



THE WAY OF THE CROSS

The way of the cross on Good Friday remembers the last stage of the journey that Jesus walked before his death and resurrection. Stories from Ballarat and St Arnaud can be read below:

Ballarat:

Hundreds marched through the streets of Ballarat to remember the true meaning of Good Friday. The annual pilgrimage from St Columba's Parish in Soliders Hill to Black Hill saw parishioners retrace the fourteen Stations of the Cross remembering the final steps of Jesus.

Bishop Paul Bird said while Good Friday was in part a sad time, it was important to commemorate the days that led to the resurrection on Easter Sunday. "We remember Jesus carrying the cross and giving his life. He gave his life for us, that's why we remember it today," Bishop Bird said. "I think people are really touched by Christ's love which is the basis of Christian faith and they respond in love."

At least 300 people took part in the walk. "We get quite a few hundred every year who come along and the great thing is people join in on the way," Bishop Bird said. "They might be just watching from their front gate and then they join in as we go along the streets."

"It's very important to remember important things in our life and important things in our history. The conclusion of the story is what we celebrate on Sunday as the way of the cross leads to the resurrection, which is especially important to celebrate on Easter Sunday."



St Arnaud:

On a warm Autumn morning, St Arnaud residents acknowledged Good Friday by making the Way of the Cross through the streets of their town. Commencing at the Catholic Church of the Immaculate Conception, the Way of the Cross according to Mark was undertaken, using Elizabeth J Smith's *Prayers and Plays for Christmas and Holy Week* (Broughton Publishing, 2007). This consisted of Ten Stations from the Gospel of Mark:

1. A woman anoints Jesus' head
2. A host provides a dining room
3. A young man runs away
4. A woman asks who Jesus is
5. Mockers dress Jesus as a King
6. A sign is written
7. Jesus is given sour wine
8. A centurion sees God's Son
9. Jesus' body is buried
10. The morning of the third day

At each station, a reader introduced the station from the perspective of one who was there, but whom no one remembers and whose names are unknown. Prayer concluded each station after which was sung the refrain from *Were you there, when they crucified my Lord...*

The Way of the Cross included Stations at the Catholic Church, the Church of Christ, and along the main street of the town stopping at the Bakery, the Newsagent and Hardware stores before concluding at the Christ Church Anglican Old Cathedral. At the conclusion, the Anglican Parish hosted all to hot cross buns and tea and coffee in their hall.

It had been many years since a public, ecumenical Way of the Cross had been undertaken in St Arnaud and all were grateful to the Rev Canon Jan Harper of the Anglican Parish for her initiative and leadership.

As we made the Way of the Cross, I was reminded of a quote from Michael Quoist - *The Way of the Cross winds through our towns and cities, our hospitals and factories, and through our battlefields; it takes the road of poverty and suffering in every form.*



Ballarat – Article courtesy of the Ballarat Courier

St Arnaud – Fr Justin Driscoll