

with other men's bodies. Almost everyone is born with a body that types them at birth as male or female, and for good reason: those bodies have different capacities and perform different functions. In each case, we can say that nature—or the natural law—points to the boundaries of what behaviour will and will not lead to flourishing.

One response to this is to look to surgery and hormones to circumvent the physical reality. In that case, the assumption is that nature is just “stuff,” something to be overcome as and when it obstructs us from doing or being whatever we want. The appeal therefore, to any kind of external (biblical) authority is likely to be met with derision or denial. But that isn't why I'm recommending reflection on natural law and the theology of the body. These are not so much apologetic tools for addressing the world but a persuasive pedagogical strategy within the church herself.

Take, for example, a young Christian wrestling with whether homosexuality is right or wrong. A pastor might point him to certain biblical texts that indicate it's wrong because it contradicts God's will for the purpose of sex. That may well be enough to convince the young Christian, but I suspect he might still wrestle with further questions: Does God forbid homosexuality simply because he's a mean tyrant? Is it just that he doesn't want my gay friends to be happy? Why has he prohibited such behaviour?

Older Christians can no longer assume that biblical ethics make sense to younger Christians because the cultural framework in which they operate is so different to the one many of us grew up in. And that means we need to work harder at explaining not simply the content but also the rationale of Christian morality. Now, in this scenario above, it's therefore helpful not simply to point to what the Bible teaches in a few texts but also to show that those texts make sense within the larger picture. And this larger picture has both a broad biblical side, where sex is a function of what the Bible teaches about human personhood, and also a “natural law” side, where, for example, the sexual complementarity of male and female bodies is relevant, as is the evidence of damage done to the physical body by certain sexual practices. It's not that nature here offers the decisive argument, yet it does help to show that biblical teaching is not an arbitrary imposition on nature but instead correlates with it. In other words, it assists us in showing that God's commands make sense given the way the world actually is.

### Collect

God our Father, you have prepared for those who love you such good things as pass our understanding: pour into our hearts such love towards you, that we, loving you above all things, may obtain your promises which exceed all that we can desire; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**



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*O Lord God of hosts, hear our prayer; give ear O God of Jacob. For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere.*

[Psalm 84.8,10].

### **14<sup>th</sup> August, 2022 – Ordinary 20**

<u>Today</u>		<u>21st August</u>
Isaiah 64	(p 1161)	
Psalms 103:8-19	(p 939)	
<b>Gal. 3:26-4:7</b>	(p 1812)	<b>Gal. 4:8-20</b>
John 8:31-41	(p 1663)	

### **Natural Law and a Theology of the Body**

Carl Trueman – TGC, July 2022.

In an increasingly pagan world, the church needs to recover natural law and a theology of the body. So what is natural law? Put simply, it's the idea that the world in which we live is not simply morally indifferent “stuff” but possesses in itself a moral structure. Our bodies in particular have a profound significance. We connect to others through our bodies. We are dependent on others because of our bodies. Our bodies are not containers that we happen to inhabit and animate. They are in a deep and significant way integral to our identity, to ourselves. Human beings—human bodies—are made to flourish in some ways and not in others. All of us understand this in what we might call a technical, morally neutral way. I cannot climb up the Empire State Building and jump off the top expecting to flourish. I am not made to fly by my own strength. My bodily constitution places restrictions on what I can and cannot do.

Natural law is the extension of this idea into the realm of morals. Thus, for example, the dependency of a new-born child upon her mother is natural, as is the obligation of the mother to protect and nurture the child to the best of her ability. It would, therefore, be immoral for the mother to abandon the child in the woods to be eaten by wild animals. Or if we assume that life is a natural good, then the termination of that life by another is wrong, a move against nature, and therefore murder is wrong.

When it comes to sex and identity, the idea of natural law is of obvious help. Without wishing to be too explicit, male and female bodies are made to fit together sexually in certain ways and not in others. Men's bodies are simply not made to fit sexually

## A guide for our prayers during the week

### Monday

Our diocese and the gospel

- Bishop and Dean
- Other parishes
- Another Year of evangelism

### Tuesday

Our church and the gospel

- Children and youth
- Families
- Seniors

### Wednesday

Our community and the gospel

- Covid19
- SRE
- Youth Group

### Thursday

Our nation and the gospel

- Prime minister
- State and local government
- Religious Freedom legislation

### Friday

God's world and the gospel

- Islamisation
- War and poverty
- Barnabas Aid & Open Doors
- Compassion - Lillian

### Saturday

Ministry and the gospel

- Link missionaries – James & Steph
- Link parish – St Anne's Ryde
- Wardens and Parish Council
- Vicar

### Dates to Remember

14 August

Registrations close for New Life  
Conference today

21 August

AGM

3 September

New Life Conference

23-25 September

Synod

8-9 October

Bible Society in Barraba

**Greet**

**Today**

**21 August**

**Lead**

Julia

Lee

**Read**

Penny

Daniel

**Prayers**

Penny, Will, Greg

Daniel, Jenni, Dale

**Counting**

Penny

Hugh

**Sunday Club**

Dean & Hamilton

Margaret & Lee

**Morning Tea**

Charm & Daniel

Peter & Margaret

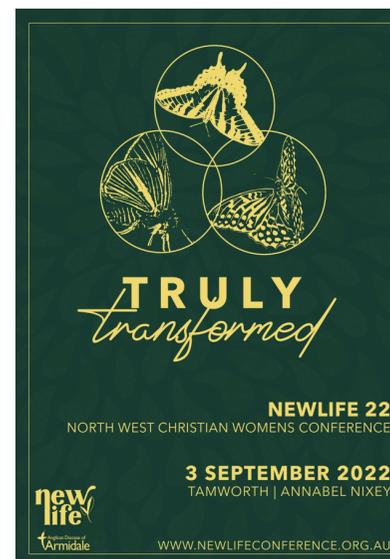
**Church Cleaning**

Dale & Elaine

**Mowing**

Jenni

Peter W & Steve



New Life is a Bible teaching conference organised by the Anglican Diocese of Armidale for all women of the New England & North West. New Life aims to provide quality Bible teaching to encourage women in their relationship with Jesus and equip them to serve Him in their local communities. There will be talks, interviews, book reviews, excellent music and warm fellowship over the day.

For more information visit [www.newlifeconference.org.au](http://www.newlifeconference.org.au), or contact the committee on 0413 491 588.

### Direct Debit Giving Information

**Account name:** Barraba Anglican Church

**BSB:** 932-000

**Account No.:** 11685 (add S3 if transferring from RAB. Omit if not)