



COMMUNITY OF THE HOLY NAME



**Autumn 2018
Newsletter**

IN THIS ISSUE...

Following the historic move to the new convent, we think about CHANGE and how it affects our lives. Also, we see the inside stories of two cherished items in the CHN Spirituality Centre.

We have also included a History Supplement of our Community, which dates back to 1888.

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Editor: Liz Johnstone

The CHN Spirituality Centre

*By Bishop Garry Weatherill, Anglican
Bishop of Ballarat and Warden to CHN*

Saturday 17th February was a glorious summer's day, when the Sisters opened their doors for members of the public to view the new convent Esther House and refurbished CHN Spirituality Centre, once again open for retreats.



CHN Spirituality Centre

Commenting on the historic occasion, Bishop Garry shared his thoughts, "As human beings, we are essentially conservative in nature, preferring the familiar and the safe to the idea of CHANGE. So, this is a bold and courageous move by the Sisters. They have a vision, to

reapply their Community House as a Spirituality Centre.

Everything old is new again. CHN ran a Retreat house in the late 20th century, until it was no longer fashionable to take retreats. Now, there is again a need for places of recovery, peace and rest. So this is a recognition, to use this wonderful building and grounds for such purposes.

This is an age when church-going and Christianity as a religious movement are not popular but many people express a need to understand the depths of the human heart. This area of self-understanding is how Christians can speak to non-Christians, where only God can speak to the human heart of the deeply significant things of human experience.

The CHN Spirituality Centre gives a place where you can engage in the spiritual journey, where it is expected that you will want to engage with it."



Ruth Burrows and the World of Change

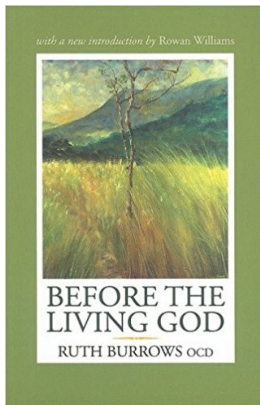
By Philip Harvey, librarian, Library of the Community of the Holy Name

Setting oneself the task of reading the works of a new author can be a change. You hear their voice, enter their world, and perhaps learn new things in the process. Ruth Burrows is a name I have known for years, but never read, so this year I set about immersing myself in her books. The combined effect is to meet someone whose life is completely dedicated to God, with all the

costs and changes that entails.

In her biography 'Before the Living God' Ruth Burrows opens by saying she was "born into this world with a tortured sensitivity." She details her responses - joyful or anguished, obedient





Front cover of Ruth's book

“She knew she had to give up everything, give herself up to seeking intimacy with God.”

or rebellious - to growing up. When her beloved elder sister Helena dies, Ruth is scarred. She does not blame God for this, but she comes to think that God is one who deprives. Change in these circumstances, however, teaches her about her own personal emotions. “Let me love anyone and God was sure to remove my loved one,” she writes. “This wound was only later healed by a friend God gave me, a friend who loved me with a deep love and in whom I have found joy. The trouble was on an emotional level and God came to me on the emotional level through friendship.”

Ruth seems an unlikely candidate for the religious life. She goes through a tomboy stage, has a boyfriend, and makes fun of the teacher nuns at her school. At 14 she has already decided she will study at Oxford and get married. Instead, she reluctantly attends a school retreat and makes a nuisance of herself by not keeping silent. On the second day of this retreat she is “seized with a sense of fear such as I had never known before. It was related directly to God and to him alone.” When she goes to confession her confessor gently confronts her, causes her to realise that “I was afraid of being ‘good’. That is, if once I decided to be ‘good’ anything might happen, there would be no knowing where it would end.” This was the moment for the grace which changed her life. She knew she had to give up everything, give herself up to seeking intimacy with God. For her the choice was “self-evident”, to become an enclosed contemplative nun. Her world was completely changed.

Ruth Burrows entered an English Carmelite convent in 1947 and has lived in one Carmel house or another ever since. Some of us would think that meant seventy years of not much change, but her biography contains unobvious examples to the contrary. To begin with, her name changed to Sister Rachel, which is how she is known within community.

Then there are essential matters like eating and sleeping. Austerity England was hard enough, but inside a religious house food was of poor quality and lacking in protein; strict hours of prayer could be a real challenge for a young woman unused to such clockwork. The older and wiser Ruth who writes this book reflects: “There are two sources of comfort, bed and food, and need for these can be tyrannical. Surely there must be something unbalanced in a regime which, far from freeing people, binds them to such animal needs. Experience has proved that when sisters are truly happy, are given adequate worthy interests wholly compatible with the contemplative life, such as good reading, interesting, creative, responsible work, and above all emotional satisfaction in human relationships, food and sleep cease to be important. They fall into the normal pattern.”

Then there's always the tricky business of human relationships. Several gruelling and entertaining stories are told of relations in the community, culminating in a clash of authority between an outgoing and incoming mother of the house. Furthermore, in this process Ruth's own vocation is questioned by other nuns. These strengthening experiences of change, and threatened change, ultimately assist in Ruth's own self-knowledge. She comes to a realisation of the supreme importance of charity. “In true love for our neighbour lies all the asceticism we need. Here is the way we die to self. What are disciplines, artificial practices of penance and humility compared with this relentless pursuit of love? Perfect love of the neighbour means complete death to self and the triumph of the life of Jesus in us.”

The glorious English summer of 1952 brought with it plans to establish a new house, with all that means in terms of choice, building, shifting, and other changes. Eventually they found a modest house

amidst foothills. Ruth goes to length describing the beauties of their new Carmel and the change in daily life, especially physical work, that came with being in the country rather than the town. Ruth's maturity is, by this stage, more apparent, as she confesses that it did not concern her which house she lived in. "The thought of a Carmel in the country was lovely but I never found myself setting store by it. I realised that Carmel was independent of situation and it was Carmel that held me." Community is uppermost, not locality or other expectations. It was here that she developed her own sense of leadership, spending time herself as leader of the community. Her account of the changes and challenges brought by that role are also good reading.

'Before the Living God' is a short book intended to reach others in need, who may gain from its honest consideration of internal experience. It was only written under instruction from one of her successors as leader. Ruth was asked to do so in order that "my thoughts would clarify and that I would come to know myself and hence God's way of love with me." It is the story of a soul,

written in Carmelite tradition, and has much more to say about prayer life than the vicissitudes of change. The book serves as useful human background to Ruth Burrows' more thorough works on the spiritual life and mystical prayer.



Philip Harvey, Librarian

Philip is a senior professional librarian and also the librarian of the Carmelite Library in Melbourne. He is a poet, writer, editor, book reviewer and blogger.

See his writings at <http://chnlibrary.blogspot.com.au> and <http://thecarmelitelibrary.blogspot.com.au/>

The Library of the Community of the Holy Name

Anyone staying as a guest or on retreat is welcome to use the CHN Library, which is used by the Sisters, Oblates, Associates, and Visitors. Access is also given to people researching special subjects connected with the Community, its history and other subjects. Researchers are welcome to contact the Community to discuss their objectives.



Comfortable seating provided for reading

The Library holds over 12,000 titles. The strongest area of the collection, and the most used, is spirituality, including Christian life, prayer, mysticism and devotional meditations. Biography is another strength.

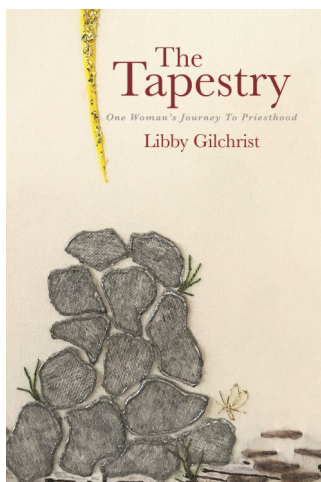
There is no fee to join. We offer free access, on site, asking only that borrowers leave contact details and undertake to return or renew their books in good order when due.

The Librarian is Philip Harvey, who manages the Library one day per week (Monday). Amanda Witt is a volunteer Assistant. The Sisters assist users with directions and information on the other days of the week.



Mother Esther Foundress Window in the Library

New in the Library by our Librarian, Philip Harvey



Last year was the 25th anniversary of the ordination of the first women priests in the Anglican Church of Australia. This year one of those first women priests, Kay Goldsworthy, was appointed Archbishop of Perth, the first female archbishop not just in Australia but in the Anglican Communion. It is

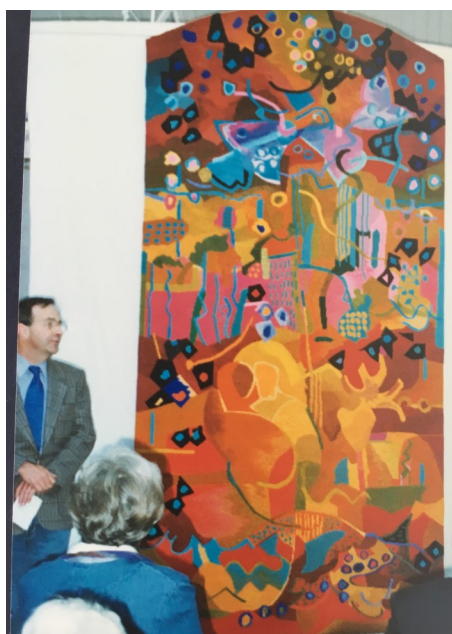
from this perspective that some of those involved in the movement for change are now telling the inside story, reflecting on both the defeats and victories of the ordination debate.

Libby Gilchrist fought the fight in what was for her familiar territory, the Diocese of Wangaratta, and she has written a sensitive account of her experiences in **'The Tapestry : One Woman's Journey to Priesthood'** (Ark House Press, 2018). The resistance to change by those she calls

traditionalists was very strong. The slowness and even obstruction of consecutive bishops is spelled out with acute detail in her book, though she strives at all times to understand those who would hinder the progress of her calling, acknowledging their human vulnerability while not mincing her words. Her accounts of affirmation from clergy and laity in the Diocese, especially the women's support network called Building Bridges, balance the story.

We know the outcome in advance. The Border's first female Anglican priest was ordained in 2005, not in Wangaratta but Melbourne. Yet to read how she got there makes for sometimes tough reading, as Libby comes up against the complex legalities of the church, the evident misogyny of some, and the fixed positions of those in Wangaratta unready to countenance change occurring all around them. One of the most affective elements of the book is her description of people changing their minds over time, through prayer and talk, so that a synod that once would have thrown out proposals for women's ordination, eventually voted emphatically for it in both houses.

The 'Creation' tapestry in the Chapel of the Spirituality Centre



Artist Christopher Pyett at the unveiling of the Creation tapestry in 1996

The image for this beautiful tapestry was composed by Christopher Pyett. Born in Melbourne in 1943, Christopher Pyett studied in Hobart. He is a figurative painter in oil, gouache and watercolour, who is well known for his vibrant and evocative watercolours and designs for tapestries. Pyett has taught at tertiary level in Devonport, Tasmania and in Melbourne. His work is represented in several public, regional and institutional collections.

His other works include the commissioned image for the tapestry of Dame Elisabeth Murdoch AC DBE, a Founding Member of the Board of Management of the Victorian Tapestry Workshop and is the first portrait tapestry for the National Portrait Gallery's collection.



Tapestry of Dame Elisabeth Murdoch in the National Portrait Gallery



The story of the Crucifix standing in the Calvary Garden dates back to the Community of the Ascension, the first Anglican male institution of its kind in Australia.

During the first World War, a few army chaplains decided that if they were spared they would found a Religious Community. They had served at the front and some had been prisoners of war; Father Harold Davies had been detained in the prison camps of Germany. Before their army service, most of them had been in 'bush brotherhoods', that is itinerant priests who had undertaken monastic vows and gone to sparsely-settled rural districts in Australia to preach, administer the sacraments and give religious instruction in schools.

In 1919 the Community of The Resurrection at Mirfield, Yorkshire, undertook the training of the original group of novices and in 1921 they began in Goulburn, in a four-roomed cottage in old Bishopthorpe, which stood in about 60 acres of ground. By 1936, there were ten professed Brothers, eight priests, and two lay brothers.

In 1870, Count Rossi had built and given this property to the Church of England for a bishop's residence. In 1913, a spark from a chimney had set alight the old shingles of the roof, and the interior of the house was completely destroyed, leaving only the bluestone shell, standing in a wilderness of rubbish, when the Community arrived to take over. So, the men lived in a cottage in the grounds, whilst the old stone coach-house and stables were converted into a chapel and library. They restored the main house, in

The Story of the Crucifix

four stages, being finally completed in 1933.

The life of the Community of the Ascension was based on prayer, meditation, study, and manual work. They grew their own vegetables and fruit, also some crops, and kept cows and fowls. Men were welcomed as guests for short periods, and casual visitors of both sexes were gladly shown round the premises and gardens. Of particular interest was the 'Calvary Garden', made by the Brothers' own labour when they excavated a portion of hillside and erected a life-size Crucifix. It was, by its nature, an outdoor chapel and viewed by visitors as a wonderful achievement.

In Anglican circles, the Community was known far and wide throughout Australia and deeply respected as the Brothers conducted and preached at parochial missions and retreats, quiet days, etc. in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and South Australia.

The outbreak of the Second World War brought the untimely dissolution of the Community, as many of the members went on active service. The Brothers had had connections with the Community of the Holy Name, presumably through the Sisters' work in Goulburn, where they managed a residential girls' home and three children's homes. They donated their cherished Crucifix to CHN and it now resides in our Community's 'Calvary Garden', here in Cheltenham.

(NOTE: We do not know who made the original cast of the crucifix.)



Bishopthorpe in Goulburn, now a private residence

Memories of Sister Margaret Anne



**Sr Margaret Anne's
Ordination in 1992**

Margaret and I first met at St Peter's, Eastern Hill before either of us were in this Community. She was one of a group of young people who studied at Melbourne University where Margaret had completed a science Degree. We developed a friendship during which she often came over from Pascoe Vale South, where she had grown up, to Essendon where I lived, to play tennis. One day I

happened to mention that I was hoping to test my vocation in the Community of the Holy Name later that year. Margaret then told me that she too was hoping to come early the next year.

We discovered later that most Sisters had faced opposition to their religious vocation from their parents, and Margaret was no exception. She felt this very much and was particularly distressed at the death of her father which occurred during her novitiate. In those days (the 1950's) the novitiate lasted for a minimum of two years, after six months as a Postulant. So, after a time, we found ourselves together in the novitiate. Back then we had several Branch Houses (children's homes, two hospitals and a Home for the Elderly) and novices were required to spend some months in at least two of these houses as part of their experience and training. So, for most of our novitiate Margaret and I only met once a week when we came to the Community House for novices' class.

Margaret's Branch House experience included a period at St Ives Hospital in East Melbourne where her knowledge as a dietician was useful. She also spent some months at our Mission House in Spring Street and at the Home for Little Children at Darling. She was professed as a Sister on the Feast of the Annunciation, 25 March 1954.

In the early 1960s she was sent to Papua New Guinea where we had established Holy Name School, a High School for girls, near the headquarters of the Anglican

Mission. Here Margaret used her knowledge as a Bachelor of science and her considerable ability to develop and expand the school.

After about 13 years in PNG, Margaret came back to Australia to stay. For many years she had felt a strong call to the priesthood, so she undertook Theological Studies and did a Clinical Pastoral Education programme based at the Austin Hospital. She ministered as a lay chaplain in a locum capacity in the Austin, Alfred and PANCH Hospitals. She was the first Australian woman belonging to a Religious Community to be made Deacon. In 1982 Margaret was appointed as the first interchurch chaplain at Box Hill Hospital, setting up the department there and retiring in 1992. She was ordained as Priest that year, one of the first group of women priested in Melbourne ministered as an Assistant Priest at St Christopher's Church in East Bentleigh for several years.

Her failing health two years ago, which accelerated rapidly over recent months, was a sadness to us all. She had been a loyal and faithful Sister, with a strong personality and presence and will be greatly missed. Farewell Margaret Anne. Rest in Peace.

Sister Elizabeth Gwen, CHN

I had the privilege of being sent to Holy Name School in Dogura in February 1964 and was warmly welcomed by Sr Margaret Anne, the Headmistress. She sent me off to do a Teaching course in Port Moresby and arranged for me to stay with some R.C. Sisters who were also going to do the course.

When I returned to Holy Name school, she appointed me as the Home Science teacher, the beginning of working with her for many happy years, during which she gave me unfailing support and help.

Sr Margaret Anne was very generous and loved the girls, encouraging them to achieve their full potential. As a result, some of them became leaders in PNG society, which was a strongly patriarchal society in those days.

I personally will always be indebted to Sister and thank her for her trust in me. The girls loved Sr Margaret Anne and respected her, as did the staff. May she rest in peace.

Sister Hilary, CHN

Waiting for God: a reflection

We all know what it is like to wait - waiting for the doctor, dentist, at the airport, in the shopping queue. Sometimes it is easier to wait than others.

Why is waiting so hard? Today's society is a time of instant answers which makes us impatient with other areas of our lives; so waiting is not something we do easily. It can be one of the most difficult things we have to do in our lives. However, the end of waiting can bring joy as with the birth of a child or it can bring sadness such as the death of a loved one.

Often when we have to wait, our lives are put on hold and it seems as though there is nothing we can do, but God may be making us wait for a reason.

In the Bible, we are told to trust in the Lord, not our own understanding (Proverbs 3: 5-6), wait for God's guidance instead of going our own way (Acts 1:4), continue in prayer being watchful with thanksgiving (Colossians 4:2) and remember the blessings yet to come (Isaiah 30:18).

Waiting can help us to become the person God wants us

to be. It can transform our character, making us grow spiritually and emotionally. It may reveal our true motives and give us time to really think about what we are doing and it can help build patience and intimacy with God.



I believe that God knows the right time for things in our lives to happen. In Ecclesiastes 3:1, we read, 'There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens.'

I would encourage you to spend time in silence and see if you can recognise areas where God's timing has been important in your own life while you have been waiting.

**Excerpt from Day of Prayer and Reflection,
April 2018, by Sr Carol, CHN**

Community and Belonging : a reflection

In one of the Creation Stories in Genesis, God creates MAN and then says, "It is not good that MAN should live alone; I will make him a helper." This story describes the beginning of family.

In pre-historic times, when humans first inhabited this earth, they soon discovered the need to live in groups, for safety, but also for the provision of food, the making of tools and shelters and for companionship. We know how tribes sat around their campfires at night telling their stories.

It has been said there is no such thing as a solitary Christian. Why?

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. (1 Corinthians 12:12;27)

For the three years of his public ministry, Jesus lived in community – an unimpressive group of men and some women, with whom he had chosen to share his life. He was often exasperated with their inability to understand his message but, at the same time, he obviously had a great love and a great need for them.

Some of you live alone through circumstances over which you have no control; for some it may be a choice; some may still have a treasured partner.



Termite Mounds by Basil Hadley, 1990

But whatever your circumstances, do you have a *belonging* community? It may be family, your parish community, bowling club, helping out at a voluntary organisation or your connection to CHN.

Is your community, or your communities, important to you? Do you value them? Why?

Sometimes, it is good for us to remind ourselves of the gifts God offers us and surely one of those is the gift of a richness of life through community and belonging.

**Excerpt from Day of Prayer and Reflection,
May 2018, by Sr Valmai, CHN**

Days of Prayer and Reflection 2018

Dates for 2018:

March 1
April 5
May 3
June 7
July 5
August 2
September 6
October 4
November 1

The Sisters of the Community of the Holy Name Invite you to Days of Prayer and Reflection at the Community House in Cheltenham, from 10am—3 pm.

The Eucharist is celebrated at mid-day and there are opportunities to sit quietly, to use our library and to wander in the gardens. Some input is given, and suggestions for using the silence.

BYO lunch. (Tea and coffee are provided.) There is no charge for these days but a donation towards costs is appreciated.

For further information, contact Sister Josephine Margaret, CHN, on 9583 2087



“Be Still and know that I am God.”

CHN Newsletter

Travelling our life-long journey: A reflection



Sinai Peninsula by Florian Prischtl

Lent is a time when we can celebrate and remember the Passover Journey when God led his people out of slavery into the Promised land. God's promise to lead his people on this journey was first made to Jewish people, but it is a promise for all God's people, of every time and place.

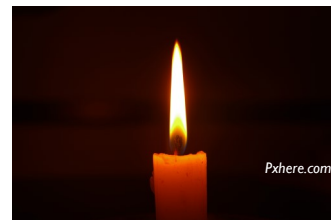
I know I am still on the journey, conscious of deep desire and failure, aware of burdens and difficulties, and I value some disciplines to help me on the way.

One of the disciplines practised by most Religious Communities is to say Psalm 119 regularly. Psalm 119 was obviously written by someone who suffered and was persecuted because of his faithfulness to the LAW. This does not consist of detailed rules to be obeyed and which can so easily turn religious practice into a heavy, lifeless burden.

Words like **counsel**, **wisdom** and **way**, probably convey the meaning of the Hebrew more clearly for us.

In the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, his Passover journey, we see the revelation of God's nature, his purpose and plan, and the way that eternal purpose was accomplished.

Choose one of these Bible readings and consider what words help you to express the meaning of the Word of God in and for your life—Psalm 119:105-112; Psalm 19:7-14; Isaiah 1:10-20; John 1:1-14 or Matthew 16:24.



PSALM 119:105
Your word is a lantern to my feet:
and a light to my path.

Excerpt from Day of Prayer and Reflection, March 2018, by Sr Josephine Margaret, CHN

Reminder for CHN Oblates and Associates

Our 2018 combined meeting of Oblates and Associates is on Saturday 16 June, beginning with the Midday Office at 12.45pm.

Our guest speakers are the Revd. Jonathan and Rachel Lopez, who were among the first members of St Anselm's Community, the Religious Community founded by the Archbishop of Canterbury at Lambeth Palace.



Revd. Jonathan and Rachel Lopez

Lunch is provided, **so please be sure to book in.** Ring 9583 2087 (or email avrilldover@yahoo.com.au) **at least one week before**, for catering purposes.