

# NEWSLETTER

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## Time

*Gulliver's Travels* is a well-known work of fiction which is widely considered an outstanding children's book. But this tale has a deeper meaning, there is more to it than the

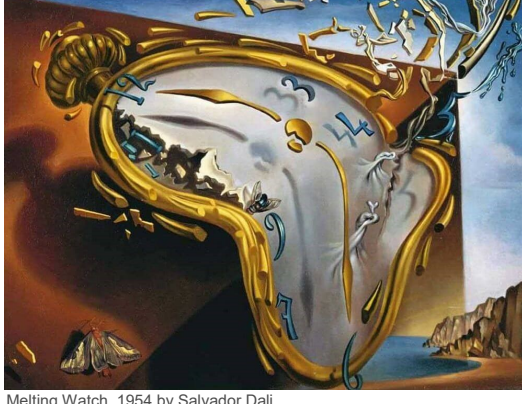
story. In his first ad-

venture Gulliver survives a shipwreck and ends up in Lilliput. The people of Lilliput ask Gulliver to help them in the war against the empire of Blefuscu, which war was over a doctrinal point about which end of an egg should be broken! So much time and energy wasted on a triviality.

Jonathan Swift's satirical novel published in 1726 critiqued contemporary society's fixation with non-sensical rituals, class attribution and dumb arguments. Sadly, these same problems persist to this day. At an international level one notes the absurdity of continuing conflict often arising from petty, centuries old arguments. Arguments that are hijacked by populist politics seeking to twist history to serve selfish oversized egos whose only objective is to hold on to power at whatever cost. One asks why many influential international leaders vie for or cling to power even when they should make room for people with more energy and a broader and longer-term world view.

We have a propensity to waste time on the trivial, the insignificant and self-aggrandisement. We delude ourselves into thinking that we will be around for ever. But the only constant is time, and the only guarantee that this constant provides to every one of us is that it will run out.

*We are born, we live, we die!* One might say time is a ticking time bomb.



Melting Watch, 1954 by Salvador Dalí

Looking at a wall clock we are tricked into thinking that after every full rotation another one starts. But that full rotation is more a reflection of our lifetime, the next rotation is not something we own. The minute hand keeps on turning but that is not your story, it's the story of the universe. Our lifetime is just a tiny blip in the fabric of time. Scientists estimate the universe to be approximately 13.7 billion years old

(+/- 200 million years), and assuming the average human lifespan of 80 years, our lifetime accounts to a pitiable 0.00000058% of that time - insignificant in the grand scheme of things.

Yet, we live as if we own the universe, as if nothing matters except 'I', making plans for tomorrow and never actually starting positively contributing to that tomorrow. As John Green once said "one day you're 17 and you're planning for someday. And then quietly, without you ever really noticing, someday is today. And then someday is yesterday. And this is your life". While our existence is insignificant, how we choose to utilise that little time is significant. "The future starts today, not tomorrow" (Pope John Paul II) and how we choose to make that tomorrow happen must be achieved within the bounds of "the most precious resource we all have, time" (Steve Jobs).

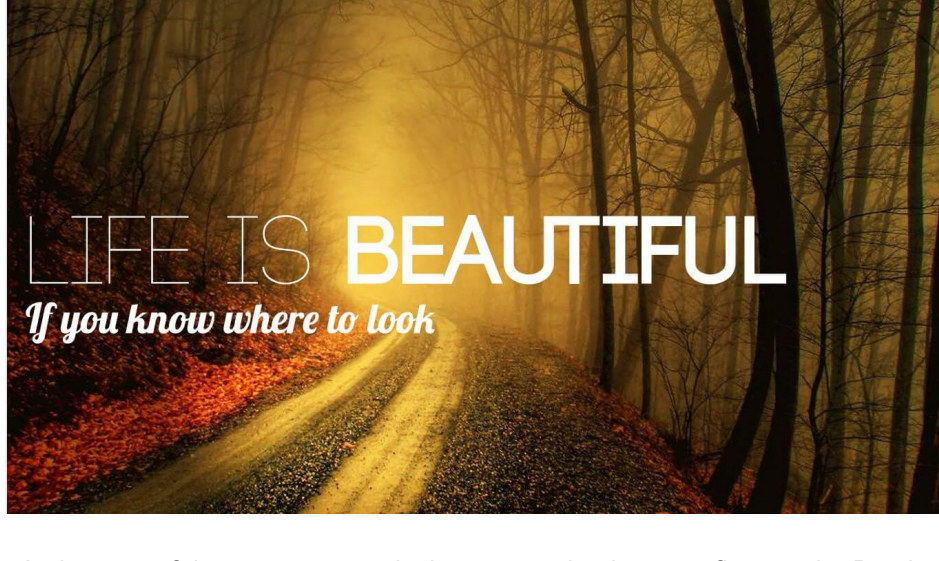
Life is not about me. It is about how I choose to use it to contribute positively towards the human story. By themselves my actions are insignificant, but by building on what the ones before did, and with the ones after me building on what I contribute, we weave something special. This way of thinking is impeded by a self-centred thought process that places the individual at the centre of the universe, where what I own and how many digits my bank account reports is the goal.

Can excessive wealth lengthen our lifespan by a single day? *No*. Remember, the clock never stops, *Tik, Tik, Tik*, that is your life story. "The bad news is time flies. The good news is you're the pilot" (Michael Altshuler). Take ownership of that time and turn it into something great and worth the effort. It is not the longevity that matters in our life, it's the quality of how we choose to live it. "Life, if well lived, is long enough" (Seneca).

A well lived life places at its centre our neighbour. Our neighbours are both contemporary humans and future generations, the unborn that will inherit the decisions you take (or choose not to take) today. "There's only one thing more precious than our time, and that's who we spend it on" (Leo Christopher). We need to stop wasting time on petty grievances (*'pika'*) and focus on what truly matters for the nation and for mankind.

At the beginning of a new year remember that "time does not pass; it continues" (Marty Rubin). We are part of a bigger picture. Do not get bogged down with the insignificant at the expense of the marvellous albeit short time you have been given. Use it wisely, do not let one day go by where you fail to actively think about the others in your life, the other humans less fortunate, about how you can use the little time you have to make a positive impact and impart a positive legacy to future generations. Open to your mission in life, that mission is not you, it is much greater than you. You have a part to play, a tiny part, yet significant enough when considered in the grander scheme of things. "You have got to own your days and live them, each one of them, every one of them, or else the years go by and none of them belong to you" (Herb Gardner).

Be the change you want to see, be that change today .



At the start of the new year, we invite you to take time to reflect on the Beatitudes. Let's make it our resolve to live by this set of principles.

You might not believe in God, however deep down these principles resonate with all people of good will. In a way they are a logically illogical way of living our lives while striving to build a better and more just world!

*Blessed* are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

*Blessed* are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

*Blessed* are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

*Blessed* are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.

*Blessed* are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

*Blessed* are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

*Blessed* are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

*Blessed* are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Matt. 5:3-10

## WHAT'S NEW?

### ŽHN end of year retreat

On the 16th of December ŽHN members met for a short albeit fruitful end of year afternoon retreat. It was an opportunity to spend some time to reflect on what we do and to recharge spiritually. We had a themed reflection and open discussion in the group, and finished off with mass together.

### Newsletter and press release archive

In case you missed any of our communications we are pleased to announce that past newsletters and press releases can be found in our [newsletter](#) and [press release](#) archive.