



SHOALHAVEN CATHOLIC NEWS

Mid-Year Newsletter 2006

Established 1863

Nowra Parish
nowraparish.org.au

St Michael's, 20 North Street, Nowra (02) 4423 1712
St Joseph's, Moss Vale Road, Kangaroo Valley
St Patrick's, Albert Street, Berry

Sacred Heart, Bunberra Street, Bomaderry
Mary, Help of Christians, Silvermere Street, Culburra
Holy Spirit, St George Ave, Vincentia (02) 44 415571

The Ordination of Richard Healey: Welcome Father!

More than a hundred parishioners travelled to Wollongong on 24 June (including two coach-loads) to be present when Richard Healey was ordained a priest by Bishop Peter Ingham in the Cathedral of St Francis Xavier. Many more joined in the next day when Richard celebrated his first Mass of Thanksgiving in the parish hall. Both events were very joyful and featured great music.

Richard came to Nowra Parish in March 2005 and has ministered here as a seminarian, deacon and now as a priest. Born further down the coast, Richard received his sacraments of initiation and completed his schooling in the Bega Valley. In May 1986 during Year 12 he took part in an Antioch weekend in Bega which provided him with what he describes as an understanding and experience of the personal love of Jesus. He has been active in Church circles ever since. After school, he moved to Sydney, where he completed a degree in Economics and Accounting at Sydney University. It was during his final year of university that he had the first clear sense of being called to follow Jesus in the priesthood. In 1990 he began to work



full-time in university ministry—mainly at Sydney Uni—while living in a formation house for consecrated life in the northern suburbs of Sydney, under the care of Fr Julian Porteous (now an auxiliary Bishop in Sydney). In 1992 the community moved to Annandale, and Richard commenced seminary

studies at St Patrick's College, Manly, which would include a Bachelor and Masters degrees in Theology. Richard completed his seminary formation in 1997, after the move to the Seminary of the Good Shepherd in Homebush the previous year. During 1996-1998, most of Richard's time and energy were

taken up with creating and coordinating the Australian World Youth Day office, which included organising and leading a group of 550 young Australians to Paris for the 1997 WYD. In June 1998, during a parish placement in western Sydney, Richard discerned that it was not the right time to be ordained, and left the seminary. After working as an ESL (English) teacher for Vietnamese and Cambodian migrants in Cabramatta and also in marketing, in early 1999 Richard joined the Discalced Carmelites, a contemplative order that has its origins in late twelfth century Palestine. Based for the next four years in the Order's

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Reflection Day - Holy Spirit Community

Sr Val Green, rsc

Thirty ladies from Holy Spirit Parish Community recently attended a Reflection Day at the home of Deirdre Sedman. The facilitator was Sr Anna Warlow (Good Samaritan Sister) together with two of her team, Pat and Beth from Berreka Centre at Pennant Hills.

The theme of the day was *Walking a Sacred Path*: "Life is a sacred journey of twists and turns that engages us in a search for the wholeness and authenticity for which we long. Our desire for a deeper exploration of life challenges

us to move onwards and inwards. This journey along a sacred path, sometimes not of our choosing, takes us inward to the deepest most central parts of ourselves where God dwells."

We were encouraged in the sacred act of 'Listening as a Spiritual Awareness'. There is a basic context that nurtures and develops the practice of listening as a sacred act. Three qualities that are essential to this deep listening context are silence, reflection and presence,

- a) Silence creates the space for listening to God;**
- b) Reflection gives us access to listening for our inner voice;**
- c) Presence is the awareness of listening to another.**

During the course of the day groups of two were encouraged to be present to each other and really listen to the other

person's story.

The day also consisted of small groups sharing thoughts on their faith journeys.

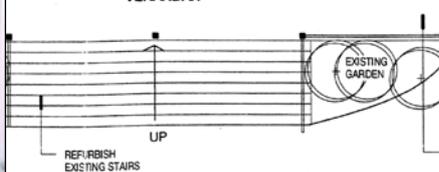
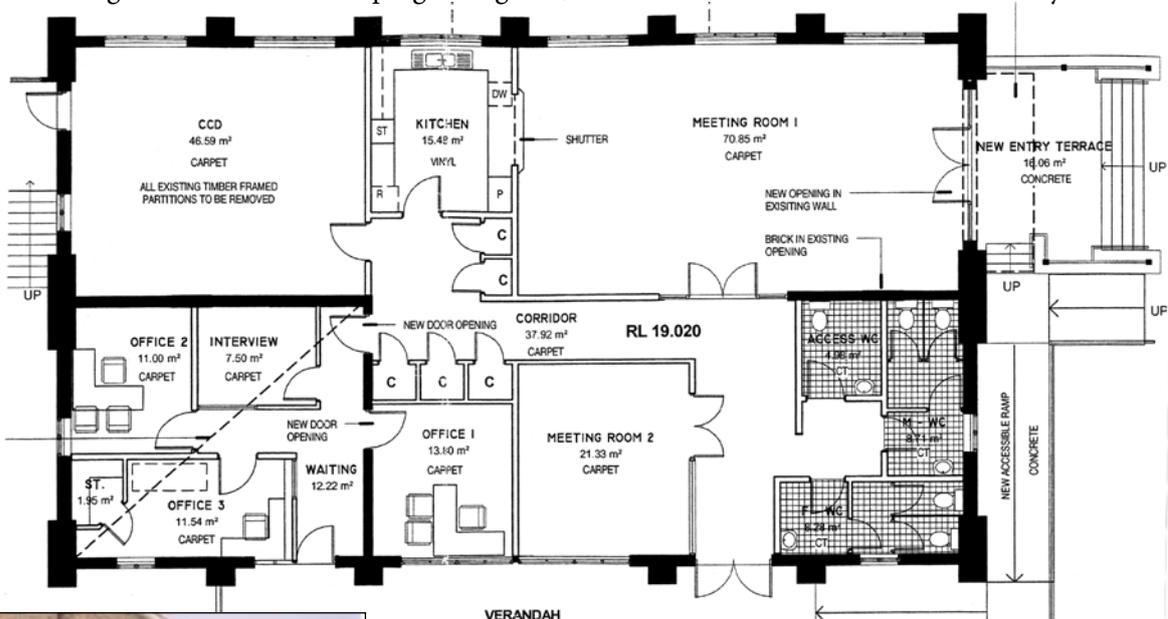
Small cards featuring an old cart wheel were distributed for reflection. The outside rim of the wheel represented the busyness of our daily lives and we were encouraged to sometimes leave the rim and venture into the centre of the wheel (our spiritual centre).

All those present enjoyed their 'time out' from their busy lives and as usual a beautiful morning tea was provided by the ladies, who can always be relied upon to 'come up with the goodies'! We shared a BYO lunch before moving out once more to the 'rim of the wheel'.

Our grateful thanks to Deirdre Sedman for allowing us to enjoy the day in the peace of her beautiful home.

Our "new" Parish Centre takes shape

The photographs below show the commencement of the transformation of the old school/parish hall into our new Parish Centre. We will all be waiting to see the progress. Hopefully in our Christmas issue of the Newsletter we will be able to publish the completed building. The renovations are progressing well, and the interior works are well-underway.



Launch of SS Vinnies: *Labours of a local legend*



The good ship “Vinnies” was launched this month at the Bomaderry Lions Park by the Jim Da Silva Farm community, a long-term refuge for homeless men run by St Vincent de Paul. The launch was held to celebrate the fine work of Monty Adams, a much valued resident of Jim Da Silva Farm, who had purchased and renovated the 14ft boat. Monty was supported on the day by a large group of friends who have come to know and love him since he arrived at Jim Da Silva Farm.

Monty has worked a very impressive transformation of the boat from poor condition to a truly handsome vessel. It was wonderful to watch this process. Monty worked on the boat most days for several months, stripping the paint back to bare metal, patching holes, repainting, wiring and rebuilding the trailer. Monty took no short cuts in renovating the boat, only moving on to the next stage when the last job was complete.

Monty was born and bred in Auburn, Sydney, during the depression and war years. It was during this time that he developed his lateral ‘do-it-yourself’ approach. Monty’s life has been characterised by hard work. He spent his working years labouring in many different factory jobs and fruit pick-

ing throughout NSW and Victoria. He frequently moved between these kinds of work, taking the time to enjoy travel along the way.

Over this time Monty rented flats, sometimes living with families or onsite at factories. Worsening arthritis in his fifties prevented Monty from continuing employment, and for many years he travelled between men’s refuges and lived in bush caves.

Monty came to the Farm around twelve months ago. At 73 years of age, he presented as a quiet and rather timid man after having experienced violence from neighbours at his housing commission flat.

The rebuilding of the boat has been a wonderful opportunity to discover things about Monty’s character and previous experience, which had been lying dormant. His skill, expertise and ingenuity shone through, as did his perseverance and good-humour. Monty’s pride in his work and sense of personal confidence also grew as he worked this transformation of the boat.

It has been encouraging to see how life at Jim Da Silva Farm has provided an environment where Monty could achieve this kind of personal fulfilment and success. We are looking forward to seeing much more of Monty’s creativity and craftsmanship in the future!

St Michael’s at Crossroads

St Michael’s Parish hosted the March meeting of Crossroads. We had a wonderful night of “Everything Irish - Everything Green”, even the lemonade at supper!



Above: Our great all-ways kitchen Parish people. Who is hiding his tea towel in the back row?

Every month “Crossroaders” celebrate birthdays. Salvina Pulis, a wonderful Parishioner who is always a great support behind the scenes, joined with the March Birthday celebrants.

Crossroads is held at the Church of Christ, Illaroo Road, on the second Friday of each month.



Thoughts on Marriage!

Lillian Wilkins

“A commitment in any relationship is a challenging task. But to surrender oneself to the intimacy and the constant day-to-day demands of married life is perhaps one of the greatest opportunities for fulfilment and growth that a person can face. Is it any wonder then, that over the centuries of Christian reflection, the Church has come to see marriage as a sign of the unconditional love Christ has for us, and a sign of the unity in which we as Christians are called to live?”

(Taken from *Catholic Australia*)



When we made our wedding vows we were young and healthy with our lives ahead of us and I don't think we entirely understood our commitment when we said, “In sickness and in health”, but now in our twilight years we have a fuller understanding and I'll speak about that presently. (As an aside—Statistics show that married people on average enjoy better health—we keep an eye on each other and lead healthy lifestyles.)

In the early years of our marriage, life was an adventure—with the birth of children to cement our marriage, emigrating to Australia, working hard to make a new life for our family—something we would have found difficult to achieve without God's help and guidance and the help of our fellow Christians.

As our children grew up, left home to make their own lives and have families, we might have thought our concerns for them were over but that is something that never changes. They might no longer be under our roof but they are in our hearts and thoughts and our concern for them never goes away. Sometimes we feel helpless but Geoff and I firmly believe in the power of prayer and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

In turn as we grow older our children's role has reversed somewhat in that they now show concern for us.

Our home has become just the two of us with more time for each other. We found it important that this new stage of our marriage allowed us to pursue our different interests, this in turn leads to much to talk about, but we also share many interests in common especially our love of music, politics and by far the most important, our Church.

In more recent years our relationship has changed as we have both had illnesses and have relied on each other for support, giving each other the strength to face the feeling of vulnerability and frailty, which comes with illness and old age. We certainly know now what the vow “sickness and in health” really means. We have come to a greater knowledge of God's love and our understanding of faith has become clearer and stronger.

Looking back I realise that our love for each other has changed considerably from the *romantic* image when first we married. Our love has become stronger, closer, one of companionship and comfort. The saying “my spouse is my best friend” really is true. However, it's still not “a bed of roses” and I quote: “marriage is such a constant change every day; sometimes it's boring, sometimes it's exciting, sometimes it's joyful, sometimes it's awful”.¹

Over the past 54 years with its highs and lows there has been one constant—the knowledge of God's presence and blessing every day of our marriage. We could not survive without the aid of the sacraments and prayer. Jesus walks with us on our journey—in short, the sacrament of marriage reveals to us that intimate relationship we bear with Jesus.

Richard's Ordination

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retreat centre and novitiate in Varroville, near Campbelltown, he undertook formation in spirituality, prayer and philosophy as well as honing his skills in website and graphic design. After a stint in Melbourne, Richard realised that he was not called to a contemplative life, and left the Order in May 2003. Returning to Sydney, Richard took up a position at Catholic Communications, working mainly in website design and print publications. Realising the desire for priesthood had not left him, Richard applied to join Wollongong Diocese at the end of 2004.



Richard describes the last 15 months of ministering in Nowra parish as a time of great consolidation, maturing and encouragement. He is deeply grateful to the parishioners for making him so welcome and sharing their lives and faith with him, especially as he has visited the sick and housebound. He is thankful for the opportunity to explore the incredible natural beauty that so characterises the parish and the chance to regularly get lost in the bush. Richard has a passion for church renewal and music, photography and design, and hopes to utilise these gifts in his priestly life and ministry.



¹ Derek Denton and Margaret Scott, *Two of us*.

St Michael's Young Adult Group

Jody Le

The St Michael's Young Adult Group for 20-40 year olds began meeting in February this year. The group is about sharing our faith journeys together, building friendships and inspiring and challenging each other to learn and grow in Faith.

To this end, we invite guest speakers to share with the group their knowledge and experience. To date we have heard about "What Catholics Believe", "Understanding Mary" and "The Person of Jesus".

We also have regular prayer nights rich with worship, music, Scripture, reflections and sharing stories.



The Group also meets for a variety of social events including dinners, tennis and bowling. We are all looking forward to our Spring bushwalk.

In September, three young *Missionaries of God's Love* sisters from Canberra will be running a day retreat for us in Berry. It will be a fantastic opportunity to spend quiet time with each other and with Jesus.

(The retreat is open to all young adults - Call Jody on 4422 3318 for details and bookings.)

Photographs taken at the Paschal Meal.

Taizé at St Patrick's, Berry



On 2 June, a wild and woolly evening about 50 people from diverse backgrounds and church denominations braved the weather to pray, sing and chant and reflect in the Taizé tradition in the beautiful candle lit church, which was glowing and bathed in the soft light of many candles and votive lamps, about 100 in all.

Everyone participated in the simple, reflective and deeply spiritual songs and chants, led by the musicians and choir. These, together with readings and silent prayer reached their highlight when all processed up to the specially prepared altar to light prayer candles for their own special intentions.

A delicious supper followed in the hall, with much discussion and making of new friends. It was clear that all were very glad to have attended, and had been warmed by the atmospherics of the candle-lit church so magnificently prepared by the Taizé group, especially Les Ambrus and his musicians and singers.

The experience was so powerful, enjoyable and positive that everyone was seeking information about where future ones would be held. These, will of course, be included in church notices. Make a point to attend one soon—you'll be so pleased you did.



Vocations Congress Arts Competition for children in Government Schools: Winner - Kinder & Year 1 ... Nowra East Public School

Congratulations are in order to Cathy Hamilton, Liz Medina and the infant grades at Nowra East Public School. Under the skilled and loving supervision of their Catechists the children entered their poster in the Diocesan-wide Vocations Competition. Their theme was "People Who Help Us". Many fireman, police, doctors and nurses in all their varying forms were carefully and lovingly laid out on the cardboard. It was all the children's work!

We were delighted to receive the news that the East Nowra entry had been chosen out of all the Diocesan-wide entries (in all sections) as the winner.

So far, a certificate has been presented to the children and Leonie Green will further recognise this great effort at our next Catechist's meeting. Hopefully we

will be able to display the winning entry in St Michael's Church foyer when it finds its way back to us.

Thank you so much Cathy and Liz for your work.

"How wonderful is it that nobody needs wait a single moment before starting to improve the world"

(Anne Frank)

Slow Down: *Take time, walk a little more slowly, eat more slowly, avoid trying to do two or three things at once, let your body be reflective in its movements. Be where you are. You cannot be truly present to anyone or anything at speed. Being present is being in love. Give yourself a chance to enjoy it!*

St John the Evangelist Catholic High School

Foundation Day, 2 June 2006

Helen Crocco



reverently and prayerfully throughout the liturgy in word, song and action.

This year's Foundation Day Mass had a slightly different format and featured Purcell House Patron Saint, St Francis of Assisi, who has long been recognized as Patron of Ecology. With World Environment Day falling on 5 June, it was decided to incorporate a prayer and reflection that centred on celebrating the marvels and wonders of God's creation. A spectacular PowerPoint presentation accompanied by music allowed the congregation to view the sights of nature's beauty and to meditate on the

Following the Mass, staff and students took the opportunity to celebrate as a school community. Food, games, guessing competitions, hair and face painting and other challenging activities were central to the fund-raising that took place that afternoon. Coordinated by Mrs Maria Chaytor and supervised by House Patrons and Home Room Teachers, St John's managed to raise a total of \$2067.64 for the St Vincent de Paul Winter Appeal.

Sincere thanks must go to all the students who contributed to the Mass, in particular those who provided music,

The feast of Pentecost, and birthday of the Church was an appropriate occasion to celebrate the Foundation of St John the Evangelist, Nowra. Recalling the incredible gifts that were instilled in the disciples fifty days after the death and resurrection of Jesus, all those assembled were able to pray that our community might be inflamed by the power of the Holy Spirit in our day-to-day existence. This was an opportunity to remember our ancestors, the many people who, directly and indirectly, have had an input into the formation of this school. This year, of course, marks St John's 15th year as an educational establishment and it was a time to celebrate the charism and core values that connected to our School Houses through the Patrons that give our Houses their names. The list is quite formidable: St Benedict, Caroline Chisholm, Mary MacKillop, Bishop Thomas McCabe, Bishop Bede Polding and Father Purcell. These are people whose names are etched in history for their Christian character and contribution to the Church. Some are well known throughout the Church: others are known on a local sphere as quiet achievers who championed specific causes and have left an indelible mark on the Church.

The Mass, celebrated by Father Ron Peters and assisted by soon-to-be ordained Deacon Richard, was a joy-filled occasion. Students participated



words and extracts of the Psalms and St Francis' *Canticle of Creation*. The Mass concluded with House Captains inviting members of their House Teams to stand and affirm their Core Values publicly and prayerfully.

Throughout the proceedings, the rain continued to fall steadily. The wet weather did not dampen the spirit of our school community and it was viewed as a blessing on the whole. Our Foundation Day was showered with much-needed rain and this was taken in good spirit as the festivities continued on into the afternoon.

the singers and cantors of the Psalm, and to all who served and processed. A special thanks to those who assisted in the Liturgy: Fr Ron, Deacon Richard, Mr Troy, Ms Dunn, Mr Fuller, Mr Malady, Mr McKinnon, Mr Frank, Mrs Chittick, Mr Woolley, Mrs Chaytor and Ushers and Eucharistic Ministers.



St Patrick's Liturgy Group - Berry

Christine Da Silva

In order to highlight and support the Vocations Congress in May, St Patrick's Liturgy Group at Berry conducted a 'Cafe Revisited' evening of prayers and Scripture reading, Mother Teresa video and sharing. St Patrick's hall was lovingly decorated with flowers and candles, together with the Paschal Candle as a focus, plus an arrangement with bible, chalice, wheat and flowers.

The "Work of God's Hands" video was profound in its simplicity. Mother Teresa stated that 'it is not how much we do, but how much love we put into the doing'. This short power-packed video (that is actually aimed at children) was affirming to us and also challenging while highlighting we are to have healing hands, hands of peace, hands of prayer, hands of praise and hands of love.

After a short discussion on the documentary, we then had parishioners and religious sharing about their respective vocations.

We could all identify with Mary and Julie with 9 children between them ranging from 3 to 19 who very eloquently shared their vocations of marriage and parenthood - along with the sometimes mundane frustrations of life, but nevertheless, endeavouring to see Jesus both in their children and in their spouses and making God and prayer central to their lives. If all our younger parishioners have this kind of spirituality, then Berry Parish is in good hands for the future.

Lillian followed with her and her husband's testimony entitled 'In sickness and in health' and we retired people nodded our heads in agreement. This couple also has been blessed with the assurance and guidance of God in their lives and He has worked through



Above: Jim & Christine Da Silva, Lillian & Geoff Wilkins & Frank Walsh. Lillian spoke about her vocation to marriage; Frank spoke about his vocation to single life.

them greatly in their ministry to our Community.

Frank, a single parishioner shared his life's experiences with emphasis on how the Holy Spirit has worked through him and how he became a foster parent to three boys. The Trinity dwelling in him means he too, has a very special family along with the wider community.

Our dear Sister Patricia held us all captive as she related her story of procuring new rosary beads and where that led her.

Father Pat painted a picture for us of his growing up in a close community in Ireland and we learned a little more about his culture and his faithfulness of riding 10 miles to school even in inclement weather.

Last, but not least, Deacon Richard Healey gave his account of how Antioch had been instrumental in increasing his faith journey to where he is today.

All those who shared are vital active members of our Community and we thank them for sharing the gift of themselves.

A couple of appropriate paragraphs taken from Pope Benedict's first

papal encyclical entitled *God is Love* summarised the testimonies.

Richard McMahan, who attended to promote the Congress, echoed a catchphrase from the Wiggles Show with an encouraging 'We need You'.

Over a lovely supper, people stated they felt enthralled and deeply moved by all the very diverse but equally enriching ways that God had called these who had shared their vocation with us all.

The evening was relaxed, joyful and spiritually uplifting with all the speakers and helpers naturally 'doing the work of God's hands'.

Catechists' News

Sr Val Green, rsc

Recently three Catechists, Margaret Sharpe (North Nowra), Mary O'Connor and Sr Val Green (Vincentia) attended a five-day course at Pennant Hills Good Samaritan Centre. *Berakah* was truly a place of blessing.

The theme was making a difference where you are. About thirty six gathered for the conference from many Catholic Schools in our Diocese. It was very inspiring to see so many young interested teachers join in the course.

Facilitators were Sr Anna Warlow, Berenice Moore, Pat O'Gorman, Mary Hinche and Beth Rioloete.

The subjects presented were - The Art of Living, Seeing Discipleship, Respect for the Earth, Implications for Gospel Living, God Matters, just to mention a few. We had beautiful rituals centred around 'The Woman at the Well'.

If you ever have a chance of joining the course it is well worth while. It is usually conducted annually and is a wonderful journey of five days Spirituality.

Right:

First Holy Communion at St Patrick's, Berry with Chris Hall who prepared the children for the celebration of the first reception of the Sacrament of Eucharist.



Volunteers bearing gifts: *Parish Disability Connection Program*

Sr Jeanie Heininger, sgs

Over the past four years I've been initiating and sustaining a vibrant intentional community spirit in many parishes in the Macarthur and Shoalhaven parishes of the Wollongong Diocese. Parish volunteers assist people with special needs to live rich and participating lives within their parishes - helping them bear the gift of their lives.

When I am invited into parishes I begin by speaking at all the celebrations of Eucharist on a given weekend. I always apply the Gospel of the Sunday to the area of disability and I quote Archbishop Carroll's apology to all families who have members with special needs for the times that they might have felt unsupported, excluded or hurt by the church. Then I follow the apology with the fact that saying 'sorry' is not enough and that this parish wishes to offer practical support to families - hence the recruiting and training of volunteers

and introducing them to the folk with special needs who make themselves known to me.

The aim of implementing these intentional mini communities is to promote positive and transformative change in the area of church and disability. The focus is broad - one parish might sponsor a social group such as the Good News Community that offers 4 hours of support and friendship to those with special needs as well as respite to parents/carers on a Saturday afternoon. Other parishes offer visitation programs and hospitality at the weekend masses.

Volunteers sign Prohibitive Employment Declarations before they make a commitment. I invite all volunteers back to three monthly supervision sessions to support, affirm and encourage them to bear the gift of their lives to others.

This programme has been running very successfully at St Michael's for approximately 18 months with 15 or



Clair Jessop with Roslyn Henderson (Disability Connection Volunteer) on a social visit.

more volunteers connected to a person with a special need.

St Michael's hosted the Awareness Mass on 4th December 2005 and was celebrated by a large number of parishioners, volunteers and people with special needs. It is hope that St Michael's will host another Awareness Mass later in the year.

Welcome to Holland

Taken from Dear Abby Column of Abigail Van Buren.

Emily Pearl Kingsley

I am often asked to describe the experience of raising a child with a disability—to try to help people who have not shared that unique experience to understand it, to imagine how it would feel. It's like this...

You're planning a fabulous vacation trip—to Italy. You buy a bunch of guidebooks and make your wonderful plans. The Coliseum, Michelangelo's David, the gondolas in Venice. You may even learn some handy phrases in Italian. It's all very exciting.

After months of eager anticipation, the day finally arrives. You pack your bags and off you go. Several hours later the plane lands. The stewardess comes in and says, 'Welcome to Holland.'

"Holland?!?" you say. "What do you mean, Holland? I signed up for Italy! I'm supposed to be in Italy. All my life I've dreamed of going to Italy."

But there's been a change in the flight

plan. They've landed in Holland and there you must stay.

The important thing is that they haven't taken you to a horrible, disgusting, filthy place, full of pestilence, famine and disease. It's just a different place. So you go out and buy new guidebooks. And you must learn a whole new language. And you will meet a whole new group of people you would never have met.

It's just a different place. It's slower-paced than Italy, less flashy than Italy. But after you've been there for a while and you catch your breath, you look around and you begin to notice that Holland has windmills, tulips and Rembrandts.

But everyone you know is busy coming and going from Italy, and they're all bragging about what a wonderful time they had there. And for the rest of your life, you will say, 'Yes, that's where I was supposed to go. That's what I had planned.'

The pain will never, ever go away, because the loss of that dream is a very significant loss.

But if you spend your life mourning the fact that you didn't get to Italy, you may never be free to enjoy the very special, the very lovely things about Holland.

Communion: We are one with God, with ourselves, with others and with the events and things of our world—we just do not know it. For the most part we sleep-walk through life. Prayerfulness is waking up and staying awake. Prayerfulness is living in communion. Prayerfulness is presence, being in Love.