

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Where the flowers grow

I've always been intrigued by life. Where was I before I was born? Where will I be after? There will never be a scientifically definitive answer to this, which is perhaps why I love the question as it draws me into a deep sense of spirit and wonder. Our sacred texts describe these times in numerous ways, and I love how Kahlil Gibran puts this paradox in *The Prophet* "The owl whose night-bound eyes are blind unto the day cannot unveil the mystery of light." We may well never understand it, but in my experience pondering and working through difficult moments around these book ends of 'life', they are worth delving into because in doing so we grow in our understanding of spirituality and in the fullness of life. In the mystery, we connect with God.



Anne Bonnefin explores the challenges of losing her husband, Peter, and the path it took her on in discovering the power of listening and seeing where love shows its healing embrace. Anne then shares a practice for being an intentional listener, for sometimes we need reminding and practise at this.

Helen McIlroy from Bendigo reflects on a raw and challenging time where her testimony prompts me to explore those times where I may have masked feelings in order to feel more 'comfortable'.

David Abbott shares his testimony about his volunteer work with the National Association for Loss and Grief, a powerful reminder of how being in community can assist us in these times in our lives. Kari Sutton provides several positive steps in helping children deal with grief and loss, John Rawson reveals his reflections on a song many of us know, and how there is healing in servant ministry. Finally, Wendy Ballard shares some of the aspects of grief and loss in her life, particularly losing her son, Luke.

This may well be, at least in my time, one of the most powerful and emotional editions of the Australia Herald. It highlights for me the blessings of community, and how much we can assist our neighbours going through loss or struggle by offering a listening ear and a compassionate heart. In addition, this Herald is 100% Australian content. A first in this era, and a celebration of the tremendous talent we have in this nation. I entrust it to you, our community; may you share it widely so that others may see the light they are to our sometimes night-bound eyes.

If you or someone you know is troubled by similar kinds of things to those described in this edition of the Australian Herald, you can call Lifeline on 13 11 14 or Beyond Blue on 1300 22 46 36. If things rise to the surface that you'd like to talk with someone about, any of our priesthood members are able to be a listening ear and journey with you.

May you continue to find the flowers wherever they grow is my prayer.

Ben Smith

Editorial Team Member

A BLESSING FOR TRAVELING IN THE DARK

Go slow
if you can.
Slower.
More slowly still.
Friendly dark
or fearsome,
this is no place
to break your neck
by rushing,
by running,
by crashing into
what you cannot see.

Then again,
it is true:
different darks
have different tasks,
and if you
have arrived here unawares,
if you have come
in peril
or in pain,
this might be no place
you should dawdle.

I do not know
what these shadows
ask of you,
what they might hold
that means you good
or ill.
It is not for me
to reckon
whether you should linger
or you should leave.

But this is what
I can ask for you:

That in the darkness
there be a blessing.
That in the shadows
there be a welcome.
That in the night
you be encompassed
by the Love that knows
your name.

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