

## LEADER'S LETTER

It is good to be writing again for this new edition of Pipeline and to be connected to you all through print when several states including New South Wales and Victoria are in lockdown. We are still very much in the midst of a pandemic. Take life easily, calmly and as purposefully as you can holding on to God's promise that, in Colin Gibson's words, "no journey is too long, no distance too great, no valley of darkness too blinding; no creature too humble, no child too small for God to be seeking and finding."

With that in mind I trust that you will be indulgent with me as I use this space in the magazine to communicate some important information about membership arising from the Wellspring Community AGM held in May this year.

You will all know, I think, that Wellspring Council, following the excellent response to the 2019 questionnaire, began a process of moving from a two-tier membership - Members and Friends - to a single tiered membership called Members. Under this single-tiered membership those who were previously Friends would automatically become Members. A special resolution to alter our rules of incorporation pursuant to the *Associations Incorporation Act 2009* (NSW) ss 2, 8 and 14 to allow this was passed at the AGM held in May

this year and was shortly thereafter approved by the Department of Fair Trading in that state. These procedural and legal changes will take effect from the next round of renewals at the end of this year - 2021.

What this will mean is that all of those who are now Friends will become members, and those already members under our previous membership rules will remain as members and will continue to live according to the Rule of the Community in the way that they have been doing.

Under the new provisions of our rules of Incorporation, "Members receive all newsletters, prayer guides, notices regarding community events, minutes of plenary meetings and are entitled to vote on all matters of policy etc." Notably, the new provision says, (s 2)

*"A member is a person who is in broad agreement with the Rule of the Community and acknowledges that living by the Rule or being guided by the Rule is a highly worthy goal."*

I highlight this important wording because the Rule of the Community (which is different from the procedural and legal "rules of incorporation") is the one which members of the Community live by or are guided by - and they do so in different ways. This provision in our rules of incorporation makes clear that all members are in broad agreement with the Rule of the Community, and

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regard living by it or being guided by it as a highly worthy goal.

For 2022, there will be one renewal form for everyone in Wellspring. In this form you will be asked to agree to the following:

As a Member of the Wellspring Community, I am in broad agreement with the Rule of the Community and I acknowledge that living by the Rule or being guided by the Rule is a highly worthy goal.”

### The Rule

- a) I will seek to be open to God in every way I can.
- b) I will use the Prayer Diary and pray regularly for Members and Friends.
- c) I will be involved in action for peace and justice.
- d) I will meet regularly with a Wellspring Community Group (or) I will communicate regularly with another Community member.
- e) I will encourage and support at least one other Member through mutual discussion of our personal response to the Wellspring Spirituality and Justice Issues and to the principled use of time and money.
- f) I will contribute 1 per cent of my net income (or what I can afford) to Wellspring Community.

**By giving assent to the Rule, no-one is committed to fulfilling every goal.**

Considering this from a finance point of view, I want to highlight that this change to the membership structure carries some risk that we really don't know about yet (s 8).

“A Member of the Community will make an annual financial commitment as determined by a process within the Rule of the Community.”

That process continues what is currently the case: that those who as Friends made an annual contribution of at least \$65 will continue to do that as Members under the new membership rules. Many contributed much more than that.

In the light of the ongoing financial needs of the community and our commitments to partners such as Common Grace and refugee work particularly in the Blue Mountains, it is vital that under the new provisions members of the Community contribute in the way they always have - and as generously - and review this each time they renew. Renewals fall due on 1 January each year.

Another aspect of the life of the community included in the special resolution was to the make-up of Council (s 14). The changes to the rules of Incorporation state that Council is to consist of:

- a) *the office-bearers of the Community, (leader, deputy leader, secretary and treasurer) and*
- b) *all State and Territory contact people*

c) *up to three ordinary members each of whom is to be elected at the annual general meeting of the Community under rule 15*

d) *The contact people for the areas of concern (Ecumenical and Interfaith, Healing and Hospitality, Peace and Social Justice, Reconciliation and Refugees, Spirituality and Worship, Sustainability).*

Again, these changes to the composition of council being part of the special resolution will take effect from the beginning of next year. At this year's AGM 2021 - we elected office bearers according to the then-in-force provisions.

I commend these changes to you, and I thank all of those who have worked alongside me to bring about these changes - council members, my fellow-office bearers, and Doug Hewitt in his capacity as Public Officer. I ask, please, for your careful, practical, and prayerful consideration of whether - regardless of how long you have been associated with Wellspring - you might be willing to serve on Council or in a leadership position in the future and, when the time comes at the beginning of next year what financial contribution you can make over and above the base level.

Blessings.

Alexander Scutt

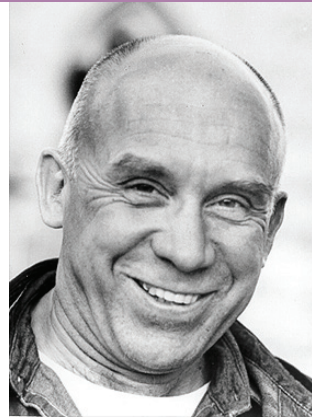
Leader, Melbourne 19 July 2021.

# An Introduction to this edition of Pipeline

## Geoff Stevenson (Day 20)

Earlier this year I picked up a book on the Essential Writings of Thomas Merton, one I'd read a few years ago. Merton's life and writings have challenged and helped guide my path at various times over the years and I was looking to reconnect more deeply with the contemplative way. Perhaps it was the experience of COVID-19 lockdowns and the experience of the pandemic across the world? Perhaps it was my growing awareness of contemplative forms and prayer through Richard Rohr, Henri Nouwen, Anthony de Mello and many others? Perhaps it was just the yearning and hunger to go deeper and learn from the wisdom of the mystical or contemplative traditions that led me back to Thomas Merton.

The story of his life, especially as told in his classic, 'The Seven Storey Mountain,' reveals the path of one who lost his way many times, explored life in its varied and diverse experiences and glimpsed the ineffable wonder of 'that which lies beyond.' This mystery at the heart of everything is glimpsed at the edges of vision, fleeting and mysterious, drawing us on to explore in curiosity and wonder as something deep within is moved; a light is switched on. We cannot always grasp it, but it follows us and appears in moments along the way until our spirit is open and ready; good soil to nurture the seed into life. This is somewhat how it was for Merton as he explored life and discovered its joys and pain and searched for deeper meaning and purpose in life – through literature, poetry, art and philosophy. As with most of us, it seems, that struggle and pain opened his heart and being to a deeper sense of humility and awareness of his vulnerability; his need for that which comes from beyond, a



deeper place. He encountered Christ, who floated in and out of his life as he was gradually drawn into the wisdom and wonder of God, a God he had never really understood. Catholicism opened the doors of his heart and various mentors guided him through into rapid growth, accepting faith and being Christian.

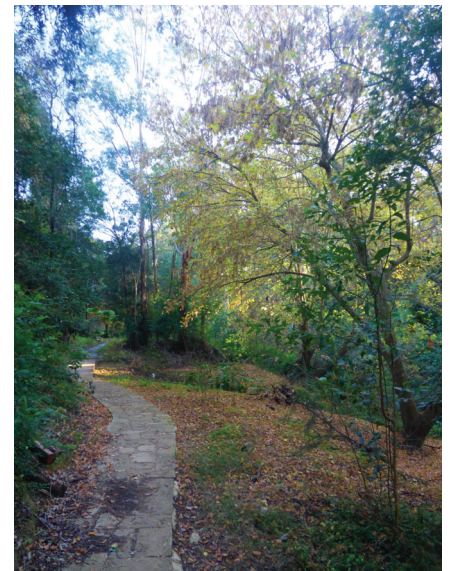
Merton was drawn to the Cistercian Order of Strict Observance (or Trappists), which he entered at age 26 and where he spent the remainder of his life, with a rich and profound ministry of teaching contemplative life and faith, opening the conversations around Justice and living the life of Christ, and working towards the unity of people, across culture, tradition, faith...

In the Introduction to the book, editor Christine Bochen, says this:

*"Three dimensions of Christianity are especially striking in Merton's life and writing: its contemplative dimension, its commitment to social justice and compassion, and its vision of unity. In other words, being a Christian involves awakening to the reality of God within, living with love and justice, and recognising and sustaining all that unites the human community."* (p32 *Thomas Merton – Essential Writings, Orbis Books*)

She goes on to speak about Merton's life and work through this three-fold lens. In my reading, his life and teaching opened up within me

awareness of my own journey, my own yearning and the inner drives of which I am not always consciously aware. I stop and look, listen and ponder and recognise that the Spirit of God has gently (and not so gently) nudged me along. In those moments when my guard is down, when I'm weary, despairing, confused or hurting, or when I simply let go because I am struck by the sheer wonder and awe of everything, I am drawn into the vast ocean of grace and swim joyfully through its refreshing, life-giving waters.



Contemplation is ultimately about the experience of the Living God; losing oneself in the vast mystery of love that has no form, shape or definition but is in everything, everywhere. Contemplation opens my eyes to a deeper truth and wonder; to 'see' Christ in all things (Col 3:20 – *Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all*). As I wander the tracks and paths along Toongabbie Creek near our home, I am able to experience Christ in the presence of sun through trees, bird-song, the flowing creek, the clouds and sky, the changing seasons. Sometimes I realise my mind is closed, locked into thoughts about

something else, anxious or worried, fiercely debating myself over some issue or another – in these times I fail to see or hear.

This experience of God challenges my perceptions and experience of people away from the categories, definitions and dualistic thinking that often preoccupies my mind and being. When I am able to stop and listen to the stories, I become aware of the raw humanity, the vulnerability and inequality in our world. I feel with others in the injustices and want to stand with them. I feel the suffering of creation and feel deeply connected to the Earth and its creatures. God's love and justice flows through us.

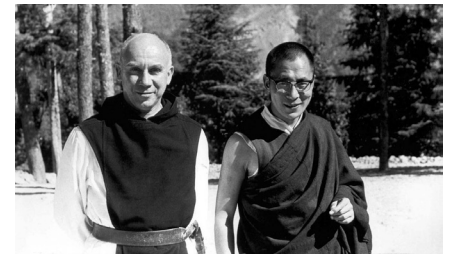
Merton was fired by a vision of a world in which there would be "no more war, no more hatred, no more cruelty." He dreamed and began to work for peace through his writing, communication and prayer. His movement into compassion and justice flowed from

his deepening experience of God and God's grace. This deeper connection with all things became the work for unity of humanity – as people created in the image of God. He opened dialogue with people of different faiths and spiritualities; he saw the deeper connections of spirit and humanity.

I discover this in Jesus' words and ministry as he reaches out to anyone and everyone. Paul takes up this up, saying that 'in Christ there are no Jews and Gentiles, slave and free, male and female...' In Christ we all belong, and barriers fall away. It doesn't mean we are the same or even follow the same path but the goal of life to live into the mystery and wonder of the Love at the heart of all things (we call 'God') is there for all.

As we ponder the wonderful wisdom of Thomas Merton and the contemplative tradition, we hear the stories within our own community; people who experience God in the

breadth of life experience, work for peace and justice in the way of love and seek to build connections and relationship with all people and the Earth and its creatures. This is a deep pool, a spring of Living Water, flowing through our connected lives encouraging and nurturing faith, hope and love. The 'three-fold lens' of Christian faith provided by Thomas Merton, 'its contemplative dimension, its commitment to social justice and compassion, and its vision of unity' will provide with the structure and flow of this edition. So, sit back and enjoy the stories and experiences of fellow pilgrims on the journey of life and faith...



## Part 1 – Merton's Lens 1: Contemplating and Experiencing the Living God...

**Neil Holm (Day 26) introduces a beautiful reflection from Gladys Pagendam (Day 16)**

In Thomas Merton on the Unspeakable, Ross Labrie comments on Thomas Merton's book, Raids on the Unspeakable (1966):

*To Merton the materialism that had overtaken modern culture removed from view the latent possibilities of human existence. In particular it overlooked the crucial solitude that was needed for the self to emerge in the face of intense, collective socialization (RU 71). What compounded this attenuation of human beings was the exclusion of nature as anything but a tool to produce the goods that purported to assuage people's emotional needs. Nature, as one can see in "Rain and the Rhinoceros" (RU 9-23), provided human beings not only with aesthetic*

*pleasure but pointed to its Creator as the matrix of all life.*

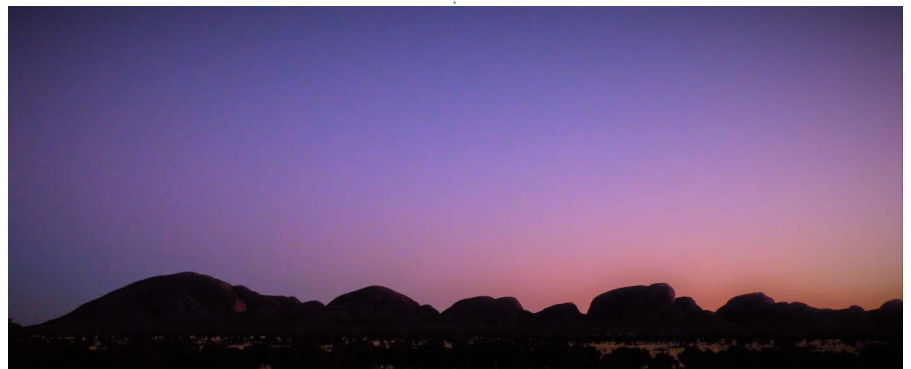
Gladys Pagendam's reflections below are a sensitive and inspiring example of Merton's principle that Nature points to the Creator of all life.

### **New beginnings**

**Gladys Pagendam (Day 16)**

Morning light is dark at first. Charcoal, with dove grey flushes pink with promise when the sky lightens. It is hard to describe, but I know I

have felt that excitement before – the promise of drama unfolding on my stage. Was it during Swan Lake? The stage is hardly lit at all. There is dim light glowing from behind a curtain. Gradually the stage brightens. We are expectant, hopeful. We wait patiently for something to happen. Now there is an ever-brightening blue glow of pulsing, growing, expanding light, with power to diminish darkness. The blue-pink hue adds tonal warmth and brightens to crimson blushes. It is so



entrancing that you do not notice there are players on the stage. You notice other props - trees that were not there before. Soon you realise that there are buildings too, with lights on. You did not notice them distracted as you were by the expanding light and other forms taking shape. God is centre stage.

A touch of gold begins to grow. It is Majesty rising.

This is I how I greet the sunrise. It has become a symbol of my Lord and King. It is probably the only time of day when I am formal with my God. It is the dazzling glory of a newly beginning day that makes me stand back in awe of my Beloved, who is otherwise so intimate and close through the rest of my day.

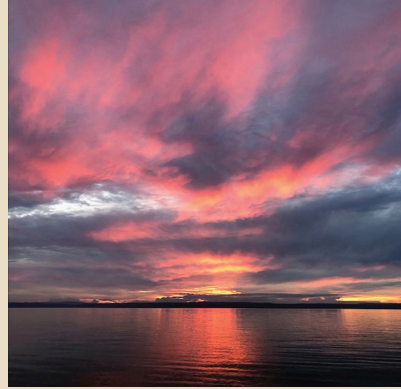
Sunrise is my time for drinking Him in and acknowledging His immense and unfathomable presence, in every aspect of my world. He sweeps across my sky in splendour bringing light and hope and peace; chasing away gloom with the promise of new beginnings. It is a time when I acknowledge the immense sweep of his Domain and when I am reminded I am not the sole focus of his love. His love covers everything created, colouring it all with newness. It is never the same even for two days in a row. I am never the same even two days in a row. He is the consummate artist, always touching up, colouring afresh. His colour is glory - rainbow.

I love Him most of all when I see his vast expansiveness – and yet there is such attention to detail, sometimes so fleeting, as when I see his light ignite the wings of a dragon fly with a flash of intense colour. I love him most when his light falls on an empty space and I see it is not empty but filled with a thousand tiny flying things. Or, when His breath creates ripples on the surface of water, or makes the leaves shiver with His touch. I thank Him that He is alive and stirring for if He were not, I would not be either.

My days are now so precious.

And full of colour.

## What manner of life is this? - Heather Eckersley (Day 17)



*Sunrise on the eastern beach Coochiemudlo Island 9 May 2021*

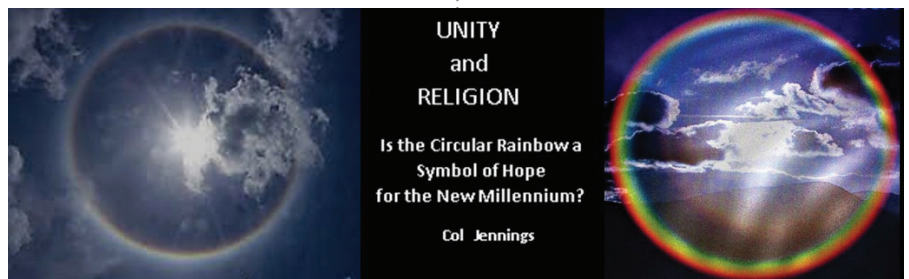
To live by the sea  
To feel the ocean move  
To smell the salty air

Embrace this gift of space and time  
Embrace the opportunity to grow and breathe  
Embrace those around you with gratitude

Ponder the companions on the journey  
Ponder the intensity of the sun's gaze  
Ponder the gentle wisdom of the moon

Time to gaze in awe and wonder  
Time to savour meeting new and old friends  
Time to grow in grace and deepening love.

*Heather Eckersley May 2021*



### Col Jennings (Day 3) says:

“The rainbow has always been significant to Pat and I as artists and writers. We used the symbol in our Wedding Service 37 years ago. The Circular Rainbow has come into fashion, and others like Lisa Wriley, as an artist, has picked up the image as well.”

The Rainbow Symbol has been connected to the story of The Great Flood in Biblical Times. ‘The Dameans’, a singing group from before 2006, had released a song called: ‘A rainbow makes a promise

that life is here to stay.’ This became the title of a still unpublished book I wrote and illustrated at that time.

In my introduction I began with a quote from the book of Ecclesiasticus Ch.43, vs.11-13 (Found in the Catholic version of the Bible): ‘See the rainbow and praise its maker, so superbly beautiful in its splendour, across the sky it forms a glorious arc drawn by the hands of the Most High.’ Through placing the rainbow in the sky, the Lord God constantly reminds us life is here to stay and for all humankind there is the promise of

eternal life even while creation goes on groaning its way to wholeness. In Genesis 9:13 the Lord God says to us: 'I have placed my rainbow in the clouds as a sign of my promise until the end of time, to you and to all the earth.'

The rainbow symbol was traditionally seen as an arc in the sky, not as a 'circle'. Historically we have learned that a number of Christian Mystics told us that SHEKINAH, the name long given to a 'circular rainbow' is a divine rainbow that radiates those seven beautiful colours in two different directions.

*The Christian mystics who knew of the circular rainbow or shekinah, taught that if you wanted to abide in Christ Jesus then you need to examine your life according to Ezekiel's approach where he condemns the idolatry which he sees in the Jerusalem Temple.*

*These mystics say that Yeshua (Jesus) walked in this crossover place between heaven and earth at the same time; and, as the Son of Man, he was filled with the Seven Spirits of God: 'And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.'* (Isaiah 11:2).

Scripture tells us that when we abide in Christ we walk in the same manner as he did (1 John 2:6). This means that one of the ultimate realities for God's 'devout ones' is that we are supposed to be made perfect and complete, just like the High Priest of the Order of Melchizedek in being completely filled with the Seven Spirits of God here on earth, as it is in heaven. These Seven Spirits correspond to the colours of the rainbow. The Seven Spirits or the attributes of God are Love, Wisdom, Will, Order, Perseverance, Patience and Mercy.

In his book 'The Hidden Gospels, Neil Douglas Klotz, the former Head of the Department of Comparative Spirituality in California, now living

in Edinburgh, Scotland, speaks of the Middle Eastern Aramaic-based religions as seeing the divine as unity without opposites. Neil Klotz says that with our western concept of God so many of us have been raised from childhood to think of God being infinitely distant from us and nature. We have been taught that religion operates by different rules than politics, science, psychology, art or culture. In a prayer to God Klotz says: 'Create your reign of unity now – through our fiery hearts and willing hands.'

The old Hebrew word "shekinah" literally means 'to settle, to inhabit or to dwell.' Currently we are living in in a very strange and unique time-period awaiting more expectantly



than ever the Second Coming of Christ. The circle for many early Indigenous Peoples was a symbol of unity, wholeness, love, right relationships, connectedness, and consensus decision-making. For most of our indigenous peoples the circle was also about building right relationships, sharing resources, and also everything to do with the universe and of preserving nature.

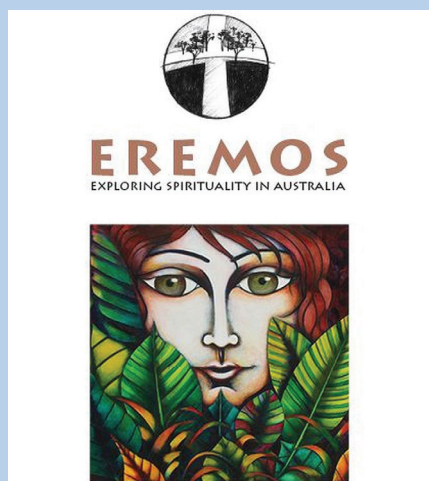
Will the Shekinah or the Circular Rainbow become a symbol of unity and the building of a new millennium of peace and justice?

The promised new millennium could certainly be achieved if we co-created with God to build that new world. It has been said by the mystics of the past that 'the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous like a rainbow round the

Creator's Sapphire Throne and the Creator is watching to see that God's Word is fulfilled.'

In the Gospel of John: 17: 21 – 23, Jesus prayed for his followers, saying: 'Father, just as you are in me and I am in you, may you also be in us so that world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one — I in them and you in me — so that all may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them as you have loved me. The words of Jesus coming through the 'unknown prophet' Jakob Lorber around 1843 in the 'Household of God', book one, says: 'There can never be a true kingdom of God in matter, but only in spirit. Thus "the thousand years of God's kingdom on earth" (the millennium) will not come outwardly visible, but very quietly and unostentatiously in the hearts of people of good will.'

# Eremos Activities of interest



Prayer and Spirituality are a significant part of the Wellspring Community. Here are some opportunities from Eremos to further awaken to the experience of the Living God.

## **Eremos Spring Online Retreat Day: Transformations through crises**

**Saturday 11 September 2021 10 am – 2 pm**

We hope you will join us for this opportunity to reflect on pathways to personal and social integrity that we may have already taken, alone and with others, during this pandemic. In the light of our faith, we discern our lives wisely, seeking opportunities for transformations within the range of crises that we and our world experience.

Cost: \$10 or free for Eremos members. Details and registration:

[https://www.eremos.org.au/index.cfm?module=event&pagemode=indiv&page\\_id=1314633](https://www.eremos.org.au/index.cfm?module=event&pagemode=indiv&page_id=1314633)

## **Upcoming Intensive Journal Workshops led by Kate Scholl**

**Part 1: Life Context Online over 4 Friday mornings starting 3 September**

Participants attend once each week: 3,10,17 and 24 September from **10:00 am – 1:30 pm AEST** (East coast time)

**To register and for more details:** Life Context online 4 Friday September:

[https://www.eremos.org.au/index.cfm?module=event&pagemode=indiv&page\\_id=1314162](https://www.eremos.org.au/index.cfm?module=event&pagemode=indiv&page_id=1314162)

**Part 1 Life Context Weekend: Saturday and Sunday 23-24 October 2021**

**Venue:** The Grail, 22 McHatton Street, North Sydney.

9:30am - 5pm Saturday; 9.30am - 4.00pm Sunday

To register and for more details: Life Context Weekend 23 and 24 October in North Sydney:

[https://www.eremos.org.au/index.cfm?module=event&pagemode=indiv&page\\_id=1315086](https://www.eremos.org.au/index.cfm?module=event&pagemode=indiv&page_id=1315086)

Cost per workshop is \$170 / \$150 for Eremos Members. **Early bird:** \$20 less and previous participants: \$20 less.

The Intensive Journal® workshop introduces a practical tool to explore our life's story and to be more grounded in our own life. On Prayer and meditation in the midst of life, the creator of the Intensive Journal® method, Ira Progoff, wrote: "Intensive Journal work is indeed a type of prayer and meditation ... it is meditation in the midst of the reality of our life experiences. It draws upon the actualities of life for new awarenesses, and it feeds these back into the movement of each life as a whole." (At A Journal Workshop, page 8)

See also their Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/intensivejournalworkshopsaustralia>

For more details feel free to contact Kate Scholl, 0425 211 065 or email [events@eremos.org.au](mailto:events@eremos.org.au)

## **Theosony and Silences: Listening to the sound of the Divine**

with Keynote speaker, Dr Sally Longley will be part of the Eremos AGM

Thursday 28 October 7.15 – 9.00pm AEDT

AGM followed by Keynote speaker ONLINE using Zoom - all registrants will be sent a link and login.

There is no charge, but bookings by 24 October are essential.

More details and booking:

[https://www.eremos.org.au/index.cfm?pagemode=indiv&module=EVENT&page\\_id=1314657&filter=i](https://www.eremos.org.au/index.cfm?pagemode=indiv&module=EVENT&page_id=1314657&filter=i)

More details about all Eremos events are available on the Eremos website [www.eremos.org.au](http://www.eremos.org.au)

## Part 2 – Merton’s Lens 2: Commitment to Social Justice and Compassion ...

### **The Coming of the Lord**

I am in the wind and the pouring rain,  
I am in the hail and the stormy clouds,  
I am the Spirit that warns and commands.  
But mostly I’m in the gentle breeze’  
In the tide that ebbs and flows,  
I am the bright Morning Star  
and the joy that is in your hearts,  
says the Lord of Life.

### **Responding to Merton: A Journey into Social Justice Work Through Fair Trade John Martin (Day 28)**

I am grateful for this opportunity to reflect on Merton’s three elements of being Christian. I look back over 39 years of Ministry from Bega-Eden Presbyterian Church, ‘being destitute of a fixed pastor’ calling me to Ordination and induction through to my final years in Aged Care Chaplaincy.

Over the years of reflection and working with the Scriptures I have moved from a very conservative position. I admit I didn’t march against the Vietnam War even though I was in the conscription ballot. A Uni friend and I went out to the Sydney Cricket Ground, not to protest the Springboks tour nor to watch the match. We went to passively observe the protestors. I grew up in the Federal seat of Bradfield which was just about the safest Liberal seat in the country and has the highest level of median weekly household income of any electorate in Australia.

Some influential mentors, such as the Rev Alan Hewitt (Doug’s father) and the Rev Malcolm Macleod, moved this son of the Sydney North Shore to see that the Gospel of Jesus Christ



has much to say about the poor, the environment, and the way we organise ourselves politically. Marriage to a young lady from Merrylands in the safe Labor western Sydney seat of Prospect probably helped too.

This budding social justice conscience bloomed by exposure to the Iona Community through a week on the Island in 1986. The blend of worship, evangelism and action which addressed ecological, economic, and political issues with the Gospel, fired in me an image of what the Church should be like. A seed was sown in Australian soil.

In the meantime, my wife, Noelene had developed a passion for expressing the justice dimension of the Gospel through fair trade, as a volunteer Traidcraft rep in England and as seller of Fair Trade products in Australia.

When facing retirement with the question of What does the Lord require of me? The answer was



obvious. I refused the Presbytery Minister’s appeal for me to provide supply ministry. The leading of the Holy Spirit, the Gospel of Jesus Christ and a world of great inequality propelled me to become a Fair Trade advocate.

In this world where child labour has increased from 153 million to 160 million in recent years, I find it hard to see how anyone who believes that Jesus was about more than just personal salvation and a small collection of mostly sexual morality issues can not be an advocate for Fair Trade. We all purchase products, and every product has a supply chain. It seems axiomatic that we seek products with a supply chain where people and the environment were treated the best.

That is why I am thrilled that Wellspring is a Fair Trade Faith Group.

A major project has been the recent development of the 10 Principles of Fair Trade Bible Study.

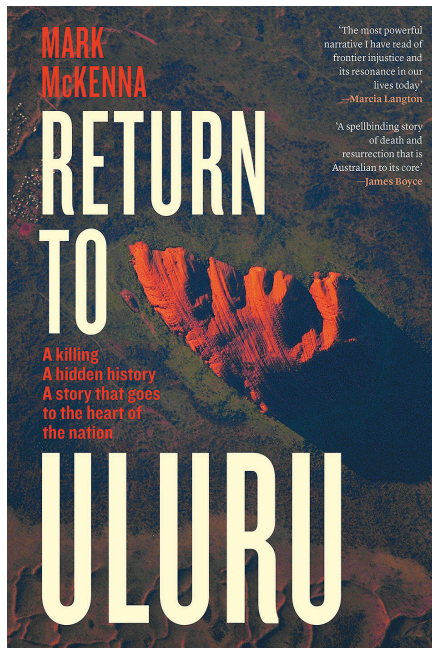
Have a look and see if you agree with our choice of Bible passages to match each of the 10 Principles. <https://cdn.moble.com/w/903/463625/file/FTAANZ%2010%20Principles%20Bible%20Study%20-%20March%202021.pdf>

### **Return to Uluru, Mark McKenna**

#### **A Review and Reflection from Peter Bennett (Day 23)**

Questions of sovereignty and justice are addressed in Mark McKenna’s book ‘Return to Uluru’ (Black Inc., 2021) which looks at aspects of the interaction between white and Aboriginal inhabitants of the land largely through the story of one policeman, Bill McKinnon and





particularly the story of how he killed the Aboriginal man Yokununna in 1934 after hunting him and his companions for days through the desert country after they had escaped custody. McKinnon killed Yokununna at Uluru, sacred site of the Anangu and spiritual heart of Australia.

The book begins with the geographical and historical context, the reaching of the centre of the continent by invading explorers and colonisers who casually disregarded thousands of years of Aboriginal ownership of the land. Under no illusion about the presence of prior inhabitants, the Europeans nevertheless found it a straightforward matter to claim large areas and to invoke the support of a system of justice that proved largely uninterested in the welfare of the original owners and unable to protect them.

Crazed killers and indiscriminate slaughter are both well documented in other massacres well into the 20th century. This was not McKinnon, who regarded himself as a humane man, even a protector of Aborigines, and in his own words 'friend of the blacks'. I see him as a figure like Victor Hugo's Javert, a police officer who believes in the rightness of the law he is enforcing. McKinnon's inflexibility, brutality and inhumanity were qualities that did not lessen

the esteem in which he was held by station owners worried about security and much of the mainstream press of the day. Forced marches in custody of Aboriginal men in neck chains and floggings were routine. Acting as an agent of the Crown, he has no remorse about this abusive treatment nor about his contribution to the genocidal policy of child removal. McKinnon differs from Javert in that he does not appear to have ever come to a realisation of the inadequacy of his vision of justice.

Commonwealth Government concern about the killing of Yokununna and other reports of violence perpetrated by McKinnon against defenceless prisoners led to the appointment of a Board of Enquiry. The extraordinary findings of the Board, which found the killing to be 'legally justified but not warranted' were apparently written by the chairperson, Professor John Cleland without consultation with the other two members. This provoked a dissenting letter from the third board member, the Rev John Sexton, who was the secretary of the Aborigines Friends' Association. Mountford (the anthropologist) and Strehlow (linguist) who accompanied the Board apparently regarded the Enquiry as farcical. There was widespread disquiet and criticism from various bodies but nevertheless the conclusion of the Enquiry enabled McKinnon to resume his career relatively uninterrupted.

For McKenna the tale has mythic significance, the events in the sacred

heart of the continent a microcosm of the frontier contact. It is an opening for probing various issues around sovereignty, justice, dispossession, and racism. Along the way the reader is discomfited by passages telling of the disrespect of the Europeans for the Aboriginal inhabitants, and the shallowness of European engagement with the land and particularly with the great rock Uluru, stretching right up to the present time and the closing of the rock climb. McKenna brings his history into the present with contemporary interviews, events and personalities. The new material unexpectedly uncovered during his research includes McKinnon's shocking contemporaneous account of the killing, and the fate of Yokununna's body. McKenna's personal responses are valid and show the deep impact his investigation of the events had on him; any quibbles the reader may have are minor.

The book has been endorsed by Marcia Langton among others. The book has a compelling grandeur and addresses issues that, to our lasting shame, remain unresolved today. I commend it as a story that illuminates troubling aspects of our common history in this country and can aid us in reflection on what justice means today in response to the dispossession, imprisonment and impoverishment of Aboriginal Australians, and the government's betrayal of First Nations people by ignoring the call for reforms set out in the Uluru Statement from the Heart.





**A Resource Book for the Last Twelve Sundays of the Christian Year (B)**

**A publication of Wild Goose Publications from the Common Concern Network on the Environment (CCNEnviro) of the Iona Community edited by Kathy Galloway and Katharine Preston Helen Weavers (Day 9)**

In recent years, the five weeks in the Christian Calendar from the 15th to the 20th weeks after Pentecost, from early September to 4th October (St Francis' Day), have been widely observed as the Season of Creation. This has been called a period "dedicated to prayer for the protection of Creation and promotion of sustainable lifestyles that reverse our contribution to climate change".

In November 2021, the 26th Convention of Parties on Climate Change (COP26) is due to take place in Glasgow. This meeting brings governments from around the world to discuss action on climate change, at a crucial time for planetary health and human wellbeing.

The proposal from Iona's CCNEnviro is to publish a worship resource book on the environment, available in print and as an online download, to serve churches, faith groups and individuals.

**It is proposed to extend the Season of Creation to incorporate the remaining weeks of the Christian**

**Year**, in order to encompass the weeks immediately before and after the COP26 gathering. There will now be twelve Sundays involved, from 5th September to 21st November, which is the last week of the Christian Year (Feast of Christ the King).

The resource book will have four sections:

1. Reflections on the Lectionary readings for each of the 12 Sundays (reflection, short prayer or collect, a question for further reflection, a suggestion for action.)
2. Twelve short essays by Climate Activists from different parts of the world. (eg. How climate change impacts on the places where they live, the area of work they are involved in, and their own personal motivation for activism).

3. A full Creation-centred liturgy.
4. Additional resources for prayer and action.

**The book will be available in August.**

For updates: subscribe to newsletter: [ionabooks.com](http://ionabooks.com)

As an Associate member of the Iona Community and also of the Common Concern network (Environment) being the only member from the Southern hemisphere, I was asked to contribute to the booklet mentioned above.

The commitment was to write an essay on how climate change had effected my local environment and specifically asked to outline the effect of the bushfires which so ravaged our country. Interest was also expressed by the group on the impact coal mining was having on the people of the Hunter Valley.

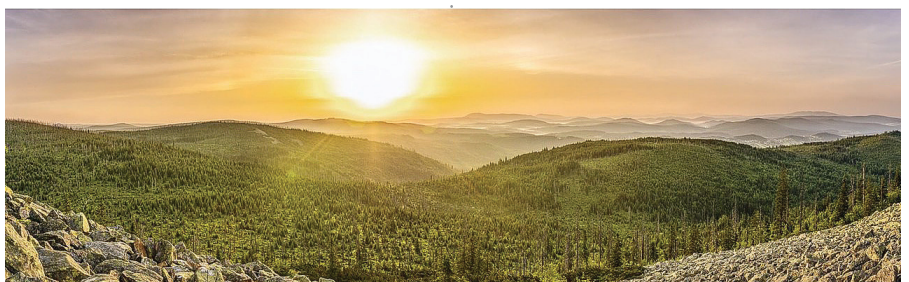
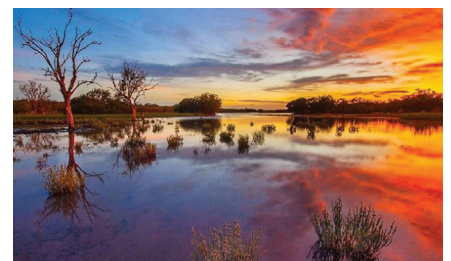
Wild Goose are publishing the booklet which will be available in August. The full creation-centred liturgy is being compiled by John Bell.

Hopefully churches in Australia will take up the challenge to pray using the lectionary based liturgy over the period prior to COP26 which will define the future of the campaign to mitigate climate change effecting our planet.

**from this . . . .**



**to this . . . .**



# Part 3 – Merton’s Lens 3: A Vision of Unity of All Things ...

## Poetry Reflecting on Justice and Unity – Peace for Peoples and the Earth...

### Deborah Ruiz-Wall

Deborah Ruiz-Wall offers some beautiful and challenging reflections in these 5 poems. The first and second poems are a *‘reflection about my time in Broome during the community dispute over James Price Point, the gas and state project of processing natural gas onshore that divided First Nations people in the Kimberley.’*

### Fragments... from the mines

Raindrops, like tears held back, swiftly burst out from the clouds like a torrent. Raw thoughts struggle for re-birth longing to be unchained. I struggle against the mining of minds from preachers of progress that support the assault on pristine lands and waters,



their nets cast wide in the raging storm to reap a harvest from an environmental and sacrosanct site disaster. Blood drips from my chalice as I watch sacrificial lambs

offered for slaughter. Emptied of pulsating energy, life slowly loses its lustre. Stars that adorn the night sky

retreat under cover of darkness, dwellers within the shell’s crusty exterior missing in action.

Crystal raindrops slowly feed the parched dry land

of my arrested thoughts.

I realise that kindred spirits and I managed

to escape institutional capture.

### Spiral of silence

The corporate world mines the ground, mines our hearts.

The energy alliance feeds ungrounded faith in the spiral of affluence, widening the gulf between the natural and the contrived.

When the earth becomes a desert, where do we turn?

When our soul becomes a desert, where is life?

Famished body, shrunken soul.

The twinkle of life deserts our grasp.

## The Challenge we are given from Thomas Merton’s Elements of “Being Christian.”

Doug Hewitt

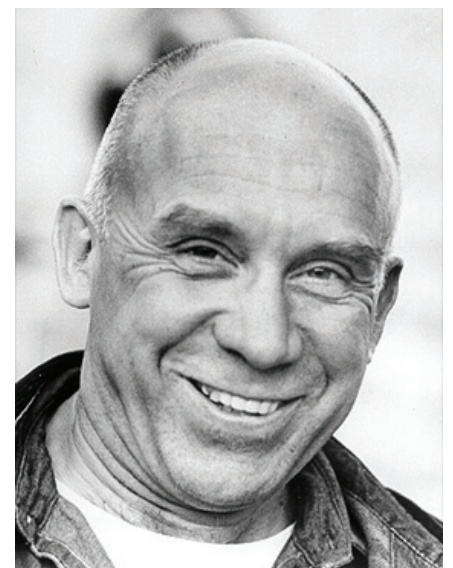
### Thomas Merton speaks of three elements of being Christian:

1. Awakening to the reality of God within (contemplation/meditation).
2. Living with Love and Justice.
3. Recognising and sustaining all that unites the human community.

How are these three elements of ‘being Christian’ lived out amongst Wellspring members? Doug Hewitt

While I want to acknowledge that all three elements to which Merton refers are essential attributes of “being Christian,” I will focus my comments on the third element “Recognising and sustaining all that unites the human community.” I will attempt to illustrate how this objective is lived out by Wellspring members.

Three months before his death in December 1968, Thomas Merton gave two talks at a Sisters Monastery in Alaska, where he spoke on the power of Christian community to deepen faith and overcome human divisions. His theme drew on the work of Eberhard Arnold, explained in his book, *Why We Live in Community*. Arnold was one of the founders of the international Bruderhof Community (which has an Australian branch on the self-sustainable rural property, Danthonia, near Inverell, NSW). Arnold wrote “Our Lord’s victory over death, the victory of love over death on the cross, seeks to be manifested in



Thomas Merton

a very concrete form on earth in the creation of community.”

At the start of his talk about the nature of Christian community Merton stated: “But before we start considering our vocation and our life, we have to stop and think what our Lord was doing. What did he come into the world for? What did he die on the cross for? What was his aim?

Because that necessarily affects our aim, and it affects what we are doing.”

In a recent issue of *Eureka Street* (15 July 2021) Andrew Hamilton SJ, wrote of the influence of St Benedict on our contemporary understanding of religious community. In an article entitled *Saint Benedict and communities: not to retreat from the world, but to engage deeply in it*, he wrote:

“The ideas from *The Rule of Benedict* have shaped the Christian imagination more than did the life of Benedict himself. It is not a rule book for leaving the world but a guide to finding a living place in a harmonious set of relationships within the world. The relationships are directed to God, and run through community members, through prayer and reflection, through communal work, and through the environment.”

The interpretation given by both Merton and Hamilton is one that I believe reflects what we attempt to do as members of the Wellspring Community. In response to our love of God and his whole creation we are called to commit to living in the world and striving to sustain it, so that we can leave it a better place for those who will follow us. Commitment to the common good is the foundation for all that we do. In all our actions we must follow the example which is given to us by the life and ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our Areas of Concern are the best example of how we as a Community

attempt to achieve this objective. As a geographically dispersed community it is difficult to work together cohesively but with inspiration from the conveners of each Area, and directions to resources to guide us, to various local organisations and community events in which we can participate, the goals of sustaining a positive human community can be met.

Our inspiration can come from many sources. An example that has encouraged me recently was the group of young students who took a case to the Federal Court, that the Minister for the Environment had a duty of care to protect future generations against the impact on their lives of approval of new coal mines. As was reported in *The Guardian*.

#### **Australian court finds government has duty to protect young people from climate crisis.**

“The federal court of Australia has found the environment minister, Sussan Ley, has a duty of care to protect young people from the climate crisis in a judgment hailed by lawyers and teenagers who brought the case as a world first. Eight teenagers and an octogenarian nun had sought an injunction to prevent Ley approving a proposal by Whitehaven Coal to expand the Vickery coal mine in northern New South Wales, arguing the minister had a common law duty of care to protect younger people against future harm from climate change.”

This report appeared in the Newsletter of the *Yale Forum on Religion and Ecology*, achieving international publicity.

The students’ action reflects on the failure of those who have been elected to make crucial decisions on behalf of our country, to ensure that the common good for future generations is achieved. There are certainly many

examples of a vacuum of leadership at all levels of government. We suffer repeatedly from late reactive responses to crisis situations, such as Climate Change, without any proactive leadership which could avert the seriousness of the disasters, both natural and human-induced. Our governments continually ignore the cries for inspirational and prophetic leadership.

Many members of Wellspring are active in taking steps to ensure action to reduce carbon emissions. It is great news that Lisa Wriley’s *Earthcare Game* received sufficient funding from supporters to finance its production. I hope you make sure that you procure a copy for use in your wider family. The Iona Community is encouraging those who already observe the Season of Creation in September to extend this year’s celebration to twelve weeks, leading up to the COP26 Climate Change Convention in Glasgow in November. They are inviting us “to pray for the protection of God’s Creation and promote sustainable lifestyles that reverse our contribution to climate change.” We hope that you will accept this invitation and download resources provided for worship.

In a further example of support for the future of humanity Wellspring has become a partner organisation of ICAN, the International Campaign Against Nuclear Weapons. Our Leader, Alex Scutt, has signed an open letter bearing 150 signatures of national ecumenical and interfaith leaders urging the Prime Minister to give his government’s support to the UN Treaty to Ban Nuclear Weapons. We still await a response, hoping that Australia can continue its long tradition of support for such international weapons agreements.





Finally, the partnership of Wellspring Community with Common Grace has opened other possibilities for us to “recognise and sustain all that unites the human community.” During NAIDC Week the Common Grace CEO Brooke Prentis reported on her pilgrimage with Aunty Denise Champion, an Adnyamathanha storyteller, ordained Christian minister and theologian. Recently, Brooke travelled with Aunty Denise to Ikara, known in English as the Flinders Ranges in South Australia, to walk on Adnyamathanha country. Aunty Denise’s new book released in June 2021 is *Anaditj* or ‘The way things are.’ This powerful book is a blend of wonderful Adnyamathanha story-telling and wisdom, challenging a fresh thinking from an Indigenous theologian and a call for justice for First Nations Peoples within the Church and the nation. Brooke and Aunty Denise in the Flinders Ranges.

These and many other actions of individual members are ways in which the Wellspring Community can live out all three elements of Thomas Merton’s challenge of “being Christian.”

### **More poetry from Deborah Ruiz-Wall: My reaction to Israel’s bombing of Gaza.”**

#### **Lament over Gaza**

It crushes my heart to watch injured and lifeless children in Gaza  
- collateral damage or sheer madness?  
‘Land is life’, my Indigenous mentors proclaim,

But I see its antithesis now when  
tortured eyes conjure  
bipolar images of stories retold over  
and over  
by diasporic tribes where past, present  
and future coalesce  
in a war of retribution so that in  
Palestine: land equals death.  
Talk is not cheap, the war machine  
that silences the whispering  
from beyond our earthly dreams will  
keep us all in chains,  
away from reaching the fullness of  
our humanity,  
away from our unity with the sanctity  
of all life.

#### **Midnight Reverie**

Thoughts explode from the depths,  
I know not where,  
my blindfold ripped from my eyes,  
our constructed world is a mess,  
a house built on sand,  
when the tsunami of flood struck,

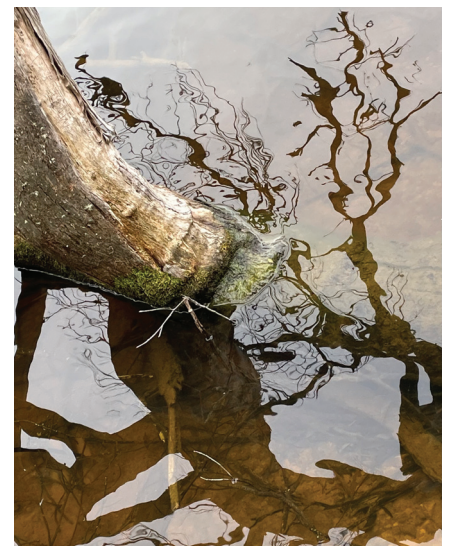


when the merging fires ravaged  
bushland,  
turning greenery to lifeless ashen  
black,  
when the unseen killer virus struck,  
wreaking havoc on our ordered  
disorder  
of life on earth, I see a wasteland of  
free will,  
what is left standing but a mirror  
of the roots of the choices we have  
made,  
and we have just begun

to scratch the surface of our undoing.  
who are we, how do we spawn the  
birth  
of a new dreaming?  
...a deeper listening to the yearning  
of the Spirit within us  
to be One.

#### **The Enemy Within**

Treasure each precious moment  
we spend with the people we love,  
the ‘other’ becomes us, even the  
unloved,  
covid-19 pandemic’s global  
proportion  
has brought us together to face the  
enemy within,  
the need to walk hand in hand  
to expel the fatal threat to our  
collective survival  
imposed by the unseen, time out in  
our isolation  
to reflect on the pointlessness of  
geopolitical  
and biological wars, the quest for  
total control,  
the vandalism of nature, our fatalistic  
faith  
that the market economy will solve  
all our problems,  
the practice of modern day slavery,  
the marginalisation and  
disempowerment  
of our fellow human beings.  
Lest we forget the story of stories,  
the return of our original face!



# What Lies Beneath? Reconciliation and Refugees Update July 2021



June and July saw the celebration of both Refugee Week and NAIDOC Week. Both represent contested spaces within the Australian community, both reflect a struggle for respect and justice and the impact of often unconscious racism in the Anglo Australian psyche, both are sites of the abuse of human rights at total variance to a central core of our faith - the intrinsic value of each person to God.

NAIDOC week saw a focus on the voices of First Nation People especially on the ABC and on SBS.

“Wednesdays with Wellspring” brought us a beautifully presented message of hope and challenge to be part of “Healing Country, Healing our Nation” from the NAIDOC Week resources and Common Grace. Thank you, Alex and Stephanie. In May the Wellspring Community, in consultation with our Indigenous led partner Common Grace, provided a submission supporting the Interim Report of the Co-Design process of an Indigenous Voice to Parliament and outlining our support for the Uluru statement. We joined a host

of universities, local Councils, unions and faith groups.

However, while there has been some movement in the Liberal backbenchers benches in the Senate and some support from the NSW Premier<sup>1</sup>, there has been glacial progress in implementing the objectives of the Uluru statement and a studied resistance to a Treaty.

Our partners Common Grace have a petition you can sign to add your voice. Type <https://www.commongrace.org.au/healingcountry/petition> into your browser and sign. Alternatively, you can write to the Prime Minister at Parliament House CANBERRA ACT 2600 and tell him you support a Constitutional Aboriginal Voice to Parliament and a Treaty with our First Nations People.



**In the refugee space** the Department of Home Affairs claims that “The Australian Government takes its international obligations seriously”<sup>2</sup> However increasingly complex legislation has ensured that Australia’s assessment of who is entitled to our protection depends on Australia’s

interpretations of these international obligations<sup>3</sup>. After the High Court ruling in June, the length of time asylum seekers can be kept in detention at the minister’s pleasure without judicial review could be, according to lawyer Father Frank SJ, “until hell freezes over.”<sup>4</sup>

The story of Murugappan family from Biloela has highlighted internationally the ongoing abuses within Australia’s policies toward asylum seekers who arrive by boat. Currently the family have been given a small reprieve as their youngest child’s status is resolved. However the Migration and Maritime Powers Legislative Amendment (Resolving the Asylum Legacy Case Load) Bill 2014 gives children born in Australia the same citizenship rights as their parents if the parents are asylum seekers who came by boat,<sup>5</sup> that is no rights at all.



**What you can do:** go to <https://www.timeforahome.com.au/> and sign the petition to give refugees in offshore detention and in Australia permanent visas. Write to Hon Alex Hawke Minister for Immigration, Parliament House CANBERRA ACT 2600. Tell him you are concerned that we are treating people who have come by boat as asylum seekers unfairly and it is time to give them all permanent



visas to let them stay in Australia. They have been waiting eight years and more. We need a regional solution to refugee settlement not a lifetime of punishment for innocent people and their children just to deter other people coming by boat. See BMRSG.org.au for more information.

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2021/jun/08/liberal-senator-says-coalition-mps-shifting-to-support-indigenous-voice-to-parliament>
2. Letter from Department of Home Affairs MC21-23591 6 July 2021
3. Sangeetha Pular June 2021 <https://www.kaldorcentre.unsw.edu.au/publication/migration-amendment-clarifying-international-obligations-removal-act-2021-case-study>
4. Frank Brennan June 2021 <https://www.eurekastreet.com.au/article/the-high-court-surrender-to-the-morrison-dutton-immigration-detention-regime>
5. <https://www.brlc.org.au/news/australian-migration-law-amendments-what-this-means-for-asylum-seeker-children>



## COMMON GRACE

Today marks a month since Common Grace gathered on Ngunnawal and Nambri country in Canberra to meet with our nation's leaders and gift our Knit for Climate Action scarves to call for urgent action on climate change. Thank you to those of you who joined us on June 21 to #ShowYourStripes and help amplify our calls for creation and climate justice.

**We were blown away by the positive support we received and engagement we had with Members of Parliament and Senators on 21 June.**

On a beautiful, brisk and sunny Canberra morning we gathered on the lawns of Parliament House to bring the gracious and powerful message of our Knit for Climate Action movement to the heart of our nation's capital. Alongside our

knitters, an art installation of the world's longest knitting needles and students from Radford College powerfully displaying a banner of the climate stripes, we heard the urgent message for climate action from Professor Will Steffen, Independent MP Zali Steggall, Labor MP Alicia Payne, Greens Leader Adam Bandt and Common Grace CEO Brooke Prentis. At this event we were also joined by Trent Zimmerman MP, Tanya Plibersek MP, Libby Coker MP, Rebekha Sharkie MP, Senator Sarah Hanson-Young, Senator Janet Rice and Senator Jordon Steele-John.

If you missed our Facebook Live of this event on Parliament House Lawns you can still view here: <https://fb.watch/6ldDzYnuun/>

We also had the opportunity to meet with MPs and Senators in Parliament House throughout the day to gift scarves and discuss the need for Australia to develop a bolder, more ambitious and more targeted action plan on climate change. We were able to gift scarves to 21 MPs and Senators with 6 wearing scarves in Question Time in the House of Representatives and the Senate Chamber on 21 June. Zali Steggall MP also gave a powerful speech in Parliament about Common Grace's Knit for Climate Action scarf, specifically thanking Common Grace "for their passion in seeking change and for taking such a creative and unique approach to raising awareness of the need for climate action." You can view Zali Steggall's full speech here.

Other highlights and media coverage from our #ShowYourStripes event in Canberra:

- Artist Keith Chidzey, along with Kiki Tse and Stuart Matheson, created the world's longest knitting

needles to be installed on the lawns of Parliament House to help show the scale of the problem we face and the urgent action needed on climate change. Read more here.

- Canberra Baptist Church sewed together 100m worth of second-hand bed sheets to create a giant scarf to wrap around their church building to draw attention to the giant issue of climate change. Read about their efforts in Mirage News
- One of our knitters, Vikki McDonough, had an Opinion Piece 'Why I'm Knitting for Climate Action' published in 19 local publications, including the Canberra Times.
- Knitters Sue, Greg and Loraine, along with Brooke Prentis, spoke with Erica Vowles on ABC Radio National Life Matters about Common Grace's Knit for Climate Action campaign. You can listen to this podcast here (15min).
- Photos from #ShowYourStripes day can be viewed in our Facebook album here.

## What's Next?

We look forward to continuing to meet with MPs and Senators throughout the rest of July - mid October, including on zoom, to gift our scarves and engage in conversations around the urgent need for ambitious climate action.

It is our vision that we will join our voices together again in the lead up to 21 October. This will be our next key moment to call on our Federal Parliamentarians to #WearTheScarf and take bold, ambitious and urgent action on climate change.

21 October is a significant date as it is the last joint sitting day in Parliament before the United Nations climate



conference in Glasgow (COP 26). This will be the most important climate conference since Paris in 2015 (COP 21) and we want to send a gracious message of support to our nation's leaders for Australia to attend in a spirit of leadership, ready to commit to bold, courageous and just action on climate change.

We want to encourage our Federal Parliamentarians to step up and commit to ambitious emission reduction targets. We want to inspire leaders across the political spectrum to listen to and be led by those most impacted by our warming world, Aboriginal peoples, Torres Strait Islander peoples, and our neighbours - peoples of the Pacific Island nations. We'll be sharing more information soon about how you can join us on 21 October.

**Would you like to spark action and conversations in your community for climate action?**

If you are not involved already we would love to invite you to take part in our ongoing Knit for Climate Action campaign. If you have finished knitting a scarf, half-finished one, or plan to knit one, keep going! We would love to reach as many leaders and people of influence as possible with our message of creation and climate justice. In particular, we would love you to consider gifting a scarf to your church pastor, minister or reverend, especially in the lead up to Season of Creation (1 September - 4 October). Imagine churches across these lands now called Australia filled with climate stripe scarves as we celebrate Season of Creation 2021. If you gift your scarf, please remember to share photos, and your

story, with Common Grace at [info@commongrace.org.au](mailto:info@commongrace.org.au)

If knitting's not your thing, that's okay! We would love you to share this opportunity on social media and with your communities to encourage any knitters you know to participate. Find more information, or register to take part in Knit for Climate Action, here.

Thank you again for all your support, prayers and actions to #ShowYourStripes and help amplify our calls for creation and climate justice.

In hope, prayer and action,  
Monique and the Common Grace Knit for Climate Action team  
Common Grace

<http://www.commongrace.org.au/>



**WELLSPRING COMMUNITY INC.**

**Wellspring Community Inc.** ABN 81 293 869 355

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Visit our webpage at: [www.wellspringcommunity.org.au](http://www.wellspringcommunity.org.au) • Follow us on Facebook

**NEXT ISSUE:** August 2021.

Pipeline Committee: Geoff Stevenson.

**Deadline for material** is Friday 16 July 2021. Theme for the August issue is “Thomas Merton speaks of 3 elements of being Christian: 1. Awakening to the reality of God within (contemplation/meditation). 2. Living with Love and Justice. 3. Recognising and sustaining all that unites the human community. How are these 3 elements of ‘being Christian’ lived out amongst Wellspring members?

Please email material for that edition to Geoff Stevenson [geoffs81@gmail.com](mailto:geoffs81@gmail.com)