

COMMUNITY OF THE HOLY NAME



Summer 2020/21
Newsletter

Shaping our glasses in 2021

by Revd. Peter Williams

I recall taking my son Ben to a day care programme some time ago. I asked, "Do you want me to come in with you?" He looked at me, startled, and said sternly, "No! Not looking like that!" I remember feeling hurt, rejected, unappreciated. It was only when I took off my sunglasses I realized one of the lenses was missing! Ben wasn't commenting on my wardrobe. I didn't need to feel attacked.

Every now and then, we can have an experience in a relationship that reminds us, that sometimes there's a big gap, between what we perceive and what is the reality of a situation. People are complicated. We are a mixture of motivations and even a simple interaction with another person can have a number of layers of communication to it.

The way we perceive and respond to others has been shaped by our life experience. We can think of the way we perceive things like a pair of glasses that we see reality through. "Looking at life through rose tinted glasses" means always seeing only the pleasant things about a situation and not noticing the things that are unpleasant.

What about you? What are your glasses like that you see reality through? How can we transform our glasses so we more accurately see the world as God does?

Here we are at the beginning of a new year. It's a good time to reflect on our own journey in life. Who am I? What is important to me? What events have made me who I am?

Two memories from my early life have great significance for me. I was eight years old. In the first event, I had spent my pocket money buying some lollies which I brought home and shared with my younger brother and sister. My mother said to me warmly, "Ah, that's a lovely thing to share your lollies. Very kind." Her tone of voice told me she was very touched and I felt great!

The second event concerns a boy in my class whose father had died. My mother spoke

with deep feeling about how difficult life would now be for this boy. And for his mother who would have to bring up the boy and his brothers by herself. The depth of my mother's concern and empathy for this family resonated deeply with me. My mother's empathy felt so profound because this was an experience she had been through, her father dying when she was just nine years old.

These two events have stayed with me all my life. I wonder if these helped to form part of the glasses I wear as I look at the world and the people around me, adopting something of my mother's empathy and compassion for others.

On a general level, we can say that all scripture is written to help us to develop cross shaped glasses. To help us see all of life through the lens of the life and death and resurrection of Jesus. To help us see the world around us, the people we meet, as Jesus would.

Let us consider Luke 2: 22-40, the presentation of Jesus at the temple, with Simeon and Anna. This Gospel passage offers two particular insights:

Firstly, shape your glasses by listening to those who love God. We see Mary and Joseph choosing to listen to, choosing to be guided by Simeon, and Anna,

humble people who love God and serve God. Many people would argue that Simeon and Anna are not particularly impressive in their accomplishments. Why would you listen to them? Mary does. Joseph does.

Revd. Peter Williams, Anglican Hospital
Chaplain, Eastern Health Network



Inside:

Letter from Sister Carol	2
Spirituality Centre report	2
Oblate Sue Retschko's story	3
Oblates' News	4
Associates' News	4
The Oblates	6
Jesu Jesu Esto Mihi	9
Happiness	10
Rest in Peace, Sister Elizabeth	
Gwen	10
What's new in the Library	12
Prayer Days 2021	12
Editor: Liz Johnstone	

Continued on page 10

Dear Friends,

This letter comes with much rejoicing that we are now able to visit family and friends, have a haircut, dine out and walk outside without masks.

I have heard various opinions about our Premier and his team. However I believe they come from how the pandemic has affected each one of us, so we can only react from our own circumstances and it is not for others to judge. The bottom line is we are now up to 50+ “doughnut days” (when this was written).

The Sisters are pleased to welcome back the volunteers who answer the phones and the girls who help out with the evening washing up. We once again had a



Pam Hogan answers the phone

Christmas party for our volunteers and employees as our way of saying ‘thank you’ for all their hard work and support.

Considering the ages of the Sisters, we did well to protect ourselves and no-one got COVID. The time we

have had has enabled us to pursue our hobbies or begin new ones.

Most of you know or have heard of Anne Brown who has been working with us for some years. Anne is now the Manager of the Spirituality Centre and she has a letter in this Newsletter. The Spirituality Centre Team has been meeting regularly to prepare for the New Year when we re-open. Candice Bennett is also joining the team and part of her job will be outreach to the local community especially re the use of the grounds.

We were all saddened by the death of our Sister Elizabeth Gwen aged 97 + who died on Wednesday 23rd December.

Although, like many of you we were not able to have many guests for Christmas dinner we still celebrated with great joy the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

May 2021 be a year free from COVID and bring peace and joy to you all.

Carol CHN



Spirituality Centre report by Anne

Greetings all!

It is with excitement that we emerge from lockdown and look towards the coming year when the Spirituality Centre can re-open and re-connect with you all. It’s been a long time and we have missed everyone.

Being in lockdown has given us the opportunity to stop and reflect on where the Spirituality Centre fits within God’s plan. After many deep and meaningful conversations and much prayer, we feel we are still on the right path, with the Spirituality Centre continuing to be an oasis of peace for anyone in need of recharging and refreshment. Until now, this has been by way of accommodation or day visits for those who have heard of us through people who are already friends, and friends of friends, of the Community. We are now being asked to reach out to the wider community, for example a Faith Book Club, a short retreat for local students studying VCE and an Easter Egg Hunt for local children.

We have given the Spirituality Centre a bit of TLC during shutdown with repairs to leaking windows and new servery doors. We will also be replacing the boiler for the heating system in early January as the rust has reached a point where it can no longer be ignored. Hopefully this one will last as long as the previous one – which would be at least 20-30 years! We will also be cleaning and sorting in readiness for the first visits in February.

We hope you all have a special time over the Christmas season and look forward to seeing many of you next year at the Spirituality Centre.

Anne (Manager) and the SC Team



Oblate Sue Retskcho's story

My earliest memory is of the feeling of well-being of my parents' home in the Melbourne suburb of North Balwyn. As I recall that memory, I see myself, a small child, sitting on a rug in the sun and holding a toy rabbit.

I grew up in a happy and comfortable home with a pleasant garden. Not much was missing from my life then, but as an only child I was often alone and wished that I had brothers and sisters as well.

As a child I enjoyed drawing and painting, fascinated with the variety of colours in my paint box and in a much-prized box of Derwent coloured pencils. It was a special treat to visit the National Gallery in the city with my dad.

An early influence establishing a path for my life began at St Silas' Anglican Sunday School. In hearing the bible stories and singing the songs, the truth, goodness and love of Jesus was implanted in my heart.

I continued attendance at Sunday School; following Sunday School came GFS, with its motto: *'Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ'* (Galatians 6:2)

In preparation for Confirmation, I studied the readings dutifully and attended the classes. My mother made me a white dress and borrowed a white veil, and the class processed along the aisle at church. I'd hoped as the bishop laid his hand on my head for some power to emanate from his hand. Less dramatic, yet powerful, was the slow, undeniable drawing of my spirit toward a deepening love of God and a desire to somehow grow to serve God in my life.

I was fortunate to go to the same school from Kindergarten to the Leaving Certificate year and was given opportunities for a good rounded education. Swimming, tennis and other team sports were an enjoyable part of my school life. I learned the piano to the eighth grade, though I was a reluctant student who had to be urged to practice.

After leaving school I began at Stott's Business College, although I had wanted to study Art.

The daily grind of learning Shorthand, Typing and Bookkeeping lasted for only three months, when my parents relented and I began at the 'Tech' in the city, where I studied Art.

I was successful in getting a position as a commercial artist at an American sales incentive company.

My church attendance had stalled as my social life took over, however, that still small 'voice' persisted, I

longed to find God again, and one day I discovered St. Peter's Eastern Hill.

I felt attracted to the sense of mystery and the 'high church' ambience that drew me there to regular weekday Mass.

In my twenties I met a young German man, it was a whirlwind romance and we married at Holy Trinity Kew, the church of my baptism. We lived in an apartment in Elwood, eventually moving to our first home in Lorna Street, Cheltenham. I became pregnant and finished work.

As I observed I became interested in the life of the Community over the road and asked if I could be a help to them as volunteer at CHN. Sister Elizabeth Gwen introduced me to Sister Clare, who was in charge of the Infirmary. She noticed that I was in the early stages of pregnancy, and only gave me light tasks.

The warmth, kindness and generosity of the Sisters made an indelible impression upon me. Our first baby was born and once I returned to the Community, I took our baby with me as I minded the phones, and he was a source of delight for the Sisters.

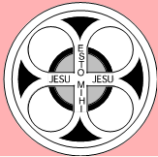
I studied and became a Hospital Chaplain, over subsequent years I held positions as an Anglican chaplain at the Alfred, the Mercy and at Monash Medical Centre.

I am thankful for the many blessings in my life, above all, the gift of faith in God. I am grateful for my marriage, my family and friends, church and Oblate life. Our family of four sons have now married and have their own families. I've studied theology and practised pastoral care and supervision, I have had the privilege of travelling in Europe, and to visit the biblical sites in the Holy Land.

As we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, I give thanks to God for the medical scientists, our excellent hospitals, the doctors and nurses and our governments who have worked so conscientiously to control this devastating virus.

I thank God for the persistent guidance of the Holy Spirit, and I look forward to 2021 to meet as Oblates once more and pray that the Holy Spirit may bring healing and peace come to our world.





OBLATES' NEWS



Our Oblate Dianna Cherry is to be commended for the interesting account she has written of her Oblate journey which is included in this Summer Newsletter. Those who have been Oblates for many years will identify with how it was in those earlier days, though each has had their own journey. As Dianna says, there have been many changes over the years, and that surely is healthy. The Oblates who have in more recent years been admitted and our present Probationers, have on the whole begun this journey later in life with many years of connection with the Community, a mature spirituality and generally a ministry within their parish and church life. Of course, we welcome women and men of all ages who feel called by God to live the Religious Life within their individual circumstances and, in so doing, become valued

members of the Community of the Holy Name.

All of the Oblate meetings scheduled to be held at the Spirituality Centre had to be cancelled in 2020 but we expect to reopen in February 2021, unless there is a COVID setback, We will begin the year with a Communion Service and lunch on Tuesday 16 February. All Oblates will be sent an invitation for themselves and partners and we hope that many will be able to come. This will be a social occasion and the first opportunity to be together for almost 12 months.

The Oblates will resume meetings, beginning with a Lenten Quiet Day on 20 March. The Combined meeting with the Associates is on 5 June. The Oblates' Retreat and AGM from 23 to 26 September and the Advent Quiet Day on 4 December.

The Adelaide Oblates and Associates met for a day together on 31 October and it was, reportedly, a very happy occasion. They plan to meet four times through the year and Sister Carol and I still hope to join them at one of their meetings.

Valmai CHN



ASSOCIATES' NEWS

What a strange and difficult year 2020 was! I do hope all of you managed to weather it without too much distress. We have not heard of any Associates succumbing to the virus, though we were saddened to learn of the COVID death of Kath Fitzgerald, a dear friend and helper of the Community, who would have been known to a number of you.

It seems strange not to have seen any of you for most of last year, but it has been good to welcome back our telephone minders, many of whom are Associates. It is good, too, that restrictions were able to be eased in time for Christmas. Our Premier did a great job of keeping us safe, and now we are hoping that the present cluster of cases is just a temporary setback. At the moment, COVID-willing, we are busily planning for the reopening of our Spirituality Centre in February.

Next year, our Associates' AGM will be a little later in February than usual, but it is not too soon to be thinking about it. As always, the election of office bearers will be on the program, so please give some thought as to whether there is someone you would like to nominate for the office of treasurer or secretary.

Before nominating anyone, please obtain their permission. Office bearers need to attend most meetings and the treasurer also needs to visit CHN regularly to keep the books up to date.

Margaret Pawsey has done a sterling job as treasurer for many years, but she now feels it is time to retire from that position, so please consider whether you might be willing to step into her shoes. One thing will be a little different at this year's AGM – because there will no doubt still be some COVID restrictions in place, we think it will be simpler if you bring your own lunch, so we will not be providing it for this meeting. Subscriptions are still \$20, and are due at or around the time of the AGM (but don't worry if you forget – we are happy to receive them any time).

I hope you all had a joyful and blessed Christmas, and wish you a safe and happy new year. With my love and prayers,

Avrill CHN



ASSOCIATES' CALENDAR 2021



20 February Annual General Meeting

- 10.30 am Morning Tea
 11.00 am AGM
 12.45 pm Lunch
(N.B. Please bring your own)
 02.00 pm A panel of Sisters will answer your questions
 03.00 pm (approx.) Afternoon Tea

10 April Easter Quiet Day, led by the Revd Colleen Clayton, vicar St Matthew's, Cheltenham

- 10.00 am Morning Tea
 BYO lunch
 03.30 pm Afternoon Tea

05 June Combined Meeting with Oblates

- 12.45 pm Midday Office
 01.00 pm Lunch
(Provided – Please book in)
 02.00 pm Bishop Brad Billings will speak about his considerable experience as a Tour and Pilgrimage Leader.
 03.00 pm Afternoon Tea

10-12 September Annual Retreat,

- led by the Revd Robyn Boyd, currently locum at St Nicholas', Mordialloc
 06.00 pm Evening Meal, Friday – start
 01.00 pm Midday dinner, Sunday – finish

13 November Corporate Communion

- Celebrant, preacher and guest speaker TBA
 11.45 am Arrive
 12 noon Eucharist with address
 01.00 pm Lunch
(Provided – Please book in)
 03.00 pm (approx.) Afternoon Tea

R.I.P. Christine Cooper

On 6th October 2020 (the same day sister Gloria died), our Associate Christine Cooper died peacefully in her sleep.

A life-long committed Christian, Christine trained for missionary service at the ABM House of the Epiphany, Stanmore, in the early 1960's, and went on to become a teacher at CHN's Holy Name High School at Dogura in Papua New Guinea where she was very highly regarded.

On returning to Australia she lived in

Brisbane and was a valued member of the Church of the Holy Spirit, Kenmore for a number of years before moving to the Symes Grove Retirement Village in Taigum, where she lived until her death. Those who knew her described her as "a character and a very good friend".

She was admitted as a CHN Associate on 17th March, 1978, and kept in close touch with the Community over the years.

May Christine rest in peace.



The Oblates of the Community

October 2020 was the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the Order of Oblates, so we are looking at their history and what it means to be an Oblate.

Since I first contacted CHN six years ago, I have learnt so much about being a Christian as opposed to doing Christianity. Being an Oblate is such a blessing for me, a contemplative life in partnership with the CHN Sisters and in fellowship with the men and women who are the CHN Oblates and the CHN Associates.

If you feel you may be called to this way of life, please contact Sister Valmai, the Oblate Coordinator.

Liz Johnstone

The Early Days by Sister Jean



21st Anniversary of the Order of Oblates.

*Back row (left to right): Beatrice Glascodine, Mother Faith, Clare Jeffrey
Seated: Sister Lucy, Jean Nothrop, Sister Elizabeth Gwen, Dorothy Reid*

On 15 October 1960, the Order of Oblates within CHN was founded. All of the seven women had been Associates of CHN for many years. Lily Lewis from Adelaide was the first enquirer, who waited six months to be admitted with the other six enquirers. They were admitted as Probationer Oblates in 1960. The first Melbourne enquirers were Bea Glascodine, Clare Jeffrey, Gwen Goldsworthy, Olive and Dorothy

Ruttledge and Jean Nothrop.

We had our first retreat at the Community House and some of the Sisters at the Community House moved across to the Retreat House so that we could be accommodated at the Community House. Sister Elizabeth, the Sister in charge of the Oblates conducted the retreat and the addresses were given in the chapel.

We had our first meal in the room called 'Hospitality' and that evening we were given our navy-blue veils, similar in design to the nursing sisters' veils. I think we had all the rest of the meals with the Sisters in the refectory, which was where the library is now.

On the Sunday, before Vespers, the seven of us were admitted as Probationer Oblates by Father J. S. Drought, the Community Chaplain. We received a lovely card made by Sister Winifred Muriel. We were Probationer Oblates for 12 months. Prior to our reception as Oblates, we each had an interview with the Warden of CHN, Father Nicholas Allenby, SSM, and the Reverend Mother. Sister Flora, who was the Reverend Mother at the time, was present at our reception although she was very ill and actually died a month later.

At our reception we received our Oblate's cross. I am not sure who designed it – Maybe Sister Elizabeth had a hand in it! The centre of the cross is the Associates' badge. **[Reproduced from a paper by Jean Nothrop, who later became Sister Jean.]**

Times Change, and We Change With Them† by Diana Cherry



A young Diana, wearing her Oblate's cross, 1970's.

My first contact with the Community was visiting the Mission House in Fitzroy as a university student in the late 1950s. While there, I enjoyed meeting Sr Lucy and had an immediate connection. The oblate life is a vocation, a calling, and it is one I took years to acknowledge. For

me it is not something special. It is simply life. I have no idea how many oblates considered seriously a calling to the religious life, but I would have to be numbered among them. Years of living abroad and having a family to care for helped in the stalling, but I did find myself drawn to quiet days and retreats in religious communities in both America and England as well as in this country. Always there was a deep sense of feeling at home.

I remember the warm welcome and

encouragement from oblates when Miriam Flanders and I became probationers in 1976, and I still have the hand-made card signed by Mother Faith as Mother Superior and “(for) the Warden P S Jolliffe”. There were regular interviews with Sr Lucy and Fr Jolliffe and probationers met bi-monthly. As probationers we needed to have a personal rule of life, and this was reviewed quarterly with the Oblate Coordinator. Oblates reviewed their rule of life annually and it was expected to “... reflect the spirit of the religious life out in the community”. It was assumed that we would have a Spiritual Director and that, in addition to the requirements of attending church, praying a daily Office, and attending an annual retreat, we would with our Spiritual Director “formulate a personal rule of reconciliation”.

In those early years there was a feeling of mystery about the Community House. An imaginary line separated it from the Retreat House and each year, while in retreat, probationers crossed it for a final interview with the Mother Superior (in my case Mother Faith), and for the renewal of Oblates’ annual vows. I still remember my apprehension before that interview.

Oblate meetings were more frequent than today and we were expected to take our turn presenting a paper for discussion. I have enjoyed re-reading Helen Tregear’s paper on *Holiness*, and one year we looked at *The Office*, and later *The Eucharist*. Sr Jane presented a fascinating paper on *Psalms in the 14th Century*. As Warden, Fr Jolliffe had a considerable influence on the Community, and supervised male oblates as a separate group. Most were priests and for many years I didn’t know they existed. Fortunately, times have changed.

In 1992 there was a paper on *Living an Oblate Life in Today’s World*, and, for three days in 1997 Fr John Stewart (then Warden and Spiritual Director of the Retreat House) led *Reflections on the Rule*. In 2000 Sr Maree gave a talk about *Sr Esther, Mother Foundress of CHN*. More recently, Sr Sheila spoke on the same topic while researching her PhD thesis. I don’t remember our being encouraged to use the Community library or borrow books, but in recent years I have been very grateful for that privilege.

Annual retreats have remained a constant. Originally held at the Retreat House and now at the Spirituality Centre, in the intervening years we have been to places as far apart as Millgrove and Mornington, Queenscliff and Lysterfield. I learnt that, even when no word is exchanged, it is possible to get to know people whom you see rarely. Family circumstances sometimes made the annual retreat impossible for me but again the Community’s hospitality meant one of the hermitages became an option.

While I have written mostly about the more serious aspects of the oblate vocation, the depth of friendships formed and the fun times come from those shared values. I have enjoyed extraordinary hospitality. When our family included a very ill child, an undeterred Sonia White invited us all to lunch in her Frankston unit.



Dorothy and George Reid hosting Sister Lucy and a number of Oblates at their property in Warrandyte

Every summer Dorothy Reid and her husband George would have a number of oblates and a Sister to lunch at their home on the Yarra in Warrandyte. Sir George was a Catholic and he and Dorothy always prayed Evensong together. He was an excellent host who enjoyed pouring the wine at our meal. Later in the afternoon we would go down to the river for a swim. One afternoon a group of larrikins decided to startle us and, naked, began to swim in our direction. Little did they know Jean Henderson always rose to a challenge. She simply swam towards them and they vanished! Her sense of humour was legendary.



Jean Mary Henderson, MBE (1920-2011), a nurse and midwife, spent 30 years as a missionary in Papua New Guinea, where she sat on the country’s first nursing council, chaired the nursing education committee and prepared the local nursing staff for independence in the seventies.

Jean was one of a number of nurses among the early oblates and both she and Joan Durdin (the twin of Sr Patience CCK) were missionary sisters in New

Guinea. Joan later worked at the Royal Adelaide Hospital, wrote its history, and today at 98 must be the oldest oblate. I remember many happy times when Jean entertained us with extraordinary stories ranging from being in New Guinea at the time of the Mount Lamington disaster, to playing golf on a gravel course in outback South Australia.



Marion McCall, OAM, with her husband David, then Bishop of Willochra, taken from the cover of her book of poems, the proceeds from which went towards the 'Wings over Willochra' fund which was set up to raise the funds necessary to train as a pilot and buy a plane .

When Marion McCall's husband, David, became Bishop of Willochra, pastoral visits in his huge Diocese meant time away from home. Ever practical, Marion's solution was to learn to fly. Her writing shared their life in the outback, as well as her exciting trip to London after winning the Duke of Edinburgh Award in the *Dawn to Dusk* flying competition.

Norma Moorhouse was an early oblate Treasurer. She was a very competent tax agent, and an appointment at her home always included a sumptuous afternoon tea. Joyce Newton was Matron at PANCH

and the committee met several times in her flat at the hospital. The list is long and the common thread is hospitality — a characteristic I have always associated with CHN.

A world-wide trend in developed countries is for the numbers of Religious to be declining. The Community of the Holy Name is no exception. As the number of Sisters has grown smaller, the variety of ministries has changed. The Retreat House has gone but the Spirituality Centre is flourishing in what was the Community's Mother House. Times have changed but what is important has not. Hospitality in all its aspects remains central to CHN's life and work.

While the number of Sisters in most convents has declined, the number of tertiaries has increased. This too is a world-wide phenomenon and the growth in the number of CHN oblates reflects the change. From the small number in the 1960s and 70s, today there are thirty-seven Oblates, including seven men. My oblate commitment has been an important and transformative part of my life for more than 40 years.

Recently an oblate asked me why some of us don't wear the oblate cross where it can be seen. Times do change. When I became an oblate, the commitment was not something we talked about — in some sense it was almost hidden. That sits comfortably with me, just as wearing the cross openly is comfortable for others. What is important is what it symbolises — the anchor of our faith in a changing and troubled world. We are very blessed.

Diana

† Tempora mutantur, et nos mutamur in illis.
Quoted in Harrison, *Description of Brittain* (1577)



Oblates' Retreat 2019, held at the Spirituality Centre and led by Bishop Garry Weatherill



Jesu Jesu Esto Mihi (Jesus is my all) by Irene Shaw

Jesu Jesu Esto Mihi ('Jesus is my all'). These are familiar words to us as Oblates of the Community of the Holy Name, written in the centre of our cross. Like the Order of St Luke (OSL), we share a cross within a circle in blue, the symbolic colour of healing. As oblates, we seek to realise God's intention in our lives, to share a stable and life-long spiritual union with the Community — and one another — to the glory of God. God calls to each one of us, asking us to respond to the events in our lives, trusting in the love of God to shelter us and bring us His peace. Our lifelong spiritual journey is a series of movements into the presence of God.

In John 14:27 Jesus says "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

Peace has a special meaning for me as it comes from the Greek word *eirene*, the Greek equivalent for the Hebrew word *shalom*, expressing wholeness or tranquillity in the soul, unaffected by outward circumstances. An anonymous author said, "Peace is not the absence of conflict, but the presence of God — no matter what the conflict." As in scripture, we trust in God to shelter us as a mother hen shelters her brood under her wings. Facing challenge

and adversity is part of the human condition. Jesus confronted his own trials with gentle and loving acknowledgement of the immensity of the task ahead of him. Fully human and fully divine, Christ is the ultimate symbol for us of 'God as love'.

As Oblates we are called to meet Christ — the living Word (John 14:7) in scripture, in prayer and meditation, in the world, in others and in all our environments. When we use God's love to reflect upon our experiences and world events, our understanding is transformed. We are strengthened by the knowledge that Jesus is "the way, the truth and the life" (John 14:6). We see all things anew in the light of His love and wisdom. How blessed we are when we reflect upon God's presence in our lives. Who has walked alongside us and where and how do we experience the sacred? Is it in a church or a building or a person,

or is it in art or music or memories; in the smile of a child, or even in silence and stillness? When has God been most present to us and who are some of the significant people who have helped us to walk on our faith journeys? How can we encourage other Christians in our daily lives? God is with us today and always.

As Jesus tells us in John 15:9,
"Abide in my love."

Irene



Happiness by Marion McCall

Happiness
 Is like a soft brown egg
 Nestled in sweet hay
 We come expectant
 Surprised when we find it
 Eagerly we grasp it
 Savour it as welcome breakfast
 And carry it
 Singing like the morning magpie
 Rejoicingly into our home.

Marion



Image by Lolame from Pixabay

Shaping our glasses in 2021, continued from front page

Because they value the faith journey Simeon and Anna have committed themselves to. To develop cross shaped glasses, we need to give particular attention to those who travel the way of the cross with us.

We need each other! Yes, the people of God are a motley bunch. But that's a good thing! Because it means there will always be people as motley as you (and I) for us to connect with! People for us to learn from, people to help us transform the way we see the world, to be closer to the way God sees it.

Secondly, developing cross shaped glasses means transforming our suffering.

In verse 24, we read

Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, "This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed and a sword will pierce your own soul too."

Even though Mary courageously accepted God's will for her life, that did not shield her from the pain that living life brings. So too for us. We can't avoid it; it's part of life. Maybe we've been hurt. Maybe we've been talked about and betrayed by friends or family. Maybe our lives didn't work out the way we thought they would.

As we get older, we realise that if we do not transform our pain, we will surely transmit it. To those we love most. I see it played out in palliative care where I work. The mother who knows she is dying, who is distraught because her only daughter has refused to talk to her for the last 20 years. She so wishes she could see her, but the daughter won't respond. She says to me tearfully, "I don't even know what caused it. She's never told me." Two people, a mother and a daughter, defined by the pain that goes on and on and on.

We need to find a way to transform our pain. To turn the crucifixion experiences of our lives into resurrection experiences. And that is what the good news of the Gospel story is all about.

Here, at the beginning of Luke, we are about to commence the journey with Mary. How will she be able to keep on living, when Simeon's words come to pass 'and a sword will pierce your own soul too?'

That is what the good news of the Gospel story is all about. In following Mary's son, we like Mary, can find the courage to look reality in the face and to transform our pain. Turn the crucifixion experiences of our lives into resurrection experiences. Not by putting on rose tinted glasses. But by developing cross shaped

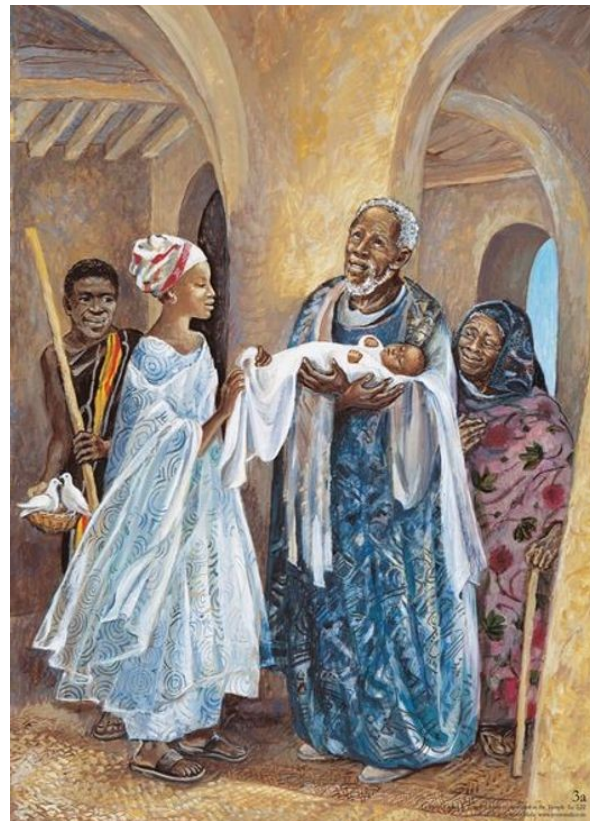
ones, through attending to and shaping our lives by this story, as Mary and Joseph did. We can allow the Gospel story to shape our lives. Living by God's word, seeking to discern God's will for us and embracing the wisdom of God's people who have travelled the journey ahead of us.

We also need to keep on listening to our own memories of God's goodness, noticing how God has comforted us; recognising how we have been changed for the better; and discerning the measure of peace that God has given us as we have travelled our journey of faith.

We will then notice the times when, in the midst of difficulty, we could honestly say, "It's going to be okay." "I know what lasts." "I know who I am." "I want to pass on life to others, not pain."

The promise of the Gospel story to us is this, that at the end of every day, our experience of these three things: ***God's word, God's people and our memories*** will enable us to say with Simeon...

"I have met my Saviour; now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation."



Jesus presented in the temple by Jesus Mafa

Rest in Peace, Sister Elizabeth Gwen

Sister Elizabeth Gwen made her Life Profession 67 years ago, so as one would imagine, her years of ministry in CHN took her to many and varied places especially in the days when the Community had a number of Houses in Melbourne as well as in other States and even overseas.

In her earlier years, she appeared to spend fairly short times in both the Children's Homes, at Ellerslie Home for the Aged and the Hostel for young women in Adelaide, and the Mission House in Fitzroy. There is every reason to believe she enjoyed these various placements. She had a gift for relating to children, as well as older folk and others in the kind of difficulties she would find at the Mission House.

In 1962 Elizabeth was appointed Novice Mistress, a role which lasted nine years. In 1978 she became Assistant to the then Reverend Mother as well as coordinating the Associates.

The Community recognised her gifts of leadership and in 1981 she was elected as Reverend Mother and held that position for 13 years.

It was a busy and eventful time for CHN and for Religious Life generally, with many changes, some welcomed and some difficult. There were large projects such as major renovations to the Community House and Elizabeth Gwen seemed to flourish through it all.

Elizabeth Gwen's term of Office concluded in 1994 and in the following years, her faithfulness to her vocation as a Religious Sister and her absolute commitment to the life of the Community became evident as she accepted without question and with her usual enthusiasm whatever she was asked to do and these included two quite large but important tasks, Archives and Oblates.

When Lyn Strahan was commissioned to write a history of CHN for the Centenary year, she asked if she could see the Archives - with some embarrassment, out came suitcases, cartons and various cupboards full of memorabilia.

Some years later one of the Sisters was given the task of establishing Community Archives in a smallish room, once used to make wafers, and after

some further years Elizabeth Gwen took over from her. Building on the work already done, Elizabeth Gwen joined the Catholic Archivists' Society and researched how to access storage cupboards, paper, boxes, etc. There was still much

sorting and cataloguing to be done, and she spent many happy hours at work in the Archives, right up until her death, bequeathing to the Community an Archive Department we can be rightly proud of.

In 1997, Elizabeth was asked if she would be Oblate Coordinator.

The CHN Oblates are women and men who, by their commitment to living out the Religious Life in their individual circumstances, are an integral and valued part of our Community. Elizabeth loved this close connection to the Oblates and with her natural gift for friendship and care, she was able to guide, support and encourage many Oblates in their life journey. They missed her very much when she retired from that role some 12 months ago.

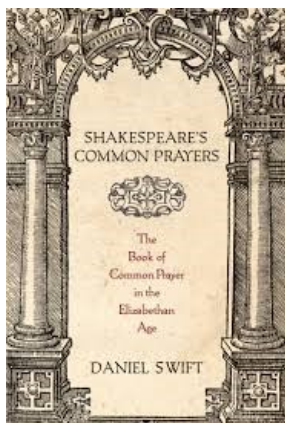
Underneath all these achievements in the service of her Lord, Elizabeth Gwen or EG as she was known among us, was the girl from Essendon who loved her football team and continued to cheer for them in all their ups and downs.

As a Community, we thank God for Elizabeth Gwen's faithful and generous response to her vocation and for all we have shared with her over these many years.

Well done good and faithful servant.

Sister Valmai





New in the Library by our Librarian, Philip Harvey

The Book of Common Prayer (BCP) is a “founding document” of English life. “It mattered more deeply than any other written text of its age because it was where and how the age defined itself.” (p. 23) Hence the Anglican arguments with Puritans about its wording and manner of worship. Two fundamental facts of the English language are brought together in Daniel Swift’s ‘Shakespeare’s Common Prayers: the Book of Common Prayer and the Elizabethan Age’, published by Oxford University Press in 2013. Swift shows how Shakespeare responded to the rites and words of the Prayer Book in several of the plays.

Centuries of use normalized our understanding of the BCP. Swift reminds us that Elizabethans, for whom it was new, “saw flaws in the prayer book and felt the struggle between alternatives: they found it neither perfect nor inevitable.” (p. 148)

Although it was forbidden to act out church ceremony on stage, Shakespeare emulates ritual patterns in the plays and tests the full meaning of essential words in the BCP. The book demonstrates how well he knew the theological debates between Protestants and Catholics that divided society at the

time. It hints that he probably attended church more often than is sometimes assumed.

‘Romeo and Juliet’, ‘Othello’, and ‘Antony and Cleopatra’, for example, test the ideal of consent, ring, and consummation spelt out in the marriage service, by dramatizing contradictions to the norm in real life. Shakespeare speaks to an audience alive both to church practice and the vagaries of human relationships; between the common form of marriage and the differences that contradicted the norm.

Marriage now occurred in “the body of the church”, not the porch or churchyard. This, and other Reformation changes enshrined in the BCP, make for instructive reading in light of same-sex marriage, current debates about blessing, and whether it isn’t time to hand over marriage entirely to the state, as in some other countries.

Daniel Swift gives similar attention to the other services, the Lord’s Supper and Burial of the Dead; his reading of ‘Macbeth’ and its use of certain essential words in the baptismal rite are challenging and original. The author seriously debunks two received positions about all of this work: that Shakespeare was not much influenced by the BCP as a source and influence; and that he acted above the fray of the religious debates going on all around him in London. On both counts Swift shows that Shakespeare actually engages in theological debate, albeit in the guise of theatre.

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.



Be still and know that I am God.

DATES FOR 2021

4 March
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