



COMMUNITY OF THE HOLY NAME



Autumn/Winter 2022
Newsletter

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2022 has got off to a great start, with a new Postulant joining us and our visitors returning.

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Called to be prophets

On 12th May five of us from CHN were privileged to attend a talk at the Melbourne Town Hall by the renowned theologian, author and speaker, Sister Joan Chittester OSB. For an hour and a half, with barely a reference to notes, Sister Joan kept us enthralled with her passionate presentation. It is impossible to do justice to it in this short space, but here are a few highlights.

Most of us, Sister Joan said, are content with only a half picture of Jesus - the "nice" half - the Jesus who heals and forgives and nurses little children, but we often overlook the other half, the more radical half, Jesus the prophet who challenged the status quo, turning the money changers and animal sellers out of the temple, and calling his opponents a brood of vipers, and the Pharisees whitewashed tombs, beautiful on the outside, but rotten inside. We tend to equate nice with good but they are two totally different things. Jesus is not afraid to tell it how it is,

and do something about it.

Sister Joan spoke about the injustices in the world and the church today, and said that faced with them, we cannot avoid making choices. Every moment is a moral moment, and every moment we are faced with one of three choices. The first choice is to walk away - "It's nothing to do with me. It's not my business. I'm not into politics. I'm not going to get involved." The second choice is to roll over - "That's the way it is. It's always been like that. I'm OK with it. It'll sort itself out in the end." The third choice is to take the prophetic stance, to have the courage of one's convictions, to speak out, to take action - to join a group, to found a group, to talk to one's friends, or anything, but to do something.

We are all, each one of us, called to live prophetically. In this way, and only in this way, the world can be changed.

At the end of her talk Sister Joan answered questions from Rachel Kohn, former presenter of programs on religion and spirituality on ABC Radio National. This took the place of questions from the floor, which would have been impossible with such a packed auditorium, and covered the topics we would probably have asked about. The entire event was inspiring and thought-provoking, and, let us hope, action-inducing.

Sister Joan ended her presentation with this challenging statement: "If you think your work is finished, and you're still alive - it isn't! (You will find more about Sister Joan's message in one of her latest books, "The Time is Now".)



Sr. Avrill

Dear friends,

I would like to thank Liz, our editor, for the great job she has done in getting the Newsletter out to you all. Unfortunately Liz is leaving us and working with her husband who is a Baptist Minister in the Seymour/Alexandra parish. A tribute to Liz is included in this Newsletter.

I am sure you are all pleased that we are now freer to live our lives as we used to. Although COVID is still around it does not control our lives completely. We are pleased to have our regular Eucharist again and thank the priests who celebrate for us. The Spirituality Centre is beginning to open up and welcome both individuals and groups. We have employed 2 new cleaners and are grateful that Meagan has agreed to cater for the groups when she can; however we would still welcome another person to fill in at times. If you know of someone please let us know.

Our monthly prayer days are also resuming and the first one, on 2nd March, was led by our Oblate Pam Cox. Pam is well trained in Art Journaling, which helps people to express their spirituality through art. Pam is interested in offering this on a monthly basis, and her first session will be on June 16th.

The Sisters are also very pleased to welcome Janet Malin, our new Postulant. Janet has been with



us now since Christmas and is fitting into the life as she begins her journey with us. She has brought with her some lovely pot plants which are in the Jacaranda Garden.

Although there have been more shut downs at the ARCARE Home where Sr. Felicity is living, she has not contracted COVID. It has been difficult as since she went to live there visiting has been restricted. Sr. Lyn who



lives in Bendigo in an assisted living village has also had to endure a number of lockdowns, although Lyn has continued to escape the virus. Sr. Sheila has had a number of visits to hospital but is now home in her unit and managing with the help of people from Bayside Council. All the Sisters in Esther House have continued to stay well.

We had our first ever wedding which was held in the grounds with Rev. Colleen Clayton from St Mathews Cheltenham celebrating. The happy couple were Candice Bennett and Dean Mitrousis. Although the weather was hot there was plenty of shade under the great pines. Their reception was held at the Mentone R.S.L.

Kezha and his family, who were living in the Lodge, have now moved to Hopper's Crossing where Kezha will be involved in ministry with the people in Tarneit, concentrating on the Indian families. So we have had to employ new gardeners - Tony and Russel were recommended and are proving to be excellent. We have been blessed by the people who join our team.

Psalm 27:14:

Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!

Carol CHN

Sister Sheila Anne's story

I was born on 6 January 1934 in South Africa. My eight siblings and I were raised in a Christian, church-going family. My father was a baker and a deacon in the local Anglican Church. My mother was an ingenious machinist who made all the **family's clothes. My sisters died after I left South Africa, when I was in England and Australia.**

Because there were teachers in the family, I was expected to become a teacher, so started teacher training when I left high school. However, I had always wanted to be a nurse and, after six months, I gave it up in order to train as a nurse. I qualified as a registered nurse in 1957, did a degree for one year in infectious diseases at the city hospital and qualified. I worked there and then worked in different hospitals. After two years, I was invited to become the matron of a new Anglican nursing home, housing 90 people with 24 staff. Initially daunted by the task, as I preferred the actual nursing, I grew into the role and worked there for five years, then returned to the city hospital for two years and then returned to the nursing home for a second five-year period.

One day an Anglican sister preached at my local church. She asked me, **"What is your desire in this life?"** I felt a definite call to the religious life and she said, **"Why not try?"** She said she saw an aura around me. and invited me to join their community, the Anglican Community of the Resurrection of Our Lord. I became an Aspirant.

I was part of that community for twelve years and commenced in Grahamstown Mother House, for my first training and we ran a soup kitchen. Then I was sent to Port Elizabeth as the Sister in charge had broken her hip and I had to do the driving. After my first profession, I went to Retreat House which was different work—feeding the poor and the school children because they had no feeding scheme. I also did house visiting. Then I returned to Grahamstown at the time of my life profession to work in the infirmary and many other jobs.

I was transferred to the branch house in London for four years where I was washing, ironing, doing sacristan work, flowers and general housekeeping.

I visited the Retreat House in Cheltenham, Australia on holiday, as my daughter had moved here. I met Sr. Valmai and enquired about joining CHN. The Community of the Resurrection did not want me to leave but eventually agreed to release me and I arrived in 1994. In 1997, I became a naturalised Australian and was finally professed as a CHN Sister in 2000.

I worked in Community House, as a sacristan, arranged flowers, made cards and helped with the cleaning at Retreat House. I went on to train for ten years in the writing of icons, with Brother Ignatius and the Revd. Dr. Rob Gallagher of the Uniting Church. Sr. Avrill and I trained in the CPE of Pastoral Care, basic and advanced, and I worked two days a week for seven years as pastoral carer at Monash Medical Centre, under the guidance of the Revd. Paul Bower.

I would say I have become 'more cluey' since coming to CHN, than I ever was in the Community of the Resurrection. My faith has grown and I have become focussed on my personal relationship with God and Christ, leaning more towards the contemplative life.





OBLATES' NEWS by Sister Valmai



Dear Oblates,

After two years of cancelled programmes due to lockdowns, there is a feeling among the Oblates that this year may be the beginning of normal. This began on a happy note with a Social day and luncheon at the Spirituality Centre for

Melbourne and country Victorian Oblates, partners or friends on Monday 21st February. As it was the first time we had been able to meet in person, there was an added touch of excitement to the day. I think this is the second Social day we have had and they have proved so popular, that by mutual consent, it will be added to the annual calendar of events. The next gathering at the Spirituality Centre was the Lenten Quiet Day on Saturday 19th March. I will list the 2022 programme at the end of this article.

I am very aware that all these activities are generally for Melbourne/Victorian Oblates, however by having them in your diaries all Oblates are kept aware of what is happening.

The Adelaide Oblates are fortunate in being able to meet as a group with the CHN Associates, and they gathered on Saturday 7th. May to celebrate with Oblate Joan Durdin her 100th Birthday. Sister Avriil

and I were there, for what was a very happy occasion, and you will be able to read all about it in a future Newsletter. Joan's actual birthday was on the 16th May and her family celebration was held on that day.

On Wednesday 7th March, four of us represented the Community at the funeral of David Ormisher the husband of our Oblate Judith. It was held at their parish church, St. Nicholas Mordialloc, and was a wonderful tribute to a much loved and respected Christian man. We have been holding Judith and David in our prayer during the past anxious weeks of his illness and will continue to support her with our love and care, as will her church family. Both sons, Peter and Andrew live in Western Australia but were here to support her at the funeral.

CALENDAR for 2022

Combined meeting with Associates. Saturday 4th. June. John Steward
Oblates' Retreat. Thursday 22nd to Sunday 25th. Sept. Reverend Willie Maddock
 AGM. Monday 22nd Aug.
 Advent Quiet Day. Saturday 3rd. December. Carol O'Connor

Blessings to all for a fruitful remainder of the year.

Valmai CHN

NEW OBLATES



Pictured, left: Margaret Tatman and Dawn Harvey with Sisters Carol and Valmai.

Margaret and Dawn were admitted as Oblates at the Oblates' Advent Quiet Day on the 4th December, 2021.

Both Dawn and Margaret have had a long relationship with CHN over many years as Associates, and were warmly welcomed as Oblates.

OBLATES' ADVENT QUIET DAY: by the Revd. Rob Culhane

Reflection 1: John the Baptist in Luke 3:1-9

John the Baptist, 'A voice of one calling in the wilderness', was preparing the way for the Lord, making straight paths for him. His voice brings disruption to stale religion. The 'business as usual' approach of the institutional expressions of Judaism will be disrupted. A new era, he announces, has begun for God's people.

We often desire to hear God's voice, perhaps like Elijah found, in the eerie silence on Mt Carmel. But sometimes God's voice can be heard in the disruptions of daily life. Big ones like cancer or loss or plans waylaid by COVID. There are also positive disruptions in life like meeting friends unexpectedly.

In spite of the effect of a disruption, there is hope. John believes that it is even from stones – the hard things, which are not anything of worth, that God can raise up children for Abraham. He points to the ability of God to transform a situation which seems bleak and incapable of resolution. His voice booms both judgment and hope. They are both here now, and most importantly, that in the disruptions of daily life they can be God's way to bring new life to stale or dead religious life, be it the institution of the church or his people.

This picture of native flowers reminds me of the disruption which spring brings to winter's unassailable claim of power.



Here are some questions for reflection:

What have been some disruptions in your life and what effect did they have on your sense of God?

Have you reached a point where you can welcome the disruption and receive it as a gift from God?

What is God inviting you to do with the disruption?

What helps you to see God's love at work when you experience a disruption?



Reflection 2: The angel in Luke 1:26-38

'Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favour with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus.' For Mary, this announcement will mark the beginning of a disruption to the normal pattern of life: betrothal, marriage and then children. What thoughts raced through her mind? How would she explain her situation to Joseph? To the local community? Yet, this disruption will bring forth life: Jesus, the Son of God and son of David, the Messiah. Mary sings a new song to the Lord her God that reframes what this pregnancy will mean for others (Lk 1:46-55).

Some disruptions can be an occasion for creativity and something shifts within us. We become alive to God and the world we live in. We see things differently when we are being creative and creating life. Our hearts are filled with hope and love. Much is received in this place of creativity and also given in return.

Some years ago, I was edging towards burnout. Little seemed to give me joy or inspire me. I returned to what I love doing: making furniture. In spite of all I was meant to be doing, I made a shadow box over successive Saturdays. The creativity renewed my heart and I felt fully alive. I was being who I was meant to be and this flowed out into my life and ministry.

Do you ever become aware of a desire, frustration or nagging unresolved disquiet that you identify as your heart speaking to you and saying: it's time to do something creative?



ASSOCIATES' NEWS by Sister Avrill



Dear Associates,
It was lovely to welcome so many of you to our AGM on Saturday 12th Feb, and I hope this will be the start of a year when we are able to come together for all our planned meetings without hindrance from COVID.

At the AGM our two faithful office bearers, Pat Blake and Lesley Keenan were re-elected unanimously as Secretary and Treasurer respectively. In a new move we also established a small committee to find speakers and leaders for our programs. As people are busy and have many commitments, this committee will liaise by phone and email rather than coming together for in-person meetings. The members are Val Dyke, Diane Clarke and Sandra Bamford, and I greatly appreciate their willingness to undertake this role.

We also agreed to donate \$250 each to the Spirituality Centre and to the Community of the Visitation in Papua New Guinea. Thank you to those who have sent their subscriptions for 2022 (still \$20), **and a gentle reminder to those who haven't yet that they are now due.** Some of you have enquired about paying by direct debit, and if you would like to, the bank details are as follows: Bank – ANZ; Account Name – Community of the Holy Name; BSB – 013 483; Account No. – 2994 56415. So that we know who these deposits are from and what they are for, could you please include your name, followed by Assoc. as your reference. Thanks.

The Associates' and Oblates' Combined meeting is on Sat. 4th June, and will begin with the Midday Office at 12 noon, followed by lunch (provided) at 12.30. At 2pm our guest speaker will be John Steward, a spiritual director and small group supervisor with the Living Well program. John has lived and worked in Rwanda and has written a book of stories of healing and recovery after the genocide there. His present focus is a program for helping groups and individuals to understand the role of emotions and beliefs in the healing of grief, and in responding creatively to painful memories and difficult relationships.

We still have vacancies for the Associates' Retreat from 2nd to 4th Sept, so if you would like to **come, and haven't booked yet, just let us know.** The leader is Fr. Roger Kelly OGS, formerly of St James, East St Kilda, but now retired. The celebrant, preacher and speaker for our Corporate Communion on 12th Nov. is the Revd Robyn Boyd, also retired, **who did a sterling job as locum at St Nicholas', Mordialloc during the 2020 COVID lockdown.**

As you see, we have a good program for the year, and we look forward to seeing as many of you as possible. Please note that it is now necessary to book for all events, whether lunch is provided or not, and it is also necessary to have proof that you are fully vaccinated.

I pray that you are keeping safe and well and that 2022 will be a good year for you all.

With my love and prayers.

Avrill CHN

REST IN PEACE

We learned earlier this year of the death of our Adelaide Associate, Pat Stevens, on 24.09.21 at the age of 96. **Pat attended St Peter's Girls' School in Adelaide where she was a prefect. After her marriage she lived in Blackwood until, at the age of 89, she moved to the Lutheran Village at Hope Valley. At Blackwood Pat and her family attended All Hallows' Church, and later she attended St John's, Coromandel Valley where she played the organ for many years. She also led many Bible Studies and was part of a prayer group, as well as helping the CHN Sisters in the kitchen at the Belair Retreat House. The CHN connection was very important to her, and she attended meetings of the Adelaide Associates until no longer able to do so. A gentle, Christian lady, Pat is survived by her three children, eight grandchildren and seventeen greatgrandchildren.**

May she rest in peace.



AU REVOIR, LIZ

For more than six years our readers have been enjoying the high quality and excellent production of our quarterly CHN Newsletters. This has all been due to the tireless work and computer skills of our Editor and CHN Oblate, Liz Johnstone.

Now it is with regret that we are farewelling Liz from her position as Newsletter Editor, as Liz and her husband Geoffrey have moved from Melbourne, and Liz is engaged in full-time church work, which leaves her unable to continue with the very time-consuming task of producing the Newsletter. So, sadly, this will be her last Newsletter.

We are very grateful, Liz, for your skill, time and dedication, for the gracious way you have responded to our comments and requests and for your perseverance in extracting from us the information you needed. Thank you for doing a great job. We will miss you



(though we still hope to see you at Oblates' functions). You will be a hard act to follow, but we are praying that the Lord will send us someone who can step into your shoes.

'The Prodigal Son is at the Farm Gate'

Well, Dear Father,

Here I am at the gate of the farm.

If I lift the latch, it will all begin.

You are in the house. Do you know I am here?

I am sure you do, but there is no sign.

Why do I hesitate?

Because the thought of our encounter is terrifying to me.

I really do not know you, your face, your nature.

Those who know you well say you are so loving and forgiving,

And I am sure all of that is true. Still.

It will be a leap into the dark, into the unknown, no previous experience is of value.



Image by Bob Ward, from Pexels

I will be changed forever; added to, certainly, but also subtracted from.

Parts of me I valued, clung on to, will be blown away or shown to be worthless.

There will be no going back.

Am I ready for this?

Who is there who does not yearn to be so completely welcomed, so totally loved and cared for, so protected and enfolded?

But how many are ready to pay the price of the searing honesty of that encounter?

You are waiting. I know. It

is what you do. You have been waiting a long time.

If I lift the latch, it will all begin.

Dennis Mills, Oblate

New in the Library by our Librarian, Philip Harvey

'The White Stone' by Esther de Waal. Canterbury Press Norwich, 2021 ISBN 978-1-78622-401-9

Written during lockdown, in a period of solitude in which the author had to plan moving from her home of fifty years in Wales to a new home in Oxford, this book is about how "we all have to face up to the process of letting go at intervals throughout our lives." She writes of "embarking upon a new life when one has reached old age."

Letting go of familiar places, letting go of former ways, letting go of people in our life, and possessions – these are realities for which we find we have no choice. This book follows the different ways in which the author has reflected and learnt to live through such letting go. She explains how age has taught her to approach the world with simplicity. Learning to forgive is essential. She finds meaning through common rituals, detailing them as she goes.

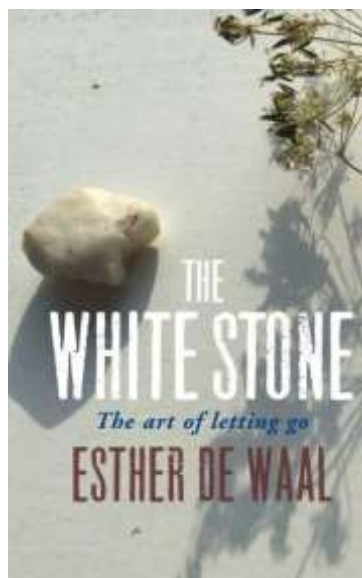
Given the author's lifelong interest in monastic life, which she has drawn upon and written about extensively, it makes sense that this is central to her now. Hence her questions, coming from Benedictine practice, "Am I becoming a more loving person?" and

"Are you hastening towards your heavenly home?" Likewise, her renewed need to let go of illusion and false gods, to listen "with the ear of the heart." A chapter on reading the Psalms, relying particularly on the work of Thomas Merton and Jim Cotter, is an integral connection.

This book of learning and loss is the closest Esther de Waal has come to an autobiography. It is not without grief and pain, though thanksgiving is the keynote. She is taking stock of her life, what she has gained and lost, but significantly what she values that she must learn to let go of. It's easy to let go of things you don't like, much harder letting go of that which you love.

The range of her quotation, most especially, is a value she gives back to the reader. No one else can be Esther de Waal and this is her personal account of dealing with change.

However, there are meditations, poems, sayings and stories here that speak to our own individual experience in this context, that speak of her world of valued spiritual guides. She writes: "I am grateful when W. H. Auden speaks of the need to practice the scales of rejoicing, because it reminds me of the sort of discipline that I should be looking for in myself."



Days of Prayer and Reflection 2022

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 2022

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

For further information, contact Sister Josephine Margaret, CHN, on 03 9583 2087, or by email jmwarne@bigpond.com

Be still and know that I am God.