



20 March 2023

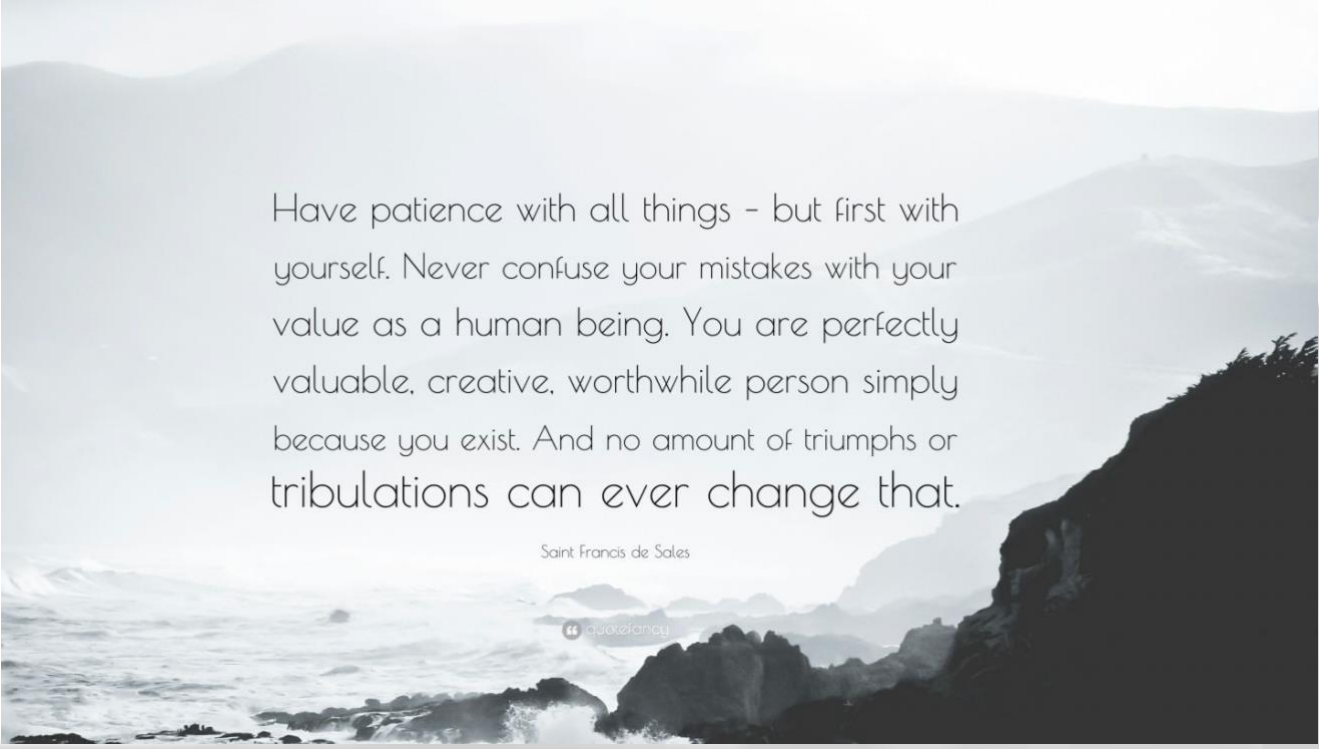
Greetings from the Arrupe Coordinator



This is our first newsletter for 2023, so I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all rich blessings for the remainder of Lent and the rest of the year ahead. Many of our students are now well and truly immersed in their studies at ACU, (see the offerings in spiritual direction and supervision [here](#)), and we welcome our new Arrupe students just as we also say ‘thank-you’ and ‘congratulations’ to our most recent graduates. It is a privilege and a grace to know and to work with such committed and caring people.

The focus of this edition is on the question of *transformation*, and I have been wondering why I chose such an elusive and intangible topic! Pursuing transformation is as fruitless as pursuing happiness – it is something that happens to us and in us when we attempt to live authentic and faithful lives. So, the podcasts, books, articles, and other references loop around the notion of transformation in a very loose and eclectic way. As always, I hope you will find some good fruit in the basket.





Have patience with all things - but first with yourself. Never confuse your mistakes with your value as a human being. You are perfectly valuable, creative, worthwhile person simply because you exist. And no amount of triumphs or tribulations can ever change that.

Saint Francis de Sales

“Quia vivimus”

I must confess, I have been somewhat disturbed by the case of Jean Vanier. I still feel the shock from 2020, when I first read that he had been accused of abusing women under the pretext of giving them ‘spiritual direction’. An independent commission set up by L’Arche International has just recently handed down their [900-page report](#) which has confirmed that at least 25 women “experienced sexual contact with Vanier which was part of a continuum of confusion, control and abuse”. This all happened between 1950 and his death in 2019. There has been some insightful commentary on this report by [Justin Glyn](#) in Eureka Street, [Christopher Parker](#) and [Jenna Barnett](#) in America Magazine, and [Patrick Hudson](#) in The Tablet.

But I feel there is much collective reflection that needs to take place in the light of what has been revealed about his abusive conduct over a very long period. What makes Vanier’s case a little different from most cases involving Predatory behaviour was his almost unquestioned status as the genuine embodiment of authentic spirituality; he was seen by many as a ‘living saint’. He seemed to have passed all the tests for holiness: he lived simply, he stayed close to the poor, he spoke truth to power, he wrote bestselling spirituality books, and he seemed to be deeply prayerful in his life habits and practices. For many of us, he was the real deal, someone we could hold up as a beacon in a church context of deep cynicism and betrayal. Now, tragically, we find that he too was a sham, a dissembler – and a sexual predator.

The personal dilemma for me is, I owe a great deal to Jean Vanier. I met my wife in a L’Arche Community in Ireland. It therefore goes without saying that were it not for Jean Vanier, I would not have met Paula and by extension would never have had the four unique and beautiful children I have been blessed with. I am deeply grateful for the gift of this life I have been given and would not want it any other way. So, I can’t completely disavow Jean Vanier. But he has wounded my psyche, and the psyches of all those who have been associated with L’Arche in any way over the last 50 years or so. It is, as we say in Australia, ‘a real kick in the guts’.

I highlight this report primarily because I think it should be compulsory reading for all spiritual directors and supervisors. If there is anything to be salvaged from this wreck, it is the valuable lessons it can teach all of us. All credit to the integrity of the writers of the report as well as the courage and honesty of current heads of L’Arche, Stephan Posner and Stacy Cates-Carney. “We recognise”, they admit, “our institutional responsibility for failing to spot these abuses, report them and forestall them.” Isn’t this the very fault line running through our church at large? We don’t seem to want to see the corrupting forces that sometimes hide in our midst in plain sight.

But I read something very different over the summer, and reacquainted myself with it again after reading the Vanier report and found it had a steadying, cleansing and calming impact on me. I felt a sense of reassurance; that the centre can really hold, even if our spirits come under sustained assault.

The piece of writing I am talking about is [Pope Francis' Apostolic Letter *Totum Amoris Est* \(Everything Pertains to Love\)](#). It was published on December 28, (the birthday of one of my daughters), and is quite a beautiful and inspiring reflection on the teachings and legacy of Saint Francis de Sales. I have been drawn to Francis ever since visiting his grave in Annecy (France) during a walking pilgrimage in 1985. There is a beautiful intimacy and natural familiarity in the way he writes about his relationship with God. But he also offers very practical advice as well as healthy prayer-centred approaches to the many challenges and difficulties that life can throw in our path. Perhaps the following wise advice can be applied to the Vanier revelations: "When you encounter difficulties and contradictions, do not try to break them, but bend them with gentleness and time". So too with his observation that "reputation is rarely proportioned to virtue".

Pope Francis quotes a lengthy section from one of De Sales' first letters on spiritual direction, it gives expression to a sentiment and an approach that would still resonate with spiritual directors today.

... Francis (de Sales) spoke quite modestly of "his method", which differed from others and aimed at genuine reform. It was a method that renounced all harshness and respected completely the dignity and gifts of a devout soul, whatever its frailties. He wrote: "I wonder whether another difficulty can also be raised concerning your reform: perhaps those who imposed it on you have treated the wound too harshly... I appreciate their method, although it is not what I am in the habit of using, especially with regard to noble and cultivated spirits like yours. I believe it is better simply to indicate the disease and put the scalpel in their hands, so that they themselves can make the necessary incision. Yet do not for this reason neglect the reform that you need". [\[19\]](#)



We witness here the same delicacy and gentleness in dealing with every individual that we find in the writings of Saint Ignatius. Both believed that "an experience of God is intrinsic to the human heart", and that such an intimate experience was possible for every individual. But to experience such intimacy we needed to be given the grace of good discernment; and the importance of good discernment is a common message of the report on Jean Vanier and the Apostolic Letter on Saint Francis de Sales. The former is a warning about what can happen when discernment is poorly developed, and the latter is an eloquent and practical series of reflections on how to approach discernment and the spiritual life with the right orientation of heart. Witness the wisdom of this reflection:

"... For the great danger in today's world, pervaded as it is by consumerism, is the desolation and anguish born of a complacent yet covetous heart, the feverish pursuit of frivolous pleasures, and a blunted conscience. Whenever our interior life becomes caught up in its own interests and concerns, there is no longer room for others, no place for the poor. God's voice is no longer heard, the quiet joy of his love is no longer felt, and the desire to do good fades. This is a very real danger for believers too. Many fall prey to it, and end up resentful, angry and listless". [\[50\]](#)

Without doubt, discernment is a grace, but we can dispose ourselves to it through our own intentionality, and honest inner work. We are more likely to discern well if we sincerely attempt to become aware of the forces that drive us (positive and negative), and, that lead to our thought, perception and action. As Carl Jung expresses it: "one does not become enlightened by imagining figures of light, but by making the darkness conscious". It is a good image for the spiritual director – we attempt to make the darkness conscious (which always leads to light – enlightenment); we always begin with letting light shine on our own darkness. If only Jean Vanier had engaged with Saint Francis de Sales instead of falling victim to some charismatic guru with "distorted pseudo-mystical beliefs" (Report), then he might have been remembered for his genuine holiness instead of for his pseudo-spiritual double life.

Pedro Arrupe SJ: His writings, his inspiration

"The Eucharist and Youth" by Pedro Arrupe (1979)

"I was once in Yamaguchi in charge of a group of boys and girls. Among these was a girl of about twenty who without any show went to the chapel and remained on her knees before the tabernacle at times for hours on end. She seemed to be absorbed, as she remained there motionless. I was struck by the fact that though she was a young woman like all the others, very charming and cheerful, she went to the chapel with such persistence, though she was living together with her companions who held her in the highest esteem. One day I met her, or rather, I made it a point to meet her as she was leaving the chapel. We began to speak as usual and our conversation fell upon her constant and long visits to the Blessed Sacrament. She had hardly given me the chance to speak about this when I asked her: "And what do you do in so much time before the tabernacle?" Without hesitation, as if she had already prepared her answer, she told me: "Nothing." "What? Nothing?" I insisted. "Does it seem possible to you to remain so long without doing anything?"



This sharpening of my request, which wiped out all possibility of doubt, seemed to upset her a little. This time she was a little slower in answering me. At last, she said: "What do I do before the tabernacle? Well, I am there." Then she was silent again. And we took up again our ordinary conversation

She seemed to have said nothing, at least nothing particular. But in reality, she had not concealed anything and had said everything with a word replete with content. In a single word she had condensed the whole meaning of being present before the Lord: "To be," as Mary, the sister of Lazarus, was at the feet of the Lord, or as His Mother stood at the foot of the cross. They also were there. Hours of friendship, hours of intimacy, during which nothing is lost and it seems that nothing is said, since that which is given is everything one's whole being. Unfortunately, there are too few who understand the value of this "being" at the feet of the Master in the Eucharist, of this apparent loss of time with Jesus.

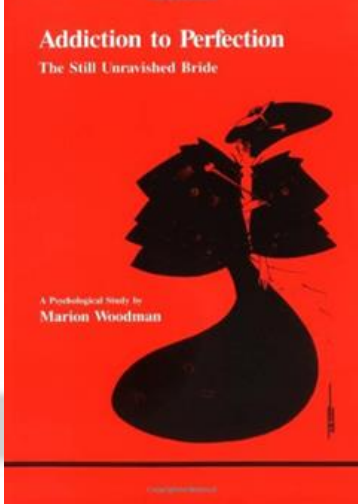


[more](#)

Would you like to have some good advice from me? Look upon Jesus as your friend, as your confidant. Learn to go and see Him, to visit Him, to "remain" with Him, and you will see how many things you will learn. It is a wisdom which He alone can give you, the true knowledge which makes men wise, holy, and even happy. All that we need for our life is gradually attained with a pouring forth from heart to heart. "Tell me with whom you associate and I shall tell you who you are." If you go with Jesus, if you remain with Jesus, you will certainly become yourself another Jesus. Do you not recall that the principles of your association tell you that you should become personal friends of Jesus and that you should speak with him? [Read](#)

Podcasts of the Month

So many podcasts could be chosen for the topic of transformation, but I have settled on a few that emphasise the psychological dimensions of transformation as well as the spiritual. Marion Woodman was an extraordinary Jungian therapist and a healing presence, an embodiment of wisdom and insight. Much the same can be said for Ken Wilber who is a philosopher and transpersonal psychologist; and finally the dialogue between Pádraig Ó Tuama and Marilyn Nelson is full of energy and vigour – very engaging. .



Marion Woodman: The Soul's Vulnerability

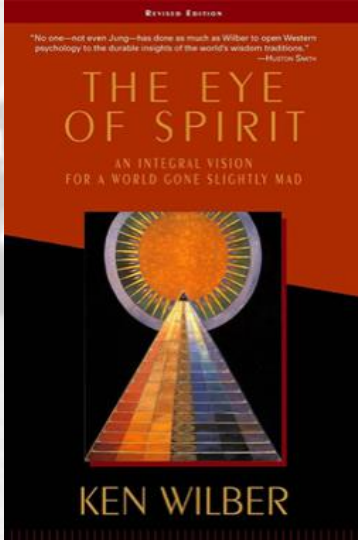
Click here: [Listening to our Deepest Wisdom, Part 1: The Soul's Vulnerability](#)

Tami Simon speaks with Marion Woodman, a renowned international teacher, workshop leader, and Jungian therapist. In the first half of this newly released, two-part interview, recorded in the year 2000, Tami speaks with Marion about the cancer diagnosis Marion received and how it has changed her perspective on life. She also speaks eloquently of the courage to face our mortality, how life can be seen as a series of birth canals, and the gifts of humour and faith that come to us with age.

Marion Woodman: The Marriage of Spirit and Matter

Click here: [Listening to our Deepest Wisdom, Part 2: The Marriage of Spirit and Matter](#)

In the second half of this newly released, two-part interview recorded in the year 2000, Tami speaks with Marion about forgiving our mistakes. Marion also talks about the marriage of spirit and matter, what it might mean to live with mystery, and why humans can never be fully conscious.



Ken Wilber: Integral Transformation: Part I

Click here: [Integral Transformation: Part One](#)

In this interview Ken Wilber talks about genuine transformation, and tackles the question: what is genuine transformation? He explores the significance of the different stages of human development.

Ken Wilber: Integral Transformation: Part II

Click here: [Integral Transformation: Part Two](#)

If we want to live the Integral vision, it has to be based on practice. It's not based on theory. It's based on actually going out and doing the practices. And so we have something called Integral Life Practice ... Ken Wilbur spells out what we have to do if we are to live an integral life.

Marilyn Nelson and Pádraig Ó Tuama: On being

Click here: [“So let us pick up the stones over which we stumble, friends, and build altars”](#)

I have already recommended another interview with Pádraig Ó Tuama, but this one has a slightly different quality. In this dialogue Marilyn and Pádraig examine the question: “where do we find a place of standing when it feels like the world is on fire?” This question was explored in a public conversation Krista Tippett just a few years ago. Pádraig weaves together social healing, poetry, and theology; Marilyn is a lyrical excavator of stories that would rather stay hidden. Another wonderful enlivening conversation



Poem of the Month

Poem: [The Layers](#) by Stanley Kunitz. This is a beautiful poem about the many transformations we experience, before we reach the ultimate and final transformation. The Poet, Stanley Kunitz (1905-2006) died at the ripe age of 100! In the middle of this deeply contemplative poem, he asks the telling question: **“How shall the heart be reconciled to its feast of losses?”** The whole poem is an answer - we become enriched and transformed when we can ‘savour’ and feel gratitude for, the many transformations of our lives – when we **“Live in the layers, not on the litter.”**



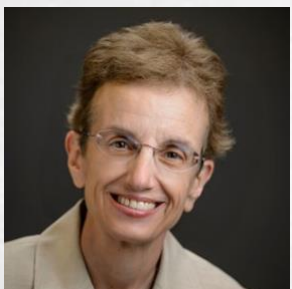
YouTube Videos

YouTube videos: Two engaging videos about transformation.



[Divine Dance: The Trinity and Your Transformation | Richard Rohr](#)

A wise and illuminating interview with Fr Richard Rohr OFM. A reflection on the transformation that is taking place in our contemporary world. Rohr’s signature brilliance on display.



[Teilhard's Evolution and the Body of Christ | Ilia Delio](#)

A fascinating and engaging lecture by Ilia Delio OSF on creation and love. Interestingly, she finds a close sympathy between the perspective/vision of Teilhard and St Francis of Assisi. Here are two wonderful quotes from her fascinating talk:

“There is nothing profane here for those who know how to see”. And, “love is the most universal, the most tremendous and the most mysterious of the cosmic forces ...” (Teilhard De Chardin). But many, many more nuggets in this absorbing lecture.

Articles

Articles that may be of interest: Two very different articles, and two different spheres of transformation ... all linked of course ...



['The Land of the Living': Engaging with Creation](#) [By Jean-Pierre Sonnet, SJ](#)

Note: To read this article you will need to be subscribed to **La Civiltà Cattolica**, a very fine Jesuit publication from Rome.

"The current crisis calls us to rediscover a bond of empathy with other living species, plants and animals, in the space and time of the "landscape," extended to the entire planet.^[4] The journey from self to self to which the human being is called can no longer be anthropocentric and solipsistic as it was in modernity: the life of the "I" passes through its inclusion in the "we" of living beings, in the horizon of the natural world. ..."



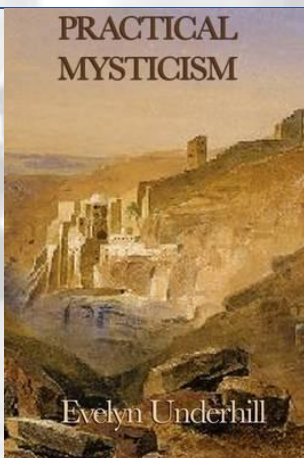
['Why Does God Hate Me?' A response to a frequently Googled question](#) [By Jim McDermott SJ](#)

"... Did you know that your question is so popular on Google? Many other people have asked the same thing. You are not only not alone; you are part of a pretty massive group.

Would you consider a thought experiment? I swear you won't have to close your eyes, take deep breaths or say some mantra. ..."

Books

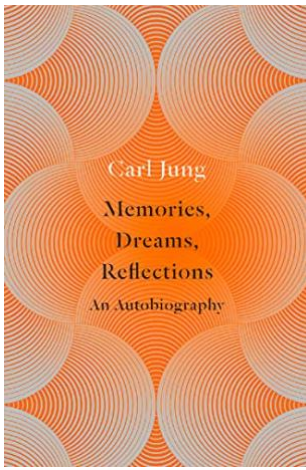
Books on Ignatian spirituality and transformation: There are so many books that could be chosen for the theme of transformation, I thought I would suggest a few that might not immediately spring to mind, and yet contain profound insights into the process of transformation – particularly in relationship with God. Instead of a brief dust-jacket summary, I have decided instead to include a brief apposite quote from the book itself – just to encourage you to sample the full text!



[Practical Mysticism](#) **By Evelyn Underhill**

"Mysticism is the art of union with Reality. The mystic is a person who has attained that union in greater or less degree; or who aims at and believes in such attainment. ..."

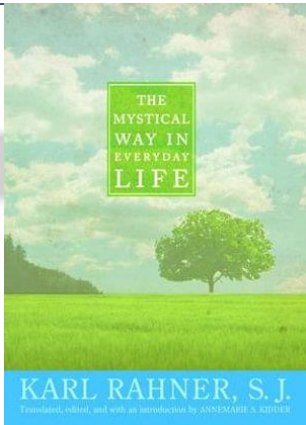
... We see that the claim of such a poet as Whitman to be a mystic lies in the fact that he has achieved a passionate communion with deeper levels of life than those with which we usually deal—has thrust past the current notion to the Fact: that the claim of such a saint as Teresa [of Avila] is bound up with her declaration that she has achieved union with the Divine Essence itself. The visionary is a mystic when he passes beyond thought to the pure apprehension of truth. The active man is a mystic when he knows his actions to be a part of a greater activity. Blake, Plotinus, Joan of Arc, and John of the Cross—there is a link which binds all these together: but if he is to make use of it, the inquirer must find that link for himself. ..."



[Memories, Dreams, Reflections: An Autobiography](#)

By Carl Jung

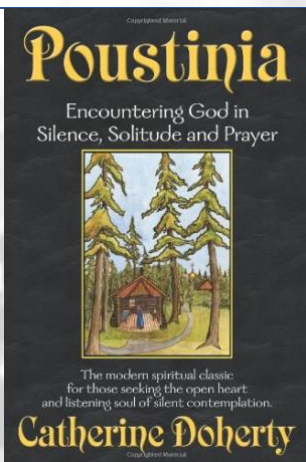
“The decisive question for man is: Is he related to something infinite or not? That is the telling question of his life. Only if we know that the thing which truly matters is the infinite can we avoid fixing our interests upon futilities, and upon all kinds of goals which are not of real importance. Thus, we demand that the world grant us recognition for qualities which we regard as personal possessions: our talent or our beauty. The more a man lays stress on false possessions, and the less sensitivity he has for what is essential, the less satisfying is his life. He feels limited because he has limited aims, and the result is envy and jealousy. If we understand and feel that here in this life we already have a link with the infinite, desires and attitudes change. In the final analysis, we count for something only because of the essential we embody, and if we do not embody that life is wasted.... The feeling for the infinite, however, can be attained only if we are bounded to the utmost. The greatest limitation for man is the “self”; it is manifested in the experience: “I am only that!” Only consciousness of our narrow confinement in the self forms the link to the limitlessness of the unconscious. In such awareness we experience ourselves concurrently as limited and eternal, as both the one and the other. In knowing ourselves to be unique in our personal combination — that is, ultimately limited — we possess also the capacity for becoming conscious of the infinite. But only then!”



[The Mystical Way in Everyday Life](#)

By Karl Rahner

“If the *Exercises* are a singular, great asking for the most holy will of his divine majesty, then this will is not meant to be like the one manifest in the will and longing of one’s own heart; the search is for the will of this free God by which God still freely governs human judgment, human will, and the human heart. All discernment of the spirits, this important piece of the *Exercises*, has its ultimate rational in the fact that, in the final analysis, it is not a discernment of the longings in one’s own heart based on common moral standards, but a listening for the commanding word of God, a searching and finding of the free command of the personal God aimed at the will of the person in his or her own concrete circumstances. And since this God meets Ignatius in Jesus Christ, Ignatius confesses to the cross and to the foolishness of Christ’s way ...”



[Poustinia: Encountering God in Silence, Solitude and Prayer](#)

By Catherine De Hueck Doherty

“One of the first steps toward solitude is departure. Were you to depart to a real desert, you might take a plane, train or car to get there. But we’re blind to the ‘little departures’ that fill our days. These ‘little solitudes’ are often right behind a door which we can open, or in a little corner where we can stop to look at a tree that somehow survived the snow and dust of a city street. There is the solitude of a car in which we return from work, riding bumper to bumper on a crowded highway. This too can be a ‘point of departure’ to a desert, silence, solitude.

But our hearts, minds, and souls must be attuned, desirous, aware of these moments of solitude that God gives us. To be so attuned we must lose our superstition of time. God laughs at time, for if our souls are open to him and available to him, he. Can invite them in, change them, lift them, transform them, in *one instant!* He can say to someone driving that care bumper to bumper, ‘I will lead you into solitude and there I shall speak to your heart’ (Hosea 2:14)”

Spiritual Direction and Supervision at ACU



[Learn more about spiritual direction at ACU](#)

Jesuit Mission



Donate – Syria Earthquake Response

Jesuit Mission appreciate your support to help delivery emergency assistance and accompaniment to Syrian people whose lives have been devastated by the earthquake and have lost their loved ones and homes. Your prayers and generous support are much appreciated.



[Please donate here](#)

JISA



The Spiritual Exercises is the very best thing that in this life, I can think, perceive or understand for helping a person benefit her or himself as well as bringing fruit, benefit, and advantage to many others; for even if you felt no need for the former, you will see immeasurably and incomparably you will be helped with regard to the latter. Ignatius Loyola 1491 – 1556. Letter to Rev. M. Miona, 16 November 1536.



[Learn more about JISA](#)

Ignatian Spirituality Retreats



An abundance of experiences for you are now available for 2023. Check out some of our retreat offerings available in person and online! Explore all Retreats [here](#) and click on the Spiritual Exercises below.



[Save the Date: IM23 Ignatian Arboretum Online 21-24 May 2023](#)

Enter the forest, feel the connections, become a tree. Explore the roots, branches, fruit, and seeds of Ignatian Spirituality. Experience the energy of this organic spirituality event.

Online May 2023:
Sun 21, Mon 22, Tue 23 & Wed 24 May 2023
2 options each day:
[10am - 12noon](#) OR [6.30 - 8.30pm](#) AEST



[Ignatian Symposium, Hong Kong July 1-3, 2023](#)

Xavier House, the Ignatian Spirituality Centre in Hong Kong, and the Centre for Catholic Studies of the Chinese University of Hong Kong are in the process of organising an International Symposium on Ignatian Spirituality, titled "From Conversation to Conversion—An Ignatian Trajectory". You can find more information on the program, speakers etc., here: [From Conversation to Conversion - An Ignatian Trajectory International Symposium on Ignatian Spirituality July 1 ~ July 3, 2023](#).



[Mystical Heart: Desiring Love: Sensual, Spiritual and Apophatic Knowing](#)

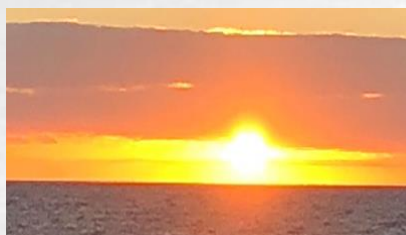
Presented by Dr Kerrie Hide

Tuesday 22nd and Wednesday 23rd August 2023 face to face at Santa Casa Queenscliff, Vic, and online.

In this course, we will explore the Christian tradition of desiderium (divine-human desire) and enter into the wisdom ways of knowing that our eternal yearning for intimacy and oneness with divine love initiates.

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The retreat will be offered both face-to-face at Santa Casa, Queenscliff and online. Please note there are limited rooms at Santa Casa, so please register early if you would like to be part of the face-to-face retreat. For further information about the beautiful Santa Casa retreat house, go to <https://santacasa.org.au>

Companions



If you are a giver of the Spiritual Exercises, please consider joining [Companions](#), which is a formal association of Givers of the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius. Remember, you can also take out student membership if you are an Arrupe student.

“The Last Word.....”



Teach Me Your Ways

Teach me your way of looking at people:
as you glanced at Peter after his denial,
as you penetrated the heart of the rich young man
and the hearts of your disciples.

I would like to meet you as you really are,
since your image changes those with whom you
come into contact.....[read more](#)

— Pedro Arrupe, SJ

Next Month

“The next Newsletter will focus on vocation and Ignatian Spirituality”

Jesuit and Ignatian Spirituality Australia acknowledge that we walk upon the traditional lands of First Nations peoples.
We pay our respects to them and recognise the continuing gift of their cultures to the life and spirit of Australia.
