

ON REFLECTION

STILLPOINT TAKES THE NEXT STEP

During the next few months there will be a process of discernment as members of Stillpoint shape its ministry and structure for 2011 onwards. But we are able to say, with joy, that we will be here for some time yet!

We have received a very positive review as part of the Mission Resourcing Network, and a further grant from the Uniting Foundation. This is good news.

However, with reduced funding from the Synod it means that, even with the income we generate via fees for service, offerings and fund raising, we will operate on a smaller budget from 2011. So we need to make some changes.

Stillpoint Centre and Stillpoint Faith Community will begin to work even more closely together and there will be one staff person, Rev Gary Stuckey, overseeing Stillpoint. I will be retiring at the end of this year, but will continue some spiritual direction, teaching and writing on a freelance basis.

We are now beginning a process of discernment to ascertain just what aspects of our ministry will continue, what new things God is inviting of us, and what structures will best help us to carry out this ministry. Please pray for us during this time and, if you have any inspirations or thoughts that you would like to feed into the process then contact either Gary (gary.stillpoint@internode.on.net) or Ann (ann.stillpoint@internode.on.net).
Ann Siddall

Sanctuary

When the world hurts and there needs to be a place to go
 when the pathway is long and there needs to be a place of rest
 when life confuses and there needs to be a place of listening
 When vengeance needs to be tempered with humanity
 When living by 'an eye for an eye' needs to learn from a more mature justice
 When you are mismatched in the world and you need a place of welcome

Then there is refuge
 a place to be held
 a place of acceptance
 a place of renewal

For all who seek
 here you are found
 this is the place

of sanctuary

Roddy Hamilton
 Mucky Paws Aug 09

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A NEW WAY OF SEEING

by Ann Siddall

I have a sense of excitement, and some trepidation, as I offer the weekend retreat focused around the writings of poets and mystics. Excitement because just a small selection of their work is enough to nourish the soul for a lifetime. And trepidation because the material can invite us to deep and sometimes unfamiliar places of the spirit.

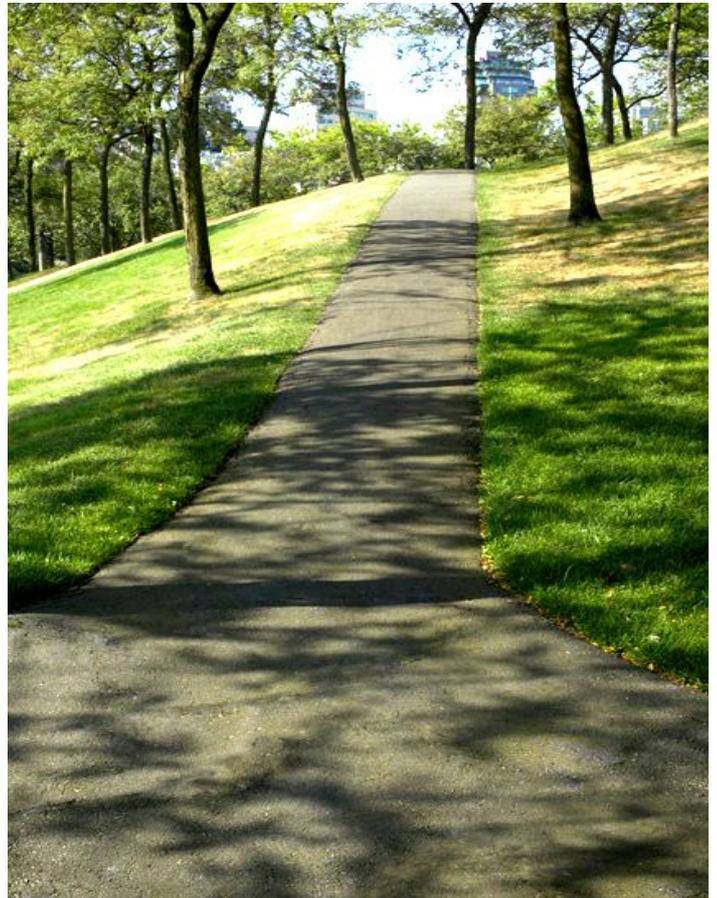
Poets and mystics of every age have invited us to look at life and faith with a willingness to see something more. They stand prophetically on the margins of society, often misunderstood or ignored but, as in our present time, increasingly seen as able to lead us on a deeper path.

Whether it's the words of the Psalmist who found God in both darkness and light; or of Jesus who spoke of the Spirit like a wind blowing where it will; of Julian of Norwich with her insights about our condition of oneness with Christ; or the words of Mary Oliver or Michael Leunig, there is much that is here to satisfy the soul and yet at the same time evoke the hunger for more.

We live in a society whose daily outpourings often take the form of "spin", yet we long for the space to attend to what is truer and deeper. A retreat is such an opportunity. This will not be an academic weekend where we look at the theology of the mystics or the structures of poetry. It will be a retreat with space, silence, prayer, conversation, and a chance to let some significant texts speak to our life and spiritual journey.

Numbers for the weekend are limited and in order to take advantage of the accommodation on offer at Nunyara we need to know ASAP if you are intending to come. The weekend runs from Friday evening September 3 to Sunday lunch. The cost is \$275/ \$225 concession.

"God speaks to each of us as he makes us/then walks with us silently out of the night/These are words we dimly hear: You, sent out beyond your recall go to the limits of your longing." (Rilke)



**But the silence in the mind
is where we live best, within
listening distance of the silence
we call God. This is the deep
calling to deep of the psalm-writer,
the bottomless ocean
we launch the armada of
our thoughts on, never arriving.**

**It is a presence, then,
whose margins are our margins;
that calls us out over our
own fathoms. What to do
but draw a little nearer to
such ubiquity by remaining still?**

**(R.S. Thomas, Welsh poet and
Anglican priest)**

VUVUZELAS, LOST LUGGAGE AND ST BENEDICT

by Gary Stuckey

The sight of a multitude of vuvuzelas returning from the World Cup in South Africa and of an empty luggage carousel where my suitcase should have been but wasn't, greeted me in London.

I had taken the opportunity to attend a conference held around the theme; "Pre-Benedictine Monasticism: the Spirituality Behind the Man." Now I'm aware this may not sound too exciting to many others, maybe to you, but I was in my element. This was for me Christmas and Birthday rolled into one.

My trip was broken into three parts, one of which was the conference. The first part of my journey was to be a tourist. Well, I'd never been to England before and they do have some really interesting stuff one ought to see. With Australia being such a young country, in terms of the European population, I was overawed at the sense of history that was everywhere. From the Roman ruins dating back 2000 years, to the Tower of London which was not only old but has seen so much significant history that has shaped the modern world, to standing on Bosworth field, the site that ended the War of the Roses, it was a great experience.

But my main reason for going was to attend the conference. In this I was hoping not only to experience the events of the conference but to meet up with others who feel drawn to embracing and being shaped by monastic spirituality in their daily lives. I had also hoped to meet people doing something similar to what we are doing in the Stillpoint Community.

The conference itself was fantastic. Being held at Douai Abbey about an hour from London only added to the experience as we sang the Daily Office with the monks, not from the body of the Abbey but from the choir stalls with the monks - truly a unique and blessed experience. Speakers, six of them in all including one from Australia, were all top rate people in their field. Topics ranged from "St Basil the Great; between the desert and the city", to "Cassian and his role in Benedict's Rule" to monasticism in post-modernity, different ways of being monk, humility, Poustinia (the practice and place of silence and solitude from the Russian Church) and Celtic Monasticism. I won't bore you with the details - a full set of papers from the conference will be available later if anyone is interested.

Another part of the conference was to connect with people who are drawn to the monastic way to shape their Christian discipleship. They came mainly from England, including one man who had spent a year living in a cave in Syria (how monastic can you get?), but also from Germany, Switzerland and of course Australia. What are we to conclude from this? The move to embrace monastic spirituality is a wide spread phenomenon, one that is having a significant impact on the Church today.



As for the other hope I had, of connecting with people who may be doing something similar to Stillpoint, it had to remain a hope. Those at the conference were on an individual journey. Some were Benedictine Oblates, others Franciscan Third Order. But none were in a Community which drew on the monastic way for its life. In that regard, rather than asking questions of others, I found myself on the receiving end of many questions. People were genuinely interested in Stillpoint because it was seen by them as being something quite unique. And they were even a little envious, I think, of us who have the chance to gather in the way we do.

The third component of my trip was to personally connect with Anthony Grimley from Monos. This is an organisation, founded and run by Anthony, dedicated to exploring monastic spirituality and its relevance for the twenty first century. (Monos and the University of Wales-Lampeter co-sponsored the conference.) I had been in email contact with Anthony for about 12 months. Anthony, with four generations of family, live in a largish house (where Charles Dickens once stayed) in the grounds of Mount St. Bernard Cistercian Abbey. A part of what they do is use the house as a place of retreat. I had a great opportunity to speak with Anthony about his experiences, hopes and dreams and to learn from him more of what is happening in the realm of monastic spirituality. Monos are moving into a phase of seeking to resource congregations in the area of monastic spirituality and would like to do so in relationship with Stillpoint. The conversation continues.

My time away was brief but rewarding, stimulating, challenging and enlightening. It helped me reaffirm our direction at Stillpoint and encouraged me that we do have something significant to offer one another and the wider Church. I hope this encourages you too.

And if you're wondering, my luggage did catch up with me 48 hours after I arrived.



THE FAITHFULNESS OF CONGREGATIONS

by Ann Siddall

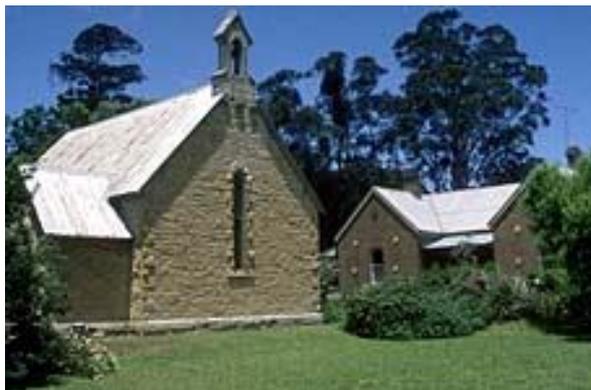


One of Stillpoint's important ministries is praying for congregations in the Synod, rotating through the Synod listing over the course of a year. We contact the congregations coming up on our list, and invite them to share any prayer requests they may have, and many do so.

In addition to including these in our morning prayers at the Centre, we have someone with a ministry in intercessory prayer who regularly prays for congregations.

This ministry gives us a privileged glimpse into the lives of communities all around the State and what we see over and over again is summed up in one word "faithfulness." Through drought, economic hardship, dwindling numbers, health issues and sometimes led over many years by lay ministry teams, the people of God are carrying on – offering love and care, teaching and preaching God's Word, pouring the wine and breaking the bread, envisioning the future, and caring for people in their community.

So as we move into the future and encourage innovative and strategic thinking in relation to ministry and how we do church, let's hear it for the enduring love of those who simply keep on keeping on and who, by their faithfulness, witness to a faithful God.



Gold in Grey

When everything is wrapped up in promise
and we are always aiming for the future
help us to live in the now
yet led by the promise

May we walk steady today
with trust because of tomorrow
step in confidence now
trusting you because of then
hold on in the present
because you are trustworthy in the future

So when everything seems grey
or the way is unsure
and the times are dangerous
or life seems vulnerable
and questions too large
or the corners too numerous
and our language is of decline

May we
in this wilderness
trust you
confidently
believe again
not with our minds only
but with our hearts too
and find the possibility of rainbows
the potential for renewal
the hope of transformation
the seam of gold
that sparks the grey
and falls open
everywhere
the moment we put our trust in it

This is the promise
and may we live in it
name it
own it
and trust it

So be it

Roddy Hamilton
Mucky Paws, February 2010

YOUR BELIEF SYSTEM

by Maureen Garth

In front of you is the most beautiful tree you have ever seen. It is tall and straight and its branches are full, with bright green leaves shining in the light that comes from the luminous sun overhead.

Each branch represents an area of your life and your beliefs. Each leaf on this branch represents how you have worked on changing your beliefs. You may find as you look at this tree, its branches, its leaves, that some of the green leaves either have turned brown and started to fall or have already grown old and stale and fallen to the base of the tree, to replenish the earth and the roots of the tree.

Feel yourself growing as the tree grows, feel the strength that comes with having secure roots that are constantly being nourished. Nothing is ever lost. Every idea you have ever had, whether used or discarded, has led to where you are today, and who you are. Ideas flow like the tide. Some are left on the shore and others go back into the sea to be replenished and to come back stronger than ever.

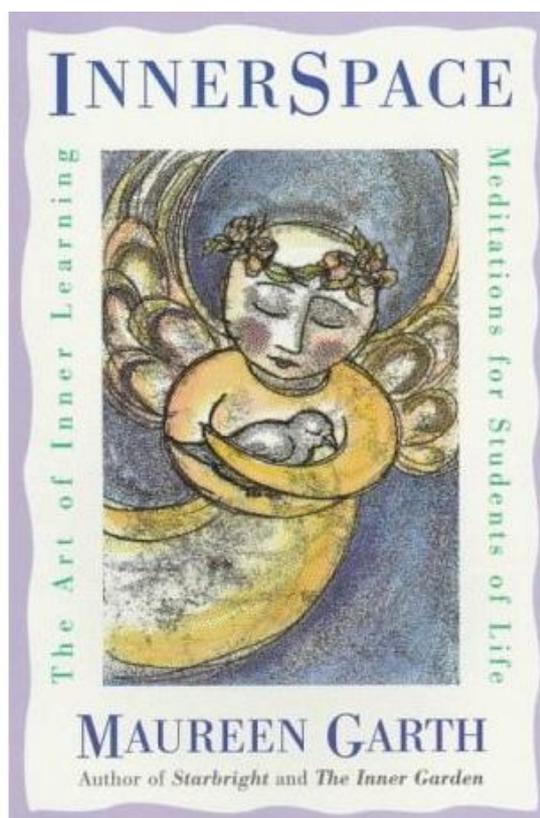
One branch represents how you feel about your own inner strengths. Another represents your value system. And there are others that deal with your kindness, your thoughts, your feelings for others.

The tree represents yourself, with a firm trunk and a firm idea of who you are, with your roots going deeper and deeper into the earth as you grow ever upward, reaching for the heavens and the light that acknowledges your growth.

Feel your strength and know that each new leaf that appears shows your learning, each sturdy branch your knowledge and your expertise.

Belief systems change with the years and you will find that some of the beliefs you have grown up with no longer apply. Therefore you will change them, because *you* need to change. We accept other people's ideas and viewpoints as our own until we discover we have the ability to enjoy our own ideas and viewpoints and beliefs.

Allow your belief system to be open, to be flexible, to be free...



The above visualization is taken from *InnerSpace: The Art of Inner Learning* by Maureen Garth. The book contains 25 creative visualisations, designed to help the reader discover and develop the inner resources needed to meet the challenges of growing, learning and living.

This is just one of the wonderful selections of books available from the Stillpoint Library covering topics such as Prayer, Meditation & Reflection, Spirituality, Discernment and Retreats. There is also a great selection of Resource books to borrow.

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Our Continuing Program for 2010

~ STILLPOINT CENTRE ~

Residential Retreats

"A new way of seeing: A weekend retreat with the poets and mystics" 3rd - 5th September (Friday night to Sunday lunch)
For centuries poets and mystics have dared to experience life deeply, and have written about it with imagination and creativity. This weekend retreat will invite you into a contemplative space with selected readings and poems which invite a deeper way of seeing. Leader: Ann Siddall. Cost: \$275/\$225 Conc. Held at Nunyara Conference Centre and Stillpoint Spirituality Centre.

Be Still and Know

A monthly gathering for prayer and reflection at the Stillpoint Spirituality Centre.

August 10, September 14, October 12, November 16.

Tuesdays 1pm - 2.45 pm. No registration required. All welcome. Gold coin donation.

Advent Retreat Days

"As Breezes Flapped Their Wings - Angelic Encounters in Advent".

26th November, 2nd & 11th December, 9.30am - 4pm. Self-led retreats using material prepared by Rev Alan Biglow.

Spiritual direction available if requested at time of booking. Up to six people per day. Cost: \$25 full day / \$15 half day.

Take Five Groups at Stillpoint Centre

"All Creation Groaning in Travail - Women Mystics doing Justice" led by Rev Alan Biglow. Registration essential.

October 18, 25, November 1, 8 and 15. 1pm - 3pm at Stillpoint. Cost \$60/Conc \$50. Groups limited to 12 participants.

Mid-Week Meditation

Each Tuesday at 11.30am we say the Office of Sext and spend 20 minutes in quiet meditation. Open to all.

Mid Week Holy Communion

At 12 noon on Tuesdays we gather around the kitchen table for Holy Communion. All welcome to join us.

~ STILLPOINT FAITH COMMUNITY ~

Contemplative Worship

6.30pm in Nunyara Chapel (unless otherwise indicated):

August 8 & 22 (22nd in the Turkindi Room), September 12 (at 7pm) & 26, October 10 & 24 (24th at 7 pm), November 14 & 28, December 12 & 24 (Stillpoint Centre.)

Reflection Group

Based on the writings of Thomas Merton: At Stillpoint, Mondays & Tuesdays 7pm - 8.30pm.

19th July - 6th September. "Entering the School of your experience"

Benedictine Days

A Saturday spent in the rhythm of a Benedictine community: October 16.

Community Gathering - 7th November at 4.00pm in the Stillpoint Centre, followed by a shared meal.

Stillpoint Spirituality Centre & Faith Community

"Nunyara", 5 Burnell Drive, Belair, SA 5052

phone: (08) 8178 0048

email: stillpoint@internode.on.net

web: www.sa.uca.org.au/goto/stillpoint

Office Hours: Mon - Thurs, 9.30am - 1.30pm

Centre Director: Ann Siddall

Minister of the Community: Rev Gary Stuckey