your will I may find my peace. Help me day by day to love you more so that I may come a little nearer to loving you as you first loved me. Hear my prayer through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

20 July

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Failure is just another way to learn  
how to do something right."  
(Marion Wright Edelman)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"I applied my heart to what I observed  
and learned a lesson from what I saw."  
(Proverbs 24.32)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Have you ever taken the shortcut that proved to be the longest way home? You got lost and ended up going in circles trying to find the right way home. What about assembling something that you bought in kit form? Did it turn out to be the situation, 'when all else fails, read the instructions!' It is said that we learn more from our failures than we do from our successes. We learn many hard lessons in life before we get some things right. The most important lesson we need to learn is accepting God's assessment of us and getting our lives right with him. We are sinners, saved by God's grace towards us in Jesus Christ. Don't take the long way home or fail to read the instructions but turn to God in repentance and faith and be right with God now.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Loving Father, my whole life until now has been one great proof of your care for me. I have been fed and clothed and sheltered and given an active mind and love in my heart. So help me, as I pause to begin the day, to resolve to trust you to shine into any gloom of the mind, to stand by me in any trial of my love and to give me needed rest in your perfect timing. May this day be full of a power that shall bring me near to you and make me more like you. May I so trust you that when the day is over my trust shall be firmer than ever. I give you thanks and ask all these things in Jesus' name. Amen.*

*21 July*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"A man with his heart in his profession  
imagines and finds resources  
where the lazy and worthless despair."  
(Frederick the Great)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"We want each of you to show this same diligence  
to the very end, in order to make your hope sure.  
We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those  
who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised."  
(Hebrews 6.11,12)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Would you describe yourself as proactive or reactive? Do you anticipate situations or circumstances in your life and take action to deal with them before they occur, or are you like someone who is being battered by a succession of waves in the surf? Are you keen about your work and looking for ways to do your job better or just coasting along doing only what is required. Christians are called to set a good example, to be proactive, in their work as a witness for Christ. The words above were written to Christians who were giving up their faith because of the hard time they were experiencing. We are exhorted not only to work hard as part of our witness for Christ but also to work hard at living Christlike lives.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Dear Lord, I know that each day contains mixed blessings. Help me to be thankful for all the good things which will come my way; for the tasks successfully completed in good time; for the encouraging remarks or compliments from others; for the help I receive from family, friends or colleagues. Help me to respond positively to those things which don't turn out as anticipated; finding in them some unexpected blessing. May I discover in me a greater tolerance for, and patience with, those who make unreasonable demands or unfair criticisms, or who are discourteous or unhelpful. In all circumstances help me to approach everything cheerfully and serenely; confirming the reality of my relationship with you. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

22 July

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Keep a green tree in your heart  
and perhaps the singing bird will come."  
(Chinese Proverb)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"But hope that is seen is no hope at all.  
Who hopes for what he already has?  
But if we hope for what we do not yet have,  
We wait for it patiently."  
(Romans 8.24,25)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

The movie 'Dead Poet's Society' tells the story of a teacher at an exclusive private school who challenges his students to think for themselves – with tragic results. A young man forced by an overbearing father to prepare for a medical career kills himself because he is unable to face such a future. Most people who kill themselves do so because they feel hopeless and can't see any meaningful future ahead of them. Time and again the Bible reminds us that it's just the opposite for true believers; who put their trust in God. In Christ the future is never really bleak. Beyond whatever darkness the believer may face they know there lies a glorious future. The Christian lives in hope!

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Almighty Father, take your rightful place as Lord of my life today. Empower me by your Holy Spirit to follow after all that is good and fair and true. Let there be nothing which occupies my mind that could not bear your scrutiny or fail to win your approval. Bless all my undertakings today and cause them to prosper so that I may be well satisfied with each and every outcome and content in the knowledge that I have done my best. Help me, where possible, to bring a comforting or encouraging word to those who may be doing it tough today and give them the knowledge that you desire to be their 'refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble'. I ask all these things in Jesus' name. Amen.*

23 July

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"To be doing good deeds is man's most glorious task."  
(Sophocles)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Do not be overcome by evil,  
but overcome evil with good."*  
(Romans 12.21)

## TO THINK ABOUT

Has someone done the dirty on you recently, or even some time in the past? Are you nursing a grudge? Have you felt like getting even or even taking revenge? All natural reactions when we are wronged but as Christians not to be acted on. Instead we are called upon to demonstrate the reality of God's presence in our lives. The ugly things in us – the anger, hatred, hostility and desire for revenge – are to be overcome and we are to show kindness and concern towards those who wrong us. In this way – by doing good – we can overcome the evil in us. It doesn't mean that our good will overcome the evil in others; we leave it to God to work that out. We benefit from the positive change brought about in us by God as evil is overcome by good.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, my Father, as I commence another day I thank you for the beauty of your world: for the light of the Sun and the wind on my face. I thank you for life's gracious things: for friendship's help; for kinship's strength; for love's wonder. I remember this world's evil and its sin. Help me to overcome every temptation and make my life like a light which guides to goodness. And, if anyone has fallen, help me to sympathise and to help rather than to judge and condemn. I remember this world's sorrow. Help me today to bring comfort to some broken heart and cheer to some lonely life. So grant that, when evening comes, I may feel that I have not wasted this day. Hear this prayer through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

*24 July*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"What hope is there when people,  
even in front of the evidence,  
turn their head?"  
(Anon)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"The heavens declare the glory of God,  
the skies proclaim the work of his hands."  
(Psalm 19.1)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

God speaks to every human being through his creation. Every person has some truth about God, because the universe which displays his eternal power and divine nature, wordlessly shouts out to us 'he exists!' Only by denying the obvious truth, that God exists and is greater than the things he has made, can we avoid accepting our responsibility before him for our failure to acknowledge him and serve him as he deserves to be served.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Lord God, into your hands I commend myself and all who are dear to me. Keep yourself present to me at all times even to the end of the day. Grant that I may not lose sight of you in all the business that will rise up to meet me. Keep me humble and gentle, self-denying, firm and patient, active, wise to know your will and to discern the truth; loving, that I may learn to resemble Jesus. Make me thankful for all your mercies, and more ready to serve you with all my heart; for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.*

*25 July*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"If you mess up, it's not your parents fault,  
so don't whine about your mistakes, learn from them."  
(Bill Gates)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Honour your father and your mother –  
which is the first commandment with a promise –  
that it may go well with you  
and that you may enjoy long life on earth. "*  
(Ephesians 6.2)

## TO THINK ABOUT

The Ten Commandments are addressed to us in the second person singular, i.e., to each of us individually! Therefore we cannot avoid accountability before God for the way we respond to them. They are relational, showing us how to live harmoniously with God and with other people. This commandment, the fifth, instructs us to show respect for our parents. That may be hard for some people if they have not experienced good parenting. Nevertheless, 'that it may go well with you,' reminds us that God gives us these commands for our benefit. As we live in harmony with what God says is right we will experience his blessing of us. You may not like what your parents have done to you or for you but that need not prevent you from showing them the respect God wishes you to show toward them.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, my Father, I am very fortunate in my home, my parents, my family, my friends, my work, my church, my country. Today I want to remember before You those for whom life is not nearly so happy as it is for me: refugees who have no home, no place to call their own; people in lands in which they have no rights because of their colour or race; those who love freedom in lands where freedom is lost; Christians in lands where Christians are persecuted; those who are unhappy in their work, badly paid or compelled to work in bad conditions; those who are treated at home without sympathy and even with cruelty; those who live or work in a situation in which it is very difficult to be a Christian at all; the friendless, the lonely, and the sad; those in hospitals and in places for those whose minds have lost the light of reason; those in prison and in disgrace. O God, grant that my own happiness may never make me blind to the need, and forgetful of the unhappiness of others. This I ask for Your love's sake. Amen.*

*26 July*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

*"Don't give up!"  
(Anon)*

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Come to me all who are weary and heavy laden  
and I will give you rest."  
(Matthew 11.28)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

I wonder if you have seen the cartoon of a frog, with his 'hands' around the throat of a pelican that is trying to eat him and his 'feet' braced in the pelican's mouth, desperately trying to avoid being swallowed. Underneath it the caption, 'Don't give up!' Sometimes it's tough being a Christian in the workplace and we feel like we're going under. It would be much easier to just go along with the crowd than trying to live up to our calling as God's child. But don't give up and don't just rely on your own resources of mental and physical strength. Remember to work in tandem with Jesus for the strength you need to keep on keeping on.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Heavenly Father, almighty and everlasting God, I thank you for bringing me safely to this day. Keep me by your mighty power and grant that today I fall into no sin, nor run into any kind of danger, but lead and govern me in all things that I may always do what is right in your sight. Guide and strengthen me by your Spirit that I may give myself to your service and live this day in love for others and to you. Give me a reverence for the truth and wisdom to use the knowledge you give me such that it will benefit all whom I come into contact with; to the glory of your name. through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*



*27 July*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"An argument attacks the problem,  
a quarrel attacks the person."  
(Ray Woodward)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Starting a quarrel is like breaching a dam. . . ."*  
(Proverbs 17.14)

## TO THINK ABOUT

We all need to learn how to argue! When I'm talking with people about building relationships I ask them if they know the difference between an argument and a quarrel. Most don't really know the difference. We argue every day when we need to convince one another about making choices about things we have to do. We collect our facts, put them in order, come to a logical conclusion and present our case. A quarrel is an argument that has got out of control because the emotions have come into play. Perhaps we are not winning the argument so we start to get personal and attack the other person, questioning their honesty or integrity, etc. That might soon be followed by name calling and then the emotions escalate further... Better to lose the argument than a good relationship!

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, thank you for giving me another day and another gift of time. Help me all through today not to put off until tomorrow that which I ought to do today. Help me not to put things off because I can't be bothered doing them; because I don't want to do them; because I don't like doing them; or because I am afraid to do them. Help me to do each task, to face each duty, to shoulder each responsibility as it comes to me, so that if life should end for me tonight, there will be no loose ends, no things half-finished and no tasks undone. I ask it through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

*28 July*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

:One picture is worth a thousand words –  
but for some reason people prefer to use a thousand words."  
(Anon)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"My dear friends take note of this:  
Everyone should be quick to listen,  
Slow to speak and slow to become angry."  
(James 1.19)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

The words we say can have a great impact on others, particularly living on a ship in close quarters. After a while at sea, especially during deployments, it's easy to become a little 'sand-papery' with one another. It's then that we need to be even more careful about what we say and how we speak to each other. We also need to be able to step back from some of the things we hear and 'count to ten' before reacting.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Loving Father, of infinite mercy and boundless majesty, I thank you that no distance can separate you from me. Be present to me everywhere and at all times, wherever I may go and I whatever I do, to be my guide and companion. May no difficulty, adversity or opposition overwhelm or discourage me but may all things turn out happily and successfully. Grant also, remembering how you have mercifully pardoned my mistakes and deliberate sins, that I may frankly forgive all those who have sinned against me and seek to promote peace and harmony around me. You have called me in Christ to love and service, with a heart ruled by the power of your Holy Spirit; so work in me today to fulfil your will and purposes for my life, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

29 July

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Men are from earth.  
Women are from earth.  
Deal with it."  
(Anon)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"When God created man,  
he made them in the image of God.  
He created them male and female  
and blessed them."  
(Genesis 1.27,28)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Much has been made in recent times about the differences in the way men and women think and function. These differences have become the subject of many jokes and quite a few books. It's not uncommon to hear someone say about another person, 'It's a girl/boy thing.' While it is helpful in many ways to understand these gender differences in relating to one another, it is also important to remember that we are, both men and women, created and blessed by God and that each of us has equal status before him and equal responsibility for the conduct of our lives.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Heavenly Father, thank you for all the good things you've given me; for all those who make a difference to my life, because of their love and concern for me and which I am privileged to reciprocate; for my home, however humble it may be and for my career, which gives me daily purpose. There are just so many other things for which I am grateful and to count them I would be truly amazed at how much I take for granted your goodness to me. Help me to express my gratitude by living as you intended for me – in obedience to your command-ments and by loving my neighbour as myself; reflecting the life of Jesus in all I say and do. Help me to excel in all that I do today, such that I bring glory to your name, for Jesus' sake. Amen.*

*30 July*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"The realities of faith  
lie outside the realm of psychology."  
(Carl Jung)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"If you do not stand firm in your faith,  
you will not stand at all."  
(Isaiah 7. 9)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Faith is necessary to please God and to be able to live for him. God never reveals the circumstances we will face ahead of us in life because he wants us to learn to trust in him. We need only accept the truth that God has revealed enough about himself in his Word, the Bible, and through his Son Jesus Christ, as the foundation for a firm faith. All of the challenges and difficulties we will face in life require an act of faith in him and obedience to his Word, if we are to stand up to them and to pass through them. The person of faith knows that they are eternally secure in Christ, regardless of what may happen here in the temporal world.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, I want to try to begin today by thinking not of myself but of others. Bless those for whom today is going to be a difficult day: those who must make decisions or wrestle with temptations or who have some special problem to solve. Bless those for whom today is going to be a sad day: those who are meeting the day with tears in their eyes and with sorrow and loneliness in their hearts. Bless those for whom today is going to be a happy day and who will walk in the sunshine of life. Give me sympathy and love for all, that I may always try to weep with those who weep and rejoice with those who rejoice. I ask this through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

*31 July*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"In this house with starry dome  
shall I never feel at home?"  
(William Watson)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"I spread out my hands to you;  
my soul thirsts for you like a parched land."  
(Psalm 143.6)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Any mother knows how hard it is to satisfy a child who comes to the table and says, 'I want something...but I don't know what I want.' A skilful mother can usually find something to please her child after such a vague request. But nothing on this planet – no relationship, no material thing, no pleasure – can satisfy the deepest longings of the soul. Our deepest longings can only be satisfied in a relationship with God and his Son Jesus Christ.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Almighty Father, who fills all things with your presence, I pray, that out of your great love you will keep me near to you this day; granting that in all my ways and doings I'll remember that you see me, and that I may have the grace at all times to know and perceive the things you would have me do and the strength to fulfil them. I acknowledge your dominion over me; my life, my death, my soul, my body, all belong to you. Grant that I may willingly consecrate them all to you and use them in your service and for the benefit of others; through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*







AUGUST









*1 August*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"To those who think, life is a comedy;  
to those who feel, life is a tragedy."  
(Horace Walpole)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Yet man is born to trouble  
as surely as sparks fly upward."  
(Job 1. 7)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

A distressing and disturbing aspect of life we have to deal with is that of unmerited suffering. One way people seek to deal with the problem is that of Stoicism – the stiff upper lip – whereby you steel yourself against the pain and suffering through fortitude and austerity. This is not an answer to suffering but a defence against it. Mercifully God has not left us to face this problem on our own. Christianity encourages us to acknowledge the suffering, to face it and to feel it, and to rely on the God of grace to help us overcome it, knowing that he never allows more than we can bear.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Eternal Father, the earth is yours and everything in it. You are God and apart from you I am and have nothing. I lift up my soul to you and put my trust in you. Grant to me the gifts and abilities I need this day to live well and fulfil your purposes for my life. As I face the changes and chances of this mortal life, give me an unshakeable faith in you, without a shadow of doubt, that I may be open to what I know is true and able to accept those things I do not understand. Arm my will with your strength to maintain my integrity and fill my heart with your love in all my dealings with others. This I ask for Jesus' sake. Amen.*

*2 August*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"To grasp this sorry scheme of things entire...  
Shatter it to bits – and then  
remould it to my hearts desire."  
(Omar Khayyam)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"In this world you will have trouble.  
But take heart!  
I (Jesus) have overcome the world."*  
(John 16.33)

## TO THINK ABOUT

The poet's reaction to misery and pain was the desire to remake the world with suffering left out. Idealistic but hardly realistic. The solutions of all religions and philosophies, other than Christianity, have no effective answers to the problem of undeserved suffering. The key to dealing with suffering is finding God in a deeper way. There are no obstacles, barriers, or difficulties that cannot be overcome when we draw near to Jesus Christ.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, give me strength and wisdom to live this day as I ought. Give me strength to conquer every temptation which will come to me; strength to do every task which is assigned to me; and strength to shoulder every responsibility which is laid upon me. Give me wisdom to know when to speak, and when to keep silent; wisdom to know when to act, and when to refrain from action; and wisdom to know when to speak my mind, and when to hold my peace. So bring me to the end of this day in goodness, in happiness and in content; through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

*3 August*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"The statistics concerning death are very impressive –  
one out of every one dies!"  
(George Bernard Shaw)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"...just as sin entered the world through one man,  
and death through sin,  
and in this way death came to all men."  
(Romans 5.12)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Every day conflicts throughout the world and within our own nation are brought to the forefront of our minds via the media. Reactions to the subject of death are quite interesting. Some are unwilling to dwell upon it at all and thrust it from their minds, considering it morbid. It is plain that they are in bondage to the fear of death. But though they can avoid the thought they cannot evade the fact – that each of us will, at some time, die. Christians need have no fear of death since they have a life within them that survives death. The life they live 'in Christ' is eternal.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Heavenly Father, whose way is perfect, help me always to trust in your goodness; that walking with you and following you in all simplicity, I may possess a quiet and contented mind, and may cast all my cares on you because you care for me. Be pleased to bless my labours today and strengthen me for my work. Assist me in being more charitable and self-denying; always ready to sacrifice my comforts and the things I like for the sake of doing good and blessing my neighbour. Make me kind in thought, gentle in speech, and generous in deed; doing all things to your glory and praise, through Jesus Christ, my Lord. Amen.*

*4 August*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Doubt is a state of mind between faith and unbelief  
so that it is neither of them wholly  
and it is only each partly."  
(Os Guinness)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Are you the one who was to come,  
or should we expect someone else?"  
(Matthew 11.3)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

When we have an honest doubt we are not betraying our faith or surrendering to unbelief. We are simply saying we are in two minds – and pondering which way to go. When you are in doubt I suggest you do the same as John the Baptist did (he asked the question above, of Jesus). Ask questions of the Lord and search for answers in the Bible. God will help you make up your mind and to come down on his side.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Almighty Father, thank you for my life and all the good things in it; for all my undeserved blessings and knowledge of yourself. Help me to grow to that full maturity you desire for me and to learn the lessons that you are seeking to teach me. Keep me from the folly of repeated mistakes and from succumbing to the same temptations over and over again. Give me the discernment I need to recognise my own shortcomings and the courage to make those changes necessary for me to reach my full potential as your child. Help me daily to grow in the grace of Jesus Christ, reflecting more and more His likeness in my life, to your praise and glory. Amen.*

*5 August*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Sooner or later one asks even of Beethoven,  
even of Shakespeare: Is that all?"  
(Julian Huxley)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"But our citizenship is in heaven.  
And we eagerly await a Saviour from there,  
The Lord Jesus Christ..."  
(Philippians 3.20)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

The human predicament is this: no matter how happy our conditions in the world there are feelings within us that say, 'I am made for something better than this.' It might sound strange, but even Christians are not perfectly satisfied in this world. We are in this world as aliens and exiles and all our sense cries out, 'This is not my home.' And strangely, we are glad. Keep in mind that this world is not your home and that you are just passing through. Do not let things of time blot out the things of eternity.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Give me this day, O God, the energy I need to face my work; the diligence I need to do it well; the self-discipline, which will make me work just as hard, even if there be none to see, and none to praise, and none to blame; the self-respect which will not stoop to produce anything which is less than my best; the courtesy and the considerateness, which will make me easy to live with and easy to work with. Help me so live today that I may make this world a happier place wherever I may be; through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

6 August

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"If for all practical purposes we believe that this life is our best shot at happiness, if this is as good as it gets, we will live as desperate, demanding and eventually despairing men and women."  
(John Eldridge)

## FROM THE BIBLE

"...Christ in you, the hope of glory."  
(Colossians 1.27)

## TO THINK ABOUT

God wants us to live our lives in the anticipation of eternity, to lift our eyes beyond the immediate and have a clear vision of the kingdom that lies ahead. There is nothing wrong with pursuing a career or buying a home as long as we do not let those things fill our whole vision and we lose sight of the fact that our real home is in heaven. If we do lose that vision, it is then that we become desperate, demanding, and eventually despairing people.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Heavenly Father, I praise you for the mercies of another day; for your kind and loving care over me; for your patience with my weaknesses; and for your merciful forgiveness of all my sins through Jesus Christ my Lord. I thank you that you are with me each moment of the day so that troubles will not overwhelm me, nor temptations find me undefended by your grace. May I so live this day, rejoicing in my fellowship with you, that all my duties may be cheerfully and faithfully done, and that I may be a real help and comfort to others, helping to bear their burdens and making life less difficult for them. Grant me your peace which will keep me wise and steadfast and enable me to bear up under any difficulties. Let your blessing fall abundantly over all my family, friends and shipmates to the honour and glory of your name, through Jesus Christ. Amen.*

*7 August*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"I have been able to conquer an empire  
but I have not been able to conquer myself."  
(Peter the Great of Russia)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Be self-controlled and alert.  
Your enemy the devil prowls around  
like a roaring lion looking  
for someone to devour."  
(1 Peter 5.8)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

There is no freedom without self-control. People who try to gain freedom through indiscipline are free in the sense that a boat is free when it loses its rudder; it is free to sail anywhere, even on the rocks. The rule of the sea is applicable in life also: heed the helm or heed the rocks. Many famous individuals have spoken about the importance of discipline in their lives. There has never been and never will be a great life without self-control.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for the blessing of family, friends and colleagues, and for your provision of food, clothing and shelter in a world where many are in desperate need of all things. Grant to me a deep sense of gratitude for all your mercies in abundance. I cannot fully understand or comprehend the extent of suffering experienced by refugees and casualties from wars and natural disaster; but my hands and my heart can be open to their plight. Stir me to act on their behalf in whatever way I can – in prayer, in giving to relief agencies, or in any other ways you may reveal to me. Help me to show my gratitude for all my blessings by letting those known to me know how much I appreciate them and all that they do for me; and by being diligent in doing all that I can for them. Help me to treasure the privilege of my work and to do it as well as I possibly can as a confirmation of my thankfulness for your love for me. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

*8 August*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

*"By our own spirits we are deified."  
(William Wordsworth)*

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Blessed are the poor in spirit,  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."  
(Matthew 5.3)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

If God were to say to you, 'Choose eight things that would make you feel happy,' what would you choose? More money? A new Car? An overseas holiday? etc... Would you choose to be 'poor in spirit'? Jesus indicates that it is very important and a precursor to true happiness. Being poor doesn't necessarily mean that a person is spiritual. Poverty can drive a person to dishonesty. The convicts who were transported here testify to that. In the Bible poverty is identified with the need for a humble dependence on God. It is the admission that we are nothing without Jesus Christ. To be 'poor in spirit' is to acknowledge our spiritual bankruptcy before God. Jesus declared that if we want to be blessed and to inherit a place in God's kingdom, then we must first be aware of our spiritual poverty and then turn to him in humble dependence.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, Lord of all good life, help me to use today well. Help me to use today to know you a little better; to do my work a little more diligently; to serve others a little more lovingly; and to make myself by your help a little more like Jesus. Help me to make today a day of progress in my life and to become a little more like what you want me to be. This I ask for Jesus' sake. Amen.*



*9 August*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Forgiveness is the fragrance  
a violet sheds  
on the heel that has crushed it."  
(Mark Twain)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Love your enemies  
and pray for those who persecute you,  
that you may be sons  
of your Father in heaven."  
(Matthew 5.44,45)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

How does one reconcile the fact that one of the consequences of being a Christian is that you will have enemies and at the same time you are called to pray for their well-being? It will remain a mystery to you unless you realise that Jesus is speaking of the basic attitudes and values that produce spiritual fruit in our lives. It is not those who get to be 'king of the castle' in this world, by walking all over people, that are rewarded by God. As I read somewhere – 'Even if you win the rat race – you're still a rat!' We are called to be better than the rest; to be 'simply THE best!' Jesus asks us, in a single phrase: 'Just be like God' in the way you act towards other people.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Blessed Father, I am forced, by the wonder of creation, the challenge of your Holy Word, the life of your Son, Jesus Christ, and by my personal knowledge of you, to seek you daily and to find in you all that is needful for my life. You are present wherever I am and in whatever I do; whether waking or sleeping, eating or drinking, writing or reading, working or playing; and I feel some measure of your love for me. Preserve me from all harm and accident; defend me from temptation and from evil; strengthen me for willing service to my shipmates; and by the witness of my life confirm my faith in you; to your praise and glory. Amen.*

*10 August*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

“Pray for peace and grace and spiritual food,  
for wisdom and guidance, for all these are good,  
But don't forget the potatoes.  
(John Tyler Pettee)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*“When you pray,  
go into your room,  
close the door and pray to your Father,  
who is unseen.  
(Matthew 6.6)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Prayer is an expression of intimate relationship with God. Here we are reminded of the need for sincerity in this matter. The ‘in secret’ aspect of our relationship emphasises that it is deeply personal and intimate. Faith is not a matter of outward show. We are also reminded that we need to take time to nurture our relationship with the Lord. When we do, we can be certain that our ‘Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.’

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Loving Father, bless me with the desire to speak only the truth in love and the will to face the truth, even about myself. Help me to maintain integrity in all my dealings today; not cutting corners with nor embellishing the truth, not bending the rules nor distorting the spirit of their intent, not seeking personal advantage at the expense of others, nor becoming self-righteous. In all things may I be conscious of my own frailties and forgiving of those I detect in the people around me; remembering Jesus' words, 'Judge not lest you be judged' and, 'first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.' Save me from hypocrisy in thought, word and action, fulfilling this prayer in my life through the strength and the gentleness of Jesus Christ, my Lord. Amen.*

*11 August*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Man does not live by words alone,  
despite the fact that  
sometimes he has to eat them."  
(Adlai E. Stevenson)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"But I tell you  
that men will have to give account  
on the day of judgement  
for every careless word they have spoken."  
(Matthew 12.36)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

It's a wonder that I am able to speak at all when I consider the times I've had to bite my tongue. I sometimes think I must be world champion at 'foot in mouth' disease. Thankfully, Jesus understands me and because of my faith in him my sins are forgiven. What we say reveals our hearts. The words that slip out when we speak casually with our family, friends and colleagues matter. It's good for us to be constantly aware of the words that tumble from our lips and to check for our own 'careless words.' We need to be sure we are treating the 'foot in mouth' disease. How well we do will tell us a lot about the quality of our relationship with Jesus.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Lord Jesus, help me to walk with you all through today. Give me something of the wisdom that was in your words; something of the love that was in your heart; something of the help that was on your hands. Give me something of your patience with people; something of your ability to bear slights and insults and injuries without bitterness and without resentment; something of your ability always to forgive. Help me to live such that others may know that I began the day with you, and that I am walking with you, so that, however dimly, others may see you in me. This I ask for your love's sake. Amen.*

*12 August*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"It was by perseverance, after all,  
that the snail reached the ark."  
(C.H. Spurgeon)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"...a great door of effective work has opened to me,  
and there are many who oppose me."  
(1 Corinthians 16. 9)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

The 1980 Boston marathon was won by a woman who was later found to have entered the race in the last mile and was then duly disqualified. Contrast that runner with those who begin a marathon and finish last. Often they are cheered as much as those who came first. And why? Because everyone recognises the quality of perseverance. Imagine if St. Paul had said, because of the opposition to him, 'I quit;' but instead he said, 'I'm staying.' It is not easy being a Christian and though there is joy, there are also hard times. The way in which we respond to these hard times reveals the degree of perseverance that is in us.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Loving Father, you have said that in all things you work for the good of those who love you, who have been called according to your purpose. Help me to trust unfailingly in your eternal will which works within my changeable life, to guide it forevermore. Help me in my striving to serve you, such that I am not turned aside to port or starboard by those things which in the past have led me off course, and made shipwreck of my faith and peace. Help me to redeem the hours of this day, filling each one with faithful duty and honest labour. Fill me with tender patience for others, conscious that I rely on theirs towards me for my own shortcomings; and make us all ready to help and quick to forgive. Give me grace to spend this day as a day holy to you, to your honour and glory, for the good of others, and my own salvation; for Jesus' sake. Amen.*

*13 August*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Every normal man or woman longs more keenly for warm friendship, admiration and human responsiveness from his or her circle of friends and acquaintances than for anything else in life."  
(Leslie B. Salter)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Be devoted to one another in brotherly love.  
Honour one another above yourself. "  
(Romans 12.10)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Start giving to others what they long for. There is nothing wrong with that. Begin by passing out good cheer and brotherly love to those around you. Don't wait until tomorrow – start today. The kindness that you show is likely to come back to you in dozens of different ways. But even if it doesn't you will be better for the giving.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, my Father, your awesome power is evident in the natural world in the thunder and the lightning and in the roaring waves of the sea. Your compassion and mercy are also evident in the blue skies and sunny days and beautiful sunrises and sunsets. All of creation testifies to you and commands my attention. I thank you for making me as I am and giving me my particular gifts and abilities, even though I don't fit any glossy magazine image. Let me not forget that you are God and are to be worshipped and obeyed, and that I should not be concerned with what the world thinks of me. Strengthen me for today and always to fulfil what you have in mind for me and to use my gifts and abilities creatively as you would wish. Grant that I may always be aware of your presence and thankful for Jesus Christ, in whose name I pray. Amen.*

*14 August*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"We are as mature as our love."  
(Selwyn Hughes)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Love never fails."*  
(1 Corinthians 13.8)

## TO THINK ABOUT

An international congress on mental health declared that the taproot of mental illness not caused by chemical imbalance is lack of love. Sociologists trace delinquency to a lack of love. The more one is loved the more one flourishes. We are the products of those who loved us or did not love us. The person who loves and goes on loving finds themselves all the better for loving. The world's greatest need is the kind of love that keeps on loving.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Almighty God, my Father, you love all those whom you have made and your desire is that all should love you in return. Turn the hearts of those who don't believe or who have wandered after other gods; blessing them with knowledge of Jesus, the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Bless me today that I may be like Jesus to all with whom I come into contact at home, at work and at play. Help me to be kind and considerate, helpful and encouraging, humble and unselfish. May all my words and actions direct others to look beyond my life to the One who lives in me, Jesus Christ, my Lord. Amen.*

*15 August*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"So precious life is! Even to the old  
The hours are as a miser's coins!"  
(Thomas Bailey Aldrich)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"...the kingdom of heaven  
is like a merchant looking for fine pearls.  
When he found one of great value,  
he went away and sold everything he had  
and bought it."  
(Matthew 13:45,46)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

What is most precious to you? Husband, wife, family, house, car...? How do you measure preciousness? Money or sentimental value? What can't you let go of? The answers to questions like these will help you determine what is most precious to you. How does God measure preciousness? What was so precious that he was willing to give his Son's life for it? YOUR LIFE! We're not talking about your survival but about your worth as a person. I'm not surprised any more about the lack of self-worth that many people confess to but your life is precious to God whether you value it or not. Your sense of self-worth/esteem is irrelevant to him - in one sense – although he is concerned at another level. To God, our life is so precious that he wants us to have eternal life by giving up our life to him.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, I know that I am going to be very busy today. Help me not to be so busy that I miss the most important things. Help me not to be too busy to look up and to see a glimpse of beauty in your world. Help me not to be too busy listening to other voices that I don't hear your voice when you speak to me. Help me not to be too busy to listen to anyone who is in trouble and to help anyone who is in difficulty. Help me not to be too busy to stand still for a moment to think and to remember. Help me not to be too busy to remember the claims of my home, my family, and my friends and colleagues. Help me all through today to remember that I must work my hardest, and also to remember that sometimes I must be still. This I ask for Jesus' sake. Amen.*

*16 August*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"For that elephant ate all night,  
And that elephant ate all day;  
Do what he could to furnish him food,  
The cry was still – more hay."  
(John Cheever Goodwin)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Then (Jesus) took the seven loaves and the fish,  
and when he had given thanks,  
he broke them and gave them to the disciples,  
and they in turn to the people.  
They all ate and were satisfied."  
(Matthew 15.36,37)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

I suppose we all know those people who are unadventurous when it comes to food; who go straight to 'Maccas' when in a foreign port and who won't try the local tucker. Some people are finicky and hard to satisfy. Food plays an important part in our lives. For a start it keeps us alive! It's wonderful that Jesus, met the needs of the hungry crowd but tragic that they were then satisfied. The encounter had not touched them deeply enough to have transformed their lives. Because in Jesus, and through faith in him, we experience a spiritual transformation that makes life different. We've left behind the unadventurous food of institutionalised religion and sampled the exciting, heavenly cuisine of knowing Jesus!

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Almighty and merciful Father, you are the helper of the helpless and you lift up the fallen, and you comfort the broken-hearted; look in your mercy upon all who are distressed in body, mind, spirit or situation; comfort and relieve them according to their necessities; give them patience under their sufferings and a happy outcome to all their afflictions. I know not what may happen to me today but I give myself up to you, to love and obey you; willing in all matters to do your holy will. I offer to you my body, soul and spirit, asking you to accept them for the sake of your Son, my Lord and Saviour. Amen.*



*17 August*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"The mystic sees the ineffable,  
and the psycho-pathologist the unspeakable."  
(William Somerset Maugham)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"After six days Jesus took with him Peter,  
James and John the brother of James,  
and led them up a high mountain by themselves.  
There he was transfigured before them.  
His face shone like the sun,  
And his clothes became as white as the light."  
(Matthew 17.1,2)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

When someone says they've had a 'mountain top experience' they usually mean that they have been through some highly elating spiritual or mystical event. Like many catch-phrases it has become a little de-valued by secular use. But its origin is in the transfiguration of Jesus, where he displayed his glory to the three disciples. Sometimes believers go through life without ever an intimation of the surpassing glory of Jesus, while others seem to live in his presence. Its important for us to reflect upon the importance of spending time in the presence of Jesus, where we see no one but Jesus and experience his glory. Studying and meditating on who Jesus is has an important contribution to make to each of our lives.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, my Father, life is so precious and all your commands were given to help me build relationships – enabling me to live with you and with my fellow human beings in harmonious community. Thank you for my life and for the people in my life; both my loved ones and friends and the ones less easy to like or love. Let me not forget that you loved me when I was least deserving of that love and sent your Son to die for me. Help me to emulate His love in my life and so build loving relationships – with you and all those with whom I come into contact. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

*18 August*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

*"Life is an adventure in forgiveness."  
(Norman Cousins)*

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother  
when he sins against me?"*

## TO THINK ABOUT

What is it that lies behind most of our unforgiving? Accumulated resentments! which sooner or later breaks out in open hostility. But we have been forgiven a debt which is beyond all paying – for our sins brought about the death of God's own Son – and, if that is so, we must forgive others as God has forgiven us. What a reminder when we find our heart hardening towards another after a few repeated hurts, that God, the great King, has forgiven us simply because he took pity on us. It is in contemplating the forgiveness we have received from God, that we can find the grace to forgive one another.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, help me not to worry those who love me, nor let down those who trust me, nor fail those who employ me; nor hurt those who are close to me. Help me not to be a cause of temptation to someone else nor make it easier for someone else to go wrong. Let me not discourage anyone who is doing their best, nor dampen their enthusiasm, nor increase their doubts. Help me to be a comfort to the sad, a friend to the lonely, an encourager to the dispirited and a help to those who are up against it. Grant that others may see in me something of the reflection of the Master whose I am and whom I seek to serve. This I ask for Your Love's sake. Amen.*

*19 August*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Education without God makes clever devils."  
(Lloyd George)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Show me the way I should go,  
for to you I lift up my soul...  
Teach me to do your will,  
For you are my God..."  
(Psalm 143.8,10)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Something more is needed than mere knowledge or education to deal with the flaws in our soul. We need to be educated by the Holy Spirit of God. There is nothing the Holy Spirit delights in doing more than transforming the honest, surrendered and receptive soul. When we come to that realisation in our life then God's Spirit is free to operate. It is impossible to transform ourself; instead we must look to God to do it.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God my Father, I thank you for all the good things with which you have blessed me. Help me to see and count and remember all my blessings, especially my Saviour Jesus Christ's death for me, that I may be directed to follow your will for my life. Your hand is ever present to lead and guide me and your Spirit to turn my heart and direct my thoughts; if only I surrender my life to your control. You know my weaknesses, teach me to look to you for strength. Bring me safely to the end of this day with continuing thankfulness and a deeper trust in you; for the sake of Christ Jesus my Lord. Amen.*

20 August

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"To cure the ills of the soul four things are necessary:  
confession, explanation, education, and transformation."  
(Carl Jung)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"My comfort in my suffering is this:  
Your promise renews my life."  
(Psalm 119.50)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Modern Psychiatry undertakes to cure the soul's problems through knowledge. Of Jung's four steps, the first three can produce alleviation but hardly transformation. Psychiatry is very good at giving symptom relief but cannot bring about change in the depths of the personality. Only surrender, the transfer of the central allegiance of the self to God, enables us to rise to the high level of living which he intends for us.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Heavenly Father, thank you for this day and whatever lies before me. Thank you that I need not face its challenges and problems alone, for you are there to guide and direct me when I turn to you for help. Let me not forget to come to you when I have decisions to make and problems to solve and difficult things to do. Help me to trust that you will give me guidance; shedding light upon my way and strength to do the things I could not do for myself. I know Lord, that when I begin with you in any endeavour, the outcome will be better and accomplished sooner than when I operate in my strength alone. And at the end of this day, Lord, may I be able to say, 'We had a great day,' to your praise and glory alone. Amen.*

*21 August*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Never was so much owed by so many to so few."  
(Sir Winston Churchill)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"He said to me,  
'You are my servant Israel,  
in whom I will display my splendour.' "*  
(Isaiah 49.3)

## TO THINK ABOUT

Sir Winston Churchill's famous line was said of those fighter pilots who maintained Britain's air defences during the Battle of Britain. We might say something similar of the one true Servant of God – Jesus Christ – who died for us upon the cross: 'Never was so much owed by so many to such a One.'

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Dear Lord, equip me today, with the humility, which will keep me from pride and from conceit; the graciousness and the gentleness which will make me both easy to live with and a joy to meet; the diligence, the perseverance, and the reliability, which will make me a good worker; the kindness which will give me a quick eye to see what I can do for others, and a ready hand to do it; the constant awareness of your presence which will make me do everything for you. Grant that today people may see in me a glimpse of the life of my blessed Lord, in whose name I pray. Amen.*

*22 August*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"If you put first things first  
then everything comes out right;  
if you put first things second  
then nothing comes out right."  
(C.S. Lewis)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"He must become greater;  
I must become less."  
(John 3.30)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

I believe that the great problem for most people is that the primary focus of their lives is themselves and they are more concerned with getting things from God than they are about giving him the glory that is due to his name. Life, first and foremost, is not about us but about Him – His glory, His honour, His power, His saving grace. Get that right and everything else falls into place.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Dear Lord and Father, I give you thanks for all your goodness to me at all times and in all places, because you have watched over me all my life and brought me to this hour. I pray that out of your goodness and mercy I may spend this day without sin, rejoicing in your fellowship and with due reverence to you. Drive out of my heart and mind whatever is not in accord with your divine will and replace it with whatever is lawful and right in your sight. Let your Spirit stir up in me the desire to seek my neighbour's good and the grace and power to fulfil the same. May I never, from love of the easy way, decline the difficult path which you choose for me to serve my fellow-man. Bless this day through the grace, mercy and love of your own Dear Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.*

23 August

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Life depends upon elimination  
as well as upon assimilation.  
One has to learn what does not contribute  
- and throw it away."  
(Malcolm Muggeridge)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"There is a time for everything,  
...a time to keep  
and a time to throw away."  
(Ecclesiastes 3.1.6)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Malcolm Muggeridge, the famous broadcaster and wit, was once asked what was the first requirement for success. He replied: 'A waste basket.' When pressed to explain what he meant he said the words above. Maybe you could use a 'waste basket,' to relieve you every day of things that would be a serious waste of your time. Have you learnt to say 'No' to lesser things in order to be free to say 'Yes' to the greater things? We have a certain time span allotted to each of us and a responsibility before God to use whatever time, treasure and talents he has blessed us with for His glory.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Eternal God and Father, I thank you for a refreshing night's rest and that I am made ready for another day in your service. May your Holy Spirit guide and direct me in all that I do. I know how easy it is for me to cut corners in my work and in my relationships with other people. Save me from sins of both commission and omission; from tactless speech and cowardly silence; from both slackness in and shirking of my duty; from negative thought and lack of reflection; and from anything that would detract from what I can be. Grant that today my life would reflect your love and goodness, bringing credit to your name and pointing others to faith in you. This I ask for Jesus' sake. Amen.*

*24 August*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"We crave things we neither need nor enjoy...  
we buy things we do not want  
to impress people we do not like."  
(Arthur G. Qish)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"As obedient children,  
do not conform to the evil desires you had  
when you lived in ignorance."  
(1 Peter 1.16)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Advertisers set out to make us feel ashamed if we do not wear the latest fashions, drive the latest model car, or eat at the priciest restaurants. Contemporary culture has an insane attachment to things. 'Society is psychotic' says one commentator. A psychotic is someone who is out of touch with reality, who lives in a world of illusion. Until we understand the thinking of society we will not be able to see how much we, as Christians, are in danger of being squeezed into the world's mould. It takes some effort on our part to resist the pressures of contemporary culture and to live in obedience to God's desire for us to live according to his will.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, help me today to be quick to praise, and slow to criticise; quick to forgive, and slow to condemn; quick to share, and slow to refuse to give. Grant me today complete control over my temper, that I may be slow to anger; complete control over my tongue, that I may speak no hasty word. So grant that today I may help everyone and hurt no one, so that I might find true joy in living; through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*



*25 August*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"The future of the world is in the hands  
of people who are disciplined to the highest ends."  
(Dr. E. Stanley Jones)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"If a man is lazy, the rafters sag;  
if his hands are idle, the house leaks."  
(Ecclesiastes 10.18)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

The undisciplined waste their energies on themselves and their own entanglements. Often our disciplines are geared to ends which are good but which are not the highest. Modern life is compartmentalised, specialised and it lacks total meaning. Just as the spokes of a wheel hang loose without a hub so do the powers of life unless they are fastened to the central hub – the Lord Jesus Christ. He and he alone gives total meaning to life. That is why we must keep God and eternity in view if we are to be disciplined to the highest ends.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Loving Father, keep me mindful of your continual presence this day and prompt me each moment to seek your help and guidance. If I become unsettled, enable me by your grace to quickly turn to you for help and peace. Let nothing come between us to break our fellowship. May it please you to give me a prosperous day in which all my work may be well done and where I turn out nothing half done. Protect me, guide me, bless me in my spirit and in my actions, that in all my doings I will please you and be conscious of your BZ. May I glorify you by my honest good work for the sake of Him who completed His work for me, Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

*26 August*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"The great man is he who does not lose his child's heart."  
(Mencius)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"...whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant,  
and whoever wants to be first must be your slave –  
just as the Son of Man did not come to be served,  
but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."  
(Matthew 20.26-28)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

The world has its own notions of how to achieve greatness in this world and in the spiritual realm. For the irreligious, their only concern is with greatness in this life because that's all there is – this life. Greatness in the kingdom of Jesus is stopping for the needs of others. It is setting aside for the moment our own hurts and concerns, to listen, and then to ask, 'What do you want me to do for you?' You may be little in the eyes of others and of little significance in the world but if you follow Jesus' example of servant-hood, you will be great in the eyes of God.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Eternal Father, this new day is another gift from you filled with boundless opportunities: to grow to maturity of mind and spirit; to fulfil the promise and potential that you have given me. This new day affords me the opportunity to do some useful work; to learn new things; to add to my store of knowledge and skills; to strengthen established relationships; to repair broken ones and to make new friendships. May I miss no opportunities to lend a helping hand to anyone in need or to comfort anyone in trouble. Let me remember that it is you who upholds me and enables me in all that I do, so that I do not seek credit for myself but instead give you the glory for all that I may accomplish. Begin to fulfil this prayer in my life today for Jesus' sake. Amen.*

*27 August*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Great hypocrites are the real atheists."  
(Francis Bacon)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites!  
You shut the kingdom of heaven in men's faces.  
You yourselves do not enter,  
nor will you let those enter who are trying to."  
(Matthew 23.13,14)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

In our spiritual lives we need to be wary, for we too are vulnerable to the attitudes that made the Pharisees such perfect failures. Instead of living by the spirit of the law, they ended up dedicating themselves to the keeping of the letter of the law. For us, the major problem is the danger of turning faith in God, through Jesus Christ, into a religion of do's and don't's. The minute that we forget that our relationship with God is because of his great love for us rather than because of who we are or what we've done, we've lost the plot. And let us remember that our devotion to God, if it is to be acceptable in his sight, can only ever be thanksgiving for all he has done for us in Christ Jesus our Lord.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, help me today to think of the feelings of others as much as I think of my own. If I know that there are things which annoy the people help me not to do them. If I know that there are things which would please them, help me to go out of my way to do them. Help me to think before I speak, so that I may not thoughtlessly or tactlessly hurt or embarrass anyone else. If I have to differ with anyone, help me to do so with courtesy. If I have to argue with anyone, help me to do so without losing my temper. If I have to find fault with anyone, help me to do so with kindness. If anyone has to find fault with me, help me to accept it with good grace. Help me to treat others as I would wish them to treat me; through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

*28 August - Deployment*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"War is not an act of God  
but a crime of man."  
(The Oman Observer)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"In the spring,  
at the time when kings go off to war,  
David sent Joab out with the kings men  
and the whole Israelite army."  
(2 Samuel 11.1)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

God gets a lot of bad press about all the bad stuff that happens around the world, especially since 'religion' is usually involved in many of the wars and conflicts that abound. But war stems from the fear and greed inherent within mankind. We can see, even from the time of King David, that there was actually a season for war, like the footy season! Next time you're ready to blame God remember that 'religion' is man's excuse to justify his criminal actions.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Loving Father, I ask you to take into your care and protection all those who are at sea today, especially those deployed far from Australia. Keep them alert and wise in their duties. Make them faithful in their daily routines and decisive and courageous in any moments of crisis. Protect them from the perils and dangers of the sea, and even in the storm grant them peace and calm within their hearts. Give them the assurance that they and their loved ones are continually in your love and care. And bring them safely together again when their work is over and the journey's done. These things I ask for Jesus' sake. Amen.*

29 August

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Short as life is,  
we make it still shorter  
by the careless waste of time."  
(The Oman Observer)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Though outwardly we are wasting away,  
yet inwardly we are being renewed  
day by day."  
(2 Corinthians 4.16)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

I heard of a feud between two former friends. What it was about I don't know. Now these two are not talking to each other or mixing with their former group of mutual friends. How tragic! The quality of life wasted carelessly and needlessly. Even more tragic because each day we have one less day to live. Much better to be renewed day by day by the Spirit of Christ, adding Christian values and attitudes to our character; such as forgiveness and reconciliation.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Almighty and most loving Father, I thank you for the salvation you have provided in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. I thank you that because of His sacrifice for me you do not see my sins and imperfections but only His perfection imputed to me. As a pardoned and redeemed subject of your kingdom help me to express my gratitude for all your mercies to me. Enable me, by your grace, to imitate Christ in my life, by living in integrity and truth and by loving my neighbour as myself. Direct my thoughts and actions so that they increasingly reflect the reality of my faith in you. In Jesus name I pray. Amen.*

*30 August*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Mistakes are the portals of discovery."  
(James Joyce)

## FROM THE BIBLE

"...calmness can lay great errors to rest."  
(Ecclesiastes 10.4)

## TO THINK ABOUT

Our natural tendency is to try and cover up our mistakes. Having to admit failure is seen, somehow, to diminish us as a person. But many of the world's great achievers were great failures before they accomplished success. Mistakes were learning steps along the way. They managed to 'keep their cool' and persevere, so that in the end their failures were laid to rest and we remember and benefit from their discoveries.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Dear Lord, help me, to meet in the right way and in the right spirit everything which comes to me today. Help me to approach my work cheerfully and my tasks diligently. Help me to meet people courteously, and, if need be, to suffer fools gladly. Help me to meet disappointments, frustration, hindrances and opposition, calmly and without irritation. Help me to meet delays with patience and unreasonable demands with self-control. Help me to accept praise modestly and criticism without losing my temper. Keep me serene all through today. All this I ask for Jesus' sake. Amen.*

*31 August*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"What does not destroy me  
makes me stronger."  
(Friedrich Nietzsche)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed;  
perplexed, but not in despair;  
persecuted, but not abandoned;  
struck down, but not destroyed."  
(2 Corinthians 4.8,9)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

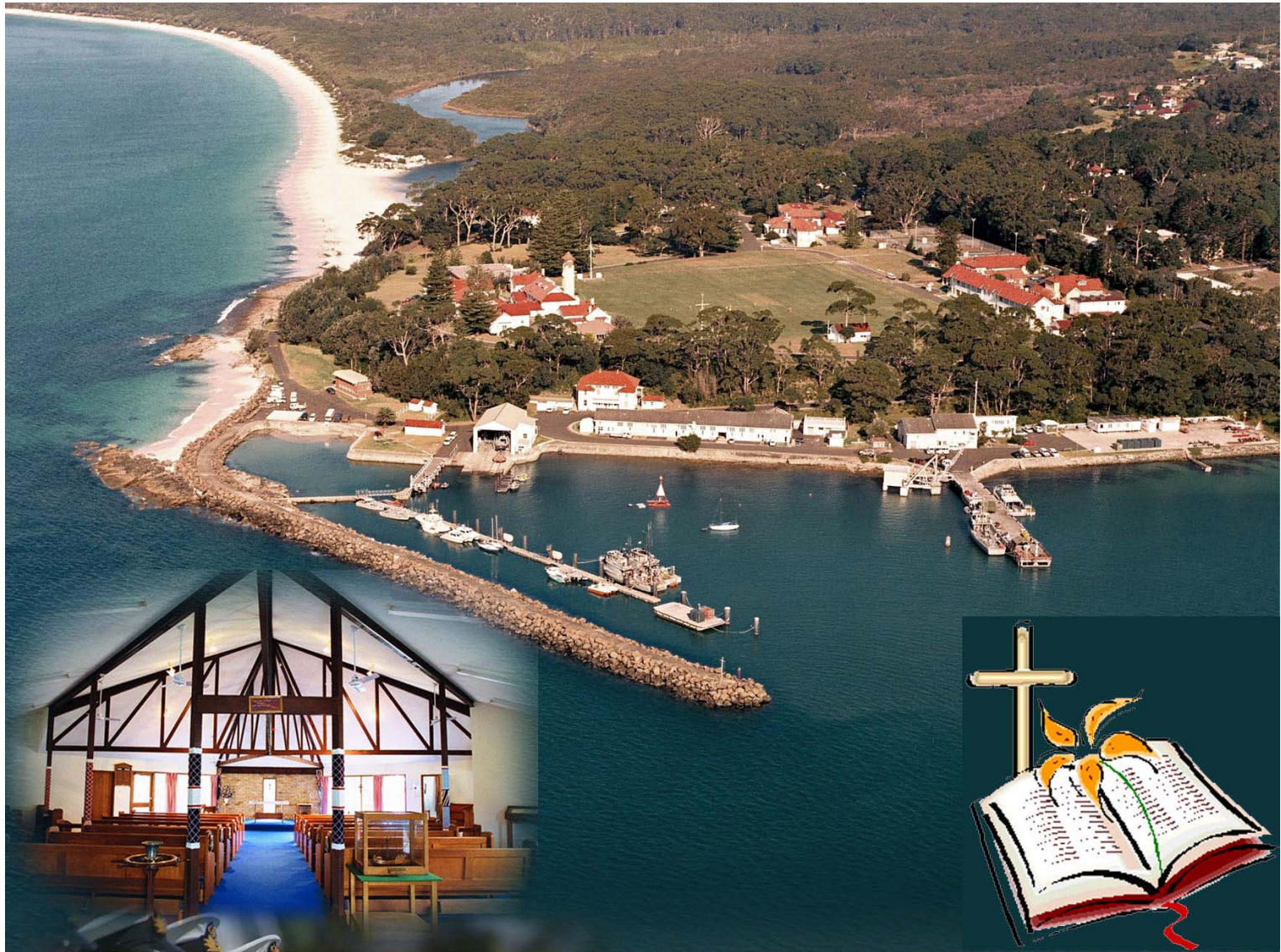
The Apostle St. Paul had a pretty hard time of it as he sought to fulfil his mission – imprisoned, flogged many times (including 5x39 lashes), thrice beaten with rods, stoned and left for dead, shipwrecked three times, robbed, betrayed,... And the list goes on! As a consequence of his faith in Christ, even though he could admit to being weak, he was made strong. His faith in God saved him from being destroyed by all that happened to him and made him into a giant of history.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Loving Father, I appear before you with a thankful and humble heart. I thank you for all the benefits that I have received from your goodness. It is to your blessing that I owe whatever success I have found. Every opportunity for doing good, every impulse to do the right thing, every victory I have gained over myself, every thought of your presence, every instance of modelling the pattern of Jesus' life; all alike are your gifts to me. Give me strength and wisdom to walk faithfully and joyfully in willing obedience to your laws, and to cheerfully trust in your love. The best thanksgiving I can offer to you is to live according to your holy will; grant me every day to offer it more perfectly and to grow in the knowledge and love of your will; for the sake of Jesus Christ my Lord and Saviour. Amen.*







**SEPTEMBER**









## *1 September – Legacy Day*

*We remember the work of Legacy as it cares for the families of members who have died.*

### THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

“...let us strive on...  
to care for him who shall have borne the battle,  
and for his widow and his orphan...”  
(Abraham Lincoln)

### FROM THE BIBLE

*“He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow,  
and loves the alien, giving him food and clothing.”*  
(Deuteronomy 10.18)

### TO THINK ABOUT

God is concerned for the sanctity of family life, which in his economy is the basic unit of a stable society. Life with God is expressed in the Bible in the context of relationship. So God has a deep concern to protect the family. That is why there is special mention made of those most affected when the husband dies – for the widows and orphans – who are dependent. Looking after dependents is part of the social responsibility of a community and God takes it personally when that does not happen. The Bible tells us that God will take up the case against those who cheat and exploit the fatherless. Legacy has taken up the responsibility of looking after the dependents of those who have lost their lives serving in the defence forces of our nation. We can join in accepting our responsibility before God to care for dependents by supporting the work of Legacy.

### PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Almighty God, let the power of your love fill the lives of those who suffer the sorrowful effects of war. Comfort and support them so that grace and hope replace bitterness, self-pity and despair; and turn sorrow into joy as you become known to them as their friend and protector, meeting every need. I give you thanks for the dedication and sacrifice of all those associated with the work of Legacy. Grant to them a sense of the great privilege it is to be able to serve the widowed and children of departed comrades. Help members of Legacy continue to work together with one purpose, providing the support and wise guidance members would have given their families had they not sacrificed life itself to keep their loved ones free, safe and in peace. Grant to Legacy the guiding wisdom of your Spirit to continue the work which they do in honour of all those who have paid the ultimate price. In Jesus name I pray. Amen.*

*2 September*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Envy shortens life."  
(Anon)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"A heart at peace gives life to the body,  
but envy rots the bones."*  
(Proverbs 14.30)

## TO THINK ABOUT

Our emotional state affects our physical well-being. The medical world acknowledges that many illnesses have their foundation in mental unwellness. The secret of good health and longevity may well rest with contentment with who we are and what we have, rather than with wanting to be like someone else or to having what they have.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Dear heavenly Father, I am thankful for another day full of opportunity and promise in which to glorify you in my life. Thank you for all the good things in my life, especially for family, friends and workmates, and for worthwhile employment and for recreation time. Thank you for any difficulties and problems that may come my way today. Help me to receive any such trials with both hands as real opportunities and blessed occasions for true self-awareness and growth in maturity, and for self-denying service towards others such that I may resemble more the character of Jesus. I pray these things in Jesus' name and for His sake. Amen.*

*3 September*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"The mind is a garden  
that occasionally needs weeding."  
(Anon)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"You were taught...to put off your old self,  
...to be made new in the attitudes of your minds;  
and to put on the new self..."  
(Ephesians 4.23)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

We live in an age of information overload, and much of what we receive from the media is of dubious quality in terms of the attitudes and values presented. Perhaps there is a need for selective pruning of what we take in if we are to improve the mind, rather than sink to the level of the lowest common denominator. To stand back and to admire a well weeded and tended garden is always much more enjoyable than viewing a weedy wasteland, especially if we have done the gardening.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Almighty God and Heavenly Father, who by your Divine Providence has appointed for me my work in life and has commanded that I should not be slothful in it, but fervent in spirit, serving you, help me always to remember that my work is your appointment and to do it heartily as unto you. Preserve me from slothfulness and make me to live 'at the ready' always, that whenever Jesus may come, I may be found striving earnestly to finish the work that you have given me to do, through Jesus Christ my Saviour. Amen.*

*4 September*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Waste no tears over the griefs of yesterday."  
(Euripides)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"But one thing I do:  
forgetting what is behind  
and straining towards what is ahead."  
(Philippians 3.13)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

We cannot change the past but we can let it change us. Crying over spilt milk does not take us forward in life, it only holds us back and sours us (like the spilt milk). We have all wished we had done some things differently and wondered from time to time what might have been, but to dwell on these things only makes us discontent with the present and likely to make more poor choices for the future. Better to put the past behind us and focus on the future and positive change. The future is certain to be non-regretful if it includes a relationship with God.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Loving Father, I give you thanks that through faith in your Son, Jesus Christ, I have been blessed with every spiritual gift in the heavenly world; that before the world was made you had already chosen me to be your child so that I should be holy and without fault before you. Because of your love you had already decided that through Christ, Jesus you would bring me to yourself as your child because this was your pleasure and purpose. I therefore praise you for your glorious grace and for the free gift of forgiveness and eternal life that you have given me in your dear Son. Amen.*  
(Eph 1)

*5 September*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

**"Once sent out a word takes wings irrevocably."  
(Horace)**

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Reckless words pierce like a sword,  
but the tongue of the wise brings healing."  
(Proverbs 12.18)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

How many lives have been affected, I wonder, by parents who said to their children, 'You'll never amount to anything,' or 'Can't you do anything right?' or any other number of negative statements. In so many ways we can injure the lives of others by what we say. Once said our words cannot be retracted, no matter how much we may apologise. Take thought to the words that issue from your lips and consider whether they are wise and positive words that nurture the well-being of those you are speaking to.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Almighty God, I come before you to ask your blessing upon me this morning. I thank you for the care with which you watched over me in the hours of darkness and I now ask you to go with me to my daily work. Keep me pure and holy by the indwelling of your Holy Spirit. Make me strong and of good courage, remembering that you will never fail nor forsake me. Let neither the cares nor the business of the day disturb my trust in you. May I never murmur under any trial nor be discontented with my lot but raise my affection to things above, that I may even now behold your presence in righteousness. I ask every blessing in the name and for the sake of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Saviour. Amen.*

*6 September*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

*"A trouble shared is a trouble halved."  
(Proverb)*

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Two are better than one,  
because they have a good return for their work:  
if one falls down,  
his friend can help him up.  
But pity the man who falls  
And has no-one to help him up."  
(Ecclesiastes 4. 9,10)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Does it really need an hour to do a deep clean. Most of us will acknowledge that, by the time a team has been cleaning in a section for just a little while, most of the bulkheads and fittings have been cleaned several times over. Teamwork has remarkable benefits. How often, in our personal lives, do we struggle on alone trying to solve our problems. We are natural individualists and we miss out on the benefits to be gained from the help of fellow travellers on life's journey; who likewise experience various troubles.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Loving Father, I begin this day conscious that I am so very fortunate to live in Australia. Today there are so many around the world who do not even have the basic necessities of life and for whom this day will be a struggle just to survive. Help me to show my gratitude for all your blessings to me by meeting, as best I can, the needs of those who may be facing difficulties today. Help me to be open handed in giving to relief agencies, both overseas and local. Stir me up to help those known to me personally who may be sick or suffering in any way, that I may be to them a good Samaritan. Teach me that in doing good for others my own life will be immeasurably enriched and that I will more closely resemble my Lord Jesus in whose name I pray. Amen.*



*7 September*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Good fences make good neighbours."  
(Proverb)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Settle matters quickly with your adversary  
who is taking you to court."  
(Matthew 5.25)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

The number one complaint to local councils by ratepayers is about boundary fences. A poorly maintained side/back fence leads to more animosity and litigation between neighbours than almost anything else; usually because one party won't co-operate in maintaining or paying for their share of the cost for the fence. A term sometimes used of people when sorting out their relationship differences, after a falling out, is that they are 'mending fences.' How are the fences between you and your shipmates? Any that need mending?

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Lord God, you have brought me through the darkness of night to the light of this new day, and by your Holy Spirit you will illumine the way whereby I might honour you. You are the giver of all good things, and without your help all my labour is ineffectual and without your grace all my wisdom is folly. Grant that in all my undertakings today your Holy Spirit may not be withheld from me but that I may be led to think and to act in accord with your will for the physical, intellectual and spiritual benefit of both myself and others. Enable me to subdue in me all that is contrary to your will for my life and may a desire to please you be uppermost in my heart and mind, for the sake of Jesus Christ my Lord; in whose name I pray. Amen.*

*8 September*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Everyone has past misfortunes,  
just as everyone has blessings."  
(Anon)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"For I envied the arrogant  
when I saw the prosperity of the wicked."  
(Psalm 73.3)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Sometimes, when things are going wrong in our lives, we think that it only ever happens to us. We ask, 'Why me?' and engage in a little 'pity party.' From my experience in ministry I have discovered that there is not one person who is untouched by misfortune or tragedy of some kind. Next time you see and envy someone who seem to be enjoying a charmed life, while yours has 'turned to custard,' just remember that somewhere in their past lies misfortune also, only you are not aware of it. And when things are going well for you give a thought for those whose lives are not going well.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Loving Father, your Son, Jesus Christ, taught that before I find fault with another I should examine my own life to see where I need to make changes. As I stand on the threshold of this new day help me to take stock of my own levels of personal integrity, dedication, loyalty, relational skills and whatever other virtues will be needed. So help me today to live up to those standards I should live by as one who claims to know you. Keep me from being critical or demanding or hard to get along with but instead to exhibit those graces which marked the life of Jesus, in whose name I pray. Amen.*

*9 September*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

*"Nothing in life is to be feared.*

*It is only to be understood."*

(Marie Curie)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"The man who fears*

*is not made perfect in love."*

(1 John 4.18)

## TO THINK ABOUT

Fear is a natural instinct when faced with a life threatening situation. It would be a foolish person who believed they could walk up to a lion in its natural habitat and not get seriously hurt or, most likely, killed. Fear is an important aspect of physical self-preservation. The fear which the Apostle John speaks of is that of the outcome beyond physical death. The Christian need not fear what may happen to them when they die because they have the promise of God that they will live with him forever. So, while it is natural to heed the fear signals of our body in this life, to preserve our God-given life, we need not fear the final outcome. Unless of course we don't have a relationship with God, in which case we will be justifiably fearful.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Eternal God, You have committed to me the solemn responsibility for the conduct of my life. Not knowing what each day may bring, but only that the hour for serving you is always present, keep me awake and obedient to the claims of your holy will. Consecrate with your presence the path my feet will take, that the humblest work will shine and the roughest place be made smooth. Lift me above my unrighteous habits and petty foibles into faith, hope and charity, by a simple and steadfast reliance on your power. In all things, increase in me the mind of Christ, restoring your lost image that I may be one with you to the glory of your great Name. Amen.*

*10 September*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Home is the sailor,  
home from the sea..."  
(Robert Louis Stevenson)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"...he guided them to their desired have.  
Let them give thanks to the Lord  
for his unfailing love."  
(Psalm 107.30,31)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

When you come alongside the wharf after a period at sea, do you pause for a moment to consider how God has watched over you and brought you safely home again to loved ones, family and friends? We live and operate in a dangerous environment, with high-tech weapons and machinery and volatile fuels, etc. Take special care with your relationships when you are at home and give thanks to God for his keeping you safe to be able to enjoy them.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, my Father, thankyou for your grace and mercy toward me in countless ways; for the forgiveness of my many failings and for all the good things I enjoy in life. Help me to show my appreciation this day by my conduct towards other people and with diligence in the workplace. Help me to persevere and to be patient with difficult people and challenging problems so that I do not 'lose my cool' or give up trying. Indeed, help me to go out of my way to help those in trouble and to tackle any work problems that I've put aside because they were too difficult. Bless this day with the touch of your hand on my life, for I ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.*

*11 September*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"An ill-humoured man is a prisoner  
at the mercy of an enemy  
from whom he can never escape."  
(SA'DI)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Do not be quickly provoked in your spirit,  
for anger resides in the lap of fools."*  
(Ecclesiastes 7. 9)

## TO THINK ABOUT

Do you have a short fuse? Does the 'turps' turn you into an aggressive drunk, rather than a happy one? If so, then you may be the prisoner of some unresolved issues in your life. Fortunately you need not remain a prisoner, at their mercy. Prayer and counselling can help you to deal with and overcome any number of issues. What kind of prisoner would want to remain in jail if he was offered his freedom? Only a foolish one! Talk with The One who can most help you to lay down the baggage of the past and release you from its clutches – Jesus Christ – and rely on him to set you free.

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

*Most merciful Father, I come before your throne this morning to seek the blessing of your peace and the assurance of your presence as I begin my daily round of duties. You have called me into that quietness of mind and peace of heart which is yours, as if from out of the storm into a safe haven, and which surpasses the capacity of man to bestow. Grant that through your super-abundant goodness, my mind may yield in obedience to you without striving and that it may quietly rise into your sovereign rest above. Grant that nothing may disturb or disquiet me here below but that all things may be quiet and calm in your peace; through Jesus Christ my Lord, who alone is the author of peace and love. Amen.*

*12 September*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"To love what you do and feel that it matters  
– how could anything be more fun?"  
(Katherine Graham)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Be joyful always; ...  
for this is God's will for you  
in Christ Jesus."  
(1 Thessalonians 5.16,18)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

God has called us to share in his eternal purpose of reconciling the world to himself through his Son, Jesus Christ. When people asked Jesus, 'What must we do to do the works God requires?' he responded, 'Believe in the one he has sent.' So, that's it! Just believe in Jesus; who he is and what he has done for us. The joy of knowing we are reconciled to God through faith in Jesus can't be kept to ourself; it shows in the way we live and can't help being shared with others.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Almighty Father, your eternal power and deity are evident in all that you have created and you sustain it by that invisible power. To know that my life is not just a chance happening; one insignificant event among countless others; here for a brief while in a meaningless continuum of existence, gives real meaning to my life and hope for the future. I thank you that in your great love you have called me to share in your eternal purposes. Help me to fulfil that calling, which is to do those good things which you have prepared in advance for me to do. Let me not miss or waste any opportunity to promote what is true, noble, right, pure, lovely and admirable; to seek excellence and encourage those things which are praiseworthy. I thank you that you help me to press on towards the goal to win the prize for which you have called me heavenwards in Christ Jesus; in whose name I pray. Amen.*

*13 September*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Let us all be happy and live within our means,  
even if we have to borrow the money to do it with."  
(Charles Farrar Browne)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Keep your lives free from the love of money  
and be content with what you have, because God has said,  
'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.'"  
(Hebrews 13.5)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

It's easy to say. But how do we find contentment when everything in society shouts at us, insisting we can and should have more: 48 months interest free! No more to pay! The answer is, remember that in Christ we already possess everything. In this world there simply is no security in wealth, or the things that money can buy, only anxiety over how we are to keep what we have. Thieves steal, possessions wear out, businesses go bust, etc... But when God is with you and you have his promise, you enjoy the ultimate security.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O Father, I give heartfelt thanks to you for your great goodness to me. Be merciful to me in every task which I undertake today and be my close companion at each and every moment. Give me a steadfast heart which no unworthy affection may drag downwards. Give me an unconquered heart which no trial or tribulation can wear out. Give me an upright heart which no unworthy purpose may tempt aside. And for any task I undertake this day help me to remember that it is not the beginning but the continuing of the same, until it be thoroughly finished which yields true satisfaction. And if there be anything meritorious in my actions today may it all be credited to the glory of your holy Name, through Jesus Christ, my Lord. Amen.*

*14 September*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

*"Out of the strain of the doing,  
Into the peace of the done."*

*(Julia Louise Matilda Woodruff)*

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"When he had received the drink, Jesus said, 'It is finished.'"*

*With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit."*

*(John 19.30)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

I knew a Chaplain who had the word *'tetelestai'* written on the passenger side dashboard of his car. Whenever he had a passenger it wasn't long before their curiosity got the better of them and they asked the meaning of the word. He would explain that it was the word Jesus used as he died for their sins on the cross. It is a business word which would be written on a bill, once it has been paid, meaning 'Paid in Full.' 'It is finished' is the English equivalent which also conveys the truth that Jesus' death was a 'once for all' transaction that does not need repeating, unlike the paying of bills. The Chaplain's passengers got to hear what God has done for them and were challenged to put their faith in Jesus. They were invited to leave the strain of trying to be good enough for God and enter into the peace of what has been done for them by God in Christ.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Almighty Father, before I begin the duties and tasks before me today I'd like to spend these few moments alone with you, remembering your presence with me not only now but throughout the day. Help me to begin with the peace of mind and serenity of heart that only you can give and to continue in that manner all day long. Guard all my faculties this day from those things which might lead me to stray from the path of righteousness. Guard my tongue from careless words. Guard my eyes from inappropriate looks. Guard my hands from being slack. Guard my mind from evil thoughts. Enlarge my heart and help me so to live this day that at any moment my actions will confirm that 'in you I live and move and have my being'. I ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.*



*15 September*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Few rich men own their own property.  
The property owns them."  
(Robert Green Ingersoll)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear,  
but as they go on their way they are choked by life's worries,  
riches and pleasures, and they do not mature."  
(Luke 8.14) "*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Over 50% of Australians are shareholders. People complain about the corporate world and its preoccupation with profits over people. The profit margin is crucial for companies that want investors. The higher the return that is promised, the more likely people are to invest in a company. Very few people want to invest in companies that lose money. Each night the TV news has a finance segment which tells us how the economy is going and which companies are the movers, up or down. As a people, are we too preoccupied with the status of our finances? Who or what controls your life – the Word of God or the condition of your bank balance?

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Almighty Father, who governs all things in heaven and on earth, mercifully hear my prayer and grant to all who work and reside in this place all things necessary for their spiritual welfare. I beseech you to remember them all for good and to fulfil, as may be expedient for them, all their desires and wants. Grant to all the spirit to think and do always the things that are right and good. May your Spirit lead us all in the way of mutual help and goodwill, keeping us from pride, anger and any evil deeds which mar the image of God in us. May we all be enabled to live according to your will, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

*16 September*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Do not let your chances like sunbeams pass you by,  
for you never miss the water till the well runs dry."  
(Helen Hunt Jackson)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"'(Jacob) has deceived me these two times:  
He took my birthright, and now he's taken my blessing!'...  
Esau said to his father, 'Do you have only one blessing, my father?  
Bless me too, my father!' then Esau wept aloud."  
(Genesis 27.36,38)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Esau was not a bad person. He was simply one of those people whose eyes are so filled with his immediate wants and needs that he failed to see the spiritual realities of his situation. He squandered the inheritance that was his by right in order to satisfy his physical appetite. Spiritual realities, like a relationship with God, seem irrelevant to many, but in fact they are far more important than anything that we can see, feel or touch. Don't leave your relationship with God until it is too late to receive the blessings of that relationship.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, my Father, thank you for all your mercies to me; for a good night's rest and another day of life. Today lies before me; let me not see it as just another routine day but as one full of opportunities. Help me to be cheerful and positive, even if things get difficult; to be calm and peaceful, even in the midst of crisis; to be helpful to those who may be 'doing it tough'. With your help I'll not encounter problems but only challenges that enlarge my capabilities and help me to reach a potential I never realised was within the bounds of possibility. So grant that today I may reflect your handiwork in my life as the source and sustaining power in all I do; to your praise and glory. Amen.*

*17 September*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Nothing in life is to be feared.  
It is only to be understood."  
(Marie Curie)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Since you call on a Father  
who judges each man's work impartially,  
live your life as strangers here  
in reverent fear."  
(1 Peter 1.17)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

If life on earth was always pleasant, would you fix your hope fully on the blessings you will receive at Christ's return? If your life was without difficulties and setbacks, would you remain sensitive to your need for God? If your life was without persecution for being a Christian, what would force you to choose between commitment to Christ and the easy life? Understand how fleeting your life on earth is but how secure your future is in Him.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Merciful Father, you have revealed yourself as a God who delights to hear and answer prayer and have commanded your people to come into your presence and to pour out their hearts before you. As I draw near to you at the beginning of this day, send your Holy Spirit to prepare me for the duties of this day and to fortify me to tackle any obstacles I may encounter. Direct my steps into the way of peace, and strengthen my heart to obey your commandments. Help me to reflect your grace in my relations with others; being long-suffering and patient, cordial and empathising, kind and good, truthful and merciful. I ask all this through Jesus Christ, my Lord. Amen.*

*18 September*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"The soul of man is like the rolling world,  
One half in day, the other dipt in night;..."  
(Alexander Smith)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"So I find this law at work:  
When I want to do good, evil is right there with me."  
(Romans 7.21)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Who would have thought the Apostle Paul would have such a difficult time being a 'good' Christian? He recognised that something inside him kept spoiling his best efforts. Every time he set out to do the right thing, his 'sinful nature' jumped right in to corrupt and spoil the good. We are no different to Paul and recognise the same inner struggle. Fortunately we do have a wonderful source of comfort – God sees and welcomes our every effort to please him. God doesn't demand that we be perfect only that we keep trying to please him. Don't let your failures dampen your love for God or your eagerness to please him.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Heavenly Father, thank you for your love for me, sustaining and upholding me in every circumstance of life. Even when I am not conscious of your presence or your working in my life, you are no less there to guide and protect me throughout each day. Remind me of your presence and your power at each new turn of events this day; so directing my thoughts and actions that I lean not on my own understanding or trust in my strength alone but look to you to lead and guide me. Bless my loved ones, friends and colleagues also with all that I have asked for myself; for I ask in Jesus' name. Amen.*

*19 September*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Up anchor! Up anchor! Set sail and away!  
The ventures of dreamland are thine for a day."  
(Silas Weir Mitchell)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"As a dream comes when there are many cares. . . ."*  
(Ecclesiastes 5.3)

## TO THINK ABOUT

Do you know the song, 'We joined the Navy to see the world, but what did we see, we saw the sea...'? Think of the romantic notions you may have had about the Navy when you were recruited – excitement, adventure, exotic places! Although I hope you do experience these things in your time in the Navy, much of the time there is the reality of the daily round of work and duty. It is in the humdrum, routine things that our minds often drift away to imagine the more romantic notions. Just as you may think these things as you go about your work, do you ever find time to 'daydream' about God and your relationship with him? Find time to meditate on God and what he has done for you in Christ and stand in awe of him.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Heavenly Father, thank you for another day in which to make the most out of the life you've give me. Help me to waste none of the waking hours of this day either at work or recreation. Help me not to spoil any moment through neglect or contrariness of spirit. Help me to make each duty an opportunity for my professional and personal development. Help me to wisely use my recreational time for health of body, mind and spirit. Enable me to enjoy both work and recreation in such a way that my resting at day's end will be well deserved and satisfying. This I ask for your love's sake. Amen.*

*20 September*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"The epochs in our life are three:  
And here we grope in rifts between  
The Is, the Was, the Might Have Been."  
(John Hugh McNaughton)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.  
The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God,  
who loved me and gave himself for me."  
(Galatians 2.20)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Marlon Brando's character in 'On The Waterfront' laments his failed boxing career with the famous line, 'I coulda been a contender.' Frank Sinatra, in his signature song 'I Did It My Way' sings, 'Regrets, I've had a few,...' It's easy to look at 'the was, the might have been' in our lives and get depressed, but the Christian has come into a new circumstance in their life. Through faith our hope and joy is our union with Jesus Christ. Through him we receive power for a new life, but he must remain the sole centre of that life. A personal relationship with him is the secret that makes 'the is' the abundant life that Jesus promises.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O Heavenly Father, your hand is always outstretched to bless, especially those who love you and keep your commandments. So help me to live for you today that I may know your blessing. Help me to be a good worker who can take pride in all that I do. Help me to be someone who makes life easier for others by my patience, kindness and goodness. Save me from being too full of myself because of my achievements, remembering that all I do is because of your enabling of me. Help me to come to the end of this day with no regrets, rejoicing that, in Christ, I have caused you no grief and that I have grown more like Him. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

*21 September*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

'The constellation of O'Ryan,  
ignorantly and falsely spelled Orion."  
(Charles Graham Halpine)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"How long, O men, will you turn my glory into shame?  
How long will you love delusions and seek false gods?"  
(Psalm 4.2)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

The quote for today is the subtitle of a poem called 'Irish Astronomy.' We may find it amusing as an example of Irish humour but it also reminds us of the fascination many people have with astrology (star signs, etc.). To think that the relative positions of certain stars in the universe can determine our personality and daily fortune has to be delusional. The Bible is quite clear in its denunciation of the worship of anything that is created. A church noticeboard in Sydney once displayed the message – 'Why worship the stars? Rather, worship the One who created them.' How true! Take care that you do not let anything in your life take the place of God as the object of your worship.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Dear Heavenly Father, help me as I begin this day to go forward with the mind of Christ. Help me to remember my finiteness in the world; that I am one of your creatures. Help me also to remember that I am unique, and that you have made me for a particular place in your great plan. Help me to fulfil all that you have in mind for me so that my life will glorify you. Lead me all through this day to be salt and light in the world for Jesus' sake. Amen.*

*22 September*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Civilisation is a method of living,  
an attitude of equal respect for all men."  
(Jane Addams)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus,  
for all of you who were baptised in to Christ  
have clothed yourself with Christ.  
There is neither Jew nor Greek,  
Slave nor free, male nor female,  
for you are all one in Christ Jesus."  
(Galatians 3.26-28)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

There are those people in any society who have the commendable ideal of equality for all, but we also know the reality of human nature which likes to pigeon-hole people according to colour, race, class, qualifications, etc. There is one society, the family of God, where such distinctions are not to apply in our relationships. God has no favourites and in his eyes we are all equal in status before him, no matter who we are or what we do. In society at large we cannot consider ourselves better than anyone else either, because we realise that we are all alike sinners before God. There is only one criteria for acceptance by him and that is faith in Jesus Christ.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O Lord, I give you thanks for another day in which to enjoy the life you've given me. Instil in me a greater zest for living in your world and making a greater contribution for good that will give me a sense of fulfilment and bring glory to your name. Instil in me a belief that I can make a difference for good in the world, especially among those people where you've placed me; even though often nothing much may seem to change because it happens gradually and subtly, like grass growing. As I consider my loved ones at home and my friends and colleagues in this place, I ask you to bless them with those things which I've asked for myself. In Jesus name I pray.  
Amen.*



*23 September*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Our life is but a little holding,  
lent to do a mighty labour: ...'  
(George Meredith)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"...what is man that you are mindful of him,  
the son of man that you care for him?  
You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings  
and crowned him with glory and honour."  
(Psalm 8.4,5)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

A 'Sesame Street' song called 'The Big becomes the Little' was accompanied by a cartoon which began in the undergrowth of the human scalp and then continued to zoom out until one had a view of the universe. The message was all about perspective. When considered against the vastness of the universe we are miniscule creatures on a tiny planet in a corner of our galaxy. The incredible thing is that God, the creator of the universe, has made us human beings the pinnacle of his creation and called us into relationship with himself. Take the time to look up into the night sky tonight and reflect upon the wonderful privilege you enjoy and praise God for his love for you.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Heavenly Father, the essence of Christian living is modelling the reality of my relationship with you in the world; for you have said that I am to become like you – to become 'Christlike'. Help me today to reflect your love for me into my home and workplace; to show your love, joy and peace; your patience, kindness and goodness; your faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Save me from the lie that 'looking out for number one' will bring me true happiness and fulfilment, and remind me that the 'selfish' life is ultimately a lonely one. Grant that today I may be outward looking and concerned for the well-being of all those I come into contact with, and so find that at the end of the day their lives have been enriched and that I have become a little more like Jesus; in whose name I pray. Amen.*

*24 September*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"If the world's a vale of tears,  
Smile, till rainbows span it."  
(Lucy Larcom)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy."  
(Psalm 126.5)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Life can get on top of you at times; that's for sure. When it does the temptation is to start feeling sorry for ourself. Remember when, if you fell and hurt yourself, your mum would say something like 'Ups-a daisy. Don't cry. Be brave.' And all you felt like doing was crying. It's not easy to smile when your circumstances all point to the opposite response being more appropriate. The Psalmist reminds us that the bad things don't last forever; that they are usually followed by good things. Eventually, of course, this life, which isn't meant to be easy, is followed by the joy of eternal life with God.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Heavenly Father, who watches over me and protects me, I thank you for taking care of me during the night and for the sleep I needed to refresh my body and mind. I ask you to show me the same goodness today, so preserving and ruling over me that I may neither think, nor speak, nor do anything displeasing to you, or hurtful to my neighbour, but that all my doings may be in accord with your will, and lead to the praise of your glory. Bring me to the end of the day conscious that you have been with me throughout, engaged in worthwhile pursuits with satisfactory outcomes, so that with a clear conscience and peace of mind I may lay down again to a well-earned rest, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

*25 September*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Two things fill me with awe: the starry heavens,  
and the sense of moral responsibility in man."  
(Immanuel Kant)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Dominion and awe belong to God:  
he establishes order in the heights of heaven. "  
(Job 25.2)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Contemporary 'spirituality' tends to focus on the presence of 'God' within a person but the Bible and creation summon us to the response of faith in God and godly, moral conduct. Kant was a great 18<sup>th</sup> century German philosopher whom we associate with a rule based ethic. He sought to develop a science of morals based on universal absolutes, but which replaced the divine commands of God. So, he could have a great sense of right and wrong, true and false, and at the same time be puzzled by the vastness of the universe, all because he left God out of the picture. The Christian does not strive for the presence of God in their life but seeks to become more Christlike in their character and conduct, day by day by day...

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Loving Father, today is another day of possibilities and challenges and I need your help and strength to face them all and deal with them in the right way. I thank you that I need not face any day relying only on my own abilities and needing to mask my insecurities with a false bravado. In all my decision making give me grace to choose the right way and to resist the wrong. Give me a sense of pride in doing my best and a disquiet when tempted to be slack in any endeavour. Help me to trust that you will indeed help me when I put my faith and trust in you, for Jesus' sake. Amen.*

*26 September*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Where lies the final harbour,  
whence we unmoor no more?"  
(Herman Melville)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"In my father's house are many rooms;  
if it were not so, I would have told you.  
I am going there to prepare a place for you."  
(John 14. 2)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

The interest in 'spiritual' things in our society is alive and well. Consider the number of 'Mind, Body, Spirit' festivals held around the country each year. People may lack interest in 'The Church' but are eager to 'connect' with that something 'other' beyond the physical and material world. And so they look in the 'spiritual market place' for something which takes their fancy, which they believe will 'connect' them with the 'life-force' behind the universe and so give their lives meaning and purpose. Jesus came proclaiming that he was God become man to show man the way back to God. There is no need to search for meaning and purpose in life for God has revealed it through Jesus Christ. The way home is through faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Almighty Father, I thank you for rest and health, for work to do, and the surroundings of my life that make it desirable and enjoyable. As I embark upon another day, raise my thoughts and purify my aspirations such that they reflect your goals and motivation for my life. Strengthen my will on the side of what is right and good and against what is wrong and evil. Light up the myriad small duties of this day, believing that glory may dwell in the smallest task done according to your will and in Jesus' name. Teach me the best way of doing the best things so that I don't spoil any outcome with unworthy means; for the sake of Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

*27 September*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Blessed are those who can  
give without remembering  
and take without forgetting."  
(Elizabeth Bibesco)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"But when you give to the needy,  
do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,  
so that your giving may be in secret.  
Then your father,  
who sees what is done in secret,  
will reward you."*  
(Matthew 6.4)

## TO THINK ABOUT

Thankfulness and generosity spring naturally from a true faith in Jesus Christ. Our thankfulness to God for the generous gift of his Son for our salvation is expressed in extravagant generosity towards others. For our pride and independence of spirit we deserved nothing from God except judgement but God, in love, sacrificed his Son that we might be reconciled to him. Sacrificial giving, without expecting or wanting recognition from others, attracts a blessing from God. And just as we should never forget what Christ has done for us, neither should we forget what others do for us, and likewise be thankful.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Dear Father God, I thank you for your care for me and your provision for all my needs; for food, clothing, shelter, the company of fellow human beings and for worthwhile employment. In a world where these things are lacking for many help me not to take for granted your blessings to me. Help me to express my appreciation by my labours today – in working hard at my responsibilities in the workplace and on the relationships I have with others. In this way may I fulfil your desires for my life and bring glory to your name, for Jesus' sake. Amen.*

*28 September*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"It's but little good you'll do  
watering last years crops."  
(George Eliot)

## FROM THE BIBLE

"Jesus replied, 'No-one who puts his hand to the plough  
and looks back is fit for service in the Kingdom of God'.  
(Luke 9.62)

## TO THINK ABOUT

In order to get straight furrows when ploughing a field I'm told that you must fix your eye on a point at the other end of the paddock and head for it, keeping your eye fixed on that point. As a young sailor I was told something similar about marching on a parade ground or in a street parade – 'Fix your eye on a point and head for it.' In the Christian life, as we head for eternal life with Christ, we must fix our eyes on the prize and not look back to where we've come from or to what lies behind. If we do, we'll lose focus and deviate from the path of living as we should. Reminiscing about and regretting all those mistakes of the past only leads to 'crying over spilt milk' or 'watering last years crops.'

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Eternal Father, grant to me a fuller realisation of your sovereignty and power and of my dependence upon you for the blessing of life. Rule in my heart such that I look to you for daily guidance, daily blessing, daily supplies of strength and love to serve and make all duty cheerful, willing and happy. I commend to you, Lord, those who today are burdened with perplexity, or troubled by many and varied cares and distractions. Help them to commit their cares to you; to wait patiently for you to assist them in their distress; and may your peace console them. Create in my heart a sincere desire to become better and a steadfast resolution to endeavour to grow in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

*29 September*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Life is but the pebble sunk;  
Deeds, the circle growing."  
(George Meredith)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Cast your bread upon the waters,  
for after many days you will find it again."  
(Ecclesiastes 11.1)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Most, if not all of us, have at some time fed the ducks or fish in a pond or lake in the park. We 'cast our bread upon the waters.' At the time the only pleasure we got was from watching the fish or ducks eat what we had provided. Living in a 'supermarket' society, removed from the food-chain process, we did not expect any other return for our investment. If we stopped to think about it, we would realise that feeding the animals is an investment in our future. The animals we feed today become our food tomorrow. In the same way, the deeds we do in life are like feeding the animals – an investment (for good or bad). You've heard the saying, 'What goes around, comes around.' You get back what you invest in life.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Almighty Father, creator of the heavens and the earth, I need only look around me at the world and above me at the immensity of the universe to know that you are real. Help me to remember that the same power that created the universe and raised Jesus from the dead is at work in the lives of all who believe in your Son, transforming us to be like Him. May the evidence of my faith in Jesus be manifest in my life today in the values, attitudes and behaviours that others see in me. Jesus came not to be served but to serve; grant to me a spirit of true service to my fellowmen and women that reflects the servant heart of Jesus. All this I ask for Jesus' sake. Amen.*

*30 September*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"I slept and dreamed that life was beauty.  
I woke – and found that life was duty."  
(Ellen Sturgis Hooper)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Paul looked straight at the Sanhedrin and said,  
'My brothers, I have fulfilled my duty to God  
in all good conscience to this day'."*  
(Acts 23.1)

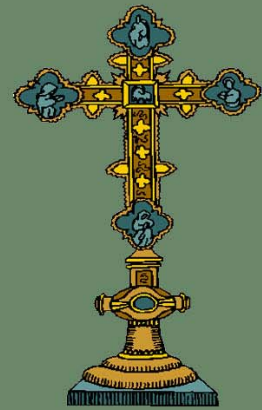
## TO THINK ABOUT

Who hasn't, at some time, dreamt of living on a secluded tropical island in a perpetual holiday mode? Aah, what bliss! We realise of course that that is unrealistic and would eventually become boring and tedious. As humans we need something to do, some purpose in life. It's built into us by God. But how much work is enough work? More importantly, what work, if any, is more important than any other? God has given each of us different gifts and abilities and hopefully we find work to do commensurate with them. The Bible tells us that there is nothing better than to find satisfaction in our work. Ultimately we are responsible to God for what we do with our lives. Besides working to supply our basic needs of food, clothing and shelter, we are to live good lives for the will of God.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Heavenly Father, grant that as I go forth once more to my daily labour that I may remember whose I am and whom I serve. I know not what this day holds for me, whether good or ill but I know that all things are ordered with unerring wisdom and unbounded love by you. Grant that in all things I may see your unfailing love at work to bless and prosper me according to your purposes. Be gracious to all my friends and acquaintances, those whom I shall relate to today; and grant that our interaction, whether for business or pleasure, may be honoured by your presence and glorifying to your holy name. I ask these things for your dear Son, Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.*





**OCTOBER**







*1 October*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"The only place where success comes before work  
is a dictionary."  
(Vidal Sassoon)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart,  
as working for the Lord, not for men."  
(Colossians 3.23)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Bill Gates gave some rules about life to High School students. Rule 3 was – You will NOT make \$40k a year right out of high school. You won't be a vice-president with a car phone, until you earn both. In an affluent society he was trying to counter the view that success is a right, something we deserve without too much effort. Someone has said that success is 10% inspiration and 90% perspiration. There are very few honest shortcuts to success in the world. The added motive for hard work in the Christian's life, rather than prestige or financial reward, is his or her desire to please the Lord and be a good ambassador for him in the community.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Loving Father, today lies before me as a clean sheet ready to be filled with fresh images. There will be opportunities to produce something useful which will contribute towards fulfilling my purpose here. There will be opportunities to learn new things which will enhance my store of skills. There will be opportunities to lend a helping hand which will strengthen camaraderie with my colleagues and develop a sense of common cause among us. Help me to seize these opportunities, that at the end of the day my 'clean sheet' will not be blotted, dirt-smudged and incomprehensible but a masterpiece to your presence in my life, directing me in all I do for your glory. I ask it in the name of Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*



*2 October*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"When we do what is right,  
we have contentment, peace, and happiness."  
(Beverly LaHaye)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Blessed are they who maintain justice,  
who constantly do what is right."  
(Psalm 106.3)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

John Hammond, a former sailor of WATERHEN, was fatally injured on Anzac Day 1999 while defending a robbery victim. The memory of John and his sacrifice is preserved through an annual award to the most conscientious and community-minded junior sailor at WATERHEN. John made a stand for what is right and just, and though he paid for it with his life, his name is blessed with an enduring remembrance and incentive to others to follow his example of doing the right thing. Hopefully we may not pay the ultimate price as John did but instead enjoy the contentment, peace and happiness which comes with doing what is right.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Dear Lord, I want to begin this day by praising you for all the blessings that are mine through faith in Jesus Christ, your Son: for the forgiveness of my sins and the gift of eternal life, and for the presence of your indwelling Holy Spirit, helping me to live and grow to be more like Jesus. Strengthen my resolve to live in such a way that I reflect His character and model His behaviour. Bless this day in my workplace for all who work there, keeping us from any untoward words or actions which may be contrary to your holy will. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

*3 October*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"A good storyteller is a person who has a good memory  
and hopes other people haven't."  
(Irvin S. Cobb)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"When [satan] lies, he speaks his native language,  
for he is a liar and the father of lies."  
(John 8.44)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Good suspense stories depend on lies. Sometimes detecting who the real baddies or heroes are can be difficult and a good storyteller will have a twist or two in the tail. When we are in a group with our shipmates and start spinning 'warries' it is usual for us to 'embellish' the facts to make the story more dramatic than perhaps the incident actually was. We seldom equate stretching the truth with being a serious lie but it still lies on the truth – lying continuum. The old saying goes, 'O, what a tangled web we weave when first we practice to deceive.' Satan, whose stock in trade is lies, would have us believe that it's OK to be 'untruthful.' Experience tells us though that when we start with a lie, more are required to cover our tracks, and then the hole we dig for ourself gets wider and deeper. When, however, we are allied with our heavenly Father who is The Truth, we don't need a good memory because we are determined to 'speak the truth in love.'

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O Lord, you have given me the night for rest and the day for labour and service, grant that the refreshing sleep of the night now past be turned to your greater glory in the life of the day now before me. Teach me so to use all the circumstances of my life today that I might increasingly reflect the life of Jesus in me. Grant to me the discernment necessary to assess each situation, examining the secret corners of my own heart for impure motives and amending my actions appropriately. Let me always be open to the stirring of your Spirit within me and in all things be open to your will for my life, through the grace of Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

*4 October*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"A genius! For thirty-seven years  
I've practiced fourteen hours a day,  
And now they call me a genius!  
(Pablo Sarasate)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me,  
or seen in me — put it into practice.  
And the God of peace will be with you."  
(Philippians 4. 9)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

A science program on TV followed the lives of a class of Australian child geniuses as they prepared for an international scientific Olympiad. Funny thing was – they all spent several weeks studying and being tutored and going through a rigorous selection process in order to make the team of four. Even genius needs to practice and study to hone its skills. Each of the contestants would be considered a geek or a nerd by many of their peers, but in order to become the best academically had required years of study and practice (the whole of their short lifetime). If we would become the people God intends for us to be we can't underestimate the importance of the study and practice of God's Word in matters of faith. Just as genius can be wasted without the requisite effort to apply oneself, so can our faith.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Almighty Father, I thank you for your continual love towards me. I thank you that you inform my mind with your divine truth and undergird my will with your divine grace. I thank you for every evidence of your Spirit's leading and for all those little happenings which, through seeming at the time no more than chance, yet later appear to me as part of your gracious plan for the education and maturing of my soul. Yet as I come into your presence I would also bring before you any who need your help today because they are faced: with great temptations; by tasks too great for their powers; with major decisions; the consequences of past mistakes, whether their own or others', or whose family circle is broken by death. Make me the human channel, so far as it lies in me, to reach the hearts and lives of those about me who need your help, with your love and compassion. For Jesus' sake. Amen.*

On this day in 1913 the Australian fleet made its first entry into Sydney Harbour. It was comprised of the battle-cruiser 'Australia,' the cruisers 'Melbourne,' 'Sydney' and 'Encounter,' and the torpedo boat destroyers 'Parramatta,' 'Warrego' and 'Yarra.'

*5 October – Navy Day*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

*"The Ancient Mariner would not have taken so well  
if it had been called The Old sailor."  
(Samuel Butler)*

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Whatever exists has already been named,  
and what man is has been known:  
no man can contend with one who is stronger than he."  
(Ecclesiastes 6.10)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

The naming of someone or something is a very significant exercise with its origins in creation. Adam's 'duty statement' called upon him to name all the animals as part of the exercise of ruling over the world. The names of various biblical characters or places either indicates their character or marks some significant event; e.g., Sarah means *princess*, Bethel means *house of God*. A person felt obligated to realise the meaning of their name in their life. A Naomi, for example, whose name means *pleasant*, would endeavour to develop a pleasant character. As a navy we have sought to live up to the name we bear and the proud heritage we enjoy. As Christians in that navy we are also called to live up to the name we bear and to reflect his character in our lives.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*On this day in 1911 an order promulgating the 'Royal Australian Navy' was issued and specifying that ships of this navy be designated 'His Majesty's Australian Ship'.*

*Heavenly Father, today we celebrate the birth of the RAN. We remember the efforts of Captain William Rooke Creswell, who strove to establish an Australian naval force under Australian control, and whose determination and perseverance led to the establishment of the Royal Australian Navy. We give thanks and praise that under your mighty hand and providence our navy has a proud record of selfless service in the defence of this nation. We remember also the navy's contribution to the establishment and preservation of freedom and peace in the world. May we who serve today continue to uphold the fine traditions of naval service that we have inherited. Grant to us the same determination to defend and preserve, as far as it depends on us, the peace and prosperity of this nation. We ask this in the name of the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

*6 October*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Ageing seem to be the only available way  
to live a long time."

(Daniel-Francois-Esprit Auber)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life,  
and this life is in his Son."*

*(1 John 5.11)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

'Warning' by Jenny Joseph begins, 'When I am an old woman I shall wear purple;...' It is a humorous poem about misbehaving in old age and making up for the sobriety of youth. How are you ageing - gracefully or disgracefully? The body will finally wear out one day and we may desire to make our protest about going quietly, even before old age, but then comes eternity. Where will you spend it? The Bible speaks about the life that is found in Jesus which begins in this life and continues into eternity. And it is a life that is increasingly full of grace and truth. Unfortunately, however popular behaving disgracefully may be, it does not lead to eternal life but quite the opposite.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Lord God, I commit myself into your hands this day. Grant to me a watchful, humble and diligent spirit, that I may seek in all things to know your will and when I know it to perform it perfectly and gladly. Be gracious to me as I set out to do my duty in the position that you have been please to set me. Give me grace to honestly improve upon all the talents you have committed to my trust. Help me to fight against a flawed human nature and the forces of evil which wage war against my soul, and enable me to triumph in the power of your Holy Spirit to the honour and glory of your name; through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*



*7 October*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"I never see what has been done;  
I only see what remains to be done."  
(Marie Curie)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"I am the vine; you are the branches.  
If a man remains in me and I in him,  
he will bear much fruit;  
apart from me you can do nothing."  
(John 15.5)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

The Christian life is a call to live in intimate union with Jesus Christ. Christianity is not just a religion of beliefs; it is a religion of relationships. The analogy that Jesus uses tells us why. A branch draws its vital juices from the vine to which it is grafted. In the same way we draw the spiritual vitality from Jesus that enables us to produce the fruit of spiritual growth and good deeds. Cut the branch off and it withers and dies. Thus Jesus can say, 'Apart from me you can do nothing. the Christian life is a supernatural life, flowing from Jesus to us. It can be experienced only as we live in intimate fellowship with him. Are you looking forward to a fruitful life by trusting in God alone?

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, help me today and every day to use life as you would have me to use it. Help me to use whatever gifts and whatever strength I have to help others, and to make a useful contribution to the life and work of the world wherever I am. Help me to use whatever money I have, not selfishly, but generously. Help me to use my time wisely in honest work; and to use my spare time, not altogether selfishly, and not altogether for my own pleasure, but to do something in it for others. Help me to use my mind to get new knowledge and to improve myself. Help me never to stop learning and not to be entirely taken up with light and frivolous things. Help me to use today in such a way that in it I may improve myself, help others and please you; through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

*8 October*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

*"Never go to bed mad.  
Stay up and fight."  
(Phyllis Diller)*

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"'In your anger do not sin':  
Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry,  
and do not give the devil a foothold."  
(Ephesians 4. 26, 27)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Phyllis Diller reckons it's best to settle a problem before going to bed, but not all problems are that easy to settle; especially if both parties believe that they are right. Sometimes the emotional energy expended in a dispute means that the brain eventually fuses and the gravitational pull on the eyelids gets too great. If an issue can't be resolved on the same day it is best for both parties to agree to disagree and make an appointment to resolve things later, when both mind and body are refreshed. What is most important, to preserve relationships, is that we don't do anything wrong in the heat of the moment and that we have 'time out' to let the dust settle. Many a relationship is irreparably damaged by failing to step back from a problem and to get things in proper perspective. Get problems done and dusted but in the right way – a way that is honouring of both parties and to God.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Heavenly Father, you have given me the gift of another day, yet made me conscious of my own mortality and how dependent I am upon you for each breath I draw. Help me so to treasure the hours assigned to me that I waste none of them on things detrimental to my physical, mental and spiritual well-being. So help me to grow in all things that would lead me to fulfil your intended purpose for my life such that, if my life were to end before the next day, there may be nothing left undone or done badly. I ask these things through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

*9 October*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"When you take the bull by the horns...  
what happens is a toss up."  
(William Pett Ridge)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"He who sows wickedness reaps trouble..."*  
(Proverbs 22.8)

## TO THINK ABOUT

In the ruins of the east wing of the palace of King Minos at Knossos in Crete (c.1500BC) there is a fresco of the sport of bull-jumping. It shows an athlete who has leapt over the bull's horns from in front of the bull and is about to dismount over the bull's hind hindquarters into the arms of a waiting woman. In what was obviously a dangerous sport it only needs one slip and the bull wins! Another dangerous sport is that of being a troublemaker in people's lives. Unlike the chance of success in bull-jumping, the person who wants to stir up dissension will certainly come unstuck sooner or later. What goes around comes around and eventually they will find themselves friendless and on the receiving end of trouble.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O Lord, grant to me that your peace will rule in my heart today that I may be strengthened for service. I commit myself to your care and keeping. Let your grace be mighty in me, and sufficient for me, and let it work in me both to will and to do what you desire, and grant me strength for all the duties of the day. Keep me from sins of both commission and omission. Give me rule over my own spirit and keep me from speaking unadvisedly. Help me to live in peace and love with all. Prepare me for all the events of the day, for I don not know what the day may unfold. Give me grace to deny myself, and to follow in the steps of my Lord and Master, Jesus Christ. Amen.*

*10 October*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

*"You cannot shake hands with a clenched fist."  
(Indira Gandhi)*

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"My dear brothers, take note of this:  
Everyone should be quick to listen,  
slow to speak and slow to become angry,  
for man's anger does not bring about  
the righteous life that God desires."  
(James 1.19,20)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

At a 'Marriage Enrichment' seminar couples were told to hold hands and look into each other's eyes while they discussed various issues in their lives. The idea behind it was that it is more difficult to get unduly upset or angry when holding hands and looking into your spouse's eyes. One had to be prepared to listen and hear what the other had to say without reacting. Another rule was that each was allowed the time to say what they needed to say before the other could respond. The aim of the exercise was to train couples in how to communicate effectively and so enrich their relationship. How often do issues in marriages, friendships and in the workplace become accusative and confrontational, all for the lack of good communication. God is a God of peace and reconciliation and desires that we imitate him in our personal relationships. Seek to bring about the righteous life that God desires for you by being a good communicator rather than an angry confrontationist.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O Lord, I give thanks for all the opportunities this day presents and for all my shipmates with whom I work. Let me be a friend to all, ready to help in any way I can. It would be a shame to waste any of today's precious hours because it would mean that I have robbed myself of the chance to reach my full potential and to grow into the person you intended me to be. Help me to come to the end of this day confident that I have walked in your power and presence and that I resemble more closely your Son Jesus Christ, in whose name I pray. Amen.*

*11 October*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

*"Brain, n. An apparatus with which we think that we think."  
(Ambrose Bierce)*

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Then Job replied to the Lord: . . .  
Surely I spoke of things I did not understand,  
things too wonderful for me to know."  
(Job 42.1,2)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Poor Job was having a tough time of it. His whole life had been shattered by a series of disasters hot on the heels of each other. He was demanding from God an explanation of what was going on and why he had been singled out for such hardship and grief. It didn't seem right to him, since he was such a good, clean living, religious bloke. When his whingeing ran out of steam, God gave him the big quiz to show him how little he knew about running the universe. Job was forced to admit that by comparison with God he knew precious little about anything. In our scientific world, where we think we know so much, it's good for us to reflect on the difference between how much we know and how little we really know, and give glory to God for his greatness and grace toward us.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Almighty Father, I praise and bless you that I have awoken to the light of another day in which to serve you by my service to others. Let this day be yours, spent with care, for your glory. As I go to my daily work, help me to take pleasure in it. Show me clearly at every moment what my duty is and help me to be faithful in doing it. Let all that I do be well done and fit for your eyes to see. Grant me strength to do it with patience to bear the challenges and determination to persevere to completion all that I have set myself to do this day. I ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.*

*12 October*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Freedom is not the right to do what we want  
but the power to do what we ought."  
(Corrie ten Boom)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"You, my brothers, were called to be free.  
But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature;  
rather, serve one another in love."  
(Galatians 5.13)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Christians truly are free. Free to choose either to indulge the sinful nature or to serve one another in love. It's not that our past has been changed. We may have used excuses before, to justify our wrong attitudes and behaviours. It's not that our present is changed. We may still be experiencing the consequences of poor parenting, bad luck, poor choices. We don't know what things we have yet to face in the future. But we are free because God has given us his Holy Spirit, who is on our side in the battle against the desires of our sinful nature. Freedom doesn't mean a life without conflict. It does mean the possibility of overcoming those things which defeated us in the past and being empowered to do what is right.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Lord God, I am called to live one day at a time and each day as though it were my last. The door has closed on yesterday and today is full of promise and manifold opportunities. Set the course of direction for my life according to your will and grant that I may follow it in the power of the Holy Spirit. Make me easy to live with and unbending in my convictions; yet gracious towards those who think and act differently to me. Grant to me self-control and integrity in all I do, aware that the example of my conduct is an unforgettable testimony to others of how much I trust in you. For Jesus sake, I pray. Amen.*

*13 October*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"The stupid neither forgive nor forget;  
the naïve forgive and forget;  
the wise forgive but do not forget."  
(Thomas Szasz)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Therefore, I tell you, her many sins  
have been forgiven - for she loved much.  
But he who has been forgiven little loves little."  
(Luke 7.47)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

The woman of 'ill repute' who poured expensive perfume on Jesus' feet and wet them with her tears did so because she knew herself to be a forgiven sinner. Others at the dinner were scathing of Jesus' tolerance of the social outcast and his allowing her to touch him. They did not understand the true nature of faith and forgiveness. When God forgives he also forgets. The Bible tells us that when God forgives our sins he also 'remembers them no more.' What a great relief it is to know that God is not keeping an account of our sins, ready to spring them on us when we finally stand before him at the Last Day.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, I bring you my thanks for all who will help me on my way this day; those of my own family; those who are my loyal friends; people I scarcely know. When I look to Jesus, I find in His daily living no failure and no foolishness. I am encouraged to find in Him no condescension to pride of place because of family background, wealth or exceptional education. I am happy to find in His relationships no barriers of race or colour but that He treated all people equally. Let His spirit be mine this day and let all my relationships today bring glory to you alone. Amen.*

*14 October*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Two may talk together under the same roof for many years,  
yet never really meet;  
and two others at first speech are old friends."  
(Mary Catherwood)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"The Lord would speak to Moses face to face,  
as a man speaks to his friend."  
(Exodus 33.11)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

I have friends that I sometimes don't see for months or even years, yet when we meet up again it's like we only saw each other yesterday. The conversation flows and there's a connection that can't be explained. We just 'click.' And then there are people I see nearly every day where there is very little connection between us, other than the business we might both be involved in. I'm sure you also have a similar story to tell of close friendships that survive separation and local acquaintances that almost seem strangers to you. It's a strange phenomenon isn't it? Moses had a very close, d & m relationship with God. So too should you and I! At the last supper Jesus called his disciples 'friends.' This depth of friendship is ours also. God speaks to us through his Word, the Bible, and we respond in prayer (talking to God). If our relationship with God gets a little distant at times, guess who moved? Make sure you stay in daily touch with your best friend, Jesus.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Almighty Father, look in mercy on all naval personnel who are undertaking duties with special dangers, granting them the knowledge that you are present and upholding them. Help them to do their duty with courage and skill, confident that in life or death, the eternal God is their refuge and that underneath them are the everlasting arms. You are Almighty God in whom all wisdom dwells and so I ask you to fill those in command with all wisdom as they direct the affairs of the navy; especially commending to you the Chief of Navy and his fellow flag officers as they lead the navy in fulfilling its role in the safety and defence of this nation. I ask this through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*



*15 October*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"I am free of all prejudice.  
I hate everyone equally."  
(W.C.Fields)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"If anyone says, 'I love God,'  
yet hates his brother, he is a liar.  
For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen,  
cannot love God, whom he has not seen."  
(1 John 4.20)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

It is said that many a true word is spoken in jest. Whether US comedian W.C. Fields was speaking the truth or only in jest we'll never know. The sentiment expressed indicates the type of person who does not have a relationship with God. To dislike another person can vary from disinterest to pathological hatred, depending on the cause of the dislike. However it is expressed it runs counter to God's command to love our neighbour as ourself. We need help though in order to do this. It is our relationship with God which enables us to love others. How do we tell if we love God? By the way we relate to others. We cannot be warm toward God and cold toward our fellowman at the same time.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Lord Jesus Christ, you have promised to come again in the same manner in which you ascended into heaven. Perhaps today! Keep me ever watchful for your glorious appearing. Help me to set my affections on things above not on things on earth. Although this day I must concern myself with the daily round, may I sit loose to the attachment of worldly concerns which would divert my heart from eternal realities. May I live as one who waits for the Lord's appearing, knowing that when you appear I will be made like you and see you as you are; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, for ever the One true and living God. Amen.*

*16 October*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"When you have faults,  
do not fear to abandon them."  
(Confucius)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"You know my folly, O God;  
my guilt is not hidden from you."*  
(psalm 69.5)

## TO THINK ABOUT

Before you can abandon your faults you have first to admit that you have them! Some people find it difficult to admit to their faults. Well, all of us do really! I heard an ABC radio interview while driving home in the car one day. The discussion was about 'Perfectionists,' as a psychological condition. At their worst they go into mental 'melt-down' because of their inability to admit to having any faults and to make others behave perfectly. How tragic to live in such fear of being imperfect and therefore not accepted by others. God knows our true condition and he accepts us through faith in Christ. It's so liberating to know that I am acceptable to God without actually being perfect, yet at the same time being credited as perfect in God's sight on the basis of Jesus' death in my place.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Dear Father, I give you thanks and praise that you have preserved and protected me through the night, and in all the times and days of my life to this moment. I pray that you will watch over me and all those near and dear to me this day and to our life's end. Continue to show me the right course in life, steering the vessel of my life always toward yourself, the tranquil haven for all storm-tossed souls. May your Spirit curb my wayward senses and guide and enable me to seek that which is for my true good. These things I ask for your glory and in Jesus' Name. Amen.*

*17 October*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"An effort made for the happiness of others  
lifts us above ourselves."  
(Lydia Marie Child)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Carry each others burdens,  
and in this way you will fulfil  
the law of Christ."*  
(Galatians 6.2)

## TO THINK ABOUT

A few years ago I was on a S.E. Asian deployment and we stopped in Saigon as one of our port visits. While we were there a team from the ship visited a Vietnamese primary school in the countryside for an aid project. We built, repaired and painted all sorts of things while the navy band entertained the children. By the end of the day we had had as much fun as the children. It was a great day and we returned to the ship tired but happy for all that had been accomplished. It's great that with the aid of God's Spirit we are not only able to meet life successfully but even to help others for whom life is so much more difficult.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Almighty and Everlasting God. I pray for all those who have been elected to the responsibility of government in this country. I commend to you the Prime Minister, the Premiers of the States, the Chief Ministers of the Territories and all who serve under them. Grant a sense of dedication, integrity and commitment to high principle to all who have the responsibility of making decisions which will affect the lives of others. I pray for a sense of responsibility for all citizens of this nation and that submission to lawful authority may prevail over lawlessness and anarchy, for the good of all and the well-being of this nation. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

(Rom 13.1)

18 October

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"A critic is a legless man who teaches running."  
(Channing Pollock)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"When they kept on questioning him,  
[Jesus] straightened up and said to them,  
'If any one of you is without sin,  
let him be the first to throw a stone at her'."*  
(John 8.7)

## TO THINK ABOUT

When people criticise Christians it is not so much because of our failings – because we are not perfect, just forgiven – but so that they can be justified in their own eyes. The way people take the moral high ground is not usually by being more righteous but by finding someone else to look down on. The media does this character assassination so well in their tabloid news and current affairs TV shows. When Jesus' self-righteous enemies were trying to get at him by using an unfortunate woman who had been caught in adultery, he reminded them that there is not one of us who is always perfectly innocent of moral failure. We need to look to our own life before we point the finger at others for their failings.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Dear Lord and Heavenly Father, I thank you for the precious gift of your constant love for me and the protection you provide. I thank you for the abundance of your provision for all my needs – for food and drink, clothing and shelter, loved ones, friends and companions, and countless other benefits. I'm thankful that you guide me daily in living for you and for others. Strengthen me for service that I may fulfil your purpose for my life. Help me today to be Christ-like with everyone with whom I come into contact so that their lives may be enriched in some way by your great love for them. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

*19 October*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Look at me: I worked my way up from nothing  
to a state of extreme poverty."  
(Groucho Marx)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Better a poor man whose walk is blameless  
than a rich man whose ways are perverse."  
(Proverbs 28. 6)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Who are the best givers to charity? Statistics show that those who are lower on the socio-economic scale are far more generous, proportionally, than the wealthy and comfortably off. It has been said that the rich get that way by spending other people's money and by hanging on to what they have. My own experience of the rich, having worked in one of the richest suburbs in Australia, is that their 'generous giving' to charitable affairs is generally but a minute portion of their wealth. It seems perverse that society can laud the rich 'philanthropist,' whose giving to charity barely registers on their bank statement, when the 'battlers' often give 'as much as they are able, and even beyond their ability.' In fact the last quote was used of an early, poverty stricken, Christian congregation. It should also reflect the truth about today's Christian.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O Lord, so often I rush into the day with my mind full of selfish concerns and already contemplating the successful outcome of all my plans and ambitions. Thank you for the remembrance that I need to pause and spend time with you if I am to be truly successful in any endeavour. I need the reminder of my own mortality and how much my life depends upon you for the very breath I draw and the strength to work. I lean upon you now, Lord, and seek your guidance and your blessing for success in my labours and in my relationships in the workplace. May this day be one which glorifies you and points to the reality of a true faith in you; through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

20 October

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"It has been said that a bride's attitude towards her betrothed  
can be summed up in three words:

Aisle. Altar. Hymn.  
(Frank Muir)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"However, each one of you must also love his wife  
as he loves himself, and the wife must  
respect her husband."  
(Ephesians 5.33)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Feminism came to the fore out of the sexual revolution of the 1960's. It is just one of the manifestations of the age old 'battle of the sexes' which had its origin in the consequence of Adam and Eve's indiscretion with the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden. Eve is told by God, 'Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.' The word translated 'desire' contains the sense of wanting to boss her partner. So, each of the partners in a relationship naturally wants to be in charge and we end up with manipulation in relationships as par for the course. Against this natural inclination God wants us to enjoy equality and mutual submission, with each giving of themselves for the benefit of the other.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Loving Father, in my work I know what it means to be under authority, to follow orders and to be ready for action at all times. Help me to have the mind of Jesus, that though he is Lord of all was willing to walk the path of obedience all the way to death on the cross. Help me to work and serve willingly with a cheerful and enthusiastic disposition, rather than chafing under my obligations and responsibilities. Help me not to speak ill of anyone but to be peaceful and friendly and show a gentle attitude towards everyone. In my dealings with other people keep me mindful of the fact that I am far from perfect and that I need a good measure of toleration from them. Neither let me forget your kindness and love towards me, not because of any merit on my part but because of your great mercy in Jesus Christ, in whose name I pray. Amen.*

*21 October*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"By working faithfully eight hours a day  
you may eventually get to be a boss  
and work twelve hours a day."  
(Robert Frost)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Now we ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you,  
who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you.  
Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work."  
(1 Thessalonians 5.12,13)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

I've heard some sailors say that they look forward to getting promoted so that life will get easier. They see advancement in terms of the perceived perks it brings to them. They say, 'I want to get to be the Chief so I can sit around in the mess all day,' or 'The officers have it easy, just bossing people about.' The reality is that with promotion comes more responsibility and longer hours. Most people don't comprehend this or see the extra effort that is required of good leaders. In my experience the lazy or bullying type bosses don't last the distance. The real motive for advancement as a Christian is service to the Lord expressed in service to his church and the wider world.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Blessed Father, I give you thanks for the priceless gift of your Son. In sending your Son to die on the cross for me you have been generous beyond measure and such love calls for the surrender of my will to yours. Help me to understand that real prosperity is not measured by how much I have and keep but by the extent to which I give and share. Grant to me a generosity of spirit in sharing my material blessings and in the giving of myself in service to others and ever ready to help and to 'go the extra mile', believing that the effect of my actions will be multiplied and will produce gratitude to you and give you the glory. I ask these things in Jesus name. Amen.*

22 October

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Every one has a gift for something,  
even if it is the gift of being a good friend."  
(Marian Anderson)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Each one should use whatever gift  
he has received to serve others,  
faithfully administering God's grace  
in its various forms."  
(1 Peter 4.10)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

As members of the Navy we are often separated from family and friends. When we first join up we are usually transported a great distance to our initial training establishment and then posted just as far away for our first posting. Often our shipmates become our surrogate family. The tyranny of distance and our need for support and encouragement has the effect of bringing us closer to others who think and feel as we do. The Christian community is even more so a close, warm and supportive fellowship, where we can find encouragement and strength to get on with life in the grim world. You may not appreciate the importance of Christian fellowship but it is essential to your growth and well-being as a Christian as well as for the others in the fellowship. With separation from extended family being the norm for most of us, what is needed is good friends and the gift of being a good friend.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Almighty God and Father, all things were created by you and all things exist through you and for you that you might be glorified forever. Because of your great mercy to me I offer myself as a living sacrifice, dedicated to your service and pleasing to you, which is the nature of true worship. Help me in my service not to think of myself more highly than I should but instead to be modest in my thinking. Help me to have the same concern for everyone and willingness to accept humble duties with a joyful heart and patience in the face of any difficulties. May I always aim at those things that help to build relationships and which strengthen team effort. Hear my prayer through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*



23 October

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Personally, I'm always ready to learn,  
although I do not always like being taught."  
(Winston Churchill)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears!  
You are just like your fathers: you always resist the Holy Spirit!"  
(Acts 7.51)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Resistance to being taught is not an intellectual problem but rather a moral issue. Let's face it, when we're not in the mood we hate being told what to do by anyone. When I do want to know something then I'm happy to submit to my instructor. Throughout the history of God's people in the Bible, the one persistent theme was their resistance to being told what to do by God. It's part of our fatal flaw as humans since Adam's disobedience in the garden of Eden. The only remedy to our unteachableness in spiritual matters is to be filled with the Holy Spirit of God. The person who is 'in Christ' by faith is ready to learn and willing to be taught how to become the person God intended them to be.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Loving Lord, because of my faith in Jesus Christ, your Son, I do not live as my flawed human nature dictates but according to the Spirit of life within me, who produces love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, humility and self-control. May these qualities be seen in me in abundance by my loved ones, friends and shipmates. As often as I have the opportunity stir me up to do good to everyone, especially those who may be burdened with troubles or faced with the temptation to do the wrong thing or to give less than their best effort. Thank you for the blessing of your Spirit enabling me to live for you today and bringing glory to your holy name; through Jesus Christ. Amen.*

*24 October*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"I think there is only one quality  
worse than hardness of heart  
and that is softness of head."  
(Theodore Roosevelt)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Those who live according to the sinful nature  
have their minds set on what that nature desires;  
but those who live in accordance with the Spirit  
have their minds set on what the Spirit desires."  
(Romans 8.5)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Most people think that religion or faith is a matter of the emotions, of warm, fuzzy feelings. Many can speak of 'experiencing' the presence of God. Certainly there should be some degree of emotional content in a relationship with God, just as there is in human relationships. However, the Bible indicates, over and over again, that a mind change is required. The essential meaning of the word 'repentance' is 'a change of mind' about God, from independence to submission. Once we put our faith in God it then remains necessary to reprogram the mind to think God's ways rather than ours. Much like a computer we start a process of deleting the rubbish and the viruses and downloading the Bible teaching on how to be fully human as God intended.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Heavenly Father, in lowliness I come before you at the beginning of a new day – a day fresh, clean, full of promise and, so far, unblemished by any folly or foolish pride on my part. I give you thanks for the knowledge that today will be different – with surprises and necessary challenges in store to test me in fulfilling my potential. Help me not to make a mess of anything. Give me the resolve: to try and make life easier for others; to speak words of encouragement to all; to help others to recognise and seize opportunities for personal growth and achievement. Bring me to the close of this day well satisfied with my efforts in the service of Jesus Christ my Lord; in whose name I pray. Amen.*

*25 October*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Darkness cannot drive out darkness;  
only light can do that.  
Hate cannot drive out hate;  
Only love can do that."  
(Martin Luther King, Jr.)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Anyone who claims to be in the light  
but hates his brother is still in darkness.  
Whoever loves his brother lives in the light,  
and there is nothing in him to make him stumble."  
(1 John 2. 9, 10)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

One of the ways we can determine whether we are a Christian or not is the degree to which we love our fellow man. You can't hate other people and belong to Jesus, because God is love. People can say that they belong to Christ yet be hateful towards others. Their actions and attitudes deny their words. We need to look very carefully at our ourselves to see where we stand. We may not always see eye to eye with other people, or dislike their lifestyle choices, or whatever else doesn't fit with our way of thinking, but can we still see them with the eyes of Jesus? Do you try to act towards them as you think Jesus would? If you can love others, regardless of your own prejudices and their idiosyncrasies, then you know Jesus and can relax. And others will also see that you love him too.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Dear Father, thank you for the blessing of living in this world with all its beauty and for the relationships I have with family, friends and shipmates. Help me to show my appreciation for all your goodness to me in so many ways, especially by living up to my high calling as a child of God, through faith in Jesus Christ. Grant to me the strength to walk in integrity – morally, mentally, physically and spiritually – every hour, relying on your presence and power. Make me discerning enough to recognise my faults and courageous enough to make necessary changes in order to be more conformed to the image of Christ, in whose name I pray. Amen.*

*26 October*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"No man has a good enough memory  
to make a successful liar."  
(Abraham Lincoln)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Two things I ask of you, O Lord:  
do not refuse me before I die:  
Keep falsehood and lies far from me:  
give me neither poverty nor riches,  
but give me only my daily bread."  
(Proverbs 30. 7, 8)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

You and I may take pride in what we achieve by hard work and professional excellence but we must also realise how vulnerable we are as human beings to corruption. Just as wealth brings the temptation to feel no need for God and poverty the temptation to steal for necessities, so in our work ambitions the temptation may be to try and get ahead by dishonest means. We saw in an earlier devotional that lying will catch us out sooner or later and bring us undone. If we are to live a successful, contented life, maintain our integrity, and avoid corruption, then we must realise that we depend on God for all those things and give him thanks for what we have.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Eternal Father, many of the badges of the Royal Australian Navy have mottoes which express high ideals and virtues to which we supposedly aspire as seafarers –*

*"We aim at higher things",  
"Courage in difficulties",  
"Defend the weak",  
"Incorruptible",  
"Defend the right",  
"Honour Integritas Virtus",*

*to name a few. Help us to live up to that standard of behaviour in thought, word and deed, which is expressive of your will for our lives and which reflects your holy character. Turn our hearts always to choose the higher path, especially when others advocate an 'easy' option when it comes to what is right and good and true. Protect us from those choices which would bring discredit on ourselves and the fleet in which we serve. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

*27 October – Deployment*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

“How we leave the world is more  
important than how we enter it.”  
(Janet Oke)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*“Mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance.”*  
(Jude 1.2)

## TO THINK ABOUT

We enter the world squawking at the indignity of it and then spend a considerable time thereafter squealing for our food and nappy changes and with wind and to be comforted. Hardly an auspicious beginning! But how will we be remembered when we’ve gone from this life? How did we turn out after the inauspicious beginning? Jude reminds us of what is available in this life and what will carry us through into the next if we have a relationship with Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. Believers who hold fast to Jesus will be upheld by God and exit this world leaving a great remembrance of themselves and a great testimony to the power and love of God to change lives forever.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Almighty Father, whose way is in the sea and whose paths are in great waters, whose command is over all and whose love never fails; let those who are deployed overseas, especially in peace-keeping or policing roles, be aware of your presence and obedient to your will. Keep them true to their best self, guarding them against dishonesty in purpose and deed and helping them to live so that they can stand unashamed and unafraid before their shipmates, their loved ones and you. In their absence from home watch over their loved ones and friends, protecting them from all danger. Give them the will to do their work and to accept their share of responsibilities with a strong heart and cheerful mind. Guide them with the light of truth and keep before them the life of Him by whose example and help they may obtain the answer to this prayer, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

28 October

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Example is not the main thing influencing others.

It is the only thing.

(Albert Schweitzer)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet,*

*you also should wash one another's feet.*

*I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you."*

*(John 13.14,15)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Are you reluctant to do demeaning tasks? Do you seek for something else to do when 'Out garbage' is piped, or moan when required to help with cleaning the fresh water tanks? None of us looks forward to doing the dirty or menial work. A willingness to put ourselves at the disposal of others is totally unnatural. Washing the feet of visitors was a job for the lowest ranked servant in Jesus' day, yet Jesus got up from the dinner table to wash the feet of his disciples to show them the true nature of Christian service. To willingly and voluntarily put yourself at the bottom runs counter to the way of this world but examples of service such as this are essential if we are to influence others for Christ.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O Lord, it is right for me to give you praise and thanks because you are creator, sustainer and redeemer of the world. Through confession of my sins, turning my life over to your control and faith in your Son's death and resurrection, I am forgiven all my sins and promised eternal life. I have confidence in every circumstance of life that you are in control and that there is nothing which may happen to me that jeopardises my eternal security as a child of God. With such confidence I am able to face all the vagaries and vicissitudes of this life. Bless all whom my life touches today because I live in your love and power. Help me to conduct myself today in such a way that I may rest tonight with a clear conscience; through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

*29 October*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"The quality of an individual is reflected  
in the standards they set for themselves."  
(Ray Kroc)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Now Daniel so distinguished himself among the  
administrators and satraps by his exceptional qualities  
that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom."  
(Daniel 6.3)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Want to get ahead in life and godliness? Then take a leaf out of Daniel's book. Because of his faith in God and a deep sense of responsibility he set himself to be the very best he could be at whatever he did. Consequently, because of his 'exceptional qualities,' he rose to be 'Prime Minister' and served under several kings of Persia. Daniel's faith also brought him into conflict with those rulers but he did not surrender his faith or his standards in order to preserve his life or make his life easier. We may not rise up the food chain as far as Daniel but the struggle to maintain our faith and live up to God's standards is just as real.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O Lord, your eternal power and divine nature is seen in all the world and in what you have created. When I consider the vastness of the universe and the complexity and intricacy of even the most microscopic environment I am awed by the wonder of it all. I praise you for your greatness Lord, especially for the privilege of being called into a relationship with you as your child and given responsibility for your world. Help me to be a good steward of all that you have entrusted to me; but most of all in helping others to know of your great love for them and of your great joy when they turn back to you. I praise you Lord, in Jesus' name. Amen.*

*30 October*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Concentration: Put all your eggs in one basket,  
and watch that basket."  
(Andrew Carnegie)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Commit to the Lord whatever you do,  
and your plans will succeed."  
(Proverbs 16.3)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

The old adage is: 'Don't put all your eggs in one basket.' The idea is that we have to play it safe in life. Financial advisors urge us to diversify our funds in order to minimise any losses that may occur with our investments. We must insure against the vagaries of life. After all, you only have to take your eye off that basket for a nano-second and wham! it's all gone. That's what it's like in this uncertain world. But those whose trust is in the Lord can commit their lives to him, knowing that they are ultimately secure in him. Because they live with his power at work in them it enables them to concentrate on pleasing him by living fulfilled and productive lives.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O Lord, my God, you are a righteous Judge who judges my thoughts and desires; keep me from doing wrong to anyone today. You demand justice in relationships and bless those who obey you; guide me in building up and enriching peoples' lives according to your will. Grant to me the same displeasure that you have towards those attitudes which are corrosive in meaningful relationships - lying, flattery, deceit, pride, slander, and the like. Remember especially those who are experiencing unjust suffering at the hands of wicked people. Teach them to put their trust in you in whom they will find true happiness and peace. Hear my prayer, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*



*31 October*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Choose a job you love,  
and you will never have to work a day in your life."  
(Confucius)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Delight yourself in the Lord  
and he will give you the desires of your heart."  
(Psalm 37.4)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

'A day alongside is a day wasted.' The enthusiasm of those who love their sea-time in the Navy is infectious. When you can enjoy your work it makes the day pass quicker and anything you do seem more worthwhile. In fact it doesn't seem like work at all. We've all heard those famous musicians, artists, etc., who say that their career is great and they would do it for nothing, and even admit that they feel embarrassed to get paid for what they do. The reality is that most people don't get that chance in life and have to work in factory or office to earn a crust. We can do something about our attitude to whatever has turned out to be our lot in life. In Christ we do not choose a job but a person we love, and that makes all the difference.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

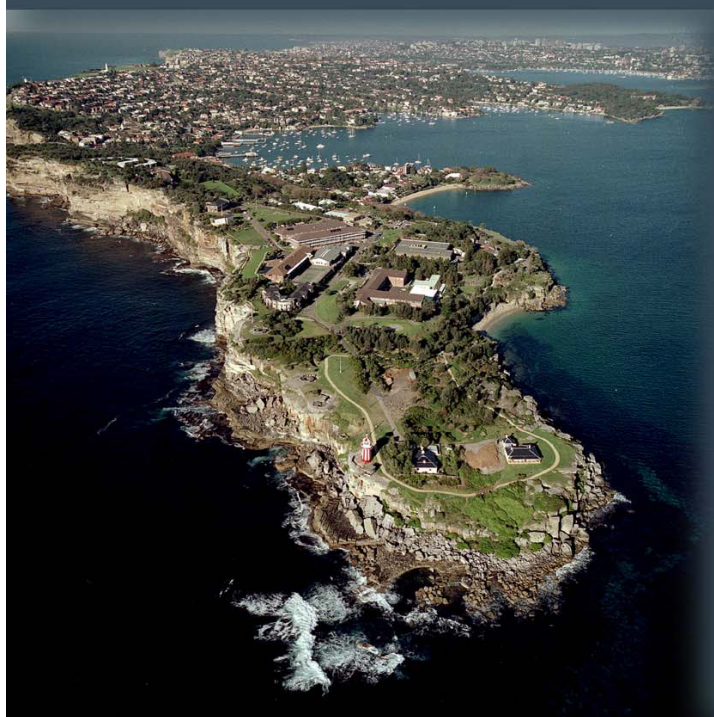
*Lord, thank you for a new day and a fresh start. I rejoice in the beauty of your creation and the glorious privilege of fellowship with you through faith in your Son, Jesus Christ. In the busyness, and sometimes confusion that I will face in the course of today, lead me to do your will at all times and make plain the course I should steer. Keep me true to your purposes for my life according to your holy Word. Veering to neither port nor starboard, where faith can founder on the rocks of error or unbelief. I ask it for the sake of Him who died for me, Jesus Christ, my Lord. Amen.*







NOVEMBER







*1 November*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"When I look back at where I've been,  
I see that what I am becoming  
is a whole lot further down the road  
from where I was." (Gloria Gaither)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"We ought always to thank God for you, brothers,  
and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more,  
and the love every one of you has for each other is increasing." (2 Thessalonians 1.3)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

In our daily lives 'faith' seems a rather difficult thing to quantify; especially so because our mood is so variable. We have our good days and our less than good days. Faith is invisible except when seen in the things we do for others. Even when others are living by faith, what they say and do may seem quite ordinary and unremarkable to us. It is only when we look deep inside ourselves that we see what it costs us to maintain this 'ordinary life' of a Christian. We should not be discouraged if our life seems so ordinary rather than conspicuous. Progress in the life of faith is usually one step at a time. God knows how much of our life is lived by faith and we will be rewarded with increasing faith.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

### *A Notice Board Prayer*

*Dear God*

*So far today I've done alright*

*I haven't gossiped*

*And I haven't lost my temper*

*I haven't been grumpy, nasty or selfish*

*But in a few minutes God*

*I'm going to get out of bed*

*And that is when*

*I'm going to need a lot of help.*

*Amen.*

*Dear Father, you're well aware of this amusing prayer which begins with expressing how well the day has begun before getting out of bed. Behind its humour lies the poignant truth that I need your help each day if I am not to make a 'dog's breakfast' of it by my frailties and wilful disobedience to your will. I thank you that each day is a fresh opportunity, with your help, to recover lost ground and advance in godliness of character. If at times it seems to me that it's 'one step forward and two steps back,' help me to trust that with you at the helm each step will be, in Christ, a gain for me and bring glory to your holy name for Jesus' sake. Amen.*

*2 November*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Keep your face to the sunshine  
and you cannot see the shadows."  
(Helen Keller)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Then the righteous will shine like the sun  
in the kingdom of their Father.  
He who has ears let him hear."  
(Matthew 13.43)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Passport and ID photos are generally shockers, aren't they? Some people talk about their 'best side' when being photographed, meaning that the way the light shines on their face makes them look better from one side rather than the other. The direction that light falls can have both good and bad effects. I came across this a while ago – 'People are like stained glass windows. They sparkle and shine when the sun is out but when darkness comes their true beauty is revealed only if there is a light from within.' Jesus said that he is the 'light of the world.' If the light is to shine from within us then it will only be as he resides within us.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

(Psalms 1 & 15)

*Dear Father God, who may enter into your presence and truly worship you as you deserve? The person who obeys your holy will and always does what is right; who speaks the truth with sincerity and who doesn't slander others; who doesn't do the wrong thing by their friends and spread rumours about their shipmates; who always keeps their promises no matter what it takes; who is generous to those in need and will not perjure themselves for ill-gotten gain; who rejects the advice of those opposed to you and does not follow their example. Lord, grant me the wisdom to worship you with a life committed to obeying your holy will. Bring me to the end of the day knowing I have lived it in your presence; for the sake of Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

*3 November*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"The buck stops here."  
(Harry S. Truman)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Against you, you only, have I sinned  
and done what is evil in your sight,  
so that you are proved right when you speak  
and justified when you judge."  
(Psalm 51.4)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

I heard the story of a young high school student who had been suspended from school for spitting on a computer. His mother was indignant, claiming that he had been treated unfairly. What kind of lesson do you think that young man is going to learn about taking responsibility for his actions and his life? King David had blown it big time before he wrote his psalm of repentance. He realised that he was responsible for his actions and that the seriousness of his offence was primarily against God. No matter who we may hurt or offend in this world, to whom we certainly owe apologies, ultimately the offence stems from our rebellion toward God. We need to straighten things out with him by admitting our responsibility, apologising for the offence caused, and seeking to make amends where possible with those we have hurt here.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

(Psalm 16)

*You, Lord, are my God, and you supply all my needs. All the good things I have come from you and my future is your hands. I praise you for guidance from your holy Word and for a conscience that warns me when I am tempted to waver from what is right and true. Grant to me a keen sense of your constant presence and the assurance that you are near and nothing can shake me. I trust in you for my safe keeping and feel completely secure in your love because you have shown me the path that leads to eternal life in your presence. As I go to my work, surround me with your blessing that others may be conscious of your 'realness' and look to you, the source of life. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

*4 November*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"To be prepared for war  
is one of the most effectual means  
of preserving peace."  
(George Washington)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"He said to them, 'But now if you have a purse, take it, and also a bag;  
and if you don't have sword, sell your cloak and buy one.' ... The disciples said,  
'See, Lord, here are two swords.' 'That is enough,' he replied."  
(Luke 22.36,38)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Christians in the military some times wonder whether they should be pacifists or not. They think that being involved with the profession of arms is contrary to the teaching of Christ and so consider discharging from the navy. The instruction of Jesus to his disciples to buy swords seems very strange when elsewhere he has instructed them to turn the other cheek if assaulted. Jesus recognised that the disciples were to face a very hostile world and might have to defend themselves from more than a slap in the face. Two swords among twelve men is more a defensive or deterrent stance than aggressive. Pope John Paul II said, "To prevent war is already to perform a work for peace. In this sense, those who are pledged to the service of their country as members of the armed services can be considered agents of security and freedom on behalf of their people. Christians (*in the navy need feel no disquiet as they work*) to defend the rights of peace and love.' [*words in Italics mine*]

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Eternal Father, you are the Lord over all and nothing is outside of your control. Even now your Son exercises His sovereign rule and is leading all things to completion on the Day you have appointed. You have given these assurances in your holy Word, so that with the eye of faith I can believe it, even though I cannot see it by my experience in the world. Because Jesus died for me and rose again I have complete confidence in my eternal security. With that knowledge let me stand tall and face the challenges and any tribulations that this day has to offer. May the example of my conduct today be testimony to my faith in you and bring glory to your holy name; through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*



*5 November*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"More than an end to war,  
we want an end to the beginning of all wars."  
(Franklin D. Roosevelt)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"The cow will feed with the bear,  
their young will lie down together,  
and the lion will eat straw like the ox."  
(Isaiah 11. 7)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

It's great to know that one day we'll be right out of a job! Not only will there be an end to war but also an end to the beginning of all wars. There is a day coming when we will be out of a job as members of the profession of arms. We won't be upset or disappointed that we are made redundant because it means that this world, as we know it, has ceased to exist and the new heaven and the new earth of God's restored creation has arrived. Whether this occurs in our lifetime or not doesn't matter. What does matter is that as believers we will share in the paradise which is heaven because of our faith in God.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Dear Lord and Father, forgive my foolish ways which so often undermine my credibility as a disciple of Christ. All too easily I forget that I represent you, as your ambassador, to my circle of family, friends and shipmates. I slip into ways of thinking and acting which express more the standards of this world than those of your heavenly kingdom. Strengthen my heart and mind so that I may live in a way that is pleasing to you and which will promote the cause of Jesus Christ, my saviour. Help me to express in my conduct those values which are eternal and absolute and which reflect your holy character. I ask these things in the precious name of Jesus. Amen.*

6 November

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"If the world seems cold to you,  
kindle fires to warm it."  
(Lucy Larcom)

## FROM THE BIBLE

"Do not put out the Spirit's fire:"  
(1 Thessalonians 5.19)

## TO THINK ABOUT

We find it easier to stand around and complain about the ills of our community, or nation, or the world, rather than do something about them. As if complaining has any power to change things! Our opinions about what should be done to rectify problems accomplish nothing other than letting off steam. If you were to find yourself in a cold room, in which there was a fireplace and the ingredients for a fire, it wouldn't make much sense to stand there and complain of the cold. Better to build a fire and light it and then enjoy its warmth. In each of our lives there are many shortcomings that need rectifying. Do we just lament these failings or do we act to change things. With the Holy Spirit's assistance we can bring about those changes which will make us more like Jesus and bring glory to God.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Dear Lord, I thank you for your wonderful love for me and for watching over me to protect me from the power of death. I praise you that, even if today my life on earth should come to an end, I will spend eternity in your presence because of my faith in Jesus Christ. Help me to share the joy of these privileges and the peace of heart and mind that they bring among those with whom I work. Keep from all harm any who are working in dangerous situations, especially those at sea. Turn their hearts to thoughts of you and eternal realities, and keep them mindful of their own mortality and frailty. Bless those with special responsibilities for leadership within the Navy; granting to them the necessary wisdom and self-discipline to fulfil the duties entrusted to them for the good of all. Hear my prayer through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

*7 November*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"The graveyards are full of indispensable men."  
(Charles DeGaulle)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"There is no remembrance of men of old,  
and even those who are yet to come  
will not be remembered by those who follow."  
(Ecclesiastes 1.11)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Over the years I've seen countless memorial services and funerals where it has been said of the deceased, 'We'll never forget you.' While understanding the strength of the emotional content involved at the time, sadly the opposite is true. Within a generation or two we are all forgotten, save for a grandchild or great grandchild. But in time even they will pass away and the only remembrance may be a gravestone or plaque where future passers-by may pause to wonder who we were or what we accomplished in life. The truth is that the world survives even the passing of its greatest and most famous persons and life goes on here below. What is important is that our names are written in God's book of life, to be numbered among those who will enjoy eternal life with him because of our faith in Jesus Christ.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Merciful Father, I praise you for the wonderful privilege I have in being able to approach the throne of God through Jesus Christ my Lord and there present my humble prayers. I am reminded of the 'peace we often forfeit,' the 'needless pain we bear,' all because I neglect to come before you in prayer to seek your help, strength and comfort, in dealing with life issues. I am mindful of the fact that you desire me to give you thanks for all the good things with which you have blessed me and to praise you because of who you are – a holy, righteous and loving God. May I spend this day in prayerful communion with you, for my well-being and your eternal glory. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

8 November

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Noise proves nothing.  
Often a hen who has merely laid an egg  
cackles as if she had laid an asteroid."  
(Mark Twain)

## FROM THE BIBLE

"Therefore, as it is written:  
'Let him who boasts boast in the Lord.'"  
(1 Corinthians 1.31)

## TO THINK ABOUT

We all know the type – lots of noise and promise and glory-taking but not much of substance to show for all the apparent effort (usually a lack of it). 'Show ponies'! who usually get others to do all the work while they take the credit. People boast about all sorts of things that they believe they have accomplished through their own abilities. No one can doubt the Apostle Paul's ability and achievements in his service for God but he was always keen to deflect attention from himself to what God had accomplished through him. It goes against the grain naturally to give credit to someone else for what we think we have achieved but as Christians we have to remember where our gifts and abilities come from. If we must boast let us give the credit where it is due – to the Lord who made us as we are and empowers us to succeed in anything we do.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Father eternal, ruler of creation, Spirit of life and light of my way; strengthen and guide me today such that your will be done in my life. When your Spirit provokes me to be honest with myself I am conscious of how much I am marked daily by selfish greed, tarnished honour and vain glory; even in the simplest and most mundane activities. In your great mercy and compassion forgive all my sins and failures and grant me the vision of a nobler life today. Lift my heart to a brighter hope of sacrificial service that does not seek pride of place or special advantage but which raises the spirits of all with whom I come into contact. Glorify yourself in my life today and always; for Jesus' sake. Amen.*

*9 November*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Between saying an doing  
many a pair of shoes is worn out."  
(Italian Proverb)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"What do you think? There was a man who had two sons.  
He went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard.'  
'I will not,' he answered, but later he changed his mind and went.  
Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing.  
He answered, 'I will, sir,' but he did not go.  
Which of the two did what his father wanted?"  
(Matthew 21.28-31)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Jesus' parable about the two sons drives home an important point. It's not what we say that reveals our basic attitude towards God. It's what we do. The old adage, 'actions speak louder than words,' is very true, and possibly derived from this parable. I guess you also know people who talk the religious talk very well yet don't seem to live out their faith. Like the Pharisees that Jesus was talking to, they say that they are ready to obey God but do not put his teachings into daily practice. Religious talk is what some people use to cover up their irreligious walk. Be wary though, for we too are vulnerable to the attitudes that ensnared the Pharisees. Be ready to answer God as the second son did and to act as the first did.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Lord of creation, your glory and power are beyond comprehension, yet you condescend to live in the hearts of those who put their faith in you. I praise and thank you for all your mercies and your loving-kindness shown to me in countless ways but most of all for Jesus Christ, my Saviour. Strengthen me to give you my will that I might joyfully obey you and accomplish all you purpose for my life. Enlighten me to give you my mind that I may be taught by your Spirit a wisdom that far surpasses my own. Enlarge my spirit to give you my heart that I may love you as I ought and my neighbour as you do. I ask these things in Jesus' name and that he may receive the glory due to His holy name. Amen.*

*10 November*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"The burden is equal to the horse's strength."  
(The Talmud)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength,  
so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed  
and all the Gentiles might hear it."  
(2 Timothy 4.17)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

At various times in our Christian lives we've known the pain of rejection or discouragement. It can be very hard to deal with, especially when we know we've put our heart and soul into something and the reaction to our efforts has been underwhelming. We do need the support and encouragement of others but sometimes we simply do not receive it. How do we respond to or deal with such discouragement? Don't be downhearted, whatever discouragement may come. When others fail us, we have been given a wonderful opportunity to experience the faithfulness of our God. Whatever the burden, God's strength is available to carry us through. He will stand by our side and give us strength to carry us through.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Heavenly Father, life is not nearly so tidy as I would wish it to be and today will bring a mixed bag of circumstances and outcomes. Help me to be gracious when faced with difficult people and situations and enable me to retrieve some good from my experiences. It's easy to be thankful when things do go well and everything turns out as well as or better than expected; but even there I so easily take things for granted and forget to express my appreciation for the way others have helped me. Most of all I so readily operate in my own strength alone and forget that it is only in the strength that you supply that I accomplish anything at all of lasting value. Forgive my foolish pride and lead me to a greater trust in you who alone can successfully navigate the ways of this unruly world. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

*11 November – Remembrance Day*

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

“Have you forgotten yet?  
Look down and swear by the slain  
of the War that you’ll never forget.  
(Siegfried Sassoon)

FROM THE BIBLE

*“How the mighty have fallen!  
The weapons of war have perished!”  
(2 Samuel 1.27)*

TO THINK ABOUT

Remembrance day – which commemorates the end of WW1 – has been overshadowed in the Australian psyche by Anzac Day. Ceremonies today will not be on the same scale. However, the Armistice was signed at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour of the 11<sup>th</sup> day of the 11<sup>th</sup> month and so ended ‘The war to end all wars.’ Most remembered, beside the Gallipoli campaign, was the awful trench warfare on the western front in Europe, where millions died. We pause today at 1100hrs to remember those who have died in the service of this nation for the freedom we enjoy because of their sacrifice and God’s mercy to us in time of mortal danger. Although ‘war’ on earth has not ended we give thanks for the hope of eternal peace that God promises to those who put their faith and trust in him through Jesus Christ his resurrected Son.

PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Almighty God, king over all, who in the multitude of your mercies have brought us to this day, we thank you for all your goodness and loving-kindness. For the gracious providence that has guided and sustained us in the dark days of war, and for the defence you raised up for us in our time of need, we thank and praise you. For the grace that upheld us through the years of peril and sorrow, and for the final deliverance you gave us, we praise and bless your holy name. We cried out in trouble and you heard us. We put our trust in you and we were given courage and confidence. Grant, Lord, that we, remembering your great goodness, may give ourselves in new confidence to your holy will and live as your faithful children; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns and is worshipped and glorified with you, Father and the Holy Spirit, One God for evermore. Amen.*

*12 November*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"No one can make you feel inferior  
without your consent."  
(Eleanor Roosevelt)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"You are all sons of the light  
and sons of the day.  
We do not belong to the night  
or to the darkness."  
(1 Thessalonians 5.5)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

The perception of what our life is worth is determined by its focus. If we allow that perception to be determined by those around us it may well lead us to believe that we don't count for much. You may end up thinking that you are just another rat in this world's rat race. Get your eyes up and focussed on heaven and the return of Jesus! Say to yourself, 'I am a child of God.' See what a difference that will make to your outlook on life. No matter what the past may have produced in us, we are not in the dark about the future or about how to live our lives here and now. With faith in Jesus, our choices and our lives are sure to be transformed

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Dear Lord, you've given me another day in which to serve you well and grow more Christlike; so help me that I may do your will. I ask that you watch over those who are near and dear to me, keeping them from all danger and protecting them from any harm. Bless all who serve in the RAN, whether at sea or ashore, in the air or beneath the waves, with the consciousness of your presence and the knowledge of your love. Grant to those in high office, with responsibility for leadership of the Navy, great wisdom in the directing and the conduct of the maritime defence of Australia. I ask these things in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.*



*13 November*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"I learned long ago never to wrestle with a pig.  
You get dirty, and besides, the pig likes it."  
(Cyrus Ching)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"He who walks with the wise grows wise,  
but a companion of fools suffers harm."  
(Proverbs 13.20)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

We have to choose carefully who we associate with. We all know situations where a parent has lamented the fact that their child has 'got in with the wrong crowd.' Maybe your own parents were worried at some time about the company you kept. We think that we can manage the situation without realising the corrupting influence of those that the Bible calls unrighteous, or wicked, or fools. The dividing line between the good and the bad is quite clear, no matter how society may attempt to blur the distinction by calling the corrupt 'adult' or 'mature,' and by exploiting pornography and violence under the pretence of 'free speech' or 'civil liberties.' God is never deceived, even though our politicians, judges and community leaders may be. Those who choose to live God's way surely are and will be blessed. Those who reject his way will receive what their actions deserve.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Gracious Lord, I praise you for the wonder of relationships: for my family, friends and shipmates with whom to share the joys and sorrows, the highs and lows of life, and for help in growing in wisdom and maturity. I praise you for meaningful work with which to occupy my mind and body. Help me to be a team player and to believe in the worth of my contribution to Navy's mission for the welfare of all Australians. Help me to serve well today because of my faith in you, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

*14 November*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Depend on the rabbit's foot if you will,  
but remember it didn't work for the rabbit!"  
(R.E.Shay)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"You have abandoned your people, the house of Jacob.  
They are full of superstitions from the East;  
they practice divination like the Philistines  
and clasp hands with pagans."  
(Isaiah 2:6)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Each morning as I drive to work, my local radio station plays a tape of the day's star sign predictions just before the 0700 news. I turn the radio off for a couple of minutes to avoid the insult to my intelligence that such superstitious nonsense is. I'm not worried about walking under ladders, or black cats crossing my path, or any other superstitions that are supposed to bring bad luck. Why? Because my faith is in the God who created this universe and who holds it all in the palm of his hands. If he is in control then I do not need to search for fortuitous signs in the sky or worry about silly protective measures, like avoiding ladders and black cats, etc. Besides, the Bible also warns me that to pursue fortune tellers and be ruled by superstitions is to put me at odds with God.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Lord God, you are King over all your creation - all powerful, all knowing, all seeing, all hearing and present everywhere. You are a God who is just, holy and true in every way. You are also a God who is love, who desires a personal relationship with me and has my best interest at heart. How then can I dare to resist your will or distrust your care for me or murmur against what you have in store for me or doubt your promises to me? It is good for me to remember these things. Assist me in living for you today in such a way that I grow in godliness and bring honour and glory to your name. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

*15 November*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"When you get there,  
there isn't any there there."  
(Gertrude Stein)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"The Lord had said to Abram, Leave your country,  
your people and your father's household  
and go to the land I will show you."  
(Genesis 12.1)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

When Abram [Abraham] left Ur, on God's instruction, he left a comfortable and secure situation at the age of 75 to venture out into the unknown. That would be a daunting prospect even for a younger person. In a sense our relationship with God follows the same pattern. God calls us to abandon our concern for safety and security and set out on a personal journey of faith. Our guide for this journey is the Word of God and what sustains us is the conviction that each day God will show us the next step. The life of faith is a journey rather than a destination. Just when we think we've made it as a Christian we'll find we've taken our eye off the One who leads us and we stumble into disobedience. It's then time to refocus on the journey of faith as we head for our true and only home – heaven!

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Loving Father, as I prepare to venture forth for another day with all its apparent uncertainties and dilemmas, and 'chaos theory' the philosophy of the day, may your Word be the anchor for my soul. Your Word imparts truths that need to be inscribed upon my heart and which alone can transform my mind. Your Word is a lamp for my feet and a light to my path, the one constant above all the competing voices seeking to claim my attention. I thank you for your Word which keeps me on course and gives me certainty amidst the chaos; for the assurance that all things are well ordered by you according to your eternal purposes. Most of all I praise you for revealing yourself in Jesus Christ my Saviour and for your Holy Spirit enabling me to live the faith which I profess. Amen.*

*16 November*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"The well of providence is deep.  
It's the buckets we bring to it that are small."  
(Mary Webb)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"I pray that out of his glorious riches  
he may strengthen you with power  
through his Spirit in your inner being,  
so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith."  
(Ephesians 3.16,17)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Several times in his ministry on earth Jesus chastised his disciples and the crowds that came to him because of their lack of faith in God. God's Word reminds us that even with a little faith [the size of a tiny mustard seed] we can still accomplish great things [the moving of mountains]. But that faith has to be in God and not our own strength or resources. God's resources are immeasurable and he is only too willing to work in and through us to increase our faith and accomplish his will for our lives. Our resources are very limited and we will not accomplish much in our lives unless joined in faith with the power of the Holy Spirit. Make Paul's prayer for stronger faith in God your own.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O Lord, my God, I go out today in your name, as a child of God. In my labours, in all my thinking, in all my speaking, help me to remember whose I am and who I represent. Help me to cheerfully fulfil my tasks, knowing that you have ordered them for my good and your glory. Enlarge, inflame, and fill my heart with love for all whom I encounter; that I may seek to build them up, encourage them in their daily round, demonstrate the reality of my faith in you, and point them to you as Lord and Saviour. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

*17 November*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

*"I am a deeply superficial person."  
(Andy Warhol)*

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"His wisdom is profound, his power is vast.  
Who has resisted him and come out unscathed.?"  
(Job 9.4)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

The artist Andy Warhol became famous in the '60's for his mass produced, simplistic paintings of everyday objects like Campbell's Soup cans and Coke bottles, and for famous personalities like Marilyn Monroe and Elizabeth Taylor. His description of himself is really an oxymoron [two contradictory expressions]. If one is superficial or shallow in character, then one can hardly be deep at the same time. I think that what he meant was that he was always, at all times, of that character. How very sad! Job was in anguish because he was someone of exemplary character, yet could not understand why God had allowed what happened to him to happen. Job was confused because he knew that good character is important in those who are God's people. Things turned out well for Job in the end because of his faith in God and his new understanding, that although good character is important, reconciliation with God is a matter of his grace towards us.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Almighty Father, mercifully look upon my life and forgive me for all those occasions yesterday when I fell short of the mark or wandered from your way and lift my ambition to nobler things today. Grant me words of wisdom to encourage my shipmates to aim constantly for a better and kindlier manner in our dealings with one another. There is more than enough pain, greed and dishonest gain, one-upmanship, tarnished honour and abuse of trust to spoil our relationships and keep us less than our best. From all these things and more, rescue us that we might demonstrate the power of your love to overcome the tyranny of sin in our lives; for Jesus Christ, my Lord's sake. Amen.*

*18 November*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"The chains of habit are too weak to be felt  
until they are too strong to be broken."  
(Samuel Johnson)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*'Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin;  
and sin, when it is full grown, gives birth to death.'*  
(James 1.15)

## TO THINK ABOUT

Addictions usually begin with a temptation. Once upon a time smoking was considered a socially acceptable and sophisticated practice but now we realise that it is an addiction. I remember as a child ducking behind the shed to try my first cigarette. Fortunately for me it made me sick and I didn't get hooked by nicotine. Those who get hooked on the 'harder' drugs usually begin with the temptation to try the 'whacky weed' and then progress to the more serious drugs of addiction. Bad habits begin with the first surrender to what seems an attractive temptation and progress incrementally until it's too late to stop. The temptation to leave God out of our lives begins in the same way...

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

(Psalm 19)

*Lord God, how clearly the sky reveals your glory and plainly shows what you have done. Without speech or the written word the evidence is heard in every place – that you are the Creator and Lord of all. But, although I might know of you, your eternal power and divine nature, from what you have created, I could not know you personally. So, in your great love for me, you have given the Bible to teach me how I might be reconciled to you and how I might have a personal relationship with you. In your Word I meet Jesus, my Saviour who rescues me from all my sins and secures a place for me in heaven. And for my daily living I have the example of Jesus and the teaching of your prophets and apostles. For all these things, which are life and health to my body, mind and spirit, I give you thanks and praise, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

*19 November*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

*'Never eat more than you can lift.'  
(Miss Piggy)*

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat  
from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God."  
(Revelation 2.7)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve were given the freedom to eat of anything, including the tree of life. After they had disobeyed God, by eating the forbidden fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they were expelled from the garden and death entered into the realm of man's existence. The tree of life was lost to us. But now, because of the saving work of Jesus Christ's death and resurrection the tree is again available to us. We can look forward to eternal life with God provided we hold fast to our faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

(Psalms 18 & 19)

*Gracious Lord, you are perfect in all your deeds and dependable in all you say. You are faithful to those who are faithful to you and you watch over those who put their trust in you. It is very difficult for me to detect all my weaknesses and shortcomings, yet you give me strength to overcome them and the power to live for you. You grant understanding to my mind and the knowledge and wisdom I lack, that I may reflect the character of Jesus and be salt and light to all with whom I come into contact. To you be all the praise and the glory, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

*20 November*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"We make our friends;  
we make our enemies;  
but God makes our next-door neighbour."  
(G.K.Chesterton)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Jesus replied, 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart  
and with all your soul and with all your mind.'  
This is the first and greatest commandment.  
And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'  
(Matthew 22.37-39)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

An article in a church newspaper recounted the experience of a senior clergyman, who worked in his denomination's head office, and who decided one Sunday to visit a church other than his regular one – just for a change. He described how, after a brief greeting at the door, he was ignored for the rest of the service and at the morning tea afterwards. Meanwhile he had observed the regular members all sitting together during the service and chatting away with one another and their friends in their various small groups afterwards. They had ignored the stranger in their midst for the comfort zone of their friends. God's people should always be on the lookout to welcome and befriend the stranger and the outcast because he looked out for us when we were strangers and outcasts to him.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

(Psalms 24 & 25)

*Almighty God, the world and all that is in it belong to you, therefore I am indebted to you for my life and all that I have. Teach me to live according to your truth and show me the path I should take. You are a friend to those who obey you and I can look to you for help at all times. Help me to be humble and merciful in all my dealings with others today and keep me from any foolishness in thought, word or deed, that I may be straight-up and do the right thing always. Thank you for your constant love and all your kindnesses shown to me. Remember me, Lord! In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*



*21 November*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Some people regard discipline as a chore.  
For me, it is a kind of order  
That sets me free to fly."  
(Julie Andrews)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"He who heeds discipline shows the way to life,  
but whoever ignores correction leads others astray."*  
(Proverbs 10.17)

## TO THINK ABOUT

If we examined the lives of many of life's 'high achievers' we would find that without exception they are all very disciplined people. On the other hand, the 'high fliers' that we see on the news that crash and burn, will be seen to be ill-disciplined and lack personal integrity. The high achievers give us a positive example of what it takes to accomplish anything worthwhile in life; while the high fliers have the opposite effect. The same applies in our own lives. If we are to succeed in our Christian pilgrimage then we will need to discipline ourselves in those things necessary for spiritual life and health, such as Bible reading and prayer, joining with other believers in worship, Bible study and mission. If we do not participate regularly in the life of the kingdom then we will gradually drift away into the self-serving lifestyle of the world.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

(Psalm 29)

*Father eternal, your people who serve in the navy are very conscious of your majesty and power. As the psalmist says: "The voice of the Lord is heard on the seas; the glorious God thunders, and his voice echoes over the ocean. The voice of the Lord is heard in all its might and majesty... The Lord rules over the deep waters; He rules as king forever". But even when we feel our smallness, and your greatness, when surrounded by the trackless expanse of the ocean, we are also more conscious of your care for us. Impress upon us, even more so when we are ashore, our dependence upon you for life itself and for our daily necessities. Strengthen us for service and bless us with peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

22 November

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"we are all worms,  
but I do believe that I am a glow-worm."  
(Winston Churchill)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Do not be afraid, O worm Jacob, O little Israel,  
for I myself will help you," declares the Lord,  
your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel."*  
(Isaiah 41.14)

## TO THINK ABOUT

If we get an over inflated sense of our own importance then we it's about time we refreshed our memory of the awesomeness of God. He is so big that when we try to take him in we are simply overwhelmed by the awesome greatness of God's power and mighty strength. By comparison even the best of us is no more than a worm. But we have a God who not only creates but also cares for us. If we seek to follow him faithfully he will enable us to be an influence for good in this world and he assures us that we can face the future with confidence and hope. As creator God has the power to mould us into the people he wants us to be and give us that something extra.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

(Psalm 33)

*Lord of Creation, the universe came into being at your command, you 'gathered all the seas into one place'; and 'shut up the ocean depths in storerooms.' As a naval member I need to remind myself of your sovereignty over my environment which also extends over my daily affairs. You frustrate the purposes of those who deny you and you keep them from succeeding in their plans. My success is not dependent upon how clever I am but upon my reverence for and trust in you. Assist me in all my endeavours today to look to you for guidance in decision making and integrity of heart in all my action. Look down from heaven and prosper me according to your righteousness and constant love; through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

*23 November*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Remember that happiness is a way of travel

- not a destination."

(Roy M. Goodman)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant!*

*You have been faithful with a few things.*

*I will put you in charge of many things.*

*Come and share your master's happiness!'"*

*(Matthew 25.23)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

For most people happiness on earth is a transient state, depending very much upon one's mood and circumstances, but those who act in faith to serve God can experience joy and happiness as a more settled state. Yet the complete state of happiness is reserved for the faithful, either when Jesus returns or they enter into heaven at their life's end, whichever comes first. In the meantime God gives us the pleasure of taking the initiative, and the freedom to use what he has given us as we choose, and also the joy of achievement. As God's people we can not only travel happy but also, as we risk stepping out to serve God, that we finally get to share in our master's happiness.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

(Psalm 34)

*Merciful Father, I will always thank and praise you for what you have done: for Jesus' death on the cross for me; for your indwelling Spirit who strengthens me for godly living and who is the guarantee of my eternal life; and for every other blessing in this life which comes from your gracious hand. I call out to you and my prayers are answered: freedom from anxiety when I am troubled in mind; the provision of my daily necessities; guardian angels to rescue me in times of danger; encouragement and hope in times of trouble; and direction for a righteous and happy life. How can I neglect such a great salvation? I put my hope in you because I trust in your holy name; through Jesus Christ. Amen.*

*24 November*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"See everything:  
overlook a great deal:  
correct a little."  
(Pope John XXIII)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"There is only one Lawgiver and Judge,  
the one who is able to save and destroy.  
But you – who are you to judge your neighbour."  
(James 4.12)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

How easy we find it to point the finger at the failings of others, criticising real or imagined shortcomings, while overlooking our own very real weaknesses. A good way to remind ourselves to be careful about what we say of others is to point our finger and then look at our hand. You might notice that three fingers are pointing back at you! Who am I to defame another person in thought or speech? Have I forgotten that I myself am a sinner and unworthy before God. God is the only one with the right to judge because his laws reflect his very nature as a righteous and holy God. When we do defame another person it demonstrates, firstly, a failure in our relationship with God before the failure of our relationship with another person. When we find ourselves criticising others it may indicate that our relationship with God needs some attention!

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Dear Lord, life is short and I'm only a guest in your world, here for a little while. With your help I'd like to make today count for something. I put my hope in your promise that you will guide the one who trusts in you and bless those who give themselves up to your will. Help me to be patient and not to give in to worry or frustration when things don't go according to plan. Let me remember that 'all things work together for good, to those who love you,' even the things that seem awry or even calamitous. With the eye of faith I believe that no matter how today turns out, whether good, bad or indifferent, with you I will reap eternal blessings. I praise you for your love in Jesus' name. Amen.*

*25 November*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Laughter is the closest thing to the grace of God."  
(Karl Barth)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Even in laughter the heart may ache,  
and joy may end in grief."  
(Proverbs 14.13)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

A comedians job is to create laughter and an artificial happiness, yet it is said that many of them are often quite sad or lonely people when they not performing. The pursuit of 'a good time' is a strong feature of our society today but so many of our attempts to find happiness end in heartbreak and futility. We tend to look in all the wrong places for fulfilment and happiness. The deep loneliness that we sometimes feel inside is really a homesickness for our creator and heavenly home. When we come into a relationship with Jesus Christ, we never have to face the loneliness which gives us heartache. We stop looking for artificial stimulants and answers because we have found the source of real happiness. When we focus our attention on growing in our relationship with God we find fulfilment and life.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Dear Father God, I give you my greetings at the beginning of another day and my praise for your love and faithfulness to me. I pray that, in the busyness of the daily round of duties and notwithstanding the need to be attentive to my work, I do not become too preoccupied with worldly matters. Secure in your love for me and in your indwelling power, help me to lift my mind to the contemplation of things unseen and eternal, and grant to me a 'holy discontent' with the things of sense and time. Cause me to dwell frequently on the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ my Lord, that I may see everything in the light of the redemption you have granted to me in His name. Amen.*

*26 November*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"How wonderful it is that nobody  
need wait a single moment before  
starting to improve the world."  
(Anne Frank)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Let us not become weary in doing good,  
for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.  
Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people,  
especially to those who belong to the family of believers."  
(Galatians 6. 9,10)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Being an active Christian is tiring, exacting work. We seek to live up our calling to imitate Christ in a world that is often hostile to our faith. We can be tempted to become discouraged, to slack off, even to give up, to become a nominal, 'secret' Christian. Some incentive is certainly needed to continue doing good things. We are given the metaphor of the farmer who sows his seed and waits patiently for the reward of a good crop. We do not always see the outcome of our efforts to be good Christians but be assured that there will be a reward in heaven for faithful service. Besides, a 'patient goodness' is a characteristic of the true Christian and evidence of saving faith.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Almighty God and Father, in your most infinite wisdom you have set me in my present circumstances, let me step out with faith and courage. I have little power to mould things to my own liking but you have called me to live in the strength which you supply and according to your perfect will. Grant me the grace to overcome all obstacles. When things are going well let me be thankful for your mercies. In hardship or difficulties keep me from deluding myself that I know a way out. Strengthen me to lay the foundations on which to build a better tomorrow. I ask all these things in Jesus' precious name. Amen.*

*27 November*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"After the game, the king and the pawn  
go into the same box."  
(Italian proverb)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile –  
the same Lord is Lord of all  
and richly blesses all who call on him."  
(Romans 10.12)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

In the natural world, as demonstrated by the pieces of a chess set, it's all about gaining power and superiority over others. In our flawed condition 'one-upmanship' is a human trait that we practice almost unconsciously as we seek to establish our place in society. But it is not appropriate in the life of a Christian. In God's economy we are all equal, based on our relationship with Christ. If we are not ashamed to call him our Lord and Saviour, then it doesn't matter who you are – Jew, Gentile, white, black, rich, poor, young, old, man or woman – our status is the same 'a child of God.' The reality of our faith will be evident in our not wanting to be over others but serving others instead, as our saviour Christ did.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Loving Lord, you care for me as if you had no-one else to care for, yet you care for all mankind in the same manner. I commend to you not only my own needs but also the needs of all in this broken and divided world. Each day the news of the world is hammered into my consciousness by the media. I hear of wars, conflicts, disasters and the like and sometimes wonder whether the only news I will ever hear will be bad and depressing. At such times help me to remember that this is the normal condition of a world which is alienated from you by its mutiny against your holy will and commandments. Recharge my spirit for the service of my fellow man, that will lead to their being reconciled to you through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. Remove from their hearts all barriers and obstacles to the best news ever and help them to meet with the Living God; through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

*28 November*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"People who throw kisses are hopelessly lazy."  
(Bob Hope)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Greet one another with a holy kiss."*  
(2 Corinthians 13.12)

## TO THINK ABOUT

In many cultures it is natural when meeting another person to kiss them on the cheeks. Pacific Islanders rub noses. Each culture has its meeting and greeting rituals. For westerners it is usually a handshake. I've been in churches where during the service there is a time for 'greeting' one another which makes some people a little uncomfortable. Paul's instruction to 'greet one another with a holy kiss' causes a bit of angst for some people. I guess the most important thing is a willingness to greet other Christians to show our bond as God's family. This needs to be done in a culturally sensitive way so that people are not made to feel uncomfortable. Remember that as Christians we are not rule bound but relational and the purpose of our greeting one another is to demonstrate our unity in Christ.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Blessed Father, I praise you for all the good things in my life and for the countless things that are yet to be; all of which come from your gracious bounty. Forgive the meagre use I have made of the gifts and talents you've entrusted to me, and the poverty of my service because of selfishness on my part. Help me to commit myself to your ways and keep me from stumbling through the deceitfulness of my own heart. May I be to my shipmates someone who is neither a shirker nor a malingerer but who is instead reliable and trustworthy, helpful and open-handed. Point others to yourself today by the evidence of your working in my life, to the praise of your holy name. Amen.*



*29 November*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Maturity is the capacity to endure uncertainty."  
(John Finley)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace  
as you trust in him, so that you may overflow  
with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."  
(Romans 15.13)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

In this uncertain world hope is a very important thing. For many people it means making every effort to ensure their security in this world, like placing a protective hedge about them. Their life is geared to making life 'safe' here and now. Then, when things go wrong, in their lives, as they do, they're shattered. 'Hope' in the Bible is a unique word, where it indicates 'confident expectation.' The person with hope has complete assurance about the future. There is no doubt in their mind about the final outcome for their life. In the meantime they can live with the uncertainty of this temporal life and get on with serving God with joy and peace, certain of God's promise of eternal life with him.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Father, when I face the storms of life; when the clouds of doubt roll in; as the tide of opinion ebbs and flows; and the cable of faith in you strains; my soul finds rest in you alone; anchored to the rock which cannot move. Thank you for being a strong and loving God, the one in whom I can put my trust at all times. Grant today that I may be unmoved by any adverse circumstances and hold firm to my course when buffeted by fears and doubts. Let others see that I am grounded firm and deep in my Saviour's love, that they also may turn to you to find the help and strength they need to be 'overcomers' in the storms of life. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

*(Inspired by the hymn "Will your anchor hold in the storm of life")*

*30 November*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"A man is never so weak as when  
a woman is telling him how strong he is."  
(Anon.)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"So Delilah said to Samson, 'Tell me the secret of your great strength  
and how you can be tied up and subdued.' ... Having put him to sleep  
on her lap, she called a man to shave off the seven braids of his hair,  
and so began to subdue him. And his strength left him."  
(Judges 16.6,19)*

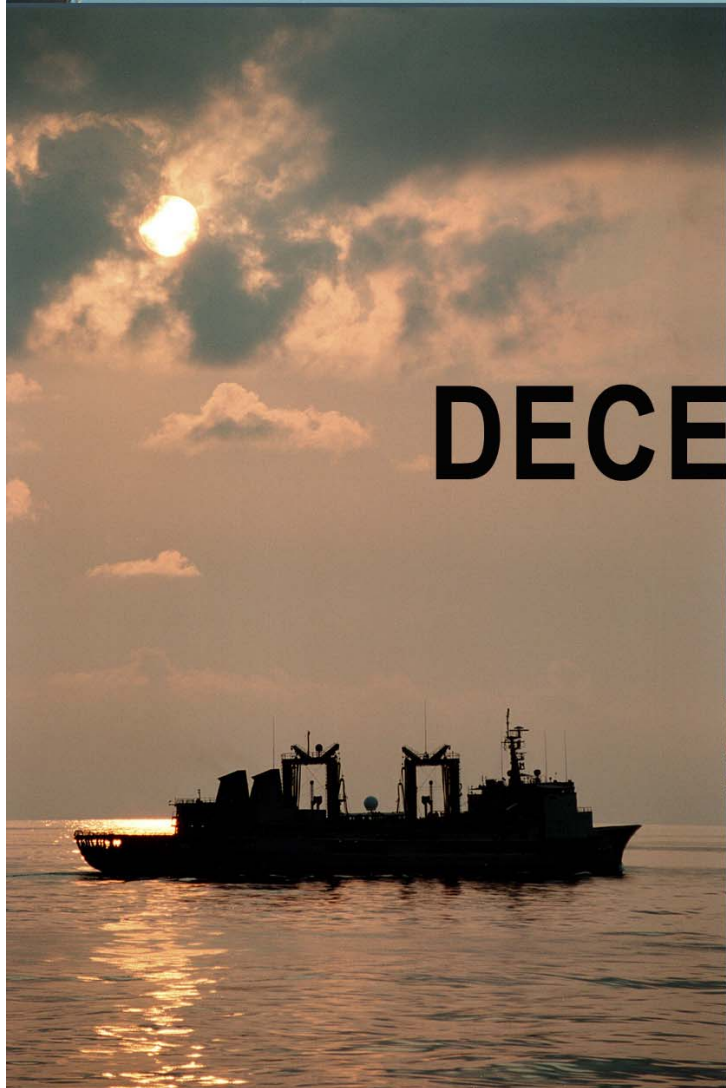
## TO THINK ABOUT

The story of Samson and Delilah is well known. His passion for her and her betrayal of him for money is legendary. Samson's desire for Delilah is more adolescent than adult and it is amazing that he kept going back to her when her behaviour clearly indicated her intent to betray him. Reading all of the story of Samson's life shows that it was dominated by his concern for immediate gratification of his desires, without any concern for the future or his calling. We wonder at his blindness to reality but it is much easier to see faults in others rather than in ourselves. How often have our choices been made simply on the basis of what we desire, without pausing to consider God's. Samson reminds us that we can't afford to remain adolescent and let ourselves be controlled by our passions and desires.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

(Psalm 46-49)

*O Lord my God, you are king over all the earth and you reign over the nations. Your sovereign power over your creation is awesome and I am called to acknowledge your greatness and to give you the praise that is due to you. Stir my heart and mind to meditate on your unfailing love; to seek your guidance for daily living and to be obedient to your righteous commands. Help me to remember the fate of those who trust in themselves – that they accomplish nothing of real value, neither here in this life nor for eternity. Impress indelibly in my heart and mind that the proof of my love for you is the imitation of Jesus Christ my Lord; in whose name I pray. Amen.*



**DECEMBER**







*1 December*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Life is either a daring adventure  
or nothing at all.

Security is mostly a superstition.

It does not exist in nature."

(Helen Keller)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"So do not throw away your confidence:*

*it will be richly rewarded.*

*You need to persevere*

*so that when you have done the will of God,*

*you will receive what he has promised. "*

*(Hebrews 10.35,36)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Tsunamis, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, typhoons, famines, bird flu, wars, terrorists, street crime, road accidents, etc., etc... Wherever do we get the idea that life can be made secure; that we can be cocooned from trouble and strife? A former Prime Minister once said, 'Life wasn't meant to be easy,' and he was right. The best we can do in this world is to step out as though life does have some degree of uniformity and predictability, with the proviso that we do not insist on it if things go wrong. Even some Christians fall into the trap of thinking that because they have faith in God that their lives will be a bed of roses, and then complain if something untoward happens to them. We live in a spoiled world and our hope is in the new heaven and new earth of our eternal home, so we need to persevere in faith as we live the daring adventure of being Christ's disciples here and now.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Almighty Father, do not leave me to my own devices today but accompany me by your Spirit in all my comings and goings. Let me have a special sense of your nearness guiding every thought, word and deed, that I may more eagerly pursue those things which are excellent and praiseworthy. You have commanded me to show my love for you by loving my neighbour as myself, and that I should do for others as I would have them do to me. In my relationships with loved ones, friends, shipmates and even the stranger, may I not fail to be sympathetic, considerate, courteous, polite, helpful and loving. For Jesus' sake and the praise of your name hear my prayer. Amen.*

*2 December*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

'There is the consolation of the little mind;  
you have the fun of changing it  
without impeding the progress of mankind."  
(Frank Moore Colby)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"He who is the glory of Israel does not lie or change his mind;  
for he is not a man, that he should change his mind."  
(1 Samuel 15.29)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

King Saul, the first king of Israel, was given a great opportunity by God to be the founder of a dynasty. All that was required was trust in God and obedience to him. Unfortunately Saul had difficulty following instructions and kept reverting to 'plan B.' So God had no option but to reject Saul in favour of David. Saul was reminded that God, unlike us, does not waiver in his plans and constantly change his mind. He is therefore dependable and can be trusted. When we keep our hearts fixed on who God is, we trust ourselves to him and obey. And obedience to God protects us from Saul's fate.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Lord God, you created me for your service, that my soul should follow hard after you. 'Create in me a clean heart and renew a right spirit within me.' Keep me from failing to live up to your standards while demanding a higher standard of conduct from others. Make me quick to see the good in others and to recognise my own shortcomings. Work in me to make this a positive day which leads to your praise and glory; through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

*3 December*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"There is nothing wrong with making mistakes.  
Just don't respond with encores."  
(Anon.)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"No-one who lives in him keeps on sinning.  
No-one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him."  
(1 John 3.6)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Some Christians wonder if they are really saved because they are conscious that they still 'stuff up.' They think that somehow they should be perfect and not do anything wrong anymore. Digging in the garden one day I found a bulb that was upside down, yet the sprout had turned around and was heading for the sun. When John writes that we will not 'keep on sinning' he is not saying that we will never sin but that God's life within us, which has been planted in our personalities when we first believe, grows in the direction of a life of purity. We sin each and every day, both deliberately and inadvertently, but our inclination is still to be growing in the direction of the Son. Don't be discouraged by the slips and stumbles in your life but rejoice in the upward direction of your life.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Loving Father, to know you is true freedom and life. I rejoice in knowing you through faith in Jesus Christ your Son. I thank you that I am free to serve you; free from slavery to self-will and the power of the evil one. I praise you for the life I have in the power of your Holy Spirit; a life lived in all its fullness. Help me to trust in you at all times; to find satisfaction in eternal realities and contentment in any and every situation because you will bring to completion your purposes for me in Christ Jesus; in whose name I pray. Amen.*

*4 December*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Why is there so much month left  
at the end of the money?"  
(Anon.)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Whoever loves money never has money enough;  
whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with his income."  
(Ecclesiastes 5.10)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Money is incapable of providing us with meaning for our lives. We can work hard and lose it to taxation, theft, and the like. Even the rich are never satisfied but only want more. The more you earn the more you spend and you lie awake worrying about keeping it. Even if we hoard it we can't take it with us when we die. Wealth is like a drug that numbs us to how empty our life really is by giving us a momentary high. If as a Christian we opt for an unhealthy love of money it means we have chosen the empty meaningless way of secular man and forfeited the riches of knowing Christ.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

(Psalm 89)

*Gracious Lord, 'Who is like you? You are mighty and your faithfulness surrounds you. You rule over the surging sea; when its waves mount up, you still them.' Watch over all who are at sea today, whatever weather conditions prevail. Keep them safe from all harm and conscious of your powerful presence. Bless all who are ashore working in support of the fleet. Grant to them a keen sense of the importance of their contribution in fulfilling Navy's mission and a firm faith in your love for them. Bless me as I seek to walk in the light of your presence and according to your holy will and commandments. All this I ask in Jesus' powerful name. Amen.*



*5 December*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Classic music is th' kind  
that we keep thinkin' ll turn into a tune."  
(Frank McKinney)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.  
Sing and make music in your hearts to the Lord."  
(Ephesians 5.19)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Australia doesn't have a tradition of community singing. We struggle to mumble the National Anthem at sporting events and the like, but we don't witness the kind of spontaneous singing that other cultures enjoy. Even in our churches the singing of hymns is very often something to be endured. These days at weddings and funerals I don't exactly encourage people to choose hymns because I'm not good enough to be a soloist. People don't sing? But see what the Bible says is to happen when we get together as brothers and sisters in Christ! Picture yourself in that setting where people are glad to see each other and rejoice in the fact that they are members of God's family. Everyone's heart is lifted and soon the gathering expresses its joy in singing praises to God. Singing is good for the soul and God delights to hear his people making music to him. God made both the crow and the canary, so don't be afraid to sing up. Don't worry about your voice, he's only interested in what comes from the heart.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Almighty God, I come before you this morning with thanks and praise, for you are good and your love endures forever. You have brought me to another day and surrounded me with family, friends and shipmates. Even as I am apart from family and some friends because of my service commitments, I am thankful for the consciousness of the ties of love and friendship that bind us together. Help me in my work to foster better relations with those about me and to contribute well to the team effort; maturing both as a person and in my work skills. Bring me to the end of the day thankful for your countless mercies, taken for granted and having grown a little more like Jesus; in whose name I pray. Amen.*

*6 December*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"We can do no great things,  
only small things with great love."  
(Mother Teresa)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"This is how we know what love is:  
Jesus Christ laid down his life for us.  
And we ought to lay down our lives  
for our brothers."  
(1 John 3.16)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

As a Christian I have, from time to time, imagined doing something great for God, to show him my appreciation. I'm sure many others have felt the same way. The reality is that often we even fail to do small things for him out of love. There are the things we could have done but didn't, and the things we shouldn't have done but did. Next to the boiler in the engine room of a steamship is a little glass tube. The water level in the tube indicates the level of water, which you can't see, in the boiler. Our love for God can be measured in the same way. The way we love other people in myriad small ways is the measure of our love for God.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Heavenly Father, in this quiet moment I lift my eyes to you whose throne is in heaven and praise you that I am secure in your love because of my faith in your Son, Jesus Christ, and therefore I need not be anxious about anything. I know that if I don't include you in my work that I won't be half as successful as I could be. So, I come to seek your guidance that I may make only the best choices in everything I think and say and do. Bless me today such that I may be a blessing to others, especially to any I meet who may be having a difficult time. I ask these things in the precious name of Jesus. Amen.*

*7 December*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"One cloud is enough to eclipse all the Sun."  
(Thomas Fuller)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"But as for me, I shall always have hope;  
I will praise you more and more."  
(Psalm 71.14)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

It's amazing how often one setback in the day can cast a dark pall over everything else that happens, even the good things. How often you experience it and how serious the gloom factor is depends on where you sit on the optimist – pessimist continuum. If we learn to rely on the Lord in all circumstances we can live confidently, even through the setbacks. Surely our experience of God in the past, bringing us through all sorts of trials and difficulties, has taught us that we can rely on him to uphold us and sustain us. Our experience of God also teaches us that we can rely on his promise of the hope we have of eternal life in Christ. Next time a cloud of trouble eclipses your view of the Son, remember that he is there behind the cloud and will never leave you.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Eternal Father, in deep humility I approach your throne of grace to give you thanks and praise for your love for me. Help me to still and quiet my soul in your presence and to put my hope in you alone, before I launch out into the day and become absorbed in temporal matters which claim my time and attention. Bless the leaders of this nation, at both federal, state and local government level, with personal integrity and courage, that they may make wise and just decisions for the good of all and without favouritism. Bless the people of this land with a desire to live up to the highest ideals necessary for peace, harmony and moral purity; such that we enjoy your favour and can say: 'The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with Joy'. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

*8 December*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"All cases are unique and very similar to others."  
(T.S.Eliot)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;  
your works are wonderful, I know that full well."  
(Psalm 139.14)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

I have a friend who could never deny paternity of his children (nor would he) because their facial resemblance to him is so obvious. My next youngest brother so resembles my father it is amazing. Yes, we are very similar to others. We say of new born babies that they have their mothers eyes or their fathers ears, etc. Although there may be many 'look-alikes' in the world, yet we are all wonderfully unique. Even 'identical twins' are not truly identical in every respect. Add to our physical attributes the different personalities we develop and we see that no matter what similarities there may be with others, we are unique. The Bible underlines the significance of each unique, individual life, from the moment of conception until eternity. How precious you are to God that he is involved in your life from before its beginning and forever!

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Lord of Creation, there is nothing in heaven or on earth which can compare with Jesus Christ, your Son. He is the supreme expression of your love for me and all mankind. Help me to grasp the wonder of your saving work in His death on the cross and His resurrection from the dead, that I may take it with me into my day to encourage and sustain me in every circumstance, and to stir me to live for your honour and glory. May I serve as a witness to your grace working in me to make me more Christlike; not only for my own spiritual well-being but also that others may be attracted to Him who is the Way, the Truth and the Life. I ask these things in Jesus' name and for His sake. Amen.*

*9 December*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"I don't want to own anything  
that won't fit into my coffin."  
(Fred Allen)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*[Job] said:  
"Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I shall depart.  
The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away;  
May the name of the Lord be praised."  
(Job 1. 21)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

I once saw a news item on TV about a man who was buried in his Cadillac. On another occasion I knew of a local sect where the leader had predicted the day of Christ's return, and all his followers turned up with suitcases packed for the journey. Ancient peoples in many cultures were buried with their possessions for the journey through the afterlife. The truth is that we can't and won't take anything with us into eternity but we often hang on to things in this life as if we could and will. Job recognised that anything he had was not really his but only held in trust for God during his life on earth. He could 'sit loose' with earthly possessions because he was secure in his relationship with God.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Merciful Father, I am grateful that Jesus prayed for me before His arrest and trial; that through me He would be glorified; that I would be protected by the power of your name; that I would have a full measure of your joy; that I would grow in godliness; and that I would share in your eternal Kingdom. It is an amazing thing to realise that I was also in your purpose and plans, not only during Jesus' life on earth but before the creation of the world. Help me to keep the wonder of your eternal love for me at the forefront of my mind and may it make a real difference to my attitudes and behaviour to your praise and glory. I ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.*

*10 December*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

*"Hasten slowly."  
(Augustus Caesar)*

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him;  
do not fret when men succeed in their ways,  
when they carry out their wicked schemes."  
(Psalm 37.7)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Someone has said that a good indicator of how well you have developed the gift of patience is to reflect on how you behave when standing in a supermarket checkout queue; especially the express lane when someone holds up the queue because they need a price-check or uses dodgy plastic that won't swipe and the next lane seems to be moving at a cracking pace by comparison. The frenetic pace of the rat-race is detrimental to developing patience. It's even more difficult when you see other people advancing in their careers at your expense or getting ahead by questionable means. Don't worry, God has his ways of levelling the playing field and thwarting the plans of unbelievers. Your responsibility is to grow in godliness and leave the rest to him. God watches over the saints and you have a future that the unbeliever doesn't. Be patient and do not fret.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

(Psalms 139,141)

*Eternal Father, I praise you that you will fulfil your purposes for me; that you will daily uphold me and keep me under your care. It's a great encouragement to know that your love for me is far greater than my capacity to comprehend it. Hem me in – astern and ahead of me, on the starboard hand and on the port hand and guide me in the right course to glorify you with my life. Keep my heart from being drawn to what is evil and my tongue from hurtful or slanderous words. Keep my eyes fixed on your perfection and my mind set only on those things which are right and true and good, that I might determine to do them. In the precious name of Jesus I pray these things. Amen.*

*11 December*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Parents can only give good advice  
or put them on the right paths,  
but the final forming of a person's character  
lies in their own hands."  
(Anne Frank)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"A wise son brings joy to his father,  
but a foolish son grief to his mother."*  
(Proverbs 10.1)

## TO THINK ABOUT

Bill Gates of Microsoft fame developed some rules that he passed on to high school students about the real world. Rule 6 is: If you mess up, it's not your parents' fault, so don't whine about your mistakes, learn from them. Anne Frank was only thirteen when she wrote her famous diary while hiding from the Nazis in WW2. What a mature young girl she was. The teenage years are a difficult period when our characters are being finalised as we head toward adulthood where we have to accept responsibility for our actions. It's also a significant time when decisions are made about religious beliefs. The 'fool' in the Bible is the person who denies God's existence and the 'wise' person is the one who believes God. Our future lies in our own hands. A negro spiritual says 'Nobody's fault but mine...if I should die and go below (to hell) it's nobody's fault but mine.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

(Psalms 143,144)

*Dear Lord and Father, you are great and most worthy of praise and your greatness cannot be fathomed. I'm thankful that each morning I'm reminded of your unfailing love for me; that you care for me – a sinner 'in thought, word and deed'. I live in a world of moral broken water and am often faced with a cross sea of opinion; show me the course I should steer according to your holy Word and lead me to the safe haven of living in harmony with your will for me. May your good Spirit direct my day such that it testifies to the reality of a true faith in you, my Saviour. Amen.*

*12 December*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"I've developed a new philosophy –  
I only dread one day at a time."  
(Charles M. Schulz)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar?  
Where is the philosopher of this age?  
Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?"  
(1 Corinthians 1.20)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Philosophy in its literal sense is seeking after wisdom. Charlie Brown uses 'philosophy' in the sense of a principle for the conduct of his life. In the Bible wisdom is the application of truth to guide daily life. Mere human wisdom breaks down at this point because all human cultures are infected with lies and half truths no matter how sophisticated they purport to be. The proof is in how supposedly 'wise' people respond to the message of the Gospel. The Jews insist on miracles to prove it. Those with their roots in Greek/Western culture insist that it should be intellectually respectable. Only those who have come to faith in Christ can understand the preaching of the Cross is the power and wisdom of God. Don't be surprised that non-Christians laugh at our faith and don't seek to intellectualise or prove our faith. The wisdom of the world completely misses the point that in Christianity everything must be focused in Christ.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Dear Father God, you have said that a proper reverence for you is the beginning of wisdom, and personal knowledge of you brings understanding. I acknowledge that I am not wise in myself but that you only are the source of true wisdom. I have your promise that you will make me into a wise person because I have put my faith in you. Grant to me the desire and commitment to the daily making of right choices in every circumstance. Help me to display the right attitudes, as one who has received wisdom and spiritual discernment: reverence, humility, teachableness, diligence, uprightness and faith in you. May I see all things from your point of view and choose to act in such ways that you are glorified. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*



*13 December*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Rudeness is the weak man's imitation of strength."  
(Eric Hoffer)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Nabal answered David's servants, 'Who is this David?  
Who is this son of Jesse? Many servants are breaking  
away from their masters these days.'"*  
(1 Samuel 25.10)

## TO THINK ABOUT

Nabal was a bully and a nasty piece of work. He and his property had been protected from 'bushrangers' and enemy tribes by David and his band of followers. Now when David and his men needed and requested some victuals in return for their help, they were denied any assistance. Furthermore Nabal denigrated David as rebel slave. Nabal's wife intervened by supplying food to David and so diffused his anger over her husband's rudeness. It's tempting to seek revenge when we are offended but consider the offender's behaviour. Do we wish to become just like them. Restraint and forgiveness demonstrate the real strength of character that comes from being a Christian.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Dear Father, it is amazing and wonderful to know that throughout life I have someone to guide me; someone to assure me that I am on the right track. And if and when I make wrong decisions or questionable choices because of my frailty or wilfulness, it's comforting to know that you are able, given my consent and cooperation, to bring my life back on course. More than that, you are abundantly forgiving, and are able to use those experiences for my eternal well-being and to glorify yourself. As perplexing and testing as life can be, help me to think of the rewards there are in living according to your purposes for my life. You have shown me the way in Jesus Christ, now help me to walk in it so that I can say, 'I have only done my duty', for Jesus' sake. Amen.*

*14 December*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"If you can't believe in God  
the chances are your God is too small."  
(J.B. Phillips)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"For even [Jesus'] own brothers  
did not believe in him."  
(John 7.5)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Mick Jagger and Keith Richards wrote a song about Jesus called 'Just want to see his face.' It expresses the sentiment of many people who have difficulty believing in God and Jesus. They say I'll believe in him if I could just see him face to face. Jesus said that people would not believe even if someone were to rise from the dead, meaning himself. Most people have a 'cargo-cult' mentality about Jesus. They believe that he should be there for them daily, meeting their every need like a perpetual Santa Claus, and when he isn't they refuse to believe. Fortunately for Jesus' brothers they did come to believe on the basis of his rising from the dead. Sadly for most people their god is too small and they miss out on a relationship with a God who will raise us from the dead to eternal life on the Last Day.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Almighty God and Father, there is so much I could say to you in prayer but all too often I say so little. You know my good intentions and how I fall short of carrying them out. Give me the grace to stick with my resolve to spend time every day with you in reading your Word, the Bible, and in prayer. May your Holy Spirit give me words to offer thanks and praise for all your blessings showered upon me, and may he overcome any anxieties I have about presenting my requests or concerns to you. I place myself in your hands for this day and I put all my hope in your love for me. May your will be done in my life as an expression of my thanks for the salvation you have provided in Jesus Christ; in whose name I pray. Amen.*

*15 December*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

*"No man is demolished but by himself."  
(Thomas Bentley)*

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Warn a divisive person once, and then warn him a second time.  
After that, have nothing to do with him.  
You may be sure that such a man is warped and sinful;  
he is self-condemned."  
(Titus 3.10,11)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Many, many years ago I heard a prison chaplain say that once upon a time new inmates were confronted with what they had done and accepted that they were imprisoned for their own actions. Now it seems they believe that their internment is because they had a lousy lawyer, biased judge, corrupt police, lying witnesses, blah, blah, blah... No longer are criminals ready to accept responsibility for their own actions. Self-destructive behaviour is not confined solely to those labelled as criminals. If a person is determined to be warped in their behaviour and live contrary to the teaching of our Lord by creating disharmony in the congregation then they are to be ostracised. Being and doing good is not optional for Christians. Self-discipline is required in members of the church. If we cannot do it then we must accept that we cannot blame anyone but ourself.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Loving Lord, thank you for loving me far more than I deserve or can even imagine. Help me to respond by trusting in your love, especially when it calls me to be obedient to your will, even though my natural self want to rebel. Strengthen me in those moments, that I might imitate Jesus and be the child of God that you invite me to be. Show me those things in my life that hold me back from greater intimacy with you and keep me from greater freedom in your presence. Let me see my sins more clearly but keep me from despairing over them because of the assurance of your forgiveness when I turn back to you in repentance and faith. Live in me today to your praise and glory, for Jesus' sake. Amen.*

*16 December*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Tradition gives us a sense of solidarity and roots,  
a knowing there are some things one can count on."

(Gloria Gaither)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"See to it that no one takes you captive  
through hollow and deceptive philosophy,  
which depends on human tradition  
and the basic principles of this world  
rather than on Christ."*

(Colossians 2.8)

## TO THINK ABOUT

The religious person relies for salvation on human traditions. They have certain practices and routines in their life that they count on to maintain favour with God, like the Pharisees who relied on fasting and prayer and tithing, etc. The religious person then insists that these practices are binding on everyone else in the household of God. So, they keep lists of do's and don'ts, and frown upon those who transgress them. 'We've always done it this way' they say. But any system that promises spiritual growth on the basis of religious practices of any kind is hollow and deceptive. If we are to grow in Christ we cannot rely on anything we do but only on what Christ has done for us in his death and resurrection. If we live each day for Jesus and trust Him to work in our lives, then his life will express itself through us in godly living.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Blessed Father, most personnel are preparing to proceed on, or have already begun, their Christmas leave. I ask that you would be with all those who at this time will be taking needed rest and a change from their daily labours. May there be nothing untoward in their lives nor anything harmful come upon them to spoil the enjoyment of their recreation. Help them to bear in mind as they take their pleasures that it is for your pleasure we exist and were created. May they not forget, in spending time and money, that we all were bought for you with the precious blood of Jesus. As they spend time in relaxation, open their eyes to see you in the beauty of your creation and to find in you the source of true happiness. Preserve from all dangers those who will be travelling, granting them both safe arrival at their destination and a quiet and relaxed return. And when they resume their work may it be with renewed strength in body, mind and spirit and enthusiastic for life's daily duties; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

*17 December*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"I know that's a secret,  
for it's whispered everywhere."  
(William Congreve)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Do not revile the king even in your thoughts,  
or curse the rich in your bedroom,  
because a bird of the air may carry your words,  
and a bird on the wing may report what you say."  
(Ecclesiastes 10.20)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

When we act surprised that someone knows something we thought was a secret they sometimes reply, 'A little bird told me.' Now you know where the saying comes from. It's so easy to inadvertently or unwittingly let slip something that we should not say and we never know how far such comments travel. "Loose lips sink ships" was an old WW2 security slogan, impressing on people the consequences of careless talk. You never know who is listening. Early on in parish ministry I learned the need to be careful about what you said of people because you never knew who was related to who and careless comments could be very damaging of relationships within the congregation. The Bible speaks in many places of the need to be careful with our tongues, lest we hurt other people and also damage our own reputations.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Father, I thank you for Jesus Christ your Son, my Lord, who is: the anchor for my soul in the storms of life; the rudder by which to steer my life's course; the lighthouse to warn of moral and spiritual dangers with which my course is strewn; my lifeboat of forgiveness and compassion when I have foundered in some way; and the safe harbour at the end of life's deployment here. Enable me by your Holy Spirit to follow in his wake and to steer by the chart of your Holy Word. I praise you that whatever squalls may assail me, by faith in your Son, in whose name I pray, I know a blessed calm within. Amen.*

*18 December*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"When a man is wrapped up in himself  
he makes a pretty small package."  
(John Ruskin)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"In the pride of your heart you say,  
'I am a god; I sit on the throne of a god  
in the heart of the seas.'  
But you are a man and not a god,  
though you think you are as wise as a god."  
(Ezekiel 28.2)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

How fragile the universe we create when we make ourselves the sole inhabitant and centre of it, with everyone else just there for our support and amusement. How devastating it is when something comes along to threaten our self-indulgence. We live in a society where self is assumed to be the rightful centre of each person's life and so we may deceive ourselves that looking after No.1 is the way to fulfilment and happiness, but experience will reveal just how much of an illusion that view of life turns out to be. Our greatest and most persistent flaw is the sin of pride, expressed as self-centredness. How sad it is if we fail to realise that our true identity and worth as a person can only be found in putting God at the centre of our world. Real happiness depends upon choosing to live by the standards which God says are good and right.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O Lord, my God, as the 'silly season' engulfs us, with the commercial pressures to spend money, and even to go into debt to 'prove' how much we love those for whom we are purchasing gifts; help me to remember what is most important – your free gift of Jesus Christ, your Son, to be the Saviour of the world. Your Son gave of himself, putting aside his heavenly glory and taking to himself frail human flesh and after sharing in my experience as a human being he then willingly died for my sins upon the cross. Teach me to be grateful for all the good things that you have given me and done for me, especially for the forgiveness of my sins and the free gift of eternal life. Let me be particularly generous in the giving of myself in service this Christmas to all my family, friends and shipmates; and also to some in need of your help and your love. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

*19 December*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"We only think when we are confronted with a problem."  
(John Dewey)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them,  
'What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?'"*  
(Matthew 22.41)

## TO THINK ABOUT

Dewey solved the problem of how to catalogue and categorise books. He thought up the numbering system that is used in libraries throughout the world. It's true that problems really test the old grey matter to come up with solutions. Sometimes we might not like the answers because they don't fit our preconceived ideas. Whenever the religious authorities confronted Jesus they were always thinking how can we solve the problem of this pesky itinerant preacher who doesn't have the right pedigree or qualifications. They were not interested in his claim to be the Messiah and embarrassed as to how they might explain the miracles. Even today, it is not that people can't understand the Bible. It's just that it doesn't fit their ideas about what God is like. What a blessing it is to be given the gift of faith and accept that Jesus is who he says he is and accept his solution to the problem of our alienation from God.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Almighty Father, once again I bow in adoration before the wonder of your love that will not let me go. I thank you that you love me as I am; but even more so that you love me too much to let me stay as I am. Help me to see that although, too often, your commands are difficult for me to understand, only because of my dullness or wilfulness, that behind everything is a heart that desires only the highest purposes and objectives to be fulfilled in my life. Don't let me fumble through this day in mediocrity but help me to be a person of deep commitment, living with the power that enables me rise up and glorify you in my life; for Jesus' sake. Amen.*

*20 December*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Every minute starts an hour."  
(Paul Gondola)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"I make known the end from the beginning,  
from ancient times, what is still to come.  
I say: My purpose will stand,  
And I will do all that I please."  
(Isaiah 46.10)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Alexander Waugh's book 'Time' explains the mysteries of time and our struggle to measure it, use it and understand it. An excellent read. Just trying to grasp the concept of time in terms of the universe, eternity, scientific measurement, etc., is mind boggling. Over all this and outside of it stands our creator God. While we may have difficulty trying to comprehend what an eternity spent with God will be like, we may trust in his character and promises in the Bible that it will be so. In the meantime we look to God's purposes being fulfilled in Jesus Christ so far, and waiting only their consummation on the Last Day. Then, what a time we'll have forevermore!

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Lord God, with so many people on leave it's become much less busy in my workplace. I'm thankful for the more relaxed atmosphere and the opportunity of 'breathing space' and to catch up on those tasks, to finish all those half-done jobs that were put aside indefinitely, for whatever reason. I'm thankful that there will be fewer interruptions and freedom from the tyranny of the urgent, so that I can, hopefully, complete my work before the rush of activity in the new year. Even so, help me to be disciplined with my time such that I do not waste any opportunities to accomplish all that is before me. These things I ask in Jesus' name. Amen.*



*21 December*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Truth is always exciting.  
Speak it, then.  
Life is dull without it."  
(Pearl S. Buck)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"I have chosen the way of truth;  
I have set my heart on your laws."*  
(Psalm 119.30)

## TO THINK ABOUT

As Christians we should always aim to tell the truth wherever possible. We know that we fail to do so from time to time for the wrong reasons, because of our flawed human nature. Our motives are not always pure. But what are we to do in those situations where, by telling the truth, we face the dilemma of a life-threatening choice? The Bible relates the situation where Hebrew midwives were ordered by Pharaoh to kill boy babies. The midwives lied to Pharaoh, saying that the births were happening before they could get them. They lied! Were they wrong to do so? Could you stand by and let someone suffer innocently just to avoid the lie? We live in an imperfect world and it's not an easy choice. Perhaps the way to resolve the dilemma is to consider relationship priorities. We are created as personal and relational beings, and right relationships are characterised by love. The Hebrew midwives put their relationship with God and his people above that of the evil Pharaoh and thereby justified their economy with the truth.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Loving Father, as Joseph and Mary approached Bethlehem and the time for Jesus' birth drew near, little did they know that for such a momentous occasion there would be no room for them at the inn. At the very beginning of His life on earth your Son experienced what it is like to be an outsider. As Christmas draws ever closer and many families gather for reunions and friends and colleagues celebrate together, you've made me conscious that there are many lonely, or homeless, or 'unwanted' people, even in this 'lucky country.' I lift them up to you in prayer, with all their suffering and hardships, asking you to bless them with the company and fellowship of at least one other person, so that no one need experience loneliness or rejection on the day we celebrate the birth of your Son, Jesus Christ, in whose name I pray. Amen.*

22 December

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"I dislike feeling at home when I am abroad."  
(George Bernard Shaw)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"All these people were still living by faith when they died.  
They did not receive the things promised;  
they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance.  
And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth."  
(Hebrews 11.13)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

It amazed me the last time I was deployed to see shipmates head straight for Maccas and KFC when we reached a foreign port. I think it's better to try the local cuisine and get a feel for the culture of other countries. After all, you can have all the fast food you like back home. What's the point of visiting other countries if you want things to feel like home? However, if you live abroad for any length of time it's only natural to feel homesick from time to time. Christians should feel and live as though they are living abroad. This is not our true home; we are only visiting. Certainly we have to live amongst people of another culture and we should try to fit in but not to the point where we compromise our faith. We should never feel at home abroad in this world but always a little disquieted and longing for our true home – heaven.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Dear Lord, you have placed a high value on relationships because they are meant to reflect your nature – the perfect unity of the Trinity. From you I learn that the way relationship should be expressed is by concern for others. Sadly, though, I have spoiled things by my selfishness which, too often, sees others as being here for my personal benefit. Even sadder, Lord, is the fact that at Christmas time many families are torn by increased domestic strife because old, unresolved conflicts are resurrected and past hurts remain unforgiven. At a time when I can reflect upon the song of the angelic host, which announced the birth of my Saviour with the words, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom His favour rests," help me to shed any self-centredness in my relationships and to become increasingly loving and forgiving. And those things which I ask for myself I also ask for divided families, that they may seek peace and reconciliation and be re-united with estranged loved ones. In the name of the Prince of Peace I pray. Amen.*

*23 December*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"The Saints are the Sinners who kept on trying."  
(Robert Louis Stevenson)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints."  
(Jude 1.3)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

R.L.Stevenson was a little off the mark with his comment but I understand what he means. Once a person turns to Christ in repentance and faith and is forgiven and receives the gift of eternal life; that person is henceforth a saint. The Bible describes all Christians as saints. It is a status we receive by faith alone and not by any merit of our own. It is a common misconception that saints are special people by virtue of their earned holiness. Not one of us is perfect and holier than other believers. We are only ever pardoned sinners by the grace of God. This saves us from that terrible burden of wondering if we'll ever be good enough for God by virtue of our own effort. The saints are sinners who keep on trying to please God out of thankfulness for the status they already enjoy.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Gracious Lord, this close to Christmas it's hard to focus on my work. My mind keeps wandering to last minute things that need to be done and the anticipating of celebrations with family and friends. I thank you that I will also be able to celebrate in church with fellow believers the birth of your dear Son, Jesus Christ. I feel a little sheepish over my childlike excitement! But your Son has said that I need to be able to come to you with childlike faith if I am to see the Kingdom of God. Help me through this day to give of myself and to fulfil my duty to the best of my ability; through Jesus Christ, my Lord. Amen.*

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Wise men still seek Him."  
(Anon)

FROM THE BIBLE

*"Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace to men  
on whom his favour rests."  
(Luke 2.14)*

TO THINK ABOUT

What is the true meaning of Christmas? Some years ago the Sydney City Mission conducted a survey, the results of which indicated that adults believe that Santa is much more important to children than Jesus at Christmas. Most Australians will barely give Jesus a thought tomorrow but may I encourage you, in your celebrations, to think of it as Jesus' birthday party. So remember to honour him as the guest of honour. Christmas is about Jesus Christ, first and foremost. It is about what God has done for us in his great love. Christmas is about God's sending his Son in to the world with the express purpose of bringing us back into friendship with God.

PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Dear Father, as I prepare to celebrate once more the birth of your dear Son, Jesus Christ, with family, friends and shipmates, I am conscious of all those naval personnel who will be far from home and loved ones; those who are posted interstate or overseas or deployed on peacekeeping or policing duties. May their Christmas celebrations nonetheless encourage and uphold them as they remember your great love for them. Keep their spirits buoyant even as they seek to fulfil their appointed tasks and duties. Enable all, at some time tomorrow, to make contact with family and friends; exchanging greetings and best wishes by phone, fax or e-mail. Grant to all perseverance and endurance in anticipation of a joyful reunion on their return home. I ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.*

*25 December – Christmas Day*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"I know men,  
and I tell you,  
Jesus is more than a man."  
(Napoleon Bonaparte)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"All this took place  
to fulfil what the Lord had said  
through the prophet."  
(Matthew 1.22)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

The image of 'baby Jesus, meek and mild' in the manger is one reason why people find it so easy to trivialise Christmas. But the Bible reminds us over and over again that his birth was a part of God's grand plan for the redemption of the universe. We read that his coming was the fulfilment of countless prophecies foretelling the arrival on earth of God himself – God become man! This is a day not for sentimental family get togethers per se but for bowing down in awe that the King of kings had a long range restoration program that would involve countless multitudes sharing in perfect relationship with him in his eternal paradise.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Heavenly Father, I praise you for your creation and especially for creating mankind in your image, to enjoy fellowship with you. Sadly, though, your creation and our relationship with you has been defiled by our rebellion against you. You are justified in your condemnation of us. But thankfully, in your great love for us, you set out to reconcile us to yourself. We remember today the sending into the world, of your Only Son, Jesus Christ, to restore us to fellowship with You. I praise and thank you that through repentance, confession of sin and faith in Him I have the forgiveness of my sins and the gift of eternal life in your heavenly Kingdom. Amen.*

*26 December – Boxing Day*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

*"I wiped away the weeds and foam,  
I fetched my sea-born treasures home;..."*  
(William Driver)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"On coming to the house,  
they saw the child with his mother Mary,  
and they bowed down and worshipped him.  
Then they opened their treasures  
and presented him with gifts  
of gold and of incense and of myrrh."  
(Matthew 2.11)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

The Magi, or 'three wise men' serve as a positive model of the appropriate response to Jesus. These foreign visitors came joyfully to the house where Jesus' family were staying and there they worshipped him and 'opened their treasures and presented him with gifts' – the traditional gifts given to royalty. More significant, however, is the pattern we see here. They worshipped Jesus. Then they opened their treasures. And then they presented him with gifts. Too often we tend to worship our treasures. When we worship those things which have become the focus of our lives we find we have little room for Jesus or for others. When we consider the Christmas present 'frenzy' it's easy to forget the true focus of our Christmas celebrations. The reason for Boxing day in times past was to help get a right perspective. Worshipping Jesus causes us to loosen our grip on our treasures, whatever they may be, and to focus upon presenting our lives to him in obedient service.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Dear Lord, in bygone days, today was traditionally the day for opening our Christmas gift boxes! It reminded us of the right priority for our relationship with you and with others – Christ first, others second, myself last. Christmas day reminded us of your great gift to us of your only Son, Jesus Christ, and how we are meant to put Him first in our lives; so we set aside that day for thanks and praise to you. Jesus taught that, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive;' so we are able to remind ourselves today of the importance of putting others before ourselves, in the giving of gifts as an expression of our love for them. Forgive us, Lord, that we have largely forgotten such helpful traditions for Christ-like manners because we are so caught up with getting things and having a good time that we forget you. Thank you for the loving reproof that today brings and help me to realign my attitudes and priorities to conform to the image of Jesus Christ; in whose name I pray. Amen.*

*27 December*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

“Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet.  
Only through experience of trial and suffering  
can the soul be strengthened, vision cleared,  
ambition inspired, and success achieved.”  
(Helen Keller)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*“Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings,  
because we know that suffering produces perseverance;  
perseverance, character; and character, hope.*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Christian character is forged in the furnace of daily living in this world. The giants of faith in the Bible, such as Noah, Moses, David, etc., all experienced great hardships and persevered because of their hope in God. Who are those who fell away? Those who went after ‘the good life,’ such as the Israelites in the wilderness, the rich young ruler, Demas, etc. The need for God fades quickly when things are soft and easy, because we can seem to be operating in our strength, rather than in the strength which comes from God. When things are tough, thank God that you are counted worthy of the trial and welcome it as an opportunity to grow as God’s child.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Heavenly Father, I’m thankful for the reminder Christmas brings, that in your great love for me, Jesus was willing to come into the world to share my human experience and then to suffer and die for my sins. But today is one of those ‘after the event’ days, which always seem to follow any celebrations. So I’m feeling a bit listless and it’s quiet around here at the moment. Strengthen me by your good Spirit that I might give my full attention and direct all my energy to the fulfilling of my duties throughout the day, as a witness to my faith in you, through Jesus Christ, my Lord. Amen.*

*28 December*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"I hear and I forget,  
I see and I understand,  
I do and I remember."  
(Confucius)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"For it is not those who hear the law  
who are righteous in God's sight,  
but it is those who obey the law  
who will be declared righteous."  
(Romans 2.13)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Jesus made a big deal about the difference between those who hear him and those who obey him. A lot of people heard Jesus during his three years of ministry but most of them balked at doing what he said and turned away. They were happy to see the miracles and listen to him preaching, so long as it didn't require any change in them. The same applies today. Many are content to consider themselves 'religious' because they go to church and give lip-service to God. As far as God is concerned, only those who seek to live in heartfelt obedience to his teaching demonstrate real faith and will be considered in a 'right' relationship with him.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Father Eternal, I give you my thanks and praise for bringing me safely through another night to rise up and serve you for another day. I thank you for the access I have to your throne of grace and for every spiritual blessing which I possess through faith in Jesus Christ, my Saviour. Help me to consecrate myself to your service and to dedicate my labours to you as an acceptable sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving for all your grace and mercy toward me. Grant that I may do my work cheerfully as doing it for you; labouring with a strength that is beyond my own; thinking with a wisdom that is wiser than mine; and come to the end of the day satisfied with the outcome; for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.*



*29 December*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"A man, sir, should keep his friendship  
in a constant repair."  
(Samuel Johnson)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet,  
'I am the voice of one calling in the desert.  
'Make straight the way for the Lord.'"*  
(John 1.23)

## TO THINK ABOUT

In ancient times the 'straightening' of roads preceded the arrival of an Emperor or king. It was the practice to send out work parties, ahead of the approaching dignitary, to clear away fallen rocks and patch holes, or even to literally straighten sections of road. It was an expression of the importance of the one who was coming. We also make preparations when we know somebody important is coming to visit. John the Baptist called people to get their lives in order, ready for the coming of Jesus. How would Jesus find you if he were to turn up today? What is your spiritual and moral condition? What are the 'rocks' and 'potholes' in your life that you have been avoiding or neglecting in your relationship with Jesus, but which need to be dealt with?

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Most gracious Lord, enable me to love you according to your commandment, with all my heart, soul, mind and strength, and my neighbour as myself. Help me to imitate my saviour in meekness and humility. Sweeten my temperament that I might be kind and helpful to all. Make me kind in thought, gentle in speech and generous in action. May I not forget that it is more blessed to give than to receive; better to minister to than to be ministered to; better to forget myself than to push myself forward. Keep me from any untoward attitudes or actions which may bring dishonour to your name on my account, but let me be of some use today in pointing others to you by my example. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

*30 December*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"A great pilot can sail  
even when his sail is rent."  
(Seneca)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions  
and to overcome all the power of the enemy;  
nothing will harm you."  
(Luke 10.19)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

There is a 'hillbilly' sect in the USA that includes snakes in their worship because they take this verse in a literal sense. However, I believe Jesus is speaking in a figurative sense about the spiritual forces of evil at work in the world. Certainly we can be hurt in the world but not to our eternal detriment if we are 'in Christ.' Satan, 'the serpent,' will do all he can to prevent us from maintaining our faith in Jesus Christ. Whenever we suffer for being a Christian it need not prevent us from sailing on, keeping our destination in view and aiming to reach our home port – heaven!

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*Merciful Father, the year is drawing to a close. At times the days seem to have sped past and at other times they've seemed to drag. However the time seems to have passed I'm made conscious that my time here is finite and that eternity beckons. You have revealed in your Word that my time here is in your hands and that I need to use the time you have allotted to me as a preparation for entering into your heavenly kingdom. Even though I need to live and work in this world, help me to discern whether those things which I'm about to think, say or do have a beneficial relevance. Grant me your wisdom in shedding those things in my life which are contrary to your will, revealed in Holy Scriptures. I praise you for your eternal love for me and ask these things in the precious name of Jesus. Amen.*

*31 December – New Year's Eve*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"The hurrier I go the behinder I get."  
(Anon)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Teach us to number our days aright,  
that we may gain a heart of wisdom."  
(Psalm 90.12)*

## TO THINK ABOUT

Another year draws to a close. It's easy to look back in review but better to look forward to the imminent new year to consider what it holds for us and what we will make of it. In the longest life time is short, it has an end, and no one knows when that will be. The time that each of us has is limited and so nothing that ought to be done today should be put off until tomorrow. So often we live as if we had all the time in the world; as if life were endless and limitless. As we approach the new year may we duly appreciate the time allotted to us by God and live wisely, going out into the world in the strength of our Lord Jesus Christ.

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

*O God, I thank you for giving me another year of life. I thank you for all the people who have been a part of my life and for everything which I have been enabled by you to do and to be this year. I thank you for all the experiences of the past year; for times of success which will always be happy memories; for times of failure which reminded me of my own weakness and of my need of you; for times of joy when the sun was shining; for times of sorrow which drove me to you. Forgive me for the hours I have wasted; for the chances I failed to take; for the opportunities I missed. Forgive me that I have not made of life all that I might have made of it and could have made of it; and help me in the year which lies ahead to make it the best yet, and in it to bring credit to myself, happiness to my loved ones, and joy to you. This I ask for Jesus' sake. Amen.*

