

St Mary's Matters

A young boy with light brown hair is smiling and giving a thumbs-up. His face is decorated with black and white paint, resembling a mask or tribal design. He is wearing a white shirt. The photo is framed by a yellow, jagged, star-like border. The background of the entire page is a bright blue sky filled with many colorful, multi-colored balloons.

Happiness

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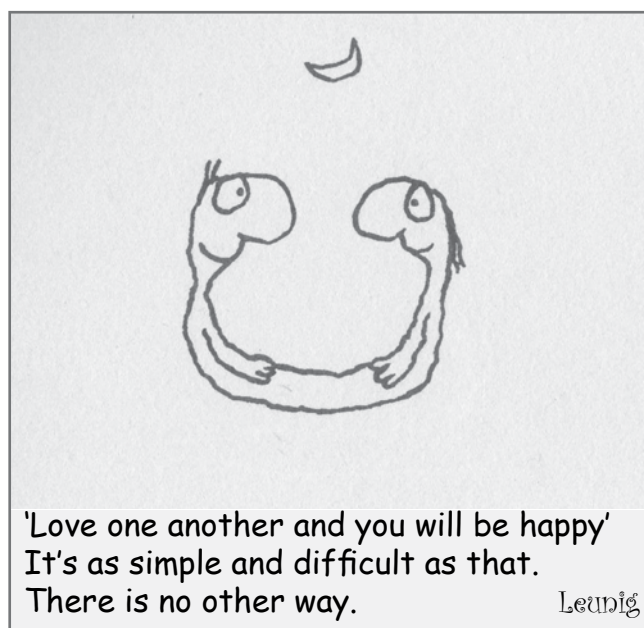


From the Editor

I was reading a book recently about the pursuit of happiness, which detailed research into what makes us happy. To me, a surprising find was that generally we are bad at knowing what would make us feel really good. Most of the things we yearn for, when realised, give at best fleeting happiness.

In this issue there are some very good ideas about what it really takes. The Leunig cartoons, above and below, give us some images of possibilities.

I hope you find this issue of St Mary's Matters interesting. Perhaps it may even help make your life a little happier.



'Love one another and you will be happy'
It's as simple and difficult as that.
There is no other way.

Leunig

Blink

The Speed of Life

How to add years to your life ... and life to your years

The stand up comic had to work extra hard for her fee. Each time she started to tell a joke a small group at one of the front tables interjected with 'Heard it!' Never was a performer so relieved when she left the stage at the end of her act.

In the world of stand-up comedy, original material helps to take the stress out of performing live. Even though happiness has been the subject of investigation for thousands of years and even though happiness research is an emerging field of endeavour, there's no new material. You've heard it all before. And some of those words of wisdom are more than 2000 years old. Socrates (469-399) told us that 'Happiness lies in doing good'. Epictetus (50-130) said that 'Happiness is the natural consequence of doing the right thing'. Proverbs 17:22 assured us that 'A merry heart does good like medicine'. Or in the case of laughter, you don't laugh because you're happy, you're happy because you're laughing.

To highlight what he considered essential for happiness, Epicurus (341-270 BC) divided our needs into three classes. He identified the desires that are natural and necessary – friends, freedom, basic food, shelter and clothes. There are others

that are natural but not necessary – a big house, hired help, a new car and the latest in fashion. And there are those desires that are neither natural nor necessary – power, fame and status.

In Epicurus' view money provided the means to purchase material needs such as appropriate clothes, somewhere to live, and something to eat. If, however, we have money without friends or freedom, according to Epicurus we will not be truly happy. If

we have friendships but not the fortune, we will never be unhappy.

An extract from the book by Neil Flanagan.

Copies of this book will be provided to those who buy this edition of our magazine.



Monday Morning

(I wrote this poem one rainy Monday when I was baulking at going to work. I was contemplating coming back as a cat in my next life!!)

I wish I was a cat
On a rainy day like that
Who likes to rest and nap
Laze about and sit on my lap
Get a little pat
And grow very fat
With lots of food
And cuddles too
I wish I was a cat!

Penny Wearne

Happiness Is

Happiness Is

Happiness is...

happiness is...

happiness is...

happiness is

different things to different people
that's what happiness is –
so says the old song.

To the Dalai Lama the basic
sources of happiness are
a good heart, compassion and love.

Abraham Lincoln said:
'Most folks are as happy as
they make up their minds to be'.
Osho (Rajneesh) believed that
happiness is the reward for a
meditative life – and it was
important to him to differentiate
between pleasure and happiness.

Pleasure is derived from some cause
and happiness is a state of joy
without cause – it emerges naturally
starting to flow from within and
in it you simply rejoice and celebrate life.

This happiness comes when you simply
reside in yourself – he told his disciples to
look at the trees, the birds, the clouds,
the stars – if you have eyes to see, he said,
You will be able to see that the whole of
existence is joyful. Everything is simply
happy – just fundamentally happy.

Thus there is freedom from comparison
and freedom from chasing "the other" .
There is no sense of "less" or something
lacking which is brought about through
the insanity of measuring against some
fictitious ideal.

This means you don't have to become
something other than who you are.
I admit I agree with Osho's thoughts
on happiness (and most other things)
and he goes on to say:

If fundamental happiness were not enough,
one more most beautiful thing then starts
to happen when you reside as yourself:
a joy starts to spontaneously flow...
It gives birth to the miracle of love.

Love is one of the basic sources of happiness
according to the Dalai Lama – suggesting a
circular continuum of cause and effect and
the interrelatedness of all things.

Osho once said: "Peace has to dance
And silence has to sing
And if your innermost
Realization does not
Become laughter then
Something still has to be done".

But what? Speaking of interrelatedness
and taking into account the circular
nature of time perhaps Horace's rhetorical
question
could be echoing down the ages :
'What stops a person who can laugh
from speaking the truth?'

It reminds me of 'The Trouble With St Marys'
and the joyful and fearless way in which
Peter and Terry lead by example
and it fills me with bubbling joyfulness.
A fundamental happiness resides in me
giving birth to the miracle of love
and gratitude at being part of such a community
and that my innermost realization has become
laughter.

- Joan Medlam



Terry gave this great homily which fits our happiness theme perfectly.

A couple of hunters chartered a plane to fly them into forest territory. Two weeks later the pilot came to take them back. He took a look at the animals they had shot and said, "This plane won't take more than one wild buffalo. You'll have to leave the other behind."

"But last year the pilot let us take two in a plane this size," the humans protested.

The pilot was doubtful, but finally he said, "Well, if you did it last year I guess we can do it again."

So the plane took off with the three men and two buffaloes. But it couldn't gain height and crashed into a neighbouring hill. All the men climbed out and looked around. One hunter said to the other, "Where do you think we are?" The other inspected

The Gift of Fullness and Joy

the surroundings and said, "I think we're about two kilometres to the left of where we crashed last year."

I think we can all see a little bit of ourselves in this story. That lack of awareness that allows us to keep making the same mistakes often, over and over.

We are seemingly powerless to change. Yet the message is primarily one of inviting us to WAKE UP and change. In the words of the Gospel, "So stay awake, because you do not know the day your God is coming."

This and other similar texts have often been read in a very narrow and moralistic way, interpreted as a warning of coming doom for all those who are not living free from sin or who do not believe in a particular set of beliefs. In other words, "You better watch out, or else!" you'll find yourself in some stuffy afterlife courtroom before a

'the joy of resting in the presence of God'

severe judge whose job it is to cast a guilty verdict on those who are found unprepared. This understanding fails to grasp the central message of Jesus to stay awake so that we don't miss out on the joy of resting in the presence of God, life in all its fullness, not

in some distant future, but available right now. We need only to live with our eyes open to this gift, which manifests itself in the little unexpected gifts of daily life: the smile on the face of a child, an embrace from a co-worker, a kiss from a spouse, a letter from a friend.

This is the thief that comes unexpectedly in the night – to surprise us with the gift of fullness and joy. Are we ready? Are we awake and watching?

There is an interesting six part series on the ABC at the moment called, "Making Australia Happy" where a panel of three experts in Happiness Psychology invite ten people from varying backgrounds, but all living in the same suburb, who have all identified that they could be happier in their lives. They are invited to a series of tests to determine their level of happiness. They undergo both physical and psychological testing and all have been found to be below the average level of happiness. (You can do this test yourself if you log onto www.abc.net.au/makingaustraliahappy.) They all agreed to undergo a series of exercises designed to increase their level of happiness.

Most of them registered as living very sedentary lives with little or no exercise which affected their metabolism

The Gift of Fullness and Joy

and sleeping patterns. All were encouraged to find a little more exercise in their lives. Some were encouraged to make adjustments to their work commitments to make more time for family, friends and fun.

One was asked to seek financial assistance to help with better budgeting and the spending of his money. All were encouraged to live their lives much more mindfully.

They used a simple exercise of eating and appreciating a sultana – to look at it, to smell it, to feel it, hear it, and eventually to savour it, really entering into the experience of appreciating the sultana.

So many of the simple and beautiful things of our lives get missed because we are never present to them; we don't stop and spend the time to enjoy them. Too busy

thinking about the past, or planning the future, the next thing, so we miss out on really living our lives.

Another exercise they used to emphasize this was that they arranged to meet in a downtown coffee shop where a busker, who was an internationally famous flute player, was playing outside. Only one stopped to listen and appreciate; most walked past her without realizing she was there.

Thomas Merton, the famous

‘..first of all a matter of keeping awake’

Trappist monk, said of the spiritual life, ‘We are like pilots of fog-bound steamers, peering into the gloom in front of us, listening for the sounds of other ships, and we can only reach our harbour if we keep alert.’

The spiritual life is, then, first of all a matter of keeping awakealways able to respond to the slightest warnings that speak, as though by a hidden instinct, in the depth of the soul that is spiritually alive.

I would like to finish with a story that invites us to think more deeply about our invitation to awaken. And the disciple queried, ‘Master, is there anything I can do to make myself enlightened?’

The Master responded wisely, ‘Do as little as you can to make the sun rise in the morning’. The restless disciple continued, ‘But Master, of what use then are the spiritual exercises you prescribe?’

The Master answered, ‘To make sure you are not asleep when the sun rises.’

Terry Fitzpatrick 27/11/10

The Trouble with St Mary's

A Short film by Peter Hegedus

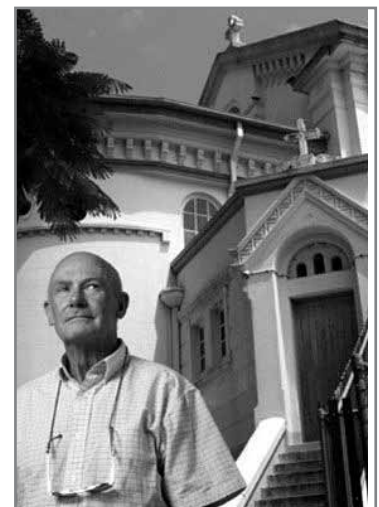
On Monday 23rd May, 2011, 500 or so of the community spent an evening at the Hawthorne Theatre where we saw the preview of the documentary, *The Trouble with St Mary's*.

This film was commissioned by the ABC for its Compass program. The ABC showed a slightly shorter version of the film on Sunday 29th May.

The film was one man's account of how he, a film-maker, viewed our story.

Personally I was captivated by the movie and often moved to tears as I was reminded of the very difficult times we all suffered when our time at the old and beautiful church of St Mary came to an end.

Reminded too of the strong bonds we felt with each other



as we celebrated Eucharist for the first time at the TLC.

Editor

A Life that is Beyond a Life Situation

Shiloh Moore shares her story of a lifetime of pain – lived now with hope, love, self -acceptance and happiness

St Mary's Homily

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*5pm 17/11/10
By Shiloh Moore*

This year I turned thirty. I expected by age thirty I'd have a stimulating career, most likely be married and have kids, preferably two. Instead I've led quite a different life and have missed out on these things so far. I have never had a regular paying job and I may never be strong enough to have children.

Since I was 10 I have lived with severe Fibromyalgia and Chronic Fatigue Syndrome otherwise known as Myalgic Encephalomyelitis or ME. I have not had a moment free of pain since at least the age of 12. An example of my pain levels is, it hurts to use an 'iphone', as the simple motion of my thumb triggers sharp pains right up my arm. This to me is normal.

When I was thirteen I was a straight A student and excelled at six extra curricular activities, despite the pain. Doctors wrote my pain off as growing pains, and nobody

else complained about their growing pains so I learnt to block it out and get on with life and tried hard not to complain. Finally at the end of the year when I was fourteen I was diagnosed.

Within a year I had to drop out of school and all my beloved extra curricular activities, including my main love, the flute. I had to say goodbye to my ambition to be a flautist and teacher. I grieved every loss deeply. I had long, beautiful hair, and I had to cut it off as it gave me headaches and pain. As much as I'd like to say I was not vain, the loss of my hair was a knock to my self-esteem.

The following year, aged sixteen, I spent entirely bedridden. Light, sound and smell drained my energy. I was in constant, excruciating pain and exhaustion of an indescribable magnitude. At times I couldn't talk, couldn't move. Lying in bed, I'd respond to Mum and Dad with a thumb up for yes or a thumb down for no, but even this movement was a huge painful effort. It hurt to breathe. It

hurt to think.

Within this time, I experienced something I'll never forget. Most of the day I would be anxious. But for moments on random days, perhaps for half an hour at a time, my symptoms would flare. In these moments, while fully aware of the pain, I could block it out and I had an overwhelming feeling of being 'held'. Whether by God or any other name, I felt a greater power of love holding me as I said my mantra 'I am okay...I am okay...' This I fully believed – if I were to live or die...I was indeed 'okay.'

After a year, for some unknown reason I slowly improved from this level of illness. Mum or friends would take me outside the house in a wheelchair: I needed to be pushed as it was all I could do to sit up. But the wheelchair I saw as giving me freedom – I was no longer locked in my bedroom.

As soon as I was able I wrote in a journal, typing on my laptop while lying down, and I started writing poetry

A Life that is Beyond a Life Situation

and drawing, expressing my emotions and observations of life. It was wonderful to finally be able to record my thoughts.

For two years I experienced vivid night terrors every time I slept. The dreams were realer than real, vibrant colours, with me at the centre. All my worst fears were reality. Many nights I woke the family with my screams, and poor Mum would get up and gently shake me awake and calm me down.

‘..not always but sometimes there was hope.’

But again, amidst the horror and the torture that was my sleep time, not always but sometimes there was hope. In some dreams, in the distance there was unearthly, moving, uplifting music. Whenever it was there I concentrated on it, and while the horror of the dream continued, somehow I could block it out and feel a sense of awe, strength and calm.

After two years, the night terrors gradually left. Twelve years later, my dreams are still vivid and bright but most often have a positive feel to them, filled with wonder. And most amazingly, every so often I still dream with the intensely beautiful music, but now it surrounds me, uplifts me, and is here with me. I

don't have to search for it and block out horror; the fear is gone but the beauty remains.

When I was 17 I had a reaction to a drug and had a depressed psychosis that lasted a month. Then, aged eighteen and nineteen I experienced two major manic psychoses, lasting 9 months each.

The first six nights I didn't sleep and hallucinated beautiful colours. The world was indescribably beautiful and I'd been let in on an amazing secret.

Eventually I thought people were experimenting on me, torturing me. I saw 'signs' in everything and thought TV, music, cinema, newspapers, magazines and books were talking to me. After the high of the initial few days, life became scarier than ever before. I had always been respected and articulate, and now everyone was saying I was 'manic' and the truths I knew were 'delusions'. After eighteen months I finally came down to earth, and felt ashamed and deeply embarrassed. The next six months I was in shock and felt empty. I felt disturbed that my thoughts had not been my own. Having been bedridden, my thoughts were critical and were all I had left. Now my thoughts had been governed by something else... It was terrifying and I couldn't get my head around it.

I have now successfully controlled my bipolar symptoms with medication for 10 years. In that time I finished school one subject at a time, moved out of home, and did a couple of subjects at uni, before again needing to pull out. In 2004 my book 'Stranger In The Moving Chair' was published, to which I have had a wonderful response. Now physically I am still chronically ill and debilitated, but emotionally, mentally and spiritually I am in a good place and have come to terms with my lifestyle, am happy and truly love life.

Peter Kennedy gave me a copy of 'The Power of Now'

‘..my dilemma in answering ‘How are you?’

by Eckhart Tolle to listen to. Tolle's lesson about 'Life situation vs life' reminds me of the typical greeting and a dilemma I face when answering it. My response to the question 'How are you' has changed over the years. In my teens my intense grief and emotional pain was not visible and it was frustrating when people asked 'How are you' and exclaimed 'you look so well!' I wondered how much they really wanted to hear of my intense invisible physical and emotional pain.

Did they really want me to elaborate or were they just making polite conversation? People still say I look well and have a need for me to be well. But my dilemma in

A Life that is Beyond a Life Situation

answering 'How are you?' has changed somewhat. I am still never well...so if I were honest I could say 'I'm terrible' and disappoint them that I am indeed not well and have them feel sorry for me. So if I were to say 'I'm fine,' it would be a lie – or would it? Now, emotionally and spiritually I am going really well. I'm happy, and the essential me is alive and well. But how do I say this, without making people think it must mean physically I am well too? So now there's two parts to my answer if I'm to answer truthfully – and to use Tolle's terms, I'd say my 'life situation' sucks(!) but my 'life' itself is blossoming!!!

Along the same lines, many people, both people with ME/CFS/FM and their supporters often think a cure or recovery is the only means of hope. Life is beyond cruel with this illness. There is no questioning that. To many, the thought of a long lifetime full of constant pain and disability is scary, perhaps even scarier than the thought of death.

But I believe pinning all hope on a cure or recovery is not necessarily healthy or realistic. To be happy in the now, you cannot pin all your hope on the future.

The way I look at it, is that you need to grieve each loss deeply – your abilities, your passions, your previous identity, your health etc etc. But eventually there comes a stage of acceptance. And, like the death of a loved one, the pain never fully goes away and will always stay with you in some form, but eventually

'Once you come to accept life with illness, it is actually possible to still find contentment and happiness too.'

you may come to terms with it and accept it. With chronic illness your physical pain may never fully go away and you may always be dealing with new and continual loss. But you may reach acceptance, and then your 'life' may truly go on.

I found my hope this way.



The hard truth is that there may not be a cure in my lifetime. My illness may alleviate somewhat but after twenty intense years it's not highly likely to ever fully go away. But my hope is not lost. My life is not lost. I live in acceptance and live life in the full belief that my 'life' is beyond my 'life situation.' With that in mind, if I do recover or a cure is found, that will be an amazing bonus. But in the meantime, my happiness is not dependant on it.

Many believe illness equates to unhappiness. The average healthy person's experience of illness is a cold or flu, which makes them feel awful, and in reaction makes them feel miserable. My current pain and symptoms make me feel considerably worse than a serious flu every day. When you are sick for months then years on end, you need to adjust your lifestyle to accommodate the illness.

Once you come to accept life with illness, it is actually possible to still find contentment and happiness too. It's taken time but I love to laugh and smile and illness won't take that from me.

Illness does not forever equal anguish.

To conclude I'd like to share with you a poem from my book. Friends and family ask me how they can help. Nowadays practical help like lifts to appointments

Continued on page 13

Glass House Mountains Bus Trip



Waiting for the bus



Uncle Sam



On the bus



*Entrance to Nungeena
Women's Centre*



Negotiating a tight corner



*In the Abbey Church
of St Michael*



Great didge player



Aunty Minnie



*Photos on this page by
Ian Ridley, Joan Medlum,
Marg Ortiz*



At the Abbey Museum



*Tony and Dorothy meet
a friend at the museum*

Happiness

by Joan Mooney

*How happy are the poor in spirit
Theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Happy the gentle
They have the earth for their heritage.
Happy those who mourn
They shall be comforted.
Happy the peacemakers
They are called children of God.*



That Gospel reading is a blueprint for our happiness, not only to be looked forward to later in this life or in some future existence, but to be experienced and enjoyed here and now.

I was about 10 years old when my Aunt May came to visit us on New Year's Day. I can still hear her greeting to my mother, "Ah Mon, what troubles will this year bring?" Not exactly a happy New Year greeting. What my aunt didn't realise

'our essential nature is happiness'

is that happiness is our true right, it is our very nature; in Life itself, as human beings, resides our happiness. Animals may be happy, plants may be happy, rocks may be happy, but they do not know it. In those millennia when we were becoming human, the awareness of our right to happiness was also evolving. As Ecclesiasticus reminds

us, 'Nor let anxious thoughts fret your life away; a merry heart is the true life of man and woman; length of years is measured by rejoicing.' Ramana Maharshi, one of the greatest sages of the C20, declares, 'our essential nature is happiness. Happiness is inherent in everyone and is not due to external causes.' The desire for Happiness is embedded in our consciousness, developed there over countless aeons, reflected in our fairy stories, where the prince and the princess live happily ever after.

There is a song that begins, 'A contented mind is a blessing kind.' Contentment would have to be one of the essential elements of happiness. No matter what we possess, if we are not content with it, then we are sad. Happiness in Yoga terms is Santosha, a guiding principle that encourages us to develop contentment. It prescribes being grateful for what we have rather than be continually yearning for new and different things.

We've all experienced the thrill of expectation that gathers momentum until we reach the peak of attainment. But when the wave falls flat then we, like the shattered wave, dissolve in sorrow. Even worse, of course, is to expect the worst; it will surely happen. The solution to this all too frequent disappointment is to abandon all expectation, then whatever we do receive is a bonus.

Our expectations aim at satisfying the ego. Happiness, on the other hand, requires at least a certain degree of selflessness. Sharing, caring for others, compassion; all these generate our own happiness. Separation, isolation inure us against happiness. St Therese of Lisieux writes in her autobiography, 'Ever since I began to forget myself I have lived the happiest life.' To embrace life in all its magnificence, to be aware, this moment, of our participation in the endless stream of existence, of our

Happiness

connectedness with all beings – that is the source and the sustainer of our happiness. During those tragic weeks of the flood in Queensland this sense of connectedness emerged in all its brilliance in a community spirit that has encouraged thousands of people to reach out to others. As a fellow-volunteer remarked to me, ‘We are no longer a city, we are a family.’

The present moment is our moment to be happy. In fact it is our only moment. To be immersed in the glorious present moment, leaving behind the baggage of our past and abandoning our expectations for the future – this is real happiness, this is truly heaven on earth. Shqipe Malushi is an Albanian woman who assists both leaders and people in troubled spots in the world to rebuild their lives and their countries. She says of her time in Afghanistan, ‘Afghanistan taught me to be in the present and to live every moment as it is. It taught me to accept people and situations and offer compassion and understanding without trying to fix anything.’

‘we all need something in our lives that we are passionate about’

Getting back to more mundane considerations, it is interesting to observe the various things or experiences that make people happy – one person’s happiness can be



This is Joan’s take on the intriguing topic of ‘Happiness’. Why is it so continually under threat?

another’s nightmare, and this is largely dependant on our personality and temperament. Psychologists tell us we all need something in our lives that we are passionate about. For many of us music or an enthralling book can take us out of ourselves; self-consciousness disappears, and the ego is temporarily suspended. Then there is gardening. Gardening is about the peace that comes from creating something beautiful –and delicious, in the case of vegetables; it enables us to commune with and relate to nature. For some it is football. The person who recently completed 52 marathons in 52 weeks – we can only surmise that for him that equates with happiness.

Happiness may be our true nature, but our possession of happiness is continually under threat. Grief, sorrow, loss, failure, disappointment, pain and illness, depression and even despair – all these come knocking at the door of everyday life. As a city and

as a nation we are right now affected, brought down, by our recent floods. Then there are the self-imposed obstacles to our happiness- overwork, over-indulgence; overactivity, overload of possessions, our selfishness, our laziness, our addictions. All these things bring disharmony into our lives. Happiness, on the other hand, according to Gandhi, is when ‘what we think, what we say and what we do are in harmony.’ Harmony comes from moderation in our lives, having not too much of anything, not too little; but this is something we have to work at every day of our lives. Self-control, not self-indulgence, not only enables us to achieve that state of harmony and balance, but it greatly enhances our capacity for enjoyment.

We all need coping mechanisms, and some are more successful than others. Drugs and alcohol, pleasure and distraction can deaden pain but hardly restore happiness. The real measure of our happiness is our capacity to cope with sorrow. We have been amazed at the resilience of people as they face loss – of life, property, livelihood. The most outstanding examples have come from those who, in the midst of their own losses, can still go out to others.

Our premier spoke for all when she said, ‘We’re the ones that they knock down, and we get up again.’ A 13- year-old boy called to his rescuers,

Happiness

'Save my little brother, save my Mum,' just as he himself was swept away on the raging waters. Where does this extreme courage come from? What is its source? It is, of course, the mystery of life itself, which persists beyond all odds. The poet Dylan Thomas describes this relentless life- force,

*The force that drives the water through the rocks
Drives my red blood.*

Then we have the example of Jesus on the cross. In

the midst of excruciating suffering, he shows and compassion towards his persecutors, 'Father , forgive

**I may be sad, but
not today**

them, they do not know what they are doing.' Teilhard de Chardin advises us, 'Let us go beyond the surface, and, without leaving the world, plunge into God.' Real happiness is able to transcend all vicissitudes; they are only the ripples on the surface of our ocean of happiness. They say we shouldn't put

things off, procrastinate, but I think that in the case of unhappiness we can, and should. There is a grave near Auschwitz, and on the tombstone is the inscription, 'I may be sad, but not to-day.'

There is a meditation teacher, Goenka, in the Vipassana tradition. He has the deepest voice imaginable; he ends every discourse and every instruction with just two words,

BE HAPPY

BE HAPPY

BE HAPPY.

Joan Mooney

A Life that is Beyond a Life Situation

Continued from page 9

or for outings, and the occasional meal when I'm in a rough patch is invaluable and much appreciated. Back when I was sixteen I wrote this poem to express what helped me the most at that stage of my life, when I had been bedridden for a year and was still wheelchair bound. It still rings true today:

*'The Best Support'
The best way to help
Is to listen*

*Advice seems to pour
From those
Who insist they understand
But have never experienced it*

*Those who help
Are those who listen
Those who accept
There is no magic cure
Accept they cannot instantly
Make things happily ever after*

*The best support
Is not a quick fix
But a listening ear,
No judgment,
And acceptance*

Shiloh Moore





Holy Thursday – washing of the feet



Bec watches over the Easter Eggs

Easter Celebrations 2011



Good Friday – Patricia Byrne enthralled us with her reading



Terry gives us a Good Friday reflection



Louis holds the symbolic Easter cross

Images of Easter

We celebrated our Easter Liturgies with the culmination of all the images we constructed in the season of Lent.

During Lent we considered 'wilderness within'.

Wilderness in Christian texts implies a time of uncertainty, unrest, soul searching; Jesus had such a time for a period

of 40 days and nights prior to his returning to public life. He sought wilderness. However, to be taken or made to move away from a known environment to that of another, is wilderness.

Last year's cross has moved into this year's Lenten/Easter expression. On the back of the canvasses, which make our

Easter installation, are the ashen marks, which signified the beginning of the Lenten period. There are, as well, homily reflections written on yellow paper slips, coloured desert sands and palm fronds of the oasis within the wilderness.

There are also 'wilderness' writings that have been



*Peter speaks to us on
Easter Sunday*



*Wendy and Peter discussing a
fine point with the music*



*Narelle welcomes us
to the Easter Vigil*

shared by members within this community. On the front of the canvasses is 'nothing' and 'everything'! A challenging place!

On Good Friday our installation represented and included the cross. It was shaped as a cylinder – enclosed and secret. At Easter, this cylinder was opened up

and became a symbol of the empty tomb, the symbol of hope and of life embracing us all.

The response of the community to the Easter Celebrations was overwhelmingly positive. Many people attended all the services.

We are so blessed to have a fine liturgy team lead by John Fitzwalter, beautiful music lead by Wendy Brown and her musos and our Presiders, Peter and Terry who preside so sensitively. Our thanks to all these people as well as the readers, welcomers and others who helped along the way.

John Fitzwalter and Marg Ortiz

Easter Reflection

When Yahweh stayed Abraham's hand from putting his son Isaac to death as a sacrifice, that same Yahweh showed there was no place for human sacrifice. The Old Testament gives details of sacrifices to be offered of animals, of crops, but not of any human person.

This is also a fine starting point to argue for the value of human life and for taking a stand against a death penalty. So Good Friday for me is a dilemma. New Testament writers assure me that we are saved because Jesus was crucified for our sake. But Mel Gibson's filmed adaptation of the gospel texts in *The Passion of the Christ* only drives home that Jesus' suffering unto death was an act of horrific violence which only reinforced the issue: how can God accept such unmitigated violence? Is this doing evil that good may come? That has never been an acceptable ethic.

I know that I am not alone here. This by a parish catechist in a local government school: "As a Catechist, teaching primary school children, I found that the Good Friday story was not all that well accepted or understood by the children. The Good Friday story was anything but 'good' to small children and teaching of a loving Father overseeing all this did not sit comfortably with them. Instead as Catechists, we

chose to place more emphasis on Easter Sunday as the New Beginnings. With this theme, we were able to incorporate the joy of the Resurrection and using the butterfly as an example, it was very appealing to children.

'Who has ever seen a sad butterfly?'

The butterfly, coming from a humble cocoon, and opening up to a new life which was colourful, beautiful, and graceful, portrayed a sense of joy and happiness. Who has ever seen a sad butterfly? We were then able to tie into this theme a new life, new beginnings, happiness and freedom with Easter Sunday and the Resurrection."

In 1959, with other theology students at Banyo, I studied the section of doctrinal theology called Christology – the person and work of Jesus. In 1992 I revisited this topic

in a series of lectures entitled 'The New Testament and Christology' given by Father Kevin O'Shea CSsR, STD.

In introducing this topic the lecturer proposed that we only really understand Jesus if we understand his work of reconciliation. If we grasp the Jewish meaning of that, we begin to grasp the work and person of Jesus.

The rescue of the hostages at Entebbe airport was a classic example. When the hostages were brought back to Israel, the country simply celebrated for days.

Jesus' stories of the shepherd leaving the 99 sheep to rescue the lost, and the parable of the prodigal son follow a similar vein. It is the Jewish way of showing reconciliation. It is about new beginnings. This is what the children taught the catechist and that came from the Gospels.

Kerry White



Wild Geese

You do not have to be good.

*You do not have to walk on your knees
for a hundred miles through the desert, repenting.*

*You only have to let the soft animal of your body
love what it loves.*

Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.

Meanwhile the world goes on.

*Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain
are moving across the landscapes,
over the prairies and the deep trees,
the mountains and the rivers.*

*Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,
are heading home again.*

*Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,
the world offers itself to your imagination,
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting--
over and over announcing your place
in the family of things.*

By Mary Oliver From 'Dream Work' (1986)

Submitted by Ingerid Meagher

Happiness by Subtraction

While waiting for my acupuncture appointment recently, I started browsing through a book with quotes from the Tao Te Ching, and on the back cover I came across a quote which went something like this:

*In the world of knowledge something new gets added each day;
In the world of the Tao something gets let go of each day.*

We all seek this thing called happiness and mostly we see it coming by adding something tomorrow to what we currently have. In the world of knowledge (egoic mind) it is all about there not here, then not now, and more. The Course in Miracles says that the ego's mantra is "seek but do not find". As long as we operate at the consciousness level of the ego we can never find happiness in the true sense. Sure there are many things we can acquire or achieve that will bring temporary pleasure, and that is OK. Buy the new car or house and achieve the higher position in the job, and enjoy them. Just don't think they will bring you happiness. I think Buddhism says it well when it talks about appreciating everything but attaching to nothing which is impermanent. I used to always be amazed how Buddhist monks at festivals could spend all week building these amazing mandalas, and then

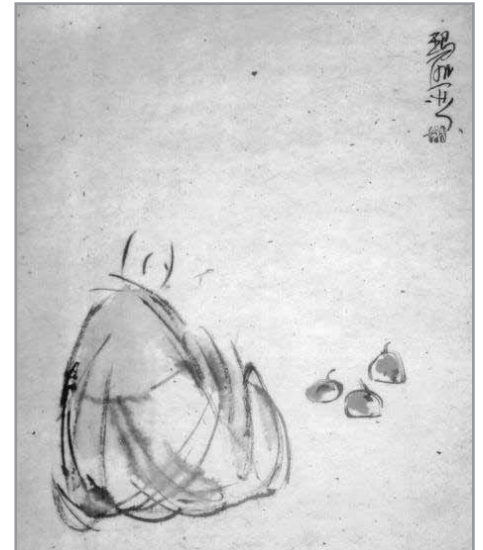
after a very short time, they would completely destroy the mandala. I would still have problems doing this myself, but I can now see the lesson about attachment.

Your task is not to seek love, but merely to seek and find all the barriers within yourself that you have built against it.

For many years I was unable to see much value in the Enneagram personality system, and certainly there is the danger of getting too caught up in the personality types and identifying with your type. The poet Rumi caused me to view the Enneagram with new eyes. By becoming aware of personality traits honestly and non-judgmentally, we become aware of how we block out our real self, which is love and happiness. It is like revealing the beautiful blue sky when the clouds are shifted. The sky was always there but it was blocked by the clouds. The main point is that we do not get there by adding anything, whether that be material things, achievements, or knowledge. We get there by letting go of all the beliefs that are unhelpful to us being aware of our true nature.

Let me finish with a quote from *Silence of the Heart* by Robert Adams:

The truth comes to you of its own free will when you prepare yourself through deep



Mike Sherman uses a quote from Tao Te Ching, who is seen in the drawing above, reminding us that happiness can be about less rather than more.

surrender to your Self, giving up all attachment, giving up your body, your mind, and everything that's important to you, to the Self.

As long as you're holding on to anything, the Reality will evade you. The Reality only comes when you give up yourself, when you give up your ego, when you give up your needs, your wants, trying to make something happen, your desires; when you give up trying to become Self-realized, when you just give up.

Then something wonderful happens. You begin to expand, not your body, but the Consciousness which you are. You become all pervading, Absolute Reality. It happens by itself.

Letting go is not giving up, it is going up. Guy Finley

Mike Sherman



Breakfast at the Bronco's Football Club.

Thanks to Bob and Dorothy for organising this event



The Finger or the Moon

There is a story about a psychologist who goes into a building and comes across two rooms. On the door of the first room is the sign "HEAVEN", and on the door of the second room is the sign "LECTURE ON HEAVEN". The psychologist goes into the second room.

The late Indian Jesuit priest, Anthony De Mello, in his excellent book "Awareness", had this to say:

All revelations, however divine, are never any more than a finger pointing to the moon. As we say in the east, "When the sage points to the moon, all the idiot sees is the finger."

They may or may not be pointers to the truth, but they are not the truth.

It is so easy to get stuck on the importance of the "finger". Everybody has their opinion on the best way to a life of happiness, peace and contentment. All churches have their doctrines and dogmas. There is the Work of Byron Katie, the teachings of Eckhart Tolle, ACT, NLP, Yoga, Qi Gong, the Enneagram, and myriads of other ways to happiness. While there is nothing intrinsically wrong with any of these ways, none of them is the "moon". They are all "fingers". We get stuck when we start thinking

any of these ways are THE TRUTH. They may or may not be pointers to the truth, but they are not the truth. The Indian Prem Rewat once said that if anyone asks you to follow him, then ignore him. However if he says that he can show you how to connect with what is within you, then pay attention. Listening by going within is our only access to Truth (or the moon).

A large aircraft carrier was at sea. The commander of this vessel, an admiral, was well known for his achievements. One night while the admiral was asleep in his quarters, the night watchman saw a light many miles off in the distance. He routinely sent a light signal in Morse code, saying, "Approaching vessel, turn 10 degrees port (left)." Off from the distance came the reply:

"Negative. You turn 10 degrees starboard (right)." This presented a problem for the watchman, because the admiral had given orders not to alter course. After the night watchman had tried a couple more times and received the same reply, he reluctantly decided that he should wake the admiral. After being briefed on the situation, the admiral sternly approached the bridge, and, through the signalman, sent the following message: "This is Admiral Smith. I am on an approaching vessel, and I order you to turn 10 degrees

port." The reply came from the distant light: "This is Seaman First Class Brown. Turn 10 degrees starboard." The old admiral, his face flushing with anger that a seaman could be so disrespectful, sent the following message: "This is Admiral Smith of the U.S. Navy. I am commander of the largest aircraft carrier in the world. Turn 10 degrees port." The response: "This is Seaman Brown. I am a night operator in a lighthouse. Turn 10 degrees starboard."

Can you see some people you know in this story? Maybe you can even see yourself in the story? The admiral was blind to everything else but the fact he was the commander of the largest aircraft carrier in the world. He had a great need to be right and most of us fall



into this trap at times. Here is another interesting story, which illustrates the same point very well.

A Department of Water Resources representative stops at a Longreach farm and talks with an old farmer. He tells the farmer, "I need to inspect your farm for your water allocation." The old farmer says: "Okay, but don't go in

The Finger or the Moon

that field over there." The Water representative says: "Mister, I have the authority of the Federal Government with me. See this card? This card means I am allowed to go WHEREVER I WISH on any agricultural land. No questions asked or answered. Have I made myself clear? Do you understand?" The old farmer nods politely and goes about his work. Later, the old farmer hears loud screams and spies the Water

Rep running for his life and close behind is the farmer's bull. The bull is gaining with every step. The Rep is clearly terrified, so the old farmer immediately throws down his tools, runs to the fence and yells at the top of his lungs..... "Your card! . . . Show him your card!"

It has been said that only about 10% of what we observe is fact, the rest is story. So we all make up different stories

based on our beliefs. There is nothing wrong with the story unless we treat the story as the truth.

So where do we find this truth? The Bhagavad Gita puts it well. "This is true knowledge; to seek the Self as the true end of wisdom always. To seek anything else is ignorance."

The fewer rules you have about how life ought to be, and how other people ought to behave, the easier it is to be happy.

Andrew Matthews

An excerpt from a homily given by Archbishop Oscar Romero

One day, there will be no more Masses, no more need of temporal priests, because all of us, through the labours of priests, of bishops, of catechists, of lay ministers of the word, of all God's priestly people, will achieve humanity's incorporation into Christ.

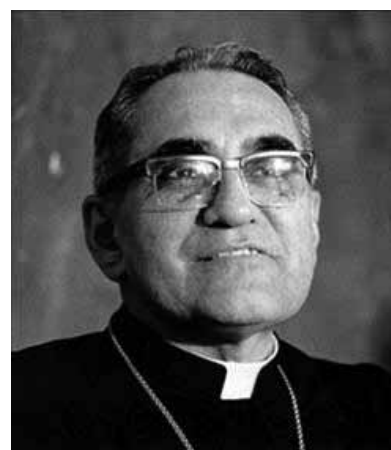
And Christ will be the one priest, formed in his historical and eternal fullness, by all of us who in the course of history have made with him one sole priesthood, one sole offertory, one sole Mass that will last eternally to sing God's glory.

This is the destiny, the objective for which we priests work in history.

There, my brother priests, in everlasting glory* along with all of our people, our people glorified*, we shall feel the boundless satisfaction of having worked with Christ to make humanity God's living temple, the living image of God's Spirit in eternity.

Submitted by Christine Rose

Note - *Taken in the context of the times, I believe the words 'in everlasting glory' are referring to a Jesuit who had been murdered earlier in the year (rather than meaning to put clergy in general up on a pedestal) as well as referring to El Salvadorian peasants, both those living and those who had been murdered 'our people glorified'.



HAPPINESS – it's a gene thing...

The Weekend Australian (7/8 May 2011) printed a short article 'Long and the short of happy gene'. Behavioural economist Jan-Emmanuel De Neve, from the London School of Economics and Political Science, led a research project on happiness recently reported in the Journal of Human Genetics.

The study compared more than 2500 participants with their reported 'satisfaction with life'. The gene being investigated is the 5-HTT which seems to help nerve cells recycle the signalling chemical serotonin which is linked to mood and

depression. Those with two long genes reported 'very satisfied' (35 per cent), 'satisfied' (34 per cent), compared with those with two short genes (19 per cent).

Be that as it may, what can we

use/do to promote our sense of euphoria or even contentment? For me, tossing Blessings around works... Blessings for those little black ants... Blessings for my muscles moving me around... Blessings for a friend not only putting up with me but liking me.... Blessings for Marg'nDoc ... Share your tricks too, please.

Patricia Byrne



Jesus was laying in the Tomb



Found an article on the web where the writer found the symbolism of the empty tomb very moving but he certainly lost me when I read – *Jesus was laying in the tomb for three days*.

Having been a High School English teacher I always have a strong reaction to errors in grammar or the proper use of words. In spite of my OUCH reaction however I found myself coming back to the

phrase. We do use eggs and chickens as symbols for the giving of new life that occurred as a result of the total giving of himself to Yahweh as Jesus faced his crucifixion. If Jesus was about to bring forth new life with his resurrection then laying is perhaps a perfectly apt word to choose!

I realised that God can speak to us even through such an error!!

I found I was taught again a lesson I had obviously failed to fully understand:

Never criticise when someone speaks from the heart as they may be saying even more than they realise!!!

Shar Ryan

Seek, but do not Find

It is said in the Course in Miracles that the mantra of the ego is “seek but do not find.” Happiness is possible, according to the ego, with “a little bit more,” when we “get to there,” and when we “take the next step.” Does this ring true with your experience of life?

Think back to when you were at school, and did you not believe that you would be so much happier when you finished Year 12, and entered the outside world with all its freedom? Then, if you did tertiary study, did you not envisage how much happier you would be when you were finished with all this study and entered the workforce and earned a salary? Then it became when you got married, when you got a promotion in your job, when you paid off the mortgage, and then when you retired.

For the economy to grow we need people always wanting more.

What is it right now? For the ego happiness is never right here and now with what you have at this moment. In fact our economy revolves around this. For the economy to grow we need people always wanting more. It would be a disaster of monumental proportions if we all decided that we were quite happy with

our present house, car, TV set, furniture, and clothes.

It is simply not acceptable to replace things only when they wear out and don't work well any more. If a new fancy gadget of some sort comes out, you do need this to make you happy. You can't possibly be happy with the old technology (probably a whole 2 years old) even if it still does the job perfectly.

A few months ago there was some discussion about raising the Medicare levy



for those whose income was above \$150000 per year. In the letters to the editor in the Courier Mail one man who earned above the \$150000 was complaining how unfair it all was because he didn't consider himself to be particularly well off. The next day came a reply from someone who indicated that if you earned \$150000 a year, you were in the wealthiest 0.1% on the planet.

Then recently there was the divorce case involving the Italian Prime Minister and his wife. The divorce settlement that the lady was after was

\$5 million per month, and the inference was that anything less than that would be quite inadequate.

The thing here is that the ego is never satisfied. Most of us would have absolutely no understanding of how something like \$2 million per month could be in any way inadequate, but on the level of ego nothing is ever enough.

Also there was the case of a 30 year old female celebrity in the US who was having a \$1 million cake for her birthday.

The key word for ego is “MORE.” Robert Holden in “Happiness Now!” says this:
We tend to take for granted what we have, and no matter how wealthy we are, the tendency is to compare our situation to those who have more.

Now where does this all leave us? Are we so much better than the people in the examples above, and if not, what do we do about it? Really it comes down to the main point in Eckhart Tolle's book, “The Power of Now”. He says quite emphatically that our main spiritual mission is to “disidentify with our minds.”

You are not your ego but something far greater than that. The story below speaks to this idea:

It seems that a woman who lived a Tao-centred life came upon a precious stone while sitting by the banks

Seek, but do not Find

of a running stream in the mountains, and she placed this highly valued item in her bag. The next day, a hungry traveller approached the woman and asked for something to eat. As she reached into her bag for a crust of bread, the traveller saw the precious stone and imagined how it would provide him with financial security for the remainder of his life. He asked the woman to give the treasure to him, and she did, along with the food. He left, ecstatic over his good fortune and the knowledge that he was now secure.



A few days later the traveller returned and handed back the stone to the wise woman, "I've been thinking," he told her. "Although I know how valuable this is, I'm returning it to you in the hope that you could give me something even more precious."
"What would that be?" The woman inquired.
"Please give me what you have within yourself that enabled you to give me that stone."

As many mystics have said through the ages, as long as you seek "happiness" outside yourself, you will not find it. You are what you are seeking.

As the Sufi poet Rumi said a long time ago, "You are the truth from head to foot, what else would you like to know?" Rumi also gave us the way to

'Your task is not to seek love, but merely to seek and find all the barriers within yourself that you have built against it.'

find this truth – "Your task is not to seek love, but merely to seek and find all the barriers within yourself that you have built against it".

Even when we begin to realise that our constant search for "more" is unhelpful, the ego will convince us that the way through is to struggle incessantly for a "fix".

In the "Wisdom of the Enneagram" Don Riso and Russ Hudson made this statement which is so relevant to this idea.

One of the major obstacles to transformation is the idea that

we can "fix" ourselves....The idea that we simply need to discover and accept who we are is contrary to almost everything we have been taught.

So the key is "AWARENESS". The way is through subtraction, rather than addition. You will find who you really are through awareness and understanding of the ego, but awareness involves no judgment. As you become aware of the movements of ego, it is not helpful to beat yourself up because of what you observe. Richard Rohr in "Discovering the Enneagram" put this very well, "The key is to recognise, name, and let go."

*We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.*

T.S. Eliot

Happiness does not consist in having what you want, but in wanting what you have.
Confucius

Mike Sherman



Corruption

Bribery and corruption do not play a large part in Australian life. According to Transparency International, Australia is the eighth least corrupt country in the world. However Gordon Nuttall has reminded us that it does go on, and more recently there have been unpleasant allegations about how Qatar obtained the Soccer World Cup.

In some cases, corruption seems like a victimless crime. The Qataris may have played dirty getting the 2018 World Cup, but I am sure that will not stop our Cup Bid Committee from spending another \$45,000,000

of taxpayers' money on hospitality and first class air fares in four years time, so they are probably not too upset.

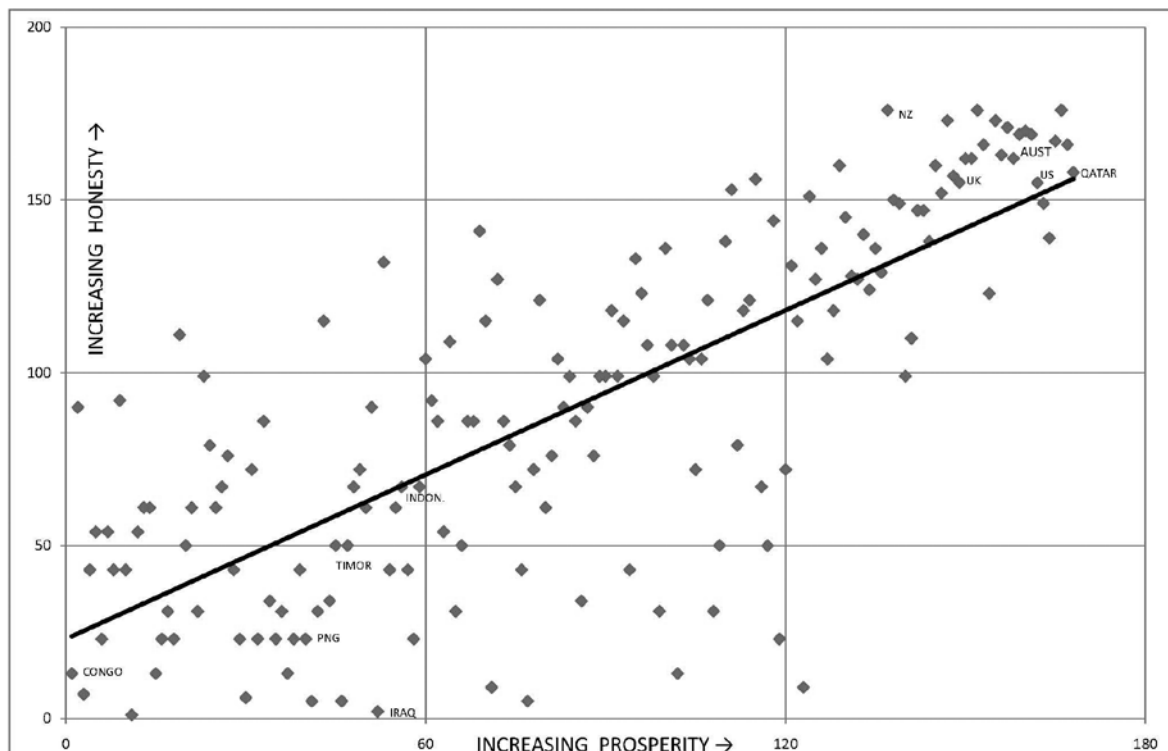
In order to investigate whether official corruption does much harm, I investigated whether there is much correlation between how prosperous countries are (as measured by IMF estimates of their gross domestic product at purchasing power parity per capita), and their level of official corruption (as estimated by Transparency International).

The graph shows a strong

correlation between lack of corruption (honesty) and prosperity. Unfortunately, the data cannot distinguish between cause and effect. So are officials in poor countries more likely to be corrupt because they are desperately poor; or is the high level of corruption keeping the poor countries back?

So in conclusion, my research has not proved anything, but it has been interesting. Afghanistan has the most corrupt government officials in the world, which sits uneasily with our spending lives and money keeping them in power. Qatar is the most prosperous country in the world, but having been there a couple of times, I can say that it would be a mistake to be jealous of them.

Peter Brown



On Being

An SMX-perience: Personal Benefits (Part 2)

(continued from the previous
edition)

Be still and know that I am
God

Be still and know that I am

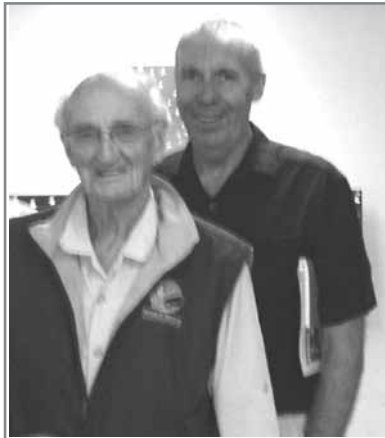
Be still and know

Be still

Be

Personal Benefits

In recent years I have focused my thinking and faith on Jesus Christ the carpenter, healer and teacher, in the context of his birth, death, resurrection and ascension as depicted in the gospels. I have gleaned what I can of the simplicity of his followers' faith and lifestyle in the first and second centuries, before they were cumbered with later Christendom's fixation on buildings, hierarchies, doctrines, dogmas and traditions. A synthesis of material presented by the authors, Teilhard, Tolle and Fiand has enabled me to clarify, simplify and affirm my faith significantly. There is a lack of Soul in books by the Christ-deniers. And a near-total disregard for the overwhelming evidence of the power and transforming consequences of valid religious experience over the ages of the Cosmic Christ, stemming from the historical Jesus. This also served to confirm further my faith and convictions.



Ted Holmes (left), shown here with fellow Victorian visitor, John, felt comfortable with the people and the theology of our community.

Teilhard, Fiand and Evolution = Transformation

In a remarkable insight Teilhard de Chardin realised that evolution, correctly understood, is the unifying process – a dynamic, personal and essentially positive process. Through this process the universe, from the moment of its creation in terms of energy and light, has continued to evolve and grow with ever-increasing degrees of complexity. Simple elements, in coming together, are transformed into elements of a slightly higher order of complexity and give birth sequentially to life, then to increasing degrees of consciousness and finally Spirit. The goal, or consummation; ultimate union through, in and with the Cosmic Christ.

A simple example of this basic, transformative process which effects evolution in matter, life and spirit is water. Two elements of hydrogen

combine with one element of oxygen and instantly are transformed (without trace) into the slightly more complex element of water. Thus the scientist and the mystic share a common interest in a common reality, a common evolutionary process whose goal, in Teilhard's terms, is The Omega Point, the Cosmic Christ. Fiand, for her part, sheds valuable light on the depths of enlightened modern scientific thought about current reality. By and through this process God speaks to us by arranging elements already in our minds, giving birth to new, higher order insights (with heightened differentiation and personalisation).

Darwin's fittest survivor is fit because less-than-fitting elements, in coming together/ having been brought together, are transformed into a new creation – something new, "custom-designed" to be fitting (the fittest).

This process applies in all areas of existence. Thus our transformative God is ceaselessly at work creating new, fitting (fittest) survivors and we human beings, possessing consciousness and spirit participate, even if unwittingly, in our own evolution and the evolution of the Cosmos.

Tolle and the Present Moment

According to Tolle to live in the present moment is to BE – that is to be a BEING, a spiritual BEING – letting go and thus free of the burden

of the past and unconcerned about the future. He makes the key distinction between EGO and SPIRIT, vital in determining our true identity. We are not the person the voice in our head (our ego) tells us we are. Our true identity is as a spark of the Divine, beloved of the Divine. As such we need to explore our Being in solitude; beyond thought and emotion, acknowledging and dismissing wandering thoughts, non-judgemental of happenings and alert and ready, if appropriate, to respond positively to developments.

When our inner alignment is with the present moment, we will then experience empowerment by the Spirit in every circumstance. And, for our comfort, even as we practise living in the present moment, we are already living in that moment!

Conclusion

Coulson, a Methodist and Professor of Applied Mathematics at Oxford University, writing in 1955 in

Science & Christian Belief, attributed the continuing decline in Church membership and Christian influence in society in the western world to Christianity's increasing irrelevance, its near total failure to modernise itself in the light of the extraordinary advances in knowledge made by science in understanding all aspects of life and the universe. Reality has not changed, but our understanding of it certainly has.

Teilhard has foreshadowed that one day there will be another extraordinary step in evolution when enough of us have come together with a living faith in the Infinite. The consequences of this new awareness, he states, will be as startling and new, as astonishing and life-changing as was the moment when life first appeared on a lifeless planet. It will open up an infinite variety of ways of being, as did the first appearance of life on earth.

The contributions of Teilhard, Tolle and Fiand are vital in

transforming the language we use in describing our reality and expressing our faith and, together, have the power to fire the imagination and capture the heart of humanity.

Ted Holmes

Final Remarks from Pattie

JUMPING FOR JOY IS
GOOD EXERCISE.

SOME CAUSE HAPPINESS
WHEREVER THEY GO.
OTHERS WHENEVER THEY
GO.

REAL HAPPINESS IS WHEN
YOU MARRY A GIRL FOR
LOVE AND FIND OUT LATER
SHE HAS MONEY.
Groucho Marx.

SOME PURSUE HAPPINESS
OTHERS CREATE IT.

BE WITH WHO MAKES YOU
SMILE, LAUGH AS MUCH
AS YOU BREATHE, LOVE AS
LONG AS YOU LIVE.

St Mary's Matters - Edition 26

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Articles, advertising, letters, photos are always welcome. Send to: margdoc2@gmail.com

Cover Picture - Face painting was one of the popular activities at our community picnic in April. Klai is seen here looking happy with his new look. The cover was designed by John Hallett

**You are invited to contribute financially to the work of the St Mary's Community in Exile by donating to St Mary's Community Ltd
BSB 064 -131 Account 10339414
Commonwealth Bank, West End**

Community Picnic at Orleigh Park

Organised by Bob and the Connections Group



Cynthia of Jade Photography took a number of great photos at the Picnic.

Visit Cynthia's website to see more of her work.

Thank you Cynthia for letting us use your photos. We can recommend her work to anyone who wants excellent professional photography done.

Her website is www.jadephotography.com.au.

Orders for the SMX community picnic photos will be taken until 26 June 2011.