

PRESENCE

NEWSLETTER OF THE CANBERRA AND REGION CENTRE
FOR SPIRITUAL CARE &
CLINICAL PASTORAL EDUCATION INC.

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THE SEASON OF CHRISTMAS IS A TIME TO CELEBRATE, REFLECT, GIVE THANKS AND BE MINDFUL OF THE MANY WAYS IN WHICH PEACE, HEALING AND HAPPINESS IS BROUGHT INTO OUR WORLD. WE WISH YOU A VERY HAPPY, HOLY AND RESTFUL CHRISTMAS.

Mary, Barbara, David, Rob, Birthe & Lyn



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ALL CONTRIBUTIONS BY MEMBERS ARE WELCOME

FROM THE DESK OF MARY

From the desk of Mary

Christmas and summer holidays are a time to be with family and friends. This time of year is a long time favourite of mine as it calls us into practices of attention and reflection around our significant relationships. Within the time spent with those that we love there are cheerful and relaxed moments, and maybe even some awkward moments, and on occasion, even difficult moments. Amongst all of this the nature of Christmas is generosity manifest in gift giving. As I pondered on the nature of giving at this time of celebration and relationship I came across an ancient Buddhist teaching called *“the three ways of giving”*

- **Amisa-dana** is the giving of material objects, such as necessities to those in need. For many it also includes giving presents for those who are dear to us.
- **Dhamma-dana** is the giving of advice, information, and guidance.

Abhaya-dana – is seen as the greatest gift - the gift of **non-fear** – i.e. having confidence and courage in life. In the practice of pastoral care when we offer the gift of confidence and courage – **non-fear** - we project a presence that heartens others to feel safe. It is the place where trust, openness, and clarity arise.

The gift of the Christ-child to us is the same: **Do Not Be Afraid!** As I give attention to the birth of Jesus with **non-fear** I perceive a moment that hints at the deeper unity that lies beneath the surface of things. In this moment I find a way of relating to the sacred of all things and am infused with a desire to understand the moment of all birth and all death as brought into clarity with the first breath and cry of the Christ-child.

Across the aeons of time Solomon sends us a convincing call into an ancient way of honouring moments – our birth



and our death - as Holy.

*I also am mortal, like everyone else,
A descendant of the first formed child of earth
And in the womb of a mother I was moulded as flesh,
Within the period of ten months compacted with blood
From the seed of a man and the pleasure of marriage,
And when I was born, I began to breathe the common air
And fell upon the kindred earth*

My first sound was a cry, as true of all.

I was nursed with care in swaddling cloths

*For no king has had a different beginning of existence;
there is for all one entrance into life, and one way out. -*

Wisdom of Solomon 7:1-6

To complete this reflection I add words of Thich Nhat Hanh from his book **The Heart of the Buddha's**

Teaching: The Practice of Non-Fear

*“When a cloud is about to become rain, she is not afraid. She may even be excited. Being a cloud floating in the blue sky is wonderful, but being rain falling on the fields, the ocean, or the mountains is also wonderful. As she falls down as rain, the cloud will sing. Looking deeply, we see that birth is just a notion. **Nothing is born from nothing.** When we touch the cloud deeply, when we touch our grandmother deeply, we touch the nature of no birth and no death, and we are free from sorrow.”*

Thank you for all your support, generosity of heart, and willingness to be transformed. I offer my blessings for your life as you gather into your own **non-fear**.

May the edges of your mind remain keen

May your reflecting be straight and true

May your passions be forever alive

May your resting refresh and renew you

May you wake into your own

magnificence

And may you increasingly:

Be Not Afraid



WHAT'S HAPPENING

2011 has been a busy year for the CPE centre, with the appointment of Mary as the new Centre Director, a party to say thank you to David, and a full complement of groups.

It is a great credit to our Supervisors that so many people are completing their second or third Basic units and we have three people applying for Advanced standing and also a supervisor in training, Rob Moore.

TCH BASIC GROUPS FOR 2011



Gail, Penny, Kate, Kelly & Birthe



Tenpa, Mary, Rob, Nic, Theresa, Tony & Susanne



Jean, Terry, Mary Ming and Marie



The PSC group: Maggie, David, Sharon, Birthe, Arthur, Susan & Clare; Ethel is in the front, being

The Pastoral Support Companions group met several times during the year, both the graduate group from 2009 and the trainee group that commenced in April.

A new group will commence in April 2012. Please contact David, Birthe or Lyn if you are interested and for more information.



Introductory group at HOME in Queanbeyan:

Barbara Hall, Sue Skinner, Sue English. Seated: Annette Stace, Anne Pratt and Benny (mascot of St Benedicts & Home who sat in on the last two sessions.

Barbara's next Mental Health Introductory in Goulburn commences Feb 8th—please register your interest early. A Basic (400 hours) unit will follow starting in March.

COURSES FOR 2012

We have begun planning for 2012 and dates are in place for **Introductory** courses in Canberra, Wagga Wagga and the Mental Health Introductory in Goulburn. The South Coast dates will be available soon.

At the request of many people, an **“out of hours” Introductory** will again be held in Canberra, using two Saturdays and six Tuesday evenings.

Basic units are planned for Canberra, Albury and Goulburn.

Our **website** shows dates for all courses and application forms can be downloaded and emailed or mailed to the Centre.

www.pastoralcareact.org/cpe



DIARY DATE: The CERTIFICATE CEREMONY

for all those who completed courses during 2011 will be at 5pm on Friday 24th February 2012 in The Canberra Hospital Main Auditorium. Further information will be sent to those receiving certificates.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

SPIRITUAL CARE AUSTRALIA CONFERENCE 2012

Where Words Meet Silence

Connecting through Pastoral Care

Silence in Encounter
The Silence of the Voiceless
Silence in Contemplation

Keynote Speaker

David W. Augsburg

Professor of Pastoral Care and Counselling at the School of Theology at Fuller's Theological Seminary since 1990.

Guest Speakers

Eileen Glass

Founding member of L'Arche in Australia, a Spiritual Director, Educator and Supervisor of Spiritual Directors

Venerable Thích Thông Pháp

Venerable Thích Thông Pháp is a Buddhist monk ordained in the Bamboo Forest Zen tradition of Vietnam.

Rabbi Paul J Jacobson

Rabbi Paul J Jacobson was born in Red Bank, New Jersey and graduated from Washington University in St Louis.

Program

Registration opens 1.30 pm Monday 16th April
Opening Ceremony 4.30 pm followed by dinner.
Conference Dinner Wednesday night
Featuring Playback Theatre.
Conference closes 1 pm Thursday.

David Augsburg – 9.15 to 10.30 am each day

Tuesday – Silence in Encounter

Wednesday – The Silence of the Voiceless

Thursday – Silence in Contemplation.

Plenary sessions will lead the theme for the day.

Each morning there will be a Morning Reflection at 8.40 and announcements etc at 9 am.

Spiritual Care Australia AGM Tuesday night.

**REGISTRATIONS ARE BEING
RECEIVED NOW.**

**EARLY BIRD PRICE: \$450 (prior to March
2nd)**

For full details of the Speakers, to download the registration form and to download the "Call for Elective Sessions, Workshops and Papers", visit the Spiritual Care Australia website:

<http://www.spiritualcareaustralia.org.au/website/conferences>

or contact the CPE Centre



YOUR 'VOICE' OF PASTORAL CARE

Each newsletter we will publish reflections, poems, responses that give voice to your experience as pastoral carers. Please pass them on to us.

THE SECRET LIFE OF SNAILS

By Joan Tompsitt

This morning I went for my walk to the post office to check the box.



On the way, as usual, I was thinking thankfully of the fact that I **could** walk to the box.

And, also as usual, I was thinking thankfully of the fact that the route I take is so beautiful.

I go through the local Park, pass all of the morning walkers: no spandex warriors among them, just ordinary people like me, relishing the fresh air and the opportunity to be in such a beautiful place.

As I walked along one of the many paths, I met a snail. He had right of way but I was faster, so I crossed in front of him. He changed my thinking pattern.

Mr. Snail had a path to take.

Mr. Snail carries his core beliefs with him.

Mr. Snail's shell is what the world takes most notice of, but his antennae are the guides for his inner snail, and consequently lead him on the safest, and often most challenging, paths.

We were not formally introduced, Mr. Snail and I, yet I know that I am like him in so many ways – as are the people I get to meet during my pastoral care duties.

The people I meet have a path to take.

They carry their core beliefs with them.

Their shell is what the world takes notice of, but their antennae are the guides for their inner selves.

And so the pastoral care setting is where the wonderful diversity of spirituality which is all

around us becomes so evident.

What propels patients with a terminal, or other, illness along their paths?

What is it that makes each and every one of them so inspirational?

Why do they touch our hearts so?

What have we, with our core beliefs, to give to people in such a situation?

My hope for each of us, is, that our own personal antennae will have the sensitivity to reach out humbly to the antennae of the patients we meet.

Inspired by our own personal spirituality, may we offer the love which we bear in our hearts, as our gift to the people we meet.

“Talk not of wasted affection, affection never was wasted;

If it enrich not the heart of another, its waters, returning

Back to their springs, like the rain, shall fill them full of refreshment;

That which the fountain sends forth returns again to the fountain.

“William Longfellow.”



THE PLATFORM OF IDEAS

Questions that stir the pastoral imagination

Responses to last month's question

In the manner of Wangari Maathai as you look at the world with *fresh eyes*: what do **you** see and what would your *mission* be?

I see the kingdom of God is growing into our souls and my mission would be to apply the understanding, hope, faith and love to all my fellow human beings.

Iris Melhado

Answer this question for yourself in three sentences or less and email your response to Lyn Kelly , CPE Centre Administrator: lyn.kelly@act.gov.au.

With your permission we will include the most interesting answers in the next newsletter.

As Christmas approaches and 2011 draws to a close and by way of offering a gift of *deep listening* to yourself you may like to answer the following three questions in relation to the year that has just been.

1. When was the last time you danced?
2. When was the last time you sang?
3. When was the last time you told your story?

Before beginning medicine work the healers of a Central Oregon Native American tribe believe that the answers given to the three questions above tell them about the resources that sustain a person in a given moment. The gift to us will be the sharing of your responses for inclusion in our next newsletter.

A CHRISTMAS PRAYER

*Incarnate Christ,
be born in me this
Christmas!*



*May my will be as Mary's,
saying 'yes' to all your ways;
my mind be as Joseph's,
open to your unfolding revelation.*

*May my voice be as the angels',
joyfully proclaiming Good News;
my knees as the animals',
quietly bending in adoration.*

*May my feet be as the shepherds',
running eagerly to find you;
my hands be as the wise men's,
offering up all that I have.*

*May my heart be as the manger
poor yet containing heaven's greatest
treasure;
my life as the stable,
hallowed and expanded by your
presence.*

*Incarnate Christ,
be born again in me this Christmas!*

(Pat Bennet)

<http://www.ionabooks.com/>