

There is an appointed time:

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Several weeks ago, a planned trip to Western Australia happened. Landing on the coastline of the Indian Ocean in a beautiful place called *Safety Bay* was the setting for an experience that has tapped deeply into my soul and sent shivers through every part of my being and continues to reverberate. Mahatma Gandhi once said: *There is a force in the Universe, which, if we permit it, will flow through us and produce miraculous results.* Oh, how true is this! The days of retreat in this place grew that force, not only in myself, but within all who were present over those days.

It all began when God finally had me in a **safe space (Safety Bay!)** in order to speak into my pain of "letting go". I might add, the volume of said voice was not delicate, but one of profound strength that touched my hidden being! It began with Ecclesiastes 3: 1-11. Indeed, there is a time for every single thing under heaven. The verse most striking was the last one, v 11: *God 'has made everything appropriate to its time, and has put the timeless into their hearts, without their ever discovering, from beginning to end, the work which God has done.'* Somewhere within us God has placed something "timeless" which is not of our human making. Could this be the force that is within the Universe that has miraculous capacity? Pondering this sense of God's timelessness, hope began to develop, and waves of softness started weaving their way into the fabric of myself.

Allowing this hopeful softness to settle, it shone a light upon Luke 9: 18-22 and the question "*But who do YOU say I am?*" (v 20). Strangely I have often avoided looking Jesus in the face and answering this question. Somehow it always appeared of no consequence, weak or non-committal. This day a power was behind the words as I loudly proclaimed, *'You are the glue that has stuck to me over all these years, pulled me through thick and thin, and now I know, you will not leave me abandoned to my feelings of grief and loss. You are the One who will continue to take me through these events – the journey of the cross, through the death of earthly things to the promise of resurrection – the promise of new life that You know is waiting.'* The power of these words sent 'shockwaves' over me. Somehow these words tumbled out like great chunks of rock making landfall on unclaimed, unfamiliar territory.

It does seem that "now is the time to cast away any excessive pride, arrogance, anger, false accusation, deception, and anything sinful, ugly or ungodly... when I change my mind, I can

change my life.”¹ May we learn the wisdom of living with our feet on earth and our hearts in heaven!²

Our time on this earth is gift, and is a limited resource, inviting us to give it our best shot. Yet, God has “put the timeless into our hearts” Ecces 3:11. *There is an appointed time for everything.* It seems that it really does matter to God how we spend our time on earth and somehow the choices we make help to carry out God’s plan for our world. There truly is a power in the universe that flows through us if we allow it, to make God’s design a reality. This was displayed to us during those retreat days as we witnessed birthing happening in the beautiful and gracious fertility of nature as we followed the baby doves and



honeyeaters. They shared their vulnerable newness with us, and we acknowledged within ourselves those spaces of newness coming to birth. The delightful creativeness of nature was calling us to truly SEE and KNOW that God was surrounding us and wrapping us in God-ness. We discovered that when we made changes within ourselves the world around us indeed changed in its appearance. This was a

lived reality for me as I walked those days at Safety Bay and what followed the next week. The words of Mahatma Ghandi in his October 1931 speech in London’s Kingsley Hall are very true: *“There is an indefinable mysterious power that pervades everything, I feel it though I do not see it. It is this unseen power which makes itself felt and yet defies all proof, because it is so unlike all that I perceive through my senses. It transcends the senses.”*³

I too, **felt that power**, but **could not see it** over those days of retreat. Each afternoon as we sat together between 4 – 5 pm in silent contemplation, in harmony with other CEN members, that power was evident and tangible. Something was happening between us, among us, and within us that was able to bring freshness, peacefulness and healing a little closer and more real. It truly was as if the entire universe was present to us at this time. It felt like all people in the entire world were here, in the great mix and match of the Cosmic Universal Love. It was as if **God -The Beautiful** broke through and showed a face of magnificence and splendour. In the words of John O’Donoghue *“with swift, sheer grace, it is like a divine breath that blows the heart open. Immune to our strategies, it can take us where we least expect...and surprise us.”*⁴ That, indeed is my experience. My heart has been blown open by that *swift, sheer grace*, and I am being taken to surprising places. My breath is caught in the Divine breath inviting a deeper openness and willingness to travel the road

¹ Fr James McKarns; *Living Faith: Daily Catholic Devotions* Vol 40 No 2.

² *The Word Among Us: Daily Meditations for Catholics* September 2024 p 48, WAU.ORG

³ <https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/mahatma-gandhis-famous-speech-at-kingsley-hall-in-1931-565204>

⁴ © 2003 John O’Donoghue, *Divine Beauty: The Invisible Embrace*, Bantam Press London, p 7

to Jerusalem with a *hope-filled heart*; embrace the cross *with compassion, peace and presence*; to traverse joyfully the way of resurrection and into new life. Truly the desire is to live more fully with eyes open and alert to the Beautiful, with feet firmly planted on this earth and heart and soul in heaven.

