

NAVIGATING LIFE IN THE AGE OF CYBERSPACE

what role for spirituality, culture & politics?

A series of captivating lectures and an innovative workshop
with Professor Joseph Camilleri OAM

Lectures:

Tuesdays 3, 10 & 17 September

6.15pm to 8.30pm
(doors open at
6.00pm)

Workshop:

Thursday 19 September

5.45pm to 9.30pm
(doors open at
5.30pm)

Tickets:

\$20 per lecture
\$50 for 3 Lectures
\$25 for workshop

Bookings:

Lectures:
www.trybooking.com/BCDRT

Workshop:
www.trybooking.com/BCDTR
or 9654 5120 Seats are
limited, book early to
secure yours.

Where:

St Michael's Hall,
St Michael's Place,
120 Collins Street, Melbourne 3000

Professor Joseph Camilleri OAM returns to St Michael's to deliver three exciting lectures offering new perspectives on life in the 'age of cyberspace'.

He will also run a training workshop on new ways of approaching conversation and dialogue in different social settings.

We're living through uncertain, anxious times. Powerful currents are shaking the very foundations of national and global society. Technology generally – and the internet, mobile platforms, social media, and computing power in particular – is one of these seemingly unstoppable currents, for good or ill.

Technological innovation is said to have generated economic growth, increased productivity and life expectancy, and given digital connection to more than 4 billion people. In the next few years, another 2 billion people are expected to come online. Endless possibilities for useful communication and collaboration have opened up.

But the digital revolution brings us much else: crippling cyber-attacks, manipulated elections, a new age of high-stakes corporate and state espionage, ever more lethal and costly weapon systems, financial volatility, job insecurity, the porn epidemic, cyber bullying, and mind numbing addiction to the screen.

Where does all this leave the search for meaning and purpose and the vitality of our cultural and political life?

ST MICHAEL'S
UNITING CHURCH



Tuesday 3 September, 6.15 pm to 8.30 pm

Lecture 1: *Searching for Meaning and Purpose*

The word 'spirituality' does not mean organised religion. Nor is it limited to spiritual practices, such as meditation. Rather it suggests a powerful impulse for life shaped by purpose, values, and perhaps transcendence.

The question is: What does such a path mean in the digital age, especially as the 'sacred' is being invoked through digital channels to justify the most heinous crimes?

Is there a spirituality that is receptive to mystery, beauty and wonder, yet comfortable with insecurity? Can spirituality accept a dialogue with those who espouse different even opposing beliefs and worldviews? If so, what form does it take? And how does it relate to the current technological explosion?

Tuesday 10 September, 6.15 pm to 8.30 pm

Lecture 2: *A Cultural Renaissance: Realistic Prospect or Just a Pipe Dream?*

The extraordinary information revolution is helping to integrate societies and provides new opportunities for many. But with it also comes a loss of uniqueness of local culture, a loss of identity, a sense of exclusion, and often populism, extremism and conflict.

What is the cultural antidote to this trend? Can we protect and regenerate local cultures? Is a mutually enriching dialogue of cultures and civilisations possible? How? Is the ground in Australia more or less fertile than it was 5 or 10 years ago? What are feasible next steps? And what of the most daunting obstacles?

Tuesday 17 September, 6.15 pm to 8.30 pm

Lecture 3 *Politics in the Digital Age. Is There Life After Death?*

Politics in Australia and elsewhere is in disarray: political parties driven largely by short-term self-interest; parliaments that don't work; those in authority, leaders in name only; lies and cover-ups the order of the day. The end result: a deeply disturbing policy vacuum.

All this is well known and has been canvassed in previous lecture series. But there are early signs of 'new life'. What might these be? How can they be nurtured? How can we bring them to the attention of a wider public? Are the conventional and social media a help or a hindrance? What might be useful communication and action strategies?

Thursday 19 September, 5.45 pm to 9.30 pm

Training Workshop *Communication and Dialogue Skills for Anxious Times*

To handle the challenges of the digital age, we need effective pathways and skills for communicating with others – for building bridges across boundaries based on gender, social standing, race, religion, culture, nationality, ethnicity and ideology.

The workshop looks at many forms of communication, but the focus is on dialogue:

- What are the key principles of dialogue?
- What can dialogue achieve?
- Who can engage in dialogue?
- What are the conditions for effective engagement?
- How does dialogue work in conversation, advocacy, community action, and conflict resolution?

The workshop includes interactive presentations, role play, practical exercises and resource materials.

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