



# NEWSLETTER

*Australian Community of Aidan & Hilda - Winter 2025*



# Welcome

BY EDITOR

For many, winter is the least favourite time of the year. Common colds and influenza. People spent cold or rainy days indoors. Australians, particularly baby boomers in southern Australia, often escape to Queensland's warmer, sunnier climate. My son's partner really wants to be in Queensland right now. She was lying in a hammock, basking in the sun on a beach of golden sand.

This is my favourite time of the year. Quieter surroundings bring inner calm. In the cold and darkness, there's a special opportunity to connect with God and find His presence. An additional blessing? I don't have to water the plants outside as much because of the extra rain.

For people who dislike winter. Grumbling about the cold and sore muscles, they head home to warm up. Consulting Scripture, specifically Psalm 147:15-18, doesn't help them either; the passage reads, "He sends His command to the earth; His word runs very swiftly. He showers snow like wool; He scatters the frost like ashes. He hurls His ice as fragments; Who can stand before His cold? He sends His word and makes them melt; He makes His wind blow, and the waters flow.' Now they are feeling even worse, although they are looking forward to the day when God says, "He makes them melt".

They also don't want to hear the church preacher tell them to open their Bibles to 1 Thessalonians 5:18. At this moment, a twitch appears in their left eye, their fists clench, and their mind screams, "What am I doing here? I braved the freezing cold to attend church, leaving the warmth of my fireplace. My arthritis is killing me. And to top it off, having to sit through a sermon on, 'in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus.' Well, I'm not having it! And no, I'm not shaking his hand when I leave the church today."

Oh, to have the ongoing power to spiritually understand the congregation's thoughts during a cold winter's sermon!

My favourite winter activity is getting cozy under warm blankets in bed at night. Blissful sleep! Until about 3am in the morning to get out and have to go to the loo. I wish I could have the toilet closer to the bed! No way God wants me to thank Him for the freezing loo walk, right? I gotta talk to someone about this serious theological stuff!



Kevin Hy Melbourne

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Prayer by Jon Anders Wilkin

# Prayer - Part Three

BY BRUCE CHALLONER

FROM HIS BOOK, 'LOVING GOD MORE' CHAPTER 5

## Lord's Prayer

What chapter on prayer would be complete if it missed the Lord's Prayer? How often have we said this prayer while attending church or in our own personal prayer life? But how many are understanding the spiritual significance behind the words? Where did Jesus get this prayer from? Was it something He made up on the

spot? Or is there something else happening that we may not be aware of?

The first hint is the Lord's Prayer itself found in Matthew (6:9–13) and Luke (11:2–4). Modern scholars believe the prayer came out of a Hebrew tradition (it has parallels with the Kaddish – a hymn of praise and common prayer said in the synagogue), as it contains

Jewish elements, including praise, petition and desire for the coming of the kingdom of God. Some believe it has eschatology leanings and may be a prayer looking towards eternity. It was common to see it used before the Eucharist (Last Supper) down through the centuries. The prayer suggests an intimacy with God and has spiritual overtones, "our daily bread" (bread of life) with a daily life in Christ. The Lord's Prayer is a taste of the mystery and spiritual aspects of prayer in the New Testament.

As Abba Poemen (c.340–450) said about the difference from living in a cell and making

progress in a cell. "Living in your cell simply means manual labour, eating once a day, keeping silent, and meditating. Making progress in your cell ... means, should you have a moment without something to do, fill it with concentrated prayer."<sup>1</sup>

Two books for further research on this topic, from different perspectives but still ancient church history, are, *On Earth as in Heaven: The Lord's Prayer from Jewish Prayer to Christian Ritual* by David Clark. The other is, *The Lord's Prayer in the Early Church: The Pearl of Great Price* by Roy Hammerling.

### **The Heart Of Prayer**

When we look back on the ancient Greek teachers such as Plato, we discover he influenced early Christian writers such as Origen (184–253). Plato taught, with prayer, that it was more than only an activity of the mind and intellect. The Old Testament tradition, carried through into the New Testament, suggested much more. This tradition made prayer a function of all inner parts of man, heart, soul and might (including the Greek influence found in the New Testament of mind as well). The entire part of man.

In early writings the reader will find terms such as purity of prayer and purity of heart. Keep this in mind as the chapter unfolds. Remember, for the early Christian, 'heart' had the Hebrew influence over the Greek understanding.

*Conference 10 articulates a spirituality at once mystical and practical. Cassian had inherited from Evagrius the view that "pure prayer" is unceasing, imageless, and wordless. Evagrius never says precisely how, practically speaking, such prayer might be done, but Cassian (in the voice of Abba Isaac) does.*<sup>2</sup>

In prayer, the first principle the monks learnt was they were not there to pray to God but to listen to God. Although prayer was communication with God, it was definitely God doing most of the talking, not us. Have you ever been talked over by another person with them not listening to what you were saying? The adoration (loving God more) aspect of prayer was critical for the monks (1 Thessalonians 5:16–18). Not that petition prayers didn't happen, because they did. The priority in prayer was listening. Many Christians have great difficulty in sitting in silence and learning to listen to God. There are many questions the reader may ask, like: what does God's voice sound like? How do I know it is God's voice and not someone else? Is His voice audible as I have never heard Him 'talking' to me? I'm sure there are other questions similar to this. For me, sometimes it is an audible voice, but not always. We are all different, and therefore God will communicate differently. Keep in perspective that communication with God is not like having a conversation with other person. Communication with God is Him knowing your every thought and what you are going to say

beforehand (Matthew 6:8). This appears as a one-sided relationship. How many reading this are thinking, "Why bother praying. He already knows everything before we ask"? This is the normal response of those thinking with their mind but not their 'heart.' We have established that prayer is not us talking, but listening. Not listening with the mind, but listening with the heart. The response by some here is, "Why bother teaching us the Lord's Prayer, or the Jesus Prayer, or any other prayer?" Let me answer by asking two questions. When you are really deeply in love with a person, and you are in their presence, do words expressing your love appear difficult to express because your love is much more than words can say? And when away from them, does the aching of your heart have no words that can explain their depth meaningfully?

The greatest desire of God is for His children to have deep intimacy with Him.

For monks, God was their centre and their love. Their all! In all that they did, God was the focus. Every breath, thought, emotion, action of love, was God centred. Prayer was no different.

Want to improve your prayer life? Put off more of 'self' and love God more. Allow your 'heart' (Hebrew context) to focus on God and nothing else. This is a critical understanding to remember when you read the section on 'Pray Without Ceasing,' later on.

Both Evagrius and Cassian said the same thing about prayer. Perfect purity and contemplation are graces and gifts of the Lord. This has not changed within monastic living today.

Christopher Hall amplifies this in his book, *Worshipping With The Church Fathers*:

*In Evagrius's understanding, "prayer is not just an activity of mind; it is a state of mind, a katastasis. That means that prayer is not so much something one does as something one is ... prayer is not ekstasis, not leaving oneself; it is a katastasis, a coming to one's true state." In a manner of speaking, we are wired by God for prayer. The ability to pray is part of our spiritual DNA. When we are in this state of prayer, attained by good coaching and consistent practice, we have found our heart's true home, at least from the perspective of Evagrius, Abba Isaac and Cassian.<sup>3</sup>*

1. Bangley, Bernard, ed. *By Way of the Desert: 365 Daily Readings*. Brewster, Mass: Paraclete Press, 2007. Page 96

2. Harmless, William. *Desert Christians: An Introduction to the Literature of Early Monasticism*. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2004. Page 393

3. Hall, Christopher A. *Worshipping with the Church Fathers*. Downers Grove, Ill: IVP Academic, 2009. Page 127

## Sayings on Prayer

"Whether we realize it or not, prayer is the encounter of God's thirst with ours. God thirsts that we may thirst for him."  
- St. Augustine

"Any concern too small to be turned into prayer is too small to be made into a burden."  
- Corrie Ten Boom

"Work as if everything depends on you. Pray as if everything depends on God."  
- St. Ignatius Loyola

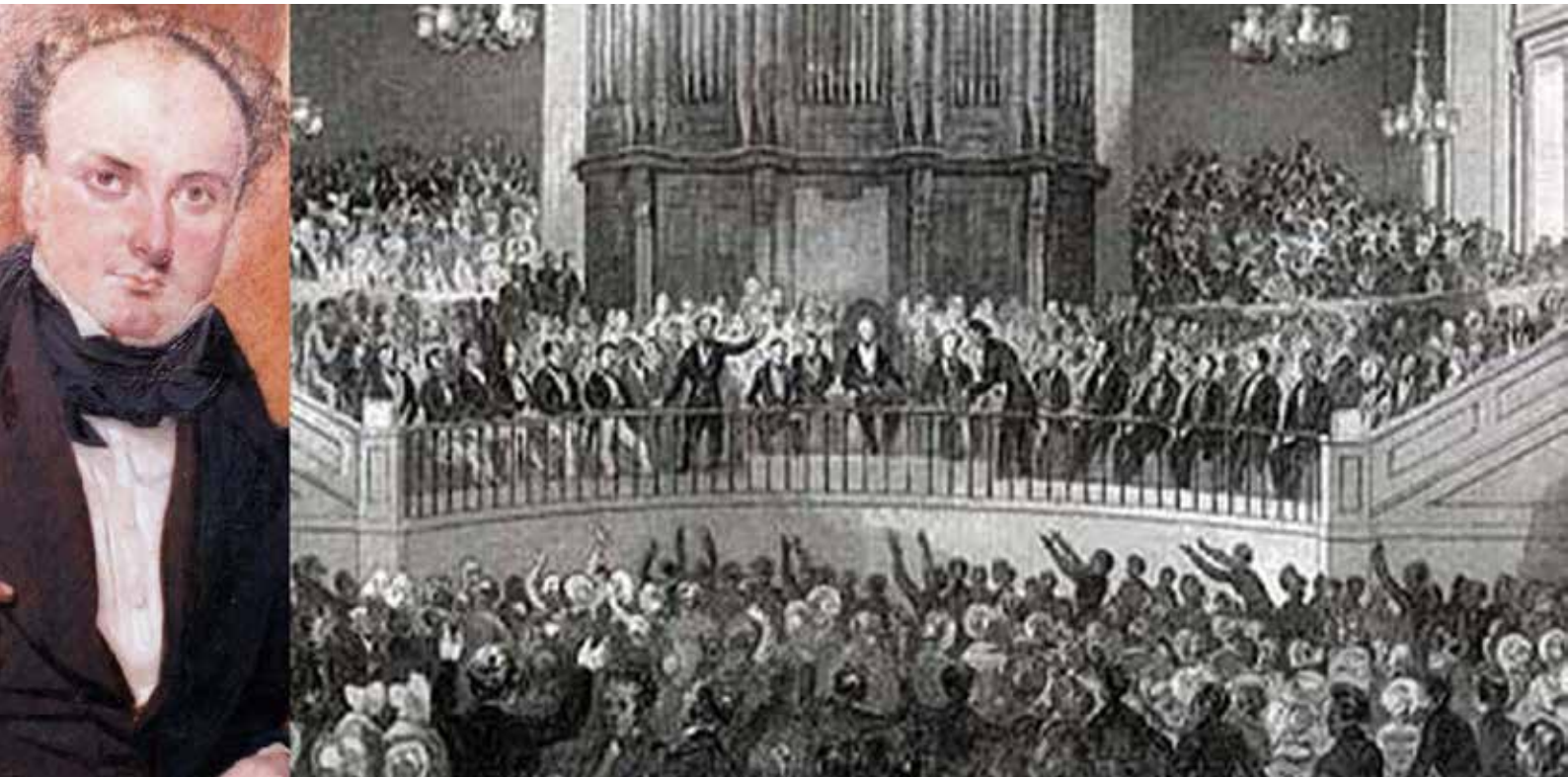
"A beginner must look on himself as one setting out to make a garden for his Lord's pleasure, on most unfruitful soil which abounds in weeds. His majesty roots up the weeds and will put in good plants instead. Let us reckon that this is already done when the soul decides to practice prayer and has begun to do so."  
- Saint Teresa of Avila

Christ's last act was winning a soul.  
His last command was to win a soul.  
His last prayer was forgiveness to a soul.  
- Unknown

When you pray, rather let your heart  
be without words, than your words  
be without your heart.  
- John Bunyan

Converting our unceasing thinking into unceasing prayer moves us from a self-centered monologue to a God-centered dialogue.  
- Henri Nouwen





# Dissenters - South Australia

BY EDITOR

In 1834, the British Parliament passed the South Australia Colonisation Act, allowing free colonists into South Australia with no convicts.

Historical records show many of the early settlers in South Australia were religious dissenters, particularly from Nonconformist churches like the Congregationalists, Baptists, Methodists and Quakers. Dissenters refer to individuals or groups who opposed the established norms or authority in South Australia, particularly during its early settlement.

In 1828, and again in 1829-30, Charles Sturt made

expeditions to South Australia to open it up for settlement. He reported back to England, predicting that the state's settlers would one day populate the heart of the continent with a missionary zeal.

## The South Australia Company

The South Australian Company was formed in London on 9th October 1835, to encourage the further purchase of land. On 27 June 1836, the Deed of Settlement was signed by about 300 shareholders of the South Australian Company.

The South Australian

Association (1833-1834) (which ended up becoming *The South Australia Company*) had lobbied the British Government for years to set up a new colony in southern Australia. The members of the Association were men of varied backgrounds, from philanthropists to merchants, including Edward Gibbon Wakefield, Robert Gouger, Robert Torrens Sr and George Fife Angas..

## Robert Torrens, Robert Gouger and George Fife Angas

The dissenters were passionate men of God. Robert Torrens became the first Chairman of

the Colonisation Commission for South Australia in May 1835. He helped to establish the colony. In a speech to the House of Commons in 1827, he set the groundwork by saying he believed he was called by God, not only to colonise South Australia but also to bring the gospel to the southern continent.

Colonial Secretary of the South Australia Company was Robert Gouger. When he set up the first meeting in Exeter Hall, London, for free settlement in South Australia, 2,500 people showed up. He was a devout evangelist.

George Fife Angus was a member of the Board of Directors of the South Australia Company. He also felt called by God to establish a Christian state. He stated,

*"My great object was, in the first instance, to provide a place of refuge for pious Dissenters of Great Britain, who could in their new home discharge their consciences before God in civil and religious duties without any disabilities. And that South Australia will become the headquarters for the diffusion of Christianity in the Southern Hemisphere."*

The South Australia Colony attracted Christians from all religious denominations. It was the first colony in the British Empire not to be aligned with the Church of England. Even German Lutherans, persecuted in Prussia, found freedom to worship in South Australia.



## The Wisdom Gift

BY EDITOR

Proverbs 4:7-8 The beginning of wisdom is this: get wisdom, and whatever else you get, get inside. Praise her highly, and she will exalt you; she will honour you if you embrace her.

Diadochos of Photiki (400-486) was a fifth-century Christian ascetic whose works are included in the Philokalia.

He said, "All gifts of God are beautiful beyond description and are the source of all our righteousness. The one that can inflame our souls and motivate us to love goodness itself is the gift of divine understanding. This is the starting point for all of God's

wonderful gifts to the soul. It severs our relationship with obsessive desire for corruptible things, and opens the way to increasing love for the riches of divine comprehension. Once we receive it, we burn with an uplifting flame and join the celebration of Angels."

How often do we appreciate a gift? Especially a gift as profound as wisdom. The Holy Spirit! We rarely comprehend what is inside of us. Diadochos appreciated any gift from God as "beyond description." God doesn't want to stop at one gift. He wants to give more. How appreciative is your heart to gifts from God?



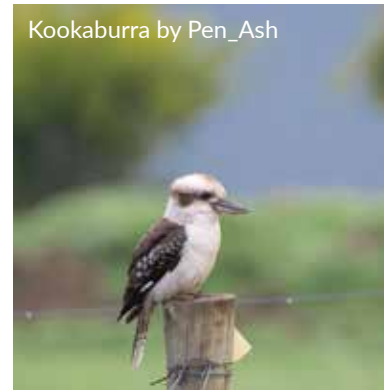
### 4th Century Prayer for Right Blessing

Lord our God, teach us to ask You for the right blessings. Steer the vessel of our life towards Yourself, the tranquil haven of all storm-tossed souls. Show us the course we should go. Renew a willing spirit within us. Let your Spirit curb our wayward senses and guide and empower us to our true good, to keep Your laws, and in all we do rejoice in your glorious, joyful presence. *Basil*



### 4th Century Prayer for All People

Remember, Lord, this city where we dwell and every other city and country, and all the faithful who dwell in them. Remember, Lord, all who travel by land or water. Remember them and give them health and safety. Grant Your mercy and loving-kindness to us all, and grant that we may praise and glorify Your great and glorious name with one mouth and one heart. Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen. *Chrysostom*



### 4th Century Prayer for Refreshment

Lord our God, let us find hope under the shadow of Your wings. You will support us, both when little, and even to grey hairs. When our strength is from You, it is strength. When it is our own, it is weakness. We return to You, Lord, that our weary souls may rise towards You, leaning on the things You have created, since You have wonderfully made them; for with You is refreshment and true strength. *Augustine*



### 4th Century Prayer for Spiritual Blessing. A Gallican Sacramentary

Most high God, our loving father, you are infinite in majesty. I humbly pray for your servant ..... Give him a pure mind, perfect love, sincerity in conduct, purity in the heart, strength in action, carriage in distress self-control in character. Here his praise and bless him. Protect him under the shadow of your wings, and hear my prayers for him in your mercy. Pardon his sins, perfect his work, except his prayers. Protect him by your name, God of Jacob! Send him your saving help from your holy place, and strengthen him out of Zion. Receive his offerings,

accept his sacrifice, give him the grace of devotion, fulfil his desire with good gifts, and crown him with mercy. As he serves you with faithful devotion, pardon his sins, correct him with fatherly tenderness, and direct him on your righteous path. Deliver him from all troubles, that declared righteous by you, both here and eternally, he may praise you forever with the angels, saying, "Holy, Holy, Holy." Through Christ Jesus our Lord and Saviour, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen..



# Dreamtime

## *The Bush Plum*

The Bush Plum Dreaming Story is a big story that spreads right across the western and central deserts from Lajamanu and Warlpiri country to the Utopia homelands.

The Bush Plum Dreaming or Creation Story from the Utopia region goes like this: In the Dreamtime winds blew from all directions carrying the bush plum seed to the artists' ancestral lands. The first bush plum of the Dreamings grew and bore fruit and dropped more seeds. Many winds blew the seeds all over the Dreaming lands.

To ensure the continued fruiting of this plant each season, the Aboriginal people pay homage to the spirit of the bush plum by painting about it and recreating it in their ceremonies through song and dance. The patterns in the paintings celebrating the Bush Plum work on many levels: they represent the fruit of the plant, its leaves and flowers and also the body paint designs that are associated

with it during ceremony.

The bush plum is a popular variety of bush tucker that is only found at certain times of the year. It is found throughout most of the Utopia region and as far west as Lajamanu. Sadly it has declined in abundance due to the grazing of introduced animals, particularly cattle and rabbits. The bush plum fruits in the summer after rain and is an important food source, even though not all of the plum is edible. The plums can be collected when ripe and immediately eaten, or they can be dried and eaten later.

When young, the fruit is green in appearance but as it matures, it becomes a purple-black colour and is similar in looks to an olive. The plant can grow up to 3 metres high and has blue-green leaves and produces a creamy white flower, making it an attractive looking plant.

The bush plum also plays an important part in Warlpiri

Dreaming and ritual practices involved in Yilpinji, Love Magic. When a girl falls in love she goes to her female relatives and is instructed in how to attract her man as a lover. She weaves a belt out of hair while singing Yilpinji songs imbuing the belt with magic. When the man approaches she entices him with her charms until he comes under the influence of her allure. She reveals the belt as his ardour grows and persuades him to place the belt around her waist. As he does, he falls under her spell and they go off together as a couple. Together they eat bush plums and hunt for food. Other important Warlpiri, on learning of their tryst, follow them and confront them as a couple and also eat the bush plums. In this way the group recognizes their relationship and acknowledges that it is an appropriate match. They are now recognized by all as a couple.

(ED. from the website of Japingka Aboriginal Art, Perth, Western Australia)

# Book Review

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BY EDITOR

WHAT IS SO AMAZING ABOUT GRACE BY PHILIP YANCEY

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A book that has been around since 1997 and reprinted many times is Philip Yancey's book, 'What's So Amazing About Grace'. The publishers completely updated the 2023 reprint and revamped the videos for his 6-week Bible study. I place this on my Christian books list as a must read in your lifetime.

Russell More, editor of Christianity Today, says, "*Philip Yancey's writing was, by God's grace, one of the things that kept me Christian as a teenager and young adult. He grew up in a world like mine, but the Jesus he wrote about was neither a cold-hearted abstraction nor a hot-tempered legalist. This book reminded me of the grace of which I stand amazed.*"

Dr. Larry Crabb said, "*I'm trying to remember when I've read a more important book.*"

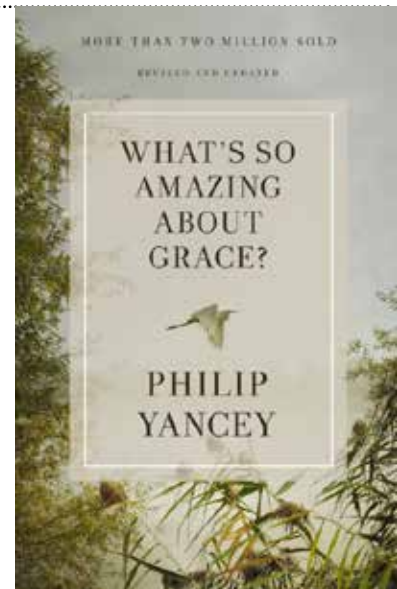
## What is so amazing about grace?

His simple definition of grace is '*unconditional, undeserved and unlimited*', sums up his simple approach on such a deep theological issue. The book is broken down into four parts with each part having five chapters, making the book 20 chapters in length, or 319 pages.

Philip takes the time to present us with many examples of grace while balancing this with equal numbers of ungrace. There are plenty examples of stories littered throughout the book making this an easy read.

One example is during a British conference on comparative religions, experts from around the world debated what belief was unique to the Christian faith. The debate went on for some time until C.S. Lewis wandered into the room. "*What's the rumpus about?*" he asked, and heard in reply that his colleagues were discussing Christianity's unique contribution among world religions. Lewis responded, "*Oh, that's easy. Its grace.*" After some further discussion, his colleagues agreed.

Also, throughout the book are quotes that are a literary goldmine of discovery. Many of his quotes are from many other people, yet the greatest gems are from Yancey himself, hidden within the text of the pages. Here are a few. "*Grace is not about finishing last of first is about not counting.*" "*The gospel of grace begins and ends with forgiveness.*" "*Braking the cycle of ungrace means taking the initiative.*" "*Law merely indicated the sickness; grace brought about the cure.*"



This is not a book for theologians or academics. It is a book for the layperson, struggling to understand what happened in their lives since becoming a Christian.

He says something important. What is our role as a Christian? Are we not called upon to follow in the footsteps of Jesus? This makes us dispensers of His grace.

I wonder why the most popular and requested Christian song is 'Amazing Grace'. It's a timeless hymn that has resonated with people for centuries and continues to be a favourite in churches, personal worship settings, as well as funerals. Grace! Who would have thought!





## Monthly Zoom Meetings

On the first Thursday of the month we have a Zoom meeting to find out how everyone is going and who we should uphold in prayer. It starts at 7:30pm to allow those in New Zealand to join us. We now use the mailing system of the K to contact people. If you are not on the database, and would like to be, drop me an email so that you can be added. Our next Zoom meeting will be Thursday 3rd July.

## Upcoming Calendar Events

JUNE 20-22 Aidan and Hilda UK Annual Gathering; 24 John the Forerunner; JULY 28 Samson; 28 National Tree Day; AUG 5 Oswald; 6 Transfiguration Day; 15 Assumption of Mary; 25 Aidan & Hilda Week; SEPT 7 Father's Day; 9 Ciaran of Clonmacnoise; 14 Holy Cross Day; 16 Ninian.

Tasmania Matt Palmer



## Upcoming Aboriginal Calendar Events

JULY 1 Coming of the Light Festival 6-13 NAIDOC Week; AUG 4 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day; 9 International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples; 25 Australian South Sea Islanders National Recognition Day SEPT 3 Indigenous Literacy Day; 13 Anniversary of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

## Invitation to the Monastery of the Soul

On 2nd August, 1:00pm till 4:30pm is Part Three - Self, Purity and Pollution Retreat at 'The Garden Hub' Swan Bay Sustainable Gardens 182-190 Swan Bay Road, Wallington, Victoria. See page 13 of this newsletter for further details.

Tasmania Matt Palmer



## Origen (185-253)

We must therefore know that the Paraclete is the Holy Spirit, who teaches truths that cannot be uttered in words.



Pathway by Tho\_Ge

# Creation as Contemplation

BY EDITOR

FROM ANCIENT CELTIC WRITINGS

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The Irish monks, although influenced by the Desert Fathers, had a landscape vastly different from the desert. The question arises on how their lush surrounds, compared to the desert, influenced their contemplation. For Job 12:7-8 tells us, "But now ask the beasts, and let them teach you; and ask the birds of heaven, and let them tell you. Or speak to the earth, and let it teach you; and let the fish of the sea declare to you."

Adomnan, writing about Saint Columba of Iona, mentions him spending many hours in solitary prayer, often in nature with God. Irish monastic poets and prayer

writers fill their work with images of nature alongside the divine God. And does not Esther de Waal write about it in her many books?

Is not this our own experience when taking a walk in nature and having nature 'talk' to us and our hearts quicken towards God because of it?

The question then asked is, does not nature create contemplation within us as we reflect quietly on God's nature?

And did not the monks use nature as contemplation on God? Although we could easily discuss the question

further, the Scripture once more holds the answer.

Romans 1:20 *"For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse."*

God is constantly revealing Himself through nature. Something the monks would have been aware of. Even in the busy world of cities, nature exists in many forms. God is always on display, always talking to us. We are always being sought after. Isn't it time for a walk outside?



# INVITATIONS TO THE MONASTERY OF THE SOUL

## Part 3 - Self, Purity & Pollution

The Australian Community of Aidan and Hilda presents part three of a four part series over 2025. Without understanding what hinders us, our inward spiritual journey cannot proceed. With insights and exercises on how self can either purify or pollute our relationship with the Holy Spirit, our journey continues. Leaving unneeded baggage behind, we journey towards our destination. The monastery of the soul.



**SATURDAY, 2nd AUGUST 2025. 1:00pm till 4:30pm.**

*'The Garden Hub' Swan Bay Sustainable Gardens - 182-190 Swan Bay Road, Wallington, VIC*

**BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL:** Bruce Challoner 0400546449 or [challoner@bigpond.com](mailto:challoner@bigpond.com)

**COST:** By Donation. Refreshments provided. Contact Bruce for further information.

# TheEnd!

Our logo is an outline of the Celtic Columba Cross or Ionic Cross (Iona). The Australian symbols of feet represent the Indigenous Nation (black) and Settlers to Australia (white). The symbols at the center of the cross represent an aboriginal meeting place. The broken line circle is the broken nature of man and the need to meet with God to be reconciled. The three circles at the edges of the cross represent the Trinity.

## NEXT!

Our next newsletter will be on the Spring Solstice which is Sunday, 23rd September 2025 (Southern Hemisphere).

## Disclaimer

The material published in this newsletter is intended for general information only and is not legal advice or other professional advice. While care and consideration has been taken in the creation of the material in this newsletter, we do not warrant, represent or guarantee that the material published is in all respects accurate, complete and current. To the extent permitted by law, we exclude any liability, including any liability for negligence, for any loss or damage arising from reliance on material on this website.

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