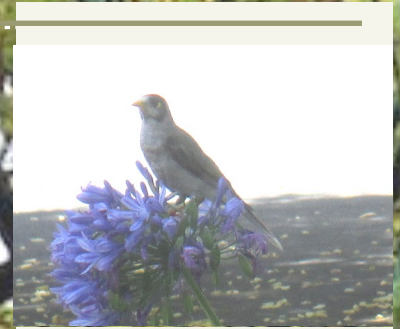




# COMMUNITY OF THE HOLY NAME



Autumn 2021  
Newsletter

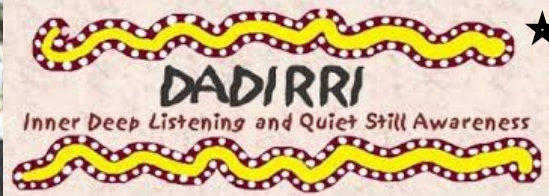
## IN THIS ISSUE...

*We consider the traditional way of 'dadirri', return to our Prayer Days and celebrate Sr. Sheila's 50th Profession Anniversary.*

## Also in this issue:

Letter from Sister Carol	2
Congratulations, Sister Sheila	2
Sister Avril's story	3
Oblates' News	4
Associates' News	5
Crossing the bridge from 2020 into 2021: a reflection	7
Anglican Overseas Aid certificate of appreciation	7
Days of Prayer & Reflection	8

Editor: Liz Johnstone



*By Philip Harvey, CHN Librarian*

Daniel O'Donovan was a Benedictine hermit who lived in a tin shed in the Kimberley. He used to send me requests for photocopies of abstruse articles, usually in French, when I worked at the theology library in Parkville. Dan always included a \$20 note in the envelope for return postage, way too much for an A4 letter even by today's rates. \$20 should easily cover it. Dan wrote on the spiritual life, using his extensive knowledge of contemplative practice across religious traditions.

The opening line of the Benedictine Rule is 'Listen with the ear of the heart' and it is good to remember this when reading his book entitled simply 'Dadirri'.

Published in 2000, it is his written response to the ongoing conversation he had with local Aboriginal elder Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr-Baumann. He writes that "already the world has witnessed the astounding resurgence of Aboriginal spirit in art, drama and song. These are no more than externals. Great – but needing to be sustained. They are sustained only out of dadirri itself, practised, examined, developed with concentrated energy."

Dadirri is Miriam-Rose's essential contribution to Australian theology, religious life, and life itself. She writes that "Dadirri is the cream in the good milk of theology. Anyone may feed on it, by God's grace. From words, we learn to be happy in silence, knowing that it is in silence that we receive the deepest understanding of all." She calls dadirri "the ancient art" and "perhaps the greatest gift we can give to our fellow Australians."

Different Indigenous languages have their own word for this art. In Miriam-Rose's

Nangikurrungur language dadirri means contemplation. At least, contemplation is one word to explain the range and depth of the practice. Elsewhere she says "it is inner, deep listening and quiet, still awareness." She explains that "quiet listening and stillness renews us and makes us whole. There is no need to reflect too much and to do a lot of thinking. It is just being aware." She calls it "the deep spring that is inside us."

When we read her words, we encounter again and again reassurances, that there is no need to hurry, no need to run away, all will be well in time when this is the most important thing we can be doing. She hands out the offer of shared wisdom, of reconciliation where all are heard.

She talks in the same breath of God: "We wait on God, too. His time is the right time. We wait for him to make his Word clear to us. We don't worry. We know that in time and in the spirit of dadirri (that deep listening and quiet stillness) his way will be clear." The Word of God is the deep spring within each of us, according to Miriam-Rose. "Within this deep spring, which is the very Spirit of God, is a sound. The Sound of Deep calling to Deep. The sound is the Word of God – Jesus."

Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr-Baumann studied teaching in Melbourne in the sixties; she became an educationalist and was principal of St Francis Xavier Catholic College in Nauiyu at Daly River. In 2013 she established the Miriam Rose Foundation to bridge the divide between Aboriginal culture and mainstream society, driving reconciliation at a grassroots level. She is an active artist and has promoted art as means to identity and expression. Miriam-Rose was declared Senior Australian of the Year in this year's Australia Day Honours.



From [sharingculture.info/dadirri-dadirri-film](http://sharingculture.info/dadirri-dadirri-film)

Continued on page 6



## Dear friends,

It seems that we are now on the way to being COVID free especially with the new vaccine beginning to roll out. We are all enjoying the new freedoms.

We have begun to have some groups back in the Spirituality Centre – unfortunately the lockdown stopped that following the ACARLA meeting in February – but we are up and running once again. ACARLA was a very small meeting this year as so many come from interstate and they were not willing to be trapped in Victoria if borders were closed. Although small, those who came had a very enjoyable meeting ending with dinner at Dom's restaurant in Cheltenham (Bishop Garry's favourite).



We have employed a new cleaner/cook for the Spirituality Centre, Candy (another Candice so we had to shorten it). Candy lives close by and is proving her worth both in cooking and cleaning. A young man, Sonny, has also been employed one day a week to help with cleaning. The

COVID cleaning, as most would know, is more extensive. We also welcome to the team Kezha who will be Chaplain to the Centre.

Our Oblates had to postpone their 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary dinner last year and we thought we were right for the 16<sup>th</sup> February but no, alas, another lockdown. However, we did manage to have that dinner on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. Although several

Oblates could not attend, those who did had a very enjoyable time over a delicious lunch followed by cake.

The Associates had their Annual Meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> February and Sr. Avriil was very pleased with the numbers who were able to come. We have also had our first Prayer Day for the year which was led by Sr. Valmai and again there were a goodly number who attended.

The Sisters have been pleased to have the priests coming in again to celebrate the Eucharist for us and we have been having a Lenten study led by Sisters, based on the booklet published by Anglican Overseas Aid on 'Colours of Lent'.

Sr. Elizabeth Gwen's ashes were interred in the Calvary Garden on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> March by Revd. Ken Hewlett. A garden seat has been placed in her favourite sitting place under the trees in her memory.

During this past year many of us would have had difficulty in seeing a positive future but these words in Jeremiah 29:11 have always given me the assurance to trust the Community's future to God's care. I think it is a message for us all: "For I know the plans I have for you", declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future."

Carol CHN

## Congratulations, Sister Sheila!

24 March marked a very special occasion: Sister Sheila's 50th Profession Anniversary.

As she had not fully recovered from a bout of ill health, she did not have a big celebration, but celebrated the milestone quietly in her unit at Brighton, where Sr. Carol visited her with flowers and greetings from the Community.

Among Sr. Sheila's achievements during her long life in CHN are the attainment of her PhD and the publication of her history of the Community, *Some Suitable Women*, which is available from the Spirituality Centre.



## Sister Avrill's story

I was born in Wellington, NZ, an only child. When my father joined the army at the outbreak of World War II, my mother and I became "camp followers" for several years, till our family finally settled in Gisborne.

God played no significant part in my life as a child. At Sunday school, we sang about a "gentle Jesus meek and mild", who held little appeal for me, and heard stories about a boy who killed a giant with a catapult and a man who was swallowed by a whale. I filed these away with "Goldilocks and the Three Bears". Since my parents were not church goers, I concluded that religion was just for children. If I thought about God at all, it was as a remote and judgemental Being whose scrutiny was best avoided.

I went to a Presbyterian boarding school in Havelock North, where I was extremely happy, forming lifelong friendships. In the sixth form I joined the Presbyterian Church, motivated chiefly by the desire to conform. I was searching for meaning in life, which I thought was to be found in worldly success and achievements.

I went on to Victoria University in Wellington where my second year was life-changing. I was friendly with a fellow student who was a Josephite Sister. She never spoke to me about God but she had an indefinable attractive quality. I thought, "I want what she's got", wondering "What makes her tick?" Gradually I realised that the answer was God and that here, too, was the answer to my search for meaning. This was exciting, but "God" was still a fairly abstract concept for me.

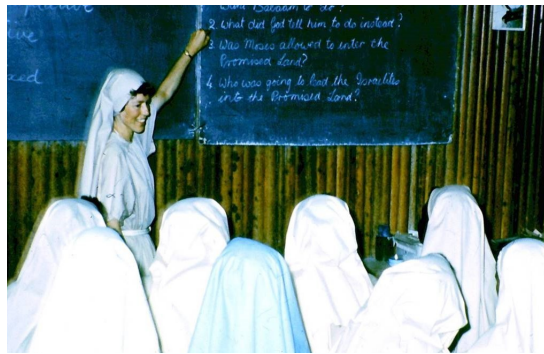
In our French course, we learnt about Pascal, a 17th century philosopher who wrote that one should make a wager that God exists: "If you win, you win everything, but if you lose, you lose nothing". One discovers that one has won by living as though one were already a committed Christian: "With every step you take along this way, you will realise that you have bet on something sure and infinite". I discovered the truth of it: at the beginning of the year God was on the periphery of my life; by the end of it, God was the centre.

I felt drawn to the Religious Life, although initially I assumed my friendship with Sister Catherine had led to this desire and I needed to 'get over it'.

Eventually, I acknowledged it was from God. Meanwhile, I was confirmed in the Anglican Church.

I trained in Auckland as a teacher, boarding at CHN's Hostel of the Holy Name, where I realised I was being called to CHN. Mother Faith recommended I complete my teacher training. I went on to teach in my home town spending my last years in NZ with my parents. Telling them I was entering a convent was very hard. They didn't understand and were greatly upset, though eventually they accepted my calling. But first there were three years of teaching at a co-educational high school, during which time I visited Australia, and the Community House.

In 1965 I returned and was admitted as a Postulant. Later that year I received the habit as a Novice, and on 22nd November 1968 (also my birthday) I made my profession in Life Vows.



I loved the 5½ years I spent in Papua New Guinea, where I was sent to help Sister Valmai with the training of the Papuan Sisters and Novices in the Community of the Visitation outside Popondetta, and to teach at Holy Name High School at Dogura. PNG is a country of exceptional natural beauty and the people are beautiful, deeply spiritual, with

much to teach us about what is really important in life.

I also worked in most of the Community's institutions: Mission House, Children's Home, Home for the Elderly, Community House and Infirmary. There were times of struggle as well as joy, but through it all there was an ever-deepening awareness of God's goodness and love.

In 1981 I was sent to the Retreat House. A year later, I was asked to take over "in the meantime". The "meantime" proved to be 12 years, some of my happiest in the Community, as well as the most challenging. The work was rewarding but also unremitting, and by the time I was recalled to the Community House I was burnt out. Shortly after, my father died, and other things as well made this a very difficult time. However I discovered that such situations can give rise to new life, as God puts just the right people and events in one's path, and by the end of the year I had experienced what could almost be called a second conversion.

At this time I also became the Associates' Co-ordinator, a position I still hold. It's a pleasure to work

*Continued on back page*



## OBLATES' LENTEN QUIET DAY, 20 MARCH 2021

It was wonderful to be able to meet again, after such a long time, for our Lenten Quiet Day, led by Rev. Robyn Boyd. The theme was Jesus' clothing, just before his crucifixion and after his resurrection.

### 1. The Stripping

Clothes denote our role or status, e.g. clergy collars. Jesus' clothes were likely those of an ordinary person, merely functional, for the things of earthly life were not important to him (see Matt.6:28-29).

But, to the soldiers, what was important was the power of the oppressor over the oppressed. In an attempt to strip him of his dignity and any notions he had of himself, they stripped him and put royal robes on him, to mock him.

Jesus was not born into a palace but in a cattle stall, to a young girl. Jesus did not pull rank when he was tempted in the wilderness or on his way to the cross. They couldn't strip him of his vocation, his dignity, his Godly authority or even his love for them. There was no false self or persona, shame, fear or need



to assert himself or fight back. Consider Phil.2:6-8.

We reflected upon (a) how we might strip and reclothe Jesus into something he's not or to control him; (b) how people strip the environment, God's creation, for profit or power; and (c) whether we felt stripped of our own self due to the 2020 lockdown?

### 2. The Liminal Space

Jesus did not take on the identity of 'death', although originally wrapped in the clothes of death.

When he met Mary and the men on the road to Emmaus, he was clothed in NEW LIFE but he still is who he always is.

We are now out of lockdown but still not back to normal: we are still in *liminal space*.

We reflected upon (a) what new clothes we (and the church) are re-emerging in; (b) is it easier to go back to who we've always been, as if 2020 had not happened; and (c) will we (and the church) dress Jesus up in the best of technology, etc and end up re-covering him all over again?

## R.I.P. CHN Oblate Joyce Newton, O.A.

Joyce came to Australia at the age of 23 and settled in Melbourne where she continued her nursing career which had begun in London when she was 16 years old. Joyce had a distinguished career as a nurse educator and was awarded an Order of Australia for her contribution to nursing. She was Director of Nursing at PANCH until her retirement.

Joyce was introduced to the CHN Oblates and St. Peter's Eastern Hill through her friendship with Jean Henderson, a fellow career nurse, Oblate and parishioner of St. Peter's. Between them, Jean and Joyce started the Breakfast Programme at St. Peter's which still continues today, now operated by Anglicare. Joyce was admitted as an Oblate of CHN in 1991. The Oblates and St. Peter's became the bedrock of her life, supporting her deep spirituality and filling her life with many friends.

When the time came for Joyce to receive more care, she was admitted as a resident at Lovell House in

East Hawthorn, settling in quite comfortably. However her niece who had ultimate responsibility for Joyce and who lives in Sydney, found the frequent travelling to Melbourne difficult, so arranged for her to be transferred to a Nursing Home in St. Ives, near where she lives.

Joyce was well cared for there and died peacefully on 18 January 2021.



*Joyce, in reflection,  
at the old St Julian's centre  
(Photo by Sue Retschko)*





## CHN ASSOCIATES' AGM, 20TH FEBRUARY 2021

As our first meeting for a year, due to COVID-19, today was eagerly anticipated, and a large number attended, though restrictions still applied. We thanked our Treasurer, Margaret Pawsey, who was retiring after years of sterling service, and Lesley Keenan was elected in her place. Our Secretary, Pat Blake, was re-elected unopposed. As a whole year's program had had to be cancelled, there were fewer expenses, and we were able to donate \$1000 to the CVL Sisters in PNG. This was timely as they had recently suffered a break-in, in which many things of value were stolen, including solar panels.

After lunch a panel of Sisters answered questions from the floor, and Pat Blake has written the following account:

The panel comprised the Reverend Mother, Sister Carol, Sister Andrea and two very long serving members of the Community, Sisters Avrill and Valmai.

The first question was addressed to Sister Valmai, as the longest serving Sister of the community who began her time with CHN in the 1950's. One of her most memorable times was working with the Community of the Visitation in Papua New Guinea.

Sister Avrill was next in line. Her call came when she was 19, at university in New Zealand, but it was 5½ years before she was able to commence her novitiate at CHN.

"What would you name as your defining ministries?" was a thought provoking question posed to the Sisters by prospective Associate Candice Bennett.

For Sister Carol, it was working at St Julian's when it was a place of Respite with Sisters Aileen, Jennifer and Dianne. They did the cooking and cleaning, ministered to people released from prison, refugees, abused women, and others in need. The prayer meetings were important. Sister Carol was involved in that ministry for five years.

Papua New Guinea and/or Retreat House were Sister Avrill's defining ministries. There were forty beds in Retreat House, and some were sometimes used for respite care. There was no provision for people with disabilities, so one of her satisfying achievements was raising money for disabled facilities which she accomplished by organising walkathons, amongst other things.

In Papua New Guinea, Sister Avrill went first to The Community of the Visitation out of Popondetta,

where Sister Valmai was overseeing the establishment of the new Community for Papuan women, then to Holy Name High School in Dogura.

Sister Andrea first joined a Franciscan Order in Canberra. When this order closed she transferred to CHN in the year 2000, twenty-one years ago this May. Andrea remembers St Julian's Retreat Centre as her happiest or defining time. I certainly have many memories of Andrea at St Julian's; her smiling face and delicious cooking accompanying many of my first retreats! Also pivotal for Andrea was her time in Aged Care.

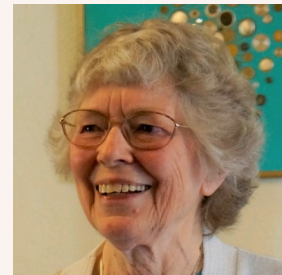
Sister Valmai remembers her time with the Sisters of the Visitation in Papua New Guinea as her defining time. Also her times at Retreat House as both a Novice and later when she was professed. One of her ministries, Ellerslie, the home for the elderly, was a place she was assigned which she didn't think she would like. This place changed her and she became very attached to her residents. Valmai, who had not been able to look after her mother when she was old, came to feel that she had been given the elderly residents to care for in place of her own mother. Then there were five or six years at St Peter's Eastern Hill where Valmai was involved with Parish visiting and pastoral Care at Nursing homes which were also pivotal ministries.

At this stage Sister Avrill made the enigmatic statement; "Everything has its time; Eleanor Lindsay's Vision came true." This referred to Eleanor Lindsay's vision of the Community House as a house of prayer for all. In this vision Eleanor saw many people coming and going from the house, which has indeed happened with its opening as a Spirituality Centre, something we could not then have foreseen.

The final question was where do you see your future? The answer that came back clearly was "Outreach".

Candice Bennett has been employed as Outreach Officer to the Spirituality Centre and is involved in outreach to schools, making the Community of the Holy Name known to young people.

Kezha Angami, who has looked after the grounds while doing Doctoral studies, is the Chaplain to the Spirituality Centre. The Spirituality Centre is a huge





## CHN ASSOCIATES' AGM, contd.

ministry that looks like stretching well into the future. The Community still has its vision for the future which seems to correspond to Eleanor Lindsey's vision from many years ago.

A delicious afternoon tea was served and convivial companionship was enjoyed by all. Grateful thanks to the sisters for their hospitality and to Candy and Candice for their delicious cooking!

### Coming Event:

5<sup>th</sup> June – Combined Meeting with Oblates. Speaker, Bishop Brad Billings. The program begins with MIDDAY OFFICE at 12.45. **Lunch is provided so please book in at least one week before.**

We now have a celebrant, preacher and guest speaker for our Corporate Communion on 13<sup>th</sup> November – Fr Ken Parker from Mornington. You may remember how much we enjoyed the creative Quiet Day he led for us a few years ago.

*Avrill CHN*

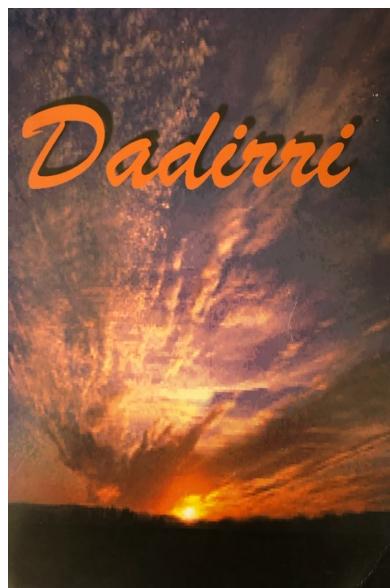
## Dadirri: Inner Deep Listening and Quiet Still Awareness (Continued from front page)

When I read Dan's book, I hear the reaching out and sharing of spiritual wisdom across our cultures. He is an example of how we can listen. He listens to Miriam-Rose, courteous at all times in his hope that he is representing her teachings correctly. Aboriginal life experience, as enunciated by her, is shown to follow "the same course as the major religions." He says that "the deepest, or most sublime, inner religious experience" comes through self-discipline. He observes this in dadirri, writing that "as the self becomes purified of such things as untruthfulness, greed, sexual un-control, the urgings for power, instincts of violence, and so on, a spirit of rest and serenity takes over in the soul. Things become clearer, and the inner self set free, becomes ready for the experience of contemplation, 'enlightenment', and for the task then of passing this on in love."

Dan also says that contemplation requires a

technique. Miriam-Rose talks of sitting quietly, in the bush or wherever she finds herself, something that Dan compares with body posture and breath control

methods in Indian Yoga, Christian Hesychasm, and in Zen. He hastens to add though that Miriam-Rose talks and writes about "the dadirri experience she herself has received and knows. The experience is spontaneous, her own." He describes her experience of dadirri as grace-moved and natural, while his reading is the cultivation of her teaching. The words and artwork of Miriam-Rose are scattered through print and online resources. The Library would like to build up a collection of her spirituality, a project that would be helped decisively if a major religious publisher acted now to make her work available to the public in a collected volume. The time is overdue for this to happen.



*Dadirri by Daniel O'Donovan*

## Crossing the bridge from 2020 into 2021: a reflection

What a year it has been! A year of lockdowns, restrictions, masks – and probably not finished yet

Use this reflection as a bridge – between the end of normal and the beginning of where we are now.

The past year has been one like no other. What has the 2020 experience has been like? What is utmost in our mind?

Perhaps grief, loss, loneliness, separation from loved ones and your church family?

Were there also golden times? Blessed silence filled with God's presence? Unexpected kindness, even from strangers. In our first lockdown, we received a note from an 11-year-old girl offering help.

Or did you rediscover the pleasure of gardening or cooking? I began to write my memoir but it fizzled out somewhere during the second lockdown!

The Dean of Salisbury said, *"I have been praying that we might learn from this experience about what really matters – each other, how we relate to each other, how we look after each other, and what unites us."*

Ponder your spiritual journey during 2020.



esudroff  
from  
Pixabay

- Are you anxious to go back to how it was before COVID?
- Or did you discover in a new way what is really important to you?
- Was it a spiritually dry time when God felt absent?
- Or was God's presence a reality in newer ways?
- Looking back over the 2020 year, can you sum up, in writing, the 'highs' and the 'lows'?
- What will you leave behind in 2020?
- What will you take with you into 2021?

*Excerpt from Day of Prayer and Reflection,  
March 2021, by Sr. Valmai*

## Anglican Overseas Aid presents Certificate of Appreciation

On 13 April, Nils von Kalm, the Church and Community Engagement Coordinator for Anglican Overseas Aid (AOA), visited our community to present a Certificate of Appreciation for donations we have given to them. Nils joined us for morning tea and then presented the certificate to Sister Carol.

Since 1992, we have donated more than \$62,000 to AOA. Most of the donations have gone towards providing help for emergencies, while other donations have been directed to where AOA have decided they are most needed.

Nils said that AOA is a small organisation, and that the money we had donated had made a significant difference to the lives of communities living in poverty.



*Nils with some members of our community.*



## Sister Avrill's story, contd.

with our CHN Associates, who are much to be admired for their generous commitment to the Community. I was also asked to establish the Community's Archives, a daunting (but ultimately satisfying) task, as everything had simply been piled into cupboards.

In the years following, I did units of Clinical Pastoral Education and took up pastoral work in Footscray, leading to involvement in chaplaincy at Footscray and Sunshine hospitals. When the Community bought a house in Sunshine I lived there, adding parish work and English tutoring for refugees to my hospital work.

After six very happy years in Sunshine, I followed Sister Valmai as Pastoral Assistant at St Peter's, Eastern Hill, initially full-time, on site, and then part-time from Cheltenham. I loved the people of St Peter's, the beauty of its worship and its inclusivity and social outreach. My work included Anglican chaplaincy at St Vincent's Public Hospital.

A couple of major events occurred during my years at St Peter's. The first was the death of my mother at the amazing age of 106, and I travelled to NZ to be with her when she died

The next was a wonderful three-month sabbatical with Sister Pamela. We travelled through Britain and Europe, attending the Oberammergau Passion Play and the Edinburgh Tattoo, stayed at a variety of Anglican Religious Communities and visited many magnificent cathedrals.

When our Community House became a Spirituality Centre in 2017, I left St Peter's, not without sadness, though with a sense of excitement, to give myself to the work of this new venture. The Spirituality Centre is very well used and obviously filling a great need, and I thank God for the opportunity to be involved in this important ministry.

As the years pass I find myself drawn more deeply into the Mystery of God, and know that whatever happens, we will always be held in God's loving care.

## Days of Prayer and Reflection 2021

The Sisters of the Community of the Holy Name Invite you to Days of Prayer and Reflection at the Spirituality Centre, Cheltenham, from 10am—3 pm.

The Eucharist is celebrated at mid-day and there are opportunities to sit quietly, to use our library and to wander in the gardens. Some input is given, and suggestions for using the silence.

BYO lunch. (Tea and coffee are provided.) There is no charge for these days but a donation towards costs is appreciated.



### DATES FOR 2021

8 April  
6 May  
3 June  
1 July  
5 August  
2 September  
7 October  
4 November

For further information, contact Sister Josephine Margaret, CHN, on 03 9583 2087, or by email [jmwarne@bigpond.com](mailto:jmwarne@bigpond.com)

***Be still and know that I am God.***