



from
Jamberoo Abbey

**May there be an outpouring of
Prayer and Peace
over our world at this time**

We are especially pleased to be able to communicate with you in this way and pray the richest of blessings upon you, your families, communities and all who are dear to you. Our newsletter this year is taking a different form. We wanted to find a way to share with you some of the insights and gleanings that have been ours during this past year. We have tried to make this a varied presentation so that there might be something for everyone.

We too have shared in the anxieties and uncertainties that have abounded in most people's lives. We were evacuated three times earlier in the year due to the bush fires that ravaged our country and have shared in the necessary Covid19 lockdown with all its residual economic and social consequences.



Our retreat cottages were closed and we sorely missed all those who at other times could join us for Mass and the Office. We recognise, as do you, that life as we knew it will never be the same again.

It has made for new learning when it comes to things technological and other ways of communication. It has got us thinking "outside the square"! However, what has not changed, but rather intensified, has been our commitment to a life of prayer and reflection on behalf of the world. Something we take very seriously.

In the following pages, we want to share some of those reflections with you and hope that you might just find some little piece that speaks to you of the profound real love, and personal concern, that God has for you and perhaps offers a word of encouragement in these the days of our time. Somewhere we hope you will find the gift from God, via us, that is meant for you!



With every blessing
Abbess Hilda and the sisters of Jamberoo Abbey

Head in the Clouds!

Our Sr Mary Bernadette has her “head in the clouds” most days.
Some of her photographs waft throughout this newsletter.

COME TO THE WATER, YOU WHO ARE THIRSTY, AND BE SATISFIED



*Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give will never be thirsty again.
The water that I shall give will turn into a spring inside you,
welling up to eternal life.*

John 4:14

Our Online Retreats

When we went into lockdown I was acutely aware of how many people would be affected by this decision; the people from all walks of life who have found sustenance through being able to come and stay with us and share our prayer life.

At the same time my heart ached for people throughout the world who were struggling with the effects of the virus and subsequent lockdown. I became aware of a deep spiritual hunger and yearning at the heart of the world and I asked myself what we, what I, could do by way of responding to that need. During the last five months, I have been hoping to respond to this need by working with online retreats

The first retreat, “Leading Strings of Love: Living the Benedictine Promises in the World”, has just been uploaded to our website, with registrations available. This retreat is about love...living in love within the concrete situation of our lives using the Benedictine tools of Conversion of Life, Obedience and Stability. It is about listening to our own hearts, hearing and seeing more clearly our own selves and then, within the context of this newfound self-knowledge, using the tools St Benedict offers to enable us to pour love into these concrete situations of our lives. It is to love the people with whom we live and work, with our own human love inspired with Christ’s own love; it is about learning to act justly, to love more tenderly and to walk more in the footsteps of Christ (cf. Micah 6:8)



Nicholas Mynheer. Mary
embraces the mother of Judas

“Into a Strange Land: A country Called Forgiveness”, as the title implies, is a retreat focussed on forgiveness. In this retreat, we are asked to go down into the depths of our own hearts first, to take a journey which if we are truthful, we would probably prefer not to take; to look at our own pain and wounds and hurts; to look also at our own contributions to the situation of hurt we are still carrying though our unforgiveness. It is, even so, a gentle retreat. We are gently led to start taking concrete steps toward forgiving those who have injured us. It is a retreat that is practically oriented; it is a journey that can sometimes takes weeks, months or even years to complete. The important thing is that we at least start out on the journey.

I have loved writing these retreats as my soul has been enriched with fresh insights and new understandings, and hence the process has enhanced my own journey to God. I now have three more in the pipeline!



Sr Antonia osb

Online retreat:

<https://www.jamberooabbey.org.au/retreats/online-retreats/leading-strings-of-love/>

“What is the face that we offer to each other?”

What a strange and tumultuous year this has been. Bushfire and evacuation, floods, and Covid19 have all combined to ensure this was a year like no other that I have experienced in the 25 years of monastic living on this holy mountain. The learning for me has been largely that in the face of the huge, unpredictable and uncontrollable, God calls me home to myself – to the simple, to the little, and the realization of the importance of faithful living of our communal Benedictine life.

This year our community was fortunate to watch a sharing from Fr Timothy Radcliffe OP on his experience of the pandemic. Even though the Dominicans do not live an enclosed monastic life, Fr Timothy Radcliffe’s experience of lockdown in the UK certainly highlighted similarities that were shared by our community.

One of his reflections touched me deeply. He said, *‘What is the face that we offer to each other? In my experience, it is immensely important that when I go and have my first cup of coffee we smile at each other. We look at each other with benevolence. And I think it is this sort of benevolence that helps us not to feel like we have collapsed into a deep hole. Israel used to say, ‘let your face shine on us and we shall be saved’. Jesus offered his face, he looked at them – he looked at Nicodemus, he looked at Nathanael, he looked at the widow offering her mite, and I think, do we look at each other with a little bit of that compassion? That smile that we need which is nurturing. Christianity is a religion of the face.’*

Christianity is a religion of the face.

What is the face we offer each other? We, who are being Christ for each other, what is the face I gift my sisters with each morning? The power of a smile, a kind word, a look of recognition can warm the heart and ease the fear and anxiety that arises in our hearts in these tumultuous times. I have been ‘practicing’ becoming aware of the face I am wearing – and its effect on myself and my sisters. Is it a reflection of my inner heart? Of habitual thoughts and judgements? Of old stories or memories relived in my mind? How often I am oblivious to the face I wear! There is a marvelous freedom in the realization that I can choose to come awake and be mindful and intentional about the face I wear, and then choose to have a face reflective of prayer and love and compassion, one that is an expression of the choice for a benevolent heart.



Bernardo Ramonfaur

That started my reflections on the nature of hospitality – the hospitality that we offer to each other, that we show to ourselves and that we show to our God. The Benedictine charism of hospitality which is so prominent in our monastic lives has a particular expression with the guests who come to our cottages. But they are not here at present and so to whom do we offer hospitality? I am reminded that here in this school of the Lord’s service, I am asked to greet Christ in each of my sisters, to make of the place where my feet walk daily, a safe space where each one is welcome. Hospitality must also express the face of acceptance. Acceptance of the reality of the changing world in which we live and of these challenging

circumstances. Hospitality is acceptance of each other with all our similarities and differences as we walk together on the path of monastic *conversatio*.



Elvira Koneva

Fr Timothy Radcliffe expressed it like this:

We need a spirituality which enables us to be unafraid of difference. Lockdown is a time, in my experience anyway, where we cannot escape each other. It is a time when we have to confront our differences...in hope. Our society is always going on about tolerance, but by this they usually mean indifference. You do your thing and I'll do mine. Real tolerance is engaging with difference in sympathy and humility, with intelligence and imagination. Real tolerance is bearing the cost and toil of difference. That's what it means to be a brother or sister.

A final reflection, was the irony that the world 'out there', in many ways and for a time, has been living the kind of enclosed life that we live daily. Listening to the sharing of those living it and listening to Fr Timothy's experience, has given me a unique lens with which to reflect on my own life here at the Abbey. What a gift. As the world emerges from the experience of lockdown I am invited to take my choice for monastic 'lockdown' deeper. It has invited me to value once again, the opportunity to slow down, to listen, to look, and notice, to embrace the beauty and the silence to which I awaken every day. It has invited me to re-embrace the hospitality which is fundamental to our living community – together. It has refreshed my appreciation of my monastic family and re-energized my commitment to the necessary inner work of living in this school of the Lord's service. It has filled my heart with gratitude for all its gifts and challenges.



I am offering an online retreat in January which explores how the Benedictine charism of hospitality might shape and influence our living as we emerge from these days of pandemic. We are invited creatively to explore some ways in which this versatile charism can nourish, sustain and stabilise us in a deeper security that is rooted in faith, in hope and love.

The retreat is advertised on our Facebook page and on our website.



Sr Magdalen OSB

Online retreat:

<https://www.jamberooabbey.org.au/retreats/online-retreats/hospitality/>

A Reflection from our Sr Agnes

Our daily prayer is for all who suffer in our world especially the poor and oppressed, the refugees, the persecuted and all who are dying because of this dreadful global pandemic. May the Lord be with them in their fears and sorrows and in their extreme poverty. May he lead them to eternal happiness.

Many good people are working for and with these people but our work here at

Jamberoo Abbey is to pray many times a day for the world, for active workers and for all the poor and suffering people they are trying to help and support.



Sr Agnes osb

The words of Fr Thomas Keating ocsa remind me that “It is not so much what we do, but who we are that allows Christ to live in this world”.

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DANCING WITH GOD



I cannot dance, O Lord, unless you lead me.
If you want me to leap with abandon, You must intone the song.
Then I shall leap into love, From love into knowledge,
From knowledge into enjoyment,
and from enjoyment beyond all human sensations.
There I want to remain, yet want also to circle higher still.

St. Mechtilde of Magdeburg

Obsculta

In 2016, I was offered, by Abbess Mary, opportunity to do a Ph.D., which would focus on the history of our community in the 19th and 20th centuries. I was 68 at the time. My intention was to bring together the historical information in abbey archives, give it a living spirit, and watch the story unfold. Our story matters, and for too long has been absent from the pages of Australian Catholic Church History.

Two archivists before me, Sr Marie Therese Malone, and Sr Marie Gregory Forster, had carried out detailed research on the nuns of the 19th and 20th centuries, from 1848 to the 1990s. Sr Marie Gregory Forster had focused on families – the families of the early nuns and their situation in Colonial and post-Colonial New South Wales. Her research was printed in three volumes entitled “Subiaco Resource Books”. Some of her early writings were published in “Tjurunga – An Australasian Benedictine Review.” Sr Marie Therese Malone researched and wrote an obituary for every nun who had lived and died in the 19th and 20th centuries. The work of both archivists enabled me to take on a Doctoral thesis confidently and further the research which had begun.



Professor James Harrison accepted me as a student of the Sydney College of Divinity, and I placed myself under the discipline required to research and compile a superior document. Since the thesis is a gift to my community, it must be the best of documents.

The title of the thesis is: “*Obsculta*- a study in Benedictine Continuity of Charism and Tradition”. *Obsculta* is the first word of the Benedictine Rule. It means “listen” and is a call to “listen” to the precepts of the Rule of Benedict, to the workings of the Holy Spirit, to the events of history. It is the call for an on-going response to God, to the challenge of missionary work, to the personal and communal suffering that shaped the life of this one Benedictine community – the first women’s enclosed community on our vast continent.

My choice of the Sydney College of Divinity is deliberate: Sitting in on monthly research seminars with members of the Coptic, Syrian, Anglican, Wesleyan-Methodist, and Catholic traditions is rich enough. Added to that are the Pastors of Christian communities around Sydney and beyond, those courageous men and women who care for the youth on our streets, the drug-addicted and the suicidal. Finally, there are those students who seek answers to the tenets of their Christian traditions – tenets which have always supported them, but which, in the 21st century, appear to be crumbling. The truth before us always, is that students of the Sydney College of Divinity study for Christ.

My thanks to Abbess Hilda, who, since her election as abbess, has enabled this work to continue.



Sr Hildegard Ryan osb

The Icon of the Nativity - Andrei Rublev

Icons are not meant to be art for art's sake (although they are stunning pieces of artwork). They are theology in line and colour, doorways to the spiritual realm. They don't obey the normal rules of time and space, of perspective, of colour. Instead these are used to express spiritual truths.

The icon of the Nativity by Andrei Rublev combines the essential nativity narratives of Matthew and Luke, as well as traditional stories from the *Proto-Evangelium of James*, an extra-canonical gospel of the second century.



In some ways, this could be said to be a Marian icon. The figure of Mary is much larger than the surrounding figures; it dominates the icon. She is dressed in the purple robes of royalty with the three stars of her abiding virginity on her head-dress and shoulders. She is positioned so that the dissecting lines of the icon cross over her womb reminding us that this birth was only possible because of her *fiat*, her readiness to throw away convention, to risk being a social outcast, even at the risk of her own life. She is lying on the ancient form of a swag, the colour of which is arresting in a sea of gold. Red is always used to depict pain and suffering. Mary is depicted staring into the distance “pondering”. We remember the words of Simeon that ‘This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the

inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.’ (Lk 2:34–35) (Remember that temporal realities are suspended in icons!)

Behind Mary we see a cave containing the Christ child lying in a manger, the food trough of animals. This little child is the bread of life, manna for the starving and all who come to him will never hunger again (Jn 6:35). The identification of the stable as a cave is an early tradition. Here we see the one “who has immortality and dwells in unapproachable light” (1 Tim. 6:16) coming “to enlighten those who dwell in darkness and in the shadow of death” (O Antiphon). The significance of the image of the cave is heightened by the fact that the infant’s swaddling clothes resemble grave cloths and the manger is shaped as a coffin. This tiny baby will in a few short years be crucified and buried in another cave, a tomb. And as there are angels at the mouth of this cave watching in wonder, so there will be angels at that other cave declaring that he is risen from the dead, his labour of love completed for us all. It is for this that he is born!

He is adored by an ox and a donkey fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah that “the ox knows its master and the donkey its master’s manger” (Is. 1:3). While the ox is permitted as food for the Jewish people, donkeys are seen as unclean and therefore forbidden. Deuteronomy also instructed that an ox and a donkey were not to be yoked together (Deut. 22:10) This demonstrates the revolutionary nature of the gospel in which there is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female (Gal. 3:28).

The universal nature of the gospel is again highlighted by the journeying of the Magi to pay homage to the one whose coming is foretold by a star. Here, on the top left, they are depicted as three men of different races (an African, an Asian and a Caucasian) and of different ages – one young, one elderly and one middle aged. (As an aside, notice the star which shines above the cave with the light from the heavens, which then breaks into three streams of light to depict the Trinity.)

On the bottom left we see Joseph looking deeply troubled in the company of a small, old man. This is a depiction, again out of its time sequence, of Joseph’s concern about whether he should put Mary away quietly. We know that the old man is the devil, the Tempter, as he is wearing boots and is clothed in an animal skin. Remember how Moses took off his sandals before the burning bush? The skin of animals represents death and decay. Adam and Eve were clothed in the skins of animals as they left the garden of Eden signifying the break in their connection with the divine. But Joseph the man of dreams listened to God and continued to support Mary in her pregnancy.

At the top right, we see a group of four angels (one is just peeking out between two others). They seem to be pointing and talking between themselves, wondering at this miracle that is unfolding below them, while another is leaning down to share the joyful news. “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace...” (Lk. 2:14) they sing. And the peace which they proclaim is not the Pax Romana of Caesar Augustus, which like the “war on terror” enforces peace through violence. This is the peace that has been foretold by the Prophet Micah, the Saviour who himself is peace (Micah 5:4). “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid (Jn 14:27) said Jesus. This extraordinary event is not broadcast to the rich and powerful, but to the poor and marginalised, the downtrodden, the homeless, itinerant workers doing night-shift in the fields. And their reaction is to go “with haste” to see and worship. And they “returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen” (Lk 2:20).

On the bottom right, we see Jesus being washed by two midwives, one of the traditional stories. Note that the ‘baby’ Jesus looks like a miniature adult. This isn’t because iconographers didn’t know how to draw a baby. Rather icons of the infant Christ always depict him as a small adult — he is a complete man, fully formed, unchanging. This scene celebrates his full humanity. The rather elaborate basin and jar they are using may perhaps be a reference to baptism. Behind the two midwives is the Jesse tree just in case you hadn’t yet got the significance of this birth.

While this icon depicts the stories of the birth that happened “in those days” (Lk. 2:1) and “in that region” (Lk. 2:8), it has so much for us here and now. May we respond with the faith and humility of Joseph, with the trust and wonder of Mary, with the enthusiasm and perseverance of the Magi and with the ready joy and praise of the shepherds. May Jesus be born in our hearts this Christmas.



Sr Hannah osb

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All Fired Up!

The summer of 2019-2020 was a hot, dry, firey challenge for the people of the East Coast of NSW, Victoria, QLD and Tasmania. This fire devastated people, homes, forests and creatures. We here at the Abbey had our own challenges in this extreme situation. By the hand of God we were enfolded in a circle of protection. The fires were 50km to our North West, 30km to the South and on one very frightening evening they came as close as 25km to our west. Then there were the spot fires close to the evacuation houses. From the long, long drought we were left with only one tank of water to wet down our buildings and get out. Deciding on whether this was the 'right moment' came several times a day for



many weeks.

With our beautiful property surrounded by rainforest and bush, evacuating when necessary in a fire season stays heavily in one's mind. We have a well-prepared Fire Plan which has our sisters evacuate when conditions are severe and over last summer this went on for months. Three times our sisters evacuated, leaving the Fire Response Team at home and on hand to set our fire pumps in action.

Well as you could imagine life in the Abbey for the five members of the team didn't exactly follow our regular monastic timetable. It was a case of 24 hours a day pulling together, taking turns to hourly monitor the conditions 360 degrees around our property, bucket watering sister's gardens, staying tuned to ABC news and the advice of the Bureau of Meteorology and we had what felt like a 'life line' communication going with our local RFS chief Hannah McInerney. We are so grateful to all our local RFS - every one of them is a volunteer.

One evening the fire team went out into the dark, with wind blowing fiercely from every direction, ash blowing into our masked faces. This was the night with the worst conditions but it was time for us to face our fears of whether we could respond if anything was to happen in the night. We were well practised for daylight but darkness and night had its added dangers and fears. Would our protective clothing, eye wear, lights and simple communication equipment be sufficient? Well it had to be done. So out we went, Sr Caritas, Sr Petra, LeeAnn and myself. It was an exhilarating experience each of us conquering the fear we hadn't as yet voiced to one another. Hours later Srs Caritas, Petra and I went again



to monitor conditions and we headed down into a part of the property where we hoped to see the colours of the sky with smoke and fire on the horizons. Yes, we were looking up but when our

headlights looked down and around we were surrounded by wombats. Not sure who got the greater shock, us or the wombats, or, who planned to do the fastest dash? A wonderful tension release with much laughter!

With all this happening at Christmas, New Year, Epiphany and all the other liturgical feasts, that came and went uncelebrated, our Abbey pantry and cool room were well stocked so the Fire Response Team didn't miss out on the goodies. We cooked up a meal each day and spent time together sharing our moments. These were as delightful as the bliss at the sight and feel of a mist on our skins, or the colours of the sky or a patch of blue appearing in a darkened smoky sky.

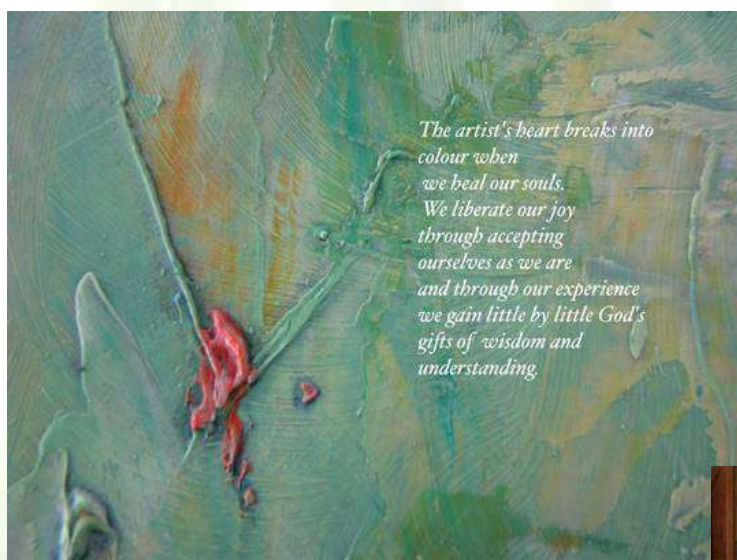


We continue to pray for the recovery of all who are still living with fear, homelessness, unemployment and the aftermath of the fires. We give thanks for the many people who financially support the small businesses finding their way again after the fire.



Sr Mechtild osb

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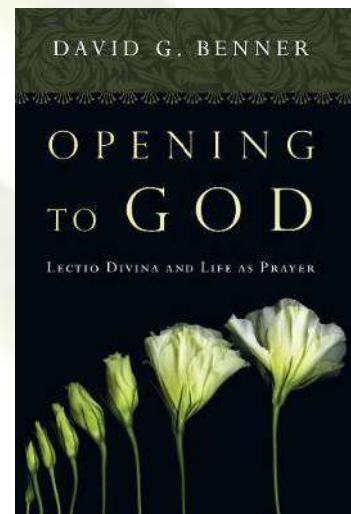
Sr Veronica Chandler osb



Lectio Divina and Continuous Prayer

This year of 2020 has been an interesting year for me. Together with the rest of Australia, we took part in facing bush fires, evacuations, floods and the COVID-19 lock down. Despite all of the challenges, I have received many blessings for which I am grateful.

One of my blessings this year has been to take part in the Global Online Benedictine Spiritual Direction Course conducted by Benet Hill Monastery, Colorado Springs, USA. This is a 2-year program. I have just completed the first year. In the course, we were given a few textbooks to accompany the modules. One particular book has helped me tremendously. I have heard God speak to me during my *lectio* with the book. It is entitled *Opening to God: Lectio Divina and Life as Prayer* by David G. Benner.



David G. Benner is a Canadian psychologist who has authored many books, including *The Spiritual Journey Trilogy: Surrender to Love, The Gift of Being Yourself*, and *Desiring God's Will*. *Opening to God* came from a series of talks he gave together with his wife at Christ Church Cathedral in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, during Lent 2009. The underlying theme of the book is the importance of being constantly open to God in our spiritual life, and that this openness to God is a transforming journey for us to become whole. He uses the word *opening* in the title because it implies a direction, not just a position. It is a journey towards full openness. He then expands the topic of prayer as it has a very important role in the deep inner work of transformation.

He dedicates the first few chapters on prayer as an encounter with God and how to prepare for this encounter. He then chooses *Lectio Divina* as a prayer practice and expands each step. We are familiar with the traditional steps of *Lectio Divina* as reading (*lectio*), meditating (*meditatio*), praying (*oratio*) and contemplating (*contemplatio*). Benner approaches these steps with a different term, the four prayer paths or movements. As he expands the four prayer paths, he offers each a new practical identity: *Lectio* being prayer as attending, *Meditatio* being prayer as pondering, *Oratio* being prayer as responding and *Contemplatio* being prayer as being.

The Four Prayer Paths
Prayer as attending
Prayer as pondering
Prayer as responding
Prayer as being

Each chapter is rich with creativity and practical expressions of prayer. It introduces new approaches for doing *Lectio*. He gives examples, as he speaks of prayer as attending, noticing, paying attention to the God who is ever present, of practising sensory prayer and cultivating spiritual perception. In discussing prayer as pondering, he discusses the prayer practice of dialogue with God and the different expressions it could take. Again, in prayer as responding, he expands the notion of responding not only with our words, but with our whole being, our body, mind and heart. And in the chapter on prayer as being, he provides us with prayer practices which can help us to settle into our deep self where God dwells. At the end of each chapter, he includes a section on how to make it practical, providing exercises we can implement to help us bring this prayer practice into our daily life. At the end of the book, he summarises with a chapter speaking of our life as prayer.

I have found this book extremely helpful. During these formation years (of which I am still a part) I have learnt that our life here as enclosed Benedictine nuns is centred around the Word, the liturgy and the Eucharist. Everything else in our life is empowered by this. Our main work is to pray the Divine Office. Our other works such as giving Spiritual Direction, making candles in Craft, sweeping the cloister floor, cooking in the kitchen, they are all extensions of this main work which is prayer. We are striving to live St Paul's exhortation to pray without ceasing (1 Thess 5:17). Through this book, I have

learnt how to expand my prayer exercise of *lectio divina* so that my prayer comes from my whole being throughout my whole day in everything that I do. I am learning to pray without ceasing.

One challenge that I experienced from the book was to *pray with hands and feet*. My professional background before I entered the community was in Software Development. I worked in front of computers for 8 hours a day for more than 10 years. I am used to sitting down and staying put. So, although I am familiar with the practice of the desert fathers and mothers who recited the psalm while weaving baskets, I still find it challenging to pray with my body. In this book, I welcomed the invitation to venture into this new way of praying. Now I practice mindful walking around the property - opening my eyes, ears and heart to the flowing creek, the laughing kookaburra and the cows eating the grass. They are all where God is for me and from where he speaks.



This book is an invitation to those of you who are feeling a deep desire for a renewal in their prayer life. Benner's invitation to the reader, was to be prepared to have our understanding and practice of prayer changed. I have found my understanding and practice of prayer expanded. I would like to share this with you in the hope that it may bring a new springtime to your prayer practice.



If you are interested in purchasing this book, it is available on our online shop or by contacting Sr Joanna at (02)42361192 or abbeybookscraft@bigpond.com

Sr Petra – junior professed

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THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL COME UPON YOU



*The Holy Spirit will come upon you,
and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.* Luke 1:35

Global Online Benedictine Spiritual Direction Program

As many of you know we have guest retreat cottages and hermitages where people seeking God can come for a time of prayer, silence and reflection. Sometimes people ask for spiritual guidance during their visit and if we can we most certainly try to meet this need. The pandemic isolation has meant that our cottages have been closed for some months though at present we are beginning to open in a very measured way. Nothing in our pandemic ridden world is certain yet.



It is increasingly clear to us that an ever greater number of people are looking for a deeper more God centred life, for genuine spirituality and we always want to meet that thirst. Consequently, some of our sisters began extensive training in the area of spiritual guidance from Benet Hill Monastery Colorado. This year three of our sisters Maureen Therese, Mary Bernadette and Caritas all graduated and three others Srs Magdalen, Petra and Marie Joseph have begun the course. It is extremely involved and made a little more difficult by the worldwide time zones. There is voluminous reading, assignments, verbatums, spiritual guidance practice, online classes comprising students from around the world, supervision sessions and of course personal spiritual direction as well. As well as giving the participants a sound knowledge of spirituality and the “nuts and bolts” of guidance, the course also aims at giving the participants an opportunity to unpack and depth their own human and spiritual journey under trained mentors. Obviously without that important element it would not be possible to connect with the stories of those who come to us. All our sisters agree that this is a life-giving opportunity.

Sr Marie Joseph has written her own response to the course and shares it here:

In 2020, I commenced an online spiritual direction program. Without a doubt the course content expanded and enriched my monastic year, especially my prayer life and *Lectio Divina*, both of which are foundational for monastic life. The course modules touched on a variety of topics pertinent to spiritual direction, some of which I had some familiarity with while others were new to me, and I both enjoyed and was challenged through being introduced to a variety of different authors and perspectives.



As the year has unfolded I have found myself desiring to cultivate a more contemplative response to what happens in my day-to-day life. By ‘contemplative response’ I mean deepening my awareness of the presence of God and God’s love for me in everything that happens around me, to me and within me. And welcoming it, especially during the times when I don’t understand or perhaps feel comfortable.



Sr Marie Joseph – junior professed

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A Way of Life Within a Life

After retiring as abbess in February last year, I enjoyed a 10 month Sabbatical in Victoria and returned to the Abbey at the beginning of this year. During the time away, I had a lot of time to think and open myself to whatever it was that God was asking of me at this stage of my life. Naturally, I was intending to return and take my place within the community, however there was a big surprise in store for me!

Having entered the monastery in 1976, I have lived under the Rule of St Benedict for 44 years and did not expect any dramatic change, however God had other ideas! A star arose for me slowly, silently and brightly during my sabbatical and I experienced a deeper call to prayer and contemplation; a call to continuous prayer, study, silence and the living out of my vows of Stability, Conversion of Life and Obedience.

I discussed this call with Abbess Hilda and she and the community gave me their blessing to live a life of solitude within the community. In my earlier life, I would never have contemplated this step but at this stage I believe the call to solitude is from God and leading me to God. The call is not to a complete withdrawal into a hermitage but to a hermitage within the community which I hope will develop and emerge as something unique. I do not see myself as following in the steps of any of the great desert fathers or mothers but humbly trying to walk in the footsteps of the way laid out by Jesus and St Benedict.



The heart of our Benedictine life is the seeking of God “with the Gospel for our guide” in the natural rhythms of daily life. Scripture, Liturgy of the Hours, Mass, silence, solitude, listening, deep interior prayer of quiet and manual work —these are the means which enable me (and all of us) to seek and find God. I am really just living as I have always lived but in a more intense way.

I have begun a vegetable garden which is very exciting and am now able to provide some vegetables for the community. I have three above ground beds that contain lush green vegetables – lettuce, beetroot, carrots, radishes, beans and snap peas. I also have tomatoes on the vine which are beginning to ripen. I love having the time to nurture the earth and delight in her bounty. I also have many birds who visit my garden and let me know rather noisily that they are ready for some seeds! Occasionally one of our rock wallabies also drops by!

I am studying Julian of Norwich who was an anchoress during the 14th century at the time of the Black Death. Her teachings are relevant and encouraging for us this year as we struggle to live with Covid-19. I am also involved in designing and producing a new line of candles, helping with the care of Sr Elizabeth and being available in other ways when needed. It is important that I do not become overly involved in work as the balance of prayer and work is of utmost importance, as it is for all the sisters in the community. The principal endeavour and goal is to devote myself to the silence and solitude of the cell. This is holy ground, a sacred space, a place where hopefully the Lord will speak; where the Word of God will resound; perhaps at times experiencing that “thin place” where the Celts say “earth is joined to heaven”.

So, here I am at this stage of my life undertaking a new journey. I can only pray with Julian of Norwich (my new companion) that “I will be as much at home with God as heart may think or soul desire.”

Sr Mary osb



THE THIN PLACE WHERE HEAVEN MEETS EARTH



“Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew not...
This is none other than the house of God,
this is the gate of Heaven.”
Gen 28:10-17

Sr Elizabeth shares with Sr Julian

Sr Elizabeth is both the oldest sister in our community in age and also the only surviving sister to have lived at all three locations of the Benedictine Abbey: Jamberoo, Pennant Hills and *Subiaco*, Rydalmere. She loves to share her memories with us especially the stories of her formative years and her years living in the monastery.

Elizabeth had no idea what a Benedictine or a contemplative nun was - it was all a mystery to her. In the 1940s she was at Sydney University and belonged to a study group called the Augustinians - a select group for serious students. As a group, they went for a retreat to *Subiaco*. Elizabeth remembers that she was running late and when she got there the priest who was leading the retreat, Fr John McCristal, was saying "marvellous life these women have here, nothing to hold on to but faith. And faith is the greatest tribute we can give to God." Elizabeth felt that this was God's call to her to live by faith in him and that is the reason she entered the monastery a year later in 1947. She felt then that she had been called to live a life of faith and still believes and lives that today. This call of faith came from her life with her parents. She wanted her life to be worthy of what each of her parents had given her in faith and courage. Her parents had put every fibre of their being, every nerve, every hope, everything was for Elizabeth as she was their only child. They had sacrificed everything and worked hard to give her all the advantages in life that they hadn't had. She believes her vocation was God's acceptance of their faith. Her father Christian was Danish who never revisited his homeland. Emma was originally from Narooma on the south coast of New South Wales and as a teenager took on the care of her brothers and sisters after the early death of their mother. Elizabeth always thought that must have been extremely hard and as a result, Christian and Emma did not marry until later in life.



Emma and Christian Funder

Once the day arrived for Elizabeth to enter *Subiaco*, the problem arose about how to get there. Normally it would have been the train, however, she was given a list of items to bring with her. This included a Bible, notebook, candle-holder, sheets, and so on but also a rake, trowel, watering can, heavy leather boots and material to make aprons. These were heavy and cumbersome and Elizabeth has fond memories of lugging the watering can to the monastery! The solution was a taxi that took her mum, her mum's friend, and a friend of Elizabeth's, and all her belongings, to Subiaco. Elizabeth

remembers that once they were in the car and leaving her home her mother would not allow her to turn around to wave goodbye to her dad because she did not want Elizabeth to see him crying.

All the sisters at Jamberoo are all very familiar with Elizabeth's sweet tooth and her love for hardboiled lollies. When I asked Elizabeth about this her eyes sparkled and she laughed as she recalled her dad arriving at *Subiaco* with a good supply of hardboiled lollies and he kept the supply up for many years. She doesn't know why he chose these but guesses that they were cheap and he could easily get a good supply of them so he would be sure everyone got a good handful. Elizabeth's mum however was not supportive of the lolly venture but her dad said "They haven't got any sweets at the monastery!" expecting his wife to support his cause. She however answered "The tragedy!" Her dad enjoyed the comment, and the supply continued.

Another time her father came to visit her and this time was carrying a cake that was burned. By way



Subiaco, Rydalmere 1849–1957

of explanation he simply said "Ah well you see, there's been a death in the family!" He was really saying that Elizabeth had entered the monastery! Her parents used to take it in turns to visit so they would both get a decent length of time to talk with her.

Another story about Elizabeth's dad that she loves to tell and laugh about now (but not at the time) is when her dad used to go to the monastery to do some work. He had been a cabinet maker and Mother Mildred found many uses for his talents, which allowed him more access to his daughter than would normally have been allowed. One day whilst her dad was doing some carpentry Elizabeth was walking past the area and heard him say "Mother Joseph, put your knee on this bit of wood for me!" She was so embarrassed as it was not the done thing to speak to Mother Mary Joseph that way! Mother Mary Joseph promptly and willingly placed her knee on the piece of wood.

When Elizabeth was younger she had a stutter. She recalls how Dame Winifred (Dame was the old Benedictine term for sister) decided to help her overcome this. She believed that Elizabeth was too self-conscious when she was reading aloud so every day at silence time, instead of going for a rest, she would go out into the garden with Dame Winifred who would attend to her garden and Elizabeth would read to her. Occasionally she would make suggestions, otherwise she would let Elizabeth read until she felt it was enough for the day. Elizabeth was touched that Dame Winifred would show so much interest in her and she did eventually overcome her stutter.



Pennant Hills 1957-1988

In 1956, the decision was made to move from *Subiaco* and a property was purchased in Pennant Hills.



Jamberoo Abbey - 1989

Life at *Subiaco* continued as before but with preparations made for the move to occur at the end of 1957. Two to three months before this the community experienced a long and severe bout of Asian flu. Elizabeth was one of the last to be infected. One of the symptoms is an inability to stand up for several days or eat. The Infirmarian had already packed up the infirmary so when Elizabeth was taken ill she was given a bottle of brandy. Yes, a full bottle of brandy and she reports that it worked wonders! Elizabeth believes that it was left behind in the packing and the Infirmarian wanted to get rid of it!

I hope you have enjoyed these stories from Elizabeth as much as we enjoy hearing them. She loves to reminisce as much as she gets excited about the future and the younger sisters. She likes to share her tales with us and now we can share some of them with you.

Sr Elizabeth osb

Sr Julian – junior professed

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KISS OF PEACE



Greet one another with a holy kiss 2 Cor 13:12

“You must trust me to carry it for you”

Many of you will have heard of the Dutch Christian watchmaker Corrie ten Boom (15 April 1892–15 April 1983). During the German occupation of Holland during WWII she, her sister Bessie and her father Casper were all arrested for giving sanctuary to Jews. Casper believed that the Jews were the chosen people of God and therefore they were of course welcome in his home. They had a hiding place built in their house for the Jews and that became the title of her biography *The Hiding Place*. He died ten days after his arrest and Bessie and Corrie were sent eventually to Ravensbrück concentration camp.



In her book Corrie, whose real name was Cornelia after her mother, tells a story from her childhood. Something Corrie did not understand had been said at school. She asked her teacher about it but the teacher was embarrassed and gave no answer. She asked her mother, and she too would not engage in an explanation. Whatever the issue was, it continued to worry little Corrie. One day she was accompanying her father on a watchmaking train trip from their home in Haarlem to Amsterdam. She gathered her courage and broached the subject with him, he remained silent but she knew he had listened, he always did. After a while he lifted his traveling case down and asked, “Will you carry this off the train please, Corrie?” She stood up and gave it her best efforts, of course to no avail. “It’s too heavy,” she said “Yes,” her father replied “and it would be a pretty poor father who would ask his little girl to carry such a load. It’s the same way, Corrie, with knowledge. Some knowledge is too heavy for children. For now, you must trust me to carry it for you.”

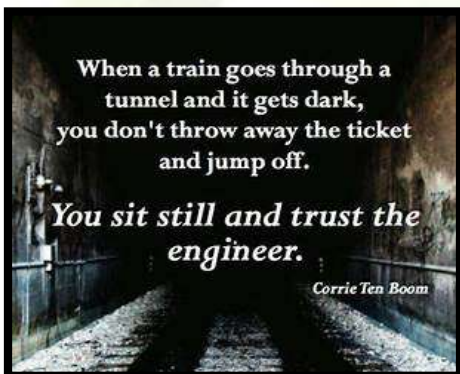
It seems to me that these days of our lives are too heavy for us to carry. The planet is in free-fall, world leaders are refusing to act, wars ravage the earth, children die of hunger and neglect, our young people not seeing a future, are prey to suicide, injustice and human extortion are rife, to name only a few of the plagues that beset humankind. The whole onslaught of Covid19 has raised all these issues to new heightened states of awareness. And what is to be done? It all seems beyond us. We have forgotten the God who is bigger than us, wiser and more than capable of dealing with our present existence. We have forgotten the God whose love is far stronger than the combined hate in the world, the God whose merest thought can heal the planet before our eyes, the God whose aching heart can dispense purpose and meaning to every

lost young person, a God who is still creating this world and even now is saying to us “Behold, I make all things new” Rev. 21:5. We actually have nothing to fear, all we need to do is trust that He can reliably carry these days for which we were all born. We know we cannot do it.

However, that is easier said than done, so some of us need to carry the bag for others by our prayer, our turning to God, our belief in His love no matter how things look and like the Ten Boom family let that belief shape how we live. That is what we are about here at Jamberoo. Every morning we go to our Church in the dark and take the entire world with us. We take you with us. We consciously live our lives in the sight of God, with you. We believe that with God, there is most certainly a future of the very best kind. We invite you to take the same stand. There is no need to give way to despair, God knows this is all beyond us and He is carrying the bag. You need only do two things: consciously invite Him into your life every day and when you do, take a hurting part of this world with you. Then stand back and watch while God does the rest. He will not fail. He needs only to be invited.



Abbess Hilda osb



Cells Come in Many Different Forms

The worldwide necessity for social isolation is a challenge. The vast numbers of people who find it the cause of suffering have impelled me to explore the reality of isolation. I perceive that loneliness can be a time of desolation, whereas solitude can be filled with peace and tranquillity. Both can have their roots in isolation.

In 1939 Walter Cizek, an American Jesuit in Poland, was arrested in the Soviet invasion and sent to Russia. Falsely charged as a spy he spent 22 years in the Soviet Gulag, including the first five years of solitary confinement in the Lubyanka Prison. Fr Cizek expressed the deepest suffering in his interior battle against the unjust sentence: "This life is not as I thought it would be. You must forgive me, God, I want to go back." As his attitude changed with abandonment to Providence and the conviction that in every situation he was precisely where God wanted him to be, the sense of freedom and peace permeated his life. Thus, he learned to be supremely happy even in a prison cell.



The concept of a cell is traditionally familiar to followers of St Benedict and to a vast multitude of people as well. Editor-in-chief of Orbis Books USA, Robert Ellsberg*, in one of his many impressive Public Lectures said "Cells come in many different forms. In this particular time of social distancing, what can we learn from our own cell? For one thing, even enforced idleness can be a time of going deeper, of exploring new worlds, of being more attentive to the present moment, of entering into a spirit of compassion and solidarity with the wider world. Even the small space between our four walls contains many mansions. We can pray that our cells teach us lessons that will help us endure and return eventually to a world more precious and beautiful than we left it".



In the meantime, I take heart from the famous solitary, Julian of Norwich, "All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well."

*Robert Ellsberg is married with three children and converted to Catholicism after a time with Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker Movement. Any of his many books and presentations are well worth an investigation.

Sr Mary Claire osb

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We ask your prayers for the close relatives of our sisters who have died this year:

Sr Mechtild's mother	Barbara Crawford
Sr Mary Claire's sister	Betty Savage
Sr Mary Bernadette's father	Budi Sunarjo

Welcome into your kingdom all our departed sisters, the relatives, friends, oblates and benefactors of our community and all the dead whose names are known to you alone.

Sr Therese in Conversation with Sr Marie Grace

We are blessed to have four sisters in Formation. Three of them - Petra, Marie Joseph and Julian, are now Juniors for three years before making their Solemn Profession. Our Novice, Marie-Grace, was clothed in the monastic habit at her Clothing Ceremony a few months ago. These sisters are beginning their monastic life with deep faith, hope and trust as they journey with our community in a spirit of listening, love and generosity. We ask our friends and Oblates to support them with prayer as they continue to Seek God and follow the Rule of St Benedict with the Gospel as their guide. I would like to introduce you to our novice, Marie Grace.



Sr Therese (Novice Mistress) and Sr Marie Grace

Grace - you were born in Malaysia and spent most of your early life there. What led you to come coto live in Australia?

I was born in a small farming village in Malaysia and I have a sister and a brother. Both our parents were teachers. I was baptized when I was a month old, and brought up in a Catholic family and community. Since the age of 12, I wanted to study abroad. I have always been ambitious and sought opportunities which my small village could not offer. After obtaining my Bachelors degree in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and working several years in both Malaysia and Singapore, I received a sponsorship to do a Masters degree at the University of Sydney so then I came to Australia. Another sponsorship then allowed me to continue my studies here to complete a Ph.D.

And what happened then?

Following graduation, I worked for about 10 years in Sydney as a Research Fellow. I was very involved in my research projects, Legion of Mary and in my local parish. Through these I made many friends who became like family to me. I fell in love and then out of love. I enjoyed cooking and used to invite friends over for dinner whenever possible. Thank God, they loved to eat, just like me!

How and when did you first become aware that you may have a religious vocation?

God has always been a major part in my life. I remember praying that if He wanted me to follow religious life God had to claim me and to make it very clear to me. Although it was a sincere prayer, I remembered saying it very reluctantly. Over the years, I came in contact with sisters from 5 different religious orders and I thought this might have been God 'hinting' to me. However, I was quite disappointed to realize that none of these orders were for me. So, I then thought marriage must have

been my vocation and started dating. However, 7 years later God brought me into contact with the Abbey here at Jamberoo. This time, God made the invitation very clear. One thing led to another, and a year later I entered the Abbey.

How did you first hear about the Abbey?

My first encounter with Benedictines was a visit to New Norcia, in Western Australia - a male community. I heard about this community in Jamberoo through some friends. Three years later something in me said, it was about time I should check out this place. So, I searched on Google and then booked my first retreat at Jamberoo Abbey in June 2018.



When I came here for my retreat I had no plans or expectations. I just knew I had to come and be open to whatever happened though I was curious and wanted to find out about life here. I met Sr. Hilda (now Mother Abbess) for Spiritual Direction. Later on, I

came to the Abbey again, and stayed for 2 weeks as an Aspirant.

To choose to enter an enclosed community, in a country so far from your family and place of birth, is a huge decision. What helped you to finally decide to ask to enter the Abbey?

I don't know – somehow, I just knew. An affirmation for me was the peace and joy within after making the decision. I knew God had brought me here, and I wanted to be open to Him. There was no need to think or plan too much. I decided just to take one step at a time and follow the trail of 'breadcrumbs' God continued to leave for me. It was like making a decision to go on a journey for one year. Then make another decision at the end of the year. When that time came, it felt right for me to stay, so I requested to be accepted into the community. Now, staying in the Abbey becomes a constant decision that I make. I know I have the option to leave at any time during my novitiate formation if I decide to do so, and God will still love me and bless me regardless. I have my free will, and so far I have chosen to stay. Another thing that has helped me was the passage in the Bible about a man selling all that he had in order to buy the field that contains a treasure that he found. I see it as a 'gain' rather than a 'loss' and that has helped a lot.

You have many friends both here in Australia and overseas. How did your family, and your friends, feel about you choosing to be a Benedictine nun?

They did not fully understand why I would want to give up my good career - 'waste away' my years of education and take up this radical type of living in a foreign country. My family understood the vocation but they would prefer I had chosen an Order in Malaysia, or one that does not take the vow of Stability. They were generally supportive and most of them said: "As long as you are happy, that is all that matters". I am very grateful for such family and friends.

Was life at the Abbey what you had expected?

I came to the Abbey without many expectations, not consciously anyway. My early experience of the Abbey was that God is so near in this place. Life at the Abbey is certainly very different from what I was used to – and the type of food was one of the most pronounced differences. The Australian culture and ways of doing things also pose great challenges for me. Although I had worked with Australians, I had never actually lived with Australians before.

You have recently been clothed in the monastic habit and you are now a novice for two years. At your Clothing Ceremony you were given a new name. You asked for the name Marie Grace. What is special about this name for you?



Both Marie and Grace are names and titles of Our Lady. Grace signifies the story of my life and the graces that I have received, and my prayer is “My grace is sufficient for you” when I am faced with my own limitations.

What part has God played in your life?

My relationship with God grew over the years, from being mindful of Him only on Sundays, to daily, then more constantly. Prayer has always played an important role in my life and before entering the Abbey, I always wished that I could turn my mind towards God in prayer during all the hours of the day, but due to the demands of work and life this was not always possible. However, at the Abbey, my prayer through liturgy and reading has increased remarkably and the silence in the Abbey has helped me greatly with this. My relationship with God now becomes ‘alive’ through ‘practical’ ways in day to day living and through my sisters in the

community. God is the reason that I choose to stay in the Abbey, and it is a daily decision.

Your monastic day involves Prayer, Liturgy of the Hours, *Lectio Divina*, working in our Craft Department, studying and so on. What do you like to do in your free time?

I enjoy gardening, crochet, tatting & cooking. Lately I have started to watch the “Inspector Morse” series on DVDs.

The Covid Pandemic has had a huge impact on the lives of everyone. Has this affected you personally?

It has affected my parents, and that in turn affected me. I am aware that they are in a very vulnerable position in Malaysia. Both my sister and brother are far away from my parent’s home. We depend on my parents’ neighbours and close friends to help them. They have been extremely caring and helpful during this time. I am very touched by this.

You have chosen to live your life now following the Rule of St Benedict with the Gospel as your Guide. Is there a passage from the Rule of St Benedict that speaks strongly to you at this stage of your journey?

The verse “The concern must be whether you truly seek God” (RB 58:7) helps me to stay focused on the decisions I make, the things I do, and on becoming the person I choose to be. It would be pointless for me to abandon all I had left behind if I had come here to seek anything other than God.

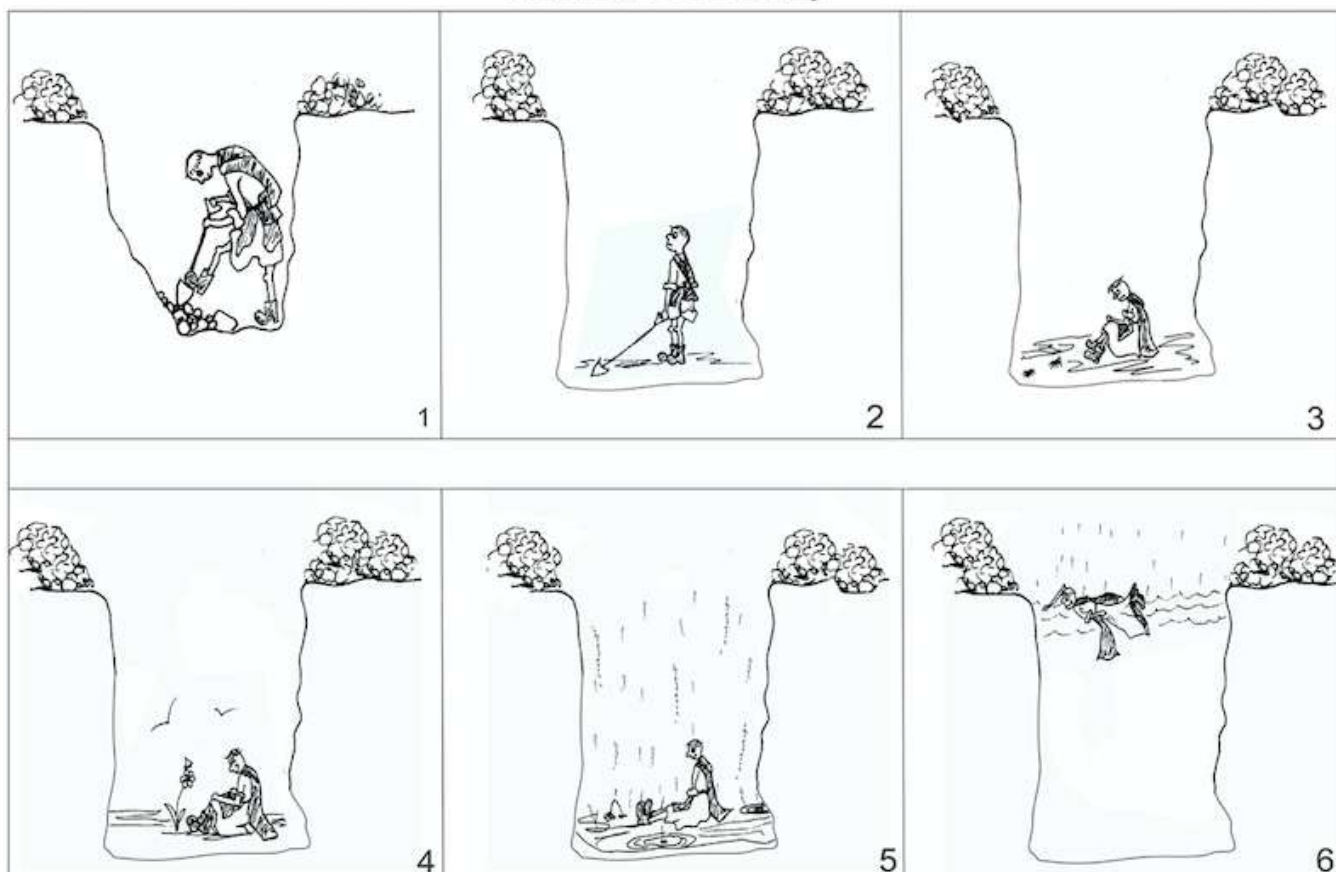
What is the most important thing you have learned so far on your monastic journey?

There are three: First, God knows what God is doing and God is in control whereas I am not. Second, the community represents the whole human race each time we pray, and this is a very powerful image for me. Third, I must first find myself, and then I can offer this ‘self’ to God.

What advice would you give to someone who is considering entering a monastic community like the one here at the Abbey?

I would repeat what Mother Hilda once told me: “There is nothing here, except Christ”. This has been very useful for me. I think that discernment of a religious vocation is like discernment of a marriage partner. You should aim to be authentic (and not pretend) during the ‘courtship’ and give it your very best.

A Monk's Journey



Sr Ancilla osb



A Special Thank You

Among the many blessings bestowed on us as a community is the friendship of Peter and Cecilia Larkin. They have been a part of our lives for many years and a prayer of gratitude always accompanies our hearts whenever we see or think of them.



Cecilia is especially gifted in flower arranging. In the Japanese style, Cecilia tells a story with her flowers and it is always a story of the life of God among us. The result of course is that our prayer is enhanced and given a beautiful backdrop. Cecilia would tell you that for her all things are an expression of love, because God Himself in all He does is the expression of love. That is the premise from which she graces us.

She is wonderfully joined by her ever-accommodating husband, Peter. It doesn't seem to matter what our need is, a renovated cupboard, a reinvented bookcase, a broken door, Peter with a gracious smile and ever ready willingness, simply does it. His kindness seems to know no bounds.

We asked Cecilia and Peter to write a piece for these pages and this is what Peter has to say:

We, Peter and Cecilia, garden at the abbey voluntarily one day a week. We find it both challenging and rewarding. Challenging when we look at the large areas and condition of some of the gardens or when the Abbess says "I have this good idea - can you do something with this garden area..." Rewarding because of the peaceful working environment, the encouragement, trust and support from the community – really being part of the community. Plus, the inspiration and satisfaction in doing the work and, at completion, seeing an unruly area turned back into a more manageable and peaceful garden area, able to provide both inspiration and enjoyment to all the community and visitors.



Tribute to Alwyn Fredericks:

There are a few surnames in the Jamberoo area that cause one to stop and say a confident “Yes”! One such surname is “Fredericks”. When our community moved in 1988, from Pennant Hills, west of Sydney, to a 245 hectare property on the Jamberoo Mountain Pass, it wasn’t long before Alwyn and Eric Fredericks of Fredericks General Store, were household names at the Abbey. They were Wardens in the Church of England, at that time, and welcomed us with a generous Christian spirit. They were, and remained, men of faith, honesty, courtesy and integrity. We know they passed the occasional kind word around Jamberoo about the nuns on the mountain.



Before we settled into the Abbey, 2 December 1989, Srs. Elizabeth and Hildegard had a meeting with Eric and Alwyn Fredericks, after shop hours, in the back of the General Store where, at that time, one could purchase everything from gum boots to a litre of milk, and as Eric once said, “especially vegemite!”

The sisters presented a sample of grocery purchases and prices we were used to in Sydney. After looking over this document, and pondering for a while, Eric said: “I think we can meet that.” Alwyn agreed. And so, our decision to shop locally was made possible. Alwyn and Eric Fredericks soon went the extra mile and delivered groceries to the abbey three times a week, combining the posting and collecting of our mail from the Jamberoo Post Office. Later, our pharmacy medicines were added to the list, coming from McInerney’s Pharmacy in Kiama, via the school bus, and delivered to Fredericks General Store. The retail business was

passed on to Eric and Alwyn by their father Ernest. Thus, their retail presence had been in Jamberoo since the 1920s.

Alwyn Fredericks married Merle King, who had emigrated with her family from the U.K. when she was 13. Alwyn and Merle had three children: Karen, Rhonda and Trevor Alwyn. Alwyn worked beside his brother Eric, for fifty years, in a spirit of stability and continuity, and within a building dating from the 1880s.

These were happy years for our community - the first 15-20 years in a new Abbey. However, the years passed and we saw the end of an era. Eric and Alwyn could no longer drive up and down the Mountain Pass. Alwyn’s son, Trevor Alwyn and Trevor’s wife, Carmel took over the business. An arson attack and a theft caused a number of sensible changes. While no one wants to see icons like Fredericks General Store change hands and name, sometimes there is no option. If you are driving through Jamberoo, you will see the IGA store. However, stop and feel the spirit. It is still there - almost a hundred years of one family’s history. Alwyn’s older brother Eric, pre-deceased him by six years.

For both Alwyn and Eric, we proclaim with St. John: “Now they can rest forever after their work, since their good deeds go with them.” (Revelation 14:13). We are grateful to have known you and forever in your debt.

Where does the little boat sail now?



Where does the little boat sail now?
Breathing in liminal space I stand numb just looking.
The soul of mother earth is pierced and all the elements rise up in chaotic energy.
The sun is holding court.
What say the stars that witness earth's harm?
Heart's beating drums have been heard and the council of eternity convenes.
What was has no bearing now.
Mask off our ego falls.
Breathing in liminal space I stand numb just looking.
A new born cries in a bubble of greening and earth's love enfolds.
Where does the little boat sail now?

Poem: Sr. Veronica 2020





ONLINE RETREATS

- *Leading Strings of Love – Living the Benedictine Promises in the world today*
January 3, for 40 days
Sr Antonia Curtis osb
- *The Versatile Charism – Hospitality*
January 16, for 4 weeks
Sr Magdalen Mather osb
- *Into a Strange Land – A Country Called Forgiveness*
Lenten Retreat: February 21
Sr Antonia Curtis osb
- *Remembering Holy Saturday*
Holy Week Retreat: March 28 - April 4
This retreat begins on Palm Sunday and ends on Easter Sunday
Rev Catherine Eaton – Anglican Priest and Oblate of Jamberoo Abbey
<https://www.jamberooabbey.org.au/retreats/online-retreats/>

Other Online Retreats coming soon

- *Through a Glass Darkly – The Psalms*
Sr Antonia Curtis osb and Sr Mary Bernadette osb
- *Meet Me in the Middle*
Sr Antonia Curtis
- *Pilgrimage through the Abbey Rainforest*
Sr Mechtild Crawford osb
- *Desert Wisdom for Daily Living – a Retreat with the Desert Mothers and Fathers*
Sr Magdalen Mather osb

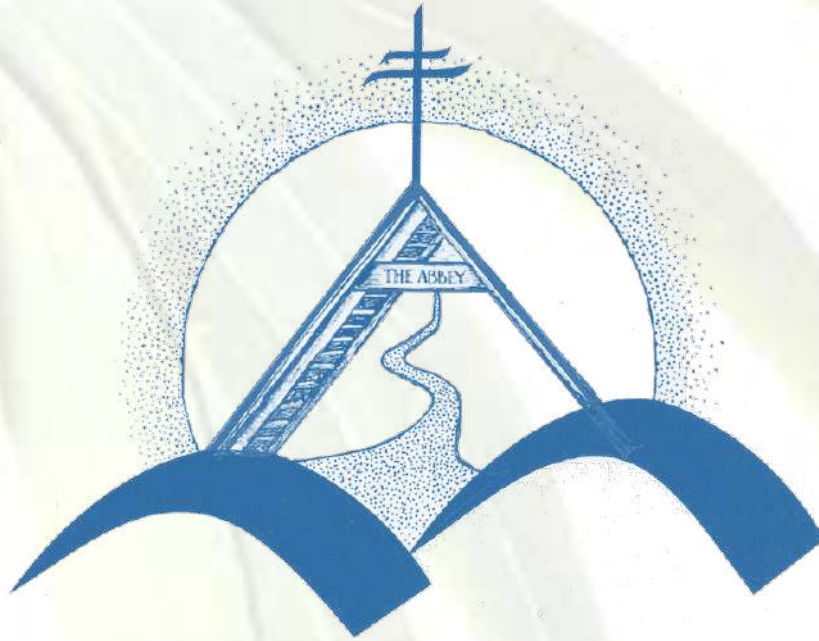
When you register for an online retreat you do not have to finish it during the time it is being uploaded. All the talks will be available, on the website, so you can work at your own pace.

NEW CANDLE DESIGNS

- Wheat & Grapes – hand carved using wax.
 - Crosses – hand carved using wax
 - Paschal Candle 2021
- To see these designs, visit our online shop: <https://www.jamberooabbey.org.au/shop/candles/>

OTHER NEWS

- The Retreat Cottages are opening gradually.
- Books and Gifts will be online in the near future.
- The Abbey Shop remains closed.



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