

STAYING CONNECTED:



THE PATH OF PEACE

FROM THE VERY REVEREND ANNE MILLS

I have for a long time been drawn to the Franciscan and Benedictine rules of life.

I think because they offer a sound, challenging and meaningful framework and discipline to a 'holy' way of life, a life offered to God in community.

In his Prologue to the Benedictine Rule, Benedict urges his monks to, 'run while you have the light of life, that the darkness of death may not overtake you.' This is not meant to be a morbid statement but rather a reminder that life is short and we must run. It is a reminder that we should live with urgency and goodness of life now, that we should constantly foster in our own lives an awareness of the presence of God.

This all builds on what I shared in my *Staying Connected* last week, that if we as Christians want to make a real difference to how we and others experience God in the story of the 21st Century then we need to make Christianity a way of life, individually and corporately, rather than just a system of belief.

How can we be an Easter people, traversing Good Friday and Easter Sunday I ask again?

Well, as well as developing our own rhythms of life which will draw us closer and deeper into God, another thing we need to consider is how we as Christians might cause peace. The Catholic Church helpfully defines peace as 'not simply the absence of war; it is the fruit of justice.'

**BE SAFE. BE KIND.
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A peaceful society is a just society recognising that adequate resources for education, housing and health care are vital ways in which to build peace; but while these physical resources are a necessary part of peace, they are not sufficient. To build peace there is also a need for spiritual resources, and, I believe, religion can provide these in a unique way. The key spiritual resource that religion offers is hope.

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‘The future of humanity,’ the Second Vatican Council stated, ‘lies in the hands of those able to pass on to future generations reasons for living and hoping.’ Sound advice as reasons for living and hoping are the heart of true religion and the greatest gift that religion can give to humanity - hope in this life and the next. Religion offers hope against despair and love that casts out all fear. For it is fear and despair that feed such things as war, terrorism, anxiety, hopelessness and anger.

We as a Church need to promote reasons for living and hoping. A key task in the 21st Century I believe is for us to engage thoughtfully with our religious tradition and, from that base, work with other religions to build peace.

If we are to work this well, each of us needs to act in a committed, intentional way. It needs to become a way of life, a life journey. It needs to be done individually but also in community since an involvement and commitment in community avoids a tendency to be self-absorbed, a characteristic inherent in so much modern Western spirituality and in our Western consumer/production driven reality.

This way of life leads us to hope in this life and the next. It gives us and others a reason and purpose to live in peace.

How will you choose to live and tell God’s story today and all the days of your life?

Blessings,
The Very Reverend Anne Mills
Dean

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