

The Fires ... a Reflection

Our hearts cry out to God! Not with the arithmetic of blame. Not because we think God sends fires. But because God is our way of speaking of the very depth of our being... and because God is compassionately engaged and knows us. Of course, this is like poetry and far from adequate or accurate. But we want to cry out **to** God and cry out **with** God. We want to believe that God is not disinterested. It is a conversation of the soul, our deep inner being. O God, hear our grief! O God, help these people!

What then moves within us and surges for fulfillment is compassion, the very being of God - an image for our co-humanity. Deep love for other people and for our world flows from within and joins us to each other and to God. God is an ocean of goodness, reaching our shore, yet far beyond our horizon and deeper than our profoundest thought. That surge moves us and we have learned to understand sin as resistance to its life. We see the tide of generosity about us and recognise the life of God.

Summoned to our common frailty we respond with human care. When people are reduced to surviving, our common humanity asserts itself.

Moments of vulnerability give us the opportunity to reconnect to what really matters. Ultimately that is about connecting to God. To do so is to sense a surging passion for good and for change, a refusal to ignore the plight of people beyond ourselves, a willingness to be engaged for all humanity.

Despite the events of recent days being beyond our control, we can still give and we can listen and we can imagine and pray as our fellow Victorians engage the horror and grief of losing their own and seeing the destruction of their homes and communities.

O God, we cry! O God, hear our grief! O God, help these people! O God, help us!
O God, help our community! O God, help us care about the world in which we live!

From Michael Hansen, Director of Faith and Ministry, Lavalla Catholic College, Traralgon, Victoria