

Anam Cara Community



Waterholes: 3 February 2018



Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney. Photo

Jane Macqueen

Welcome

Welcome to Waterholes, the Anam Cara Community newsletter for the week beginning 4th February 2018.

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

Welcome to our first e-newsletter for 2018. It is good to welcome some new subscribers since our Annual Thanksgiving service. We trust that Waterholes will be an encouragement and provide food for thought and reflection.

Coming Events

We are pleased to advise that for our first Quiet Day for 2018 will be joining with the Anglican Parish of Bunyip who offer a number of Quiet Days throughout the year. By co-sponsoring the day we have been able to invite Carol O'Connor and Cath Connelly to travel from Melbourne and lead a Celtic Quiet Day.

Travel: It will be good to car pool for the day so if you would like to come but need a lift please contact me.

Celtic Quiet Day



Led by:

Carol O'Connor - Poet, teacher and book seller

and

Cath Connelly - Spiritual director and harpist

on
Saturday 17th March, 2018
St Thomas' Anglican Church
16 A'Beckett Rd, Bunyip
9.30am – 3.30 pm

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 as she prepares for her Installation as Archbishop of Perth on Saturday 10th February.
- The registry staff, Brian, Annette, Kellie, Sue and David.
- Associates who have asked for prayer: Norma, June, Chris Venning, Sue Hopkins and Val Lawrence.
- All in formation as spiritual directors particularly those who will meet for the first session for the year at the Living Well centre at the end of February.
- For peacemakers in our world. For political leaders in their discussions and decision making.
- For wise and compassionate counsel and some direction and hope for the future of refugees and asylum seekers across the globe.

Prayer of the day

Saving God,
whose Son, Jesus Christ, healed the sick
and brought them wholeness of body and mind:
inspire us, his disciples,
so that we may constantly proclaim his gospel
by our words
and by the dedication and integrity of our lives;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Seasons of the Spirit prayer

God of our beginnings and endings and every transition in between,
help us to recognise our need for healing

and to understand the ways we are formed by its process, even when a resolution is never in our sight. **Amen.**

Reflection

The Rev'd David Head - Rector, St Mary's Morwell

5th Sunday after Epiphany

Isaiah 40.21-31; Ps 147.1-11; 1 Corinthians 9.16-23; Mark 1.29-39

Are you an extremist? By this I don't mean a terrorist, but do you like engaging in Extreme Activities? When I mention extreme activities, I guess most of us immediately think of bungee jumping or freefall parachuting from a plane or paragliding from a mountain cliff. I have not done any of these by the way. Well, not yet anyway! If someone were to ask you the top five dangerous activities in which you have engaged, I wonder what they would be? I guess, for me, driving would have to be one of them. Driving can be a really dangerous exercise as we try to obey all the road rules and keep alert from all the distractions around us. Minds are so easy to wander when driving. Did I turn off the heater? Have I got my wallet or handbag? What am I going to say at the meeting today? How is Mum or Grandma doing in this heat? And then there is the totally unexpected driving behaviour of others pulling out in front of you, driving erratically as the driver is texting and so on.

However, I am sure that you would not expect that prayer would make my list of dangerous activities. I mean I like prayer and I am meant to be a man of prayer. I do engage in prayer a lot. I think it is a good and helpful and spirit strengthening thing for me and people of faith to do. But is it dangerous? I can think of far more dangerous things that I have done than pray!!

Prayer is an important activity and a critical activity for those who believe in the power of prayer as I do, but dangerous is not the first word that comes into my mind when talking about prayer. When I think about prayer, I think of a place of comfort, of rest and balm for my soul. I think of lovely hymns like "Be still my soul" or "Take it to the Lord in Prayer" or "Make me a channel of your peace". I think of solitude and quiet, a peaceful time set apart from the battle of the day when I can commune with God, centre my scattered self and seek the peace and guidance of the Holy Spirit for some of the tough and complex decisions of life. When I think of prayer, I think of our church community offering prayer in confession and intercession on Sundays, naming before God the hopes and the hurts, the pain and the needs and the brokenness of ourselves and others and of the world; I think of seeking through prayer God's healing and guiding, God's wholeness and forgiveness; I think of prayer as a sort of safety zone, a place of refuge from the fast and furious lanes of life where it is hard to sometimes take a breath from the dangerous and erratic drivers, not just of cars, but of life itself. A place we can go to be replenished, renewed and revived for the living of our challenging lives.

However, in Mark's Gospel, prayer seems to come across as a somewhat dangerous activity! It seems it can be fraught with peril and with risk! Prayer takes Jesus to places where Satan, the Tempter, lurks, and to places where the public and cosmic battle between good and evil, as witnessed in Jesus' teaching and preaching and healing, continues on in a more private, personal place. We get our first glimpse of the dangerous nature of prayer early in the first chapter of Mark's Gospel, when Jesus, immediately after his baptism by John the Baptist in the River Jordan, is led by an angel out into the wilderness to prepare his soul and spirit for his demanding public ministry.

This time apart is anything but peaceful and calm. In this desert wilderness, Jesus is tempted by Satan. In the wilderness, Jesus encounters the wild beasts lurking in the heart of his being. Here he is forced to wrestle with his own identity of what God has called him to be and do. For forty long and demanding days and nights, Jesus does battle with the tempter in a place pulsing with the powers of greed and pride and self-focussed success. This is a place and a battle we know only too well from the appalling tales of personal and corporate greed that have fuelled much financial hardship for the ordinary person through corrupt financial advice or dodgy superannuation and bank practices in recent years.

It is only after a time of severe testing that Jesus emerges fully equipped to begin his public ministry. But what is even more troubling is that prayer is seen to be a cosmic wrestling match between good and evil that does not just end there at the Temptations for Jesus where he is so victorious, but continues on throughout his ministry, right up to his final prayer battles in the Garden of Gethsemane, and as he suffers and dies on the cross. Indeed, 'My God My God why have you forsaken me?' are some of Jesus' last words of crisis on the cross.

Jesus needs time out to pray not just for refreshment and peace and a place of quiet seclusion to be with God, he needs prayer to help him clearly determine and face the dangers and the pitfalls that lie around and before him all the time – to name them and thus contain them in the empowering that God gives him in these times.

In today's Gospel reading, we are told that Jesus goes out to pray in the early morning while it is still dark. It is the day after a very full and exhausting day of ministry. No wonder he slips out quietly in the early dawn hours to a deserted place where he can be alone and re-energise and pray for guidance and strength as he is faced with all sorts of temptations to misuse his power for self-glory and control of others. However, his silence and prayer in this deserted place is soon disturbed as the disciples seek out and find him and barge in and tell him that he is needed. His fame has spread, everybody is looking for him and the disciples are basically telling Jesus that he has to come now and wow the crowd with a few more amazing miracles. His disciples are only giving voice to the temptations that he himself had

no doubt just experienced during his solitary prayer time as he faced the dangers of revelling in the public's adoration and of setting a populist pathway for his future teaching and healing ministry rather than following God's pathway. This pathway is one of service and of seeking to preach and teach only that which will enable profound God-centred meaning and purpose.

As Christians, we are called to the service of following Jesus. But often in our calling there is always the temptation to rest too long on yesterday's laurels, rather than boldly moving forward into the new faith ventures that God calls us to. Consequently, prayer is not only balm and peace and strength and healing to us, it can also be dangerous to us, because in truly open prayer we open ourselves to God and God's purposes which can tend to destabilise what we prefer and want to do. When we enter into solitude with God, into prayer and conversation with God through the Holy Spirit's enabling, we are entering a wilderness zone where the forces of complacency, power and greed do battle with the forces of God's desires and purposes for us and our service in the world.

Prayer **is** a dangerous, but a healthy dangerous, exercise!! Prayer, when heartfelt and focussed, can be so deeply rewarding and empowering. It can be so fulfilling to our totality of being human and of knowing the presence and peace and guiding of God.

Photo Reflection



Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney. Photo Jane

Macqueen

The fern, in infinite slowness, uncurls each frond... new life slowly, bravely, venturing forth...

Further opportunities for Spiritual Nurture

1. St Paul's Cathedral, Sale.

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.**

NEW OPPORTUNITY: Zena will soon be offering Spiritual Direction and Supervision from the Anglican Church in Drouin. Contact Zena via the website below.

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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