


Spirituality and Ministry

My first encounter with Heart of Life was in 1985 at seminars on Developing an Australian Spirituality and Spirituality & Story. Post Vatican II, this was a new way for me to reflect and discern in a contemplative way. This was enhanced by a seminar in 1992 on *The Human Experience of God in Australia*, outlining for me justice and compassion in Australia, which I have been able to reflect in my pastoral ministry. Complementary to these introductory seminars were the workshops on the Myers-Briggs Personality Type Indicators, very beneficial in discovering a respect for myself and others.

These were followed by many other seminars over the years at Heart of Life, offering many opportunities of creative enrichment and guided contemplative reflection on the workings of God's Spirit (and other spirits) in my life.

In 1989, I was privileged to be part of the first 12-month part-time course of the Spiritual Leaders Group, offering a contemplative approach to ministry and leadership. This was a challenging and encouraging experience, helping me in developing further a sense of the sacred and an openness to receive and trust in the Lord. This group inspired me to wholeness, acceptance, commitment to change and how to respond to disturbances. The welcoming, the wisdom of words and the combined searching for truth, assisted me to discern that spirituality is in the simplicity of being, out of which deep fruit is born.

I learnt to integrate my own personal struggles into my learning and faith. It assisted me to build upon the spirituality, skills and knowledge I already possessed and enabled me to deepen my awareness of who I am and developed my own prayer life and spirituality further. I learnt that in touching the lives and spirituality of those I met, we are both deepened in His gentleness and peace.



I have always had a desire to learn and to listen, to grow more aware of myself and come to a sense of the other, and have always been open to deepen my understanding of 'things spiritual'. Heart of life seminars, workshops and courses have challenged and enriched my faith.

Reflecting on my various pastoral ministries, through these courses, I developed my understanding of 'being poor', not just physically but spiritually, and I learnt so much about being real (like the 'Velveteen Rabbit') from the so-called 'forgotten people' — refugees, single parents, older people living alone, etc.

All these learnings have stayed with me in my various ministries in parish, church and community projects, care of the sick and dying, sacramental programs, parish groups, liturgy, funeral services, nurturing community in parish, my ongoing commitment to building a better world, a better parish, and my awareness of social justice which grew from my experience and my questioning of it. Also, in 1999, I co-authored *Graphic Worship, Inspiration for Liturgical Celebrations*.

I now enjoy the ministry of retirement from full-time work, although I am still actively involved in parish life. Throughout my life of 78 years, I have been encouraged by the opportunities that Heart of Life offered me to reflect on what each event/situation holds for me and to discern what the Lord is teaching me—yet again, and continuously—what He is saying and what He is moving me to become.

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