



Blessed Be

September 2018

*Namaste (Hindu greeting: I bow to the Divine in you) Welcome to this Spring edition of *Blessed Be*.*

*Our first contribution is from **Tricia Gemmell** who presents us with a reflection on the indigenous tradition of contemplation:*

In this NAIDOC¹ week we celebrated strong indigenous women. You might like to listen to **Miriam-Rose Ungemerr-Baumann**, distinguished tribal elder, artist and educator from Daly River in the Northern Territory. This is what she says:

‘Many Australians understand that Aboriginal people have a special respect for Nature. The identity we have with the land is sacred and unique.

What I want to talk about is another special quality of my people. I believe it is the most important. It is our most unique gift. It is perhaps the greatest gift we can give to our fellow Australians. In our language this quality is called *dadirri*. It is inner, deep listening and quiet, still awareness.

Dadirri recognizes the deep spring that is inside us. We call on it and it calls to us. This is the gift that Australia is thirsting for. It is something like what you call ‘contemplation.’ When I experience *dadirri* I am made whole again.

A big part of *dadirri* is listening.

We have learned to speak the white man’s language. We have listened to what he had to say. This learning and listening should go both ways. We would like people in Australia to take time to listen to us. We are hoping people will come closer. We keep on longing for the things that we have always hoped for – respect and understanding.

To be still brings peace – and it brings understanding...Our culture is different. We are asking our fellow Australians to take time to know us; to be still and to listen to us’.

(from *Dreaming A New Earth: Raimon Panikkar and Indigenous Spiritualities*, ed. Gerard Hall and Joan Hendriks)

An Indian adage:

I believe I have the Truth. You believe you have the truth. I respect your truth so please respect my truth.

¹ National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee
Australian Grail Publication

Elizabeth Lee, who has just finished working at the Matthew Talbot Hostel in Sydney has given us a poem reflecting on the life-lessons she is taking away with her

Lessons from the Talbot

Walk slowly
Pause frequently
Listen deeply
Speak sparingly
Consult widely
Act with integrity
Work collaboratively
Respect unceasingly
Praise regularly
Advocate passionately
Observe closely
Discern wisely
Reflect often
Tread sensitively
Encourage sincerely
Love tenderly
Question perceptively
Discuss openly
Respond compassionately
Laugh heartily
Celebrate frequently
Pray unceasingly
Breathe deeply
Weep occasionally
Wash hands habitually
And live gratefully

*Does this extract from David Duchovny's book. **Holy Cow** resonate with you? The narrator is Elsie the cow:*

We believe in God. In the shape of a cow. Not really. Scared you, though, didn't I? But we do believe something made all the somethings in the world – all the animals, animalcules, plants, rocks and souls. And whether that Maker is something shaped like a cow, a pig, a person, an amoeba or Jerry Garcia, we don't really know and don't care. We just believe there's a force for life and creation out there. The closest thing people have to it is Mother Earth. But that's just an approximation. And we don't just believe these things, we know them. In our bones and the bones of our ancestors who lie there in Old Macdonald's field somewhere.

Margaret Quinn has provided us with the following two pieces:

Christ asks for a home in your soul – where you and he, alone together, can laugh and be silent and be delighted with one another.

(**Caryll Houselander** from *Blessed Among Us*, Robert Ellsberg Liturgical Press, 2016)

To avoid the anxieties which may be caused by either regret for the past or fear of the future, here in a few words is the rule to follow:

the past must be left to God's measureless mercy;
the future to his loving providence;
and the present must be given wholly to his love through fidelity to his grace.

(**Jean Pierre de Caussage**, *Letters, Book VIII, 1/455*, from *Living with the Mind of Christ*, by Stephan Gillow Reynolds, Darton, Longman & Todd, 2016..)

*Thank you to the organiser of our National General Assembly in June this year, who put together this extract on Sabbath from **The Ten Commandments: Laws of the Heart** by **Joan Chittister**.*

Sabbath is the word that demands justice for every living thing...

Sabbath, it is clear, comes out of Hebrew for the sacredness of all life and the grounds of human dignity.

Sabbath is not a day of 'rest' because people are tired. It is a day of rest because people are human and ought not to be driven to death, because every living thing requires time to renew itself, if not physically, certainly spiritually; if not spiritually, at least physically.

It is a day of protest against the enslavement of peoples everywhere. It is a day of reflection on the life that makes humanity more than simply an exercise in survival.

Sabbath says that we must take the time to remember that we are from God and to determine what we are doing daily in the process of returning there...

Sabbath says that we are accountable for the way we live our lives, the way we do or do not develop our humanity, the way we allow the abuse of others in our name.

*A quote from **Erwin McManus**, pastor of Los Angeles church, *Mosaic*:*

The measure of an apostolic community is not the legends created by heroic acts but in the quality and texture of what that community considers ordinary living.

*Now some words from **The Seven Storey Mountain** by **Thomas Merton**:*

There is only one vocation. Whether you teach or live in the cloister or nurse the sick, whether you are in religion or out of it, married or single, no matter who you are or what you are, you are called to be the summit of perfection: you are called to a deep interior life perhaps even to mystical prayer, and to pass the fruits of your contemplation on to others. And if you cannot do so by word, then by example.

*From the book, **Meditations of a Hermit** by **Charles de Foucaud**:*

I shall do my best and God will do his will. Pray for me that my life may be such that he is able to use me for good. Happen what may, if my life is good, my time on earth will be useful to souls; if I am bad or lukewarm, however I may labour, I shall do no good.

*This poem comes from **Helen Gomez**:*

The Cup of Our Life by *Joyce Rupp*

My cup of compassion holds tears of the world; it overflows with sorrows, struggles and sadness.

My cup of compassion holds the cries of children, unfed, unloved, unsheltered, uneducated, unwanted.

My cup of compassion holds the screams of war, the tortured, slain, imprisoned, the raped, the disabled.

My cup of compassion holds the bruised and battered, victims of incest and abuse, gang wars, violent crimes.

My cup of compassion holds the voice of silent ones, the mentally ill, illegal immigrants, the unborn, the homeless.

My cup of compassion holds the emptiness of the poor, the searing pain of racism, the impotency of injustice.

My cup of compassion holds the headache of loss, the sigh of dying, the sting of the divorce.

My cup of compassion holds the agony of the earth, species terminated, air polluted, land destroyed, ^ rivers with refuse.

My cup of compassion I hold to my heart where the Divine dwells, where love is stronger than death and disaster.

My thanks go to everyone who has helped to make 'Blessed Be' be what it is.

Please, if you have anything you wish to contribute, whether it's something you've come across or written yourself, or a suggestion for something you'd like to see included, I'd love to hear from you at helenmacauley@gmail.com



*And finally, from **Hildegard of Bingen**:*

Be not lax in celebrating.

Be not lazy in positive service of God.

Be ablaze with enthusiasm.

Let us be an alive, burning offering before the altar of God.