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# LIVING COMMUNITY

## November 2011

Dear Friends,

As we go to print we have just experienced saying a loving, Christian farewell to Jill Gibbs who died on November 4<sup>th</sup>. Jill passed away peacefully, supported by family and friends through her last illness. She was an inspiration to us right up to her death. Her funeral Mass was celebrated by family and friends at Giovanni Chapel, St Vincent's Hospital, Brisbane, and her body was laid to rest in Nudgee Catholic Lawn Cemetery. Members of the Group, past and present, travelled long distances to say goodbye to Jill. We give thanks to God for giving her to us and to the world.

With this edition of "Living Community" we are bringing you the news that our national office has moved from Morisset to Brisbane. After twenty five years of apostolic commitment Sr. Tess Connolly RSJ is retiring from her role as secretary. We thank Tess for her devoted service and friendship over the years and look forward to her continuing with us as a collaborator.

At our annual gathering at lovely Manly on Moreton Bay in Brisbane we unanimously elected Margaret Green as our new director in Australia from the end of 2011. During the week together, the thirteen participants reflected on our life as a 'group of mission' at the service of the church for a better world. Wanting to be true to our vocation and mission we wish Margaret well as we journey with her in a spirit of co-responsibility.

Before Jill died, she and I had completed another formation book, Journey Together 2, for those "salt of the earth" people who carry forward the apostolate and mission of Jesus as members of our church.

We are particularly honoured that Bishop William Morris who, as bishop of Toowoomba Diocese, had ordered a large number of our Journey Together 1 formation booklets, has now written some words of support for our second creation.

We express our admiration for Bishop Bill and stand in solidarity with him in wanting to build a church of equality, participation and dialogue. We are grateful to him for his never-ceasing commitment to the Australian church as a loyal and caring shepherd.

Thank you to all our friends who believe in and support our work for the renewal of church and society. We wish you much peace and happiness in your own life and mission for a better world.

Yours in hope

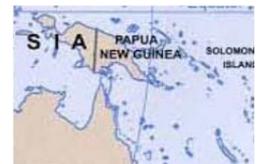
**Fr Michael Fallon**  
Retiring Director, CBW Australia

Dear Friends,

I'd just like to say, for all the members of CBW, how appreciative and thankful we are for the dedication, generosity, commitment and love that Fr Michael has poured into our lives and countless others around Australia and our near neighbours. He did this as Director, but mostly as co-worker and close friend. Any of you who have heard Michael "in full flight" speaking about the Reign of God, here but still coming, will know exactly what I mean. It goes without saying that he will continue working within our group but now in a part time role not full time. Thanks Michael.

**Terry Casey**

## NEWS FROM OCEANIA



## PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Life is busy for us here with a full calendar for the year. At present we are involved in giving a course at the Catholic Theological Institute (Seminary) in Port Moresby.

The course is entitled: Pastoral Theology and Strategy in a Church of Communion. We are involved with the last two years of Theology with 38 students. We are working as a team, myself with Sr. Bernadette, Fr. Martin Potkau and Mr. Mariano Mamei.

While in Moresby I am continuing the work with the Moresby Archdiocese where we have completed the Diagnosis and will begin discerning the Pastoral Plan.

I am also working with Mt. Hagen Archdiocese to review the Analysis and Diagnosis documents they did in the 90s. We hope by the end of the year to arrive at a new plan and move to Phase 2. We continue work with the other dioceses in different ways and keep in contact.

One of our concerns is the lack of depth in our membership. We need more educated and competent people to complement the work of the grassroots and village based members. With the present needs and potential for the future we need to promote a stronger membership.

The Local Teams in Wewak and Bereina have a number of members in formation which, in a year or so, should give us a boost. We are also looking for members for the National Team as there is much to do; and more we could do with more hands and heads.

So we keep doing as much as we can, planting seeds and hoping to see movement. All the best to all CAS members in Australia.

Fr Roger Purcell msc  
Director CAS Papua New Guinea

## AUSTRALIA

### The Power of Journeying Together

Our small group of St John the Baptist, Enoggera, parishioners met together fortnightly earlier this year to complete the 10 topics of "*Journey Together*". What drew us together was a desire for nourishment and growth in our faith; but remarkable also were the differences in our backgrounds and experience in life and of the Church. Our group contained a very traditional Catholic, a migrant convert, and a relatively recent RCIA convert, a mum who was discovering herself anew through her parish pastoral work, and me, a member of the Brisbane team.

On reflection, the guidelines ensured a faith experience we all came to appreciate, for we were reminded that we needed to listen to each other; to give silent space for each of us to speak.

Over time it was evident that each of us had been deeply moved by some point or other, and everyone remarked that they had begun to reflect more deeply on the topic because of what they had heard.

I was moved to see how well each prepared for the meeting and took their turn as 'leader'. With each reflection on life, the gospel passages and the selection of a specific action to follow the topic, each of us became ever more aware of the work of the Spirit as faith had been strengthened or challenged. 'Hope' was a constant in our diverse experiences.

We changed in other ways too over the weeks as one hour became two as we caught up before the topic with cake and a cuppa. Afterwards, as we tidied the hall, we found we could help each other out in our lives and in parish work. It was wonderful. All have asked for 'More Please'. Thank you, Michael and Jill.

Margaret Green

### 'JESUS' comes to Corinda/Graceville

The Brisbane team presented a relaxed well-attended day of reflection on ***Jesus and the Good News of the Reign of God*** to parishioners of Corinda/Graceville on August 29 last year in the Christ the King parish hall. Fr Bill O'Shea and Margaret Green led the group in an interactive process over three sessions that included input, silence, reflection, sharing, exploration of scripture and prayer.

The three sessions were:

Jesus promotes Reign of God through his Word, his teachings and his Parables;

Jesus promotes the Reign of God through his Action – his works of mercy and his miracles; Jesus entrusts his disciples with his Mission.

We hoped the day would encourage people to be drawn to Jesus and his way of life and to see that we can live it, as a fully human life.

This day of reflection was developed by the Brisbane Team with insights from our National Group in response to Archbishop Bathurst's request for material to assist parishes over a three year period depth the meaning of an Archdiocesan vision described as ***Jesus, Communion, Mission***.

The Team was very pleased that the parish then asked us to return this year to present days of reflection on ***Communion*** and ***Mission***.

## **Going to Holy Communion: a Parish Journey for all God's People**

During Lent the people of St John Vianney Parish Morisset gathered each Friday for a time of reflection and sharing on the Eucharist. With assistance from Michael Fallon they spent time thinking about the spirit and purpose of the Introductory Rites, the Liturgy of the Word, the Liturgy of the Eucharist itself and the Concluding Rites. Then they explored the personal, social and structural implications of each part of the Eucharist for their community life as church.

The Introductory Rites invite us to think about the ways we can convene all our people; beginning in their streets and neighbourhoods. The Liturgy of the Word asks us, as parish, to organize ourselves systematically so as to enter into gospel dialogue as a way of life, just as dialogue is God's way of relating to us. The Liturgy of the Eucharist speaks to us of gratefully taking hold of our giftedness as a people and offering our gifts sacrificially at the service of the reign of God in a deepening communion with one another in Christ. The Concluding Rites remind us that the whole of the Eucharist is the celebration of a missionary people who see themselves as having a vocation to be "light and yeast and salt" for the transformation of society according to the heart of God. The whole Eucharistic celebration challenges the parish to put itself in a permanent condition of evangelizing everybody and everything,

So the four spiritual reflection sessions were based on the conviction that we, as church, need to make our pastoral restructuring and leadership of parishes, deaneries and diocese coherent with the Eucharist. What we celebrate spiritually in the various parts of the Eucharist we need to make visible in our style of life as church.

The way we organize ourselves in parishes, deaneries and diocese needs to be consistent and true to our nature as human beings and true to our church nature.

Lent is always a call to conversion and a time to receive from the Crucified Jesus and the Risen Christ the gift of newness of life. In the sessions we helped one another discover how the Spirit of the Lord is calling all the people of St John Vianney Parish and every parish to take further steps of growth together as disciples of Jesus.

## **National Pastoral Planners Network Conference: Living Hope, Living Mission**

This conference was held at Mary McKillop Place from late afternoon 7 June until midday 10 June 2011.

Each day started with Morning Prayer and finished with evening prayer or the conference Eucharist. The liturgies were inspirational and were greatly enhanced by keyboard and singing.

The four keynote addresses were among the highlights of the conference.

The Opening Address "Overview of the challenges facing church in 21st Century" was given by Archbishop John Dew (Wellington, NZ). He took as a theme the story of Zaccheus (Luke 19, 1-13). Zaccheus became closer to God, to neighbour, his alienation was gone, he began to see the truth of himself, he was set free in God. Archbishop John asked us "who and where are our Zaccheuses Do we call them by name and then leave the rest up to God? He suggested that belonging comes before believing.

The 2nd keynote: "The Context of Church Mission in the 21st Century" was given by Rev Dr Richard Leonard, SJ. Among other things he stressed the need to read the 'Signs of the Times'. Mission involves three things: Witness by word and example, going out to the world, but not with the same old words; Inculturation and finally, Liberation which means that we need to be set free to be sons and daughters of God, free of old images of a tyrannical God.

Dr. Robyn Horner, ACU, Melbourne, gave her keynote talk on "The Theology of Hope", illustrating her ideas by referring to 1 Peter 3:15, Romans 8:24, Romans 4:18.

How is Church to be a beacon of hope? We have to hope for something but if we only hope for what is possible, it's not hope.

The basis of Christian hope

- a) only God guarantees hope's fulfilment
- b) we dive and don't know we'll emerge, but we believe God holds us.

The nub: hoping against hope.

If we cannot see our future as church, we must discern a way forward, based on fundamental hope.

We have to be watchful, awaiting, but not paralysed.

We have to pray that God will: pray in us, hope in us, move in us, act in us.

On Friday, Rev Dr John Chalmers, ACU, Brisbane, spoke on "How the Church Supports the Mission". The sub-title could be: "Seeking Asylum in God's Pastoral Strategy".

Asylum Seekers have swallowed the story about a future of freedom in a true homeland. The story we've swallowed is God. Heaven is our homeland – here we're 'resident aliens'. For him, Pastoral Planning is about the Spirit of God working through the people of God for the life of the world. It should not be stymied by scarcity of priests. Lay people are a leaven in the community - there is abundant grace on the loose among us. The challenge is living in the present reality and striving for the future reality.

There were panel discussions, workshops and small group discussions. A great deal of interest was in the Lay Pastoral Leadership model of the Wellington Archdiocese, pioneered by Cardinal Williams and supported and enhanced by Archbishop John Dew. The Archdiocese has six pastoral areas consisting of 2 or 3 parishes, of which 1 has a Lay Pastoral Leader, working with a sacramental priest. These people are highly trained in both theology and pastoral matters.

I took part in a workshop on 'Inclusion'. One of the participants spoke glowingly of the Community for a Better World parish planning model in Mosman, (Sydney Archdiocese) and described it as her best experience of inclusion. She was pastoral associate there for 12 years and the parish priest was there a total of eighteen years and very committed to making this vision of parish work.

### **2011 Cenacle – Rome, September 11 to 23**

During the National Convivenza in July the group arranged for me, as newly elected Director to attend the Cenacle, with Fr Kevin McIntosh (Parish Priest of Sunbury, Victoria). In Rome I was unaware of the powerful experience of being part of the international work of the group. In the evaluation at the Cenacle's conclusion, many commented that it had been the best they had experienced, marked by graciousness and joy.

In this short account, I am unable to comment in any depth. The election of the General direction resulted in Feliciano Rodriguez (Puerto Rico), Nacho Gonzalez (Spain), Keith Gordon-Davis (South Africa), Mirek Grendus (Poland), Carlos Sola (Puerto Rico).

The commissions formed to carry on the work of the group include: The Spirituality of Communion, in particular the Communitarian Exercises and Signs of the Times; Processes and Projects; Finances; Spirituality; and Persons and Group. More in coming editions.....

**Margaret Green**

## **INSIGHTS of Fr. LOMBARDI**

### **General Renewal of the Church**

It seems to be that the Lord wants a general renewal the Church, especially in the communitarian aspect, in order to help all humanity to grow in holiness in this moment of history, and to help humanity to go forward on a cosmic and universal journey.

### **Communitarian Holiness**

It seems as if we are in a new phase of the Church where we begin to consider holiness collectively. Here we are like the seed of this group holiness. It is a matter of holiness together, of the holiness of human relationships in a world that at present is lost in hate.

The modern world tends in essence to collectivity: it is pulling down all the barriers, the thousand barriers at international level in every field... Never as at present does this communitarian spirituality, that can strengthen all the efforts of our world towards unity, appear so necessary

**Fr Riccardo Lombardi 'Spiritual Writings'**

## **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

The rediscovery of the "Centrality of the Kingdom" has been one of the most transforming events of the recent history of Christianity; it has been a fundamental "paradigm change" that creates an abyss between two essentially different types of Christianity, although theoretically they might be covered by the same institutional umbrella.

The Church lost this theme and emphasized the Church as central. This resulted in it becoming inward looking rather than adopting its role of looking outwards towards the "hastening of the Kingdom".



## **TOWARDS COMMUNITY SPIRITUALITY: ACTS OF FAITH**

Those of us of a certain age finished Catholic primary school with a number of prayers committed to memory, among which were “Acts” of Faith, Hope and Charity. The Act of Faith went something like this: “O my God, I firmly believe all the truths that the Holy Catholic Church believes and teaches. I believe these truths, O Lord, because Thou, the infallible Truth, hast revealed them to her. In this faith I wish to live and die. Amen.”

Noble sentiments, but more a statement than a prayer, and it does betray a rather narrow or restricted idea of faith. What is emphasised is the content of revealed truth (all that the Holy Catholic Church believes and teaches) whereas biblical faith in God or in Jesus Christ has a much more personal dimension: believing not just what they teach, but believing **in** them, trusting in them, committing oneself to them.

Living a ‘communion life-style’ in our everyday relationships can indeed be summed up under the headings of faith, hope and charity – what have traditionally been called the ‘cardinal virtues’. They hold the key to expressing a communion spirituality. And of course, it is God first and foremost who must be the object of our faith, hope and love. But building on that, we ask how our act of faith, directed primarily to God, can and should also embrace others.

Living in faith means trying to see all (persons, things, events) with the “eyes” of God, from the point of view of God’s wisdom. In that way, it becomes an important dimension of a God-related attitude or outlook on life.

Having relationships of faith with one another means, first of all, recognising one another as sons and daughters of God, and therefore as brothers and sisters in God’s family. This involves seeing others as loved by God, eternally valued by God, and so worthy of being loved. Through Christ, God gives to every human being that dignity which gives him or her the right to be loved.

All others, therefore, are worthy of the kind of faith that God places in them. This means faith that each one is capable of becoming, has the potential to become his or her best self. Such faith in others gives them the opportunity to reveal who they are, and who they want to be. Having faith in others helps them to have faith in themselves. It strengthens them to overcome difficulties and grow in their ideals.

In this sense, our faith is a gift we offer to others. They do not have to earn our faith in them.

Faith implies seeing or perceiving the other from God’s point of view. It means, in other words, seeing others in their closeness to Christ, and in their distance from Christ, because Christ is the ideal model whom God has given us. It means seeing them with an attitude of faith, recognizing in others the seed of salvation planted in them, being alert to what is best in the other person, to what the other person is called to be.

In the words of Genesis 1:26-27, it means recognizing that the other is created in the “image and likeness” of God, and going beyond the externals of looks, personality, character and so on. It means affirming others, but also helping them to identify those aspects in which they need to grow. It means helping what is best in others to emerge, so that they might overcome their limitations and sins.

That does not mean we point out to others what we think their limitations and sins are. We obviously must avoid any judgmental attitude. And to be sincere, we must be prepared and even want others to have and show faith in us in the same way. When we express faith like this through our ways of relating, we help to create the conditions for people to experience being loved by God.

Along with hope and love, faith is an important part of the style of life we are called to live, both within the Church community, and with society as a whole. We have been baptized into a ‘new humanity’, to breathe in the wisdom of God and breathe it out by our response to God in faith. Day by day we try to make that wisdom part of who we are. By relating to one another in faith, we enable the wisdom of God to penetrate the world and the life of the Church through us. This enables the Church and the world and to become more “communion”.

**Fr Bill O’Shea**  
**Adapted from “Exploring the Spirituality of Communion”**  
**a resource of ‘Community for a Better World’**