As I write in Melbourne, we are in the middle of Stage 4 Covid19 lockdown, with four reasons to go out, including a maximum of one hour’s outside exercise daily, (within 5km of home), no visiting and no visitors, face coverings on once outside the front door, and no hugs.

I had planned to reflect on celebrating Easter in springtime. This year we were not able to celebrate communally at all at Easter time, nor can we still, when we are now actually in Spring, here, this year.

CEN invites us into the true reality of being together although apart. It is not just shared circumstances of apartness. In the power of prayerful one-ness we come together with intent, beautifully focused within the Heart of our Beloved. It is the perfect antidote to the virus which is causing so much havoc and heartbreak throughout the whole world and amongst all people, especially those most disadvantaged (as usual). May our CEN prayer together be an instrument of healing and wholeness.
What is happening???

Covid-winter externals subvert normality;
  • focus on numbers, logistics, isolation,
  • banish cherished commitments and routines.

Fearful selfishness breaks rules: spreads virus and disharmony.

No vaccine – immanent foreboding - ancient prayers suddenly urgent.

Succumbing to fear’s wiles, (“I am with you always” - how I forget!)

Easter snatched away, cruelly, profoundly.

Social isolation (“We’re all in this together” Really??) meant:
  • no rejoicing in baptism, new life, new fire, new believers;
  • no welcome into the gathered Community of the Beloved;
  • no celebration of death and resurrection of Jesus the Christ;
  • no celebration of outpoured Spirit;
  • only alone. Darkness covers the face of the Earth. (How long, O Beloved!)

Distanced - Family, Community, Worship.
“Alone we are together.” (Un-really!)

Difficulty magnifies. Taken-for-granted, small errands impossible.

Public Transport operating, but not safe, and all the shops shut.
  • (What new socks?? Darn the old ones some more).

WHAT IS REALLY HAPPENING!!!

Lockdown grudgingly permits precious daily exercise.
An hour’s walk, gratefully, by the beach - vista across the Bay,
  • still reflections, choppy whitecaps, high-tide, low-tide,
  • seaweed, sandbars, clear or cloudy skies; blessed extravagant variety.
  • Intimations of Spring en-route: buds, blossom, daffodils, bees, camellias, wattle, magnificent abundance… Wait … Not yet. (But there is hope.)

Universal Community Sunday liturgy prepared and shared.

Human ingenuity blesses the four corners of the globe.

Simultaneous rejoicing, entreaty, thanksgiving, praise; union, communion.

So, also, quiet, con-joined hearts and minds,
  • persistent, faithful, afternoon prayer,
  • brings for healing into Beloved’s Heart-gathered love
  • our dear, darkened, disfigured Earth.
We may not have been able to celebrate Easter this year in ways we know and love, but we can quietly reflect on the truths enshrined in that central liturgy of the Christian churches.

- **What is being birthed in us from hidden, darkened depths?**
- **What new perspectives are we gaining from our experience?**

The “**Creed and Covenant**,” which follows, I first encountered in an “Easter in Spring” retreat in 2015. It is offered for CEN’s reflection with the permission and blessing of the author.

**OUR BAPTISMAL CREED**

We believe in God - Creator and Source whose breath sustains all living things, whose eye fills the universe, whose heart holds all time and seasons.  
We believe in Jesus the Christ  
the compassion of God, the fulfillment of love, whose dying and rising lives in us.  
We believe in One Spirit of Holiness  
wellspring of wisdom, fount of inspiration and awe, source of our oneness.

**COVENANT OF A LIVING JERU-SHALOM**

And So - We Embrace a Life of Holding in Love,  
false and empty promises,  
selfish ways and fearful living,  
paralyzing doubt and despair,  
grasping need and wanting mind  
restless worry, boredom and cynicism  
violent anger and treachery  
envy, jealousy and betrayal  
seduction and manipulation  
force and domination  
powerlessness and power  
dualism in thought and emotion  
the illusion of golden yesterdays  
and of golden tomorrows,  
and the lure of evil.

And So We Will Live,  
in the presence of forgiveness  
in the presence of healing  
in God’s gracious love
in poverty of spirit
in mourning our losses
in vulnerability
in hunger and thirst for The Christ’s will
in completeness of heart

And So We Will Live,
in the midst of duality seeing oneness
   in mercy
   in gratitude
   in trust
secure in The Promise
knowing we are forgiven
offering forgiveness
making shalom
extending healing
in charity
in hospitality to the stranger
in selfless service
   in joy
as Pilgrims – on the way - never Arriving
ever bending toward Harmony
ever living as Jeru-Shalom

So We Will Live
As Jeru-Shalom,
Where All are God’s Beloved

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Anne Hubbard – September 2020