

Anam Cara Community



Waterholes: 16 September 2018



Lake Guthridge, Sale. Photo, Jane

Macqueen.

Welcome

Welcome to Waterholes, the Anam Cara Community newsletter for the week beginning 16th September 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.

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 Richard, Leanne and Rachel and Nicholas as they continue to settle in to their new home, community, workplaces and school.
- The registry staff, Brian, Annette, Sue and David.
- Philip and Cathrine Muston and the parish of Lakes Entrance for their new beginnings.
- Tracey Lauersen, husband Sven and Abby and Freya as they prepare to leave Melbourne for the parish of Warragul.
- For locums and lay readers in their ministries in parishes without clergy.
- Associates and friends who have asked for prayer: Norma, June, Fiona Barry, Chris Venning and Val Lawrence.
- For all who are suffering as a result of extraordinary weather events, typhoon, hurricanes, drought, fire, heatwaves.
- For our churches to be places of inclusion, welcome and reconciliation.
- 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

God of mercy,
help us to forgive as you have forgiven us,

to trust you, even when hope is failing,
and to take up our cross daily
and follow you in your redeeming work;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Reflection

17th Sunday after Pentecost

Proverbs 1.20-33; Psalm 19; James 2.18-26; Mark 8.27-38

THIS IS NOT A DRILL: THIS IS REAL - Reflection by The Rev'd Nikolai Blaskow

Somewhere, somehow we all have our God moment, or some great great insight that persuades us that God might be real. Peter had his:

You are the Messiah.

For my father it was in his room over a story of the feeding of the 5,000 when he was deeply depressed, and Jesus spoke to him and said: don't laugh at that story—yes it really did happen. For Patrick White, our only Nobel prize winner it was in a storm in a moment of anger when he slipped and fell in the mud when he got up and shook his fist at God. For Greta Pienz it was when she thought she'd been tricked as she asked Jesus into her heart and there was an instant confirmation that her prayer was answered.

But then St Peter, God bless him, he's so much like us, had one of those moments we would all rather forget: when he got it completely wrong and Jesus had to rebuke him. So we go from his great insight, to his monumental misunderstanding.

Those sorts of moments never come in isolation. There's always, usually, mostly a long period of gestation: of the evidence for such a reality unfolding itself incrementally over time. For me it was the stories of *The Robe*, *Ben Hur*, which I read and re-read almost on an annual basis and which profoundly moved me: I wanted so much for it, the reality of Christ to be true. But it took my railing and making fun of that Bible study group at Sydney University to bring me to a halt: 'You haven't seen the Christ, you haven't heard him, you haven't touched to see that he is real?...then why are you wasting your time here...pretending.

The Proverbs reading makes that abundantly clear. Allow me if you will, to paraphrase this morning's Proverbs reading. I will read it as a prophetic utterance, which suits the occasion. We imagine God speaking to us...a God moment.

When panic strikes you like a storm, and calamity comes at you like a whirlwind, when distress and anguish come upon you [because your] complacency [allowed it to happen],

In that instance you have only yourself to blame.

Because you were warned and you refused to listen. It wasn't just once that you were

determined not to listen, and it wasn't just once that you turned away from reality and the truth that stared you in the face, that inconvenient unpalatable truth that challenged the foundation you were standing on.

And that was because you thought what *you* believed was true, even in the face of the hard evidence that it wasn't. You thought that scoffing and laughing it all off, and making fun of what was actually true, would make *your* truth more real.

But that wasn't to be... was it?

Now it's come back to haunt you. Because you can't fight reality: what's really going on in your life and what's going on in the life of the world, won't go away.

Maybe now when you've stopped fighting yourself, you might be able to extricate yourself from denial, find a space and place at last, to hear what I am actually saying.

Because every day and every moment, if you'd only listened, and every day and every moment since... I have been pouring out my thoughts to you. Yes, even in the midst of the busy city, on the cross roads of this town: I was speaking to you, in the ebb and flow of everyday life.

Because this is not a drill. This is the real thing. And I truly cared about you. But you weren't ready to hear.

Here endeth the lesson. SELAH.

I use SELAH deliberately, mostly we come across it in some of the Psalms. And I think it somehow captures something I want us to take away from that prophetic reading (by that I mean a reading that has relevance, importance to the moment, this moment here in this place at this time, for me and you).

SELAH, Emil Hirsch notes, is of uncertain origin. In the Septagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, it is given the meaning of '**always**' '**forever**'; St Augustin, Hirsch points out, suggests the possibility of '**fiat**' = '**let there be made.**'

In other words, the words that have been read and sung in the temple, in our case this morning, spoken in the Cathedral (*ex cathedra* you could say), have a meaning that will stand forever; words that have in them the creative power to change our thinking and our behaving, the power to create something new in us this morning, just as it has done in the long past stretching back to the first and second Temples of our Jewish ancestors .

Whereupon another word from which SELAH might have been derived, is '**sollah**' a **musical imperative** meaning '**lift up**' the modern equivalent to "**fortissimo**": perhaps signifying a clash of cymbals and a blare of trumpets; an imperative to "**Lift up [benediction]**" **lift up our hands in benediction;**

Or a passionate outcry with **the lifting up of hands—an imprecation, a malediction—to make an end of, to erase or delete** the evil that stands in our way.

(Emile Hirsch, *Jewish Encyclopaedia*)

If the proverb had been sung, this morning in some other place and time, the temple priests

might have added the term **SELAH** as an incentive to make us take the words seriously. Ideally those words should fill us with praise, thanksgiving. But equally, if those words find us in a state of mockery, they might then become a stern warning, a pleading to change our thinking.

A warning as stern as that delivered to Peter by Jesus in our Gospel reading, the significance of which I want to reflect upon as our take away message today.

Let's hear the last part of the Gospel reading again in a modern turn of phrase:

³⁴⁻³⁷ Calling the crowd to join his disciples, he said, "Anyone who intends to come with me has to let me lead. You're not in the driver's seat; I am. Don't run from suffering; embrace it. Follow me and I'll show you how. Self-help is no help at all. Self-sacrifice is the way, my way, to saving yourself, your true self. What good would it do to get everything you want and lose you, the real you? What could you ever trade your soul for?"

³⁸ "If any of you are embarrassed over me and the way I'm leading you when you get around your fickle and unfocused friends, know that you'll be an even greater embarrassment to the Son of Man when he arrives in all the splendor of God, his Father, with an army of the holy angels."

I like this paraphrase expressed in the modern idiom. Several notable observations emerge which I'm going to turn into questions, accompanied by corresponding reassurances:

1. Who's in the driver seat? Trust Jesus.
2. Are you running away from something? You don't have to.
3. Are you afraid of suffering? Don't be: embrace it.
4. Are you scared stiff you're going to lose your sense of who you are if you follow Jesus in this radical way? Think again: which is better to find the real you, your true self, or live with the fake one for the rest of your life?
5. Are you embarrassed to say you're a Christian? Then just maybe those so-called friends who make you feel that way aren't true friends after all.

I mean come on look at the comparison:

What good would it do to get everything you want and lose you, the real you? What could you ever trade your soul for?

6. So our last question. Do you worry about losing everything? You needn't. The essential you, is the indestructible you.

But it doesn't end there. They're the simple things. *This* is the hard bit. We need to listen carefully to what Jesus is saying here and what he means by what he says.

The difference between Peter and Jesus in this crucial moment in Jesus' journey to Jerusalem is this. While Jesus is the 'Yes-sayer', Peter is the 'No-sayer'. But 'Yes' and 'No' to what?

The simple answer is this: it's the suffering. Jesus wants to embrace it. Peter

doesn't. Why? Because it overthrows Peter's assumptions about how and why Jesus is here, doing all this. Peter's assuming an act of power: overcoming Rome, restoring Israel's independence as a nation, bringing in the kingdom of God. But Peter only hears what he doesn't want to hear and what he thinks is everything that Jesus is saying, but it's only the first part:

the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed...

Peter doesn't hear the end bit:

and after three days rise again.

Jesus knows why he is here: as that same Son of Man to undergo the suffering, to overcome the suffering... and in the end—to become for us the first fruits of the new creation, as the cosmic Christ, the Son of the living God, into which active and dynamic slipstream all of us here today, all of us in Sale, all of us in Australia, all of the world, all of the cosmos, material and immaterial is being drawn as part of the new creation by which all things are being transformed.

The old is passing away, and the new is coming and is already here, unseen but active among us. In the Weekend Australian Magazine in a special anniversary issue of the thirty notable Australian artists, thinkers, scientists, movers and shakers came this answer from Jimmy Barnes to the question, 'what was the most important development in your life...would you change anything? I think it captures the spirit of our reflection this morning...life is not just a rehearsal, not a drill...it's the real thing and the wisdom of life, which is the wisdom and the love of God in Jesus Christ is reaching out to us through the love of others (where there is love there is God) if we would but reach out to it and hold it close. Jimmy Barnes writes:

I tried to leave behind a childhood that was defined by poverty, abuse, fear and shame...I stumbled blindly on, creating more pain and shame for myself. I knew there were people who loved and cared for me [but] I was trapped in the same cycle of self-destruction that my father and his father were caught in. And eventually, it nearly killed me. But I didn't die. I knew I had a lot to live for...So I reached out and started asking for help. I had a wife who loved me and a family who needed me. I thought that asking for help was a sign of weakness but I know now that that was the first time I showed real courage [...] Personally, I wouldn't change anything. Everything that has happened to me, and everything I have done has brought me to the right place. We make mistakes and that how we grow.

I hope that as a country we can do the same thing. We all know that as a nation we've made mistakes in the past and we'll make more in the future but things usually happen for a reason. As long as we can learn and grow from those mistakes it will all work out. I know that sounds simple but it's the way I feel.

[Weekend Australian Magazine, September 15-16, 2018, pages 44-45]

How about you? And me? What will we decide that will become for us a life

changing moment?

Photo Reflection



Spring is coming in the Quiet Garden, St Paul's Cathedral. Photo Jane Macqueen

Further opportunities for Spiritual Nurture

1. The Abbey of St Barnabas, Raymond Island

- Tree Planting 2018

Enjoy some time at The Abbey and help with The 2018 Planting

We have around 900 plants to put in the ground, so we'd love some help!

Come when you can, stay as long as you are able.

BYO lunch. Tea and coffee provided.

Families and friends, young and old.

Sunday 23 September: 2-4pm

Monday 24 September: 11am-3pm

Tuesday 25 September: 11am-3pm

Tuesday 2 October: 11am-3pm

Wednesday 3 October: 11am-3pm

Thursday 4 October: 11am-3pm

For further information contact The Abbey

Phone (03)5156 6580 Email: info@theabbey.org.au www.theabbey.org.au

2. St Paul's Cathedral, Sale.

- **Contemplative Quiet Afternoon at the Gallery**

1.30pm- 4.00pm

Sunday 30 September

Gippsland Art Gallery, Foster Street, Sale

Spend a contemplative quiet Sunday afternoon at the Gallery. We will gather in the Wayput Room upstairs for a short reflection, then spend time with the art in the gallery, then return to share something of our experience and insights. Led by Susanna Pain, priest, poet, dancer

To register interest: contact Susanna Pain susanna.pain@gmail.com 048637469

Cost; by donation to the Gallery

- **Interplay** - Sunday 23rd September 2.30pm - 4.30pm *Freshness and New Life*
- **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**

3. 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.

4. 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), cherylrussell1@bigpond.com
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Love and prayers

Jane Macqueen

On behalf of the Servant Leaders

*APBA & NRSV portions, TiS hymns 'Reprinted with permission.
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