

RETREAT IN DAILY LIFE

AN INTENTIONAL JOURNEY WITH GOD DURING LENT



ANGLICAN PARISH OF WARRACKNABEAL

10-17 MARCH 2024



A PROJECT REGENERATE INITIATIVE
RENEW PEOPLE. REVIVE PROJECTS. RESTORE PLACE.

The Retreat in Daily Life is an invitation to simply say, 'Yes'.

There are many resources online that explain what a 'Retreat in Daily Life' may look like - and if you're not familiar with this spiritual discipline it can all seem a bit overwhelming.

In this booklet, I am offering a simple way to 'enter' an intentional time with God - whoever that may be for you - each day during this particular week in Lent.

I do not pretend to be a 'Specialist Retreat Leader'. What lies before you is my own attempt to try something new in the parish for the second year. It is to push myself out of my comfort zone, and literally 'go on a journey' with each other in the context of our ordinary and extraordinary daily lives.

I hope that you will find this intentional time useful and fruitful.



*"BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO TRUST IN THE LORD,
WHOSE TRUST IS THE LORD.
THEY SHALL BE LIKE A TREE PLANTED BY WATER,
SENDING OUT ITS ROOTS BY THE STREAM.
IT SHALL NOT FEAR WHEN HEAT COMES,
AND ITS LEAVES SHALL STAY GREEN;
IN THE YEAR OF DROUGHT IT IS NOT ANXIOUS,
AND IT DOES NOT CEASE TO BEAR FRUIT."*

JEREMIAH 17:7-8

“The journey of a thousands steps begins with a broken fan belt.” [Anon]

I love this quote. It makes me laugh every time!

Sometimes things break.

It is not always a test from God. We do not always deserve the things that go wrong. It is not always our fault - that things haven't turned out this particular way.

Sometimes - life just *IS*.

It is that simple. It is difficult at times. Whether our tears are a result of pain or gratitude - our awareness of life's little mysteries helps us to appreciate what is around us; and where we are living; and what we can do for others.

This retreat - I invite you to take a bold step into trusting God.

As our Lenten sermon series reminds us each week:

- a) God's love is EXTRAVAGANT, abundant, unconditional and limitless.
- b) God desires a personal, intimate and fulfilling relationship with you -
AS YOU ARE!
- c) God is 'here' NOW - with you - as you open your heart to hear God's voice.

I invite you to be still - and hear God call your name.

I invite you to be still - and calm your breathing.

I invite you to be still - and discern what God may have to say to you - today.

I will invite you to create a 'special' place for your retreat this week.

Surrounded by all your familiar furniture and knick-knacks - is there a small table you set up with a candle or favourite picture or icon. Maybe the table is covered with a piece of fabric or cloth to determine a 'different space' than normal.

Maybe it is in another part of the house or garden completely different to your normal routine.

I encourage you to communicate with those you share your house with that there may be a particular time that you will be unavailable: no phone or interruptions; certain rituals that you will adhere to; there may be times they are welcome, and other times when they are 'not'.

Or will this be a journey you will take 'in secret'?

Action:

What are three things you are grateful for today?

With Passion

With
passion pray. With
passion work. With passion make love.
With passion eat and drink and dance and play.
Why look like a dead fish
in this ocean
of
God?
[Rumi]

What does pray normally look like for you?

Are you happy with your rhythm of prayer?
Is there something you would like to change?
Who is God for you - when you open your heart to our Creator?

What work do you have / did you have to accomplish today?

Are you feeling content about what the day may hold / or satisfied at what happened during the day?
Is there a challenge that needs a fresh approach?
Is there anything you would have liked to have done differently?
Is there a supportive colleague or a challenging dynamic that you would like to hold before God?

What will you do / have you done that you ABSOLUTELY LOVE today?

When you are doing this activity - how do / did you feel?
Is it something you will do / did by yourself?
Will you have / did you have company? What does that person mean to you?

Will or did your day have a sense of PLAY?

What will it or did it look like?
What contribution will you make to your days' joy?

Action:

What do you need to do today to give you LIFE?

The Chance of Humming

A
man
standing on two logs in a river
might do all right floating with the current
while humming in the
now.

Though
if one log is tied to a camel,
who is also heading south along the bank - at the same pace -
all could still be well
with the
world

unless the camel
thinks he forgot something, and
abruptly turns upstream,
then
uh-oh.

Most minds
do not live in the present
and can stick to a reasonable plan; most minds abruptly turn
and undermine the
chance
of
humming.

[Rumi]

“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” [Philippians 4:4-7]

Did you know, that if you have food in the fridge; or have some money in your purse or wallet; or you own a car; or have some money in the bank - you are in the top 5-10% richest people in the world?

I know completely ridiculous!

However, are our hearts truly at peace?

Are you happy within your own skin?

Do you have regrets that keep haunting you?

Are you feeling content at the moment?

What makes you frustrated at the moment? Is it a first world problem?

Do you feel you have ‘enough’?

What would make you hum - in the presence of God today?

What does your heart need today - to be truly peaceful?

Action:

I invite you to give someone a gift today.

It might be a ‘present’ or something you’ve made or an act of kindness.

What will be your gift to God this day?

Day Four - Wednesday 13 March:

Laughter

He Told Me A Joke

My Lord told me a joke.

**And seeing Him laugh has done more for me
than any scripture I will
ever read.**

[Meister Eckhart]

“Laughter is carbonated holiness.”

Anne Lamott

Laughter is crucial for our physical and mental well-being.

Here are some reasons why:

It helps to reduce stress:

Laughter triggers the release of endorphins, the body's natural feel-good chemicals. These neurotransmitters promote an overall sense of well-being and can temporarily relieve pain. Additionally, laughter reduces the level of stress hormones like cortisol, which can alleviate tension and promote relaxation.

Boosts our Immune System:

Laughter increases the production of antibodies and activates immune cells, thereby enhancing the body's resistance to infections and illnesses.

It improves our mood:

Laughter can elevate mood and counteract feelings of anxiety, depression, or anger. It shifts perspective, helping us see situations in a more positive and hopeful light.

Laughter promotes creativity:

Laughter stimulates the brain's reward system, encouraging creativity and problem-solving abilities. It can lead to novel insights and innovative thinking.

It is GOOD for our body:

Laughing improves cardiovascular health by increasing blood flow and improving the function of blood vessels. It also provides a mild workout for the muscles, including the diaphragm, abdomen, and facial muscles.

It helps develop resilience:

Humor and laughter can serve as coping mechanisms during difficult times, enabling individuals to bounce back from adversity and maintain a sense of perspective.

Overall, laughter is a powerful tool for promoting holistic well-being, fostering healthy social connections with others, and enhancing the quality of our life.

Action:

Tell a good joke to a friend.

Source a favourite TV program and have a good belly laugh.

Look in the mirror - nah; only joking!

Listen to an episode of 'The Goons'.

Or just start laughing...

(If in public, see how many people you can get to join you.)

"Kyrie Eleison"

"Lord - anoint me with your Spirit! Have mercy on me."

Today, I invite us to become more conscious of when we have been wasteful.

Where are the places of disconnection in our life?

Have we hurt someone lately?

Have we transmitted our hurt rather than transformed it?

Is there a moment, a circumstance where you would like to 'try again'?

Have we been hurtful to others or ourselves?

Have we ignored someone recently?

Have we spoken to someone harshly?

Have we upset someone?

Have we neglected our duty?

Have we let ourselves down?

Action:

I invite you to write a letter - to God, to yourself or another person.

You may feel comfortable sending it.

You may not.

The important part of this process - is that you've written the letter saying -

"I am sorry."

I invite you to think of a way to symbolically 'let this hurt go'.

Maybe a small fire (*safely*) that symbolises a fresh start:

Maybe cutting it into small pieces and placing it in the compost that symbolises that something difficult can become nourishment for new growth:

Maybe placing it through a shredder symbolising that our circumstances can no longer 'drag us down':

or maybe explore other ways you can 'transform' rather than transmit your pain.

God is waiting - and ready to forgive!

"Therefore, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful."

[Colossians 3:12-15]

"After this there was a festival of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate there is a pool, called in Hebrew Beth-zatha, which has five porticoes. In these lay many ill, blind, lame, and paralyzed people. One man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had been there a long time, he said to him, "Do you want to be made well?" The ill man answered him, "Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, and while I am making my way someone else steps down ahead of me." Jesus said to him, "Stand up, take your mat and walk." At once the man was made well, and he took up his mat and began to walk." [John 5:1-8]

Imagine that you are going through your day - and you meet Jesus.

What do you talk about?

What does he say to you?

Does he ask you a question - or you him?

Is he kind and funny?

Does he tell you a story?

Is he intent on giving you some helpful information?

Is he okay with silence? Are you okay - waiting for him to speak?

I invite you at some stage in this interaction with Jesus - to hear him say to you;

"What would you like me to do for you?"

What do you answer?

Jesus has come to save us - to make us 'whole again' - not to judge us.

Jesus was sent by God to be the 'bridge' or the 'ladder' we need to communicate with God more clearly.

Jesus - our example - really wants us to learn from him.

"Take courage. Do not be afraid." [Matthew 14:27]

Action:

Today - I invite you to make a cross.

Today - I invite you to write a prayer.

Today - I invite you to take Jesus at his word - 'What do you want me to do for you?'

Where are you 'hungry' for God?

Where are you 'thirsty' for God?

Surrender. And smile, and you will know what to do!

“Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” [Matthew 6:26,33]

God loves you.

That's it - in a nutshell.

There is no debate in God's mind. No indecision.

God loves you - right now!

**“There is nothing you can do, nothing, NOTHING!
To make God love you any less than God loves you already.
Importantly, there is nothing you can do, nothing, NOTHING!
To make God love you any more than God loves you already!”**

Richard Rohr

Our human being complicates this simple truth.

How can God love me?

I'm not perfect.

I've 'stuffed up' too many times.

I wish I wasn't so angry or impatient or so much better than my neighbour.

Jesus says, “I'll take the weight. Let me carry it - so that you are free.

Free to walk with God today.”

Will you accept this invitation?

Be still, and know that I love you.

Be still, and feel God's presence surround you.

Be still, and hear God say - 'You are my beloved.'

Be still, and let the tears fall down your face.

Be still, and invite the Spirit to heal your broken heart.

Be still, and challenge the negative thoughts to 'GET LOST!'

Be still, and smile ...

Action:

Buy a plant. Plant a seed or a tree. Water it.

Offer a prayer of thanks - to God who ALWAYS LOVES - extravagantly.

Action:

Today is a day to rejoice. Make it special.

We are God's people! God loves you. God will never abandon you.

God is here - are you ready to say: "YES!"



IT TAKES TIME TO BAKE A LOAF OF BREAD,
TO GRIND, TO KNEAD, TO WAIT....
TIME FOR FRIENDS TO BREAK AND SHARE THEIR LIVES.

IT TAKES TIME TO CRAFT IN WOOD,
TO STRIP, TO WOUND, TO BLEED....
TIME FOR THE ORIGINAL TO BE RELEASED FROM THE PRISON OF OUR FEAR.

IT TAKES TIME FOR US TO BUILD
AND FORTIFY OUR LIVES,
TIME FOR THE STEAL OF THE DIVINE TO SLAY OUR PRIDE.

IT TAKES TIME TO BE WITH PAIN,
TO YIELD AND LET THE HEALING HAVE ITS WAY,
TIME IN THE DARKNESS TO TRUST THE DAWN.

IT TAKES TIME TO BE ALONE
TO BECOME ONE'S INTIMATE FRIEND,
TIME IN THE DRY FOR THE HIDDEN STREAM TO FILL THE EMPTY WELL.

IT TAKES TIME TO WAIT IN SILENCE
FOR THE COMING OF THE SPRING.
TIME FOR THE BUD TO SWELL ON WINTER'S DREAMS.

IT TAKES TIME TO LET YOUR LIFE BE TURNED AROUND,
TO ACCEPT A VISION'S DEATH,
TIME IN THE VOID TO SEE WITH DIFFERENT EYES.

IT TAKES TIME TO STILL WITHIN
AND MERGE WITH LIFE,
TIME IN THE WILD TO LET A RIVER SLOW YOU DOWN.

IT TAKES TIME TO TEND A CROP OF GRAIN,
TO PLOUGH, TO SOW, TO WONDER....
TIME FOR LOVE TO RIPEN AND BE HARVESTED.

NOEL DAVIS

[FROM 'HEART GONE WALKABOUT']