

Something to think about: 10 July 2011

Taking care of non-business.

There is a song that I remember from many years ago that has in it the refrain “taking care of business”. We are all very good at that, and spend much busy time taking care of business and thinking about how we will take care of business even when we are ‘doing other things’ like taking the children to sport or going out to dinner. It is so easy in this ever busier world to be caught up, one way or another, in ‘taking care of business’– whatever we identify that as. ‘Business’ is what we do to ensure we feel productive that we are “making a contribution”, being successful, valued, and not wasting time. We are so well schooled in not wasting time, in doing our best, in being competitive, that we feel we can’t ‘waste’ time on matters that are not core-business. I had a teacher once who impressed me by positing that integral to a spiral was the space that was not the spiral: a spiral comprises two spirals – one the substantive matter the other the non-matter – you have to have them both to have one spiral! As I grow older I am thinking about ‘business’, (translate productivity or useful engagement) like this: to be able to take care of business we must also take care of non-business. By that I mean all the things that seem peripheral to ‘core business’ but on reflection are integral to it, like the wellbeing of partners and children, food on the table and transport...clothes and friends and the street and neighbourhoods where we live. Unless all these ‘peripheral’ aspects of our core business are taken care of our capacity to engage in ‘taking care of business’ is bankrupted. So, concern for family violence, sustainable agriculture, clean water and oil substitutes...are important matters. I think most of us are operating a debt in relation to the non-business aspect of our lives and we need a bit of capital reinvestment. I think during these next couple of months of winter it would be good to consider how we can take care of non-business.