

Lazarus Centre Chaplaincy Newsletter

Volume 8 Issue 3

Meet the New Breakfast Program Team Leader

I asked new Breakfast Program team leader, Wayne Gleeson if he would write something for this edition for the newsletter. As is evident below he has settled in quickly during very trying circumstances and I thank him for his thoughtful introduction.

Fr Philip Gill

My name is Wayne Gleeson and I've been the Team Leader of the Homeless Support Program at Anglicare Victoria since the beginning of June 2021. I come with nearly ten years' experience of working in the homeless sector in the Fitzroy area and fifteen years' experience altogether in case management in the aged sector and the criminal justice system in both the UK and Australia.

During my relatively short time in this role, I've been busy building new and exciting relationships with the staff on my team, the parish and of course, the people who are recipients of the service as well as learning about how the program is delivered to the homeless community.

I've been humbled by the warmth of everyone's welcome these past few months. It's truly an honour to lead an iconic program which provides such an important service to individuals experiencing homelessness in Melbourne. I am very proud of how wonderfully my team have endured working through the COVID-19 pandemic; the difficulties/changes associated with the service delivery from how it used to be to what it is now.

Despite there being a glimmer of hope with the roadmap out of lockdown, it's important to normalise/accept the "languishing" feeling as a result of the restrictions and how important it is that we work together, as a community, to try and overcome these challenges. My work is driven by the harsh realities which the homeless community face on a daily basis, pre/during/post pandemic, and how my team can improve the quality of an individual's life by providing a service which is warm, respectful and dignified.

In August 2021, I worked alongside the COVID vaccination program at CoHealth in Fitzroy where we arranged for recipients of the Breakfast Program to receive their COVID vaccination. This occurred on Mondays 6th and 13th September, a third date was also scheduled on Monday 20th September, however, CoHealth decided it would be more equitable to set up a daily drop in clinic for



the general public at their clinic in Fitzroy instead, therefore, the third date was cancelled.

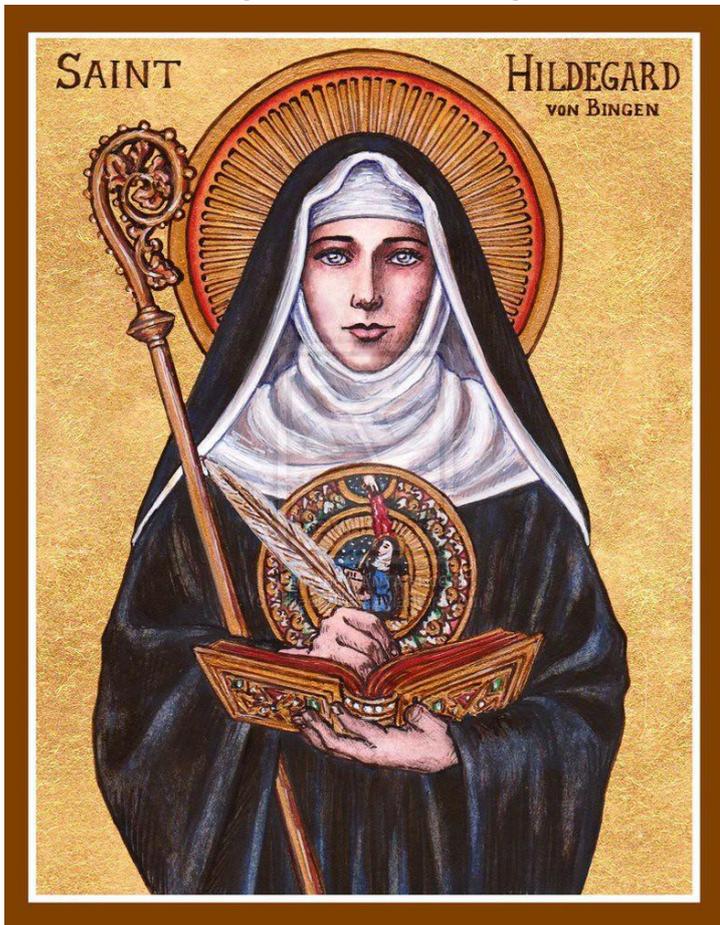
As expected, the overall turnout was reasonably low. Some stated that they had already received the vaccination and there is also vaccine hesitancy, unfortunately. However, we vaccinated approximately twelve people altogether over both days. That's twelve people who may never have received their vaccination if the clinic was never set up at St Peter's. Therefore, I'd like to thank Father Hugh, CoHealth and all who were involved for their hard work with this venture as I believe it was an overall success.

I'd also like to thank everyone who I've met through St Peter's who has made me feel very welcome during my short time in this wonderful role. I look forward to meeting with more people from the parish when it's safe to do so."

Wayne Gleeson

Team Leader Homeless Support Program

Hildegard of Bingen: An inspiration for COVID times



Hildegard of Bingen was born in 1098 and became a Benedictine nun at 15 years of age. She began to experience visions and for some time kept them secret until she could do so no more. Her confessor encouraged her to write her visions down, but she was reluctant even to do this. Then she received a direct calling to speak out. She consulted Bernard of Clairvaux who encouraged her to speak. She sought and gained the approval of her archbishop and eventually the pope. Thank God there were some enlightened men around!

In her prophetic ministry she entered into the conflicts of her day and offered counsel to church and secular leaders. When she heard about the falling out between Henry II king of England and Thomas à Beckett she wrote to the king:

**From Hildegard Abbess at Rupertsberg to Henry, King of England, greetings:
When a certain man holds a high office over other men, the Lord commands him:
Yours are the gifts of giving, it is by ruling and defending, protecting and providing, that you may reach Heaven.
But then a bird, black as pitch, will come to you from the North, and it will say:
You can do whatever you want; so do this and do that; make this excuse and that excuse, for it does not profit you to have regard to Justice; for if you always consult Justice, you are not the master, rather you are reduced to mere slavery.**

It is imperative that you not listen to the Thief who so counsels you, who is like the one who in the First Age stripped humanity of its great glory, when from dust humankind was made in a beautiful form, and when it received that vital spark of life. Rather you must pay your attention to your Father the Creator, especially since your mind is well-intentioned, and thus you will willingly do good unless you are overcome by the squalid habits of those around you and become estranged from Him in the course of time. Dear Son of God, you must flee this environment and call on your Father with all your might, as He gladly reaches out His hand to help you.

Thus may you live forever and dwell in eternal happiness.

—Hildegard of Bingen, letter to King Henry II of England (ca. 1154) (composed when Hildegard learned of Henry's falling out with Thomas à Beckett, Archbishop of Canterbury) from: *Analecta Sanctae Hildegardis Opera*. *Analecta Sacra*, vol. 8, p. 556 (J.B. Pitra ed. 1882)(S.H. transl.)

The events of history overtook the tenor and content of Hildegard's letter, but her contribution to humanity has been deep and lasting. Not only did she pursue her calling as a prophet, but she also attracted many to the religious life opening and managing large monasteries, she was a poet, musician, artist, author and playwright.

She wrote books on natural science, medicine and commentaries on the Gospels, the Athanasian Creed and the Rule of St Benedict. Her play, *Ordo Virtutum*, considered the first morality play, has experienced a renaissance in recent years. Several modern adaptations have appeared, one which was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize.

In later life she fell out with authorities when she and her fellow sisters buried someone who had been excommunicated in their grounds. They were cleared on appeal to the archbishop. Hildegard died in 1179 when she was 80 years old. We give thanks to God for this devout, creative and courageous woman of God and leave the last word to her:

Humankind, full of all creative possibilities, is God's work. Humankind alone is called to assist God. Humankind is called to co-create. With nature's help, humankind can set into creation all that is necessary and life-sustaining. -Hildegard of Bingen.

Fr Philip Gill

O Pastor animarum

Antiphon for the Redeemer
by Hildegard of Bingen

O Shepherd of our souls,
O primal voice,
whose call created all of us:
Now hear our plea to thee, to thee, and deign
to free us from our miseries and feebleness.

translation by Nathaniel M. Campbell