

Anam Cara Community



Waterholes: 5 August 2017



Photo Val Lawrence

Welcome

Welcome to Waterholes, the Anam Cara Community newsletter for the week beginning 6th August 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.

Coming Events

1. Gippsland Diocesan Retreat - NEXT WEEKEND!

The Abbey of St Barnabas

Winter Earth and Pomegranates

Led by: The Rev'd Susanna Pain

5pm Friday 11th August - 3.30pm Saturday 12th August

2. The Abbey of St Baranabas

The Abbey Feast

Rev Nikolai Blaskow will be our Chef!

Come and celebrate with other Friends of The Abbey as we enjoy the chef's gourmet creations:
4 course meal with wine.

12 noon,

[Saturday 19 August 2017](#)

\$55 per person

Funds raised for The Abbey

Phone: [5156 6580](tel:51566580) Email: info@theabbey.org.au. www.theabbey.org.au

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 in her ministry and leadership.
- The registry staff, Brian, Annette, Kellie, Sue and David.
- Susanna Pain as she prepares and leads the Diocesan Retreat at The Abbey and all who will receive from her ministry.
- Associates and Friends who have asked for our prayers:
- Kate and her mother Letitia giving thanks for the availability of a place in Ashleigh House for Letitia.

- Joan Smith, prayer for management of her sciatic pain as she spends time in Vietnam and Cambodia.
- Norma and June.
- For peacemakers in our world. For political leaders in their discussions and decision making.
- For all refugees and asylum seekers across the globe.

Prayer of the day.

O God,

with whom we wrestle until the break of day:

make us long to seek your face beyond the limits of our strength,

that in our wounds we may remember you,

and in your blessing we may find ourselves;

through Jesus Christ. **Amen**

Reflection

The Reverend Heather Toms

Hospital and Prison Chaplain

Matthew 14:13-21

Our Gospel reading from last week in Chapter 13 ended with the rejection of Jesus at Nazareth, where he was unable to 'do many deeds of power because of their unbelief'. That unpleasantness was followed by the story of the beheading of Jesus' kinsman and dear friend, John the Baptist (14:1-12). In 14:1-2, Herod heard reports of Jesus and concluded that he was John the Baptist raised from the dead. While Herod did not threaten to kill Jesus too, that possibility looms over these verses. What follows now is the story of the feeding of the five thousand (14:13-21).

What a contrast between Herod's gruesome dinner party and the meal that Jesus provides for the five thousand! Herod's party is characterized by opulence Jesus' meal by bread, the most basic of foods. Herod's party is characterized by hatred Jesus' meal by compassion. The host at Herod's party is a petty tyrant whose concern is his own power and well-being. The host at Jesus' meal is a compassionate saviour whose concern is the well-being of those who have come to see him. Herod's party ends in death, Jesus' meal sustains life. The contrast could not be more deliberate or complete.

Do we believe in miracles? I know we tell ourselves that we are supposed to believe in miracles. But do we? Do we really? The word "miracle," comes from the Middle English, with a

Latin root, a wonder, marvel, from *mirari* to wonder at.' Are there things in the world that we truly 'wonder at?' Even in today's difficult times? Do we see miracles? Do we acknowledge them?

We live in a scientific age, an age in which it is almost passé to believe in miracles. Many scientists make statements similar to this, 'There is a logical, scientific explanation for everything that happens in the world.' Well the flip side of that statement is, 'If it cannot be explained rationally, scientifically, it just did not happen.' The Gospel reading for this Sunday is about perhaps the greatest of Jesus' miracles the feeding of the five thousand.

There are all kinds of questions that surround this miracle story. First, did it happen at all? This is one of a handful of stories that appear, in almost identical form, in all of the Gospels. Given the number of differences that we find when we compare Matthew, Mark, Luke and John's accounts of Jesus' life and ministry, when a story that appears, almost verbatim in all four, then that story has a great deal of credence. But the greater question for many people is the question of how this event took place. In other words, was it really a miracle?

The chief objection that modernists have with this story was answered by St. Augustine over 1500 years ago. Augustine said, 'Miracles are not contrary to nature, but only contrary to what we know about nature.' The miracle here was that a weary but compassionate Jesus understood the true power of the Creator God the Father of the universe. And He acted in accordance with that knowledge: with miraculous results.

On this particular day the crowd was huge five thousand men, Matthew says plus women and children. Eight thousand, ten thousand, twenty thousand we do not know how many only that the crowd was huge. After being told of the death of John the Baptist, Jesus was seeking solitude at a deserted place to be alone, however the crowds followed him.

We would expect Jesus to be annoyed. He was looking for solitude, but ended up with a crowd. At some point he surely wanted to say, 'Leave me alone! Go away!' That must have occurred to Jesus, but only for a brief moment. When he saw how needy they were, he had compassion on them. Matthew tells us that he cured their sick they were people who desperately needed his healing touch, Jesus was filled with compassion. He turned his attention to those who needed him.

Jesus was so caught up in ministry that he failed to see that it was getting dark. His disciples noticed, however, and they came to talk to him. 'Jesus, it is time to let these people go home, time to let them find something to eat! It is getting late, Jesus, and people are hungry. Send them home.'

Most of the time, the disciples addressed Jesus as Lord. They treated him with respect and they

deferred to him. But not here! Here they talked to him completely differently as if he were in need of a dose of reality. 'It is getting late. The people are hungry.' The disciples even tell Jesus what to do. 'Send the people home so they can get something to eat.'

Jesus said, 'They do not need to go away, you give them something to eat' (verse 16). The disciples looked at each other. 'What are you talking about Jesus? There must be ten thousand people here. We do not have any food! We have nothing, nothing at all except five dinner rolls and a couple of fish!'

Jesus said, 'Bring them here to me' (verse 18). Then he ordered the crowd to sit down, and he lifted up his eyes to heaven and he blessed the bread and broke it and then he had the disciples distribute the bread and everyone ate and everyone was filled. Thousands of them! They ate and were filled! And then the disciples collected the leftovers, which filled twelve baskets. There was more at the end than there was at the beginning. And Matthew says, 'Those who ate were about five thousand men' (verse 21). Amazing! Then he tells us that there were women and children present too, even more amazing! Matthew was not trying to say that the women and children were unimportant. He was adding them at the end so that we might know that the crowd was twice as large as we had thought. We call this the Feeding of the Five Thousand, but it was probably the Feeding of the Ten Thousand.

The disciples had assessed the situation correctly, the crowd was huge and it was late. They had only five small loaves and two fish. Five plus two equals seven. Seven bits of food would not feed the front row of this great crowd. 'Send them home, Jesus,' they urged.

But there was something wrong with the disciples' mathematics. They added five plus two and got seven and concluded that there was no hope. There are some scholars around who believe, 'They should have counted to eight.' That the disciples had forgotten the one most important reality and that was Jesus. They had their arithmetic right and their mathematics wrong. They had added correctly and concluded wrongly. Five plus two does add up to seven. In that, they were correct. But their equation was wrong, because they forgot to include Jesus. If we are involved in God's work and fail to include Jesus, we always get the wrong answer. Always!

Most of us like to think of ourselves as realistic people, we like to think that we face facts. We know how to add, subtract, multiply, and divide. We can get the numbers and tally the columns. However, and this is a very important however, if we are involved in a faith enterprise and all of life, after all, is a faith enterprise if we are involved in a faith enterprise, it is important that we do not forget the single most important part of the equation and that is Jesus! Because Jesus transforms everything he touches! Everything!

The disciples saw a huge, indeed overwhelming need, and they worried and fretted over it

knowing that they did not have the ability to do anything to remedy the situation. Jesus, on the other hand, sees the incredible need, understands the power of God, takes what meagre resources they have and offers them in true thanksgiving to God. And God does the rest, a true miracle of enormous proportions.

That means that, when we walk with Jesus, everything becomes possible. It does not matter if our bank account is empty. It does not matter if we reach in our pocket and find only lint. It does not matter that we are not especially smart or talented or beautiful or charming. However little we may possess, Jesus whispers 'bring them to me, and with him, our little becomes a lot'. If Jesus is with us, the sky is the limit! That is the message of this story. Now that does not mean, 'Believe and grow rich!' It is not what this story of the Feeding of the Five Thousand means. Jesus did not serve fillet of snapper. There is no mention of a lovely Chardonnay. No green beans almondine. No dessert flambé. Jesus fed them bread, the most basic of foods. But all ate, and all were filled. They felt good. They were satisfied. They were happy. They were not hungry anymore. That was quite a feat for someone who started with five small loaves and two fish! Quite a feat indeed!

The promise of this story is that, if we will truly sit at Jesus' feet, Jesus will provide what we need even if the numbers do not add up. In fact, we can say that, if the numbers do not add up, it is because we have forgotten to put Jesus in the equation. We have added five plus two to get seven when we needed to add five plus two plus Jesus to get eight.

The miracle of the loaves and fish is not just a story, or not even just a miracle, in addition, it is a way of miraculously living each day. When we are faced with seemingly incalculable difficulties, we should not indeed cannot, if we are living in faith wring our hands in worry or complain about how insignificant and lacking our resources are. Instead, we should take what we have, offer it in thanksgiving, humbly, before the God who gave us everything. Then we should leave our meagre resources to be blessed and broken by God. Then we, as God's hands in the world, should spread those blessed resources out and watch as they grow and expand to fill the need.

Amen

Photo Reflection



Early morning jewels. Photo Susanna Pain.

Further opportunities for Spiritual Nurture

1. St Paul's Cathedral, Sale.

Christian Meditation 7.45am - 8.15am every Wednesday

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

AWAKEN Spring Festival - Speakers with ideas to stretch stimulate and nourish

Saturday 16th September 2pm-5pm

Robyn and Alan Cadwallader

Body and Soul - the conflicts and the gifts of the past

Saturday 21st October 1.30pm - 5pm

The Earth is the Lord's - Listening to God in Scripture and Creation

Graeme Garrett and Jan Morgan

Alice Springs desert retreat for body and soul 24th - 29th September 2017

Details from Susanna Pain

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.**

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

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

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