



AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR
CHRISTIANITY AND CULTURE

WISDOM FOR THE COMMON GOOD

ABOUT THE NEED FOR PEACE- MAKING LEADERSHIP TO GIVE HOPE

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With inspired leadership, St. Paul's Cathedral in Melbourne has a beautiful globe of our earth suspended above the altar now and for these coming weeks. <https://cathedral.org.au/gaia/>

One's eye is drawn to it immediately upon entering the Cathedral.

If I could make one wish it would be that those with and seeking political leadership might come to the Cathedral and sit silently, taking this in.

When I look at this, I have three current reflections.

First, everything is a gift. Everything.

In spiritual practice, one learns attention to our breath.

As we breath in and out, we know life is here now and is a complete gift.

Yes, in the web of life on our tiny planet in a universe of incomprehensible vastness and wonder.

It is so wonderful that we are now seeing light that left a distant star some 13 billion light years ago!

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-03-30/star-13-billion-light-years-from-earth-is-most-distant-ever-discovered>

It is a divine creation, as we appreciate the wonder of being here at all.

Yes, down here, on our island along with the kookaburras, the kangaroos, the waratahs and the wallabies.

Hence, the call of all faith traditions is that we cherish and care for this gift of planetary life.

Hence the insistence that science shapes policy and political leadership so that the Paris Agreement is fully implemented and the rise in global temperatures is contained to the 1.5 degree limit, ASAP.

All this is a matter of justice and love.

Secondly, when we look at our one earth as portrayed in St Pauls Cathedral, it is obvious that we are one human family .

Much that currently passes for reality then looks to be complete folly.

How can it be that, with potential catastrophic global warming, a pandemic still ravaging many communities, more than eighty million people already displaced internationally by war and

violence, thousands of nuclear weapons sitting on trigger alert, that, in this context, we can have leadership speaking words that fan hate and fear?

How can it be that people who have never met speak so badly of one another?

It is as if we have learned nothing about reconciliation from the mistakes of times past.

But we have. Including that an enemy may be someone who's story we do not know very well. Therefore, we should seek an opportunity to meet. We should create space by acknowledging our own mistakes and asking forgiveness. We should look for initial small steps that are trust-building .We should meet quietly, diplomatically. We should restrain language that amplifies enmity.

If only those politicians, so quick to speak words of war these past days, as regards China and the Solomons ,had instead taken a vow of silence and sat in St Pauls Cathedral ,pondering our planet in the place of Holy Communion.

It was, looking back, the choice of biblical King Solomon to seek wisdom so that he could make good decisions for his people.

Thus, a third reflection is therefore that Australia is at a moment of choice.

On our island there are many fine people who know what makes for peace. Including folk with a background both in China and in the islands of the Pacific, the ocean named for peace.

Australia still has the potential to give the global family hope and optimism about the future. It can be a future of peaceful co-operation.

We cannot let this opportunity be trashed by leadership ill-suited to the hour.

As the old song goes, 'all we are saying is give peace a chance'!

Bishop Philip Huggins.

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