

The Ministry in Spirituality Newsletter

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»>» please note the new telephone & email details <<<<

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I hope on a regular *basis* to *send* you a brief newsletter with a few thoughts and this is the first, i hope there may be others in your congregations with whom you might share these newsletters for this is a ministry to all in the diocese. As well, there may be others connected with other *denominations* who *may find* it helpful. Then there may be others with no church connection ... and who knows where that may *lead* if they are encouraged to consider the spiritual dimension to their life and see it as part of a whole. So please share this around.

To be clear right from the start; I don't see myself as the spiritual guru of the diocese nor as someone with all the answers. I Ve done a bit of praying and read a few books and talked and listened to a few people over the years; that's all.

Concerning my background in this area -I have had an interest in spirituality dating back to my time in College more than thirty years ago (closer to forty in reality). I later spent a year studying in this area in the USA in the early Eighties when there was *very little* on offer. In fact there was nowhere in this country or in England that I could find and I found five places in the States that offered courses. How things change!

I also see this ministry as one of encouragement, not just with your own relationship with God *and* the spiritual life of your parish, but also, for those interested *in* developing skills further in this area that may lead to leading Quiet Days, Retreats, Workshops, writing book reviews for this newsletter, or in fact anything else. If this is the case please be in touch. There may also be some lay folk whose spiritual gifts lie in this area. As I tried to indicate before, I don't see myself as "a one man band" with all the answers. I welcome *and encourage your* involvement; this is not a ministry about me but growing the potential that is already there *in our diocese and beyond*.

Book Review

John Pritchard; "How to pray - a practical handbook" SPCK 2002

Cost EstgIO US\$16

Available through Amazon.com

John Pritchard is the new bishop of Oxford and prior to this was the bishop of Jarrow in the north of England, He has written several books and his most recent is "the Life and Work of a Priest", i think "**How** to pray*" [s an excellent book and extremely useful for anyone trying to find a way to begin a relationship with God. In five sections incorporating 25 brief chapters Pritchard gives an excellent overview of how to pray and it is all very readable!

There are some great stories that you may have read or used yourself before. There are also a handful of wonderful cartoons (one printed below) and everything is brief and snappy.

For example, his chapter on how to slow down has a brief introduction, a key question to ponder, some practical things to try, a quote, a story, an image to relate to our life and finally a modern version of the 23rd psalm by Toki Miyashima. This is typical of the book's format; short, sharp sections and to the point,

Some of the chapter headings are - how to make the first moves, how to start the day with God, how to pray for other people, how to pray with the Bible, how to soak in silence, how to pray in bad times. There is also a very helpful fist of further resources.

This is a book whose content is a useful reminder to each of us on the "how-to" of praying, a book for the bookshelf to lend to others seeking to grow in this *area*, *and* one to *In* fact encourage others to purchase. It will end up being well-thumbed!



The Revd Habakkuk Wilkins was the victim of a bizarre meditation accident.

Next year's programme

At the moment I am trying to put some of the programme into place and there will be further details in the new year.

In the meantime I draw your attention to the current brochure and the **Retreat for clergy in local ministry here in Burra in early January.** June and I have a couple of spare beds and other accommodation is listed on the brochure. In addition I have discovered another place and the price there is negotiable, so be in touch with me if you are interested.

I also draw your attention to the post Easter Retreat led by **Michael Kennedy**. Michael is a former Jesuit and an excellent Retreat Conductor, now retired in Brisbane.

Specifically i draw your attention to another possibility. Michael Kennedy has agreed to during the weekdays either side of the weekend Retreat.

The plan is for me to take Michael to parishes /congregations to lead quiet days /evenings/ workshops/one-to-one spiritual direction, depending on the local request. We would need accommodation, and travel costs would be extremely helpful!

During the week Monday 14th to and including Thursday evening of the 17th April on the western side of Spencer's Gulf and on Tuesday 22nd April to Friday 25th inclusive on the eastern side of Spencer's Gulf.

It would be good if we were able to develop a coordinated strategy and perhaps have some combined central functions.

Having Michael in our diocese to lead us in this way is both a wonderful opportunity and possibility and I encourage you to be in touch sooner rather than later and to promote it among your people.

There is a poster I have seen of a small Afro-American boy standing in front of a dilapidated old building in or near Memphis/ Tennessee. He has a defiant look on his face and the caption reads: *God made me; God doesn't make junk".

Meditation Workshop

I am currently discussing the possibility of leading a workshop on Meditation with one of our clergy, if anybody else is interested to do the same please be in touch. There can be up to 6 sessions and this can be formatted in different ways. Each

session has half an hour of input followed by a different styled meditation to allow participants to experience some of the variety allowing them then to choose one that suits them.

Here's a different way to begin a Parish Council meeting or Guild Meeting etc.

HIS PRESENCE IN THE PRESENT

When our attention is caught up in past or future concerns, it blocks our availability to Christ who meets us in the here and now. This exercise is one way of coming back to focus on the present moment and could also be used by group members during the week.

The prayer leader guides the prayers

As you sit, close your eyes and settle yourself into a posture that is comfortable but alert... Rest your hands on your lap, and enjoy the stillness after all the movement of the day ... Christ Jesus is Lord over all that has been, all that is, and all that is to come, but we meet him in the present moment. So we want to bring our whole selves to him now,, Clench both your hands into fists...

Become aware of all the things from past moments and days that occupy your thoughts and feelings right now ...Imagine you are holding them all tight in your left hand... A closed hand leaves no space for Christ to come in ... So in your own time, relax your hand into an open, upturned palm, releasing these past matters into Christ's care...

Now become aware of all the concerns you have about what is to come - worries, things to do, even things you're looking forward to... Imagine you are holding them clenched in your right hand ... A clenched hand means a tension that can be tiring .. So in your own time, open out your hand as an act of letting these *concerns* go into Christ's keeping, and trusting him with the outcome ...

Open hands express a willingness to respond and receive whatever Christ wants to fill you with here and now ... Stay for a moment in quiet, with palms upturned, consciously in his presence in the present moment, offering this time, this place, this meeting, yourself, to him, for him to use as he chooses...

Christ Jesus is Lord over all that has been, all that is, and all that is to come ... And he is with us now... Thanks be to God.

From: Julia McGuinness "Creative praying in groups" SPCK 2005 £stg 10 US\$10.95 Available through Amazon.com