

MINISTER'S LETTER

Last month I invited you to play with me and to imagine one or more words to sum up what our (Ormond) church is. I'm glad to report that ideas are being generated. I think it is too early to report results and I held back offering ideas of my own. After all, you will have a much longer and larger stake in this church's future than I. However, I can't pretend that I have not had an idea or two. Indulge me while I offer one idea, not to close off conversation, but to encourage more of it. Here is my idea: "Celebrate". So: "Ormond Uniting Church: This is a place for Celebration."

If I have a personal motto in these later years of my life it is this: "When in doubt, write a poem." In the early hours of the morning, as so often happens, the word "celebrate" started to run around my restless mind. I decided to take it seriously, and true to my late-life motto, I decided to write a poem.

I call it "a rough Psalm". It helped me get out a few ideas about a church in the world, which I feel are consistent with the Gospel message. Remember that Jesus' very first miracle was at a party (celebration) where he replenished a diminished supply of wine. Here it is:

Celebrate?

A rough Psalm of desperation and hope

Celebrate?

You urge me to celebrate?

You've got to be joking!

Have you noticed:

thousands of people displaced, dismembered, denied of rights
...and life!

Millions killed by inhaling something they can't even see!

Kids shooting other kids!

Drug use rampant!

Attitudes coloured by skin pigment!

Words stretched, sanitised, spun beyond recognition.

Lots of love-talk,

but not enough love-walk

and more violence in the home than you can poke a stick at!

A mighty pandemic of loneliness,

alienation, disconnection, emptiness!

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Celebrate?

Are you serious?

Celebrate what — and where?

I might need a hand coping with all of the above.

Where can I find a home of hope?

Where can I find some workers of miracles?

Where are swimmers-against-the-stream;

where the life-givers — life-rescuers?

Where can I share in a vision that transcends negativity?

Might it be on the corner of Booran and North?

Are there workers of quiet miracles there;

the sort you don't notice until you get to know them

— and you think and pray about it?

Are there doers-of-the-unlikely — even the impossible?

Is it there that I will find custodians of renewed life

— folk whose daily lives are resurrected ...and redeemed?

Is it there that I will find cause for celebration?

Is it there that I will want to lift my eyes

and cry "Yes! Let's celebrate."

Maybe —

Karel Reus

