



# COMMUNITY OF THE HOLY NAME



Spring 2019  
Newsletter

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Editor: Liz Johnstone

## Our new labyrinths



We have two new aids for contemplation - a garden labyrinth and a finger labyrinth, the former in memory of Sister Pamela.

A labyrinth has a single path to the centre and then back out again. It has many turns but none lead to dead ends, compared to the puzzles of mazes.

The first known Christian labyrinth is in the Basilica of St. Reparatus in Algeria, dated 324 AD. In **the centre are the words "Sancta Ecclesia" (Holy Church), unlike other labyrinths of the time, which usually featured an image of Theseus and the Minotaur in the centre.**

By the 11th century they were used in manuscripts and on the walls and floors of churches. The most famous is in Chartres Cathedral, France. The overall pattern forms a large cross, a cruciform. This is a defining feature of the Christian labyrinth.

Many used it as a substitute for pilgrimages to Jerusalem, calling it the "Chemin de Jerusalem" or Road of Jerusalem. Some used it for repentance, following the path on their knees.

**The path symbolized the pilgrim's journey from birth through life to the heavenly Jerusalem – the centre.** As with faith, at first it seems to go straight to the centre but then turns away. Again, it heads to the centre and then out to the edges in great circles. Faith calls for endurance, trust and hope.

Often set in the floors of Gothic

cathedrals, labyrinths they were designed to be seen in two ways. From above and outside, the pattern shows **the truth that God and God's plan hold us in our journey to God.** From within, we walk and can only see as far ahead as the next turn or as far back as the last.

A labyrinth is simply a place to walk and pray, focussing your mind on God. As you follow the turnings, you lose track of direction and of the outside world, thus quietening the mind.

Christians can choose to walk the labyrinth in an intentionally Christ-centred way, in prayer, reflection on Scripture, and/or listening to God. We invite you to walk the labyrinth and pray. **There are no specific "rules" to walking the labyrinth but the following guidelines can be useful:**

1. *Releasing.* On the walk inward, you might meditate on a Scripture passage, or talk and listen to God about a particular topic or question. Give your cares and distractions over to him.
2. *Receiving.* When you arrive in the **centre, rest and rejoice in the Lord's presence.** God longs to be the centre of your life.
3. *Returning.* On the walk outward, think about how you will take what God is saying to you back into your daily life. Thank God that He will be with you even after this time of retreat.

The labyrinth is a tool that enables us, in the busyness of life, to be still and focus our thoughts and feelings.



*Finger labyrinth, donated by Colleen O'Reilly; trace your finger along the path*

*Community of the Holy Name  
We are a Community of Anglican Sisters who have been living, praying and ministering in Melbourne for more than 125 years. Nowadays, our main ministry is hospitality, offering a place of spiritual renewal and refreshment.*

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*Dear friends,*

The last few months have been very busy ones for the Community. In July we hosted a dinner for the priests who celebrate for us on a monthly roster. It was a lovely occasion and they were delighted to catch up with colleagues they may not have seen for some time.



*Sr Valmai celebrating her 90th birthday*

Sr. Valmai celebrated her 90th birthday with relatives and friends. She is still a very active sister and partakes in everything including coordinating the Oblates.

We were sad to hear of the death of Sr. Patience CCK whose twin sister Joan Durdin is an Oblate of CHN. The Oblates of CCK are holding a Conference/Retreat at the Spirituality Centre in November.

In August I heard that our application for a plaque in Little Lonsdale Street was approved and we are now waiting on a design to be presented to us and the City Council.

On the 7th August we celebrated Holy Name Day. Unfortunately, Bishop Garry Weatherell was not able to celebrate but we were very pleased to welcome back Father Graham Reynolds who was a former Warden of the Community. It was a very happy occasion with Oblates, Associates and friends enjoying a delicious finger food lunch by our favourite caterer Kate and her team. Our Holy Name Day celebration is followed by a three-day retreat for the sisters. This year the Revd Sharne Rolfe from Mordialloc conducted the retreat for us, based on the Prayer of Preparation. Although we say this regularly at a

Eucharist, how many of us really meditate on the words?

After 8 weeks away, we were pleased to welcome home Anne, our Office Manager, returning from holiday with family overseas.

The Anglican Board of Mission (ABM) has recognised Sisters Josephine Margaret and Margaret Anne for their service in missionary work, with the awards of Frank Coaldrake Medals. Sister Josephine Margaret worked in Papua New Guinea as a missionary prior to joining CHN. I was delighted to receive Sister Margaret Anne's on her behalf.

In September we had our Annual Chapter at which Father Graham Reynolds was elected as our Warden for the next three years. Our Wardens are elected for a specific term of Office so we were sorry to have to say goodbye to Bishop Garry but he assures me he will still be a frequent visitor to the Community. He is leading our Oblates in their Annual Retreat.

I was invited to attend the 70th Profession of Brother Robin from the Brotherhood of St Barnabas in



*Brother Robin, BSB, with myself*

Charters Towers; a long way to go but very worthwhile. Brother Robin taught at All Soul's School for over 50 years and I was touched to hear the comments made by past students of his care and guidance of them.

May you all enjoy this fine spring weather.

My love and prayers to you all

*Carol CHN*

## Sister Elizabeth Gwen's story

Both my parents went to church, so that it became part of my life as we went together as a family, unlike many other Sunday School children whose parents stayed at home. My first inklings of a call to the Religious Life go back to my school days with Nora Collison, our school principal. School **assembly had been uninteresting and 'dead' but she somehow brought it to life.** I rebelled against Sunday School because it was second rate compared with Divinity classes at school.

After school, I went to Stotts Business college, learning shorthand, typing, and bookkeeping. They got me a position in a motor firm. It was challenging as I **had to use many new terms, for example 'crankshaft'.** When war came, I was sent to their finance company, but it was boring. I grew restless and thought of joining the WRANS. Meantime, I got involved in a **GFS (Girls' Friendly Society) group and through them** I was selected to go to the 1947 World Conference of Christian Youth in Oslo, Norway. It was so unexpected and such a thrill!

Our GFS branch visited the Retreat House and Community House. Walking into the Community Chapel was a turning point for me: as soon as I saw it, I felt I was home. God works in such mysterious ways! Initially I rebelled against the Religious Life. I **knew I couldn't be a missionary but I wanted to serve God.** I had also thought about marriage but had not longed for it. So, I came to CHN, against the wishes of my mother, but when I got mumps as a Postulant, she hot-footed it down to see me. She told Sister **Constance Mary she thought I'd been "influenced."** **"Well, if she has, she won't stay," she told my mother and that won her over!**

During my early years in the Community, I worked at Ellerslie Guest House for the elderly, the **Children's Home in Brighton, Mission House in Spring Street** and did the Court work while living at the Mission House. From 1957 till 1962, I was in charge of the Home for Little Children at Darling. I was apprehensive at the prospect as I had never had anything to do with small children.

Then, in March 1962, the shock of my life came. I was asked to become Conventual at the Community House, that is, in charge of the household matters. In December 1962 I was installed as Novice Mistress. In all the things I have been asked to do here, I found this position the hardest because it was my first **leadership thing and I felt I hadn't had the training for it.**

I went on to take charge of the Mission House in Fitzroy, then was appointed Assistant Superior and

**Associates' Sister,** before being elected as Mother Superior in March 1981, for three years. When I was re-elected for another five years, I visited similar communities in England and Canada. I was re-elected in February 1989 for another five years. When that term of office ended, I had a sabbatical for a few months and went to England again, mainly to visit relatives.

From 1994, I was in charge of the Retreat House until CHN ceased its involvement in 1997, as the Mission to the Streets and Lanes had merged into Anglicare. Returning to the Community House, I looked after the Archives (still doing this), was Coordinator of the Oblates, and Assistant Sacristan. From 2012, I was on the Community Council for several years.

The highlights for me have been the overseas trips when I met with Sisters of other communities. I felt at home with a small community in South Wales but most of those in England I found to be very different from CHN. I also visited Iona and Lindisfarne (Holy Island), enjoying the long Christian tradition of these places. I was very much at home in the Canadian community, the Sisterhood of St John the Divine and still keep in touch.

Changes started when Mother Faith was in office, when we began going out of our traditional habits. I recall when we first heard of the changes and **found out that the veil would go...we all gasped! The changes haven't worried me at all, except we used to keep more silence.** Apart from Feast days and Sundays, we used to keep silence at the Community House from 10am-12 noon and during Lent from 2-4pm. Now I think it is up to each of us to take what opportunities we can.

I was born in 1923, professed in 1953, so I am now 96 years old and can look back over 66 years in this Community of the Holy Name.

I think it would be good to perhaps advertise the worship and work of the Community, to invite people to consider coming along as Alongsiders for a period of time, to encourage them to develop their relationship with God.





## OBLATES' AND ASSOCIATES' DAY 1<sup>ST</sup> JUNE 2019



At the annual joint meeting of the Oblates and Associates, we were inspired and challenged by our speaker Mrs Joy Freier as she shared her life journey. Joy is a teacher by profession and the wife of our Archbishop, Philip Freier.

**"I am a Queenslander, who grew up in Blair Athol, in central Queensland, near one of the biggest open-cut coal mines in the world. It was a town of 200 with only 16 faithful people in our church. My family moved to Emerald in 1965 so my younger brother and I could attend high school. God was very important in my childhood, because of the guiding lights in my life: my mother and my grandmother who cared enough about me to tell me about Jesus. Mabel Bingham, our minister's wife, identified my leadership ability and asked me to run a youth group when I was 16 years old in Year 11. This led to my career in teaching, with a heart for working with Aboriginal people."**

The biggest issue Joy is dealing with amongst the members of the school community where she is now a teacher, is anxiety, an issue for so many people. As Christians, we can tackle our anxiety if we reframe our thinking and use gratitude as our response. This becomes a habit of our mind. Reflecting upon our lives, we see how our relationships with others **nourish our relationship with God. Indeed, "Telling our story is a form of evangelism for, if God is part of our life, sharing our story with others will naturally bring God into focus", Joy explained.**

**"Who has been a guiding light in your life?"**

*Who are you a guiding light for?*

After qualifying as a teacher, I worked in Aboriginal communities. My husband Philip and I both taught at Kowanyama in Western Cape York and in Yarrabah, near Cairns. During these times, I recall several people who inspired me: the local Aboriginal priest, Father Arthur Malcolm, who told us that the church had been praying for Christian teachers, and he also introduced me to the Anglican Prayer Book (APBA). He was later consecrated as the first Aboriginal Bishop in the Anglican Church in Australia. Colleen Malcolm, his wife has a real relationship with God and would also encourage and challenge me. I read many books, one which was significant was **Malcolm Muggeridge's 'Something Beautiful for God'**, about Mother Theresa: it inspired me.

*Who has inspired you?*

*Who do you inspire?*

In our more mature days, people sustain and nurture us in our Christian beliefs. When Philip was elected Bishop of Northern Territory in 1999, Ann Carnley, wife of the Archbishop of Perth and primate of Australia invited **me to the Bishops' spouses' conferences.** She has remained a good friend. Giving our concerns and worries to God and not being worried any more is good advice, as burdens can become part of our identity.



*Mrs Joy Freier*

*Who sustains and nurtures you?*

*How do you sustain and nurture?*

While in Darwin I was a companion in the catechumenate process (the explanation of adult faith) with Diana, who remains a close friend. In 2006, we moved from Darwin to Melbourne. Melbourne initially was terrifying with its trams, buses, four lanes of traffic, hook turns, and names of places I had no idea about. In fact, the whole population of Darwin (then 100,000) came past our home at Bishops Court on their way to the MCG! What a relief it was that Jill Wilson became my companion, someone who is **totally honest and won't judge but walks together** with me through life. God gives us exactly what we need at the time we need it, in order to do his work. Just as Corrie Ten Boom said, you get the train ticket just before you take the ride. We are like flowers: we bloom right where God plants us.

*Do you have a companion, or have you had a companion?*

*Who do you companion?*

I teach my granddaughter Phoebe to pray about **the things she's grateful for and the things she wants help with.** Let us recall with gratitude those who have nourished our relationship with God and pray for help **as we seek to nourish others."**

*Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. (Psalm 51:10)*



## ASSOCIATES' NEWS

### DIARY DATES



Our last meeting for the year is our Corporate Communion on Saturday, 9th November, at which the celebrant and preacher will be Fr. Graeme Brennan. The program begins with the Eucharist at 12 noon, followed by lunch. After lunch there will be a guest speaker, our Associate Pat Blake, who will share with us some of the highlights from her recent overseas travels. *As lunch is provided, it is essential for catering purposes that you book in at least one week beforehand.*

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**Our AGM is the first event on next year's calendar, and will be held on Saturday, 1st February, 2020, beginning with morning tea at 10.30 am.** After the meeting and lunch (*N.B. Please book in*) there will be a guest speaker, and the day will end with afternoon tea at approximately 3 pm.

*Please remember*

A reminder that subscriptions for next year have increased to \$20.

**If you have not yet paid this year's subscription, it remains at \$15 until the end of 2019.**



## OBLATES' NEWS

With 40 Cavanagh Street, Cheltenham, being the location of the Community for so long, it is inevitable that Oblate events and activities are held at what is now the Spirituality Centre and generally those who come to those events are from Melbourne or surrounding centres.

It is with great pleasure therefore that in the past month or so, we have had visits from interstate Oblates. In July, two of our Adelaide Oblates who have been long-time friends of mine, came to help me celebrate a significant birthday and were able to stay several days with us. It was an opportunity for them to see the Esther House and learn of other developments we have made here and spend time in fellowship with the Sisters.

Three of the Adelaide Oblates attended the Oblates Annual retreat at the end of September and two of them added extra days before and after in order to spend time with the Sisters, likewise also one coming from New South Wales. We always welcome visits from any Oblates.

**We were greatly blessed by Bishop Garry Weatherill's leading of the Oblates' Retreat. Garry is the Bishop of Ballarat.**

*Sister Valmai*

CHN Oblate co-ordinator

### DIARY DATES 2020



Because of the heavy bookings for the Spirituality Centre, Sister Avrill has given us the following dates for next year. No speakers have been arranged yet, so a full programme will be sent to you before the end of the year.

21st March	Lent Quiet Day
13th June (t.b.c.)	Oblates/Associates Day
17th-20th September	Retreat and AGM
5th December	Advent Quiet Day

PLEASE NOTE: on 15th October 2020, the Order of Oblates will be 60 years old. We hope to plan a small celebration around that time and add that to our 2020 programme.

## From the Archives... The building of the Community House, 1935-36

By the 1930s, the Community of the Holy Name needed a headquarters of their own, apart from the business of their work for the Mission to the Streets and Lanes of Melbourne. Their numbers



*Left & right-scenes from the laying of the foundation stone in October 1935*

retreat from their busy work. They had come a long way since their beginnings in the rat-infested Mission House in Little Lonsdale Street.

In October 1935, many people gathered to



had swelled and their work become more sophisticated but their ministry was still focussed on the poor, destitute and unemployed women and children of Melbourne. This now included running **children's homes, two hospitals, Mission House in Spring Street and the House of Mercy in Cheltenham.**

witness the laying of the foundation stone. In **Our Midst noted, 'The scene might have been taken from a medieval Pageant, as the procession of Sisters wended its way across the green paddocks, joined by a long queue of white-robed clergy.'** The ceremony was performed by Lady Huntingfield who was married to the Governor of Victoria. She was a



*Left & right- further scenes from the laying of the foundation stone in October 1935. Note the market gardens in the background. At the right is Lady Huntingfield and Sister Ida.*



The House of Mercy was set in eight acres of rural countryside and market gardens. CHN acquired four adjoining acres where, for the princely sum of £7700, Community House was built. Now recognised as a Heritage building, it was designed by

woman with a social conscience, a commoner who had married into English aristocracy and used her influence to champion the care of children in need and the provision of modern healthcare for all Victorians.



*Left & right-scenes from the hallowing of the Community House in 1936. On the left are the House of Mercy girls with Sister Christina.*



architect Louis Williams, a two storey Spanish Mission style building with white stucco walls, tiled roof and a campanile. It was a fitting memorial to Mother Esther who had died four years previously, and realised her vision of gathering all the Sisters together as a united force, in a place suitable for their spiritual formation, as well as being a peaceful

In 1936, the Archbishop of Melbourne dedicated the building, on 26 May, the birthday of the Mother Foundress, Sister Esther. He stated that the **Community House would generate 'an influence that will become more and more a very important factor in the Church life of the diocese.'**

## Everyday epiphanies: a reflection

On the Feast of the Epiphany, 6 January, we celebrate the visit of the wise men from the East to the baby Jesus. The significance of this lies in it being the manifestation of Christ to the gentile world. But **that's not the only epiphany there is. Any moment when God's presence is suddenly revealed to us is an epiphany** (or a Theophany).

The experience of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus was an epiphany (Luke 24:13-35). Sometimes an epiphany can be very dramatic, as it was for Paul on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1-19). **But most often it's something much more ordinary.** God is with us always, in the everyday parts of our lives as well as the special times; in fact more in the ordinary times because they make up a much greater part of our lives.

The more we are able to see the sacred in everything, even, or perhaps especially, in the small, ordinary things, the more we will be receptive to epiphany moments. So if we learn to live with open and expectant hearts, we can have epiphany moments at any time. It takes a willingness to slow down and be aware, to open ourselves to the possibility of an epiphany.

My first epiphany moment, at least the first that I remember vividly, occurred when I was a child of about 12. It was late one autumn day and my mother and I were out walking.



*Classic Oak Tree by David Anstiss on [geograph.org.uk](http://geograph.org.uk)*

Suddenly I found myself transfixed by the sight of a bare tree silhouetted against the evening sky. I felt myself to be in the presence of Beauty itself, with **a capital "B"**, and I felt called to respond but had no idea how to because I felt limited by my finiteness and incapable of making an adequate response. Later I recognised this as an experience of God.

*Excerpt from Day of Prayer and Reflection, June 2019, by Sr. Avrill, CHN*

## Discovering Wisdom: a reflection

Wisdom is often confused with having knowledge, understanding and discernment. Wisdom goes beyond these three. It is to exercise sound judgement, based on knowledge, understanding and discernment, in order to pursue a proper course of action.

The greatest wisdom known to Scripture is found in the skill of living well. True wisdom is to perceive the nature of this world as created by God, and to live in accord with it.

**I believe we all have wisdom but we don't** always recognize it in our selves.

There are ways which may help us to discover our inner wisdom:

- Listening to others, especially those older than us.
- Having a Spiritual Director or Mentor.
- Sometimes, just speaking with another helps us to find our inner wisdom.
- Trusting in God, and asking him to give us the wisdom required when we have to make decisions. When I have an important decision to make, and I am open to recognize his prodding, I make the wisest decision and speak the truth wisely.

Where does the way of true wisdom lead? To the deepest centre of who we are, where God

dwells.

What are the times in your life when you believe you have made wise decisions?

What helped you in making those decisions?



*Image from [chucklawless.com](http://chucklawless.com)*

*Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. (Matthew 7:24)*

Time ripens all things. No one is born wise.

*Excerpt from Day of Prayer and Reflection, July 2019, by Sr. Carol, CHN*

## Commandment: a reflection

MEANING: a divine rule, especially one of the ten commandments.

Unless I am wrong the Ten Commandments are, apart from the first two, about what you should not do. On the whole they are basic rules that help a Society function; we all need boundaries. When there are rules you know there are consequences. They allow us to live safe lives.

Do not covet what is not yours.

Be honest even if it costs you more than you wish.

Do not cheat or lie if it benefits you or yours alone.

Take care of those who have much less than you.

What most of us do well is the first commandment - to love the Lord YOUR GOD with all Your Soul.

Now there are temptations that are not bad for the soul, like should I have had that last bit of chocolate. Then there are temptations that are harmful to the soul. I think we all know those that are part of our lives. They are different for each of

us. We are Blessed to have a loving and forgiving GOD who is ever present for each of us.

Now getting back to the Commandments. The one that I think trips us all up is the second one: TO LOVE MY NEIGHBOUR AS MYSELF.

**I, and I don't know about the rest of you, find it much easier to do the reverse. I can love my neighbour, but myself, that's when it can be tricky.** But it does link in with the first, to LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART AND SOUL.

**It is just as important to love yourself. I can't** tell you how to do this as I am on the same journey with you. But it is something we need to really stop and think about. It is not an egotistical love or a false **perception of yourself. It's a soul connecting love,** God and others; we are all in it together.

*The Day of Prayer and Reflection,  
August 2019, by Sr. Andrea, CHN*

## New in the Library by our Librarian, Philip Harvey

The arrival this year at the Spirituality Centre of the Living Well Centre for Christian Spirituality coincides with a large donation of quality books from John Stewart. John is the founding Director of the Centre and now its co-director of spiritual direction formation. He has been an Anglican priest since 1973 and has held various positions of ministry over the years including eight years as Warden of the Retreat House here in Cheltenham, where the Living Well Centre ministry had its origins. In some sense it could be said this is a homecoming.

It is the largest single donation received by the CHN Library. Spiritual direction and specialized pastoral care are major strengths, reflecting a lifetime of dedicated learning in these areas, but also scripture, commentaries, theology, inter-religious dialogue, and the history of Christian spirituality. Titles in the donation help augment and update the already excellent holdings in these subjects. It means the Library can provide further breadth and depth in spiritual direction and allied ministries.

The donation includes a substantial number of works from the library of David Brown. David is a Uniting Church minister who played a central role in **the assembling of that Church's worship books, so** liturgy and prayer books are an outstanding part of his collection. He has read widely across the Christian traditions and is highly versed in varying liturgical practices, both Western and Eastern, hence

some remarkable and valuable additions to the Library which we would not otherwise have been able to procure.

The changing use of what was the Community House has brought changes to the purpose and collection development of the Library. As well as being the Library of the Community itself (sisters, oblates, associates and friends), which is its first priority, the Library now serves a diverse variety of visitors, any and all of whom could find something to meet their need in this special collection. Whether on retreat or at a quiet day, at a conference or private gathering, those coming here bring their own reading needs. The Library is here to surprise, enlighten, challenge, teach, feed; the Library offers wisdom and nourishment for the visitor.

Donations like those of John Stewart and David Brown open up greater possibilities for connection. They exist inside the familiar traditions represented in the Library and keep us updated on new thinking in words.

