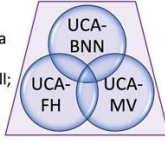




Whitehorse Uniting Cluster

The Uniting Church in Australia
Congregations of: Blackburn
North / Nunawading; Forest Hill;
and Mountview (Mitcham);
in a shared ministry together



Order of Service 25 September 2022

Worship Materials come from Seasons of Creation
VICTAS website

Humanity Sunday

We worship with all humanity and all creation

“Hear this all you peoples, give ear all inhabitants of the world, both high and low, rich and poor.”

YouTube Hymn: Be Still for the Presence of the Lord – tMt video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3-yBLNgQkvY&list=PL5dbbdzyKBag-mEd9qTgdyYNQLIsLD2rC&index=5>

Welcome!

We worship this Sunday with all humanity, peoples of all ethnic origins. We celebrate the kinship between humanity and the rest of creation. We rejoice that humans who bear the image of God now understand their role as servants who follow Christ, the true image of God.

Gathering

Leader In the name of God, who creates all peoples,
the name of Jesus Christ, who gives new life to all peoples,
and the name of the Spirit, the same breath in all peoples. Amen.

People **All peoples of our planet!**
Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord!



Call to Worship

- L1 Peoples from every corner of creation,
P **Celebrate with all creatures on Earth!**
- L2 Young and old across the planet,
P **Rejoice in the day that God has made!**
- L3 Indigenous peoples of every land,
P **Help us sense the spirit deep in each land!**
- L1 Black and white and brown and grey,
P **Celebrate with us the colours of creation!**

L2 All humanity on Planet Earth,
P Praise God for our planet home.

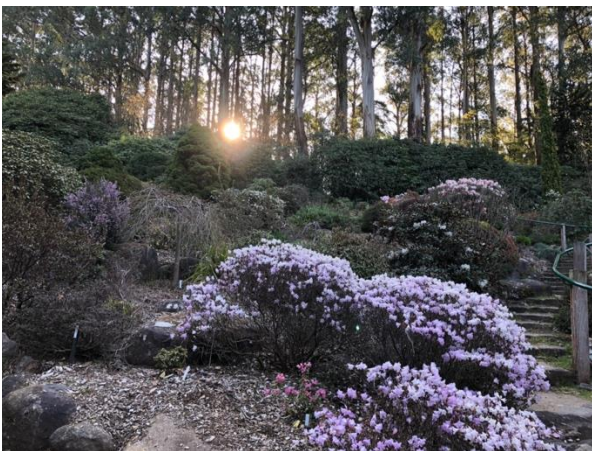
L3 Sing, peoples, sing!
P Sing, creation, sing!

Prayers of Adoration

Loving God, you have promised to always be there for us, no matter what. We are blessed.
 We find you in all creation, speaking to us through Jesus or moving our hearts through your Spirit.

Your love for us moves our hearts to love
 Your justice and mercy in all creation meets with our desire to love and serve you.

We offer up our lives to you
 With thanksgiving and praise. Amen



SONG OF HEALING

To the music of 'Morning has Broken'

1. Healing is flowing, deep in the waters,
 Flowing from Eden, flowing from old.
 All through creation, God sends forth waters,
 Oceans of healing, for all the world.

2. Healing is rising, fresh with the morning,
 Healing is rising, bursting with grace.
 Christ, our rich healing, deep in creation,
 Heal Earth's deep wounds and rise in this place.

3. Healing is offered, leaves from the life tree,
 Healing is offered nations at war.
 Come, wounded Healer, torn by the violence,
 Rise from the grave, bring peace to our shore.

4. Healing is given, flows from forgiveness,
 Healing is given, flows from our faith.
 Christ, give us heart to love your deep healing,
 Living forgiveness, even in death.

5. Healing is rising, free in Christ's body,
 Healing is flowing, free with Christ's blood.
 May this deep healing pulse through our bodies,
 Heal the world's wounds still bleeding and red.

Words: © Norman Habel 2000

Dramatised Readings for Humanity Sunday

Reading 1: Genesis 1.26-28 Colleen Rowe

Then God said, 'Let us make humanity in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air and over the cattle and over all the wild animals of Earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on Earth.

So God created humanity in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill Earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon Earth.

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Reading 2: Genesis 2.7-8, 15, 19

Reader – Colleen Rowe and Voices 1, 2, 3

Then the Lord God formed a human being from the dust of the ground and breathed into the nostrils the breath of life. And the human being became a living creature.

And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the East. Then the Lord God took the human being and put the human being in the garden of Eden to serve and preserve it.

Then out of the ground the Lord God formed every animal in the field and every bird of the air and brought them to the human being.

Voice 1 I am the first human being, the voice of the human being in Reading One. I am Adam and Eve.
I am humanity!

Voice 2 I am the first human being, the voice of the human being in Reading Two. I am Adam and Eve.
I am humanity!

Voice 1 God made me in a special way. The word of God in Genesis One says so!

Voice 2 And God made me in a special way. The word of God in Genesis Two says so!

Voice 1 I am created in the image of God. Do you understand? The very image of God!

Voice 2 I have been made personally by God. Do you understand? By God's own hands!

Voice 1 I am like God, created in God's own likeness.

Voice 2 I am liked by God. I even live in a garden where God likes to walk and talk!

Voice 1 I have human reason. That makes me superior to all other living creatures! Superior! Get it!

Voice 2 I am flesh taken from Earth itself and breath that comes from God. So, I am kin with all other creatures. We are family! Do you understand family?

Voice 1 Family? Fiddlesticks! I have dominion over all creatures. I dominate! I tame!

I rule all other creatures. Your family!

Voice 2 I have a partnership with all other creatures. We are friends. We are partners.

Voice 1 I am authorised by God to subdue Earth, to harness nature, to put creation under my feet.

Yes, to control your friends!

Voice 2 I have been given the responsibility by God to serve Earth and preserve it, to care for Earth as God's Garden.

Voice 1 I can conquer creation. I rule! I rule!

Voice 2 I groan with creation. When you rule, I suffer. I suffer!

Voice 1 I am the king of Earth. I bear the image of God! I am king over creation! I rule!

Voice 2 I am a servant on Earth, caring for creation.

Voice 1 I am king! God said so! God said so!

Voice 2 I am a servant, God said so!

Voice 3 Wait just a minute! Stop your arguing!

Voices 1 & 2 I have God's word on my side!
Voice 3 Sure you have! But do you have the final word?
 Do you have Jesus' word? Do you? (*Silence*)

Voice 3 Who is the one who reflects the true image of God on Earth? Come on! Who?
Voice 1 & 2 Jesus Christ!

Voice 3 Who is the true servant of God? Come on. Who?
Voice 1 & 2 Jesus Christ!

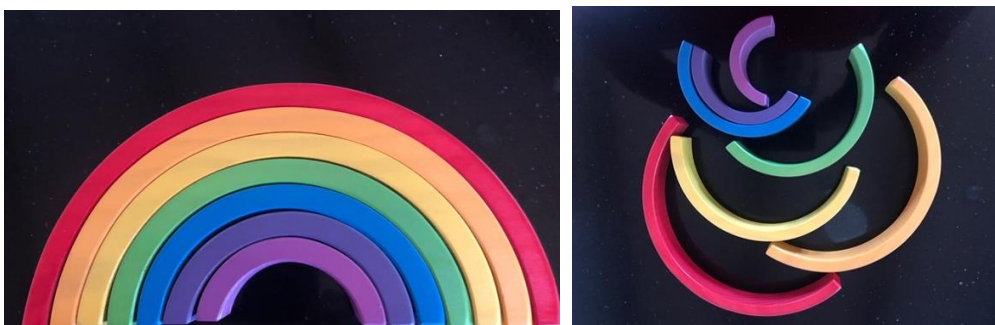
Voice 3 And how does Jesus invite us to live? To rule like the Romans and dominate like their Caesars?! Or to follow the way of the cross and serve as Christ came to serve? Listen to his word from the Gospel for today!

Reading 3: Luke 16:19-31 – Colleen Rowe

¹⁹ 'There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. ²⁰ And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, ²¹ who longed to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the rich man's table; even the dogs would come and lick his sores. ²² The poor man died and was carried away by the angels to be with Abraham.^[a] The rich man also died and was buried. ²³ In Hades, where he was being tormented, he looked up and saw Abraham far away with Lazarus by his side.^[b] ²⁴ He called out, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in agony in these flames." ²⁵ But Abraham said, "Child, remember that during your lifetime you received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in agony. ²⁶ Besides all this, between you and us a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who might want to pass from here to you cannot do so, and no one can cross from there to us." ²⁷ He said, "Then, father, I beg you to send him to my father's house— ²⁸ for I have five brothers—that he may warn them, so that they will not also come into this place of torment." ²⁹ Abraham replied, "They have Moses and the prophets; they should listen to them." ³⁰ He said, "No, father Abraham; but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent." ³¹ He said to him, "If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.'"

Young at Heart – God's Rainbow

God gave us a rainbow to symbolise his covenant with us to never again destroy creation. Each of us needs to do our part to rebuild the rainbow whenever it's destroyed by humanity. I invite members of the congregation to come forward to help rebuild the rainbow as we pray for the healing of creation



A liturgy for Whales TBC - Mountview Young People

Hymn 143: Immortal, Invisible, God only Wise 2016 Hymn Channel

<https://youtu.be/pfu1dqKCGd8>

Reflection for Forest Hill on Creation – Rev Tina

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, amen

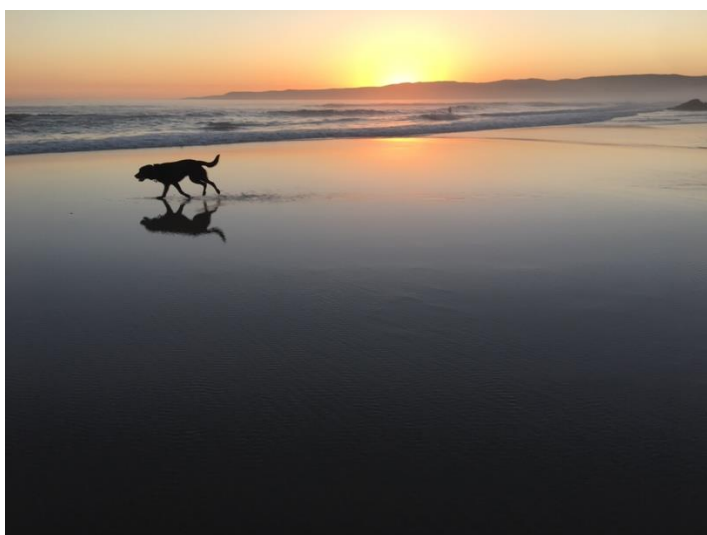


The flood ends and Noah and his family begin life again.

Life is full of new beginnings, where we need to pick up the pieces of our lives and journey on, except that this new beginning was different. God made a resolution, a covenant with all people never again to destroy his creation and the 'never again' was symbolised in a rainbow. Never again would God give up on humanity. God resolved to continue to call us to embrace God's purposes for creation.

It is up to us to remember God's covenant. To develop a social conscience and be good stewards of creation. If we ignore creation and wilfully destroy it, there will be consequences. We will reap what we sow in climate change, extinction, natural disasters, drought, and starvation, where humanity suffers globally.

I remember buying toys for my children forty years ago and having a conversation with the toy shop owner. He was grieving deeply because he knew of the destruction of what he called "our nest", the world we live in, not just by corporations or nations, but by each one of us in our everyday choices.



Many of us may have seen our coastlines polluted by washed up plastic or may have watched documentaries about ocean animals whose stomachs are full of plastic and who have starved to death. We may have watched documentaries about people in the Mediterranean who used to make a living out of fishing but now the fisheries are now overfished or destroyed by large fishing trawlers that dredge the ocean and take away all life. Forests have been destroyed and tribes of indigenous peoples have been slaughtered and many have become extinct.

We can feel so powerless when faced with such destruction, yet we want to do something and act.

Whenever the environment experiences brokenness, the church is called to break the silence and become the voice of the voiceless. The church is called to heal God's creation and to be united and speak out and hold those who are responsible to account. When the rainbow is broken by the actions of a few, that affects all, and we are called as Christians to become the voice for the suffering and rebuild the rainbow. We can even become the voice for a small island community whose island no longer exists due to rising waters.



The church needs to take up the challenge of protecting our environment. The actions of some affect the wellbeing of all. There is a need to embrace a spirituality that honours the land such as Celtic Spirituality. We can recycle, reuse, replant, lobby, write, speak out.



We can also learn from our indigenous neighbours whose wisdom over the ages is founded in care of the land. I remember meeting Uncle Bob at the Parliament of Religions. Looking into his eyes was like looking at the entire milky way. His soul spoke of his spirituality and connection with Creation.

There are many practical things we can do such as recycle, reuse, replant, lobby, write, speak out. Many others are taking this challenge on too.

There is a proposal to include the crime of ecocide, alongside of Genocide, the crime of aggression, war crimes and crimes against humanity, in the Rome statute of the International Criminal Court. The church needs to speak out and support this proposal. We need to know more about this initiative to prevent more destruction and unite with all those who want to hold individuals, including rogue leaders and directors of companies or corporations, liable for the destruction they cause.

We must not give up and must do our best to work for the good of all humanity, in local and global actions. If God's heart can be changed, so can ours.

God's creation includes humanity. Forty years ago, I visited Batam, a tiny Indonesian island located between Singapore and Bali. I bought a can of coke and accidentally dropped it. A local man picked it up and gave it back to me. It was damaged and I was reluctant to drink it but was very aware the cost of that can of coke was a day's wages in many places, and this man probably only earned the price of one or two cans of coke a day. Little did I know at the time that the world would be polluted by cans and in third world nations some people are drinking coke instead of eating food and are experiencing malnutrition. There is so much need.

God put people in charge of creation, and they subdued and destroyed its rivers, oceans, mountains, and deserts. Yet God continues to restore and recreate. God doesn't give up on creation or us.

Until the world embraces love of neighbour and an ethic of responsibility for creation, people will suffer, and die. As the poet W.H. Auden said: *We must love one another or die.*

We as Christians need to lead the way. One voice alone is not heard, but united as all churches together, we can be heard. We can take up the towel Jesus once used to wash feet and can humbly call for all members to embrace a new way of being, where our love for God and for neighbour as ourselves, includes responsibility for the wellbeing of all those who come after us.

Let our legacy be life, not death. Let us mend God's broken rainbow by joining with all those calling for the healing and protection of God's creation.

Reflection for Mountview on – Luke 16:19-31 - Rev Tina

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, amen.

Jesus tells a parable about an unrepentant rich man who has spent all he has on feasting and wearing rich and beautiful clothes believing God has blessed him and he has ignored a beggar named Lazarus who sat at his gate begging, a beggar he considered cursed by God. When they both die, everything is reversed. The rich man goes to hell and the beggar to heaven. In life there was a huge chasm between the rich man and the beggar, and this continues after death.

What stands out is the rich man is nameless, although the tax collectors, sinners, day labourers and beggars, who are listening to Jesus and who are all considered cursed by God by the Pharisees, know who Jesus is directing this parable towards. The Pharisees. Lazarus is the hero, the one with a name, which means *God is my Help* or *God has helped*.



Images from Revised Common Lectionary

In the parable the rich man calls out to Abraham, and he responds, calling him: *Child*. The rich man is still a child of Abraham, just like Lazarus. Except that there are no more chances for the rich man and Lazarus is now blessed by God.

Jesus' parable is a wakeup call to the Pharisees. Will they listen? Will it be too late for them too?

There is no shortage of rich people and beggars throughout history. Most regard one another with suspicion. The rich fear robbery and the beggars hope for a coin or two. A woman sits outside my local supermarket begging whenever her money and food runs out. People drop a few coins on her dirty scarf laid out on the ground. Very few say anything or stop to have a conversation. In the city people have their quilts and blankets laid out on the cold ground outside David Jones and other shops. People pass by trying not to make eye contact. When I worked in the city a man organised for blind and disabled people to play musical instruments and busk. I remember greeting Charles, who played his flute outside Myers. Perhaps it's easier to label people, rather than develop a social conscience.

The parable questions the behaviour of the Pharisees and whether they are genuine in their faith or hypocrites who do not adhere to the teachings of Moses who calls for compassion for the poor. It questions whether they're false teachers who reject God's purposes in the world. Jesus provokes them to rethink how they use their wealth and how they witness to their faith.

In the parable the rich man in Hades is unrepentant and still doesn't get it. He asks that Lazarus wait on him and pay attention to his needs. He wants Lazarus to sacrifice his comfort and blessing in heaven and leave heaven to go to Hades to care for him or be sent as a messenger to warn his family. After he ignored Lazarus, and showed no mercy or compassion to him, he expects Lazarus to show compassion and mercy to him and care for him and his family. After treating Lazarus with such unkindness, and ignoring him, the rich man wants Abraham to make Lazarus pay attention to him. I'm sure the irony of this wasn't lost on the crowds. The arrogance of the rich man wouldn't be lost on them either.

I remember a poster in a coffee shop in Nepal said: *Material wealth is spiritual bankruptcy*. Perhaps the rich man in the parable has lost all awareness of God.

So, what do we make of this parable?

I grew up with my grandmother's stories about the great depression. She and her daughter and son-in-law owned and managed Carinya guesthouse at Lorne for many years. During the depression, men would come to the back door of the kitchen looking for odd jobs and food. Many were returned soldiers or men of all professions and trades, some once wealthy men who had lost all their money. Many of these men were hoping to earn something to send home to the family. My grandmother always found them something to do, and there was always a meal and some money.



Image by Tissot from Revised Common Lectionary

Life is fragile and we never know when hard times or loss or challenges can come that leave us feeling lost, or without any purpose or meaning in life. Comfort, a welcome, a kind word, dignity, a smile, “you’re welcome” or simple acknowledgment is enough to give us, or others hope and courage to go on.

The good news for all is Christ is in the faces of the lost, hungry and dispossessed and it is they whom Christ offers the greatest hope. Thousands have followed and still follow him. Jesus does not ignore or neglect the poor.

Perhaps the parable challenges us to rethink our identity and purpose in Christ, where we do not ignore and neglect the poor in this world. Perhaps it calls all parents or grandparents to rethink the legacy they will leave their children or grandchildren. Perhaps their legacy can be one of including all the family in acts of mercy and compassion towards others, simply because we love and follow Christ and look to him as our exemplar.

I do remember what motivated me to step forward for ministry. Managing a legal crisis and referral service with a team of people where I either met with or took all the long calls of those who were traumatised, victims of crime, had mental health issues or family law matters or were facing a crisis. I must have spoken with over thirty thousand or more. Again, and again people spoke of their need to belong, to be loved, to have dignity, a home, safety, family, a job, a purpose, food and security, belief in something good or faith. Most of all they wanted to be heard, noticed, and valued, not ignored, shown no mercy, or compassion.

Next time you look at those who have lost all and are forced to beg, consider how God sees them and allow God to awaken your heart. That is what Jesus is doing. Awakening the hearts of all who will listen, hoping they will embrace his social ethics of mercy, compassion, and action. That’s the good news of this parable. It awakens and stirs our hearts into acting with compassion and love.

Hymn 589 - Jesus Calls us O’er the Tumult - 2016 Koine A modern version

Tune out to the chaotic noise of the world and hear the voice of Jesus calling to you, “love me more than these...”

<https://youtu.be/wpjXuuFTqus>

Offering Prayer

L God, our Creator, through your love you have given us these gifts to share. Accept our offerings as an expression of our deep thanks and our concern for those in need, including our fellow creatures on planet Earth.

P With all creation, we bless our Creator.

Prayers of the People and the Lord’s Prayer – John Gerrard

Loving God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we bring to you now our prayers for others. As we consider the wonderful world in which you have placed us to live, we pray particularly today for the people of Bolivia, Brazil, Chile and Peru.

We give thanks for:

- the distinctive rhythms, music, dance, food and natural medicine in this area
- the beauty of the region, forests, mountains, rivers, lakes, and ocean coastlines, and especially indigenous peoples’ relationship with, and care for, the natural environment
- churches who witness and work both ecumenically and with those of other faiths to build relationships of trust and commitment amid ongoing injustice and oppression

- the diversity of languages and cultures flourishing in the region despite disruptions that have occurred through colonization, and political and economic turmoil.

We pray for:

- Christians to have the courage, imagination and energy to build bridges of peace and understanding against conflict and division, and to pursue justice for the poor, marginalized and dispossessed
- an end of corruption in all levels of the society, including economic exploitation which impoverishes and hinders economic growth from benefitting all.
- immigrants and refugees seeking a new home, and those who accompany and support them
- cocoa farmers to find sustainable incomes from other crops, for an end to drug trafficking, and effective assistance for those who are addicted.

We thank you Lord, for the peaceful and unifying influence that Queen Elizabeth has given to Britain and to the world throughout her 70 year reign, and we pray that you will bless and guide the new King that he may wisely lead the Commonwealth for the benefit of all.

In our **ecumenical** prayer cycle we remember today your people worshipping and serving at St Edwards Anglican, Blackburn South. May they know your presence with them as they seek to show your love to others in their neighbourhood. The people of St Edwards are operating a wide range of community activities, both onsite and online worship, a craft workshop, Prayer by Phone, Online Bible Study, men's breakfasts and exercise classes. We ask your blessing on the programs offered by the church, and on those who participate and lead.

Within the **Uniting Church** we pray today for the worship and work of St Margaret's Uniting Church, Mooroolbark. St Margaret's reaches into the community with a range of activities for women, men, families and young people, and we pray that you will bless and guide their work as they seek to show your love to the community around them. We remember too our Synod's Associate General Secretary and the overall leadership team of Synod. In these times of social change we pray for your guidance and encouragement for our leaders as they take the church forward into the often unknown future.

Within our local cluster of parishes we seek your blessing on our people, on our worship and our work together. We ask your blessing on each member of our cluster ministry team as they lead us in worship, service and growth at the parishes within the cluster. May this be a time of encouragement and growth for us all. We pray today for comfort and healing for those close to us who are unwell or who need your guidance and strength, and we remember and pray for them now in silence

We bring these prayers in our Saviour's name, praying the words that he taught us:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.

Hymn 665 - Jesus Christ is Waiting 2020

John Bell and Graham Moule of the Iona Community published 1988 Chet Valley Churches

https://youtu.be/CSzEviUc_o

Sending Out

L Christ calls you to be his disciples, to serve him with love and compassion, to serve Earth and the peoples of Earth.
Will you care for creation?

P With Christ, we will care for creation!

With Christ, we will keep our planet green!

With Christ, we will celebrate life!

Blessing

- L May the Risen Christ, who brings, restores life to all in our planet, fill you with his living presence to praise the Creator and help revive creation.
Go in peace! Serving Christ and loving Earth!
- P **We go in peace, serving the Risen Christ and celebrating all creatures--including whales!**

YouTube Hymn: Shalom to you now – tMt video

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=liH_HdkWs74&list=PL5dbbdzyKBag-mEd9qTgdyYNQLIsLD2rC&index=44

Pastoral Care tips – Rev Tina**The healing power of Silence**

Thousands of years ago men and women sought the silence of the desert to be close to God. They were known as the desert Fathers and Mothers. Many of their writings are contained in the *Philokalia*, (meaning *love of the good and beautiful*) a book of sayings, which you may find in many Orthodox homes. Sayings that come from years of living in silence and listening to God with the heart. I had a taste of silence in the Sahara with a group of people. We waited in the dark for dawn and its light made the golden sand pink. One man who had discovered silence for the first time wished he could have his own sand dune where he could sit in

silence for days and days. He had discovered silence was his friend.

Many of us fear silence. We do not befriend it because often feel stripped naked in front of God. For some, with enough silence, unresolved issues may rise into their consciousness. Imagine the energy trying to prevent this from happening and the freedom that may come from not controlling these memories. If this is something that is preventing you from living with freedom and joy, seek counselling and healing.

Meditation offers silence. I remember learning Vipassana Insight meditation in a retreat centre and being silent for twenty-one days. Over time I relaxed into the silence. I realised how much energy went into speaking where I had very little left to listen to others.

Silence can also be a gift. I remember a priest I spoke with while learning about Christianity in Asia. I rambled on for ages about my concerns and he listened silently, nodding occasionally, until I worked out my own problem. It was like he made space for my soul, where I felt listened to and valued. What a gift. I learned much from his generosity.

God is in the silence. Often the silence seems loud, so strong is God's presence.