

INDUCTION SERVICE FOR Anne Griffiths 18th February 2012

I have gone to a number of Induction service over the years and have listened to preachers giving all the advice possible to the Inductee and to the congregation to which they are stationed.

Today's induction is somewhat different, Anne is not being inducted into a parish, but into hospital chaplaincy which is very much at the cutting edge of the Gospel of pastoral care. I guess it will a great deal different from parish Ministry or even from Workplace chaplaincies. Here you will be dealing with sick people, immediate grief, stressed relatives and staff as well as people from all walks of life, faiths or no-faiths, cultures and ages, you will meet people who come into your life for a moment and then just as quickly leave it again. You will need to make snap decisions and you will need to consult and to know the support and the encouragement of others who journey with you. You will need to listen, to allow time to stand still, to support and to encourage yourself and others. This is indeed a place of healing, of wholeness of body, soul and spirit and what a privilege and responsibility to be part of this awesome and humble ministry. In short it is a new beginning of a new story that will become part of your own journey within the Kin-dom of God.

So, how to begin and what to say: I guess for me, the place to begin in in the Children's book shop. I recently bought Anne a copy of Dr Seuss, "Oh the places you'll go". What could be a better story for a new journey begun? I love it! I don't believe it is a children's book but very much an encouragement for an adult embarking on a new journey. One who knows a little about life but embarks on a different journey with all the joys and the dangers ahead. It is a roller coaster ride, meeting the unexpected and finding the light in the next valley.

But, and here's the but, this story, As Dr Seuss tells it, is very much an individualist journey. For Anne and for the people of this hospital community, this is not an individual journey. It is only as you share the journey together that you can go places. You will build on what has gone before, make changes, go through some rough places and I'm sure that you will reach your goal. This little character reminds us of the necessity to stay focused on where we are going. Yes, he does meet all the dangers, he becomes frightened, but he isn't distracted, he doesn't try to go back, he doesn't run off in a new direction, he faces things head on and keeps going. And he does get there in the end, he is a success or at least 98 3/4 guaranteed! However there is one other element that is missing in this profound and fun little story and that is the faith ingredient.

Anne, your journey is not a lonely one, it is not an individual one, you have your training, your life experiences as resources to draw on, you have your support group, your colleagues in ministry,

your supervisor and your friends, but above all you have the faith and the example of Jesus to take you on your journey. Your work here is no slap dash, spur or the moment thing, it cannot be done without prayer, planning, preparation and patience, expecting the unexpected along with the many skills and gifts that you have for the job. You can get frightened, you will have people saying that you should do it their way, but you have the courage and the compassion to get alongside and show the peace and compassion of God in how you act. For your community, they will need to trust you and the decisions you make, support you with their prayers and patience and respect the work that you do. You will also need to minister in this community within your ordination promises to the ministry of word and sacrament and pastoral care within a very different setting that you were used to in Parish ministry.

Over the last few weeks, our readings in Mark's Gospel have taken us into the community with Jesus. We know that Jesus worshipped in the Synagogue. We know that he loved and respected the festivals and traditions of his people, but we also know that the majority of his work was not done in this setting, it was out in the wider world where people were hurting, lonely and abused and oppressed by corrupt leaders and rulers. So often these people were the outcasts of society. Jesus ministered amongst them, told them stories that encouraged them and gave hope, and offered them a wholeness of life based on love, co-operation, respect and practical examples from nature that were seen and known in the everyday life around them and they responded to his love in action. It is the man with the unclean spirit who is the only one who knows who Jesus is. It is Peter's Mother in law who has a handle on who Jesus is, and the stories of Jesus amazing ministry among the sick and dispossessed keep on going. Know that you, Anne, and you the community of care surrounding this community, are walking in the footsteps of Christ who loved, cared for and was sensitive to not only those who walked alongside of him, but also the despairing, the stranger, the outcaste and the lonely. You will meet them all on your journey and share with them the compassion, justice and inclusiveness that was the hall mark of Jesus' ministry. What Jesus was on about was inclusiveness and the in-breaking reality of the Kin-dom of God in word and action. He broke down barriers, restored people to family and faith and gave love and a new relationship with each other and with God.

I listened to an induction service a couple of weeks ago where the preacher talked very much about being a "go" church, of following the Spirit of God into the local community. Anne, I know you are good at that but it will be a huge challenge and change from parish Ministry and is only as you daily trust, the Spirit to walk with you in both the enthusiasm of your ministry and in the pain

of discovering that you don't always have the answers, that you often can't see the wood for the trees that you will grow as a person and as a pastor. For **this journey** to continue you will need a sense of expectancy, a glimpse of future possibilities, a vivid imagination – and plenty of niche courage!

For Creativity God's creation in this place is not done. And that creativity must be nurtured as you nurture yourself with good friends, with prayer and with taking time to love yourself and allow God to share God's life with you.

Do know Anne that our Aroha, our love, our prayers and our support are with you in this new phase of your ministry to and with others in this place.

Anne, Kia Kaha, have faith in yourself as a pastor in this place and if you want another children's book to encourage you I suggest you look for "Giraffe's can't dance" a pre-school picture book but what a great message! It is a sermon in itself.

As you begin this new ministry I leave you with some well-known words:

I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year
'Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown.'

And he replied,
'Go into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God
That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way!'

So I went forth and finding the Hand of God
Trod gladly into the night
He led me towards the hills
And the breaking of day in the lone east.