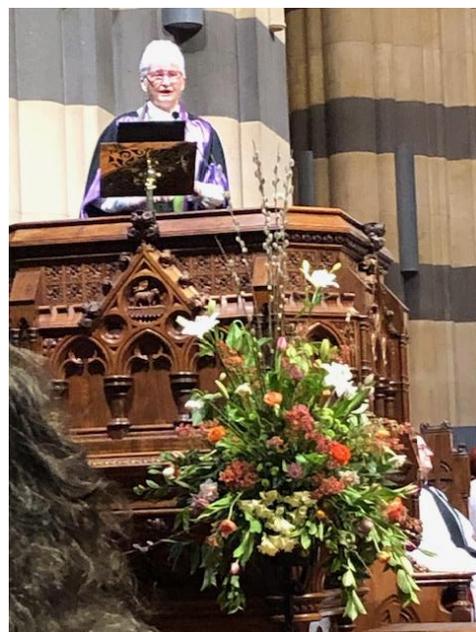


# History Made at St Paul's

History was made when a Catholic religious woman preached the homily at St Paul's Anglican Cathedral (Melbourne) to celebrate the Feast of St Phoebe.

Sr Mary Coloe pbvm, Professor Emerita of the University of Divinity, became the first Catholic woman to preach at St Paul's Cathedral (Melbourne), on Sunday 3 September 2023, for the feast of St Phoebe, during Evensong.

The title of Mary's [homily](#) was "Lost in Translation" as she showed how the significance of women such as Mary the Magdalene, and Phoebe, has been lost because of the poor translations from the Greek. In every Gospel Mary is named as Mary **the** Magdalene to distinguish her from other Marys. This is a title from the word for a "tower". Professor Coloe said, "Mary is the "towering one" or, I prefer, the outstanding one. And she did stand out. The first to see the Risen One, the first sent out to bear witness to the other disciples. Rightly she is now called the Apostle to the Apostles – Mary the Magdala – the outstanding one. "



She then spoke of Phoebe who, in Romans 16, is named by Paul as "deacon – *diakanon*" and "leader – *prostasis*" of the church in Cenchræe. The Greek terms are poorly translated into English as "servant" and "benefactor". Her leadership role is **lost in translation**.

Professor Coloe went on to speak of the significance of Phoebe: "Paul sent her to Rome with his letter. He was not the founder of the Church in Rome, but she could be his ambassador, to introduce him, through this letter, to the Christians there. So, Phoebe was acting as his apostle – sent by him to Rome, to carry the letter, to read and then explain it to the Romans. What a job! Romans is a particularly complex letter and Phoebe was its first commentator."

*Text and photos supplied by Mary Coloe pbvm.*

