

Still Waters News

August 2018



Kangaroo on the Beach Potato Point, NSW

Welcome to the August Still Waters Newsletter.

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I am amazed that it is now half way through August! Everyone seems to say it - the year goes so quickly. It can seem like one is repeating the very obvious and echoing the sentiments of everyone else.

Yet I remember so vividly how childhood days and even the days of young adulthood seemed to stretch on forever. I am sure there are all sorts of psycho-spiritual-physical reasons for this but my own stab at a reason is that as we go through life we gain more and more experience. We gain more and more layers of existence. We gain more and more story. The length of each day and season remains the same. It just seems shorter because there is so much more of 'us' to squeeze in.

This is one of the great blessings of contemplative practice. In silence and meditation, in the practice of surrendering and letting go to the present moment we come back to centre, simplicity and timelessness or rather us-lessness. As has been suggested perhaps this is part of what Christ meant when he said, 'unless you become as a little child you can never enter the kingdom of heaven'. (*Matt 18.2-4*). I am sure he and the writers of the gospel meant other things as well! Personally I am drawn to the idea of heaven as centre, simplicity and timelessness.

I hope the words in this newsletter and your own contemplative practice help you and those you love find the hope filled, loving centre in the midst of our complex and wounded world.

There was a small group of people at the July 28th Quiet Day at St Joseph's Spirituality Centre, Batehaven. It was unfortunately very cold but we discovered woollen blankets and eventually made ourselves comfortable! The lectio divina text was Ephesians 3.14-21. This is a beautiful prayer that Paul prays for his readers. It is a prayer about the inner self growing strong and being grounded in love. We also shared conversation, insights and stories. The next quiet day will be on Saturday the 24th of November, same place and time.

The retreat at Potato Point is very close now - the weekend of the 31st August. As Linda has mentioned the retreat will be a time of spiritual friendship, enjoying the beautiful environment and sharing about contemplative practice and community. A word Linda used in a recent email to describe how she saw the weekend was Dadirri. Dadirri is an Aboriginal word that means deep listening. Dadirri builds community.



Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr-Baumann, an Aboriginal writer describes it as an *"inner, deep listening and quiet, still awareness. Dadirri recognises the deep spring that is inside us. We call on it and it calls to us. This is the gift that Australia is thirsting for. It is something like what you call 'contemplation'".*

She goes on to say,

"When I experience Dadirri, I am made whole again. I can sit on the riverbank or walk through the trees; even if someone close to me has passed away, I can find my peace in this silent awareness. There is no need of words. A big part of Dadirri is listening."

For more information about the retreat please contact Linda.

Finally,

- In this newsletter I have included some quotes, poems and pictures that I hope will inspire and affirm your contemplative practice. As part of an ongoing feature I have include a piece that focusses on one of aspects of Still Waters community as described in our intentions and goals. The month it is the vision of the community - *to be a community of Christ, totally attentive to seeking God.* With any contributions or content of this newsletter please *take what you liked and leave the rest.*
- As I mentioned previously there is a section in the newsletter for contact details. If anyone is happy to share their details please let me know and I will add you to the contact list.
- I also draw your attention morning meditation via conference call. The Monday, Wednesday and Friday 6.30 am rhythm continue. Around 6 to 10 people regularly phone in and I am continued to be amazed how sitting in silent mediation on the other end of a phone with others builds connection and community!

Thank you so much to everyone for your presence, prayers and practice.

If you have anything you would like to contribute to the next newsletter, including suggested resources, your contributions can be sent to: stillwaterscommunity@gmail.com.

With blessing, peace and love

Rebecca

ph 0450 960089

On the Way to Seeing the Vision.

Rebecca

When Linda and I began the conversation about Still Waters we had no clear sense of what it was and what it would look like. We would talk about it with other people, and they would say to me at least, 'But Rebecca, what does it look like? What do you think it will do?' That is still true to some extent because we have wanted to be as open as possible to the guidance of God's Spirit. We wanted also to make sure this was inclusive and open enough to embrace difference and change. However, we know we needed to start 'somewhere' and after further conversations we developed the simple outline that you see opposite. This is clearly stated on the website and in any brochures and publications. My hope has been that these short statements provide a simple framework for what it is we think we are all doing! This is not to say that everyone 'gets' what these words mean in the same way. Words are always just an approximation of our shared reality.

<p><u>Vision</u> To be a community of Christ totally attentive to seeking God</p>
<p><u>Intent</u> To create space for silence and attention in daily practice and communal life To be an inclusive community of spiritual friendship and formation To serve others and creation in simplicity and gentle care</p>
<p><u>three core commitments</u> listening, stability conversion of heart</p>

The statements might be - hopefully - clear and simple, but they also say a great deal. As an aide to further understanding and clarity and to continue to build community and connection I thought it would be useful to discuss what it is I understand by these statements. I invite you to share your reflections also. That way we begin to build a common picture. What I write today is one perspective in a moment time. In this Newsletter I start at the top - our vision is *to be a community of Christ totally attentive to seeking God*.

For some of us this may be the most problematic of the statements. Not all of us are 'card-carrying' Christians. The very word Christian is not very appealing in our current cultural climate. Sometimes I wish I could disassociate myself from the concept and I am an Anglican priest! This is not the time and place to go into any type of apologetics. What I will share is what I mean when I read those words, *a community of Christ totally attentive to seeing God*.

For me Jesus the Christ is the One who shows me how to be fully human, - that is connected to my own truth, my Higher Power, and the created world in all its complexity and beauty. It is about my inner self becoming strong and being grounded and planted in Love. In Christ I see the human and divine as One, who leads me to wholeness and reconciliation with all things. It is about the journey from fragmentation to wholeness, from distraction to centre, from woundedness to healing. For me to be a community of Christ, is to be a community where Christ's Spirit of reconciliation, peace and wholeness is central and informs everything I do and work towards. It is certainly not about doctrine or dogma or statements of belief to which I must adhere. It is about whole, loving, compassionate relationships that bring forth 'good fruit' for all creation.

The central intent then of such a community is to seek God.
The statement says, *totally attentive to seeking God.*

It is said there is a God shaped hole in our being that only God can fill. As Psalm 42 says “O God you are my God, for you I long. For you my soul is thirsting, my body pines for you, like a dry weary land without water”. Or as St Augustine famously said, “O God, our hearts are restless, until they find their rest in you”. The God of Christ is the transcendent being who longs to share the divine life. Our deepest yearning, then, for happiness, or, ultimately union with god, is matched by God’s passionate desire that our longings be fulfilled. God draws us continuously. To be a community totally attentive to seeking God is to respond to that longing and to take the journey back to Centre.

What I think I am on about in this community is union and communion with the Holy One whose centre is everywhere, from the farthest star to the depths of our hearts. For me Jesus the Christ shows me how to get there and how to journey with those drawn to the same Reality. I believe there are many paths to the centre but for me Jesus the Christ makes it all possible.

As I write this I am drawn to the little symbol we have at the top of the newsletter. It is an ancient celtic symbol used in Christian celtic knot work. It is a symbol of the Trinity - God, Christ and Spirit, a relationship of creative love. There are lines in the symbol that could represent different journeys to the centre. There are lines that lead out again. There are many parts to the picture. It is about unity and diversity, movement and stillness, journey and homecoming.



Dorothy Tchumut The Last Supper, 1992

I could say much more but that is more than enough! I hope this reflection has been useful and not distracting. One reason both Linda and I are drawn to silence and contemplative practice (and I think Linda will not mind me speaking on her behalf) is that words can be so inadequate to describe what is fundamentally mystery and beyond words. In the end the knowing is in the silence.

But don't let that stop you offering your thoughts to share! Despite the limitations we are creatures of language and connection. It is how we become and are in the world. In contemplative practice we listen - we attend - to the silence. We take the insights and impressions and weave them into a picture to share.

Stillness

Still the chatter that bubbles endlessly
 from the sleepless cauldron that is your lesser mind.
 Let your greater Mind prevail.
 The Mind that is not held in matter, confined to neural interplay.

Seek the stillness beyond thought.
 Seek the void beyond the stillness.
 Quiet your chattering nonsense.
 Stand at the edge of mystery, fathomless, endless.
 The void that is not the world yet supersedes the world,
 harbours it, births it, destroys it, regenerates it.

Do not be frightened as you stand on the edge of the abyss,
 tensing at the edge of nothingness.
 That fear is a voice of the lesser mind scheming,
 chattering, spooking, scaring.
 Telling you lies. Limiting, inhibiting, life-abridging lies.

Look over the edge into Night without end.
 Stretch outward your arms.
 Close your eyes.
 Fall forward, downward—yet upward—for it is both and neither.
 Plunge headlong into the nothingness which is everythingness.

Let it fall, all fall away, all cares, concerns, thoughts,
 wants, needs, all that words can say and describe, a
 all that thoughts can picture, shed them like a wrinkled,
 translucent skin fall out of your body,
 out of duty, out of despair, out of desire.

Fall in, fall away, fall out,
 fall up, fall downward.
 Just fall.
 Fall.
 Fall.
 Fall into and through the darkness.
 Embrace the darkness.
 Flow through the darkness and let it flow through you.
 Until you are the darkness. And the falling. Speak not. Think not.
 Fall.
 Fall.
 Fall.

Feel the world, a jewelled droplet falling,
 unimpeded, falling, through the infinite dark mystery: its womb, its destiny.
 And you, a tiny spec on that droplet.
 And you, the endless, creative abyss.

(S. C. Norwood - in A Book of Affirmations and Meditations for Women)

To ponder....

“A garden to walk in and immensity to dream in--what more could he ask?

A few flowers at his feet and above him the stars.”

— Victor Hugo, *Les Misérables*

“Muddy water, let stand, becomes clear.”

— Lao Tzu

“In the city fields

Contemplating cherry-trees...

Strangers are like friends”

— Kobayashi Issa, Japanese Haiku

“One might say I had decided to marry the silence of the forest. The sweet dark warmth of the whole world will have to be my wife. Out of the heart of that dark warmth comes the secret that is heard only in silence, but it is the root of all the secrets that are whispered by all the lovers in their beds all over the world. So perhaps I have an obligation to preserve the stillness, the silence, the poverty, the virginal point of pure nothingness which is at the centre of all other loves. I attempt to cultivate this plant without contempt in the middle of the night and water it with psalms and prophecies in silence. It becomes the most rare of all the trees in the garden, at once the primordial paradise tree, the axis mundi, the cosmic axle, and the Cross. *Nulla silva talem profert.* There is only one such tree. It cannot be multiplied. It is not interesting.”

— Thomas Merton

Book Study

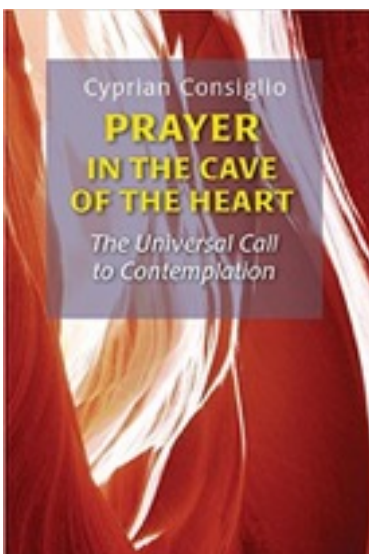
For those studying or reading the book....

From the first chapter:

“We dispose ourselves, we stop, we listen, we wait, we watch, we make ourselves available, and we put ourselves in situations and environments that are conducive to prayer and meditation. And then we wait for the working of grace, like the bride awaiting the bridegroom” p12

Questions for Reflection and sharing:

1. Was there something in the chapter that spoke to you particularly, in a helpful way?
2. Was there anything that jarred or you struggle to understand?
3. Does this chapter draw you closer into the cave of your heart? If so, how?



Meditation & Prayer

On **Monday, Wednesday and Friday morning at 6.30 am** the community meditates together. This happens via a conference call. Currently around 6 to 10 people phone in. All are welcome. On the last page is a simple outline of the prayers.

How to call in:

Option 1

Call 08 95203110

When prompted enter the access code - 8265919 - and follow the prompts

Option 2

Go to the web site www.freeconference.com

Click on the "Join Meeting" tab and enter the access code - 8265919 - and follow the prompts

NB: This only works with the latest version of the Google Chrome web browser.

Option 3

Download the "freeconference" app from your app store

It is orange with a white Asterix

Once you have installed it and set it up you can enter the call by opening the app, going to the bottom of the screen and simply entering the access code - 8265919 - and follow the prompts.

Very importantly, if your phone plan does not include national long distance calls you will be charged by your telecommunications provider. However, using the 'freeconference' app or website only uses your internet data.

Please be on-line by 6.25 am or 7.25 pm.

Administration and Support

If you would like to make a donation to the parish, in support of Still Waters, that would be very appreciated. Currently the parish of Moruya financially support the community so any contribution would be gratefully received but it is **not** required.

We have the bank details below as some people have asked that they be available.

Please give only if you feel called to and are able to do so.

The bank details for direct transfer and debit are below:

Bank Details:

National Australia Bank (NAB)

Name: Anglican Church of Australia, Parish of Moruya

BSB: 082 739

Acc: 509812159

Please note "Still Waters" in the note/subject line.

Thank you!

Upcoming Dates

Quiet Days

The quiet days will be an opportunity to be in peace and silence but to also share a meal, discussion, meditation and prayer.

Saturday between 10.00 and 4.00 pm.
Joseph's Convent, David St, Batehaven NSW.

24th of November

September Retreat
31st August to 2nd of September
Potato Point

Community Contact Details

Rebecca Newland	rdland@mac.com	0450960089
Linda Chapman	opensanctuary.tilba@gmail.com	0422273021
Mary Carse	marycarse@gmail.com	0402618772

Morning Prayers

The Spirit of the One who creates the universe dwells silently in our hearts and is loving to all.

Glory be to God, source of all being, eternal Word and Holy Spirit as in the beginning, so now and forever.

Amen

The night has passed and the day lies open before us:
Let us pray with one heart and mind.

May we listen deeply with the ear of our heart and may we attend to the present moment in peace and gratitude.

Reading

20 mins silent meditation



The blessings of heaven
the blessings of earth,
the blessings of sea and sky.
On those we love this day
on every one
the gifts of heaven,
the gifts of earth,
the gifts of sea and sky.

We pray for the earth
We pray for the people of the world
We pray for those in any need, sickness or trouble
We pray for ourselves, our friends and our families

May we be blessed with peace
and be channels of peace
Amen