

Australian Network for Spiritual Direction Inc.

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For people engaged in godly listening

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

Newsletter June 2009

Greetings to you all.

I wonder how many of you are rushing about organising end of the financial year activities. Life can become so busy. By the time this newsletter reaches you it should all be over. What better time to sit down with a nice hot cup of soup and relax with something good to read!

*Last year it was decided that different regions would gather the information to go in the newsletter. Many thanks to the members from Queensland and their representative **Denise Brosnan** for providing the articles for this newsletter.*

*President **Jack Stuart's** report provides us food for thought. The photo which follows just seems so appropriate to Jack's report and seems to connect with it. It was taken and sent by **Anne Bailey** along with an article she wrote on Brother David's three week tour of Australia. There are quite a few links at the end of the article that will enable you to explore more if you would like to.*

***Patrick Oliver** has written an article on Spirituality and the Enneagram. There is also a book review on Patrick's new book "The Freeing of God: Revisiting the Gospels in the Second Half of Life". It's certainly an issue I can identify with.*

*An article on Listening to Dreams – a topic of increasing interest - has been included and was written by **Lucy Tierney**.*

*There are no **Regional Reports** in this issue. Please contact your regional representative to discover what is happening in your region. Their details are included on this page. I was in WA in April and discovered **ICONS BY MARICE**. Below is an example of her work and her website details.*

*Happy reading
Jo Windeyer (editor)*



Mary McKillop

Icon by

Ms Marice Sariola

More information on works by Marice can be found on

www.iconsbymarice.com.au

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President's Letter

*“No Dreaming,
No Story,
No Belonging”*

These words spoken by the young Aboriginal boy, Nullah, in Baz Luhrmann's film "Australia" encapsulate one of the central themes of the film. The film itself is a compassionate reflection on Australia and how Black and White Australia does not have to be in conflict, but can teach each other how to live in harmony.

It is significant that the release of "Australia" came just months after Kevin Rudd led the country in a new chapter of our national story with the Apology to Indigenous Australia for the Stolen Generations.

Something significant happened to many Australians on that day of Apology. A distinct shift occurred in our psyche when compassion replaced stubbornness. A new part of the Dreaming of our Country evolved and for many, as this new chapter was written, a new sense of belonging emerged. While symbolic, and to the whingers shallow, despite this it was an important event in the maturing of this country. Obviously it is not the last word and is part of the on-going process of "growing-up". Symbolic and practical reconciliation can now develop hand in hand.

So much change and upheaval occurred during 2008 and continues on to now - the Apology, World Youth Day, the on-going drought, the global financial meltdown, the ever present fear of bushfire that was sadly realized so destructively in Victoria on Black Saturday, the life giving yet destructive floods in Queensland and NSW. All of these events, plus many more individually and collectively provide the back drop for our ministry of spiritual direction. The excitement and joy of the Apology, the devastating effects on people's lives of the financial crisis, the ever present threat to the planet of climate change are all part of the story that is told and explored in spiritual direction.

As we know spiritual direction is about the compassionate acknowledgement of our Dreaming, of telling our story so as to understand and so to enter our Belonging. In Acts 2:42 "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer". The dreaming, and the telling of the story of that first community was told and lived in such a way that belonging was a natural outcome.

Change has also been part of the ANSD story in 2008. After years of dedicated service to ANSD, Glenys Wimmer and Caroline Pearce retired. Glenys originally was Secretary/Treasurer and Caroline came in to take over the role as Secretary. Their contribution to ANSD cannot be over stated. Deep and sincere thanks to Glenys and Caroline for their role in helping to tell the ANSD story. Liz Palmer and Heather Northwood were welcomed as Treasurer and Secretary respectively.

Glenys and Caroline's work also bore fruit in the finalizing of our Public Liability Insurance Policy and the appointment of Jeff Lawrence as our Insurance Officer. Special thanks to Jeff for his work in helping us address this important issue.

While we are not a large organization, we are far flung. The work of ANSD in serving the ministry of spiritual direction is carried out mainly through our regional groups and through our annual conference.

In July last year our Conference in Brisbane triumphed despite many hiccups. Kate Luxford-Morgan and the team are to be congratulated for gathering the various elements of venue, worship and speakers into an integrated whole. Initially they were hampered by the withdrawal, due to ill health, of the initial keynote speaker. John Stewart and Christina Fox ably stepped into the breach. Their call to enter the "Desert" with the help of Harry Potter, the Desert Fathers and Mothers and the gospel stories of Mark enabled a reflective and contemplative process to unfold. This process was enhanced by the beautiful liturgies prepared by the Brisbane group. Again our thanks go to Kate and the team for encapsulating all the elements of Input, Liturgy and Venue.

The Brisbane Conference was also a good lesson in how regional groups can obtain new life. As a result of the Conference, the Brisbane group of ANSD has found new life, energy and members. Sydney has also regrouped during 2008.

It is in our regional groups that we see the quiet work of ANSD continuing. Indeed, in one way the work of ANSD is a quiet work as we attempt to nurture, sustain and foster the ministry of spiritual direction.

Where to from here? One important area that we can support individually and as an organization is the development of supervision. Last year in Melbourne, at Campion, a week of learning for supervisors occurred. Mary Ann Scofield and Sandra Lomasson from Burlingame Centre in California led the week. While it was not an ANSD project many ANSD members were present and benefited greatly. Supervision is an integral part of our ministry and needs our ongoing support.

Another issue that needs our creative attention is how to imagine spiritual direction into the future. By and large the ministry of spiritual direction still draws its members from Church life. Increasingly, with an ageing population, and a

declining Church membership what will the ministry of spiritual direction look like? Yes it is a prophetic ministry, often at odds with Institutional Church life or not supported by it, yet up till now the majority of directors and directees come from our Churches. Will this be the case ten years from now? We believe we have something to offer the Church and the broader community. That does not necessarily translate into acceptance by the Church and the broader community.

Many of us are seeing a sprinkling of younger people seeking Spiritual Direction but not a lot and so many are disaffected, alienated or just not interested. Yet their lack of affiliation with the Church does not mean they are not on a spiritual path. How do we creatively imagine Spiritual Direction into the future with this in mind?

Many people are seeking to explore the spiritual path and the spiritual dimensions of their lives through processes like Life Coaching. And as we know, as Spiritual Directors, we are not the only ones walking with others on their spiritual path. Marketing sounds like a crass word to many of us, but somehow we may need to take on the positive energy of the “marketers” to let the world know what we have to offer. How we do this is our on-going challenge. I related the story of my next-door neighbour last year. On answering her question as to what I did she replied “I’ve been a Church goer all my life and I have never heard of this?” If my Church going neighbour in her seventies hasn’t heard of Spiritual Direction how will the next generation who are not aligned know about this ministry and will they want to know anyway?

Spiritual Direction as we have experienced it is a powerful way of journeying into the Mystery of God and Self. In the telling of our story we are graced to be able to stand in the larger Dreaming of our Christian Tradition. But that does not mean that we can rely on older ways and old language anymore in communicating our Story. As we are noticing, the Great Story told badly is a factor in the decline in Church membership. We have a duty of care, a responsibility to tell our story the same challenging way as Teresa, John of the Cross, Meister Eckhart etc. in their times, that is in a language and in practices that are relevant to the 21st century.

As we head towards 2010 and our Twenty First year what will we need to do to ensure that the story told in Acts 2.42 is as astounding and inspiring as then?

“No Dreaming,

No Story,

No Belonging.”

At the end of the film this was not the message portrayed. It was just the opposite – the Dreaming is alive in the Storytelling and a sense of Belonging is not only possible, it is NOW. How blessed we have been in ANSD to know the depth of this message and to paraphrase Thomas Merton “We may not know where we are going, or if we are doing God’s will, but at least the desire to do so is an essential part of the Dreaming and we may just be on a life - giving path!”

John Stuart
(President)



ULURU MOONRISE

Br David Steindl-Rast's Tour of Australia

Last year, while I was living and working in California and studying for a Diploma in the Art of Spiritual Direction through San Francisco Theological Seminary, I became reacquainted with Benedictine hermit, Br David Steindl-Rast. I had first encountered Br David in Australia in the early to mid 1980's when he visited here at the invitation of the Sisters of St Joseph and later at the invitation of what was then known as the Major Superiors of Religious Congregations.

Br David, now in his 80's, told me that he wanted to make a final world tour in 2009 and again visit Australia as part of that trip. So began my organizational role for a tour of Australia in May and June of this year. At that time, I only had an inkling of the blessings that would come from such a venture.

The trip to Australia was only possible for Br David because of the help he receives from Anthony Chavez, his personal assistant and travel companion. Anthony is the grandson of Cesar Chavez, social justice advocate and founder of the United Farmworkers' organization in the US. Br David and Anthony met at a peace conference where his grandfather was being honoured, along with Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr.

Br David and Anthony were in Australia for three weeks. In that time, Br David did eleven presentations and Anthony three, in eight different cities. It was my great privilege to accompany them to Newcastle, Sydney and Alice Springs but also to take them sight-seeing in the Blue Mountains and go on pilgrimage with them to Uluru, each of us seeing Uluru and Kata Tjuta for the very first time. I am grateful to other hosts who accompanied Br David and Anthony in Queensland and to the Great Barrier Reef and Kangaroo Island off South Australia, as well as those who hosted them for a brief visit to Perth.

Over 1000 people attended Br David's presentations on topics including Gratefulness, Prayer, Can We Still Believe in God, Christian Faith for a New Millennium, Spiritual Practices for Everyday Living and a Spirituality of Grateful Living.

Even though I heard Br David speak on the same topic in several locations, each time he delivered his presentations, his message was fresh and new, as if I was hearing it for the first time. And Br David's message is universal. He uses his skills, training and understanding of psychology, Buddhism and other faith traditions to encourage people to consider the elements that unite us rather than those that divide us as human beings who share the universe with the whole of creation.

Br David quoted several poets and authors, including Mary Oliver, E Cummings, Christopher Fry, Kenneth Rexroth, Eugene O'Neill, C.S. Lewis, Meister Eckhart, St Augustine, Thomas Merton, Karl Rahner, Abraham Maslow, Dag Hammarskjold, Michael Morwood, and Eckhart Tolle.

Indeed, Br David himself possesses the heart of a poet. He is a bridge builder and his message touches the contemplative heart of those to whom he speaks, as Sr Ruth Long said in introducing Brother David to those in the crowded room where he spoke in Newcastle.

Many parts of Br David's message are applicable to those involved in the art or ministry of spiritual direction. Here is a sample:

*"Happiness is not what makes us grateful. It is gratefulness that makes us happy.
Gratefulness is the key to happiness. Unless you are grateful for the gift, it won't make you happy."*

Here he is talking about happiness as deep joy, which doesn't depend on what happens. The key to joy is in our own hands.

The opposite of gratefulness is taking something for granted.

Gratefulness (which Br David describes as being the same as mindfulness and prayerfulness) is like any other spiritual practice – it must be practiced!

Practice giving thanks for first things, for beginnings. When you wake in the morning, before you even open your eyes, give thanks for the gift of sight. (Br David makes a practice of praying at this moment for those who have no sight or who have impaired sight.) Give thanks for your first cup of tea or coffee – let all your senses come alive or wake up. Continue to mark out the little beginnings of each day – as you open your bedroom door and move into the rest of your house or as you open your front door and walk outside or as you put the key in your car ignition to begin your commute to work.

But also mark the endings of your day – when you arrive home and close your front door behind you or when you shut down your computer. (Too many people do not shut down their computer or log off from work – it tends to go on and on with no end or renewed beginning!)

Start with things that are easy. You don't start playing the piano with a piece by Chopin; you begin with scales and chords!

“Gratefulness can change your life and therefore can change society.”

For further information on practicing an attitude of gratefulness, go to the website: www.gratefulness.org

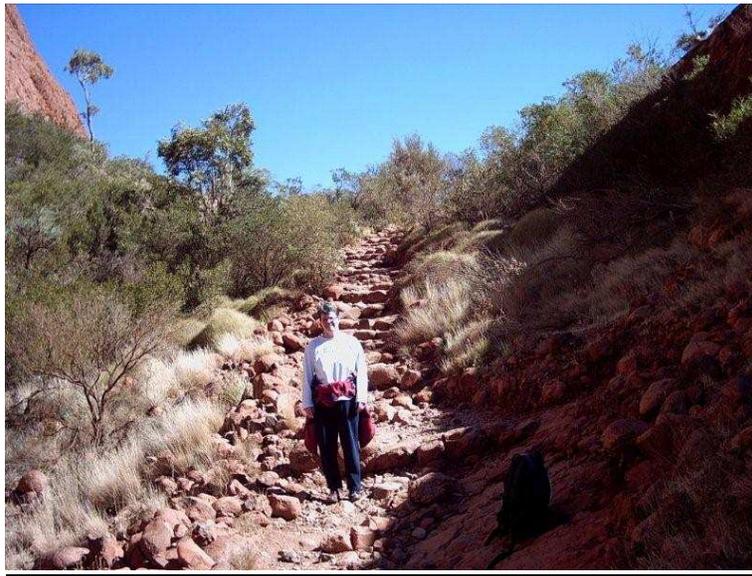
Two books written by Br David in the mid 1980’s have now become classics. They are “Gratefulness, the Heart of Prayer – An Approach to Life in Fullness” and “A Listening Heart – the Art of Contemplative Living”. Two more recent publications are: “Common Sense Spirituality – The Essential Wisdom of David Steindl-Rast” and “Words of Common Sense for Mind, Body, and Soul”.

For more details on Br David’s books, writings and interviews see: <http://www.gratefulness.org/brotherdavid/index.htm>

Visit the Eremos Institute’s website www.eremos.org.au to see a full list of places in Australia visited by Br David and to order recordings of his presentations or see photos taken at his events. There is also a link there to his radio interview with John Cleary which was broadcast on June 21 on the Sunday Nights radio program on the ABC.

Anne Bailey

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KATA TJUTA LOOKOUT PATHWAY

Spirituality and the Enneagram

Deepening "spirituality" invitations constantly present themselves even when we are not aware of inner journeying as a call of life. These "spirituality" invitations are, as well, the content of deliberately engaging in the unique evolution of personal inner journeying. Each one of these invitations flags the beginning of an epic journeying cycle - the stuff of fairy tales at the coal-face of our living into growth.

The epic journeying cycle has six stages: -

1. Inner questioning or inner and/or outer dissatisfaction/discomfort raises the possibility (sometimes imperative!) of a new inner and/or outer direction/pathway.
2. A decision is made to set out on this direction/pathway.
3. Struggles and difficulties are strewn along the new direction/pathway.
4. Help (sometimes from unexpected sources) comes our way.
5. Something is left behind.
6. Something new comes to birth.

Six Enneagram Wisdom Frameworks express the universality of patterns operative in nine groupings of general characteristics of human behaviour, feelings, and motivations. While the element of universality is absolutely true, the element of personal uniqueness is also absolutely true, e.g. facial features, fingerprints, DNA structure. Enneagram

Wisdom Frameworks name the "facial features, fingerprints, DNA structures" in general of human behaviour, feeling, and motivational patterns. The individuality emerges through the unique responses and choices of the person within these patterns.

The Enneagram Wisdom Frameworks that give clues to an "epic journeying cycle" in process and/or completed are:

	Epic Journeying Cycle equivalent
1. "paired strategies	Stage 1
2. "coping strategy"	Stage 2
3. "arrows"	Stage 3
4. "affirmations – including 'wings'	Stage 4
5. "3 centres"	Stages 5 and 6.

Life doesn't begin with knowing Enneagram Wisdom Frameworks. Enneagram Wisdom Frameworks provide enlightenment about patterns already present and lived out. As well, there are many clues in Enneagram Wisdom Frameworks that help us know the flavour and direction of my personally unique invitations to grow (deepen spirituality).

In my opinion, the ultimate outcome of deepening spirituality is experiencing "an abundant life" (John 10-10) and to be able to live into the gift of inner and outer freedom. On these matters, Richard Rohr and Andreas Ebert associate these two outcomes with the Enneagram:

"...It (the Enneagram) is an experiential method in which, through a kind of "inner listening", I find out what "voices" are at work within me. The "discernment of Spirits" is that instinctive spiritual certainty that helps me to realize which of these voices will free me for an "abundant life" (John 10-10) or which will lead me to jail and to death."

Discovering the Enneagram: An Ancient Tool for a New Spiritual Journey. pp.212-213.
and
"The Enneagram is offering you the gift of freedom."
Enneagram II: Advancing Spiritual Discernment, p.170.

For those who are unable to do the Enneagram, don't want to do the Enneagram, or have done the Enneagram in a non-experiential way, I offer the following five non-Enneagram Wisdom Framework questions. Releasing these questions in our psyche, being present to them in a contemplative way repeatedly will also help name the patterns outlined in Enneagram Wisdom Frameworks.

1. What is my drive? Survival strategy? Coping strategy?
2. What behaviour patterns balance my stress? Increase my stress?
3. What features of my "almost bottom lines" or "sometimes" behaviours emerged/are emerging?
4. What signs are there that let me know that I am safely "on the journey"?
5. What is coming to birth in me as a result of these "movements"/ facing stress?

Patrick Oliver.
(Spiritual Director and a Sessional Lecturer at Australian Catholic University)

Listening to Dreams

The number of times we have heard in churches about the helpfulness of dreams and listening to dreams probably could not be described as copious. Yet the last few decades have witnessed a small but steady increase in the number of people taking the role of the dream seriously in their spiritual walk.

The Early Church is rich in the appreciation of dreams. St Basil the Great, for instance, in the 2nd century wrote that

"the enigmas in dreams have a close affinity to those things which are signified in an allegoric hidden sense in the Scriptures".

Tertullian in the 3rd century commented that

"Almost the greater part of mankind gets their knowledge of God from dreams."

Both Origen and Gregory of Nyssa are on record as having a lively appreciation for the role of the dream in experiencing and reflecting upon the workings of God in the lives of human beings.

My favourite quote is that from the 5th century bishop Synesius of Cyrene: “Dreams, more than any other thing, entice us towards hope. And when our heart spontaneously presents hope to us, as happens in our sleeping state, then we have in the promise of our dreams a pledge from the divinity.”

The story of why the dream fell into disrepute in the Church is a story on its own. Yet in my work of spiritual direction and companioning, I have found the dream to be a consistent help for the process of listening to the soul.

The dream does not worry whether a person has the “right” vocabulary about God or churchy things; yet it constantly tries to take a person into a more conscious awareness of how he or she is perceiving life – and therefore God, named or not named.

It has been a privilege for me to have listened to many many dreams through the years, and I am always amazed at the creativity and ingenuity that they bring forth. We seem often to be far more creative when we are asleep than when awake!

Dreams seem to come from that realm of imagination that is beyond our conscious control – which is why St Augustine thanked God that he (Augustine) could not meddle in his dreams – because at least when he was asleep he could get out of the way and let God be God for him.

Dreams can also be like a lighthouse, beaconing and beckoning us through those times when perhaps everything else has seemed to turn to night. We may think we have simply “crazy” or “stupid” dreams – yet experience has taught me that it is often the most stupid or crazy scenarios in dreams that can give us clues as to the ways through when we get stuck in our one-sided perceptions.

In fact, this is what the purpose of dreams seems to be: to move us from our prejudice of favouring a constricted view of reality (and therefore of God, since God is a God of reality), into a stereoscopic appreciation of the multi-faceted nature of reality and ourselves.

Whenever dreams become a source of inwardness for inwardness’ sake, then there lies a misuse of dreams. They always try to free us to love – especially the unlovable which we first recognise within ourselves, and because of this, we see it in those “out there”.

There is no dividing wall between “inner work” and “outer work”; the bridge is grace. Rather than dreams leading us away from the presence of God, it has been my experience through the years that has helped me realise how dreams mirror the great Gospel themes of reconciliation, grace, healing and love.

They illustrate perfectly what is a constant theme of Richard Rohr: “Everything belongs”. They draw us into the arena where we recognise and experience that there actually is a life within us that we do not make happen, and that this life (the Spirit of God) calls us into the dance wherein we are invited to forget ourselves and become one with the dance.

Dreams are a “little door” into the recesses of the soul. Like Jesus in the desert, we meet in our dreams both angels and wild beasts, yet it is for the sake of our maturing in honesty before God. They lead us into death and out again. Like the biblical theme of the least being the vital element, the disregarded and ignored dream is, as the rabbis liked to put it,

“like a letter that is unopened from God”.

Lucy Tierney.

BOOK REVIEW

There are some things you can know
only by staying on the journey for a few decades ...

When we’re “staying awake”,
we find that life has a habit of trying to teach us about what it means
to really love, to fail, to hope and to pray.
It teaches us about being human ...
which is about belonging to God.

Sadly, countless people through the years have been bruised and bludgeoned through the misuse and abuse of the scriptures. Rather than being set free to enjoy and relish the fullness of life, their passion and humanity have been hobbled through needless shame and guilt. The liberating message of the Gospel so often has been

twisted into a voice of condemnation, a confirmation of self-hate, and a reinforcer of people's fear of themselves as a failure – and it's this abuse that "The Freeing of God" sets out to offset.

This book doesn't pretend to be either a commentary or a translation of the gospels. Rather, it's a retelling of every verse and chapter, from the perception of what's sometimes called "the second half of life". And what is this?

Most of us spend our first few decades trying to get it together, get secure, get loveable, or get over our fears – and when the Gospel is heard through these lenses, we can hear it as a finger-wagging insistence for us to improve. God gets painted wearing a perpetual frown that displays divine displeasure – for it seems we're never good enough, never moral enough, or never believing fervently enough. Why would anyone want to have anything to do with God?

Hopefully though, somewhere along the line we gradually learn that love can't be earned, that peace of soul can't be bought and that forgiving life for being imperfect is the only way through. In this "second half of life", we can let mistakes and wounds be the way into deeper loving, we can let ourselves and others be mixtures of light and shadow, and we can surrender the need to be something other than who we are. Such shifts in perspective also change the way we let the gospels tell us of who God is ...

"The Freeing of God" holds that the Gospel speaks to the heart of being human, and will help readers to discover their own life as the sacred story. It's an offering that invites the soul to dance with the God who woos.

Phone Patrick on (07) 3356 4218 for your copy of "The Freeing of God: Revisiting the Gospels in the Second Half of Life", or send your cheque for \$30 plus \$10 postage, made to "Patrick Oliver", to 94 Reuben St Stafford Brisbane Qld 4053.

CONTOURS OF SPIRITUAL COMPANIONING

In the quiet stillness of expectation, the two
are gathered into the warm embrace of welcome
with one waiting upon the letting go
of contours of faith
into the listening of the other.

In abiding with the seeds of becoming
contours, sometimes etched with agitations
sometimes hardened with the temper of busyness
converse into undulations of faith
contours, touched with words
that gaze upon intimacy;
tactile words, intruding not
yet lingering intently within.

In the quiet reverence of listening
responses, drawn from pools of sacredness
flow into trust
silences, mined from veins of God
speak into a communion of wisdom
touches of God sifted from hallowed ground;
tactile touches of God nurturing verdant growth.

In the sacrament of these contoured words
two souls share the revealing of God's will;
contours of faith ploughed
into the holy space of each other.

Michael Mosley (excerpt from Michael's upcoming book, 'Musings and Meditations')