

THE WELLSRING COMMUNITY INC

PILGRIMAGE 2003



GOING OUTSIDE THE CAMP

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GOING OUTSIDE THE CAMP:

THE PILGRIMAGE

I am writing this on Thursday 24 April. Margaret and I are booked to fly to Alice Springs to continue our pilgrimage in exactly three months. All going well you will read this about two months before you take your next step along the way.

I am getting excited about what lies ahead. Each time I do a mailing I look at the names and addresses. I see many names of people who I do not know—yet! I feel that already many of us have deepened our relationship with God as we have prepared for the pilgrimage. As I have said before, the warmth of the comments that many of you have made blesses me about our preparation. I am really looking forward to getting to know you when we meet in Alice Springs. I continue to pray that God will use this pilgrimage to strengthen each of us and to transform the Community.

The original schedule continues to hold together:

So we move to

Instalment 5:

May/June Finding spiritual meaning in the stranger or the other

And then we have

Instalment 6:

June/July Great pilgrims and great pilgrimages.

I start a new job in June. I have accepted a position as Academic Director and Senior Lecturer in Education Studies and Christian Formation at the Macquarie Christian Studies Institute. MCSI is affiliated with Macquarie University in Sydney. In a wonderfully creative arrangement that is not paralleled anywhere in the world, MCSI engages the life of mainstream Australian higher education. We offer a wide range of thought provoking units in many areas including education, media, counselling, spirituality, worldview and ethics. These units are designed as “plug-in” electives for a wide range of undergraduate programs. I will work on extending the range to include post-graduate units. The units are accredited by Macquarie University and can also be cross-credited to many other universities. See www.mcsi.edu.au for more information.

I am excited about this new stage in my life. It is most unexpected and I am very grateful to God for giving me this opportunity. But it means that I will have much on my mind in June when I need to send you Instalment 6. So please consider what you can contribute to Instalment 6. Marylin van Winsen has already sent some reflections on her pilgrimage to Lourdes.

If you have been on a pilgrimage before please write and let us know about it: Where did you go? Why? What was special about it? Were there disappointments? Did it challenge you? Did it frighten you? Did it change you? How did you feel when you returned home? What did you learn from that pilgrimage that will help you in this one?

Is John Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress* special to you? Why? What was special about it? Were there disappointments? Did it challenge you? Did it change you? What did you learn from that pilgrimage that will help you in this one?

If you have not been on a pilgrimage, do you have time to research one of the great pilgrimages such as Santiago de Compostella?

Salem-al-salakim--Peace

Neil Holm

(3/42-44 Kings Cross Road, Kings Cross NSW 2011) (neil-margaret.holm@bigpond.com)



Day 1: Ways of Understanding the Sacred

Frederic and Mary Ann Brussat, *Spiritual Literacy: Reading the Sacred in Everyday Life* (Scribner: New York, 1996), pp.36-39.

SPIRITUAL LITERACY FILTERS

Let's explore one other important aspect of spiritual literacy--the different filters commonly used in spiritual readings. Just as photographers use filters on their lenses to remove haze from a scene or to enhance the brightness of a certain color, the traditions use filters to emphasize particular understandings of the sacred. Filters do not change the scene as much as they change the perception. The spiritually literate passages collected in this book include examples of writers using four different filters.

The first, and perhaps the most familiar, is *sacramentalism*, in which the creation is seen as a sign pointing to God. Objects, places, events, and relationships can be reminders, reflections, metaphors, analogies, symbols, or samples of the divine reality. Catholic Bishop Fulton Sheen uses the image of the universe as a windowpane; you see through the visible to the Invisible God. This understanding is evident in the primal religions that regard the world as being infused with Spirit, and in the wisdom traditions that encourage believers to look for hints of God in the world around them.

The following story captures the essence of this filter.

God decided to become visible to a king and a peasant and sent an angel to inform them of the blessed event. "O king," the angel announced, "God has deigned to be revealed to you in whatever manner you wish. In what form do you want God to appear?"

Seated pompously on his throne and surrounded by awestruck subjects, the king royally proclaimed: "How else would I wish to see God, save in majesty and power? Show God to us in the full glory of power."

God granted his wish and appeared as a bolt of lightning that instantly pulverized the king and his court. Nothing, not even a cinder, remained.

The angel then manifested herself to a peasant saying: "God deigns to be revealed to you in whatever manner you desire. How do you wish to see God?"

Scratching his head and puzzling a long while, the peasant finally said: "I am a poor man and not worthy to see God face to face. But, if it is God's will to be revealed to me, let it be in those things with which I am familiar. Let me see God in the earth I plough, the water I drink, and the food I eat. Let me see the presence of God in the faces of my family, neighbors, and--if God deems it as good for myself and others--even in my own reflection as well."

God granted the peasant his wish, and he lived a long and happy life.

-Story quoted in *Peacemaking Day by Day*

According to sacramentalism, anything can become a disclosure of grace. We experience intimations of the divine in a lover's embrace, a rainbow, a baby's smile, a bird's flight overhead, a friend's forgiveness, a dolphin's leap, or the selfless service of a volunteer.

Another important filter used to explain the relationship between God and the world is *panentheism* which means "everything in God, and God in everything." Panentheism is not the same as pantheism, which identifies God with nature, or dualism, which emphasizes the gulf between God and creation. It stresses immanence--God within the world--over transcendence--God above and separate from the world. This poem from an ancient Welsh text reveals that panentheism is certainly not a new idea.

I am the wind that breathes upon the sea,

I am the wave on the ocean,

I am the murmur of leaves rustling,

I am the rays of the sun,

I am the beam of the moon and stars,

I am the power of trees growing,

I am the bud breaking into blossom,

I am the movement of the salmon swimming,

I am the courage of the wild boar fighting,

I am the speed of the stag running,

I am the strength of the ox pulling the plough,

I am the size of the mighty oak,

And I am the thoughts of all people,

Who praise my beauty and grace.

-The Black Book of Camarthan quoted in
Celtic Fire edited by Robert Van de Weyer

Panentheism enables us to see all of life as sacred. Matthew Fox, one of the most prolific contemporary proponents of this understanding, uses the image of the universe as the divine womb containing us all; the way we treat things, nature, animals, places, and people is the way we treat God.

A third filter used to put the sacred and the world in better focus is *divinization or sanctification*.

A little girl was standing with her grandfather by an old-fashioned open well. They had just lowered a bucket to draw some water to drink. "Grandfather," asked the little girl, "where does God live?"

The old man picked up the little girl and held her over the open well. "Look down into the water," he said, "and tell me what you see." "I see myself," said the little girl. "That's where God lives," said the old man. "He lives in you."

-MARK LINK .

in *Challenge*

Judaism and Christianity emphasize that humans are made in the image of God. The Quakers believe "There is that of God in everyone." In his book *The Orthodox Church*, Timothy Ware points out how this belief is reflected in that tradition: "This respect for every human being is visible expressed in Orthodox worship when the priest censes not only the icons but the members of the congregation, saluting the image of God in each person." Divinization does not mean that we are God or are becoming God, but it does mean that we are vessels containing the Holy One.

A fourth filter is demonstrated in this passage.

Whenever I touch a flower, I touch the sun and yet I do not get burned. When I touch the flower, I touch a cloud without flying to the sky. When I touch the flower, I touch my consciousness, your consciousness, and the great planet Earth at the same time. . . . The miracle is possible because of insight into the nature of interbeing. If you really touch one flower deeply, you touch the whole cosmos. The cosmos is neither one nor many. When you touch one, you touch many, and when you touch many, you touch one. Like Shakyamuni Buddha, you can be everywhere at the same time. Think of your child or your beloved touching you now. Look more deeply, and you will see yourself as multitudes, penetrating every- where, interbeing with everyone and everything.

-THICH NHAT HANH

in *Cultivating the Mind of Love*

This view of the interconnection of all creation is an example of a filter that is nontheistic. Thich Nhat Hanh, a Vietnamese Buddhist monk and peace activist, calls this filter "*interbeing*." It engenders within us a sense of unity and harmony with the world and its abundant wonders. And as anyone who has felt a mystical sense of at-oneness with nature or with other people knows, this experience can lead to a transformed respect for everyday life and its mysteries.

Suggestions

1. Visualise a stranger or some person who is "other" to you. Now put on each of the filters: sacramentalism, panentheism, divinization, and interbeing. What do you see through each of these filters?
2. Look back over our pilgrimage readings. Can you find examples of times when we used these filters as a way of preparing us for the pilgrimage?
3. Have your own "street retreat". Go out into the streets around you. Find a place where you can sit and watch for a couple of hours. What does God show you? What does God say to you? What filter did you use?
4. Meditate on Hebrews 13

Day 2: :Encountering the Amhaaretz

Eugene Stockton, Chapter 7: The Larrikin. *Landmarks: A spiritual search in a Southern land.* (Eastwood: Parish Ministry Publications, 1990)

Read from page 53 to the end of the Paul section on page 56.

Suggestions.

1. Consider Jesus' ministry with outsiders. Take one (or more) of the passages on page 55. Try the 6Ps:

Pause, Presence, Picture, Ponder, Promise, Pray

(Adapted from *David Adam The Cry of the Deer, Triangle/SPCK, 1987, pp. 19-20.*)

Pause

Stop what you are doing. Let yourself relax; let all the tension go out of your body, all troubled thoughts out of your mind. Make space in your life for something to happen. Make room for God. Let go, and let God. Breathe slowly and deeply. Be still.

Presence:

Know that God is with you.

This is the purpose of this exercise--to discover that God is with you.

'God unseen yet ever near

Thy Presence may I feel.'

The Presence is to be enjoyed.

Let God take over. Do not try to do anything at this stage but to be aware of Him and rest in His Presence. Make little acts of affirmation. 'Lord you are here. Help me to know it'

'Lord you are love. Help me to receive you.'

Picture:

What this fact of Presence means for you today as you imagine yourself with Jesus in this encounter. As you picture it, remember: Your God is with you: you dwell in Him and He in you. He is with you at this sacred place and in the relationship you have just entered.. Can you feel Jesus' emotions as he encounters this stranger?

Ponder:

Think what this should mean for you in this new situation.

We are never alone. There is an abiding Presence; strength, love, peace, forgiveness are ever at hand.

'My Presence will go with you and I will give you rest.'

Promise:

To recall the fact of His Presence throughout the day. Perhaps God will move you to make another promise based on your experience.

Pray

2. Meditate on Paul "coming as a nobody" to be among "nobodies."
3. What strangers and others are you encountering (or likely to encounter) on the pilgrimage? Visualise these encounters. What is God saying to you?

Day 3: Let Us Go to Him, Outside the Camp

Eugene Stockton, Chapter 7: The Larrikin. *Landmarks: A spiritual search in a Southern land.* (Eastwood: Parish Ministry Publications, 1990)

Read the rest of the chapter.

I have entitled this booklet *Going Outside the Camp*. I have drawn on the imagery that Eugene discusses on page 57 in the Hebrews passage. I find this image quite startling. *The New Interpreter's Bible* comments:

Jesus died "outside the camp," outside the sacred precinct. It was outside that animal carcasses were destroyed and criminals were executed (Lev 24:14, 23; Num 15:35-36; Deut 22:24). Just as the writer had earlier spoken of the manner of Jesus' death as one of shame and disgrace (12:2), so here the place of his death is one of "abuse" ("reproach," "disgrace,"; used of Moses at 11:26). And just as readers were called on to "look to" the Jesus on the cross

of shame (12:2), so here they are called to “go to him” and bear his abuse outside the camp (v.13).

Going to Jesus outside the camp has been variously interpreted. [It may mean] . . . to turn loose of all the securities and certainties that cushion believers from the risk taking that discipleship involves. . . . To go to Jesus outside the camp is to join Abraham and all the company of faith pilgrims who left a homeland in search of the homeland, who left a city in search of the city (11:8-16). By declaring themselves strangers and aliens on the earth (11:13), they took on the abuse that goes with the life of a pilgrim, which is to be without identity, without status, without place in the world. (Volume XII, p.167).

I have just seen the film *The Fight Club*. In many ways, the characters in this film go outside the camp. They don't go to Jesus but they turn away from the cushioned, anaesthetised existence to a life of risk without identity, without status, without a place in the world.

SUGGESTIONS

1. Reflect on the Hebrews passage again. From this perspective, how do you see the stranger and other?
2. Do you ever feel “out on a limb” (page 57)? Do you feel that everyone else is “other”? Do you still “seek the Living among the dead” (Luke 24:5)?
3. On the pilgrimage, you will meet other pilgrims who are essentially strangers and others. How do Eugene's words at the top of page 59 apply in this context?
4. Can you re-write Miriam-Rose's words on page 59 to reflect your experience? Miriam-Rose's “other” is her people. Who is your “other”?

Day 4: Creating Space for Strangers I

Henri J M Nouwen, *Reaching Out: the three movements in spiritual life*, New York: Doubleday, 1975

Living in a World of Strangers

The first characteristic of the spiritual life is the continuing movement from loneliness to solitude. Its second equally important characteristic is the movement by which our hostilities can be converted into hospitality. It is there that our changing relationship to ourself can be brought to fruition in an ever-changing relationship to our fellow human beings. It is there that our reaching out to our innermost being can lead to a reaching out to the many strangers whom we meet on our way through life. In our world full of strangers, estranged from their own past, culture and country, from their neighbors, friends and family, from their deepest self and their God, we witness a painful search for a hospitable place where life can be lived without fear and where community can be found. Although many, we might even say most, strangers in this world become easily the victim of a fearful hostility, it is possible for men and women and obligatory for Christians to offer an open and hospitable space where strangers can cast off their strangeness and become our fellow human beings. The movement from hostility to hospitality is hard and full of difficulties. Our society seems to be increasingly full of fearful, defensive, aggressive people anxiously clinging to their property and inclined to look at their surrounding world with suspicion, always expecting an enemy to suddenly appear, intrude and do harm. But still that is our vocation: to convert the *hostis* into a *hospes*, the enemy into a guest and to create the free and fearless space where brotherhood and sisterhood can be formed and fully experienced.

A Biblical Term

. . . . [Hospitality] is one of the richest biblical terms that can deepen and broaden our insight in our relationships to our fellow human beings. Old and New Testament stories not only show how serious our obligation is to welcome the stranger in our home, but they also tell us that guests are carrying precious gifts with them, which they are eager to reveal to a receptive host. When Abraham received three strangers at Mamre and offered them water, bread and a fine tender calf, they revealed themselves to him as the Lord announcing that Sarah his wife would give birth to a son (Genesis 18:1-15). When the widow of Zarephath offered food and to shelter to Elijah, he revealed himself as a man of God offering her an abundance of oil and meal and raising her son from the dead (I Kings 17:9-24). When

the two travelers to Emmaus invited the stranger, who had joined them on the road to stay with them for the night, he made himself known in the breaking of the bread as their Lord and Saviour (Luke 24:13-35).

When hostility is converted into hospitality then fearful strangers can become guests revealing to their hosts the promise they are carrying with them. Then, in fact, the distinction between host and guest proves to be artificial and evaporates in the recognition of the new found unity.

Thus the biblical stories help us to realize not just that hospitality is an important virtue, but even more that in the context of hospitality guest and host can reveal their most precious gifts and bring new life to each other.

...

The term hospitality, therefore, should not be limited to its literal sense of receiving a stranger in our house- although it is important never to forget or neglect that!- but as a fundamental attitude toward our fellow human being, which can be expressed in a great variety of ways.

Ambivalence Toward the Stranger

Although it belongs to the core of a Christian spirituality to reach out to strangers and invite them into our lives, it is important to realize clearly that our spontaneous feelings toward strangers are quite ambivalent. It does not require much social analysis to recognize how many forms of hostility, usually pervaded with fear and anxiety, prevent us from inviting people into our world.

To fully appreciate what hospitality can mean, we possibly have to become first a stranger ourselves. a student wrote:

I left Nice one day with little money and stuck out my thumb. For five days I went wherever the wind blew me. I ran out of money and had to depend on the kindness of others. I learned what it is to be humble, thankful for a meal, a ride, and totally at the mercy of chance...

We can say that during the last years strangers have become more and more subject to hostility than to hospitality. In fact, we have protected our apartments with dogs and double locks, our buildings with vigilant door- men, our roads with anti-hitchhike signs, our subways with security guards, our airports with safety officials, our cities with armed police and our country with an omnipresent military. Although we might want to show sympathy for the poor, the lonely, the homeless and the rejected, our feelings toward a stranger knocking on our door and asking for food and shelter is ambivalent at the least. In general we do not expect much from strangers. We say to each other: "You better hide your money, lock your door and chain your bike." People who are unfamiliar, speak another language, have another color, wear a different type of clothes and live a life style different from ours, make us afraid and even hostile. Frequently we return home from vacation with that gnawing suspicion that some stranger might have broken into our home and discovered the closet where we have hidden our "valuables."

In our world the assumption is that strangers are a potential danger and that it is up to them to disprove it. When we travel we keep a careful eye on our luggage; when we walk the streets we are aware of where we keep our money; and when we walk at night in a dark park our whole body is tense with fear of an attack. Our heart might desire to help others: to feed the hungry, visit the prisoners and offer a shelter to travelers; but meanwhile we have surrounded ourselves with a wall of fear and hostile feelings, instinctively avoiding people and places where we might be reminded of our good intentions.

SUGGESTIONS

1. Meditate on Genesis 18:1-15, I Kings 17:9-24), Luke 24:13-35, Hebrews 13:2. Think back over the last few times you welcomed a stranger into your home. What precious gifts did these guests bring with them that they revealed to you, their receptive host?
2. Meditate on Genesis 18:1-15, I Kings 17:9-24), Luke 24:13-35, Hebrews 13:2. Think back over the last few times you were welcomed as a stranger into a home. What precious gifts did you bring that you revealed to your receptive host?
3. Think again about the issues in Suggestions 1 & 2. What are the implications for your participation in our pilgrimage to the Centre or your personal pilgrimage?
4. Look around your home and your workplace. Observe your habits: the way you go to work, your leisure patterns, your shopping routines, your church habits, your habits at parties and other public

- events and so on. Reflect on the ways you have protected yourself from “strangers” and “others”. To what extent are these habits culturally determined? To what extent are they Spirit guided?
5. As a Christian what changes can you make in your life “to offer an open and hospitable space where strangers can cast off their strangeness and become our fellow human beings”?

Day 5: Creating Space for Strangers I

Henri J M Nouwen, *Reaching Out: the three movements in spiritual life*, New York: Doubleday, 1975.

Creating a Free and Friendly Space

When we have become sensitive to the painful contours of our hostility we can start identifying the lines of its opposite toward which we are called to move: hospitality. The German word of hospitality is *Gastfreundschaft* which means, friendship for the guest. The Dutch use the word *gastvrijheid* which means, the freedom of the guest. Although this might reflect that the Dutch people find freedom more important than friendship, it definitively shows that hospitality wants to offer friendship without binding the guest and freedom without leaving him alone.

Hospitality, therefore, means primarily the creation of a free space where the stranger can enter and become a friend instead of an enemy. Hospitality is not to change people, but to offer them space where change can take place. It is not to bring men and women over to our side, but to offer freedom not disturbed by dividing lines. It is not to lead our neighbor into a corner where there are no alternatives left, but to open a wide spectrum of options for choice and commitment. It is not an educated intimidation with good books, good stories and good works, but the liberation of fearful hearts so that words can find roots and bear ample fruit. It is not a method of making our God and our way into the criteria of happiness, but the opening of an opportunity to others to find their God and their way. The paradox of hospitality is that it wants to create emptiness, not a fearful emptiness, but a friendly emptiness where strangers can enter and discover themselves as created free; free to sing their own songs, speak their own languages, dance their own dances; free also to leave and follow their own vocations. Hospitality is not a subtle invitation to adopt the life style of the host, but the gift of a chance for the guest to find his own.

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Occupied and Preoccupied Space

Occupation and not empty space is what most of us are looking for. When we are not occupied we become restless. We even become fearful when we do not know what we will do the next hour, the next day or the next year. Then occupation is called a blessing and emptiness a curse. Many telephone conversations start with the words: “I know you are busy, but. . .” and we would confuse the speaker and even harm our reputation were we to say, “Oh no, I am completely free, today, tomorrow and the whole week.” Our client might well lose interest in a man who has so little to do.

Being busy, active and on the move has nearly become part of our constitution. When we are asked to sit in a chair, without a paper to read, a radio to listen to, a television to watch, without a visitor or a phone, we are inclined to become so restless and tense that we welcome anything that will distract us again.

This explains why silence is such a difficult task. Many people who say how much they desire silence, rest, quietude would find it nearly impossible to bear the stillness of a monastery. When all the movements around them have stopped, when nobody asks them a question, seeks advice or even offers a helping hand, when there is no music or newspapers they quite often experience such an inner restlessness that they will grab any opportunity to become involved again. The first weeks or even months in a contemplative monastery, therefore, are not always as restful as they might seem, and it is indeed not surprising that vacations are more often spent on busy beaches, camping grounds and around entertainment centers than in the silence of monasteries.

All this shows that preoccupation is in fact a greater stumbling block than occupation. We are so afraid of open spaces and empty places that we occupy them with our minds even before we are there. Our worries and concerns are expressions of our inability to leave unresolved questions unresolved and open-ended situations open-ended. They make us grab any possible solution and answer that seems to

fit the occasion. They reveal our intolerance of the incomprehensibility of people and events and make us look for labels or classifications to fill the emptiness with self-created illusions.

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So we can see that creating space is far from easy in our occupied and preoccupied society. And still, if we expect any salvation, redemption, healing and new life, the first thing we need is an open receptive place where something can happen to us. Hospitality, therefore, is such an important attitude. We cannot change the world by a new plan, project or idea. We cannot even change other people by our convictions, stories, advice and proposals, but we can offer a space where people are encouraged to disarm themselves, to lay aside their occupations and preoccupations and to listen with attention and care to the voices speaking in their own center. How important it is to become empty in order that we may learn is well illustrated in the following Zen story:

Nan-in, a Japanese master during the Meiji era (1868- 1912) received a university professor who came to inquire about Zen. Nan-in served tea. He poured his visitor's cup full, and then kept pouring. The professor watched the overflow until he could no longer restrain himself. "It is overfull. No more will go in!" "Like this cup," Nan-in said, "you are full of your opinions and speculations. How can I show you Zen unless you first empty your cup?"

To convert hostility into hospitality requires the creation of the friendly empty space where we can reach out to our fellow human beings and invite them to a new relationship. This conversion is an inner event that cannot be manipulated but must develop from within. Just as we cannot force a plant to grow but can take away the weeds and stones which prevent its development, so we cannot force anyone to such a personal and intimate change of heart, but we can offer the space where such a change can take place.

Suggestions

1. "If we expect any salvation, redemption, healing and new life, the first thing we need is an open receptive place where something can happen to us. . . . where we can reach out to our fellow human beings and invite them to a new relationship." What are your expectations of your pilgrimage? How does this thought apply to you as you form new relationships on your pilgrimage?
2. Bill Howarth has written to say "my prayers will be with you as you prepare and go on the pilgrimage." He has sent some meditations on silence. They are from Robert Llewellyn (ed), *Circles of Silence: Explorations in Prayer with Julian Meetings*. Dartman, Longman & Todd.

Be Still and Know -Alice Fairclough

*In the silence are heard
Whisper, sibilance and sigh:
The breathing of the sleeping child
Cradled nearby:
The stir of mouse, insect and bird.
In the silence the Word.*

*In the stillness discern
The minutiae of form;
The shape and symmetry of fern,
the insphered calyx of the rose,
Delicate spearheads
Of catkin in repose.
In the stillness the Word.*

*In the silence far sounds draw near:
The cataract below hill-top,
Laughter in the next valley,
The unseen lark we hear.*

*In the stillness the small
Encompasses the all:
The still pool accepts within its secrecy
The height, the depth, the mystery
Of the vast sky.*

*And in the stillness, I
may take the imprint of the Word:
In the silence, I
Receive the Lord*

Silence -Joy French

Silence

*Is more than a pause between noises,
More than the space between words;
Silence is herself
The unknown queen.*

Silence has power,

*Which is why some men fear her and seek to
kill her
With chatter and clatter of tongues;
Man reaches for his drums, or switches on the
radio,
Afraid of the voice of silence.*

Silence endures;

*When the drummers sleep, and the radio says
Goodnight,
And even the dogs in the distance cease to
bark,
Silence resumes her throne
(which was always hers; she has never
abdicated,
merely gone into retreat).*

Silence reigns;

*And in silence, the self-deceived
Open their hearts to the truth
As they open their eyes to the stars.*

3. "The paradox of hospitality is that it wants to create emptiness, not a fearful emptiness, but a friendly emptiness where strangers can enter and discover themselves as created free; free to sing their own songs, speak their own languages, dance their own dances; free also to leave and follow their own vocations." This reminds me of Eugene's reflection on freedom in Chapter 3. Reflect again on Galatians 4:1-20 and 5:1-26.
4. Let the Spirit fire your imagination and vision as you reflect again on Eugene's words. The "kingdom" that Jesus proclaimed was "a freeing vision of the world, in which God was seen as ruling and guiding with love, and believers knew themselves as children in their Father's house. This message was given . . . in acts of compassion, forgiveness, healing and deliverance . . . , and in stories replete with homely images to expand the imagination. The new vision was celebrated with outcasts and sinners around the meal-table. . . . (Matt 9:10-13, 11:19).

Day 6: Feeding Our Wolf.

Frederic and Mary Ann Brussat, *Spiritual Literacy: Reading the Sacred in Everyday Life* (Scribner: New York, 1996), pp. 498, 499

There is a story about St. Francis and the Wolf of Gubbio. The version we like best is told by Catholic theologian John Shea in his book Starlight, and he credits it to the storyteller Bob Wilhelm, plus or minus a few details. Here is a paraphrase of the story:

The people of the little Italian city of Gubbio are understandably very proud of their beautiful home. Then one night a shadow comes out of the nearby woods and prowls the streets. In the morning the people of Gubbio find a mangled and gnawed dead body. This happens again and again. Finally an old woman says that she has seen a wolf on the streets at night. The terrified people decide to ask a holy man who has a reputation for being able to talk to animals for his help. They send a delegation to get St. Francis.

They have very specific ideas on what St. Francis should tell the wolf. First, he should preach to him and remind him to obey the commandment against killing and to follow Christ's commandment about loving God and neighbors. And then, just in case, since a wolf is, after all, a wolf, he should tell the wolf to move to someone else's city.

Francis goes into the forest to meet the strange shadow, addressing it as "Brother Wolf." Then he returns to the town square. "My good people of Gubbio, the answer is very simple. You must feed your wolf." The people are furious, especially with the suggestion that this uninvited beast in their midst is somehow to be regarded as "their wolf." But they do feed it, and the killing stops.

SUGGESTIONS

1. Look around you. What is "your wolf"? How and where can you feed it?
2. Does this story have an application for the pilgrimage to the Centre?

3. As you read Luke 15:11-32, especially the meeting of the father and son, use your imagination to enter into the smells, sounds, and emotions of the story.

Day 7: Hospitality

The following liturgy was prepared by Jean Walker for the bi-monthly meeting of the Inner North Cell Group, Sydney of the Wellspring Community, held on Sunday 27 April 2003

In the Beginning

Leader: In the beginning, when it was very dark, God said, "Let there be light" '

ALL AND THERE WAS LIGHT

(The sign of light, a lighted candle is placed on a central table)

Leader: In the beginning, when it was very quiet, the Word was with God

ALL: AND WHAT GOD WAS, THE WORD WAS.

(The sign of the Word, an open bible is placed on the table)

Leader: When the time was right, God sent the Son

ALL: HE CAME AMONG US, HE WAS ONE OF US.

(The sign of the Son, a cross is placed on the table)

When the Lights Are On

Leader: When the lights are on, And the house is full, And laughter is easy, And all is well.

Voice: Behold I stand at the door and knock.

Leader: When the lights are low, And the house is sad, And the talk is intense, And the air is full of wondering. ...

Voice: Behold I stand at the door and knock.

Leader: When the lights are off, And the house is sad, And the voice is troubled, And nothing seems right.

Voice: Behold I stand at the door and knock.

Leader: And tonight, Always tonight,, As if there were no other people, no other house, no other door.

Voice: Behold I stand at the door and knock.

Leader: Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest, Stay with us for the day is ending. Bring to our house your poverty,

ALL: FOR THEN SHALL WE BE RICH.

Leader: Bring to our house your pain,

ALL: THAT SHARING IT WE MAY ALSO SHARE YOUR JOY.

Leader: Bring to our house your understanding of us,

ALL: THAT WE MAY BE FREED TO LEARN MORE OF YOU.

Leader: Bring to our house all those, Who hurry or hobble behind you,

ALL: THAT WE MAY MEET YOU AS THE SAVIOUR OF ALL.

Leader: Bring to our house your Holy Spirit

ALL: THAT THIS MAYBE A CRADLE OF LOVE.

Leader: With friend, with stranger, With neighbour, and the well-known ones, Be among us tonight,

ALL: FOR THE DOORS OF OUR HOUSE WE OPEN, AND THE DOORS OF OUR HEARTS WE LEAVE AJAR.

Prayer:

ALL: CHRIST OF EVERY NEW DAY, WE OFFER YOU OUR LIVES,
AND IN OUR LIMITED WORDS,
WE AFFIRM OUR FAITH IN CONFIDENCE AND PRAYERFUL HOPE.

Bible readings on the topic of Hospitality:

Genesis 18: 1-8 (Abraham)

Luke 10: 38-42 (Mary and Martha)

Acts 2: 42-47 (the early Church)

Definitions:

HOSPITALITY: The act, practice, or quality of being hospitable;

HOSPITABLE: Showing friendliness, kindness, and solicitude towards guests.

KOINONIA: One who shares something with someone, partaker, partner, companion.

Biblical references:

Old Testament

Genesis 18: 1-8 (Abraham)

1 Samuel 9: 22 (Samuel brings Saul and his servant into the dining hall, gave them a place at the head of the company, a portion of meat, a bed)

2 Samuel 6: 19 (David -and after David had completed these sacrifices, he blessed the people in the name of the Lord of Hosts and gave food to all the people, a flat loaf of bread, a portion of meat, and a cake of raisins)

2 Samuel 17: 27 (David, bringing mattresses and blankets, bowls and jugs, and food for the weary in the wilderness)

Job 31: 16-22, 31-32 ("If I have withheld their needs from the poor, Or let the widow's eye grow dim with tears, if I have eaten my crust alone, ...if I have seen anyone perish for lack of clothing, or a poor man with nothing to cover him, if his body had no cause to bless me, because he was not kept warm with a fleece from my flock. ..." ..no stranger has spent the night in the street, for I have kept open house for the traveller.")

New Testament:

Luke 5: 29ff (a party with tax gatherers and others after telling them to follow him)

Luke 10: 38-42 (Mary and Martha -we can become so consumed with our church busyness and providing food that we don't listen to Jesus)

Luke 19: 6 (Zacchaeus up the tree -after Jesus recognises him, Zacchaeus invites him to a party)

Jesus and feasting -the wedding feast at Cana, water into wine, the feeding of the 5000; in the parables, the Prodigal Son is welcomed with a feast, the good Samaritan (Luke 10: 29-37) cares appropriately for the man set upon by robbers); Jesus joins with his disciples in the Last Supper.

Acts 2: 42-47: The early church met constantly to (in this order) -

- 1) hear the apostles teach
- 2) to share the common life

3) to break bread (this may mean sharing of food with guests, newcomers and each other, not specifically the Communion)

4) to pray

They also shared material possessions (v.44)

Hospitality shown to Paul on his journeys eg: Lydia inviting him to her home (Acts 16: 15), islanders at Malta (Acts 28:2)

The marks of a Christian include being hospitable, eg Romans 12: 20, Titus 1 :8, Timothy 3:2, 1 Peter 4:9 "be hospitable to one another without complaining", and Hebrews 13:2 "Remember to show hospitality. There are some who, by so doing, have entertained angels unawares."

Closing Liturgy

Leader: (the ancient Celtic rune of hospitality)

We saw a stranger yesterday,
We put food in the eating place,
Drink in the drinking place,
Music in the listening place,
And, with the sacred name of the triune God,
He blessed us and our house,
Our cattle and our dear ones.
As the lark says in her song:
Often, often, often, goes Christ in the stranger's guise.
Blow the trumpet, Lord,
call a celebration;
let stories be told
and tears shed;
let prayers be uttered
and laughter break forth;
let bread be broken
and wine shared
until your kingdom comes among us
bringing its many surprises.

All (standing in a circle, holding hands):

MAY THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, THE LOVE
OF GOD, AND THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, BE
WITH US ALL, NOW AND FOREVER, AMEN