

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

Almighty and everlasting God, of your tender love toward man, you sent our Saviour Jesus Christ to take upon himself our flesh, and to suffer death upon the cross, that all mankind should follow the example of his great humility – mercifully grant that we both follow the example of his patience, and be made partakers of his resurrection; through the same, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**



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*‘Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD. Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!’ [Mark 11:9-10]*

### **Palm Sunday**

24<sup>th</sup> March

Isaiah 50:4-9a

Psalms 118:1-2, 19-29

Philippians 2:5-11

**Mark 11:1-11**

### **Easter Sunday**

31<sup>st</sup> March

Isaiah 25:6-9

Psalms 118:1-2, 14-24

Acts 10:34-43

**Mark 16:1-8**

### **Natural Law and a Theology of the Body in a Strange New World**

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 newborn 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 with other men’s bodies. Almost everyone is born with a body that types them at

## A guide for our prayers during the week

### Monday

Our diocese and the gospel

- Bishop Peter
- Other parishes
- Dean for Cathedral – Rev. Ross Nicholson

### Tuesday

Our church and the gospel

- Children and youth
- Families
- Seniors
- BCA

### Wednesday

Our community and the gospel

- St Luke's Shop
- Blackwater
- Emerald Churches

### 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
- Persecuted Church
- CMS and ABM

### Saturday

Ministry and the gospel

- Bible Studies
- Food for Body and Soul
- Wardens and Parish Council
- Rev Daniel and Jenni

## Dates to Remember

24 March (today)	Service at 4 pm Food for Body & Soul 5.30 pm
29 March	Good Friday at 9 am Combined churches service Bush Chapel – botanical gardens at 4.30 pm
30 March	Easter service at Blackwater 3 pm
31 March	Easter Sunday at 9.30 am

	24 March	31 March
<b>Service Leader</b>		
<b>Welcome</b>	Alan	Alan
<b>Power Point</b>		
<b>Read</b>	Jenni	Dianne
<b>Prayers</b>	Nancy	
<b>Sunday School</b>	Cate & Noah	
<b>Morning Tea</b>		
<b>Shop</b>	Jenni	
<b>Mowing</b>	Nuku (Friday)	

## The BCA Prayer

Lord our God, help us to remember those who live in isolated and remote parts of our land. We ask you to strengthen and encourage all whose ministries are supported by The Bush Church Aid Society.

Refresh them in times of discouragement and loneliness and call others to stand with them in the task of making Christ known.

Grant that, through the ministry of the Word and Sacraments, through caring service and by support for young people, the message of your redeeming love may be proclaimed and accepted by the people of our land. We ask these things through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

### Direct Debit Giving Information

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