



Australian Network for Spiritual Direction Inc.

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For people engaged in godly listening

Website: <http://www.ansd.org.au>

NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2012

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President's Letter

As I write this letter I am listening to J S Bach's *Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring*. It has been an important piece of music for most of my adult life. I first became aware of it in 1962 on my first morning in the seminary. I was 18 years old. I was in the chapel for meditation at 6.30 in the morning and with 8 years ahead of me, I was feeling terrible. I had no words to articulate what was going on inside of me. In fact, there would have been no one to speak to if I had words. At the end of the half hour meditation, my sense was much worse than when we had started. My central thought was "there is no way that I could last 8 years." Then between meditation and mass, the organ started to play the Bach piece. Whatever happened during that 3 to 4 minutes of the music, I was not aware of then, but I was brought into a completely different place. I felt better and the sense that I could not go on evaporated. The awful feeling would return many times during the 8 years, and even to this day, it returns. The difference now is that I have words to put around the experience and quite often I put that music of Bach on and it invariably transforms how I am.

Bach seems to have captured an essential element of what Jesus of Nazareth was/is calling us to viz., that transformation is part of our inheritance. We do not have to earn it because it is an expression of grace. My recall of that time 50 years ago is that while I certainly felt better about myself it was not just a feel good experience. I was introduced to a quality we all possess, **compassion**. The music that morning triggered compassion but it was years and years later that I learned its lesson, and am still learning its lesson I hope. It was almost as if something deep inside me lay dormant, waiting for the time when I would grow up and come to a deeper understanding of the mystery of grace. This piece of music is but one example of how the movement of the grace of transformation can be triggered.

This example fits into a larger picture of what it means to be open to grace. As I write this letter, I am aware of the further revelations of the sexual abuse cover up that is continuing to bedevil the Catholic Church. In Melbourne a priest who literally absconded to England in the middle of the night was apparently tipped off by a senior cleric that he was to be charged. The police never followed the case and he was never charged. An American Monsignor has just been jailed for 3 to 6 years for covering up cases in Philadelphia. In addition a recent *Four Corners*

program has revealed similar cases dating back at least 20 years. All this terrible cover up reveals nothing of the movement of transforming grace.

As spiritual directors we are called to daily ponder the movement of transforming grace and the way it is blocked and can be blocked. As I mentioned, the above example fits into a much larger picture. It is part of the call that Jesus the Christ issues to each of us, not just as spiritual directors but as human beings viz. to care for others. In a beautiful book, first published in 1974, *Out of Solitude*, Henri Nouwen reflects on the true meaning of CARE.

*What does it mean to care? Let me start by saying that the word has become a very ambivalent word. When someone says, "I will take care of him!" it is more likely an announcement of an impending attack than of a tender compassion. And besides this ambivalence, the word **care** is most often used in a negative way. "Do you want a cup of tea?" "I don't care." "Do you want to stay home or go to a movie?" "I don't care." Etc. This expression of indifference toward choices in life has become commonplace. And often it seems that not to care has become more acceptable than to care, and a carefree life-style more attractive than a careful one.*

Real care is not ambiguous. Real care excludes indifference and is the opposite of apathy. The word "care" finds its roots in the Gothic "Kara" which means lament. The basic meaning of care is: to grieve, to experience sorrow, to cry out with. I am very struck by this background of the word care because we tend to look at caring as an attitude of the strong toward the weak, of the powerful toward the powerless, of the haves toward the have-nots. And, in fact, we feel quite uncomfortable with an invitation to enter someone's pain before doing something about it.

Nouwen captures an important aspect of the movement of transforming grace. Genuine care cannot be operative outside of entering the difficult, the uncomfortable, the painful, the terrifying. This being present to is the only thing that can advance the work of transforming grace. How often is it reported that the abuser says that he was only trying to show love. And this reveals a complete lack of awareness of the true meaning of care as Nouwen espouses. Another insight that all this shows is that we have to be aware of, and open to, the movement of this transforming grace within ourselves before we can be present

to others. We cannot shy away from the difficult, the uncomfortable, the terrifying in ourselves and expect to be present to others in similar situations. Also we must never forget that receiving joy and taking delight in life and engaging in the pleasurable is as equally important an aspect of care, because life is never all gloom and doom.

As we approach the AECSD conference the theme of **“Stepping into Mystery”** reminds us that this journey of allowing the movement of transforming grace is a delightful, awesome and terrifying one. All of us have had a Bach moment that triggers compassion. How incumbent is it for us to be continually open to these promptings of the Spirit, even if we have to wait for God to appear in the hindsight experience rather than the immediate one.

John Stuart

A Sincere Thanks

David Steindl-Rast has as a title to one of his books “Gratefulness: The Heart of Prayer”. As we all know, the heart of Christian worship is the Eucharist which simply says thanks for life and the Life-giver. We have come to an important time in the life of ANSD. Jo Windier has been the editor of our newsletter for a number of years and has served us all well in bringing us NEWS of the work of ANSD.

Jo, we want to say how **grateful** we are for your service to the spiritual direction of community in Australia. The Newsletter has always been a difficult task and you have done it so well, often under difficult circumstances.

Jo, THANK YOU SO MUCH. We are truly grateful and wish you every blessing.

We also welcome Colleen O’Sullivan who has kindly taken on the role of Editor of the Newsletter. Thank you Colleen for taking on the task.

John, (President)

Story Telling and Spiritual Direction

Stories are important in the ministry of Spiritual Direction. People come to direction to tell their stories, and in the telling, with the help of their Director, can be put in touch with other stories, not least the story of our people, the community of faith, and the story of God. And in the telling

and re-telling of these stories they find a new spaciousness, room to breathe where they can become more fully themselves; a renewed imagination, where they can envision fresh possibilities and hope; and new perspectives, where they can hear the invitation to grow up and to make those choices that are life-giving and freeing.

Some of the most powerful stories we can tell are the stories of the resurrection, which are not told for our information or for the reporting of literal detail. They are told simply for our transformation. They contain, like all good stories, “stored magic”, and have the capacity to capture endlessly our imaginations, move our hearts, and transform us.

Mary Magdalene knew and loved Jesus, perhaps more than most, but after he rose from the dead she supposed he was the gardener. It’s not that he looked different after the resurrection; it’s just that she, like the other disciples, had never seen who he really was. It wasn’t until he moved from saying to her “Woman, why are you weeping?” to speaking “her early morning name” that it dawned on her. He had “recognized” her, and in that recognition, she “recognized” him. It is of course, one of our most fundamental needs: to be seen, to be recognized, and when it happens to us, it is little short of the miraculous. And as spiritual directors, we have the privileged opportunity to recognize people into being, see them into life, and listen them into speech.

Thomas’s moment of “recognition” came when he could overcome his attachment to what God should be like and discover and accept in his wounded God his own wounding. “Listen to the language of your wounds” (Jim Cotter), for this place of vulnerability is precisely the place God speaks to us. For unbelief has less to do with blockages in the intellect than with those in the heart. The faith that Thomas was called into, like the faith that we are called into, has to do with our capacity to say “I am”. Thomas is a good companion for us in Spiritual Direction, for he keeps us alive to the potential places of unfreedom in our hearts.

The disciples in the Upper Room, behind the locked doors of their fear and anxiety, discovered (in Ronald Knox’s famous words) that a wall can become a window. And from this early story of the disciples and their self-imposed imprisonment we can turn to the seemingly endless twentieth century and contemporary stories of people finding hope, resurrection and freedom behind the four walls of their prison cells. Nelson Mandela, who had found freedom well before he was

released; Solzenhitsyn, who could say “Bless you prison!”; Brian Keenan, the Beirut hostage, who discovered that “captivity had recreated a freedom for us. Not a freedom outside us...but...within ourselves”; Bonhoeffer, who could say in his prison, just before his death, “This is for me...the beginning of life”; Anna Akhmatova, the great poetic chronicler of Stalin’s terror, who could write: “I am alive in this grave”; and Yulia Tymoshenko, twice PM of Ukraine and now a political prisoner: “I am more alive, I know, than the men who have imprisoned me here”. For those who come to us for Spiritual Direction need a safe place to tell the story of their four walls, of what holds them captive. And it is the way in which we are with them, our manner of expressing our solidarity with them, which is crucial. Bonhoeffer suggests that we may need (even) to let go of the ultimate truths by which we live, and take up a penultimate attitude, refusing to assure them of truths of God’s love and God’s presence and simply be with them, wordless and impotent. If we can be that for another, perhaps, in time, they “will gradually notice another presence there, silent, but benevolent and peaceful” (Karl Rahner)

And the disciples on the road to Emmaus, in touch with their disappointment and sadness, in the night time of their distress, could still be hospitable to the stranger and say “Stay with us”, and afterwards wake up to their “burning hearts”. We do not know where the original Emmaus was: we do not know who the companion of Cleopas was, which suggests that Emmaus is everywhere, and that each of us is on that road. And wherever we are, and whoever we are, directee or director, the Stranger travels with us, addressing us, challenging us, recognizing us.

Such stories allow us to invest significance into our Spiritual Direction relationships. Such stories alert us to the possibility of an “event of the Spirit”, a “moment of grace”, “spots of time” as Wordsworth says, where “our minds [are] nourished and invisibly repaired”. If God is that which allows me to see, then the telling of stories becomes the means by which I enter into a world of ever expanding horizons.

We tell these stories again and again to alert ourselves “to a possibility of present experience”. We do not tell them to prove a doctrinal point, or to fit them into our normal way of understanding the world and our lives. These stories point to an inexhaustible truth, which waits to grasp us and transform us in an inner revolution, or change of heart, a profound re-orientation, like falling in

love, where nothing has changed but everything is different.

We keep telling these stories “to arouse [our] astonishment and thoughtfulness”, (Peter Carnley) turning us around so that we can become more fully alive in the present moment, living hopefully towards our future who has already appeared.

Philip Carter

THE ONE WHOM MY SOUL LOVES – celebrating MARY MAGDALENE (22 July)

Song of Songs 3.4 I found him whom my soul loves

2 Corinthians 5.17 If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation

John 20.13 “Woman, why are you weeping?”

Whether we believe that Mary Magdalene was the same woman as the Mary with the alabaster jar of precious ointment in Luke 7 or not (and most scholars these days don’t), I am certain that the woman who met the stranger in the Easter garden of John 20 had such an experience of love in her encounter with Jesus that her life was totally transformed. She wanted to cling to him forever – the one whom her soul loved, who sought him and found him. May we too be overcome with her joy. Try to capture that moment of her wondrous recognition in your heart. Mary, in her Christ encounter, became a new creation, the old had passed away (the old included 7 demons we are informed by Luke 8.2...whatever they were); behold the new had come. And we, with our demons, are equally loved with Mary and equally gifted with this transforming love if we would receive it.

This awakening to divine love has done amazing things to people over the Christian centuries. Thomas Merton, a Trappist monk who died in 1968, lived in the strictest of monastic conditions in his Kentucky hermitage. Yet he would speak of such inner growth and a festive sense of God’s presence in words that remind me of the way I felt after my first date with my wife. “Love sails me around the house... I walk two steps on the ground and four steps in the air. It is love. It is consolation...to say that I am made in the image of God is to say that love is the reason for my existence, for God is love.” Elsewhere, Merton

says, "Love is the key to the meaning of life. It is at the same time transformation in Christ and the discovery of Christ. As we grow in love and unity with those who are loved by Christ...we become more and more capable of apprehending and obscurely grasping something of the tremendous reality of Christ in the world, Christ in ourselves and Christ in others..."

Our greatest dignity, the essence and most intimate secret of our humanity, is our capacity to love. Gabrielle Bossis in her dialogue with God as recorded in her book, *He and I*, reveals a most innocent and profound communion with divine love:

The Father says: 'You are astonished by my love. There is only one explanation: God's extravagance. So just believe in all simplicity in this love...And give yourself up to his infinitely delicate and tender power. Be taken captive by love and ask for grace. Love me with my love and be full of trust...Practise the presence of my love. I am everywhere. Put your head on my heart. Of course, since this pleases me. If only you understood the gift of God and who it is speaking to you...Come to me, then, and bring others in your heart...fan flames of your love...don't stand still. Never cease to go forward. Enter even deeper and deeper into my heart. Reading about my passion is not enough. Make it a part of your very self. Wherever you are, take my sufferings. Sufferings desired, willed, expected...they are my love for my children - for you'.

We do need to remember that in real life true love is often born of pain, suffering or misunderstanding. In any worthwhile relationship, this will be discovered as we are refined in love. I am sure that this is what happened with Mary Magdalene and Jesus. Hopefully, it happens to us too. In the game of marriage, I am saddened when I meet men and women who say that they are "no longer in love" with their partner. Often this simply means that they have been hurt or misunderstood or no longer feel the physical buzz they once felt. Too many people who think they've fallen out of love have never learned deeply to love. Our early 'in-love' feelings are just the icing; what sustains us for the long haul is the cake: the solid, deep, fruitful ingredients of abiding love, one for the other. I also believe that most of our present sexuality debate in the Church misses this crucial issue. Ironically, when we talk about union or marriage, we are talking much more about abiding companionship, fulfilling relationship, the blissful certainty of being wanted and loved in faithfulness by another

human being. I know a gay couple who haven't had sex for over 10 years; they joke about it. Sure, it was once important and it still is for most people long into a relationship. But what really matters to that couple, what brings them to overwhelming tears of joy, is the deep and abiding love, strength and companionship they have in each other's gifted presence and security. And *this* is what we need to bless and celebrate as a church! - instead of being so hung-up just about sex. Meanwhile, celibacy, a beautiful vocation in itself, should be strictly a matter of choice; enforced celibacy, enforced loneliness on the other hand, is simply immoral.

In celebration of Mary Magdalene and of single, celibate, partnered and married love, the following is a reflection by an unknown author entitled *I LOVE YOU*:

I love you,

*Not only for what you are,
But for what I am when I am with you.*

*I love you
Not only for what you have made of yourself,*

But what you are making of me.

*I love you,
For passing over all my foolish and
Weak traits that you can't help but see.*

*I love you,
For drawing out into the light my
Beauty that no-one else had looked
Quite far enough to find.*

I love you

David Thornton-Wakeford

David Thornton-Wakeford is Rector of the Anglican Parish of Parkside in Adelaide and Co-Founder/Leader of the St Oswald Centre for Spirituality

The Gift of Compassion

The ANSD group in Sydney has taken as its theme in 2012: Compassion. Each meeting has focussed on one aspect of this quality so much needed today. Mary and Colleen began the series with input and discussion around the theme. The first two sessions focussed on the topic: *Becoming a Compassionate Presence*. Joyce Rupp's wonderful tapes on the subject gave insight and inspiration. These sessions were followed by one on *Liminality and Compassion*.

The next session in the series will focus on *Music and Compassion* and the final session on *An Ecological and Compassionate Presence*.

The Sydney group was also fortunate in being able to host a workshop facilitated by Lucy Abbot Tucker from ISL, Chicago. Lucy was invited to Australia by Barnabas Ministries to run a supervision workshop in Canberra and to work with Spiritual Directors in training.

The one day Sydney Workshop was held at St Joseph's Conference Centre, Baulkham Hills and was titled: *How Does Compassion Look for the Spiritual Director?* The paragraphs below offer a brief summary of what was a very rich day.

Lucy shared with us some significant concepts, and some wonderful stories and poems, which challenged the listener to re-think their ideas and practise of compassion. Our main task is to listen to our directees but to listen for what? Lucy suggested we are *listening for the heartbeat of God in the Sacred Moment*. That moment we call the now. How do we do this? As Directors we do this partly by allowing our directees to be in control of the session. We are attentive to the person as they are now. We are called to be present to their reality; gently overcoming resistances, not pushing too hard. When the past emerges it needs to be recognised as significant to the now. An appropriate question is: What is it about this story that relates to your life now? This response puts us into the place of compassion in the present moment.

Perhaps one of the challenges for spiritual directors is that we are called to respect the spirituality of the other as long as it is working for them.

Spiritual directors are called to exercise compassion towards the process as much as to the person. Each time a director sits with a person the Director is called to believe that God is present. Growth in compassion is a growth in freedom for the Director and Directed. Above all we are called to believe that we are not simply made for God but we are made of God.

Finally Lucy reminded us that we must love this ministry and that our compassionate love of the work must grow the more we participate in it.

Colleen O'Sullivan

AUSTRALIAN NETWORK FOR SPIRITUAL DIRECTION Inc.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

XAVIER COLLEGE KEW,
MELBOURNE

Sunday 23 September, 2012 at 3pm

Ordinary Business:

- Welcome
- Present
- Apologies
- Minutes of last AGM
- Executive Report (President's Report)
- Financial Report
- Election of
- Regional Representatives (at least 5)
- Membership Committee (3 members not on Executive)

Nominations will be accepted from the floor of the meeting, but prior consent to nomination must have been obtained from anyone nominated but not present at the AGM.

Specific Business As Indicated Below

- Brief Regional Reports
- ANSD Conference 2013

Create in me a new heart, O God¹

Wisps of my heart go questing and festering
Snaking their way in mockery jesting
Sneaking and sleuthing not open to truthing
But sniggering and pointing at the fickleness of
faith.

O take, shake, batter and break
This two-toned heart of push-me-pull-you
Yet gently too, with your aromatic hue
Give light and nudging – allow me no
begudging;
Stretch out your hands and gather the sands
Into clay you can mould and fold and hold.
Tilt my face toward you
To embrace all that is true
And gather me, lather me, drench me in grace.

For you are the light,
My love and delight,
You won't refuse this one –
surrender
Undone and outrun...

As you lick my tears, soothe my fears, whisper
gently in my ears
I begin to hear softly, smell so strongly
your wine-soaked breath, transforming this
battle-choked death
pulsing my heart's schisms into your
resurrection rhythms
'til at long, long last
this dark night is passed.

PS:
Who would have thought that stone, when
crushed,
forms warm deep softness so like the flesh of
your strong chest?

Sally Longley

¹Based on **Ezekiel 11:19** I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh.

Day of the Magdalen

In Solemn High Mass on her feast day
our senses are rich with candle glow,
the incense perfume of Arabia,
the liturgy's dignified words,
full bellow of organ,
loud chant of choir.
At the shrine her statue
wears a festal robe.
The guest preacher speaks

of legends conflated
to vision this women,
apostle to the apostles,
chosen to bring to the men
news from the open tomb'
the Christ's resurrection:
'Mary,' 'Rabbouni' 'Go. Tell them.'

After shared supper,
as we walk to our cars
in the old city street
ridiculously my mobile rings.
'You have a new granddaughter,'
my daughter tell me
in a strained, weary voice.
'Madeleine Emily.' I gasp,
tell her of the feast day and how
I love the names she has chosen.
'And I didn't even know,' she says,
nonchalantly. The younger generation
seem to miss God's subtle workings
through their sensitive minds,
their healthy bodies. But grandmothers
are open to all possibilities.

**Dawn Colsey,
(Adelaide, South Australia,
for Madeleine, and Mary of Magdala)**

The Outsider

Her wild, pleading eyes seek trust.
A face thin with hunger,
lean body furtive in every movement,
unwanted, knowing more of escape,
flight to safety,
than of warmth, compassion,
invitation to a home.

An edge-dweller,
she waits for the darkness of night,
lights out, others curled in bed.
She embodies the marginalised,
the one who slinks and peers
to see if she can steal safely.

She helps me know
how it would feel to be an outcast
when I enter into
her anonymous life.
Cat without a home.

**Dawn Colsey,
(Adelaide, South Australia)**

Poems – Attending to Presence

What is my Purpose?

I'm letting this one go.
Stalked it first, but it eluded me.
Would you believe I thought I had it in the bag,
and the cheeky bugger slipped away.
Trust me to think the whole deal about
'purpose' in life might be tameable.
How utterly naive.
It came back and bit me.

Not gonna track it any more
Too like ferreting out rainbow's end:
the glorious colours wasted
in the pursuit.
Maybe when I stop hunting it,
It will come to me – on its own.

Hopeful thought
I shall wait.

**Karen Gibbs,
(Adelaide, South Australia)**



Brave Enough

Ah! Precious Lover of Lovers
How choice to lie in Your embrace
Shamelessly ravished
Such unspeakable intimacy
Limp I lie in ecstasy's postlude
Listening to Spirit's whisper
Filling me, telling me
Be brave enough
to come again.

**Karen Gibbs,
Adelaide, South Australia**

A TRILOGY ON SILENCE

26/12/08

Deep in my soul
sadness.
Evoked by the purity of sound
of clear single notes
of voice, brass or reed
of haunting melodies
and "sheer silence."
(“the sound of sheer silence” 1 Kings 19:12
NRSV)

24/5/10

Just to be
in silence, still.
One with myself
one with all beings.
Alone, but not alone,
with Being itself.

30/05/12

The lone car stopped
beside the bitumen
stretching from sight
both in front and behind
the desert encircling
the car and its occupants
who stepped out into the landscape
“Listen to the silence,”
the visitor remarked
“I’ve never heard it before.”
the creation totally quiet
as we stood on holy ground.

Caroline Pearce



“IN THE PAST, IS THE PRESENT”- MONASTIC ‘MURMURINGS’ AND THE EMMAUS WALK

1. Introduction

“In the past, is the present” reflects on the proposition that the faith ‘murmurings’ which led to the founding of the early monastic movement, might be viewed as a precursor of our contemporary faith ‘murmurings’.

‘Murmurings’ which today can be viewed in one way as the disenchantment with traditional faith dialogues or with what many view as the increasingly soulless and pervasive consumerism, ‘affluenza’, afflicting our society.

How therefore, might contemporary Spiritual Direction gain insights from these early monastic ‘murmurings’ which might assist in engaging with contemporary ‘murmurings’.

I will reflect on these early monastic ‘murmurings’ through the prism of the original desert mothers and fathers, and of St Benedict, with the catalyst of their ‘murmurings’ resulting in their consequential expressions of the monastic movement.

Today, we are experiencing similar expressions of spiritual and faith emptiness and cynicism – negativism – within our contemporary society. For some, there is disillusionment with the institution of Church which for them no longer provides spiritual and faith relevance; there is no longer any sense of engagement with, or connection to, the faith message being offered.

However, there is a corresponding searching for something more authentic both from those with an existing faith background and from those with no formal grounding in faith dialogues. This reflection also embraces ‘liminality’, as this contemporary searching might be placed within the context of being in limbo: a transitional searching within a wilderness of consumerism and ‘affluenza’, as arid as the desert sands. A wilderness sometimes viewed through symptoms akin to those of acedia and of the ‘dark nights of the soul’ as expressed by St John of the Cross.

So, I consider the current ‘murmurings’ of my reflection as a groaning expression of both the personal and collective consciousness of an emptiness, which sometimes cannot be

articulated and at times only felt in its abstractness.

‘Murmurings’ from spiritual ‘hollows’ lying deep within ourselves; ‘hollows’ of spiritual emptiness left in the void after the flight from: consumerism, ‘affluenza’; from religious and social disenchantment; from an acquired false self. They are ‘hollows’ echoing with the cries of yearnings for spiritual/faith meaning; cries which collectively bellow into social consciousness and consequences – liminal ‘hollows’ hungry for the grace of spiritual meaning and acceptance.

How then might an understanding of these past ‘murmurings’ and traditions help contemporary Spiritual Direction to transform these ‘murmurings’, to fill spiritual ‘hollows’? How might reflecting on the relevancy of this ‘past’ to our ‘present’, practically support contemporary Spiritual Direction in its ministry to those directees who may be ‘churched’ or ‘unchurched’.

2. Monastic Considerations

As a starting point we can place Spiritual Direction in the context of hospitality, the hospitality of the desert mothers and fathers of the early monastic movement; a tradition and culture of providing hospitality to the weary traveller, of ‘monastically’ greeting them and embracing their ‘murmurings’ and spiritual ‘hollows’.

Metaphorically the cradle of our hands, the cradle of Jesus’ hands, can become the holding place of the hospitality of our ministry.

The cradles of our hands can also be seen as an image of the stability of Spiritual Direction, a counter balance to the instability and inhospitality of the mobility and constant change within our contemporary world.

Here we can offer a place of stability, where a deep breath can be sighed into the resting presence of our sacred, still place; a contemporary stability which comes to us from the ‘passive apostles’ of the desert mothers and fathers. A stability of becoming an anchor to secure these ‘murmurings’; the Spiritual Director becoming the ‘eye in the centre of the storm’ where the centre is still and calm in loving acceptance.

The Spiritual Director may seek to introduce an element of stability into the life of the directee between sessions, by introducing a form of

monastic daily offices to enable the sense of the presence of God and moments of holiness, to enter into their daily lives. The setting aside of daily rhythmic prayer times to enable conversations of the spirit: meditation, sacred readings, contemplative practices such as 'lectio divina'; to open up that space to intentionally enable God's presence to be felt and acknowledged.

In attending to our own conversations of the spirit, our own 'hollows' of the spirit, we too can become a companioning presence felt and seen by our directees – "the real companions are much more than teachers; they are themselves the teaching, their whole lives are the message"- (Andre Louf, 'Tuning into Grace').

Whilst we may not be hermits of the monastic desert or wilderness, we can carry within ourselves the ability to go inwards to the, "hermit of our hearts"- (Bishop Kallistos Ware, 'The Inner Kingdom') - to where that meeting place with God resides. Perhaps this sense of the "hermit of our hearts" might too be seen and felt by our directees, opening them up to the realisation that they do not necessarily need to be in a truly spiritual place, to encounter God. Similarly, the seeking of God in the 'ordinary' and the prophetic nature of Spiritual Direction might help directees to place their 'murmurings' in the context of the early and subsequent monastic movements. This may help those who are disillusioned with the institution of Church, to connect with a Christian monastic tradition viewed by some as one which can sit outside of the mainstream Church.

A tradition which perhaps connects with the wider community's 'murmurings' and also to social justice issues, thus providing a further pathway of exploring a relationship with God. A relationship open to credibility through the highlighting of how contemporary Orders can and do live out of these traditions.

For some who have in effect become 'refugees' in their desolation, then Spiritual Direction could for them become a haven, a safe place in much the same way that the desert mothers and fathers, who initially fled their own contemporary religious settings, found refuge in the subsequent monastic movement and which then provided refuge for those who came to them.

Spiritual Direction can provide that haven, refuge for those who may be seeking God, outside of the institutional Church.

It can provide that haven, refuge where they can let go negative, proscriptive images of God which have been impediments to their growth in faith. A haven of the 'colour purple' of faith:

holding them while they may be undergoing the painful and at times frightening shedding of previous faith templates; safely holding them to then trust in the presence and movement of the Holy Spirit, to fill their spiritual 'hollows'. This haven may be just as relevant to those who are 'unchurched', who are fleeing from the 'murmurings' of consumerism, 'affluenza', yet who are still yearning for some form of spiritual authenticity to fill their abstract 'hollowness'.

3. Emmaus Walk (Luke 24, Verses 13-33)

People caught within the emotions arising from these 'murmurings' can have a sense of being in a faith limbo: a faith limbo in which they are consciously or unconsciously on a journey to an unknown destination, seemingly alone; a liminal spiritual 'hollow'.

These verses of Luke's Emmaus Walk speak powerfully of this liminality, of being in a faith limbo. In these verses, where the two disciples are walking from the start point of desolation and mourning, to a potentially fearful and as yet unknown destination, they are in a state of liminality, in the painful void of Easter Saturday. At this lowest point within the walk and without them realising it, the risen Jesus is with them.

Similarly in a contemporary setting there can be those 'mourning' the loss of 'church', the loss of their previously well held faith expectations and beliefs, yet who are still seeking some form of renewed faith grounding. This can be equally applicable to the 'unchurched' who are searching for a faith, who can be in a similar state of liminality within this transitional searching from a rejected superficiality, to a desired, authentic faith belief.

When we are with directees who are in the depth of their 'murmurings', their spiritual 'hollows', we can overlay onto these encounters, the template of Jesus as Spiritual Director, in effect engaging the Jesus of the Emmaus Walk. Here we have Jesus as Spiritual Director discerning the inner 'murmurings', the inner movements of the disciples: their deep grief, their shock, the 'burning of their hearts'.

As Spiritual Directors we too can bring to the encounter our sense of what are the inner stirrings of the directee; in so doing we can intentionally call upon His presence and sit in companionship with Him as we sit with and listen to our directees stories.

In effect, we take on the presence of the 'unseen' Jesus in the early part of the Emmaus Walk, and as previously mentioned, He remains the silent witness at that part of the encounter.

If we accept the proposition that Jesus brought a point of tension to His companionship of the two disciples at that point in the story, which gave rise to the words, "stay with us", then we too may arrive at a stage in our direction of directees when we sense the opportunity to create a similar sense of tension. In this context, it could be creating a tension to bring inner movements to the surface which may involve moments of: challenging, questioning, reminding, mirroring back to directees in much the same way that Jesus did for the disciples.

He confronted them with what they already knew yet which at that moment was muddled by and buried within, their grief and desolation. This confrontation by Jesus kindled the "burning of their hearts", so that from where they were lost in their 'micro' surrounds and unable to recognise the 'macro' scriptural reality, the potential for hope was created.

We too might similarly challenge, remind our directees of where their stories, if placed within a larger world perspective, may reveal their potential for the generation of hope; yet challenges always offered within the underlying tenet of love and compassion for them.

As previously mentioned this resultant tension may enable directees to bring to the surface that which is being **felt** rather than that which is being **thought**; articulations, previously buried in silence, which have been holding back the movement from 'sense' to 'spirit', the transformative process. 'Murmurings' of emotional pain, of loss can be brought into the healing presence of Jesus, leading to a baptism of interred, unconscious pain into the birth of a shared healing with Jesus.

Here we can gently offer up the proposition that this might not be a healing of giving over the pain to Jesus but rather one in which the pain/wound is held jointly in renewal. A pain which becomes a reconciled, benign and rounded 'thorn'; a pain which diffuses into being an authentic **part** of who

they are and no longer a pain which, with authority, **defines** who they are.

4. Conclusion of, "In the Past, is the Present"

Spiritual Direction today can be enriched from its legacy of past traditions and perspectives, which can infuse contemporary Spiritual Direction encounters.

These historical perspectives and traditions, when placed alongside the current encounters and experiences of our directees, may reinforce their awareness that although each of their experiences are unique to them, their experiences are part of the shared journeys of the company of peoples down the ages, who have spoken of similar stories and experiences. The relating of past stories to them may provide comfort in their realisation and understanding of these common and shared past experiences, particularly for directees who may feel alone in their experiences but who may be empowered by the remembrance and inspiration of others on past and present, similar faith journeys.

My personal reflections on Spiritual Direction: as hospitality, stability, refuge; of its prophetic dimension; of Jesus as a model of Spiritual Direction, are all examples of the ways in which I feel Spiritual Direction can apply the 'past' to the 'present', can help with the transformation of 'murmurings' and the filling of spiritual 'hollows'.

So the essence of 'In the Past, is the Present' and its application to Spiritual Direction can, perhaps for me, be expressed in the view that the traditions and mysteries of our faith are there to be worn and fashioned through Spiritual Direction, to the realities and needs of our directees in our contemporary world. They are traditions which can clothe us, shape us and which can be tailored for us, but traditions which are not meant to be uniformly restrictive to ourselves or to our directees.

Through all this, Spiritual Direction for me is that which 'heals on the Sabbath' which recognises and embraces the sanctity of the 'broken'; a ministry which inherits His transforming 'crown of thorns' and not proscriptive laurels, woven into wreaths of literalism.

Michael Mosley