

Lazarus Centre Chaplaincy Newsletter

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The Reverend Louise Lang reflects on her time as Lazarus Centre Team Leader

From the Lazarus Centre Chaplain

The Reverend Louise Lang will be leaving her position as Team Leader for the Lazarus Centre in November. I will miss working with Louise for many reasons. I don't think I've met anyone who can keep as many "balls in the air" as Louise. Over the years we have worked together I have been in awe of her commitment to her vocation, to her family and scouting interests, and to her theological studies.

While all this effort is admirable I have been most impressed by the way she has quietly, and yet most assuredly, managed the practicalities of the centre as well as the individual needs of staff, volunteers and participants. It has been a privilege to work alongside Louise as chaplain to the Lazarus Centre. I pray every blessing for Louise, Andrew and their family as they begin new ministries in South Australia.

As we give thanks at the conclusion of one aspect of ministry we look also to the future. As I reflected on the works being carried out on the grounds of St Peter's I was struck by the juxtaposition of the "danger do not enter signs" and the memorial crucifix on the corner of Albert and Gisborne Streets (see picture over). While the aim of the work is to increase the openness of St Peter's grounds to the public we are reminded that there is a dangerous element to the Christian faith - our "construction" as people of God occurs amid the terror of the cross as well as the glory of the Resurrection.

Fr Philip Gill



As my time working as the Team Leader of our Homeless Support Services comes to an end I have been contemplating my experiences over the years and what it has meant to me.

I am hugely grateful for the opportunity to do something I never dreamt of! For the first couple of years in this role I used to say, "If someone told me ten years ago that I would be living in Melbourne and working with people experiencing homelessness, I would have laughed at you"! It was true – I never thought that was a possibility! Now I find myself after 8 years of the work, and nearly 11 years with Anglicare Victoria, moving onto another chapter of life.

I have learnt so much from being here ... I have learnt to judge less and to be grateful for what I have. I have learnt to love more and to support people, even though to some in our world that may seem pointless. I have learnt that our community is diverse and that there are different ways to look at life. I have also discovered that our lucky country is far from perfect and the social systems we have in place may favour some, but there are a great many people who suffer from the lack of care and that we as a society fail to provide for some of the most vulnerable amongst us. I have learnt so much and there is still so much to understand!

The experience of this place and this work will stay with me for a very long time, it will remain in my heart, thoughts and prayers and I hope it will be continue to be in yours.

~ Louise

Victorian Homelessness Election Platform 2018

With data obtained from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the Council to Homeless Persons (CHP) has created a list of the twenty metropolitan state electorates according to numbers of homeless people. The Melbourne electorate topped the list with 1,617. Dandenong was second with 1,158 and Footscray was third with 894. With these figures in mind and a state election later this year the CHP has produced a proposed platform challenging political leaders to tackle the problem of homelessness. It is a substantial and thoughtful document in which the CEO, Jenny Smith says:

Ending homelessness is within our means. Homelessness should be rare, the experience brief, and it should not recur in cycles of repeated homelessness. With the right measures in place, we know that homelessness is preventable, early intervention achievable, and that keeping people housed is possible. These measures are detailed in the Victorian Homelessness Election Platform. It is now up to the next government of Victoria to deliver on ending homelessness. We call on all parties and candidates to commit to these priorities, and to working alongside us to deliver them. <http://chp.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Victorian-Homelessness-Election-Platform-2018.pdf>

The Sheep and the Goats

This song by Keith Green has recently been drawn to my attention. It is a contemporary rendition of Matthew 25.31-46. The first verses cleverly render the astonishment of the "sheep" but it is the way Green re-imagines the response of the goats that is most telling! See a live version at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ix8ddo-sig-k>

*Uh Lord uh, Lord, when were you naked,
I mean Lord, that's not fair either Lord,
We didn't know what size you wear.
Oh Lord, when were you a stranger Lord,
You weren't one of those creepy people
Who used to come to the door,
were you?*

*Oh Lord, that wasn't our ministry lord.
We just didn't feel led, you know?
Lord, when were you sick?
What did you have, anyway?
Well, at least it wasn't fatal, oh, it was?
I'm sorry Lord, I would have sent you a
card.
Lord, just one last thing we want to know,
When were you in prison Lord?
What were you in for anyway?
I had a friend in Leavenworth*

*Enough!
In as much as you've not done it
unto the least of my brethren,
You've not done it unto me.
In as much as you've not done it
unto the least of my brethren,
You've not done it unto me.
Depart from me.*

*And these shall go away
into everlasting fire.
But the righteous into eternal life!*

*And my friends, the only difference
between the sheep and the goats,
According to this scripture,
Is what they did, and didn't do!!*

Every Body's Home...

Every Body's Home is a grass roots campaign seeking to influence governments to tackle the problem of homelessness. It has the support of many well respected agencies who advocate in this field. Here are some of their aims -

There's a solution for everyone.

We're calling on governments to put together a national action plan to end homelessness that:

- Addresses all the drivers of homelessness, including the lack of affordable housing, poverty and family violence.
- Rapidly rehouses people who are homeless and helps them stay there.
- Addresses the over-representation of Aboriginal people in the homeless service system.
- Commit to ending homelessness by 2030 by taking action to prevent homelessness and delivering rapid access to the housing and support people need if they do lose their own home.

With real effort we can halve homelessness in 5 years and end it in 10.

It's time to fix the housing system. <http://everybodyshome.com.au/>

Under Construction: a new openness at St Peter's

Work is underway on the corner plaza on the Albert and Gisborne Streets. The project will open up this part of St Peter's allowing people to catch their breath in the midst of a busy day. The plaza will also provide a space for the coffee cart social enterprise project. As well as providing refreshment for passers-by there will be opportunity for Lazarus Centre participants to be trained in the fine art of coffee making and customer service. The present works also serve as a reminder that under the cross of Christ we are all yet incomplete and that while "under construction" there may indeed be some dangers to be confronted!



Lazarus Centre Chaplaincy is funded by the St Peter's Charitable Foundation. Find out how to support this ministry at <http://spehcf.com.au/church/public/>