

Anam Cara Community



Waterholes: 18 March 2017



Lake Guthridge, Sale. Photo: Karena King

Welcome

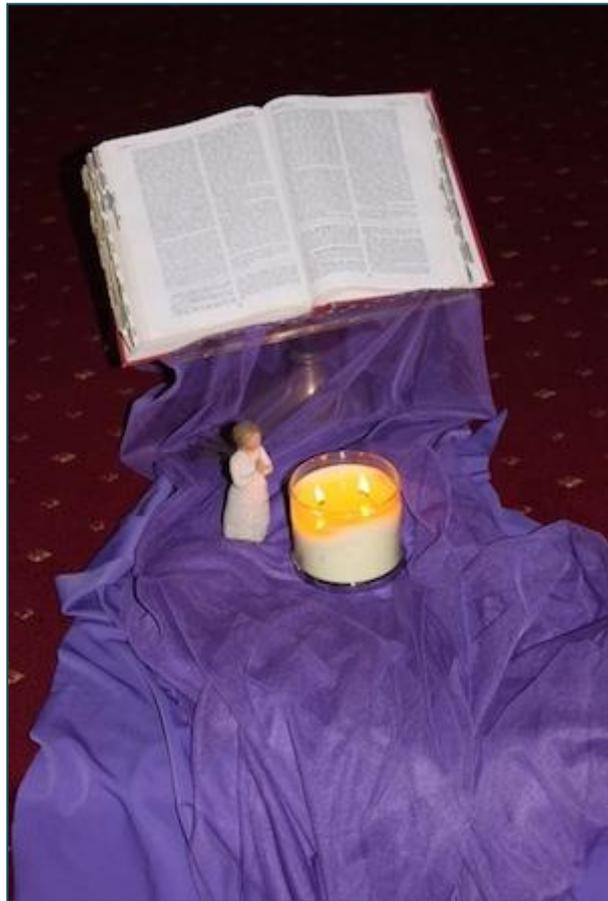
Welcome to Waterholes, the Anam Cara Community newsletter for the week beginning 19th March 2017.

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

Quiet Day - Today twenty five people gathered around the visual below to share in a gentle space of worship, a reflection on prayer led by servant leader, Sue Hopkins, and then corporate silence. We each intentionally took time out to simply 'be'. Our Lenten journeys continue...



Photos - Thank you to Karena and Ross for today's offerings for reflection... more are always welcome!

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 leads and ministers amongst the people of our diocese.
- 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 and June
 - John in his continuing battle with cancer and his family, Grace and David.
 - Pam Clay and the palliative care team as they care for her.
- As we journey through 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.

O God, the fountain of life,
to a humanity parched with thirst
you offer the living water that springs from the Rock,
our Saviour Jesus Christ:
stir up within your people the gift of your Spirit,
that we may profess our faith with freshness
and announce with joy the wonder of your love.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Reflection

John 4.5-42

Jesus, Women and Gentiles:

a case study in seeing things as they are by The Rev'd Nikolai Blaskow

The mantra for the 2017 International Women's Day celebrated on March 8 was 'be bold for change'. Why has it taken thousands of years to arrive at a point when women are even now only just *starting* to realise their equal status with men? The answer must surely lie in a long period of blind adherence to unexamined, if not just plain unquestioned assumptions that in their physical standing women are inferior to men. Part of this, of course, is entrenched in erroneous church teachings concerning a woman's place in the home and the church. This is not the forum to engage in an examination of those claims—I am merely setting the backdrop to today's reading, where gender and race were then, and now continue to be, contentious issues.

Jesus' own experience confirms that he too struggled with this kind of enculturation—was blind to it until it was revealed to him by the Syrophenician woman in Mark's Gospel. For example, in Chapter 7: 24-30, having in her desperation broken into a Jewish home deep in Gentile territory and contaminated it with her pagan presence, finds that her pleas for her 'daughter's' healing fall on deaf ears. She counters his suggestion (delivered in the staccato rhythm of an iambic pentameter) that her status as a woman and a Gentile is not much better than a dog, by pointing out in a Greek turn of phrase vastly superior to that of Mark's, that in her *culture* their dogs are working dogs and so are entitled to receive the best morsels from the table.

St Mark bills this as a turning point in Jesus' ministry—from this point onwards—with the healing of the daughter, there is a softening and a broadening of his understanding of the status of those outside the Jewish fold: sorely tested as we are yet without sin—in as much as the moment he is made aware of his misperception (as opposed to sin), Jesus *immediately* embraces the reality and the truth of her challenge, changes his thinking and heals the daughter.

But such changes never occur neatly and smoothly, as we all know when we make an attempt to extricate ourselves from long established habits of thought and behavior.

Later in his round of preaching in the synagogues and teaching in open squares, public places and in the wild barren places, when Jesus encounters this woman at midday by the well you can see him flouting some of the conventions of the day—such as talking to a Samaritan who is also a woman. And this woman was herself scandalized. John tells us that, the Samaritan woman, taken aback, asked, "How come you, a Jew, are asking me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?" (Jews in those days wouldn't be caught dead talking to Samaritans). (John 4:9 MSG)

And so too were the disciples aghast in the face of his unorthodox behaviour. According to John, They were shocked. They couldn't believe he was talking with that kind of a woman. No one said what they were all thinking, but their faces showed it. (John 4:27)

But the change in thinking is still a work in progress: a mixed set of responses. On the one hand Jesus is now willing to risk being misunderstood, but still speaks from a male Jewish POV: "Believe me, woman, the time is coming when you Samaritans will worship the Father neither here at this mountain nor there in Jerusalem. You worship guessing in the dark; we Jews worship in the clear light of day. God's way of salvation is made available through the Jews. (John 4: 21-22)

On the other hand, Jesus clearly sees that his Father is bringing about a seismic shift in cultural differentiation:

But the time is coming—it has, in fact, come—when what you're called will not matter and where you go to worship will not matter. It's who you are and the way you live that count before God.

Consequently, when he discloses his specific knowledge of her, 'You've had five husbands, and the man you're living with now isn't even your husband. You spoke the truth there, sure enough,' she takes no offence because she perceives that this intimate knowledge of her is not judgmental in the way that the disciples' response is ('that kind of woman').

As Father James Alison points out

the gospel story...the Apostolic witness, is told by people who are not good, about something which has happened in their midst and which shook up their previous sense of goodness, giving them a longing for a different sort of goodness, which they found themselves becoming, not through their own efforts but at the hands of someone else, and all this to the very great scandal of those who were experts in goodness. (*Jesus the Forgiving Victim*, Book One, 41b).

And adds,

...we are on the receiving end of an act of communication from someone who knows all that about us, is not taken in by us, is not concerned by how little good we are, and yet, even so, wants to take us to another place. (42)

No wonder she immediately believed that this was no ordinary prophet and proceeded to effectively tell others about it, "Come see a man who knew all about the things I did, who knows me inside and out. Do you think this could be the Messiah?" And they went out to see for themselves.' (John 4: 30)

The proof of Jesus' true humanity is that he struggles like us to break out of our enculturation to the extent that in the resurrection period of his appearances he clearly privileges the changed status of women by according them the honour of being the first witnesses where previously under Jewish

law women and children had no such standing—were not even counted in a census (see St Mark's census of 5,000 'men' in the first mass feeding, and then, after the Syrophenician woman encounter, includes women and children in the second mass feeding of 3,000). Jesus' struggle shows that we too can be of good cheer, and 'overcome the world'.

In conclusion, I would like to offer a discipline of mind that has proved helpful to me and my students to see others as they are. It is based first on a psychological principle, the notion of *metacognition* and *metacognitive processing*. This involves being aware of our thinking, and then once we are aware of it, the ability to change our thinking if it is either unhelpful or damaging to ourselves and others. The second discipline of mind is shaped by what is called 'transcendent ethics' philosophy. Briefly stated it encourages us to move through successive stages of self-reflection, and awareness: (a) vulnerability: whereby encountering new people, new situations, issues, we resist the temptation to pre-judge them—opening ourselves to the possibility that we might *not* actually know what this is about (b) empathy: by which means we *choose* to look through the lens of compassion (c) 'truth' and reality: a habit of mind which allows itself to be schooled and disciplined by careful research and is willing to constantly align itself with reality (d) perseverance: an attitude of never easily giving up on people (e) emergence: the confidence that undergirding all things is a goodness at work, a beauty, a justice beyond good and evil, a grace.

In *A Woman Looking at Men Looking at Women*, Essays on Art, Sex and the Mind, Siri Hustvedt shares this final insight to cause us to realise how much, in our social interactions, we actively shape and form our self-image and sense of wellbeing:

We are innately social beings and as soon as we are born, we are able physically to reflect the faces of others. Those expressive faces are crucial to development. (410)

Question is: what do we reflect?

Photo Reflection



Californian Redwood plantation at Beech Forest Apollo Bay. Photos, Ross Byrne

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

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

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 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 or 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

Love and prayers

Jane Macqueen

On behalf of the Servant Leaders

APBA & NRSV portions, TIS hymns 'Reprinted with permission.

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