

Hello everyone. As many of you know the week before last I spent 7 days on retreat at St Mary's Towers.

Today I would like to share with you something of the time there and what we do in community on the retreat. Firstly a little about the retreat centre.

St Mary's towers is on 500 hectares of bushland 90 kms from Sydney.

The Dharawal people were the original custodians of the land, and for them it was a place of reconciliation or "sorry business". I believe it is still a place of reconciliation.

The Nepean River flows through the property, providing a beautiful setting for the many walking trails. St Marys Towers has a permanent biobank area of 80 acres to protect and maintain the natural vegetation of the Cumberland Forest.

The main building, Mitchell House, was built in 1842 and has had several owners down through the times, including, in the 1860's a Dr. Richard Jenkins who was at that time a prominent local Anglican.

The Order of the Sacred Heart Community have owned the property since 1904 and have developed the property as it is today.

During the retreat the daily routine rests in the silence, with conversation only taking place for retreatants for 20 mins daily with a spiritual director. Of course if things get desperate, you can whisper into your phone away from the others.

The idea of the silence is that in it, we are gifted with the opportunity to become more aware of our surroundings, our responses and reactions to them and to others, and so develop a deeper experience of God who is with each one of us all of the time.

For me the silence is very much welcomed, for I find it the best way to declutter the mind of unending and complicated thought patterns that tend to swirl around.

Each morning on the retreat, we would receive input from the presenter about the theme of the retreat. Then the day is ours to sit, read, walk, explore and contemplate.

The theme this year was, "Loving God with the Saints and Mystics".

So during the week we heard about a different Saint each day from the ancient times and through the centuries to the more contemporary ones.

We heard about God in their lives and their responsive communion with God and with their fellow humans. For me it was an enlightening time and one insight that surfaced during my prayer time throughout the week, was how God will do all things possible to reveal himself to us not only to get us to know him more intimately but to have us participate in his glory, joy and creativity. Our response to his perpetual invitation is key, for we cannot harness God's energies of love if we are not in communion with God, if we do not pray.

It was during this insightful time that the fullness of God in the Trinity was brought to mind, for in the Trinity, we find an expression of amazing insight into the being of God.

While the fully articulated doctrine of the Trinity came into existence only in the 4th Century, scholarship tells us that its real roots lie in the lived reality of Jesus's own relationship with God.

In their unity proclaimed in Jesus words “The Father and I are one” flows an unbroken current of self-giving love through which all things are invited to participate, in the power of the Holy Spirit. In the Trinity we are shown the unity of the whole - the ever creative Love of God the father/mother,

God’s Word and Wisdom as the Son, always at God’s side from before the beginning, and the breath of life of the Holy Spirit guiding us into all truth.

The unity of the whole that as Julian of Norwich wrote; *continually flows outward creating and re-creating, sustaining and binding everything together.*

In our psalm today, the psalter is amazed that God keeps us in mind and cares for us. “What are mortals that you should be mindful of them, mere human beings, that you should seek them out -In the light of the whole creation, who am I?”

It is of note that in answer to this question, the psalter does not look at himself or at humanity and what we do, to find the answer. He rather looks at God and what God has done and is doing for us through his generous and wonderful courtesy’.

We can be guided by the Psalter, I believe, when we seek to understand ourselves in relation to God and each other. We too can look to our God to find the answer. And when we do, we see a unified oneness of God’s love, wisdom and breathe, showing us the mercy, compassion, joy and creativity of love.

We also see that we are invited to participate in it - sharing it with others.

Theologian Michael Fallon MSC explains: *Knowing that God is Father/Mother of all, we learn to reverence the sacred ground of each person’s spirit, and be attentive to each person’s word, as together we journey towards our mysterious God, the Source, the father and mother of us all.*

Knowing that God is Word reminds us to be attentive to the words and actions through which God speaks to us, and the words and actions through which we respond to God.

Knowing that God is Spirit reminds us to be attentive to the divinely inspired movements of our own heart; It reminds us to be sensitive to these movements in every person.¹

I believe we see the nature of God, in the Holy Trinity, and we also see our likeness in God’s image. The wonderful part is we don’t have to go anywhere special to see or find it. It is all around us through prayerful communion. And we don’t have to be a Saint or a Mystic either. Who we are and where we are on our journey with God is just right for our life together in God. For as Julian of Norwich (14th Century Mystic) wrote,

We are enfolded in the Father

and we are enfolded in the Son

and we are enfolded in the Holy Spirit.

And the Father is enfolded in us

and the Son is enfolded in us

And the Holy Spirit is enfolded in us- all might, all wisdom, all goodness.

One God. One Lord. The Lord be with you.

¹ www.mbfallon.com/homilies.html

“The Most Holy Trinity” accessed 14.6.19.

