

there must be
more to **life...**



Discover
Jesus.

Greetings,

We are now heading into the second half of the Calendar year and the days are getting lighter, and certainly in the South East, there are some initial signs of Spring – bulbs and even blossoms, lambs, etc. We are also heading into the last quarter of the liturgical year and hopefully people are looking at material for the Year C – Luke’s Gospel? In the meantime, September has the theme of *Jesus the Healer*, and a supplementary them of *Jesus the Fount of Creation* – to reflect ‘Creation-tide’ which is observed by many communities in September.

When reading the Gospel events of Jesus’ healing activities, it is important to comprehend the subtleties of what is occurring. While “cures” obviously happened, Jesus was ultimately interested in “healing” and that is a much wider matter than just fixing an illness. Those with an awareness of the ecumenical organization the Order of Saint Luke will be familiar with the concept of Healing and Wholeness. We see this illustrated in the Gospels where ill people, those with disease, were excluded from their community and family. Jesus’ healing actions not only deal with the particular illness, the person is restored to family and community where their purpose and meaning in life is grounded! (Very different from our sometimes individualistic approach to illness and healing!) Wholeness involves not only the physical, but the spiritual and the social aspects of life.

Below are a number of links to articles which will hopefully “tweak” our understandings?

You might also consider having a liturgy of healing – the APBA makes provision for this – as an occasion to talk about the Christian understandings related to healing? Another possibility might be to introduce Anointing and Laying on of Hands as part of your Sunday (or mid-week) worship on a regular basis. Plus, don’t forget that the Church’s practice has always had the option of anointing for the sick at home or in hospital.

An article and a study guide are attached which some might find of use – *Healing; Going Beyond Cure and Health Study Guide*.

Some other links:

Health and Healing: The Difference Christianity Makes, Stanley Hauerwas

www.abc.net.au/religion/articles/2015/10/14/4331740.htm

Healing or cure?

www.cmf.org.uk/resources/publications/content/?context=article&id=25766

A review of John Pilch's book *Healing in the New Testament: Insights from Medical and Mediterranean Anthropology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000) www.grace-ed.org/blog/archives/784

John Pilch, looking at the reading for the 5th and 7th Sundays in Ordinary Time, Year B (Mark 1:21-28 and Mark 2: 1-12) as an example of distinguishing between cure and healing:

www.liturgy.slu.edu/5OrdB020418/theword_cultural.html

www.liturgy.slu.edu/7OrdB021912/theword_cultural.html

Our other theme is that of *Jesus as Fount of Creation*. Jesus as “the Word/Logos” in early Christian theology was seen as the active principle in the Creation story. If you are familiar with mediaeval woodblock illustrations, the figure at work in the presentation of the acts of Creation is Jesus, and up in the sky is God the Father watching. This links the Logos/Word of St. John's Gospel with the understanding that the Father “spoke” and things came into being through his “word.”

In recent years in some Church communities (Anglican, Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant) the month of September has become “Creation-tide” – an opportunity to reflect upon the creation, ecology, etc. While in the core of Christianity, its hymnody, psalms, etc., a deep sense of God's creation has always prevailed. At least since Industrialisation, Western societies have ended up with an increasingly rapacious attitude to the resources of the earth. (All different from the previous agrarian culture.) Some would say it has taken those outside the church to remind us of the importance of the created order and our interdependence.

Information and resources for Creation-tide can be found here: www.seasonofcreation.org/

NB – where there are lectionary materials for readings, these have no official status in the Anglican Church of Australia, and hence do not supersede any of the official readings for the Sunday Eucharist. But they can obviously be of use for supplementary liturgies and celebrations or study groups.

Further material can be found at the Creation Justice site:

www.creationjustice.org/world-day-of-prayer-for-the-care-of-creation.html

Some specifically Church of England resources can also be found here: www.creationtide.com

The previous Greek Orthodox Patriarch, Demetrios I, declared 1st September as a Day of Prayer for All Creation. The current Patriarch, Bartholomew, has written extensively on matters to do with creation, ecology, the environment, etc: www.patriarchate.org/bartholomew-quotes

An interesting reflection may be found here:

www.orthodoxartsjournal.org/the-making-of-a-new-icon-christ-breaking-the-bonds-of-animal-suffering/

Following up on **Evangelism** generally; our Roman Catholic brothers and sisters have been engaged in the *New Evangelisation* effort since the pontificate of Blessed John Paul II. A couple of articles are also attached to this email for reading and reflection: *The New Evangelisation of the Twenty First Century* (O'Loughlan) and *New Evangelisation in Australia* (Fr Noel Connolly). Also a couple of reflection sheets are attached from the RC Archdiocese of Brisbane on New Evangelisation. These might be useful if reformatted for Anglican use, particularly some of the questions.

And a helpful link on sharing one's testimony or story:

www.credosydney.org/evangelisation/how-do-i-evangelise/sharing-our-testimony

September has often been the time for **Back to Church Sunday** – with one Sunday in the month prepared for and designated as the time for people who have possibly lapsed, or who are not familiar with the life of the Church, to come and experience worship and hear the stories of those who find the Christian life and worship gives purpose and meaning to their lives. There doesn't seem to be an Australian website for this occasion, but the US site is: www.backtochurch.com/

The CofE has *Back to Church Sunday* as part of the Season of Invitation:

www.seasonofinvitation.co.uk/about/back-to-church-sunday/

This is built around a number of festivities/celebrations in the second half of the year leading up to, and including, Christmas.

A similar UK activity is *The Weekend of Invitation*. After free registration you can access resources here:

www.weekendofinvitation.com/

Liturgically, September has a number of major festivities. Supplemental liturgical material is attached for *The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, 8th September; *Holy Cross Day*, 14th September; *St. Matthew*, 21st September; and *St. Michael & All Angels*, 29th September.

While not a liturgical “feast day,” Father’s Day occurs in September. Families often do their own thing on this day, however there might be an opportunity for a Fathers/Dads event of some sort during the month? It also provides an occasion to pray for fathers in the intercessions, as well as families where there is no father. Some prayers are here: www.loveyoufather.com/prayers.html and www.bne.catholic.edu.au/formationandleadership/prayer/Pages/Father%27s-Day-Prayer.aspx

And finally, I received an email from Deacon Peter Chapman. It shows what a patient presence in a community can sometimes achieve in terms of opportunities. In a subsequent email he writes:

If we are actively involved with what is around us in our own towns and suburbs; then people will take notice if we are ambassadors for Christ.

This does not mean we are overt and in people’s faces. But it does mean we demonstrate the fruits and gifts of the Holy Spirit amongst people who do not know Christ.

If we do this do not be surprised if folks ask what is it that is about you.

The world is so thirsty and we have the everlasting water they long for deep within their souls.

The initial email is included as an attachment.

With every prayer and blessing as we struggle to progress the Kingdom of God.

DP

Fr David Patterson

(Chair of Diocesan Task Group)