

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Image of God

On her way to join a panel discussion at Parliament house for International Womens Day she was dressed in a pointed red hat covered with colourful embroidery. She had carefully chosen it to match her outfit of the day that was mostly red and she completed her ensemble with spotted red and white long socks and red shoes. Her hair was carefully braided in perfect long grey plaits reaching almost down to her waistline. At the very least she would stand out! She posed smiling for us in the door way long enough for us to snap her photo. I thought she looked fabulous! You could tell she was a survivor. You could tell her wisdom had come from a deep understanding of disappointments and that her joyous exuberance for life was a conscious choice that she made daily - to be AWAKE to her truest self, to make a difference and live her convictions OUT LOUD.



On the wall of a convent in Florence there is a strange fresco. Painted C1400 it depicts Christ. He is blindfolded and sits silently on a throne holding an orb and a sceptre yet around his head are hands and faces slapping him and spitting on him. Mary his mother and Saint Dominic sit at his feet - they both are deep in thought and don't offer him any help or sympathy. It is a disturbing scene. It shouts of despair and of the hopeless situation of Christ in the days before the crucifixion.

This edition of our Australia Herald rather than leave us in the despair of Good Friday with all its pain and suffering takes us on a journey through Christ's suffering, our own adversities and the despair of others to a place where we vision Christ in our midst. In seemingly contradictory circumstances Christ's death summons us to hang on to hope and to seek the things around us that awaken us to "breath and live in the Spirit we seek". Seeking not to brush over adversity or to forget it but to transform it we consider what it looks like to liberate the Living God in our own lives for the sake of the Kingdom.

Katie Harmon-McLaughlin shows us a scene of the disciples gathered after the death of Christ and asks us to recognise the radical hope of Christ risen in our midst whatever the circumstances. She asks; "Are you driven by fear or drawn by the energy of the Holy Spirit?"

How we reflect the Living God and live out God's just and compassionate purposes is the theme in Robyn Luffman and David Anderson's article. They invite us to take a look at our own implicit bias and how we mistreat others because of difference. They provoke us further by calling us to "repudiate theological, economic, political, and social distortions that demonize and demean". Their sentiments are also mirrored in the challenge by Ben Smith, Australia Mission President, on page 6. "Our call as a people of faith is to uphold the

worth of all persons. Occasionally, in our culture, that means standing up against a structural norm which seeks to dis-empower people from using their God-given voice. It means we must, as disciples, speak out for positive change..."

John Taylor also takes us to the scene of the disciples and the death of Christ and we contemplate how radical the image of Jesus as both Lord and Christ was to the Jews and Romans of this era. Taylor reminds us of Christ's overarching messages of forgiveness and affirmation of the worth of all life.

In "Child of the Future" by Harry Fielding we are reminded to embrace our spiritual essence that is a manifestation of the Divine and to recognise our connectedness and interdependence.

In "Easter Blessing" by John O'Donoghue we are prompted to search for the light of Easter in our hearts and consider the little kindnesses that make a difference in another's life.

Tony Chvala-Smith in "Love more than Rules" reminds us of the importance of love and that living in companionship with Christ is all about increasing in spiritual freedom more than living by rules.

I hope as you read these pages you may sense an overflowing of Christ's love for you and that through the disappointment and uncertainty of our times may this love spill over to a world in need of God's love and justice. May you show up with the brightest expression of yourself; faithful, joyous, loving and awakened to your truest identity. May your life reflect Imago Dei OUT LOUD.

Anne Bonnefin

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