

Lazarus Centre Chaplaincy Newsletter

Volume 5 Issue 2

The coldest nights need not be the bleakest!

From the Lazarus
Centre Chaplain

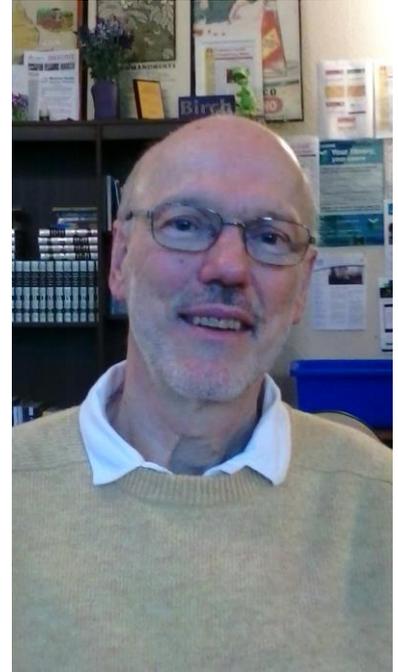
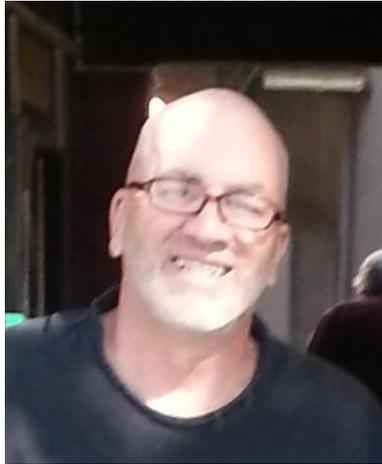
The Winter solstice marks the longest night of the year and is an appropriate time to express solidarity with those experiencing homelessness. At St Peter's on 24th June, the Sunday nearest the solstice, we will be showing our support at each Mass through our prayers and practical contributions of food and clothing.

In conversation with our volunteers I find a shared theme. Each of them tells of the privilege they feel in being able to support those in need. They receive much more than they put in.

Pictured are some of the Breakfast Program volunteers who give of their time to support the homeless. Clockwise from top left: Pete, Lum, Chris, Peter and Carol, John and Cheryl.

Their enthusiasm is echoed by the latest research on the relationship between wellbeing and quality social interaction. Read more about the "social cure" on page two.

Fr Philip Gill



Interested in joining our team of volunteers at the
Lazarus Centre Breakfast Program?
Talk with coordinator, the Reverend Louise Lang about
volunteering with Anglicare Victoria
0458 750 031

No Man is an Island

~ John Donne

*No man
is an island
entire of itself;
every man
is a piece
of the continent,
a part of the main;
if a clod be washed
away by the sea,
Europe is the less,
as well as if a
promontory were,
as well as any
manner of thy
friends or of thine
own were;
any man's death
diminishes me,
because I am
involved in
mankind.*

*And therefore
never send to
know for whom
the bell tolls;
it tolls for thee.*

MEDITATION XVII
Devotions upon Emergent
Occasions John Donne
<https://web.cs.dal.ca/~johnston/poetry/island.html>

The Social Cure

There is now compelling evidence that the health risk of social isolation is comparable to the risks of smoking, high blood pressure and obesity, even after controlling for other variables known to affect health. - Jolanda Jetten, Catherine Haslam, S. Alexander Haslam and Nyla R. Branscombe

We might normally think of science as always bringing forth new and challenging discoveries. But it is also enlightening, and encouraging, when research verifies ancient wisdom. A group of social psychologists looked at many studies on the relationship between wellbeing and social involvement. A study conducted at Columbia University found, for example, that socially isolated stroke victims were twice as likely to have another stroke within five years as those who were socially connected. Another study found that those who were isolated were twice as likely to catch cold as those who had busy social lives. This result may seem counter-intuitive, as does the work done among students that shows that those who nurture quality social interaction attain higher marks than those who are more isolated.

The researchers advocate social connectedness as a vital part of wellbeing. Dispelling the myth that too many groups can complicate our lives and cause unwanted stress, they claim social involvement is a crucial part of our identity echoing Aristotle's dictum that human beings are social animals. John Donne's meditation also comes to mind as he reminds us that "no man is an island". It seems the happiest, healthiest and most resilient people are those who, in terms of group involvement, don't have all their eggs in one basket. For example some athletes on retirement suffer depression because their identity is so defined by their sport. So too those whose identities are defined primarily by their work and have never made time for other interests are more likely to find loss of employment difficult.

Aristotle and John Donne were not the only ones to realise that our wellbeing is largely dependent on our relationships. Jesus called together a group of disciples to join his mission. His mission continued beyond his earthly presence in the church and among all who believe in him. Under the influence of Jesus, and indeed in his presence, the Church gathers and offers hospitality to the marginalised of society. The Lazarus Centre Breakfast Program is an expression of Jesus' call to "Love one another as I have loved you" and invites participants into meaningful social interaction.

More on this research into the Social Cure can be found at:
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/au/blog/social-cures/201707/social-cure>
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/247446655_The_Social_Cure
https://books.google.com.au/books/about/The_Social_Cure.html?id=POJ4AqAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=hp_read_button&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false

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