

Diocese of The Murray, South Australia.

**THE MURRAY
CON-TRIBUTARY
NEWSLETTER**



Transformation - Now!

March 2022

Dear Members, Here we are thinking about our new Theme and Lady Day, with Lent and Easter not too far away and yet it seems that 2022 is only just getting underway.

I have been looking at ideas to use for the Transformation - Now! theme and found this poem that I just love.

If we had a fraction of the faith in you that you have in us then this world would be transformed.

If we showed a fraction of the love that you show us then this world would be transformed.

by John Birch.

I hope each of you personally and within your branches and parishes find something to ponder on and do in relation to transformation. I have got a few ideas off the website and I am willing to visit branches and lead an activity.

Our chaplain Fr Daniel has just commenced a teaching contract in rural South Australia so will not have the freedom to join us at celebrations this year but has retained the role of our chaplain and I have included a letter from him.

I attended a State meeting last week and it was good to share ideas with Lynette from Willochra and Marion from Adelaide.

Several branches are starting the year with butterfly activities of one type or another and Southern Suburbs are organising a Lent 'count your pennies' activity.

For those who love knitting there is available a 'sheep' pattern. I have been told that it is about 12cm tall. With the sheep and shepherd theme in the bible and knitted nativity scenes this may be useful. I can email it to you or you may be able to find it on the Mothers Union Australian website.

Please note the changes to Lady Day in the Diary Dates section below and if you have special MU anniversary to receive acknowledgement for please let me know.

love and blessings for the coming months.

Jocelyn

**We have a new Treasurer

**We are still looking for a new Prayer and Sprituality co-ordinator and would love to hear from you if you would like to nominate someone or yourself. Phone and email contact with members would be required and quarterly reports for Exec meetings could be emailed and attendance at the meetings not compulsory so this could be handled by someone in the South East or a Diocesan member.

** It has just been announced that the Mothers Union project is "Disaster Management and Climate Change in the Pacific". This is close to home as we are part of Zone C which includes Islands which have been ravaged by storms in the past few years. This is a 2 year project so we have time to pray for ideas to raise funds. Another activity suggested is that Branches and individuals plant a tree or significant plant as a commitment to repairing God's world and leaving it in a healthier state for generations of children who follow us.

**Mothers Union is Australia is to celebrate 130 years in 2022. A good excuse for a special afternoon/morning Tea!!?? Invite others!

Diary Dates:-

March 25th.... Lady Day. NOTE change of location. It is now to be 11am St Margaret's McLaren Vale

Please bring a mask and BYO lunch. In place of a trading table you are asked to bring a donation to the Community Garden that St Margaret's are just getting started. eg seeds, snailbait, gloves etc that they can donate to the new gardeners or use themselves. This will help our host church and also fits in with the new environmental theme of Mothers Union worldwide. We may not have the numbers of years ago nor the banner procession nor the lavish buffet lunches but it will be a friendly, meaningful time together.

May 23rd.... exec meeting at Strathalbyn 10.30am. NOTE change of date.

Fr Daniels letter is on the next page.

“He brought Simon to Jesus, who looked at him and said, ‘You are Simon son of John. You are to be called Cephas (which is translated Peter).’” John 1:42

When you stop to think about it, this is a strange situation being described by the author of the fourth gospel. Here is a person just introduced to Jesus and the first thing Jesus does is to give him a new name. Almost seems comical if we are honest with ourselves, conveying tones of an Abbott and Costello skit, although not quite as far fetched as “Who’s on First?”

What Jesus’ renaming of Peter was about however, was an encouragement and a foretaste of the transformation that would eventually, (after quite a lot of false starts if we are once again honest with ourselves), overtake the fisherman called Simon.

In many ways transformation is one of the key themes that emerges from the biblical text. As our guide on the Holy Land Pilgrimage in 2017, Oliver, said to me, the Bible is all about going forward and not looking back, just remember Lot’s wife!

Transformation, including the transformation of who we are, of what we do and how we do it, is happening all the time. I know on my own part that I have changed much over the years (and I don’t just mean the greying and thinning hair on my head!). As I learn and grow and deepen in my understanding of life, relationships, and faith, then my views and opinions have changed and been shaped by my experiences. And as I encounter a whole new raft of changes in my life, returning to teaching, moving house, and preparing to welcome a new baby, I am sure that I will continue to be transformed in new and as yet still unknown ways.

Transformation is also the 2022 global Mother’s Union theme, keeping in mind the verse from 2 Corinthians 5:17 - *If anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!*

The global pandemic has meant that no one has been untouched by the various restrictions and lock downs that have been imposed from governments around the world. Life has changed remarkably for many who can now see life differently – their priorities may have changed, habits may have dropped away, financial circumstances may have altered. Some of these changes may be for the better, others may not.

As we seek to navigate our way through the changes we are all experiencing we would do well to contemplate the unchangeable nature of God, a nature revealed in 1 John 4 as love. God is not simply loving but is love itself. And while we can confidently say that the nature of God as love is unchangeable, from generation to generation, what is changeable, and capable of transformation if we are open to the workings of the Holy Spirit, is how we understand and exist in relationship with that unchangeable God.

In this year dedicated to the theme of transformation I encourage you all to pray for openness to the ways God might be seeking to bring about transformation in your lives, in your hearts, and in your actions. Amen.