

Anam Cara Community



Waterholes: 12 May 2018



North Arm, Lakes Entrance. Photo Ross

Byrne

Welcome

Welcome to Waterholes, the Anam Cara Community newsletter for the week beginning 13th May 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.

Coming events

Only 2 weeks to go...

MAY QUIET DAY:

Please RSVP to help us with our planning

God of Surprises

Led by The Rev'd Heather Toms

Saturday 26 May

Holy Trinity Anglican Church,
McFarlane St, Stratford.



9.30/10.00 am – 3.30 pm

What to bring: your lunch, pen & notepad

Tea/coffee/water & morning tea provided

Donations welcomed nil - \$15 depending on means

RSVP: Jane 0411316346 or jemacqueen@gmail.com

Community News

1. Mobile Library - Librarian Sue will be bringing our extensive mobile library to the Quiet Day on the 27th May. It is a great resource for people to browse and find some inspiring reading. Quiet Days are also a good opportunity to return books you may have borrowed in the past. If you are not able to come to Stratford and have books to return try to pass them on to someone who will be attending.

2. Photo contributions

I am very thankful that Ross Byrne takes his camera with him on his outings and always looks at creation with an eye for offering images to share in Waterholes. I particularly enjoyed his offerings today from a recent trip to Gippsland. The first draws me in and encourages me to sit a while and reflect. The second the trestle bridge at Stony Creek has an ethereal feel as he captures the bridge through light and smoke haze. You will read in Dean Susanna's reflection something of the mystery of the material and spiritual realms meeting.

Photos for reflection are always welcome and appreciated. Photos taken in landscape format are best for Waterholes and can be emailed directly to me jemacqueen@gmail.com

2. Annual Community Subscriptions

I was contacted recently by an Anam Cara Associate who was concerned he had missed something... he realised that he hadn't made his annual subscription to the Community! We are thankful for those who support the Community's ministry by a financial contribution of \$20 per year (or \$30 per couple).

As such I will include the subscription details below... but don't panic... most people made a donation back in November at the Annual Thanksgiving service or around that time!

DIRECT DEPOSIT DETAILS

Account Name: Anam Cara ADF Gippsland

BSB: 705 077 Account Number : 00040606

Details: ACC your surname

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:

- Diocesan Administrator, Philip Muston
- Thanksgiving for the election of The Rev'd Dr Richard Treloar as the thirteenth Bishop of Gippsland. Prayers for Bishop elect Richard, his wife Leanne and children Rachel and Nicholas as they look toward new beginnings.
- The registry staff, Philip, Brian, Annette, Sue and David.
- Associates who have asked for prayer: Norma, June, Chris Venning, Sue Hopkins and Val Lawrence.
- For peacemakers in our world. For world leaders in their discussions and decision making.
- For all who suffer as a result of violence.
- 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 - Ascension Day

Almighty God,
your blessed Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ,
ascended far above all heavens that he might fill all things:
mercifully give us faith to trust
that, as he promised,
he abides with us on earth until the end of time;
through the same Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

Reflection

Offered by Dean Susanna Pain, St Paul's Cathedral.

I offer two reflections on the Ascension, one from Sarah Bachelard^[1] and a sonnet from Malcolm Guite.^[2]

Sarah Bachelard from Benedictus contemplative church in Canberra writes (slightly amended):

‘The Ascension is for me perhaps the strangest bit of the whole gospel story. Luke the historian begins, seemingly conventionally:

‘In the first book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus did and taught from the beginning’ (so far so reasonable) ... ‘until the day when he was taken up to heaven ...’ (not quite so reasonable any more).

We seem to have flipped without warning from the realm of history to the realm of myth.

And the text doesn't get any easier to categorise. Luke mentions the 'convincing proofs' of resurrection presented over forty days. He reports the disciples' ongoing concern for the political restoration of Israel in the particular historical circumstances of the Roman occupation of Palestine, alongside the descent of a cloud to whisk Jesus up and out of their sight, and the sudden appearance of two men (aka angels) 'in white robes' offering commentary on it all.

What form of writing is this?

What does this mixing of genres suggest about how we are to understand this text?

What is a preacher to do?

Well, as I've said, taking my lead from Luke's somewhat fractured account, I want to offer a reflection in three fragments – fragments that don't resolve the difficulties of the text, but highlight what it invites me, at least, to grapple with.

Fragment 1 is about the relationship between the **material and spiritual** dimensions of life. In Christian understanding these two domains can't neatly be separated. Whatever the spiritual life is, it's not an escape from this one. The work of salvation and reconciliation happens in our bodily lives, by means of bodily practices. It affects our relationships with people and the creation, how we think, feel and act, what we do with our time and resources. Spirituality is about the transformation of the whole human journey.

Christianity also affirms, however, something much more difficult. 'We' say that the possibility of transformation has been opened up in our ordinary, material world by the irruption of another reality. This happened in ages past – when 'God' called the people of Israel, gave the Law, and inspired the prophets. It happened again at a particular historical moment in first century Palestine. Christianity claims that the deeper human journey is revealed and made possible for us because the spiritual reality we name 'God' has entered our mundane life, has become matter.

We say this in various ways. God came down from heaven and was born in human form. The Son of God was crucified under Pontius Pilate and on the third day was raised from the dead.

We also say that this historical episode of the divine life dwelling on earth in human form came, at a certain point, to an end. Jesus ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God.

These are words at the edge of intelligibility; it's hard to know what we really think we're saying.

And yet, in all this, the gospels purport to witness to a series of events. ... This insistence on the material embodiment of spiritual reality seems to generate the strange interweaving of what sounds like history and what sounds like myth. It breaks our categories.

Is it nonsense?

Or is it a breakthrough into a much larger conception of the nature of things?

Fragment 2 is about the '**space**' opened up for human being by Jesus' departure. Here, I am strongly reminded of the space that God generates in the creation story in Genesis. Remember that what God primarily does in the creation of the world is to make space. God separated light from dark, creating the temporal spaces of day and night; God separated the waters above the earth from the waters below, and created the domains of sky, earth and sea. And then God calls upon these spaces to bring forth and be fruitful: 'let the earth put forth vegetation; let the waters and the sky bring forth living creatures', and so on.

**God creates the conditions for fruitfulness;
God encourages creation to participate in its own fulfilment.**

In the same kind of way, Jesus' Ascension is understood by the gospels to create a kind of **space for human living**.

It opens up different possibilities from before, because it's a **space now indelibly coloured by hope**.

The risen Jesus has undergone death and not been extinguished, he has been rejected and returned with forgiveness. Nothing can definitively separate us from the love of God, which means we are liberated from fear and for life in a whole new way.

So it's a **space now charged with the energy of the Spirit**. To the extent we open ourselves to it, our lives are directly empowered by the life of God.

But as with the space-making of creation, what this new space for human living will bring forth is not pre-determined.

In John's gospel Jesus tells his disciples that 'because I am going to the Father', you will do greater works than I do (John 14.12).

Luke, in our passage, has Jesus say that the disciples will **receive power to become his witnesses** – that is to live out of the reality he has begun to bring about.

There's something about the Ascension, which is to do with **enabling our more conscious participation in the fruitfulness and fulfilment of creation**.

This leads, in turn, to Fragment 3. The **Ascension is the culmination of the Incarnation** – the whole life, death and resurrection of Jesus **now internal to the life of God**. And this is said to implicate not just Jesus but the rest of us: God became human so that human beings might become divine, Irenaeus says.

But this vision of the open heaven, and of Jesus seated at the right hand of God (to use the traditional imagery), actually intensifies our awareness of our need for healing, and of the suffering of the world. ..In the light of this promised reconciliation, we are drawn to protest and longing. It generates our vocation to give ourselves for the world's transformation, as Jesus did. The vision of the open heaven returns us to the world.

So the strange, category transgressing story of the Ascension imagines our finite, human lives set against the horizon of God's life.

It imagines our lives potentially empowered directly by the energy of God's Spirit, suffering more acutely the world's alienation, participating more consciously in life's generation, liberation and fulfilment.

..., it seems to me, the truth of this way of imagining reality must be proved – tested – by the character of the lives it shapes.

Are we finding ourselves more capable of hope?

Is our integrity, our wholeness, being deepened, even as we give ourselves for the healing and empowerment of others? Sometimes it feels a fragmentary thing – the life, the imagination of faith.

Even so, out of such fragments may we find ourselves ..to be for **the blessing of all.**'

Malcolm Guite says it in other words in his sonnet:

Ascension

We saw his light break through the cloud of glory
Whilst we were rooted still in time and place
As earth became a part of Heaven's story
And heaven opened to his human face.
We saw him go and yet we were not parted
He took us with him to the heart of things
The heart that broke for all the broken-hearted
Is whole and Heaven-centred now, and sings,
Sings in the strength that rises out of weakness,
Sings through the clouds that veil him from our sight,
Whilst we our selves become his clouds of witness
And sing the waning darkness into light,
His light in us, and ours in him concealed,
Which all creation waits to see revealed.^[3]

Ascension Day, is the finale of the Easter Season.

In the Ascension Christ's glory is at once revealed and concealed, and so is ours.

^[1] http://benedictus.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/ascension_in_fragments_160515.pdf

^[2] Malcolm Guite in [Sounding the Seasons](#), published by [Canterbury Press](#) England.. <https://malcolmguite.wordpress.com/2011/06/02/ascension-day-sonnet/>

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Photo Reflection



Stony Creek Trestle Bridge. Photo Ross

Byrne

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

Love and prayers

Jane Macqueen

On behalf of the Servant Leaders

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