

Soul-Carer's letter August 2010.



Dear Associate,

As I write this letter I am conscious that it is a long time since I did so. With the advent of the website, more and more Associates using email, and our "Waterholes" newsletter, I had not had the "nudge" to write as regularly as I had intended at the formation of the Community. However I have come to see the value in keeping in touch this way, perhaps more for me than you?! By the time you receive this letter you will have received the latest edition of "Waterholes" This would not be of the standard and quality it is without the great giftedness of our web servant and editor Colin Thornby. There is little doubt without his contribution to the life of our Community we would not have grown in numbers and depth as we have. I want to take this opportunity to honour and acknowledge this "true servant leader" in our midst; one who truly lives a contemplative life in the world.

Writing has always been my medium for thinking out loud; for letting go of inner issues which may be "bugging" me. Since the gift of a laptop it is so much easier physically to do this. I have always found keeping a journal beneficial for my spiritual growth and know so many others find this a helpful inner journey "tool".

I continue to write, in long hand, personal letters of welcome to new Associates along with our brochure, membership form, most recent newsletter and prayer card as I am given your names. Typing certainly means my writing is more legible! It is so much more accessible and I have found helps me think more clearly as I write, plus providing the added advantage of not having to cross out mistakes!!!

It is always a joy to welcome new Associates particularly when hearing how the person has heard of us and why they wish to be associated with us. Here are words written by a new associate. "Whilst looking through the SCP (Society of Catholic Priests) I discovered the Anam Cara website and have been deeply moved and inspired by what I read." Others have made similar comments at other times. There seems to be a "mystery" quality to our Community which attracts others. In my own growth I have become more and more comfortable with mystery with "not knowing" for there is God. On receiving my welcome letter, the response demonstrated this hidden quality even more, "What a joy I felt when I received your welcoming letter. Your warm and & generous response to my enquiry reflects the ethos of the community you represent. I look forward to the journey of hope---"

This has certainly spurred me on to keep in more personal contact with you all. You will find accompanying this letter a Statement of the Community to clearly speak of who we are for now and into the future. This is a statement of the outer workings of the Community. The "mystery" of the uniqueness of the Community lies in the unwritten, the inner, the soul and core. I hasten to add I am NOT a writer as in "author", just one who enjoys putting words on paper in order to communicate to God, self and others

The leadership team continues to meet on the first Saturday, Bi-Monthly to pray, reflect, plan the ongoing life of the Community. This is a time of great encouragement out of which new "ideas" "actions" flow.

I invite you to the Quiet days on September 11th; October 9th; October 30th, all advertised on the website, in Waterholes, or information sent out via email or snail mail by the gatherers and soul carers of the meeting places.

I especially encourage you and invite you to be present at the Annual Thanksgiving and Commissioning Service to be held at St. Paul's Cathedral Sale, on Saturday November 27th at 11am followed by a light lunch. This is a wonderful opportunity for Associates and others to come together to give thanks to God for the past year; to pray for the year ahead; to commission new associates and team leaders. The Bishop (or for this year, the Vicar General) and the Dean will lead the service along with associates of the community. A TIME OF BEING TOGETHER.

One of the greatest growths at this present time is the formation of a "Meeting Place" in Canberra. Our Bishop John liaised with the Bishop of Canberra Goulburn Bishop Stuart Robinson. I had approached a retired Anglican priest I knew in Canberra to be the gatherer/soul carer, Jeannette McHugh. She was already an Associate along with several others in Canberra. It seemed the "right" time to begin a meeting place in Canberra. Jeannette felt a real "call" of God to pursue this new ministry. She met with Bishop Stuart who was overwhelmingly supportive of all the Community ethos and encouraged her to begin.

The first gathering was on August 8th. Like the original gatherings here in Gippsland we “wait” for the Holy Spirit to bring about the growth and gently lead and guide. I am confident a “meeting place” in Canberra will evolve in this same manner. My Australian “roots” are in Canberra, as I first arrived there from England in 1974. All my family continue to live in Canberra so I am there often. This too seemed a good and obvious reason to have our first “meeting place” beyond the bounds of Gippsland in the national capital.

The Community continues to have liaison and involvement with the development of the Centre for Spirituality and the Environment at A’Beckett Park on Raymond Island. Two of our leadership team, Jane Macqueen and Brian Turner serve on the A’Beckett Park Development Committee. In time the “Abbey of St Barnabas” as it is known, will have its own Community. The Anam Cara Community will NOT be that community although individual associates may become part of such a live in community in the future. It is important that the Anam Cara Community retain its original vision of being a DISPERSED Community.

Growing in AWARENESS OF God is at the heart of the inner journey. Growing in awareness of God in everything is my greatest desire. A former Bishop and spiritual guide of mine once said, “There is nowhere where God is not” and “Whoever you think God to be She is not!” I wonder who God is for YOU right now in your journey and who YOU are for God? I continue to journey with these questions, with great excitement and expectation for growth and transformation.

My love & prayers for each of you as you make your own unique journey into God and your truest self.

Anne Turner

PS A gentle reminder if you have forgotten to pay your 2010 Associate subs.
\$20.00 single, \$30.00 couple to

The Treasurer Kate Campbell
Anam Cara Community
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Anam Cara Community Statement

1.0 Mission

1.1 The Anam Cara Community is a dispersed Christian contemplative community of prayer and support for the inner journey into God.

2.0 Objectives

2.1 The Anam Cara Community will serve God, the Anglican Diocese of Gippsland and the wider church by:

- Forming a community of individuals (associates) who seek to live the contemplative life, in all its dimensions;
- Providing resources for individuals, parishes and other groups to support the inner journey into God;
- Being a community of prayer, worship, the Bible, reflection, discernment, justice and mutual support.

3.0 Values

3.1 The Anam Cara Community is a *Christian* community, rooted in the historic faith. We recognize and celebrate the many and varied expressions of the Christian tradition within the Anglican Communion, and in our sister churches. We also recognize and celebrate the wisdom of other religious traditions, and seek to understand and learn from their experiences. We acknowledge the importance of the traditions and wisdom of Australian Indigenous spirituality, particularly the understanding of the link between spirit and earth.

3.2 The Anam Cara Community is a *contemplative* community, committed to the understanding that God calls us to make an inner journey the end of which, ultimately, is union with God. We celebrate the ways of prayer, prayerful reading of scripture, worship, spiritual direction / soul care, reflection and silence. While we value the contemporary, we also value the historical wisdom drawn from the mothers and fathers of the tradition.

3.3 The Anam Cara Community is a community of the *Word*. Jesus, the Word, is communicated to us through the texts of the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures, in which we seek truth, wisdom, nourishment, correction and guidance.



3.4 The Anam Cara Community is a community committed to *equality, peace and justice making*. We believe that response to God's call to the inner journey is a call to make peace and work for justice.

3.5 The Anam Cara Community is a community of *renewal and reformation*. We hear God's call to make all things new, and to continually examine our expression of faith to determine what supports, and what hinders our growth in God, and our service of the world.

3.6 The Anam Cara Community is an *open* community. We are open to all, and undertake to work co-operatively, respectfully and transparently with parishes and other ministries in the Diocese.

3.7 The Anam Cara Community is a *dispersed* community. Whilst we do not live together, or even close to one another, we acknowledge that we are sisters and brothers, and fellow pilgrims.

4.0 Leadership

4.1 Leadership within the Anam Cara Community is modelled after the leadership and ministry of Jesus, who taught his disciples:

So Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers in this world lord it over their people, and officials flaunt their authority over those under them. But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must be the slave of everyone else."¹

4.2 We understand this to be ***servant leadership***. Robert Greenleaf describes servant leadership in this way:

The servant-leader is servant first... It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is leader first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions...The leader-first and the servant-first are two extreme types. Between them there are shadings and blends that are part of the infinite variety of human nature.

The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant-first to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served. The best test, and

¹ Mark 10:42-44 NLT, cf Matthew 20:25-28, John 13:12-15



difficult to administer, is: Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society? Will they benefit or at least not be further deprived?²

4.3 Servant leadership within the Community is mediated through human beings, gifted and called by God and commissioned by the Bishop and the Community to serve the Community.

4.4 The **Community Soul Carer** is the chief servant leader of the Community. The Community Soul Carer is appointed by the Bishop to guide, support, lead, teach and inspire the Community, and the individuals within it. We understand our Soul Carer to hold an important place within our Community, to have much responsibility and to be in need of our love, support and prayer.

4.5 **Soul Carers** are nominated by the Community's Leadership Group on the recommendation of the Community Soul Carer in accordance with Diocesan policy and procedures on the ministry of Spiritual Directors. Together with the Community Soul Carer they guide, support, lead, teach and inspire individuals within the Community.

4.6 **Gatherers** are nominated by the Community's Leadership Group, and are responsible for supporting and leading individuals in designated geographical areas (Meeting Places).

4.7 The Community Soul Carer, Soul Carers and Gatherers together with others nominated by the Community Soul Carer form the **Community's Leadership Group**. This group is responsible to the Bishop for the good order, leadership, direction and care of the Community. The Community Soul Carer is the leader of the Leadership Group, but may delegate specific leadership tasks to any member of the Group. The Leadership Group will appoint individuals to specific responsibilities, including a treasurer, newsletter editor, web servant, secretary, and other offices as required.

4.8 Individuals who wish to become members of the Community are known as **Associates**. Associates commit to regular prayer, Bible reading, worship, and to walking in the steps of Jesus, as they are called. Associates may be from any Christian denomination. The Community's Leadership structures exist to serve the Associates, and others who may choose to access resources provided by the Community.

² Greenleaf, R. K. (1991). *The servant as leader* ([Rev. ed.]). Indianapolis, Ind.: Robert K. Greenleaf Center.



5.0 Organisation

5.1 In order to care for a dispersed Community, the Community's Leadership Group will create **Meeting Places**. A Meeting Place is a geographical area, in which associates live and activities such as quiet days are held. At present these Meeting Places include, West Gippsland, South Gippsland, Sale, East Gippsland, Latrobe Valley and Raymond Island. The Leadership Group may also, subject to the approval of the Bishop of Gippsland and the bishop of the other diocese, create Meeting Places for associates in other diocese of the Anglican Church of Australia. Associates who do not live in a geographic meeting place are served by the Virtual Meeting Place, which is mediated through print and electronic resource materials. The Leadership Group will appoint one or more Gatherers and Soul Carers for each Meeting Place. Gatherers and Soul Carers together will be responsible for the creation of schedules of activities in each Meeting Place.

6.0 Oversight

6.1 The Anam Cara Community is a ministry of the Anglican Diocese of Gippsland, offered by the Diocese to the whole church.

6.2 The Leadership Group and Community Soul Carer are responsible to the Bishop of Gippsland and the Synod of the Diocese of Gippsland for the good order of the Community.

6.3 The Leadership Group and Community Soul Carer will take all steps to ensure that the Community's activities function in accordance with Diocesan requirements, including (but not limited to) professional standards, power-and-trust, accounting, authorization for ministry, and privacy.

*Approved by the Community's Leadership Group
7 August 2010*