

## Go Deeper

I moved up to South West Gippsland in 2007, an open paddock change, one could say. I had lived in the Dandenong Ranges since 1983 but by 2007, my children were flying the nest and it was time to go. When I made the move, I knew absolutely no one in that part of the world. I had left my job, sold my house and put the future into the hands of the Lord. It was a very isolating time and initially lonely. I had managed to find work in an Aged Care Facility in Trafalgar attached to Warragul Hospital, but it takes time to get to know country people in a small community

In 2008, a close friend in Melbourne rang and told me to make enquiries about a course being run by the Heart of Life Centre. The course was 'Let the Heart Listen.' If I had known then where this contemplative listening course would lead me, I might have run the other way! The Lord however had other plans.

*For the first time in my life, I had to sit still and learn to listen, not just hear. I had to learn to go inwards, and above all else, to honestly confront the darkness I had unknowingly been carrying all of my life.*

At the conclusion of the course, I knew I wanted more, that this was not enough.

Five years passed with the usual ups and downs. In 2013, I was again advised by my dear friend that another course was running at Heart of Life entitled, 'The Way of the Heart.' This course took me into a more contemplative place whilst at the same time educating me into the richness of the history of the Catholic Church. It introduced me to different world faiths, their history, traditions and richness. It allowed me to go another level deeper into my journey back to my Heart. It was a challenging course, not just because of its content, but I was making a 150km round trip every Saturday, going back onto a shift at the nursing home the next day. I completed

the course in 2014 and thought to myself that there wasn't any more 'to do' on my spiritual journey. Well... I couldn't have been further from the truth if I tried!

It was at this point that God decided to 'up the ante', as they say. A course came up in 2014 called 'Spiritual Leaders' Formation Program. This course could be described as being placed between a rock and a hard place - the rock being God and the hard place being my logical brain. It was a constant battle between my Heart which had been awakened to contemplative awareness since 2008 and my logical approach to life. The supervisor would often counteract my endless questioning with, 'Go deeper.'

Then came Siloam — didn't see that coming! A two-year part-time formation program in Spiritual Direction.

There's a pattern here: a baptism of fire in every sense of the word. Job wrestling with the angel comes to mind, as I too struggled with the suffering of humanity, let alone my own attempts to balance out logic with feeling and that touch of mystery which flows through the bible. There were several aha moments, and many not so aha moments.

Mondays were filled to capacity. Challenging at times, irritating at others, but always in the background were the words, 'Go deeper.'

The retreats built into the course were times of personal contemplative examination, in hindsight a great gift that allowed me how to find that place of peace, albeit pockets, in everyday ordinary life.

It's been a journey those eight years. It has taken me from being *aware* of God, to actually *knowing* God's presence in my Heart. But always in those quiet moments of my day or evening prayer when I doubt, there is that whisper, 'Go deeper.'

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