

## UNTITLED POEM

And then all that has divided us will merge  
And then compassion will be wedded to power  
And then softness will come to a world that is harsh and unkind  
And then both men and women will be gentle  
And then both women and men will be strong  
And then no person will be subject to another's will  
And then all will be rich and free and varied  
And then the greed of some will give way to the needs of many  
And then all will share equally in the Earth's abundance  
And then all will nourish the young  
And then all will cherish life's creatures  
And then all will live in harmony with each other and the Earth  
And then everywhere will be called Eden once again.

Judy Chicago, creator of the installation, *The Dinner Party*, 1979

Jesus said: I must proclaim the kingdom of God in the other towns, too, because that is what I was sent to do. Lk 4:43



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## NEWS FROM HERE AND THERE

### Melbourne

The winter months have seen a number of visitors to Melbourne from near and far. Alison Healey has continued regular visits to spend some valued time with Joanna Waite as well as keeping in touch with friends. This time she was able to join us for our Regional Group meeting. We were very happy to host Nancy Traer from Pilgrim Place in California when she and her husband, Bob, were visiting Melbourne to help their daughter move house. After *lectio divina* one morning we enjoyed a lively lunch hearing about the Pilgrim Place retirement centre and community and Nancy's other experiences in the Grail. She also brought with her a gift from Sally Timmel of a copy of the biography of Anne Hope which we were happy to receive. Nancy put us in contact with her friend, Anne Freudenberg Kay, who lives in Melbourne but whose parents are residents of Pilgrim Place. Anne's current work is in facilitating palliative care services. Dinny Culican Ward, Kathy Wayland and I were surprised to hear that she knew of the Grail as her family had lived next door to Pat Sheeran in the Cotham Road Centre.

In between these comings and goings at 'Hesed', Dinny's granddaughter, Sophy, continues to reside at the unit several days a week, providing a valuable, visible presence in the property. We enjoy seeing her 'little touches' such as the flourishing herb garden.

Our *lectio divina* group has been meeting fortnightly, and we have begun alternating venues, including Irena and Kevin Dunn's lovely home, to allow easier accessibility for members. We recently spent a few sessions reflecting on Kathleen Dowling Singh's 'The Grace in Dying', but the group has decided not to continue with it and to explore other texts in the coming weeks. We have plenty of options.

Carol Farmer represented the Australian Grail at the International Council meeting in Tanzania at the end of June and gave us an account of her experience at our July Regional Group meeting. She left Australia armed with gifts of brooches handmade by Helen Jeffcoat in Brisbane and Anne Day in Sydney, Grail cards made in Melbourne, a cloth with a map of Australia and many photos. Each country representative was called on to make a brief presentation, and Carol felt her account of The Grail in Australia was well received. She told us of how she was most warmly welcomed and enriched by the experience. She was particularly impressed by the wide range of cultural differences brought to each session combined with a common commitment to the theme of the 'Cry of the Earth'. High-lights included a trip to Santa Teresa School which demonstrated the Grail's huge contribution to fostering girls' education in the area; and a wonderful outdoor liturgy under a banyan tree with the local community which was led by Ann-Charlotte, a Swedish Grail member who is also a Lutheran minister. Carol will write a more detailed account in the near future for the Australian Grail.

Our annual fund-raiser for cancer research was held at Ann Niall's lovely house in Brighton in May where we again experienced her generous hospitality. The guests enjoyed a sumptuous morning tea, they were appreciative of our moving prayer ritual and we made the handsome sum of \$1,195, which was divided between the Christina Ghobadi Foundation and the Cancer Council.

Whilst the Melbourne group has had to put the community 'hub' project on hold for the time being, we are very pleased that Sydney, through Anne Marie George's efforts, has decided to pursue this project. In the mean-time, we are working on a smaller scale with other groups. Thanks to Kathy Wayland's impetus, we are contributing to the Good Samaritan Sisters' clean

water 'bio-sand filter' project and the 'shoe-box' gift for children project. In addition, Andrea Venier has devised a more straightforward method to reproduce Grail cards. Hopefully, we will have some new batches available in the new year.

Plans are still afoot for some small renovations at 'Hesed', especially in the bathroom. It is important to note that with the imminent installation of the NBN, the unit may be without phone and internet access for a few weeks in September. Genny Grabau has been persistent in her dealings with the internet provider and the new Body Corporate manager of the units.

Genny is currently in Europe on a well-earned holiday where she has visited Bé Marujo in Portugal and is now spending time as a cricket 'groupie' attending some of the Ashes tests. Ann took a break to get some warm weather in North Queensland and Dinny has been travelling back and forth to see family for a few days at a time. In the meantime, we ask for your prayers for others of us who still face some health challenges.

*Andrea Venier*

## Sydney

There is still no lull in the projects and collaborations with other like-minded groups that have made this year a very full and challenging one. To our regular schedule of long-running activities, we have added several others this year in response to current issues and needs. Residents in the Grail Centre breathe at a different pace on the occasional weekends when the calendar is blank.

*Lectio divina*, with the Gospel of Luke, continues to offer opportunity for quiet reflection and sharing of insights every Wednesday evening, 7.30 – 9 pm. All are welcome at any time.

Recently the guest speaker at the monthly meeting of the Australian Catholic Historical Society was Robin Hughes who spoke on the role of fiction in provoking and stimulating the moral imagination. She described what has, in fact, been our experience in the Book Club over more than 10 years of reading and talking about fiction together. Next month, however, we are turning to biography to read *No Friend But The Mountains*, written by Kurdish-Iranian journalist and scholar, Behrouz Boochani from detention on Manus Island, Papua New Guinea – his fate when he sought refuge in Australia six years ago.

Once introduced to us by Elizabeth Lee at our National Assembly in 2018, Judy Cannato's book, *Field of Compassion: How the New Cosmology Is Transforming Spiritual Life*, has won our attention this year. Liz has led two day-seminars, one in Sydney and one in Brisbane, based on Cannato's thought; Tricia Gemmell chose it for the 2019 series of Tuesday morning reflections; and it will inspire our National Retreat in early November.

In June-July we offered an induction program to women interested in exploring deeper ties with the Grail. It is always a new, fresh and enjoyable experience; every group generates different responses and insights and this group was no exception. Another program is scheduled for the first half of 2020.

NAIDOC week came round in early July – a week of celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, culture and achievements. Sheila Hawthorn and Ruth Crowe were a Grail presence at the event arranged by the Women's Reconciliation Network: Linda Burney MP launched two videos telling the stories of Aunty Ali Golding and Aunty Beryl van Oploo. Although both described themselves as 'storytellers' (and they are gifted in this), their talents,

skills, achievements and community commitments range far beyond. Aunty Ali grew up in Taree and is largely self-taught having had very little formal education. But as an adult she studied and trained at Sydney University to become an Aboriginal Education Assistant and completed a Diploma in Theology at Nungalinga College in Darwin, Northern Territory. In 2011 she accepted the post of 'Elder in Residence' in the Faculty of Medicine in the University of NSW. She is currently teaching Aboriginal children at Redfern Jarjum College, an initiative of the Jesuits. When she was 16, Aunty Beryl van Oploo left her birthplace, Walgett. An aunt had taught her to cook and this skill proved very useful when she moved to Sydney. She taught herself to read, studied food technology at East Sydney Technical and Further Education (TAFE) College and eventually ventured into a business of her own by setting up a 'hospitality caravan' selling her cooked food in a park in Marrickville. She has a Bachelor of Education from the University of Technology, Sydney, and has taught hospitality courses in the TAFE system. 'The Great Australian Cookbook' includes Aunty Beryl's recipes and she was honoured as a 'celebrity chef' in NAIDOC week.

Sheila, Alison and Liz and John Lee were among a tightly packed congregation in the Reconciliation church, La Perouse, for the Sunday Eucharist during NAIDOC week. Frank Brennan SJ was the celebrant in a joyful liturgy filled with song. The usual warm hospitality of the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry was particularly bountiful. The refreshments that followed were enough for everyone and included an unimaginable cake decorated like a dot painting.

A new series of meetings has been attracting keenly interested participants. This program promotes public awareness of waste and misguided consumption in our society and proposes repairing actions we can take. Ryan Collins from Planet Ark shared his expert knowledge and experience of recycling and avoiding landfill at the first of these *Twilight Talks* in May. The most recent session was on 'fast fashion', resourced by Kirsten Lee, a university academic with years of practical experience in the fashion industry. Kendall Benton-Collins, wife of Ryan, who assists with administration in the office here, has taken a leading role in organising this series. She herself is a founding member of the Working Committee of [Fashion Revolution](#) (Australia-New Zealand). Fashion Revolution came into existence after the Rana Plaza factory collapse in Bangladesh, which killed 1,138 people and injured many more in 2013, and is now a worldwide, not-for-profit movement working for ethically produced fashion and transparent supply chains.

Another welcome project has been two introductory sessions on the thought of French philosopher, René Girard, and its relevance to our world today. Sr Susan Connelly, rsj, well known for her championing of the cause of the East Timorese people, and Sheelah Treflé-Hidden, both authoritative interpreters and teachers of Girard's work, presented the main lines of his thought on desire and violence and scapegoating in human behaviour and demonstrated these in two feature films, *The Devil Wears Prada* and *The Scapegoat*. We are discussing with Susan and Sheelah a longer course of teaching next year. They received an enthusiastic response; people want more and Susan is keen to connect Girard's perceptions with the Gospels.

The last day-seminar of the year will be on 14th September when well known sociologist, researcher, writer and activist, Eva Cox AO, will offer her ideas on 'how we can make our society more civil'. Over twenty years ago she identified 'social capital - trustworthiness of strangers and of those in power - as the basis for a Good Society'. She writes, 'Now, we are suffering from an in-creasing trust deficit, not just here but globally, as distrust of Others grows, and democracy is seen failing to create fairness. Decades of over-emphasis on economic self-interest have been steadily destroying the social links we need to live well. How can we fix it?' Quoted on radio this week was Lao Tzu's disturbing dictum, 'If you do not change direction, you may end up where you are heading'; and this exactly expresses the motivation for this seminar.

American theologian, Matthew Fox, was recently in Australia for a Common Dreams conference and Liz Lee took the opportunity to invite him to speak with spiritual directors, of whom she is one. This is what brought him to the Grail Centre to spend a couple of hours with them. He and they seemed happy with the encounter.

Finally, some news of two remarkable women - Judith Watkins and Beryl Cates.

Judith celebrated her 100th birthday in June and Helen Gomez and Alison Healey represented The Grail at an afternoon party in Cosgrove House in the RSL Retirement complex in Narrabeen (Judith was a service woman during the Second World War). Her life's profession was social work, in which she was highly esteemed. She engaged with the Grail as a young woman and was actively involved into old age. Now, in advanced dementia, she retains her beauty – a serene presence receiving her guests with the same warm courtesy and grace as ever, clearly well cared for and loved by her nieces and the Cosgrove House community.

A large congregation celebrated the Eucharist in Holy Family church, Lindfield, to honour Beryl Cates who died in late July at the age of 95. Beryl was a journalist who lived for many years in Suva, Fiji. It was there that Philippa Green met her, when Philippa was working at the Catholic Teachers' College. There was always an unfailing welcome in the Cates home for Philippa and she and Beryl became life-long friends. Beryl was writing to the end, contributing her distinctive views in a regular column in the Lindfield parish bulletin. Her company and conversation were always lively, thoughtful and enjoyable. We will miss this kind, faithful woman.

We look forward to hosting the next meeting of the National Leadership Team in Sydney in mid-September.

*Alison Healey and Sheila Hawthorn*

## **Brisbane**

Mary Mennis and Judy Brown had a wonderful four days at 'Avila', the Sydney Centre, preparing for their commitment in the Grail. There are plans afoot to celebrate this event during the National Retreat in the first weekend of November.

Judy is working intently on the development of a day seminar with the theme, *New Wine-skins: responding to the faith challenges of today*. Quality speakers are keen to be part of it and the Brisbane Grail is happy to sponsor it. The six presenters - Alison Healey, Kevin Treston, Bill O'Shea and Ormond Rush, Janet Galos and Lyn Horner – will explore the subject from different perspectives - contemplation in action, reflections on church history and Vatican II, inclusive spirituality and collegial inter-action at the local level. To be held at the Grange Bowls Club on Saturday 28 September, it promises to be the big event of our year and we look forward to it with great expectation and excitement.

In March, a group of us visited Canungra on the Scenic Rim and the Marian shrines in the valley that have been lovingly designed by a variety of ethnic communities in Australia – Ukrainian, Lebanese, Filipino and many more. The Papua New Guinean community was building a shrine to honour Blessed Peter To Rot for which Maggie Jenatsch was making efforts to raise funds. In July, we returned for the blessing of this Shrine now completed. The Eucharist celebration was full of vitality with dancers in traditional costume, singers and drummers from Papua New Guinea (PNG). Maggie was very pleased that the Brisbane Grail attended this ceremony which celebrated the life of this wonderful man, a Tolai chief and catechist who gave his life for his faith and his people in 1945 during the Second World War.

The seminar led by Liz Lee (Sydney Grail) which was based on Judy Cannato's book, *Field of Compassion: how the new cosmology is transforming spiritual life* was beautifully delivered and very well received by 29 participants at Women's College at the University of Queensland on 18 August. Twenty-three evaluations, overwhelmingly positive, were received. There was a real buzz in the room and discussions were spirited. The event also aroused interest in the Grail itself which we will, of course, be following up.

Mary Tinney, rsm, founder of EarthLink, presented *When Heaven and Earth Meet – how we engage spiritually in an emerging universe* to Grail members and others at Delamore earlier in the year and has announced the publication of her book of the same title, to be launched at Happy Haven, Queens Rd, Nudgee on 18 October, 10am. We hope to study it together in 2020.

We look forward to an exciting 2020 with people approaching us now with interesting proposals they would like to present to us! This is a real turnaround.

Bernadette Canfell McLay, Moira Ryan and Ann Aboud attended Phyllis Capra's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations recently – all members of the Brisbane 'Ballybrac group', former residents of the Mackay Grail Centre. It was a marvellous celebration for a woman of great courage. She looked very well - all that dancing and tennis at 'Ballybrac' has stood her in good stead. Many years ago, Phyllis went on a search and found her birth mother and many other relatives in England, Ireland and the United States, one of whom was a US Senator. A number of them sent her birthday greetings. Bernadette had found a cache of photos of 'Ballybrac', which she has given to Jan O'Donoghue for her Mackay history.

News of the younger generation is good. Helen Jeffcoat reports that her twin sons, Keith and Duncan, have now started University courses in nursing and in IT. She always remembers how, in 2001, when she was heavily pregnant, the Brisbane group and Alison who was up from Sydney for a formation program, prayed a blessing over her and the two children. Duncan's second name is Raphael in honour of Helen's happy memories and respect for her years as a student at St Raphael's College, Townsville. Ann's Lily is in the United Kingdom, Sophie in Canberra, Olivia nursing at Brisbane Private Hospital, Alice and Poppy studying criminology and nursing. Jill Herbert's Josephine has just had a month in the Solomon Islands on a justice project. And the children of Mary Nelson, Janet Galos and Jan O'Donoghue are all engaged in interesting professions and fields of study.

Jill and Helen are off overseas with their respective families in the September holidays. A number of us are preparing to attend the Retreat in Sydney in November. Mary Mennis is off to Port Moresby soon to inter-view PNG's first Cardinal, Archbishop Ribat, preparatory to writing the story of his life. And the year is flying away.

*Ann Aboud*

## **Papua New Guinea (PNG)**

Four Grail women, one from each of four Provinces – Manus Island, East Sepik, East New Britain and the National Capital District - participated in the International Council meeting in Tanzania in July – a great opportunity for them to experience personally both the diversity and unity of the Grail around the world.

Schola Manembe wrote from Wewak about the impact of the local Grail Lenten program with the theme, *Reconciliation and Rebirth*. 'Our Lenten journey was a special one as a few of us were



able to rise up and give courage to weaker ones and we moved forward together. The final session ended with the Stations of the Cross which we all prepared overnight and prayed from our hearts', wrote Schola.

In June, the Sydney Grail enjoyed a four-day visit from Philma Waken, daughter-in law of the late Elizabeth Waken, one of the founding members of the PNG Grail. Philma has just graduated with a Masters degree in Agricultural Science from the University of Queensland and has now returned to her position in the Research Centre of the Department of Agriculture in Port Moresby, where there has been a very active Grail group for many years.

## **International**

The International Council, to which all countries where the Grail is established sends a delegate, took place in Kisekibaha, Tanzania, in July. Australia's representative is Carol Farmer, Melbourne, and there is a short personal report from her in the Melbourne News on p.3. Grail groups everywhere are rejoicing at the news that the Council formally accepted into the International Grail three new groups, which have been developing over several years in Angola, Ecuador and Paraguay.

As we reported to you last year, The Grail in Mozambique hosted a Leadership Training program for young women from ten countries in Africa, Australia, Europe and North and South America. It was a strong program offering leadership skills, spiritual deepening and community experiences; and each participant returned home with a project she planned to implement with support from a mentor. It is intended that a similar program be held with other young women in 2020 in Mexico.

## **IN MEMORY OF ERYKAH FLORENCE KYLE** **8th October, 1937 – 27th July 2019**



We were very saddened when we received the message of Erykah's sudden death on 27th July in the Good Shepherd Home in Townsville.



Erykah was born on Palm Island. Having spent some of her adult years away from the island, she returned with her young family in the early 1950s and became concerned for Palm's community life and well-being. Madura McCormack wrote in Townsville's daily paper<sup>1</sup> shortly after Erykah's death that she was 'strong, outspoken and caring. A lifelong indigenous rights activist and firebrand and former Mayor of Palm Island, she steered the community in its greatest time of need'. Erykah was Mayor in 2004 at the time of the uprising and Cameron Doomadgee's death in custody.

In her teens, Erykah was chosen to attend the Singleton Bible College to study theology. Her contact with The Grail began in 1982 when she attended one of the 'Know your Neighbours' Pacific Summer Schools that the Australian Grail organised for young people in the South Pacific region. In '82 the venue was Suva, Fiji. She continued her involvement with the Grail on her return to Palm Island, in company with the Grail women responsible for the Catholic Women's College, St Raphael's, on the campus of James Cook University in Townsville. In 1989, she was one of the team who organised a Pacific Women's Conference at the College. In the following years, she attended and made valuable contributions to a number of national and international Grail gatherings and programs. She impressed other participants with her passionate commitment to justice for all. A leadership program in Cornwall, USA, in 1995 made a deep impression on her. 'With the diversity of cultures represented there, we all shared a common deep concern for justice', she wrote.

One of Erykah's daughters described her mother as 'thinking of others all the time'. Among her achievements on Palm Island are the Kootana Women's Centre and the Youth Centre. She was a founding member of the Turtle Dreaming Community Health Service and the BWG Colman Cooperative. She was active in the World Council of Churches Program to Combat Racism for more than 20 years.

Erykah had a dream of involving other Aboriginal women in the Australian Grail but the advance of ill health prevented further action in this and other projects. In 1995, she wrote, 'We carry the pain of our Aboriginal history but we have much more to share – our gifts and our vision for a better place for all of us'.

*Sheila Hawthorn*

Sheila and I were among the mourners making the ferry-crossing to Palm Island from Townsville. It was a pleasant trip on a calm ocean under a beautiful clear sky. The sights were beautiful of sail boats and fishing boats and uninhabited hilly islands. There was an excited rush to one end of the ferry - two whales were sighted out in the wide ocean. To see such wonders of nature was appreciated by young and old! It was my first time to see two whales in the ocean, my first time to Palm Island and my first time to attend an Indigenous memorial ceremony.

On arrival we were met and welcomed by Andrea Kyle, the eldest of Erykah's six children, and taken to where Erykah's body lay and most of her family and friends were paying their respects and saying their farewell. Knowing Sheila's strong connection with Erykah, her children and grandchildren welcomed Sheila with tears and smiles of acknowledgement.

Erykah was taken to her burial place accompanied by her son's playing of the didgeridoo. The hearse bore the Aboriginal flag. All traffic on the roads stopped in respect; people along the roads stood with placards with loving messages farewellling Erykah; and people standing in front of their homes held their flags with heads bowed. One woman's placard caught my attention: it

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<sup>1</sup> *The Townsville Bulletin*, 10th August 2019

carried the message *'Because of her, we can...'* I witnessed a farewell by family and friends to a great leader - in her family, in the Grail and in the Australian community. It was an honour to accompany Sheila to Palm Island to farewell such a great woman. I am envied by many friends and family members to have had such a journey.

*Consulata Masina Sakaria*