

## FR THOMAS KARAMA IN MINLATON

In 2011 after a fairly long vacancy Bishop Garry appointed Fr Thomas Karama as priest in charge of the Ministry District of Lower Yorke Peninsula. It is fair to say that Fr Thomas didn't fit the mould of usual Anglican Priests. He was young, single, formerly Roman Catholic and Indian. Thomas quickly endeared himself to all, whether Anglican, other denomination, or non-church people. There was one couple not so enamoured about Thomas's appointment because they had other aspirations.

Thomas did much good for our church and the Christian faith generally. His sermons were from the heart and related to real life situations. The dominant theme in sermons and the New Testament is following Jesus' teachings by caring for and helping the poor, disadvantaged and marginalised. Thomas not only preached it but lead us to do many good works. He established the Mission to Seafarers Pt Giles, joined BlazeAid, established ROBOS and more. Most of us enthusiastically followed, none more so than our late friend Joan Correll. Thomas also provided much care and support to Joan when she was ill and was instrumental in getting her the correct treatment.

As many will attest, Joan so enjoyed participating in these good works that she wanted her estate to be used to continue such works after her passing. She was also rightly proud of her restoration and maintenance of "Olive Grove" and wanted, if possible, for it to remain loved and cared for in perpetuity. Many years ago, she offered it to leave it to the Diocese for use as a retreat, with one condition, that it never be sold. The then Registrar advised that he could not guarantee that, and in her usual forthright manner Joan advised "well you won't be getting it!" Such was the esteem Joan held for Fr Thomas that she decided to leave him the house and sufficient funds, in trust, to maintain it and continue philanthropic work. Additionally, she left money to 18 charities and/or groups and 14 individuals.

Sadly, some people could not accept our priest doing good and kind work. These people have lodged a succession of professional standards complaints against Fr Thomas. Bishop Stead also chose to act against Fr Thomas. Twice Thomas has beaten these charges, but such is the vindictiveness of these few that the Sunday Mail articles were orchestrated, and further professional standards charges instigated.

A good man, acting as Jesus taught, and indeed as clergy everywhere preach, has been persecuted by these same people professing to be good Christians. If this is the way the Anglican church is to act, then I am ashamed of it.

Bishop Stead has been very reticent to reply to many letters from various people here over these matters and in my opinion, has handled the truth carelessly. The custom for the church has been to use the Chancellor for honorary legal advice and use an outside lawyer for any legal action necessary. Bishop Stead has used the Chancellor to take direct legal action against Fr Thomas and the estate of Joan Correll. Because the Chancellor is heavily invested in this action his ability to provide independent advice is compromised.

The total estimated cost of all the legal action is estimated to be over \$200,000. This has been incurred by Fr Thomas, the Estate of Joan Correll, and the Diocese of Willochra.

I conclude with the following indisputable facts

- Fr Thomas has not done anything illegal

- Thomas's time here did much to enhance our church and indeed all Christian churches
- Joan Correll can leave her estate anyway she wishes
- Denys Correll (Joan's late husband's nephew) was treated most generously by Joan. He and his two siblings were each left \$130,000 when they in fact had no claim whatsoever over Joan's estate
- The above legal action has done serious harm to our church and the reputation of Fr Thomas and the memory of a good and generous lady, Joan Correll

Bruce Cook