



Photo - Anne Bonnefin - Nozawa Onsen

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

God is greater than all your doubts

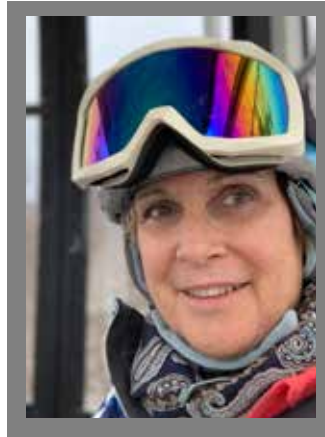
“Walk to the red line and wait.” he said “I’ll be right next to you.”

I followed the instructor and suddenly felt my body jolt as the chair lift scooped us up and carried us across the snow. With my stocks in my left hand and instructions about how to push myself off, this certainly was one of the more challenging lessons I had had the past few days. I’d only had two ski lessons but if my instructor thought I was ready for this challenge then I would trust that he’d summed up my skill level correctly. Anyway it was the last chance I would have to ski down the mountain this holiday.

Truth be told everyone back in Australia was quite bemused when I told them I was going skiing in Japan. “Have you skied before?” was their response. My mumbles about a week skiing in Austria when I was twelve was usually met with a knowing silence.

And then there was my fellow traveler Lisa Hoelzl. A fantastic skier. She learnt to ski in Austria as a child from her father. On the slopes people admire her natural grace and movement. You can tell she was taught by an Austrian. I knew I could not match her skill level... but maybe I could stand up with skis on, maybe I could manage a slight slope, learn to stop and maybe I could even come home without a broken bone!I didn’t really have many expectations. But hopes... I had lots of them. I hoped my ski boots would be comfortable, I hoped I’d be warm, I hoped to be able to learn how put skis on, I hoped my knees would hold up, I hoped the fitness training I had done in Australia coupled with the Liza Hoelzl’s ‘boot camp Tokyo’ (which involved lots of steps) would mean I had a fighting chance to learn to ski. I dived right in!

On the beginner slopes there was a small hill to practice on. Here I practiced stopping (snow plough), turning, keeping upright and how to get up if I fell over. I practiced this a lot. To ski you have to remember to lean



forward, to stay present, pay attention and most importantly keep your eyes on where you are going. I couldn’t but think it is a little like the challenge of a new year. Like a new year every attempt at skiing has new obstacles and you have to adapt as best you know how. Like life... you learn by your mistakes and the little hiccups along the way... you learn to lean into your goals, stay present and keep your eyes on the horizon. Most importantly in skiing and in life you have

to learn to let go of your fears.

In this edition President Stephen Veazey's article asks us what it means to be faithful to God's call and invites us to plunge deep into discernment about re-thinking the church.

Katie Harmon McLaughlin asks us to focus and align our life with Christ.

Ben Smith and Alice Granleese write about what it means to face our vulnerability. Ben challenges us to 'move forward in the light of our divine calling' and Alice shares about setting intentions and tips for plunging into the New Year....

...Perhaps the most amazing things about skiing in Japan is that you get to spend days up a pristine snow covered mountain, breathing in fresh air, taking in the spectacular landscape and sharing it with people from all around the world. It is awe inspiring!

What does it mean for you to plunge into the New Year? Perhaps it means to listen to that still small voice calling you onward, perhaps it means acknowledging your doubts, finding renewed strength in community and God, counting your blessings and then plunging in. May God whisper in your ear - I’m greater than all your doubts. May your year be filled with moments of Awe!

Warmly

Anne Bonnefin

Editorial Team