

ANAM CARA COMMUNITY GIPPSLAND



*Anne Turner
Soul Carer*

April 25 2009

Dear Fellow Associates,

Here is the latest news following our executive meeting this month. The most significant aspect of our meeting was the structure John White has envisaged to describe the Community and its purpose. We are growing in providing spiritual/soul activities for Associates and others in each of the "Meeting places" throughout the Diocese. There are three "streams" being offered to support Associates and others. Stream (1) based on meditation and contemplative prayer; stream (2) based on one or more days based on a particular theme and stream (3), based on spiritual development programs. Each Meeting Place can plan around these three streams giving well balanced and varied opportunities to make the inward journey through the Diocese.

Since the February newsletter, I have led a three day retreat for three ordinands at a beach house at The Honeysuckles, supported by Associates providing meals and physical help. The theme I chose was "being transformed through prayer. I was able to introduce the participants to different forms of prayer, meditation and contemplation. Worship and sessions were integrated as a whole and there was plenty of time for solitude silence and stillness. The biblical accounts of the Transfiguration were at the heart of the retreat and the reflective sermon at the service. We each experienced some form of transformation in our inner lives as a result of drawing aside to, "BE", before the climax of the ordination service itself and the "DOING" which has followed for each of the Deacons.

In March, the Sale meeting place had organised a quiet day at the Campbell's home at Loch Sport, right on the Marina. Joy led us gently and deeply, using the theme of "Water, Oceans of God's Love". She shared many of her mandalas and collection of shells for us to us to tell our stories and contemplate water as an image of the "feminine divine." Yet again people were able to come from further afield to share in the day and there was plenty of time and space for silence stillness and solitude, as we contemplated our relationship with our inner feminine soul and feminine images of God, as well as our relationship with water. Connecting our stories with God's story in the sharing helped each of us journey to deeper places.

As I write this I have just returned from participating in the Pilgrimage to Raymond Island, facilitated by Michael & Andrea Begg over here from Ireland. They are skilled facilitators of Celtic spirituality pilgrimages, connecting with the land and story telling. This pilgrimage attracted people from all over the Diocese and from other denominations. A wonderful mix of experiences and spirituality, of men and women, each hungry to go deeper into God. Some of the large group left at the end of Saturday whilst a smaller group stayed overnight, enjoying the continuing pilgrimage on Sunday. It was a significant event in the light of the vision for A'Beckett Park to become a centre for pilgrimage and retreat connecting with the environment. It was as if we were walking and praying into the vision and its fulfilment."For the pilgrim there is no set path. The path is made by walking."(Michael Begg)

As a result of these two events we have new Associates and a growing understanding of the purpose of the Anam Cara Community. In the light of the pilgrimage, it seems very appropriate that the Valley's meeting place under Carolyn R's leadership has organised a day of indigenous spirituality at Billy's Creek facilitated by Pastor Kathy Dalton. It is on **May 2nd**. This being the spirituality of the land will be conducted outside in a most beautiful part of Gippsland. There is no cost for this day.

On **May 9th** the parish of Newborough has invited the community to speak about the inward journey in a workshop style. Jane M is taking me to speak on behalf of the community. We would appreciate prayer please.

June 20th, the West Gippsland Meeting Place is having a day gathering, "Dreams-experience endless awakenings" led by Archdeacon David & Mrs Anne Chambers from Melbourne Diocese More details at a later date from Marion W.

July 4th. Latrobe Valley Meeting Place is having a "Lectio Divina" Day with Sr. Mhoira of The Benedictine Companions of Christ Crucified. Please contact Carolyn R for registering for what should be a deep day of learning an important way of prayer used over the centuries. More details will be available closer to the date.

August 22nd 10am -2.30pm West Gippsland Meeting Place are having a day gathering on Masks, led by Rev'd Lyn Porritt, "Just the way you are - a day exploring the masks we wear".

September 12th South Gippsland meeting Place will be having a "Spring" Quiet Day. More details from Gatherer Ruth P who, with new Associate Colin Thornby will be facilitating the quiet day. How we will be ready for a "spring" experience in this Bushfire area.

October? Sale Meeting Place will be having a spiritual development day on Christian Meditation and Contemplation.

November 28th 11am Annual Thanksgiving & Commissioning Eucharist at St. Paul's Cathedral Sale. followed by a light lunch.

As well as these "days" there are a number of small groups happening within the various Meeting Places. Please ask your Gatherer for information. Some groups are already full but others may spring up as the need arises. Any Associate is encouraged to facilitate a small group. Just talk it over with your particular Gatherer or one of the 4 soul-carers. We are planning to have a soul-carer for each meeting place.

The Sale meeting Place organises a monthly "Listener's" group facilitated by Associate Patricia McC. It is held on the 4th Friday at 12.3-2pm. A lunchtime for working people to listen with the ears of the heart using worship, meditations, music and silence. West Gippsland is also planning a Listener's group and Sue J will be setting up a group in Trafalgar for Christian meditation. A Christian meditation group continues at St James, Traralgon.

The West Gippsland meeting Place is exploring a spiritual development programme called, "Living the Questions". An information session will be held at St. Mark's Yarragon, 2pm. This is a 21 week programme in 3 lots of 7. The "Myssfits" continue to meet in Trafalgar using the book by Caroline Myss, "Entering the Castle" In Sale a group will spend time at the Miller's home Contemplating "The New Earth", Eckhard Tolle. The Valley meeting place is exploring a small group called ----"Pizza Pilgrims." looking at the sermons of Ian Lawton published on the internet. Ask Joy C about this!

The Sale Meeting place continues to facilitate an hour of contemplative prayer on the 4th Sunday of each month at 5pm in the Cathedral Lady Chapel. All welcome.

The Gatherers are responsible for the advertising of each of the three “streams” and will be responsible for sending a report to TGA. A reminder that the deadline for the Community half yearly June Newsletter by Mid-May. Please send your contributions to me so that I can pass on to the editor for each newsletter. Please do not be shy to share whatever. Other Associates, especially those living outside the Diocese can be fed spiritually through our contributions. For some, it may be the only soul feeding they are receiving. It can also be a good place for the sharing of stories. There will be more in depth sharing of events in this main newsletter.

It is good to know that TGA want to have regular updates on the life and ministry of the Community and is planning to do a special feature on the Community.

We are not sure how much the Anam Cara library is being used so we have put off buying any new books at present.

With regard to the prayer diary, is there anyone ‘out there’ who would like to compile such a resource for Associates’ prayer.

We are still praying for a “Gatherer” for the Bairnsdale rural deanery area. Anyone sensing the “call”?

As a result of the “events” which have already happened and by word of mouth we continue a steady growth in fully registered Associates, 60+ TO DATE. At our meeting Carolyn led us in a meditation, imaging a tree from a seed. We can dig, plant, and water etc but God gives the growth. We need always to remember this truth.

A report on the Anam Cara Community appears in the Synod Booklet for the May Synod.

I am overjoyed to see the “thematic day gathering” planned for the rest of the year, and to hear of small groups emerging some for the “prayer arm” some for “spiritual development”. Please let your Gatherer know of any initiatives you would like to instigate. Please do not forget this is **not** a hierarchical community but a circle of soul friends companioning each other on this most incredible of journeys.

With love and prayers,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Anne Turner".

Anne Turner