



The Christian Community Melbourne

Movement for Religious Renewal August 2017 Newsheet

A Programme of Time and Space

By Cheryl Nekvapil

Putting together a programme for our Community for three months is a tangible experience of hope for “the future coming towards us”. So much converges on it: the festival rhythm of our year is anticipated; people are visiting and inspired to contribute; a cloud of ideas and possibilities hover over head; offerings come from members who deeply engage with themes and generously share with us all; individual biographies call for special sacraments; events outside of our congregation impress on our plans; we impress our community life into the world. And there with a dead-line, a programme emerges from this airy substance of unclaimed possibilities, future becomes ‘visible’. Then we have in hand (or online) to read a futuristic picture that has been moulded by us as artists. Artists of what? Of religious-spiritual community with a pinch of prophecy and vision! The framework of the programme holds up for us inviting spaces into which we inwardly and outwardly gather through our religious-spiritual strivings, to encourage each other, to learn, to support, to share, to comfort, to acknowledge, to befriend, to walk and talk in company. Our programme provides time and space in our living for us to be two or more together, and awakening to Christ in our midst.

Rudolf Frieling in his book “New Testament Studies” describes what is an exalted possibility by coming together in sacramental community:

“The veil that has hidden the divine from the world until now will be removed in the future. The appearance of the Trinity, which breaks into the human realm in the Church, causes the presence of the divine on earth to become so obvious that it can be known – even by ‘the world’. This must however be preceded by a powerful realisation of the divine in man. By the way in which Christians manifest their ‘being loved by God’, a window is opened for the world so that it can ac-

tually know something of that transcendent mystery within God – ‘as much as you have loved me.’

Such love in Community is our greatest hope, the future programme for humanity and the earth; we will keep creatively striving towards that, three months at a time.



Altar at Windhoek, Namibia
Photo by Michaël Merle

No need to go overseas; it's all happening here!

The Christian Community in Melbourne has an extraordinary programme this winter and spring. Priests and other guests are coming from all over the world to share, exchange, participate and give of their time. A programme of this calibre is certainly worth going to overseas for, but we don't have to. It will be right here on our doorstep.

Bastian Baan, a Christian Community priest, previously in the Netherlands, is currently Director of the North American Seminary in Spring Valley, New York. He lectures widely and has written many books (some of which are available from Matthew) such as *Lord of the Elements*, *Old and New Mysteries*, *The Chymical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreutz*, *Ways Into Christian Meditation* and *Sources of Christianity*. Bastian and his wife will be visiting Melbourne, and he will be giving three talks in August as part of the Mystery of the Holy Grail Conference:

25/8—The Grail and the Renewal of the Mysteries
26/8—Traces of the Old Mysteries in Modern Life
27/8—Life as a Path of Initiation: Four Trials

Anand Mandaiker has been a priest in the Circle of Seven since 2006, and is the link priest for our region. He will visit our congregation, speak to the youth and give the following talk:

1 Oct—The Thresholds of Birth--Responsibility and Freedom

Christian MacLean is visiting from Scotland and is the founding editor of Floris Books and is the UK and A&NZ representative on The International Council of The Christian Community. He will give a talk:
8 Oct—11.30am—Journey of St. Paul

Karl Heinz Finke moves between Berlin and Australia and is among other things a counsellor, consultant and trainer in Life Biography work. He will present at the Uriel Talk, Saturday 19th August 10am – 2.30pm, on the theme: **Life Phases** --Am I Catching up with Life or is Life Catching up with me?

3pm – 5pm: Life Phases - The Development of Consciousness. :Talk and Q & A with Karl Heinz Finke

Joerg Kirschman, from Germany—whom many of you will have met—is travelling around Australia with his wife and son at the moment. Before he leaves us, don't miss :

Sunday 20 August, 10.00am. **The Act of Consecration of Man in German.**

Cheryl Prigg, a seminary student from Spring Valley in New York, is visiting until September. She will give the talk "Water into Wine.

20 August, 11.30.

Cheryl Nekvapil will give the following talks at 11.30:

13/8—Music in the Sacraments

24/9—Engaging with our Time

29/10—Sacraments for children and youth in The Christian Community – Baptism and Confirmation. Gifts for a lifetime.

John Wilson will give a talk and demonstration 21 October at 3–5pm on 'Hidden over-breathing—an unrecognized cause of chronic illness and its reversal as healing'

There is so much more to the programme these next three months—please read the programme carefully and make space for these wonderful events.

Promoting this programme

As a management committee we recognise that the quality of speakers and that the content of the talks and workshops are of utmost importance to all individuals—not just those in our small community. Can you help us get the word out to people about our profound programme? Think about friends and family, other societies and organisations who may be pondering the same things we are but who may not have the resources for such a rich programme. If you need copies of this newsletter or our programme, please see Robin or Cheryl.

Playing with Fire

Melbourne Youth attend the International Whitsun Conference



Photo by Cheryl Prigg

Due to the generosity of the Netherlands Christian Community, our own Melbourne community and parents, six youth from the Melbourne community were able to go to the International Whitsun Conference in the Netherlands in June. Catherine, Freya, Tahlia, Max, Elanor and Mignon, from the Melbourne congregation, were accompanied by three other Australian youth, Cheryl Nekvapil, Lisa Devine and later by Cheryl Prigg at the conference. There were 400 youth and over 1000 adults from 30 countries and presenters and workshop leaders from all over the world.

The Melbourne youth spoke to us last Sunday about their trip. They attended the talks and various workshops, enjoyed the company of 83 Argentinean youth, slept in cardboard tents and sang. They visited the Anne Frank house in Amsterdam and the Rijksmuseum. After the conference they took trains all over Germany visiting Hannover, Freiburg, Lake Constance with side trips to The Island of Reichenau, where St. George's remains lie; the Goetheanum in Dornach, and The Altar of Isenheim in Colmar France.

It was an experience that will live in them for the rest of their lives. On behalf of the parents of these lucky teenagers, I'd like to thank the priests and Cheryl Prigg for the planning, accompaniment and care that you all gave our children.

Robin Jaworski

Children's services

There will be Sunday services for Children at 11.15am 6 August, 3 September, and 15 October and a Whole Community Service 17 September. Please see the programme for more details.

Library books

Returning library books is needed to replenish our shelves. You might also have books published by Floris Books to donate to the library. What a great community activity, to borrow and return and donate books.

Ironing

At the moment we do not have people who can regularly volunteer to iron vestments. It's a most satisfying job – and we need you if you can and like to iron linen and cotton vestments. 1 hour once per month by 2 people is all that's needed.. Phone Cheryl Nekvapil 0458 124 088.

Further to the subject of "Loneliness"

By Guy Southey

In his wide-ranging book on "Loneliness", which seems to have been written out of the need of the times in which we live, Adam Bittleston charts a Path, one might say a modern Path of Initiation, in which loneliness can be, and often is, a feature. Loneliness does seem to have its polarities with inner and outer, and it is helpful to have guidance on the path with its pitfalls and where, one may appear at times, to be walking in Darkness.

What I find so helpful in this really quite accessible book with its six concise chapters is that it reaches out beyond the veil, as it were, to show that we are in reality, never entirely alone. True, many may feel so, even in a crowd, or perhaps even more so in a crowd, but that when one seeks the quiet within, and nurtures this space then one can come to feel interconnected with life and other, invisible beings. And that through the play of the senses this may be enhanced. It is wonderful the way he cites, for example, Kaspar Hauser, Jacques Lusseyran, and others within the framework of the senses.

A verse I had once attributed to Adam Bittleston, but I now learn from my research is from Dr Rudolf Steiner, can be helpful:

In the new Mysteries the whole earth becomes
a temple.

The hidden tragedy and triumph begins to become external fact.

Our own friends can become for us-though we may know little of it-

The terrible and wonderful actors in the ceremony of our initiation.

Perhaps it would not be superfluous to list the chapter headings in "Loneliness":

1. THE ONSET OF LONELINESS
2. THE RING OF THE SENSES
3. THE FAMILY
4. THE SOLITUDE OF GOD AND MEN
5. RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION
6. THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST TODAY

with a hope that others may be guided to this gem of a book, which encompasses many of the great teachers of humanity to so enrich

us, and help us to deal with what comes to us in the region of the threshold. This determines to a great extent the kind of progress we will be able to make on our life's path. The inner path is also an outer path.

SOMETIMES

By Rebecca Maxwell

sometimes I feel
I'm in a congregation of one:
the deep words bless my solitude
though I cannot guess symbolic gestures,
nor the purpose of footsteps I hear.

sometimes at tea-break,
I'm in a community of one;
the walking, talking, milling and merging-
catching someone's eye, and waving,
all that clatter matter happens back there,
where they clump together at a distance
around a generous buffet table.

I don't know who's there,
but it is there,
not here,
not knowable to me.
then sometimes someone engages with me,
sitting beside me
and I find I do belong.

sometimes, I'm in a writer's workshop,
there's the subdued rustle of passing paper;
is it simply an attendance sheet?
or copies of hand-outs for discussion?
what names are on the sheet?
whose postures, whose moods, fringe the block
of tables?
who fills the space with unison?
while I attend alone?

but how real is ostensible union?
what aloneness is tasted though swiftly gulped
before it can taint the flavour of comfort?

give me the two, or three or four together,
few enough to savour the communion;
many enough to be active radii
of a compact contact circle
where a real diameter can happen,
and the centre can sense every radius
to its particular starting point.