

Editorial (Ann McNelley)

Hello Everyone

It has been a while since our last newsletter. Sychar house remains a vibrant and inspirational place, thanks to the many generous and gifted people who, under Sr. Elaine's leadership, contribute the life of this place.

In this issue we welcome Moyaliala Tokmak to the staff at Sychar and farewell Sheila Sarquis who has volunteered in our library over the past three years. We are deeply appreciative of the significant contribution she has made to Sychar's ministry. You are always welcome to drop in for morning tea and a chat, Sheila! We also bid farewell to our beautiful magnolia tree which needed to be removed due to its invasive root system.

Take care, stay well and may the Spirit walk with you.



Krys' delight – Our cactus has flowered

My Journey to Sychar (Moyaliala Tokmak)



It is through Elaine's kindness that my heart is now able to call Sychar home and I wish to warmly extend my gratefulness to all of the Sychar family who welcomed me.

My spiritual journey over the years has led me to experience the profound richness and beauty of many faiths but I have now come home joyfully and with deeper appreciation of my Christian roots. I give thanks for so many teachers that have been like a harbour through which one enters the ocean. Now working at Sychar, I've come to understand what the word "sheltered" truly means.

To the Sychar friends and family and those I've still yet to meet, I look forward to the rich companionship of sharing the journey together.

As I commence my Contemplative Studies through the St Francis College, I take with me the wisdom imparted to me by my grandfather at the time of his passing: "Moyaliala, look deeply, look deeply." I have come to realise that the earth upon which I stand is paradise if I look deeply. It is my hope that I will contribute to Sychar's ministry of enabling others to find life's beauty by looking more deeply.



Sheila – Candid Joy



Sheila's farewell morning tea



Our groups continue to meet

When Great Trees Fall (Maya Angelou)

When great trees fall,
rocks on distant hills shudder,
lions hunker down
in tall grasses,
and even elephants
lumber after safety.

When great trees fall
in forests,
small things recoil into silence,
their senses
eroded beyond fear.

When great souls die,
the air around us becomes
light, rare, sterile.
We breathe, briefly.
Our eyes, briefly,
see with
a hurtful clarity.
Our memory, suddenly sharpened,
examines,
gnaws on kind words
unsaid,
promised walks
never taken.

Great souls die and
our reality, bound to
them, takes leave of us.
Our souls,
dependent upon their
nurture,
now shrink, wizened.
Our minds, formed
and informed by their
radiance,
fall away.
We are not so much maddened
as reduced to the unutterable ignorance
of dark, cold
caves.



And when great souls die,
after a period, peace blooms,
slowly and always
irregularly. Spaces fill
with a kind of
soothing electric vibration.

Our senses, restored, never
to be the same, whisper to us.
They existed. They existed.
We can be. Be and be
better. For they existed.



Musings from the Spirit of Sychar's Magnolia (Moyalial Tokmak)

Yes we weep as the tree has been cut down ... and know we have been blessed by this Silent watcher guarding our front door, and know in our hearts the renewal of new life awaits.

To each of us we come to a fuller understanding that trees are sanctuaries. Whoever knows how to speak to them, whoever knows how to listen to them, can learn the truth.

A tree silently says "A kernel is hidden in me, a spark, a thought, I am life from eternal life. Unique the form and veins of my skin, unique the smallest play of leaves in my branches and the smallest scar on my bark, the life that finds home within my branches. I was made to form and reveal the eternal in my smallest special detail."

A tree silently says "My strength is trust. I live out the secret of my seed to the very end. I care for nothing else. I trust that God is in me. I trust that my labour is holy. Out of this trust I live."

If we respond to the invitation towards deeper reflection on the times in our life when we are stricken and cannot bear our lives any longer, then a tree has something to say to us: "Be still! Be still! Look at me! Let God speak within you, and your thoughts will grow silent. Home is neither here nor there. Home is within you, or home is nowhere at all."

If one listens to the trees silently for a long time, this longing reveals its kernel, its meaning. It is not so much a matter of escaping from one's suffering, though it may seem to be so. It is a longing for home, for new metaphors for life. It leads home. Every path leads homeward.

Whoever has learned how to listen to trees no longer wants to be a tree. He wants to be nothing except what he is. That is home. That is happiness.

Don't be ashamed to weep; 'tis right to grieve. Tears are only water, and flowers, trees, and fruit cannot grow without water. But there must be sunlight also. A wounded heart will heal in time, and when it does, the memory and love of our lost ones is sealed inside to comfort us.



Sychar Staff – Sr. Elaine and Moyalialia.



DONATIONS TO SYCHAR: Participants have requested payment information for Sychar

Note: Donations go into a special fund held for Sychar within the Diocesan Account, so it is important to give “Sychar Spiritual” as Reference.

Bank: NAB
BSB: 084-961
Account No: 65 309 7284
Account Name: Corp of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Twba (CRDOT)
(If there is not enough space for the full account name, CRDOT will be acceptable)
Reference: Sychar Spiritual *(your name in brackets if receipt wanted)*

CHEQUE DETAILS

Diocesan Development Fund (This would need to be handed in to Sychar so that it can be directed to the correct account)