

☞ Encounters ☜

Don't you love serendipities, those happy, unexpected events in life which lead to pleasant surprises? Those unforeseen encounters that lead to some new joy and wonder. My meeting Anthony, my friend in England two years ago was one of those. In a quite casual manner he said to me one day, "Why don't you bring Esther de Waal to Australia. I know her and I could connect you with her." And the rest, as they say, is history. When he first said this to me I was delighted but a bit sceptical that this would lead anywhere, but it has, and Stillpoint is delighted to host Esther's visit to Australia in November 2012.

Esther is one of the foremost writers in the area of Christian Spirituality. She is one of the people who has pioneered the application of monastic spirituality to everyday life. Although living in England, she is a senior fellow of the Cathedral College Washington DC and has led retreats at Washington's National Cathedral.

In an interview with US Catholic Esther said, "There's such a danger of life passing people by unless we stop them in their tracks and say, what are you going to do with this incredible gift of God's absurd generosity, which makes each of us so different and so interesting?"

In her time in Adelaide (the program is on page 2) Esther will help us explore more deeply this incredible life we have, a gift from an absurdly generous God.

I hope to see you there.

Gary Stuckey (Rev)
Minister, Stillpoint Faith Community

Ebenezer Scrooge a spiritual companion? Bah humbug!

But maybe it's not! Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* has been deeply loved by many. Down through the years there have been more than 130 productions of the work involving such notables from Frederic March to the Muppets. Without exaggeration, it seems that each generation feels called to add a few more interpretations to a growing legacy.

Part of the power of the *Carol* is that it is a teaching story. It speaks of the conflict between greed and good, but also carries other deep spiritual and religious experiences which are sometimes missed: introspection and transformation; the journey from isolation to community; enjoyment of life; as well as compassion and justice. These are all themes that are central to the heart of the Gospel and offer God's blessings to all.

Keeping Christmas Well is an invitation to take some time out in this busy Advent period and reclaim these truths in preparation for the celebration of Christ's coming.

This self-led one-day retreat, using specially prepared material will be offered on Friday 30 November, Wednesday 5 December or Saturday 8 December, from 9.30am - 4pm. It can also be held over a half day.

Spiritual conversation is also available if requested at time of booking.

Up to six people per day. \$25 full day; \$15 half day. Also available for home use: \$15.

To make a booking please contact the Stillpoint office on 8178 0048 or email stillpoint@internode.on.net



Esther de Waal

Esther de Waal is one of today's most celebrated spiritual writers. *Seeking God*, her classic book on the relevance of the Rule of Saint Benedict, has opened up the riches of the monastic tradition to readers throughout the world for many years. Join us as we share with her in the following events:

Twilight Reflection (Tuesday 6 November, 4.30pm - 8.30pm)

Thomas Merton

The celebrated spiritual writer Thomas Merton remains one of the most influential voices of our day. His many books have become modern spiritual classics and he opened up the riches of the monastic tradition for many. Esther de Waal will draw on extracts from his writings and photography as she leads the Twilight Reflection (comprising two sessions with a meal break between).

Enfield Uniting Church - further details from Stillpoint Spirituality Centre 8178 0048

Cost \$35 or \$30 concession (includes a light evening meal)

Reflection Day (Saturday 10 November, 9.30am - 4.00pm)

St Benedict - Guide and Prophet for Christians Today

Is it surprising that a sixth-century monastic text, the Rule of St Benedict, should be a guide for lay Christians living in today's world? In fact the questions which St Benedict had to face are still questions which face us today: How do I live with others? With the world? With myself? With God? How do I bring balance into my life? St Benedict speaks to the heart.

Esther de Waal will lead a reflection day exploring the ancient and gentle wisdom of the Rule in relation to the demands of modern living and the importance of balance between prayer, work and study.

Sunset Rock Uniting Church - further details from Stillpoint Spirituality Centre 8178 0048

Cost \$60 or \$50 concession (includes lunch and refreshments)

Quiet Day (Monday 12 November, 9.30am - 4.00pm)

The Celtic Way

Esther de Waal, one of Celtic Christianity's preeminent scholars, will lead a quiet day sharing some of the riches found in the Celtic tradition that brings a refreshing and invigorating dimension to the Christian life. She reveals how this tradition of worship draws on both the pre-Christian and on the fullness of the Gospel, with an enlightening glimpse at the history, folklore and liturgy of the Celtic people. Participants will be introduced to monastic prayer and praise in which ritual and rhythm, nature and seasons, images and symbols play an essential role.

Nunyarra Chapel - further details from Stillpoint Spirituality Centre 8178 0048

Cost \$60 or \$50 concession (includes lunch and refreshments)

Esther de Waal will also give a lunch-time address at the rural setting of Mt Bryan Soldier Memorial Hall on Thursday 8 November.

Should you wish to attend any of these functions or require further details, please contact the Stillpoint office on 8178 0048 (Mon-Thurs 9.00-1.00) or by email: stillpoint@internode.on.net

A discounted price of \$140 or \$115 concession applies if you wish to attend all three city events.

Registrations close 18 October 2012.

Quotes from Esther de Waal

"In the end it is prayer which allows me to hold everything in place and which prevents me from being pulled apart, fragmented."

"When I am fully alive I look around me with eyes that are open, astonished, and ears that are attentive, and as a result I experience all life as gift."

"What we can learn from the Rule (of Benedict) is that the sense of God's presence can be mediated through daily work and not destroyed by it."

"The essential dynamic that underlies the monastic tradition is in the end simply a matter of letting our lives be shaped by the Gospel."



LAVENDER FLOWERS

Looking into the sun,
too bright,
too hot.

But the lavender flowers
luminous purple,
too beautiful to pass by,
draw me.

Walking around the bush
into welcome shade,
but a disappointment,
though still purpley beautiful,
the glow on the flowers has gone.

The luminous can only be seen
by looking into the sun.

I walk back and take off my shoes.

Everything in creation is lit like that,
God shining through,
if we could just see.

May I take time to see the sacred
in everything.

Denise Griffen



Our Continuing Program for 2012

RETREATS - GOD'S GRACIOUS GIFT OF TIME

Advent Retreat Days

Self-led one-day retreat using specially prepared material. 30 November, 5 or 8 December, 9.30am - 4pm. Spiritual conversation available if requested at time of booking. Up to six people per day. \$25 full day: \$15 half day. Also available for home use: \$15. (See first page of newsletter for details)

Transition Retreat

This is available by request at Stillpoint Centre as a personal or small group retreat for people in transition (ministers, people relocating, retiring, grieving or journeying through endings and beginnings of various kinds). Experienced retreat leaders available. Room, Leadership & Material: \$80. Material only: \$40.

Personal or Small Group Retreats at Stillpoint Centre

We have two quiet rooms (max numbers 15) where you can reflect and pray privately (material, spiritual direction, and facilitation available on request). For individuals, ministry teams, small groups.



Program for 2012 continued



MID-WEEK MEDITATION & HOLY COMMUNION

At 11.30am on **Tuesdays** we gather in the Lounge to say the Office of Sext followed by a time of Meditation. At 12 noon we gather for Holy Communion. All are welcome to join us for either or both times of reflection.

At 11.30am on **Thursdays** we gather in the Lounge to say the Office of Sext followed by a time of Meditation.

BE STILL AND KNOW

A monthly gathering for prayer and reflection at the Stillpoint Spirituality Centre. Tuesdays 1.00pm - .2.45 pm. No registration required. All welcome. Gold coin donation. 11 September, 9 October, 13 November.

BENEDICTINE DAYS

The aim of these days is to enrich our life with God and experience the monastic life as a guide for Christian living. Benedictine Days are held at Stillpoint Spirituality Centre from 8.30am - 4.00pm on the following Saturdays (with the option of beginning the day earlier at 7.30am followed by breakfast): 1 September, 6 October, 3 November

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

Rev Gary Stuckey is a member of the Ecumenical Spiritual Directors' Association (S.A.) and offers accompaniment for your spiritual journey, or can connect you with another Director from the Association. Bookings are essential.

STILLPOINT ON THE ROAD

Stillpoint is committed to resourcing congregations and is able to offer a limited number of opportunities each year for retreats and workshops in country or metropolitan churches. Themes can range from a general retreat to give people "time out" for spiritual refreshment, retreats on particular themes (e.g. seasons of the church's year); workshops on prayer, spiritual growth in congregations, discernment, intercession, living contemplatively, spiritual practices and so on. Talk to us about your needs.

STILLPOINT FAITH COMMUNITY

CONTEMPLATIVE WORSHIP

Holy Communion, singing, prayers, meditation, silence, and a time of community afterwards for those who wish.

6.30pm in Nunyara Chapel

26 August, 9 September, 23 September, 14 October, 28 October,
11 November, 25 November, 9 December, 23 December.

6.30pm at Lefevre UC (63 Gedville Rd, Taperoo)

19 August, 21 October, 2 December.



Stillpoint Spirituality Centre & Faith Community
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Office Hours: Mon - Thurs, 9.00am - 1.00pm

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