CSCNewsletter

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Two farewells, thousands of miles apart, yet close to the Sisters in all Provinces. Sisters Audrey and Rita died four days apart; Audrey in Melbourne, Australia on April 18th and Rita in the Canadian Province, though living in Buffalo, USA, on April 22nd.



May they rest in peace - and rise with Christ in glory!

The 'Ham Move' now has a little more detail on it. Just the thought of moving everybody and everything from a house the size of the convent at Ham, is enough to send people into nervous jitters! Somehow, though, it happened. CSC no longer owns that property, which it acquired in 1949.

A lot of history has been made in that house but, as with everything else, the time has come to move on and make history in new places. It's the same with Sisters, I suppose. We also have our time and place in this life, to give and receive in whatever Community house we are for a time. Places and people have to be let go of, so we can move on to other ministries, helping to create new possibilities for God's work. It is always a temptation to look back longingly at where we were and what we did, but God asks us to be present to NOW, to the place in which we live now, among the people God Sr. Fiona must be has given us, now.

feeling something of this, after her latest move. (Page 8) Those who were closest to Sisters Audrey and Rita, must want to hold onto them as they were, but we know we have to let go of them too.

It isn't just Sisters, though, who feel these things. It is the same for all God's people, who are called to move on to new places and new works, new people with whom we can share the Gospel life. God always calls us on, out of the cosy ruts we've made for ourselves. As it has been said, there's nothing so hard to climb out of than a rut! Maybe when we know every detail of our particular rut, every crack and shade of grey, we know it's time to climb our of it...and God is always ready to lean down and help us out!

May each one of us know when the time is right to move on in our lives, and have the courage to trust in the God who calls us on. We surely can't believe that God would lead us astray - can we?









SISTER AUDREY



Sister Audrey was born in Ballarat, Victoria on May 2nd 1924 and joined CSC in 1959, in Perth, making her Profession in 1963 and her Solemn Profession in 1968, in the UK.

At her funeral there was a eulogy from her family, but what follows are extracts from the eulogy given by Sr. Linda Mary:

'Audrey's favourite colour was blue, a light blue. In phone conversations with her, especially when she was in Cabrini, she told me of the cloudless blue sky in which she was rejoicing and the comfort it gave her. The view from her window also gave her pleasure while she lay in bed. On one of my last visits I commented on her new pyjamas with their predominately blue floral pattern and she expressed her delight in them and in her favourite colour. Audrey was not a fresh flower person. The only flowers she had were some rather large yellow silk ones.

What was more important to her was the vase into which she has placed them. It was made by her father, who made items from beaten metal as a source of income when he returned from war service overseas. She had numerous pieces which she cherished. When I asked her about flowers at her funeral she immediately asked for donations to Heart Research Center, to which she contributed regularly.

Finding her Chinese heritage was an immensely fascinating gift and she surrounded herself with Chinese art, wore Chinese garments and researched the story of her own family. A day at the Art Gallery was a day of renewal and with many books on art in general, and architecture she spent hours looking at them. Audrey wanted to be an architect but her father said she would never get a job (I guess in those days because she was a woman). In her long daily walks she was not only walking but soaking herself in the architecture of the buildings and not all measured up to what she regarded as 'good' architecture. After schooling at MacRobertson Girls High School, Audrey went to Melbourne University. Her father desired her to study commerce and economics so she could take on the family business. She left because commerce did not engage her. Audrey worked part time, and then ran the family woollen knitwear business. She realised she did not desire to remain in the business and wanted to sell it. The mortgage needed to be cleared so she gathered all the leftover and other yarn on the shelves – dyed it teal green and designed a man's pullover with a shawl neck. They sold well and the mortgage was cleared. Audrey sold the business.

She later returned to Melbourne University to study philosophy (gaining first class honours) and English.'

Audrey's movement towards the Religious Life began when she attended a Student Christian Movement Mission, led by Fr. Michael Fisher.

Ideas of what Religious Life should be?

Sr Helen has written: "After I was professed we [Audrey and Helen] were both Junior Sisters, inhabiting the Junior Sisters' community room at Ham Common. Together with Sr Frances, another Australian Junior Sister in England, we discussed Religious Life as we experienced it and thought up ways it could be improved. As Audrey was the oldest of us and had been in the Community the longest, Frances and I decided that she should be our spokesperson to present our ideas to Dorothea, the Mother Superior of the time. The encounter was rather a stormy one. Another Senior Sister was brought in to

support Dorothea and she had a calming effect. Subsequently, none of us was thrown out and many of our suggestions were implemented."

The Community in England had asked Audrey to teach at Old Palace School. She was teaching and began study for a Diploma of Religious Knowledge from Cambridge University. With this qualification and finding the text books available inadequate for the course she was teaching she wrote one based on the course for those studying Religious Knowledge at both O and A levels.

Audrey with much support from Mother Dorothea and other Sisters rewrote the Constitution of the Community. This arose because when she was given the Constitution she believed it was incomprehensible and not applicable to the Community in the early 1970's. It took about 10 years to complete and she travelled to each Province to resource information. On a visit to Australia in 1971 primarily to see family but also Constitution work, the Sisters in this Province elected her to be Provincial and she became the Provincial on 11 May 1972. The building of the house at East Burwood so that older Sisters and those in the novitiate could be separate from the School environment raised financial problems for the Province. Audrey was asked to contribute her expertise and it began her time managing the finances of the Province, investing money in a profitable manner.'

She loved life

It became part of Audrey's time as Provincial, to close the schools which CSC had founded in Australia. Meredyth Sarah AM, a St. Peter's Old Scholar and Governor, worked with Audrey to pass on the school in Adelaide. She writes:

"I knew her (Audrey) to be a very intelligent, well-educated woman with a strong faith in God, and a gift of foresight enhanced by a good business acumen, knowledge of governance and an ability to be a good judge of character.

She also loved life and had a great sense of humour.... We were sad to see this vibrant woman deteriorate mentally and mourn the loss of her friendship, but rejoice that she is now at peace and with God."

'After nine years as Provincial, the Constitution indicates a time of sabbatical is needed. Audrey asked if she could live singly in her sabbatical time.

On her return to Melbourne, Audrey asked to continue to live singly, which she did in various places. For a time she was a chaplain at Victoria University and ministered in a parish. She was a solitary person, yet remained connected with the Community and contributing possibly more than when she lived in Community.

I have experienced her deep loyalty to the Community, to me in my role, (as Provincial and Mother Superior) and her sense of responsibility in being a member of a Religious Community committed to prayer and ministry. Throughout her life she was willing to transform what may not be to her liking into a life giving experience for herself and others.



A younger Audrey, communicating and alive



Sister Rita Dugger was born in 1927 in Buffalo, USA. Although she made her Life Profession in CSC in 1998, she had a full life before that. She was married for 36

years and was the mother of four children, and cared for 24 foster children over the years.

After her husband died, in 1982, Rita joined the Community of the Way of the Cross, a small Religious Community based in Buffalo. Two years after making her Life Profession in 1983, she was elected Mother Superior, and served in that role until 1996. She closed CWC, as there were only two Sisters left, and transferred to CSC.

The eulogy, at Rita's funeral, was given by Gina, one of her daughters. This shows Rita's total commitment to God throughout her life, not just in the Religious Life. Gina writes:

'For as long as I can remember our mother had a beautiful impact on people. I would hear from many, from a young age and all the way to now,...of the kindness our mother showed others and how her unending faith has touched many in so very many ways. That's who she was, how she was raised and how she raised us.

'allow them to be as they are'

As I grew older I came to realise the difference our mother had on other people's lives...because when you give kindness to others, allow them to be as they are, you usually get the same in return. This may be why she was blessed in her life with so many roles - a daughter,

SISTER RITA

a sibling, a wife, a mother, a Sister, a mentor, an inspiration and a friend.

Our mom was up at 5am every day reading her morning prayer, without fail....it was her faith that called her to enter Religious Life later in years.

We are here to celebrate Sr Rita's life through faith.... I'm reminded how she would say, "you do not have to like people, but you do have to love them...it doesn't matter what other people do, it is what you do that matters." Integrity. One I continue to strive to keep in my life is that "people are doing the best they can." I remember asking her where the terrible people go, and her answer was, "With God, of course, as they need him the most."

I am humbled by how deep her faith was. And those who knew her could be sure that she is with her Maker right now. But I smile at what she would be saying right now, in that God loves us all, and that there are no exceptions. And she may even have followed that with a wink of her eye.

So, God IS love, and faith is certainly humbling as we have learned through our mother's example.



Sr. Rita a little younger

New Leadership in the Solomon Islands Veronica - Sister Provincial

On March 26th this year, Sister Veronica was Blessed into office as Sister Provincial in the Solomon Islands.

Sister Emily (Assistant Provincial) writes:

Sister Veronica Vasethe was elected to the post of Sister Provincial of Solomon Islands last year, replacing Sr. Kathleen Kapei.

Sister Veronica was ordained priest after studying theology at Trinity College, Bristol, in England. After she was ordained she served as a priest in St. Andrew's Parish in Ham, England.

The day was highlighted by people coming to witness her Blessing. Archbishop of the Anglican Church of Melanesia, the Most Reverend George Takeli, was the chief celebrant. The Right Reverend Bishop Nathan Tome, our Bishop Visitor preached and officially blessed Veronica. He preached an inspiring and encouraging message on leadership. Bishop Tome stressed that to become a leader, one has to 'replace the garments of title and status with a garment of service.'



Sr Veronica being blessed with Holy Water by Bishop Nathan Tome

The ACOM (Anglican Church of Melanesia) General Secretary Dr. Abraham Hauriasi, Vicar General of the Diocese of Central Melanesia and Reverend Philip Rongotha, representatives from the other three religious orders, and Sisters in Charge from CSC houses throughout the Province, all came to the Blessing and family representatives also came to witness the event.

Sister Veronica will carry out her role as priest only at TNK, the Christian Care Centre and other CSC houses in the Province, under a hospitality decision offered by the Church's Council of Bishops. The decision was given in the light of the fact that the issue of the ordination of women is still being discussed by the Church of Melanesia's General Synod.

We are very grateful to have Sister Veronica as our Provincial Sister. She brings with her a wealth of experience and knowledge as a Sister and ordained priest. We believe that she will take forward the Community, in this Province. We wish her God's blessing.



Veronica being presented to the Sisters as the new Provincial



Archbishop George Takeli, Srs Veronica and Emily and Bp Nathan Tome (Left to right)

THE MOVE

In the last edition of the Newsletter Sister Hilda Mary wrote a little about the CSC move from Ham Common to Gerrards Cross, in the UK. It could only be part of it because The Move was still in process. Since then she has thought much and written much more than before. What follows are some of her musings.

The Yard Sale turned out to be the tip of the iceberg. We held it on November 5th and it was a great success, but at the time we had no idea how much more stuff needed to go. We made well over £2,000 with all the different things we sold.

On November 8th the first wave of seven Sisters and one of our Alongsiders left Ham Common for Gerrards Cross. Six removal men and two vans arrived early that day and were all packed up and ready to leave by 1.00pm. Meanwhile the older Sisters had coffee in the Community Room and we had a lovely Eucharist celebrated by Veronica, before a simple lunch. It was then time to go. Fortunately the sun was shining. It was a poignant moment. Our friend and Associate Jean Orpwood was with us to help in all this.

Four of us, plus some of our Alongsiders and the two families, remained with the task of emptying the house ready for us to move out by December 14th. It was quite a challenge, a 40 bedroom house to empty. After the first group left, the wonderful removal firm came to see all that remained and told us that we probably could keep only half of all we had left! That meant at least 10 furniture vans full, plus all the stuff from the garden - benches, tools, plants, ride on mower, the statue of Our Lady and much else besides.

So began in earnest the job of getting everything sorted and packed up so the house and grounds would be completely empty on time. A marathon task.

The local charity shops could no longer take any more from us. Someone

mentioned 'the donkey man.' (He has a donkey sanctuary) He took away three loads in his pick-up truck.

Meanwhile each day we left things by the back gate for our neighbours to take. Nearly everything went. Where did it all come from? We began to dread finding another cupboard full of stuff when we thought we had cleared them all... and we did!

We got in touch with several charities about the furniture and one Saturday, November 25th, a very efficient French lady from the British Heart Foundation arrived on her large motor bike. She went through the house 'like a dose of salts' but even at her pace it took over three hours. On several occasions we had our removal men, the British Heart Foundation and others with vans, taking things all at the same time. Catherine did a great job in making sure that everything went to their correct destinations.

I got in touch with a charity, London Potters, and one of their members came and took our very large collection of glazes and much of the other equipment. He also found someone who wanted the potter's wheel. which now has a new home near Hay on Wye.



Inside the old pottery kiln-shed. Glazes were mixed, tested, and fired in the kiln. So many years of creativity.

There were fears that we would be giving away very valuable furniture and objects. One afternoon I simply prayed that someone would turn up to help us, and the prayer was answered. A man who lived on the common had heard and asked if he could look around, as he was an antique dealer. He was a very honest

and lovely person. We knew we were getting an honest deal and moving things on to places they would be appreciated. He also helped with the great task of decataloguing books.

One source of sadness and concern was what we were going to do with the organ and chapel furniture? It was another answer to prayer when St John's Church in Kingston, said they would have it all. Such a joy to know it was all going to a new home. where it would be so much valued. They also took most of the wall hangings we had created over the years.

Sr. Catherine sorted our vast numbers of books, not only a hundred boxes packed in Dewey system order from the library, with the help of two of our removal men, but all the other books scattered around the house. Again, a very helpful man from the Oxfam shop came and took away several car loads of books.

Finally Catherine and I were left camping in the house, sleeping on the floor, as

Our small Chapel at Gerrards Cross, at Easter. The containers of our furniture etc for the main house can be seen through the window.

almost everything and everyone had gone.

Our huge dustbins were overflowing with lots of black bags we could't fit in. The 'dustmen' came on the last day and took the lot, without complaint, which was a huge relief. One said he had been coming to us for the last 33 years.

The Final Act

Everything had to be ready to hand over by 10am on Wednesday 14th December. It was a blessing that it was a lovely sunny day and the garden was full of bird song. Was it their farewell to us?

Catherine and I got up bright and early and went into what had been a sitting room but had become the final Chapel. All that was left was the reserved sacrament and our boxes of office books upon which we sat and said our prayers and consumed the sacrament and blew out the candle. It was the last act of worship at St Michael's Convent, Ham.'



The work on the main house goes on, as Spring blossoms!



Our Lady from the Ham garden, stands guard over the Easter Garden



CSC LEAFLET MINISTRY FROM KEMPSEY, AUSTRALIA

One day in November 2015, I looked at a bound copy of my doctoral thesis and said to myself, hardly anyone has read this apart from myself, my supervisor and examiners. Yet, in spite of all the words and religious jargon, I believed it had some important and relevant things to say. What could I do?

I thought back to my youth when I avidly read John Bull Tracts which were cheap booklets available in the local Anglican Bookshop. Realising that most people would apply the word 'tract' to

a piece of land rather than a religious pamphlet, and today people like pictures to illustrate articles which are relevant and brief, I decided to produce a leaflet from one A4 page folded in halves. Such leaflets can be read easily during a coffee break.

I began by taking two current issues in Australia which I had written on in my thesis: 'A Christian Response to Climate Change' and then 'A Christian Response to Islamic Terrorism'. People seemed to be willing to read them, so I proceeded to write some more in response to what was happening in daily life.

Realising that many people today access the internet, these pamphlets are easily available through www.kempseyanglican.com. When this comes up, click on 'CSC – Sisters' found at the top right hand side, then scroll down until 'Articles: Living with God in today's world' appears. Under the picture are titles of the leaflets. Click on any one of them and it will be revealed. May you find them helpful.

Helen CSC

A Different Perspective

Sr. Fiona, has recently moved into Cedar Place, an aged care facility, but had previously stayed for seven weeks. She wrote about her short stay, and extracts follow:

'I was very apprehensive and rather embarrassed at being on the receiving end (after visiting to minister to residents). When the line dancers were coming to entertain us, I even wondered whether I would go to my room. However, I stayed as I realised it was just a matter of pride! Why would I be embarrassed? What was degrading about being in care? The residents around me were quite happy and friendly and accepting of their situation.

I joined in Exercises every morning which were very stimulating. The activities personnel 'were both very creative and provided opportunities for craft, music, singing, walking round the garden and admiring the efforts of those who had their own little patch. There were board games such as scrabble, dominoes and several others that I had never heard of and cards, as well as a large jigsaw that folk added to at odd times. They also

provided times for attention to beauty treatment such as hair and nails, some liked to have their nails painted. There were chooks, one of which was carried around by one of the residents. She became quite demanding if her personal carer didn't turn up! There was also an Aviary with a few budgies flying around and some small doves and also some quails, which were interesting to watch.

I never felt bored as there was usually something going on. I joined in some of the activities but just needed some quiet. It was great how the residents would care for each other. There were opportunities when I would notice somebody sitting on their own, mostly at morning or afternoon tea and I would just go and sit with them and talk. With no access through my computer I felt very cut off at first. especially from Community. In fact, it was a complete change from what I was used to. I was guite sad when the time came for me to return home and to say goodbye to all my new friends. However, it was good to get back to my normal routine and to return to time in Chapel and the saying of the Office.'

We wish Fiona well in her new surroundings!

'Peace be with you!'

A homily given by **Catherine Wood SCL** (Alongsider in the UK) based on

John 20: 19 - 31

It wasn't only Thomas who struggled to believe the unbelievable. Mary Magdalene had done as Jesus had said that wonderful, amazing morning, and had told the disciples – 'I have seen the Lord!' Come the evening of that first Easter day, there they were, locked in, fearful that the Jewish leaders would hunt them down next, perhaps thinking that Mary had lost her mind with grief. With their greatest hope of liberation ripped to shreds in a matter of hours, perhaps they just didn't have the energy to respond, let alone chase after someone else's phantoms.

It was only when Jesus came to them. was right there with them that any of what Mary had been saying became real. As they saw him, heard his 'Peace be with vou,' and looked at the wounds of crucifixion even in his new body, it was only then that they could truly rejoice. Someone else's experience, even someone as close to them as Mary, wasn't enough, not just for Thomas, but for any of the disciples. For the unbelievable to become real, for something too good to true to become a certainty, it had to become personal. While a second-hand experience couldn't move them, touching nailed hands transformed them. It was then that 'peace be with you' began to heal their broken. disillusioned hearts.

Peace today?

At this time in human history when there has never been so great a sense of global threat, coming from multiple sources, can there be any reassurance for us in Jesus' words of peace? As two unstable stags lock nuclear horns, and people are mown down just for crossing a bridge,*

*Terrorist act on Westminster Bridge, London. UK. in March 2017 the question 'where is God in all this?' murmurs through the clamour. When, if ever, will God intervene?

For the people of Israel, their defining moment of God's intervention was the Exodus.

The command that gave them the 7-day feast of Passover was to ensure that the people never forgot what God had done – that mighty act of liberation, setting them free from slavery in Egypt.

'This day shall become a day of remembrance for you. You shall celebrate it as a festival for the Lord for your generations...because on this very day I will take you out of the land of Egypt; you shall observe this day for your generations as an eternal decree.' (Exodus 12: 14-17) Year after year they were to tell the story during the Passover Seder meal, in response to the youngest asking four ritual questions.

Just as the Exodus became the defining moment of God's intervention for the Jewish people, so the resurrection of Jesus has become the defining moment for Christians. Alongside our Jewish brothers and sisters, we too are charged with retelling the story for each generation to come, so that God's awesome power over the forces of evil and death will remain part of who we are – so that we will never forget.

And yet — In the face of all the 'deathliness' that our world is being threatened with, is even that enough? Has even resurrection any power in the face of nuclear annihilation or chemical attack? When the Jewish people retell their story at Passover; when we, as the Church, re-enact Jesus' story through Holy Week and Easter, it isn't just for ritual's sake. It is so that it can become personal — the very essence of who we are. A second-hand account wasn't enough for Thomas, or for any of Jesus' disciples; neither can it be enough for us.

It is as we allow God's liberating, death-defying presence to infuse every part of our own lives that freedom and resurrection become real. God's presence in the world is bringing about interventions that I believe we are scarcely aware of; God is constantly working in so many subtle and gentle ways for peace and for healing. And much of that is through people.

Making 'Peace be with you' a reality

When I was more actively involved in social justice and peace networks, someone told me that if it hadn't been for Quakers at the UN during the Cold War, the nuclear button would have far more likely been pushed. It was their gentle presence, working for peace, that stopped the unthinkable. The more deeply we're able to enter into God's life and let it flow through us, the more we're able to be part of all that is working to make 'peace be with you' a reality.

The Catholic concept of Personal Vocation invites us to discover our unique way of expressing God's love and life in the world. That may well change over the years; as we get older or face health

challenges we may well not be able to do what we were able to do when we were younger. Yet, for each of us, there is way of expressing God's love in the world that is uniquely ours, at any time in our lives.

In his time, the forces of 'deathliness' were allowed to do their worst to Jesus, but in their wake, was released the greatest force of love and life.

Whatever the forces of evil are able to do in our time, our defining story assures that they will never have the last word; nothing the worst can do will ever defeat the power of God's love and life. It is that reassurance that makes 'peace be with you' both a personal, and a global reality.

'God raised Jesus up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power. For David says concerning him, 'I saw the Lord always before me; he is at my right hand, so that I will not be shaken.' (Acts 2: 24-25)

Whatever happens in the coming months and years, this is God's world and, ultimately, nothing is greater than the power of love.

In his book 'Things Hidden',
Richard Rohr speaks of the
Israelites being led by Moses (and
God, of course) by the wilderness
road. He says (page 127):
'There was apparently a much
quicker way than forty years of
wandering around in circles, but the
real goal was not getting there, it
was the journey itself - through
trials, nature, relationships - three
steps forward and two steps
backward.....How you get there
determines where you will arrive and what you arrive as.

There is no path to peace, but peace is itself the path.'

The man was hanging off the edge of the cliff and felt his fingers getting weaker.

He needed help instantly.

"Help!" he cried. "Is there anybody there?!"

A voice spoke gently to him.

"Here I am," it said. "I am your God and I've come to save you. All you have to do is let go and fall back into my arms."

There was a silence. God was waiting and the man was thinking hard. Then the silence was broken when the man cried out, "Is there anybody else there?!"

I wonder how many times we do the same, hopefully not if it means we're hanging over a precipice....but then many events in life can be cliff-hangers!

Pause for thought

Linda Mary writes:

A few months ago I was sharing my experience of dengue fever and of God and myself with my Spiritual Director. I described how my daily life was changed by living with the symptoms of the virus, which was very much affecting my body, and yet it being like a companion on the At the end of the session, she reflected back to me what I had been saying. She said I was seeing life very differently, and I responded, 'I know'. I knew that I could do nothing other than accept the situation. I needed to cancel commitments and realised it would be a long time before I would feel well again. There was no sense of 'if only', or quilt, or failure.

The next morning she emailed me an article written by Ron Rolheiser entitled, 'Seeing In A Deeper Way', which I read with interest. Rolheiser begins by saying that, 'Seeing implies more than having good eyesight. Our eyes can be wide open and we can be seeing very little.' He suggests we need to see through familiarity to wonder; through paranoia and self-protection to metanoia and nurture; through bitterness to grieving; through anger to forgiveness; through longing and hunger to gratitude.

(For the full text of his article: http://ronrolheiser.com/seeing-in-a-deeper-way)

Later that morning, one of the Sisters came to see me and brought with her an article, 'Learning To See' by Timothy Radcliffe OP which someone had sent to her. In his delightful way he shared how he had come to terms with a cancer diagnosis and what it had taught him about mortality – and patience. The article ended with, '[t]here is so much to be let go: people whom we love, health, beauty, teeth and hair, life. Perhaps the toughest is to let go of being the centre of the world.'

Seeing differently was further highlighted a few Sundays ago when the Gospel reading was Nicodemus visiting Jesus (John 3:1-10).

Nicodemus as a Pharisee had been taught to see God in a particular way and he taught others from this particular way. Jesus indicated to him it was necessary for him to see God in another way; to look from another direction and discover other aspects or attributes of God.

These instances deeply confirm for me my need to continue to be open to not always seeing from my perspective, but rather from God's perspective and/or from another's perspective. As I write now I recognise this is a daily task and responsibility - and a gift of resurrection life.

A couple of quotes from Sr Helen's leaflets to whet your appetite

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'We do not always welcome silence – it allows terrifying anxieties to rise up in our minds.'

in 'Meeting God in the Silence'

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'When we, individually and as a church, engage in hospitality, we experience something of the all-embracing compassionate love that is God.'

in 'Hospitality'



Sister Helen

Community Addresses ~



~ and Who is Where

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