

# Anam Cara Community



## *Waterholes: 4 March 2017*



A moving waterhole! Bridal Veil Falls Govett's Leap, Blackheath, NSW. Photo. Julie Brackenreg

## **Welcome**

Welcome to Waterholes, the Anam Cara Community newsletter for the week beginning 5th March 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

## Opportunities for Spiritual nurturing in the Gippsland Diocese

Thank you to those who have let me know of other opportunities for spiritual nurture. We are fortunate to have opportunities available for people to explore and grow their spiritual lives here in Gippsland. Meditation groups in Sale and Traralgon, an opportunity to gather for 'Breathing Space' during lent at the Cathedral, as well as an opportunity for a guided retreat or spiritual direction as Bass Hill Hermitage. See the section following the Scripture Reflection for further details.

**Subscriptions** - Thank you to those who have responded to our reminder about Membership Subscriptions and have renewed your memberships to the Community for 2017. Your commitment is an encouragement to us as we seek to grow community and it also allows us to offer further ministry through your financial contribution.

**Photos** - Thank you to Julie Brackenreg who sent us today's photo offerings and further photos from Karena and Ross for you to look forward to in coming weeks... more are always welcomed!

---

## Coming Community Events

Date for your diary:

**QUIET DAY: ONLY 2 WEEKS TO GO...**

**Come along and join us as we explore...**

**"ASPECTS OF PRAYER"**

**Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2017**

**Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Stratford.**

9.30/10.00 am – 3.30 pm

Sue Hopkins a Servant Leader of the Community will lead us as we come together to explore the spiritual discipline of prayer.

**"I am more and more convicted that without prayer nothing of any value ever comes into being." *Bishop John McIntyre.***

What to bring: your lunch, pen & notepad.

Tea/coffee/water & Morning Tea provided.

Donations welcomed nil - \$15 depending on means.

*To let us know you are planning to attend or for further details, contact:*

*Jane Macqueen: [jemacqueen@gmail.com](mailto:jemacqueen@gmail.com)*

*Sue Hopkins: 5182 5542*

# 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](mailto: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 leads our diocese.
- Sue Hopkins as she prepares for the upcoming Quiet Day on March 18th.
- For Lyndal as she lives with an aggressive form of Motor Neurone Disease and her family in their care for her.
- Associates and Friends who have asked for our prayers: Norma, June and Linda. John who has recently begun another round of chemotherapy and his family, Grace and David.
- As we enter lent a call to *Remember the Refugees and Migrants...* to be continually mindful of the global refugee and migration crises, and the injustices and conflicts that have swelled the statistics to a number greater than ever in the history of the world.

## Prayer of the day.

Almighty God,  
whose Son fasted forty days in the wilderness,  
and was tempted as we are, yet did not sin:  
give us grace to direct our lives in obedience to your will, that, as you know our weakness,  
so we may know your power to save;  
through Jesus Christ our Redeemer,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

---

## Reflection

Genesis 2.15-17; 3.1-7; Ps 32; Romans 5.12-21; Matthew 4.1-11

The Rev'd Heather Toms

We have lots of Sundays during the Church year that have titles; Pentecost Sunday, Trinity Sunday or Transfiguration Sunday. If this first Sunday of Lent were to be given its own name, it would have to be 'Temptation Sunday.' On this Sunday, we are into our freshly decided upon Lenten disciplines, and now we get the Genesis story of Adam and Eve and the serpent, along with Jesus' time in the wilderness. Today there is temptation all around us, and you know what Oscar Wilde said, 'I can resist anything, except temptation.'

The story of the first couple and the snake in the garden is one of those that we all know and remember from Sunday school. But, do we *really* know this story? For instance, how many of us believe that the fruit that was bitten was an apple? Well, nowhere in the story does it say that. It was a piece of fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And as one writer said, 'The fruit on that tree probably tasted better than the fruit of all the other trees combined. However, because some Renaissance painter took the liberty of making the fruit an apple, we now '*know*' the story that way.

We know the story Adam and Eve rebelled against God, against the God who had created them, against the God who had loved them, against the God who had placed them in a Paradise, against the God who had given them almost all the freedom in the world.

Adam and Eve became enslaved because they gave up their souls in their attempt to be like God, knowing the day they eat the fruit their eyes would be opened, knowing good and evil. And so we, too, find ourselves enslaved to many things money, power, pride, love of thrills.

To quote a middle aged man 'It began quite innocently; my life of crime, that is. I do not know how old I was, maybe eight or nine. And I cannot remember what I took and why I took it, but I thought 'wow' that was easy. So I continued on this path, however I ventured broader, tempted more in many different areas for a few years until my 'time' ran out and I hit the end of the road, could not even use my money to buy my way out of the life I had created and was now leading. Oh, I still do inappropriate things, we all do? However, I have not been tempted for a number of years now'.

Temptation, it is so subtle when it first comes to us, we may not even know it is temptation. Rather, we are given a glimpse of something that we want, or something we think we really need, or more subtly yet, something we think we really deserve. And then our mind starts to work on us.

When we yield to the temptation, next time, it becomes easier. We reason that 'I did it once, one more time will not hurt' and we give in to temptation again. After a while, we do not even bother with the formality of inner-conflict; as the slogan says, we 'just do it.' We are not proud of it, we still sense it is perhaps wrong, but we do not stop or we cannot stop.

Our Gospel reading tells us that after he was baptized, 'Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.' (verse 1).

What Spirit was it that led Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil? It was the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God.

Why would God lead Jesus into temptation? After all, when Jesus taught his disciples to pray in the prayer that we call the Lord's Prayer did he not teach them to pray 'Do not lead us into temptation' (Matthew 6:13 a literal translation from the Greek). When you stop and think about it, that part of the prayer seems almost unnecessary. Why would God lead us into temptation? We expect God to

lead us out of temptation not into it. But after Jesus was baptized, God led him into temptation. Why would that be?

The book of Hebrews gives us a hint to the answer. 'For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin' (Hebrews 4:15).

There is another hint in Philippians 2, where Paul talks about Christ Jesus being in the form of God equal with God in the heavens. But then Paul says that Jesus 'emptied himself' so that he could enter our world as a man subject to all the pains and sorrows and, yes, subject to the temptations that we experience. He made himself vulnerable to death so that he could give us life.

Jesus was subject to every human experience from birth to death. He experienced hunger, pain, grief, anger and temptation. If Jesus could not fail, his temptation would have been less difficult than our everyday experience. A saviour who could not endure our everyday temptations could not save us.

So God's Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness 'to be tempted by the devil' so that Jesus could know what it is like to be tempted so he would feel the lure of the temptations that all of us face and so that he could emerge sinless perfect. That was a key to his ability to save us. He had to be the perfect, sinless lamb slain for the sins of the world. That is what it would take to save us from our sins.

In the wilderness, Jesus fasted forty days. Actually, it might not have been forty days. In the Bible, the phrase 'forty days' means 'a long time.' In that time and place, people spoke of forty days much like we say, 'a couple of weeks or 'a month or so.' Those are not exact measures of time, but we understand them.

So Jesus fasted went without food for a very long time. Then, when Jesus was desperately hungry, the devil came to him saying, 'If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread' (verse 3). That was pretty sneaky. At Jesus' baptism, just before his temptation, a voice from heaven had announced, 'This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased' (3:17). Now the devil says, 'If you are the Son of God', challenges Jesus to prove that he is the Son of God. 'If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.'

That is a challenge designed to arouse Jesus' indignation to get him to say, 'Of course, I am the Son of God'. 'See! Here are the loaves of bread!'

But Jesus did not give the devil a chance to snare him like that. He responded by quoting a verse of scripture: 'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God' (v. 4).

Then the devil tried another ploy. He took Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem and placed him on the pinnacle at the very top nearly 180 feet in the air the height of an eighteen story building. Being on a pinnacle 180 feet high would be scary especially for someone like me, who does not like heights. One little slip and you would be gone. The devil was waging a war of nerves here.

The devil said, 'If you are the Son of God' there is that challenge again 'If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down' because the scriptures say that God will send his angels to protect you.

Jesus responded again by quoting another scripture, 'Again it is written, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test'.' (verse 7).

Then the devil tried again. He took Jesus up on a high mountain to show Jesus all the kingdoms of the world, and said, 'All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me' (v. 9).

That was quite a temptation. Jesus had come to save the world, and the devil was offering to give him the world. What a shortcut! No necessity to train disciples! No walking the dusty roads of Palestine! No cross! How could Jesus beat that deal?

But Jesus was not having any of it. The problem with that deal was the same as the problem with every deal the devil makes it looks like one thing but turns out to be something altogether different.

That reminds me of a large spider that lives along the banks of the Amazon River. To attract insects, the spider has the ability to spread itself out and to look exactly like the blossom of a beautiful flower. Bees and other insects land on it, expecting to find pollen. Instead, they find a sharp sting and then they die.

The devil is like that. He gilds his temptations wraps them in beautiful paper binds them with lovely ribbons but when we open them, we find that they have a poison sting.

Jesus knew that he could not trust the devil, so he responded to that temptation by saying, 'Away with you Satan! For it is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him'.'

So the devil gave up at least for the moment, however, the devil never gives up permanently.

Earlier, I noted that Jesus was tempted as we are. Have you ever experienced temptations like the ones that Jesus faced? Most of us are not tempted by the big temptations. We are not tempted to kill someone or hold up a service station. The things that really tempt us are the things that look beautiful like a lovely flower. That is how the devil tempted Jesus by dressing up the poison to look like a flower. That is how the devil tempts us too.

What tempts us to try to be God? Is it the desire to change the choices that our spouse or children



make? How about the need to have everyone else think the way we do? Or perhaps we are tempted by the one that gets more people than any other the need to be perfect. Do these sound familiar? If we do not do it, it will not be done right. We know it is taking too long, but if we just work on it for a little while more, we can make it so much better. If everybody would just pay attention to us and do it our way, things would turn out the way they should.

Recognize any of those? They are all about trying to be God trying to control all things in our world so that everything can turn out in our image. That is the greatest temptation of all. But we cannot be God, we do not have God's power, or ability, or even God's sense of humour, so instead, we end up being pains in someone else's neck rather than being Godly.

Instead of seeking after perfection; instead of trying to get everyone around us to be like us; this Lent, let us take a real, honest look at ourselves, and try to change ourselves to be more like Christ. When we are tempted to judge someone else, or to try to keep a tight hold on all of the details of things; let us try to recognize that God is God and we are not, and trust in God's grace and providence. We should ask God to: come quickly to help us who are assaulted by many temptations; and, as God know(s) our weaknesses, let each one find God mighty to save.

Lent is not the season of legalism; it is not a time to beat ourselves with rules and regulations and the failures of our lives. Lent is the season of introspection and repentance; a time to consider God's amazing grace, and how our living might be the evidence of our gratitude for that grace. In the coming days of Lent, may we refuse to let temptation go unchallenged. And may that lead to good choices, joyful living, and deeper faith in the Saviour.

As God told Paul in the moment of his trial, so he says to us, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' (2 Corinthians 12:9) **Amen**

## Photo Reflection



After the bushfire near Leura, Blue Mountains, NSW. Photo, Julie Brackenreg

# Further opportunities for Spiritual Nurture

## 1. Breathing Space at St Paul's Cathedral during Lent.

Mondays to Thursdays during Lent 5.15pm - 5.45pm, Lady Chapel, St Paul's Cathedral Sale

A short time of reflection, silence, thanksgiving and intercessory prayer and sharing our Lenten stories.

All welcome

## 2. Meditation at St Paul's Cathedral, Sale.

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](mailto:susanna.pain@gmail.com)

This practice is in the tradition of the World Community for Christian Meditation <http://www.wccm.org/>

## 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. Lady Day Quiet Day

**Saturday March 25th**

at St Thomas' Bunyip

A Lady Day Quiet Day from 10am till 2.30pm

The Rev'd Dean Spalding will talk about Luke's portrait and there will be input about Mary and devotion.

For more details and to RSVP please contact Ken Parker [negris2@bigpond.com](mailto:negris2@bigpond.com)

## 5. 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](http://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](http://www.anamcaragippsland.org)
  - To subscribe to or unsubscribe from the mailing list contact Jane
  - *Soul carer (Community Leader):* Jane (0411 316 346 or [jemacqueen@gmail.com](mailto:jemacqueen@gmail.com))
  - *Secretary / Librarian:* Sue 03 5182 5542
  - *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, [cherylr@gippsanglican.org.au](mailto:cherylr@gippsanglican.org.au)
- 

Love and prayers

Jane Macqueen

On behalf of the Servant Leaders

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

*Copyright Broughton Publishing Pty Ltd.'*