



COMMUNITY OF THE HOLY NAME



Winter 2017
Newsletter

IN THIS ISSUE,

We are looking at discernment, from different points of view. We also consider what lies ahead for CHN, following the Moving Forward Together meeting.

Inside this issue:

Discerning a call to the Religious Life 3

Leadership of CHN: Sr Carol re-elected 3

The staff: who we are and what we do 4

'Moving Forward Together': a day of planning the big move 5

Sr Pamela appointed Member of the Order of St John 6

Reflections:
• Awareness 7
• Seeking God's face 7
• Humility and discernment B/P

Days of Prayer and Reflection B/P

Editor: Liz Johnstone

Discerning your calling

By Bishop Paul Barker, Jumbunna Episcopate*



I was 19 when my minister suggested to me, totally out of the blue, that I ought to consider ordination.

Over time my life changed enormously. I am so grateful to God for that initial conversation and his leading. How do we discern a call to ministry?

Externally, there are several factors to consider. Titus 1:5-9, for example, lists several of the qualities required for ministers. Notable is the emphasis on godly character. Unless a person demonstrates godliness of life and character, then ministry is not a calling. The only 'skill' in this list of attributes (and similarly in the pastoral epistles in general) is that a person be 'apt

to teach'. Handling the scriptures is paramount for a person called to ministry.

Secondly, being exposed in ministry is crucial to testing a call. My minister led me to start leading Bible studies, even to preach when I was 20. In a sense this was testing my call. I have similarly encouraged people who talk to me to get involved in ministry in different ways.

Third is the endorsement of others. In my case, my minister prompted my thinking. But as I led Bible studies, preached and began in leadership roles, others responded positively and encouraged my ministry.

**Jumbunna Episcopate covers parishes south of the Yarra and to the east but outside the urban redevelopment zone.*

(continued on page 4)

Discernment as a way of life

by Paul Beirne, Emeritus Professor of the University of Divinity



Prof. Beirne is the Director of Heart of Life Spirituality Centre, Box Hill

In a quest to understand the meaning of Discernment, let us turn to a source book which contains truth, beauty and an intriguing cast of characters - the Gospel of John.

When Jesus saw Nathaniel coming, he said of him, "There is an Israelite who deserves the name, 'incapable of deceit'." "How do you know me?" said Nathaniel. (John 1: 47-48)

How indeed? How did Jesus accurately discern the measure of a person whom he had never met, from a distance? How did he know Nathaniel? Jesus knew that he himself was accepted fully in direct relationship to, and with, Abba his Father, and to, and with the Holy Spirit. This total awareness is seen in the accounts of the calming of the storm.

With the gale blowing, and the waves breaking into the boat, the disciples were terrified, but Jesus had his head on a cushion, asleep. The

disciples shook Jesus awake crying "Master, do you not care? We are going down!" Jesus turned to the wind and the sea, and said "Quiet now. Be calm." And all was calm again. (Mark 4:35-41).

There was Jesus, at peace and in harmony with the wind and the waves, sound asleep.

What if the disciples, by this time aware of the calm power residing in their midst, had refrained from panicking and had just let Jesus sleep, and when he awoke, had asked him.

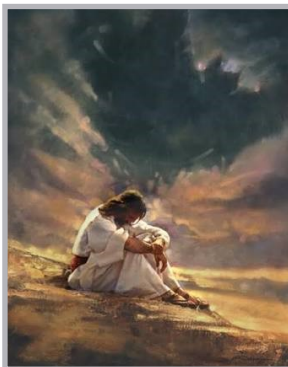
(continued on page 2)

**“Master, what
did you dream
when the storm
was raging?”**



*Jesus sleeping during the
Tempest by James Tissot*

**“But Jesus
would always go
off to
somewhere he
could be alone
and pray.”**



*Jesus Praying from
Free ClipArt*

Professor Beirne, continued from front page

“Master, what did you dream when the storm was raging?” What a wonderful opportunity was missed by the disciples to discern the situation they were in, to respond appropriately, and to be enlightened.

This is the nature of true discernment - to be aware of, to trust in, and to wait with the calm presence at the centre of our lives until, with clarity and precision, a way opens that we know instinctively to be true and right, precisely because it is as true and right as the source from which it springs.

Larkin in his book ‘Silent Presence: Discernment as Process and Problem’ describes discernment thus:

The experience of that word from God, of that effect experienced in one’s being, is the experience of discernment. It is hearing and responding to the word of God by one who knows the language. (pp. 19-20)

And again:

The Journey into self, moving within the perspectives of the world of faith, actuates that faith and puts us in touch with the Silent Presence. Such is the rich contribution of discernment to life in the spirit. (p. 60)

Discernment, then, is not something that one does. It is, rather, a way of life as modelled by Jesus himself:

In the morning, long before dawn, Jesus got up and left the house and went off to a lonely place and prayed there. (Mark 1: 35)

After sending the crowds away, Jesus went up to the hills by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone. (Matt. 14:23)

His reputation continued to grow, and large crowds gathered to hear him and to have their sickness cured. But Jesus would always go off to somewhere he could be alone and pray. (Luke 5:15-16)

In Jesus’ life, and in general, true discernment flows from a prayerful relationship with the Silent Presence within.

In times of yore, novices in religious orders attempted to learn the discipline of particular examen, or the examination of conscience for at least 15 minutes every

day.

In a seminal article published in 1972*, the Jesuit scholar George Aschenbrenner s.j. comments on this practice:

Examen is usually the first practice to disappear from the daily life of the religious... it is not of immediate practical value in a busy day. (p.14)

He then encourages a different approach:

Examen must be seen in relationship to the discernment of spirits. It is a daily intensive exercise of discernment in a person’s life. When examen is related to discernment, it becomes examination of consciousness rather than of conscience... (p.14)

The specific exercise of examen is ultimately aimed at developing a heart with a discerning vision to be active not only for one or two quarter-hour periods a day, but continually. (p.16)

In other words, and once again, discernment is a way of life.

The road of discernment based on consciousness examen is not an easy one to travel, as the interior journey is difficult to comprehend, let alone practise. Yet remember that we do not travel alone and the way to follow this path is to allow the source of life to find us, rather than the other way around. Jesus’ mother is our model in this regard, as Luke notes following the nativity: *As for Mary, she treasured all these things, and pondered them in her heart. (Luke 2:19)*

Understanding the meaning of discernment as a way of life may be sought through the medium of imagery, poetry and symbol. After all, Jesus explained the Kingdom of God through stories and images. Consider the following lines, from T. S. Eliot’s poem Preludes and read not with your mind, but with your heart, and soul:

I am moved by fancies that are curled

Around these images and cling:

The notion of some infinitely gentle

Infinitely suffering thing.

* Reference: Aschenbrenner, George, A. ‘Consciousness Examen’, Review for Religious, Vol. 31, No.1, (Jan 1972), pp. 17-21.

Discerning a call to the Religious Life: *'You did not choose me but I chose you.'* (John 15:16a)

By Sister Carol, Mother Superior, CHN

It is God who first calls you. Some sisters heard that call from a young age, for others it came in midlife, and I was one of the latter. At first there may be a sense of disbelief – this can't be right; not me, no thank you. But once the seed is planted, it won't go away. Each sister has their own story and no two would be the same.

With that call come doubts, self-made barriers and, at times, opposition from family and friends. So, discernment also involves our relationships, with God and with each other. When I left my teaching position to join the Community, this resulted in a colleague being moved out after many years, and into a school where he was given the art room. He had only ever been in a classroom. This caused me much pain and anguish, however when I met him a few years later, he admitted it was the right move and he was very happy and enjoying it

As we discern, we are not on our own. God provides people to support us and guide us and listening is important. As I was discerning my call my teaching colleagues, who were not Christian, were often more supportive than those who were. God speaks to us in many and diverse ways and we need to be alert.

God does not call when there is turmoil in our life, even though entering the Religious Life might seem to be a way of escape. When my call came, I was settled, had a good job, plenty of money, a great social life and was part of a nurturing church community.

How then do we know that the call is truly from God? Among all the ups and downs, there remains an inner sense of peace and rightness. As discernment is a process, we need to be receptive, with an open heart and listening ears, spending time quietly with God and trusting him.

When I am approached by young women discerning a call to the Religious Life, they are under the impression it will happen sooner rather than later. But it may take months, even years, as it happens in God's timing. The Community members also spend time in prayer together, discerning God's will for that person.

Religious life is not easy. It can be hard work living with a group of individuals with different personalities. But when God has truly called you, he walks with you amidst the turmoil, to a place of life where we find life, joy and a peace like no other.

I have called you by name, you are mine.
(Isaiah 43:1b)



"God does not call when there is turmoil in our life, even though entering the Religious Life might seem to be a way of escape."

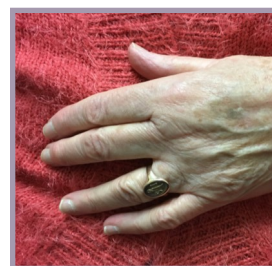
Leadership of CHN: Sister Carol re-elected

Sister Carol was re-elected for her third term to lead the Community on 13th March. Leadership is a great privilege and trust. Each term is for three years and, after the third term, the leader stands down for the election of a new leader.

The election involves much prayer and discernment, seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit. A Eucharist of the Holy Spirit is celebrated prior to the election, which is by secret ballot, watched over by the Warden and two invited priests. The elected leader then chooses her own assistant and the sisters elect three members to represent them on the Community Council, which meets monthly with the leader and her assistant. The

Council act on behalf of the sisters, advising the leader, and bringing any concerns to her attention, for instance the current building works and impending move.

At the re-installment ceremony, Sister Carol was again presented with the ring of Office and the cross, as passed down since Sister Esther's time.



The ring of Office

Sister Esther, Mother Foundress of CHN, with the cross of Office

Bishop Paul, continued from front page



***“...God entrusts
such treasure to
mere jars of clay...”***

A fourth consideration is adaptability in ministry. I was fortunate in that I returned to Melbourne and had to start again in a new church. That was very helpful for seeing that I could be involved effectively in ministry in a different place, under the guidance of a different Vicar who also mentored and encouraged me.

Finally, but not necessarily last, is the inner call. This does not replace the above. It may precede it, or as in my case, follow. But a desire grew in my heart to leave a lucrative career and serve the gospel and church of our Lord Jesus.

The factors are brought together in the diocesan selection process, of which I was once an Examining Chaplain. They are considered in selection interviews, training, field placements during study in different

ministries, the endorsement of others and testing of call.

When I was still in the throes of discerning my call and when to begin theological study, one senior minister urged me saying that the best test of ministry is simply to do it. I worked in a secular job for three years but was very active in my church, reading theologically, preaching, becoming a churchwarden, all the while both exercising ministry and strengthening my sense of call and commitment.

Finally, there is no greater privilege than to be a minister of the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ in a world which needs more and more to know him. That God entrusts such treasure to mere jars of clay (2 Corinthians 4) is astonishing, a joy and privilege.

The staff: who we are and what we do



Eileen



Anne



Liz

A team of loyal workers care for Community House and Gardens, ensuring they are well-maintained all year round. Judy, Terri and Zhano undertake the cleaning, Kezha the gardening and David does the basic maintenance around the buildings, while Michelle and Eileen serve up delicious and nutritious food for the sisters and the visitors.

In the specialised Library, Philip researches, catalogues and gives help and advice.

Anne does the bookkeeping and anything and everything that needs doing around the office.

And Liz (that's me) looks after the website and the publications.



Kezha, Zhano and baby Avi



Judy, Michelle and Terri (left to right)



Philip



David

‘Moving Forward Together’: a day of planning the big move

On Saturday 13th May a meeting was held at the Community House to discuss the topic of ‘Moving Forward Together’. The Facilitator was Bishop Garry Weatherill, who is also the Warden of CHN. 42 people attended, comprising Sisters, Oblates, Associates and Priest Associates. This was a wonderful response and encouragement for the Sisters as the Community faces the task of moving from the present Community House to the new building and establishing the main house as a Retreat and Spirituality Centre.

Bishop Garry led the gathering in three sessions. Everyone was divided into groups discussing each topic and reporting back. There was considerable discussion and the feedback from each group was listed and collated.

At first, we considered **what we appreciated** and agreed upon:

- The Sisters – their prayerful presence, accessibility and hospitality;
- The building and the grounds – the beautiful gardens and birds, the spaciousness and the pervasive sense of peace;
- The whole atmosphere and experience of the Chapel and Offices, providing a distinctive culture where people can find their own space.

Next, we thought about the **challenges and opportunities presented**, with feedback from the groups as follows:

- There was concern for the roles and welfare of the Sisters and supporters;, including:
 - Defining the roles of Sisters in the management and running of the two buildings;
 - Preserving the religious life and privacy of the Sisters;
 - Ensuring a continuing connection between visitors and the Sisters.
- There are issues associated with the buildings:
 - What will be the life of the Chapel?
 - How will the Lodge and Hermitage be used?
 - The separation between guests and Sisters;
 - Ensuring the security of the buildings.
- Planning and Day to Day Management:
 - The need to develop a business plan;
 - Defining how the Retreat Centre will be managed – paid staff and volunteers, managing multiple group use;
 - Advertising and promotion of the new facilities.

Topic Three was **‘Practicalities’**. Three timelines were considered:

- Within three months, the Sisters will be in process of moving and settling into the new accommodation;
- In 18 months’ time, there should be a clear sense of how the new convent use and Retreat House are managed and used, with a business plan complete with organised finances and critical staffing; retreats should have commenced;
- In three years’ time, the goal is to have published a forward program and annual review, conducted a review of the management program, increased the number of retreats and encouraged an increase in Alongsiders.

We all enjoyed a lunch of soup and sandwiches and concluded our time by joining together for the Eucharist, celebrated by Bishop Garry.

We pray for God’s continuing guidance in these challenging times and look forward to moving forward together.



***We appreciate
the accessibility
and hospitality
of the Sisters.***



***What will be
the life of the
Chapel and the
Offices under
the new
arrangements?***

Sister Pamela admitted to Membership of the Order of St John



The Governor of Victoria, Linda Dessau AC, at the formal Investiture, with Sister Pamela



Sister Pamela's insignia, bearing the internationally recognised 8-point star of the Order of St John

On Wednesday 24th May 2017, Sister Pamela was invested as a Member of the Order of St John, or to give it its full name, the 'Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem'. In a formal ceremony conducted in the State Drawing Room at Government House, the Governor of Victoria, Linda Dessau, AC and Dame of the Order of St John conducted the Investiture and admitted Sister Pamela, and others, to Membership of the Order. Membership is a special honour bestowed on individuals who have contributed significantly to the Order over a long period of time. There are 414,200 St John Ambulance volunteers worldwide but only 25,800 have been admitted to the Order as Members.

Sister Pamela has worked as a volunteer First Aider in the Order of St John since 1994 and is now a 'First Responder', providing professional support at local events, such as school fetes, and major state and national events, including the Australian Open.

The Order of St John is a major international charity, founded on Christian principles, providing first aid, healthcare and support services in over 40 countries around the world. It traces its origins back 900 years to the Knights Hospitaller who, in medieval times, offered care and shelter for pilgrims and crusaders in their hospital in Jerusalem. After the Fall of Jerusalem, the Knights moved and settled in Malta, until moved on by Napoleon Bonaparte.

In the 19th century, a group of citizens revived the Order of St John in England and St John Ambulance was formed in response to the dangers posed by the new industrial society, with its mines, factories and railways. They promoted the cause of first aid for the sick and wounded through volunteer effort—a novel concept at

the time and a much-needed one in the days before the National Health Service. Queen Victoria was so impressed with their provision of nurses, ambulances and first aid training, that she constituted St John as a Royal Order of Chivalry by royal charter in 1888, adding her royal beasts, the lions and the unicorns to the 8-pointed cross. Currently Queen Elizabeth II is the Sovereign Head of The Order,

The distinctive insignia of the Order, the 'Maltese Cross', was adopted in the 15th century, with its eight points of the four arms representing the eight lands of origin of the Knights Hospitaller. Nowadays, the Order of Saint John teaches that the eight points represent the eight Beatitudes, while St John Ambulance uses the points to represent the traits of a good first aider, to be Observant, Tactful, Resourceful, Dextrous, Explicit, Discriminating, Persevering and Sympathetic.

St John Ambulance has been active in Australia for over 130 years and is in all States and Territories, providing a myriad of services, including First Aid training (Over 500,000 first aid certificates last year), ambulance services in Western Australia and the Northern Territory Public and public access defibrillators throughout the Australian community.

Sister Carol, said, "The Sisters are very proud of Sister Pamela's work with St John and the award is well deserved."

References: www.stjohninternational.org, www.stjohn.org.au, https://www.stjohnsa.com.au/cms_resources/Understanding%20the%20Most%20Venerable%20Order%20of%20St%20John.pdf

Awareness: a reflection

In Mark we read, *A great gale arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. But (Jesus) was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, 'Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?' He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, 'Peace! Be still!' Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. He said to them, 'Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?' And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, 'Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?' (4:37-41)*

The knowledge that God is with us through our trials and tribulations gives us hope and trust. Are we open to and aware of what God is showing us? Look around at others, at nature, incidents in life. Did we see God in them or miss the opportunity?

Jesus looked to God for guidance on his life's pathway. In the Temple as a child, asking questions, listening. At his baptism and when tempted in the wilderness. When teaching, he often went off by himself to pray. In Gethsemane, he asked God to "take this cup from me." Yet he added, "Not my will but yours be done." On the cross he cried, "My God, My God, why have you



Jesus Stilling the Tempest, by James Tissot, in Brooklyn Museum

forsaken me?" But at the point of death, "Into your hands I commit my spirit."

Can we learn to be aware as Jesus was of God's presence, in every situation, in every step of our path of life, as we walk the Way of the Cross with Jesus by our side?

Awareness. Look and find it where God is showing you today.

*Excerpt from Day of Prayer and Reflection, April 2017,
By Sister Pamela, CHN*

Seeking God's face: a reflection

In your own words, from your own heart, what is one thing you wish to ask of God, that you really seek after?

To see the face of God is to know, or to recognize, that we are in the presence of God.

Recall a time in your life when you felt that you saw God, or knew him in some particular way. Think about this time again. How did you feel? What did you experience in your heart?

Think about how we sometimes know, or recognize, 'the face of God', in surprising and unexpected ways and places, people, events. We may see Him first as a stranger: he may not be as we expected him to be, perhaps not as we want him to be.

We can fail to recognize God's face because we are intent on pursuing our own interests, too busy to pause and look at what or who is in front of us. Sometimes it may take us a while to recognize the risen Christ among us. We may be afraid to hear his voice, afraid of where we may be led if we do so.

I saw the Lord, enthroned, with seraphs attending.



'Worship' from Pixabay

Their song: Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.

The building shook, and was filled with smoke. (Isaiah 6:1-6)

A picture of worship – 'worthship' is an old English word meaning giving God his true worth. He is the Holy One, glorious in his saving love, all-powerful and all-loving.

A vision is given by God. All our seeking of God's face is really in response to the gift of God, who looks on us with love. Our seeking means standing before Him, with open eyes and ears and heart, offering Him the worship of our heart, our adoration and praise.

*Excerpt from Day of Prayer and Reflection, May 2017,
By Sister Josephine Margaret, CHN*

Community of the Holy
Name, 40 Cavanagh Street,
Cheltenham, Victoria 3192
Phone 03 9583 2087
Email:
chnmelb@bigpond.com
www.chnmelb.org



We are a Community of Anglican Sisters who have been living, praying and ministering in Melbourne for more than 125 years. The Archbishop of Melbourne is the Visitor of the Community.

We believe that God has called us to give our whole being to him within this Community. Each Sister offers herself to God to be used in his service. We believe that this is how we may best respond to his love for us.

The purpose of the Community is to give glory to God and to share in the ministry of God's healing and reconciling love through prayer and service, seeking to proclaim Jesus as Saviour and Lord.

Humility and discernment: a reflection

Micah wanted to know how he could thank the Lord for all the Lord had done for him. Was it to offer burnt offerings, thousands of rams, rivers of oil or a first born? None of these things. Instead he was told...

...what does the Lord require of you but to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God? (Micah 6:8b)

Many people think that humility is being weak and passive. But that is not God's message to us. Bible based humility is different to worldly humility. It does not mean having to grovel, nor does it mean being unaware of our gifts or calling. A great example of humility is that of Mary of Bethany who washed Jesus' feet. She freely gave her all, not worrying what others thought of her. Clothing herself in humility, she poured a very costly perfume on Jesus, and Jesus recognised the sacrifice Mary had made. (John 12:1-8)

As we evaluate our lives, think about what we can offer one another – a heart that looks out for the interests of others, one that is not self-seeking or proud, a heart that serves and loves unconditionally and a heart that cultivates humility.



*'The Anointing at Bethany' Used with the kind permission of the artist.
Copyright Daniel F. Gerhartz
www.danielgerhartz.com*

How does humility fit with discernment? The discerning process in our life involves an awareness of how the decisions we make affect others. This may take weeks, months or even years and requires a humble heart, much prayer and listening to God. It is often said that discernment is more about relationship than decision-making.

Reflect on some of the big decisions you have made in your life and how they came about. Were they promptings from God? Did they affect your life style? Did they affect others in your life?

Excerpt from Day of Prayer and Reflection, June 2017, Sister Carol, CHN

Days of Prayer and Reflection 2017

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.

Dates for remainder of 2017

August 3

September 7

October 5

November 2

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



"Be Still and know that I am God."