

Anam Cara Community



Waterholes: 21 October 2017



Waterhole in the Dunkeld Arboretum with Mt Sturgeon in the background. Photo Ross Byrne

Welcome

Welcome to Waterholes, the Anam Cara Community newsletter for the week beginning 22nd October 2017.

Why this newsletter? This newsletter is one of the ways by which we hope to promote community. The Anam Cara Community is intended to be much more than simply a group of likeminded people. We hope it will continue to grow into a community that is a sign of God's presence in and love for the world, a dispersed community of contemplatives whose lives and action bring peace and healing to all of God's children. We are a Community of Prayer, and believe that as we pray together, God calls us deeper into fellowship with one another.

Who is welcome? The Anam Cara Community is proud to welcome anyone, from any background or faith community (or none!). We are an open and inclusive community that affirms the dignity and worth of all humans, the value of the environment, and seeks to model a way of living with one another and the world that points to the love and care of God for everyone. Individuals who wish to formally join the Community are welcome to become associates.

Community News

Over twenty people gathered at St Paul's Cathedral last weekend for the Quiet Day led by Dean Susanna. At the close of the day many reflected on what a gift it had been. Dean Susanna encouraged us to be still. To take time to stop and to be. Participants sat in the Cathedral Quiet Garden, they walked mindfully in the park opposite the cathedral. Some sat and took note of the pair of ducks with their eight tiny ducklings. Some wrote poetry, some reflected on the artworks adorning the Cathedral precinct ready for the Burnt Earth event that evening, some read and some prayed. All were blessed and agreed that this day was an invitation to live more simply and be still. A beginning.

And on a personal note I give thanks for the birth of my granddaughter Bronte Grace born last night to Fiona and Jacob. Yes that is why Waterholes is a little late today... Nanna cuddles were needed!

For your prayers

Part of the joy of the Anam Cara Community is the gift of being called to pray for others. If you would like the Community to pray for you, or for someone else, please email or call Jane ([0411 316 346](tel:0411316346) or jemacqueen@gmail.com) who will add them to the prayer list, and ensure they are included in our roster of prayers.

At present, your prayers are asked for:

- Bishop Kay in her ministry and leadership, giving thanks for her ministry amongst us and for her calling to be Archbishop of Perth.
- The registry staff, Brian, Annette, Kellie, Sue and David.
- Thanksgiving and prayers for the ministries of locum priests in our diocese, particularly remembering Heather Toms at Lakes Entrance, Ken Parker at Bunyip, Heather Cahill at Croajingalong, Bishop Jeff at Tambo, Bevill Lunson at Orbost and visiting locums at Heyfield.
- Associates who have asked for prayer: Norma, June, Chris Venning, Joan Smith and Anne Turner as the first anniversary of Brian's death approaches.
- For all suffering following extreme weather events.
- For those grieving and experiencing suffering as result of senseless violence.

- For peacemakers in our world. For political leaders in their discussions and decision making.
- For all refugees and asylum seekers across the globe.

Prayer of the day.

O God,
whose beauty is beyond our imagining
and whose power we cannot comprehend:
show us your glory,
as far as we can grasp it,
and shield us from knowing more than we can bear,
until we may look upon you without fear,
through Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Reflection

The Rev'd Heather Toms

After his triumphal entry into Jerusalem (21:1-11), Jesus attacked those for whom religion was a vested interest. He cleansed the temple (21:12-17) and cursed the unproductive fig tree (21:18-22). The chief priests and elders responded by challenging his authority (21:23-27), and he responded with a series of parables that continued his attack (21:28-32; 21:33-46; 22:1-14). After the first two parables, 'the chief priests and the Pharisees realized that he was speaking about them, and 'when they sought to seize him, they feared the multitudes' (21:45-46). Pharisees have been conspiring to destroy Jesus since Matthew 12:14. They tested him to no avail in 16:1 and 19:3.

Now the Pharisees resume their counter-attack, begun in 21:23-27. Their goal is to destroy Jesus' influence, either by discrediting him in the presence of the crowds or by causing him to make a misstep that will get him in trouble with the Romans. Our Gospel lesson is the first of three questions with which the Jewish leadership attempts to discredit Jesus.

Chapter 22:15-22. Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not?

Chapter 22:23-33. Whose wife will she be?

Chapter 22:34-40. Which is the greatest commandment?

After Jesus deals with these three questions, he will denounce the scribes and Pharisees (23:1-36).

Christians have sometimes turned to 22:15-22 to address issues of church and state. While this text can be helpful in that regard, its main point has to do with people who claim religious authority but who do not obey God people whom Jesus identifies as hypocrites (22:18). It calls us to review and to renew our commitment to God.

Reading this week's Gospel lesson from Matthew, brings to mind Bob Dylan's song, 'Gotta Serve Somebody,'

*You may be an ambassador to England or France,
You may like to gamble, you might like to dance,
You may be the heavyweight champion of the world,
You may be a socialite with a long string of pearls.*

*But you're gonna have to serve somebody, yes indeed,
You're gonna have to serve somebody.*

The Pharisees and the Herodians conspired to trap Jesus. That was a remarkable pairing, because the Pharisees and the Herodians were often enemies. The Pharisees hated the Romans, but the Herodians advocated accommodation.

But nothing works better than a common enemy to get people working together, and for the Pharisees and Herodians, Jesus became that enemy. Jesus' ministry threatened both the Pharisees and the Herodians, so they combined forces to get him.

The Pharisees and Herodians did not mount a frontal attack on Jesus. They did not invite Jesus to debate them. They did not urge the crowd to crucify Jesus. In fact, they came to Jesus with flattery on their lips.

'Teacher,' they said, 'we know that you are honest.' {Watch out, Jesus!}

'Teacher, we know that you teach the way of God.' {Get ready, Jesus!}

'Teacher, we know that you are not partial to anyone.' {Here it comes, Jesus!}

'Tell us, therefore, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not? {Let us see you handle that one, Jesus!}

What do you think? Were the Pharisees and Herodians sincerely wanting Jesus' advice? Of course not! They had already made up their minds.

The Pharisees hated the Roman tax, which had to be paid with a Roman coin. The Roman coin was stamped with a picture of the emperor, and it bore this inscription. 'Tiberius Caesar, August son of the divine Augustus, high priest.' This was a religious inscription, and identified the emperor as a religious personage.

The Pharisees considered the coins and the tax idolatrous. They would have done nearly anything to avoid paying it. Their minds were made up! Jesus could say nothing to change the Pharisees' minds!

The Herodians, on the other hand, saw the power of Rome and said, 'If you cannot beat them, join them!' They saw Rome as mighty and Israel as weak. They believed that resistance to Rome would end in disaster. They advocated, 'Go along to get along!' Their minds were made up! Jesus could say nothing to change the Herodians' minds!

But, to stop Jesus, the Pharisees and the Herodians got their heads together. They brainstormed ways to trip Jesus up. They gave it their best thought, and finally came up with this question: 'Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?' It was the perfect question! If Jesus said yes, he would alienate the people, who hated the tax. If he said no, the Romans would arrest him for sedition. Either way, Jesus would lose and the Pharisees and Herodians would win.

But Jesus recognized their treachery. He said, 'Show me the tax money' by which he meant the Roman coin that people used to pay the tax. The Pharisees and Herodians brought Jesus a denarius the hated coin the coin with the picture of Caesar the coin that held up Caesar as god.

Where did these Pharisees get that coin? They produced it so readily that they must have obtained it from their own pockets. That was remarkable! They were in the temple standing on holy ground. Their religious beliefs prohibited idolatry, but they were carrying the idolatrous image of Caesar in their pockets. They used these idolatrous coins, not only to pay the tax, but to buy their lunch and to pay their debts.

When they so readily produced the hated coin, they made it clear what they really believed! They believed in money and what it could buy even if their coins bore the image of Caesar even if their coins violated their religious beliefs.

When we hear this story, we say, 'Oh, those Pharisees! What terrible people!' But perhaps they were not so different from everyone else. We all like money even if we have to get it by selling shoddy products or billing inflated hours or selling a poor person something he does not need. We say, 'A person has to live' by which we mean that we have to do whatever we have to do to make a dollar.

There is probably more than a little Pharisee or Herodian in many of us. Do we trifle with Jesus? Do we split hairs on our promises to him? Do we bait and switch on our commitments praising God and then kicking him way down our queue of priorities? If so, we are in good company. St. Augustine prayed for virtue but not now. He was having too much fun. Sounds incredibly arrogant, but don't we all play the same game from time to time. And while we may fool ourselves, the God who made every atom of our being is not buying it. He knows when we are hedging our commitments, trying to rationalize our neglect, justifying our self-absorption.

Jesus saw the graven image on the coin which these men had given him, and he said, 'Whose is this image and inscription? They answered, 'Caesar's.' Then Jesus said to them:

'Give therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.'

Jesus' comment was so subtle that we need to think about it for a moment. The coin was created in the image of the emperor, so it was appropriate to give it to the emperor. But there is something created in God's image, and we should give that to God. What is created in God's image? Do we know? We are created in God's image. Genesis says:

'So God created humankind in his image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them. {Genesis 1:27}.

Jesus calls us to give ourselves to God. I heard a story that helps us understand what that might look like. A church in a smallish Queensland town had a bus ministry. The pastor went door to door in poor neighbourhoods to identify people who might ride the bus to church. At one home, he found a nine-year-old boy at home. As they talked, the pastor asked the boy if he would like to receive a free gift, and the boy, of course, said yes. The pastor began to explain the plan of salvation, and the boy said, yes, he would like to receive the free gift of life.

The next Sunday, the bus picked up the boy and took him to church. Keep in mind that this boy had never been to church before. He sat in the pew clueless. At one point in the service, he saw several people go to the front and pick up wooden plates. He watched as they walked up the aisle.

All of a sudden the boy realized what was taking place. The congregation must be giving money to Jesus. He reflected on the free gift he had just received. He searched his pockets, but could not find a thing to give Jesus. When the plate came to him, he had to let it pass without putting in any money.

Then he had an idea. He walked to the back where the ushers were gathered and asked for the plate again. He put it on the floor and stepped into it. He then said:

Jesus, I do not have any money to give you today, but I give you myself!

Some years ago, a pastor friend conducted a workshop. During one of the breaks, a woman rushed to the front to talk to him. 'Do you know what I used to be?' she asked. The workshop was being conducted in a Church of Christ church, so the pastor guessed that she had been something truly shameful like a Baptist or a Methodist. She said, 'No, I was not any of those. I was a professional gambler.' She went on to tell about betting \$90,000 on one turn of the wheel. She said, 'That was the biggest risk I had ever made in my life, and I lost it.'

But she continued, 'Since then I have made an even greater risk. Someone told me that God loved me and that his Son, Jesus, died for me and that Jesus wanted to live within me. So I accepted Jesus Christ as my Lord and Saviour. That is the biggest risk I have ever taken in all my life.'

She had to tell her husband that she was becoming a different person than the woman he had married. She had to turn her back on everything that she knew and walk into the life of the church, about which she knew nearly nothing. When the pastor met her, she was directing the whole educational program for her church, and was filled with joy. She had given unto God that which belonged to God and it made her a winner.

An English poet by the name of Christina Rossetti put it this way:

'What can I give him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
If I were a wise man, I would do my part;
yet what I can I give him: give my heart.'

Jesus said, 'Give therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesars, and to God the things that are God's.' Jesus was not suggesting that we divide the world into two equal parts, half of which belongs to the emperor and the other half of which belongs to God. Jesus was not setting up Caesar as God's equal God's earthly counterpart.

Quite the contrary! Jesus was saying that Caesar has a mint where they manufacture pocket change. Our pocket change comes from Caesar, so we may give it back to Caesar. Do not worry about our pocket change, because it is not important.

But WE are important! God created us in his own image in his own likeness. We come from God and will return to God. Give YOURSELF to God!

Earlier in Matthew, Jesus said:

'Do not worry, saying, 'What will we eat?', or 'What will we drink?'
or, 'What will we wear?'

For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.

But seek first God's Kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things will be given to you as well' (Matthew 6:31-33)

In our text today, Jesus says something similar. Do not worry about pocket change. Focus on what is really important. Give yourself to God and everything else will fall into place.

Jesus raises important questions for us in this text and he does not give word for word answers. There are elements in our lives that are, indeed, part of the world order and should be 'rendered to Caesar,' as the text states. But there are other parts of our lives, our very persons and our very selves, that belong to God alone. If we remember that, all of life can take on greater focus and meaning. We belong, not to anything in this world we belong to God.

And this means that no matter what we may do or say, no matter where we may go, no matter what may happen to us, we are first and foremost and forever, God's own beloved children. And, if we believe this and live this, God will shape all that we say and do and how we live. We belong to God. We are God's beloved children.

*But you're gonna have to serve somebody, yes indeed,
You're gonna have to serve somebody.*

You're gonna have to serve somebody. And, with Bob Dylan, we know who we serve.

All of life is God's. This text tells us that we are to 'Render unto God the things that are God's.' And, since all of life is God's and since you 'gotta serve somebody', we serve and love and live in the love and rule of Jesus Christ. We belong to God. We are God's children. Our task is to believe that and live it.

To God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be all honour, glory, might, power and dominion, now, and forever more. **Amen.**

Photo Reflection



The Community of the Holy Name garden, Cheltenham. Ross Byrne

Our Waterholes photos sometimes have a theme that connects them. Today the theme is the seat... that invites us to stop and sit awhile. An apt invitation given the Quiet Day last weekend where Dean Susanna encouraged us to be still.

Further opportunities for Spiritual Nurture

1. St Paul's Cathedral, Sale.

ROBIN MANN Concert

[Wednesday 22 November at 7.30pm in the Cathedral...](#)

Robin's been leading and writing songs for over 40 years, and he hopes to do some more yet.

While he's best known for songs like *Father welcomes*, *Comfort comfort* and *May the feet of God walk with you* (and more recent ones *God. Version 1.0* and *For you, deep stillness*), he also performs some 'non-singalong' songs, especially for groups who didn't get the 'community singing' gene.

Christian Meditation

-[7.45am - 8.15am](#) every [Wednesday](#) AND

- [5.30 - 6.00 pm](#) every [Thursday](#)

Christian Meditation is a spiritual wisdom and a practice leading from the mind to the heart. It is a way of simplicity, silence, stillness and openness to God. It can be practised by anyone, wherever you are on your life's journey. It is only necessary to begin – and to keep on beginning. Contact:

Susanna Pain susanna.pain@gmail.com

This practice is in the tradition of the World Community for Christian

Meditation <http://www.wccm.org/>

Evening Prayer with focus on intercession 5.15pm Mondays

2. Meditation - the chapel of St James, Traralgon

A group of people who are exploring the inner journey regularly meet for prayer and meditation together. We meet twice a month on the 2nd and 4th Monday mornings [at 10 am](#). During the hour we spend together we share the reading of scripture, prayer and music. There is a long period of silent meditation. To sit in silence together before God helps us to recognise God in the complexities of our lives. In the depth of our being there is always a sanctuary filled with God's presence. We can go there in silence to be and to listen. All are welcome.

3. Bass Hill Hermitage

Thinking about making a silent Retreat?

Bass Hill Hermitage is on the Bass Coast, near Phillip Island. The Hermitage has its roots in the traditions of Christian Spirituality. It is a perfect place to reflect, pray and deepen your relationship with God. Beginners, as well as experienced retreatants are welcome. They offer **directed and self-guided retreats as well as on-going Spiritual Direction and Supervision.**

The Hermitage can also be booked for a 'Quiet break' or some 'Time Out'. Visit the informative website:

www.basshillhermitage.com.au for more information.

Support on the journey

The Anam Cara Community's ministry is to be a support to those who are on the inner journey into God. Each person's journey is different, and we recognise that there are some for whom the Christian tradition is difficult or not supportive. We're committed to finding ways to hear the needs of each Associate, and support them as we can.

Contacts:

- *Website:* www.anamcaragippsland.org
 - To subscribe to or unsubscribe from the mailing list contact Jane
 - *Soul carer (Community Leader):* Jane ([0411 316 346](tel:0411316346) or jemacqueen@gmail.com)
 - *Secretary / Librarian:* Sue [03 5182 5542](tel:0351825542)
 - *Treasurer:* Kate
 - *Postal mail:* Anam Cara Community c/o PO Box 928, Sale, VIC 3850
 - *Diocesan Director of Professional Standards (to make complaints or express concerns about our ministries):* Ms Cheryl Russell [0407 563 313](tel:0407563313), cherylr@gippsanglican.org.au
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Love and prayers

Jane Macqueen

On behalf of the Servant Leaders

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