



Companions

In the Ministry of the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises

Conversar News 30th June 2021

News from the Chair

This year, the 500th Anniversary of the conversion of Ignatius, is centre stage, inviting us to embrace and consider the significant and continuing impact of the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius in their many different forms and the possibilities they provide in a world challenged by the disruptions to life from COVID and the lingering uncertainty presented by sporadic outbreaks. Ignatius faced many uncertainties and difficulties as he sought to discern and understand God's desire for him and how he was to respond. We are also faced with this challenge, though consoled knowing we are not alone and that whatever we do today, God is beside us. And no matter what comes our way, God's hand will guide us. A consoling, reassuring, and encouraging thought!

Committee Changes

As recently advised the composition of Companions committee is changing, with the resignation of Frances Tilly in February, and recently, advice from Larry Cox and Anne Pate they will not renominate for the committee. In addition, as you are aware, I have served the maximum term of 6 years on the committee in a variety of roles and spent an additional year as an observer prior to election.

I would like to acknowledge and express gratitude to Larry and Anne for the extraordinary commitment they have made in supporting the mission and membership of Companions.

Larry generously stepped into the role of Treasurer on invitation completing that year and a further two in addition to a similar role in the early days of Companions. I have appreciated the time and energy he has given to the role and his support and liaison with the website developer. Larry's diligence has ensured the accuracy and currency of membership information and the finances of Companions and has established positive relationships with financial institutions.

Following a year as an observer, Anne has been a committee member for another four years, during

which her commitment, wisdom and clarity of thought has come to the fore in a multitude of ways.

Ever willing to respond to a request, Anne has collaborated in organising and presenting at Companions Conferences, regional Gatherings and more recently, Companions Reconnecting on Zoom in 2020 and subsequent Virtual gatherings. In the early days of COVID, Anne developed a format for connection and conversation with members to identify how Companions could be of support.

Anne as chair of the membership committee, developed a membership application process, took a lead role in the revision of the Constitution, development and subsequent revision of the Apostolic Plan, revision of the Formation Standards and a multitude of other initiatives including as Companions Representative on the Australian Ecumenical Council for Spiritual Direction (AECSD). We thank Anne for the contribution she has made to the revitalizing of Companions and look forward to her continued involvement, though to a lesser extent during her PhD studies.

Companions Connecting

A positive initiative that has emerged from COVID and intermittent lockdowns in which many of our members are now immersed, is the creative ways that enable us to connect, communicate and support each other.

Our vision has been enlarged and we have responded to the challenge. Companions Connecting in March adopted the theme of stepping out into new and emerging spaces of friendship, connection and professional development that was highlighted in a presentation by Joan Jennings, an original member of Companions, who engaged 32 members in a creative and prayerful reflection on her experience of changes to a ministry that she was deeply committed to for many years and moving into ministry with the aged in their homes and in aged care facilities.



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In the words of one participant, “the sharing of experiences are a wonderful way for us all to grow in our ministry” and, “what a vibrant, energized, prayerful and life-giving community we are in Companions. The future, whatever it holds for us personally and collectively, and whatever it holds for what 'Church' will become, will be transformative in ways that we cannot yet imagine. May we have the grace to continue to wait in hopeful expectation.”

Whilst the following reflection from Laetitia Puthendapath, one of our New Zealand Members, was received after Companions Conference last year, it is relevant to now and beautifully resonates with the evolving sense of identity as the body of Companions in the body of Christ.

Reflecting on Companions Gathering via Zoom on August 15th – 16th 2020

Previously I would not have been able to imagine that community building was viable across virtual space through the medium of video-conferencing. However the weekend meeting of Companions pointedly guided me towards possibilities that await creative minds when infused with the Spirit.

The medium of Zoom reminded me that God's preferred way of speaking to humanity is through metaphorical language. So the form of the language of Zoom became a 'figure of speech' as God's communication to Companions was beamed vividly onto our computer screens.

The symbolic realm continued to be upheld through Ezekiel's valley of dry bones. Metaphorical language of the prophet's vision engaged the whole person, emotions, intellect and the soul. It brought invisible reality to the visible domain. This imaginative transformation was profoundly revitalising for everyone, especially the Companions disheartened by the challenges of the current pandemic.

How did Companion's gathering help build community? I want to suggest that the covenantal love of the Companions traversed the intermediary area between self and the other whereby the unique subjectivity of each person was momentarily

suspended. All of us were gathered up on the wings of prayer as a unified body of numinous witnesses to the Body of Christ. Christ awakened in us brought us to the expansive periphery where we experienced within us a reflection of the infinity of God's love for the world.

Following the gathering, in the daily reading on August 22nd prophet Ezekiel announced another vision (Ezekiel 43:1-7). The prophet saw the glory of the God of Israel approaching from the east and finally filling the temple. God said to the prophet “I shall live here among the people of Israel forever”. The symbolism spoke to me as the reiteration of the covenant. I heard the Word of God announcing that God will enter the world temple, fill it with divine glory and dwell here forever. Could this vision become Companions' deepest desire: to make the indwelling of God visible and tangible even in the darkest of places and circumstances?

There was the promise of fulfilment of deeper faith and the readiness for passionate engagement with wider society and eagerness to share the gifts of Ignatian Spirituality.



Members Connecting in November 2020

Monthly Prayer

A recent initiative by Terry Fanning to strengthen Companions as a 'community of consolation' and deepen connections has been the introduction of monthly for reflection and prayer on Friday mornings from 9.30am – 10.30am. This commenced in May and the next will be on **Friday 9th July at 9.30am.**



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It is a time to come together as community in a simple and prayerful way with no registration necessary and everyone invited. Zoom link is sent to all members in the prayer week.

If you are interested in being involved in this wonderful initiative, please contact Terry or any committee member whose details are on the website.

Works in Progress

Logo – work on the Logo has slowed and suggestions put forward by members are still being considered.

Apostolic Plan – work still to be done.

Formation Standards – being progressed with Michael Smith SJ joining the group reviewing the standards.

Patrick and Anthony Wright Formation and Education Fund (PAWFED)

Grant money has been transferred to AECSD bank account and George Warren, Past President of AECSD is taking a leading role in the project and is presently seeking working party members. Ongoing updates will be provided.

AECSD – Communion in Diversity: Audacious Dreaming for Spiritual Direction in Australia – 16th – 18th July.

This will be held online and Companion's members are urged to participate. You may recall some years ago Companions decided not to hold a Conference in the year of the AECSD Conference. Detailed information of the program and bookings can be made on this link: [COMMUNION IN DIVERSITY: AECSD invites 'AUDACIOUS DREAMING' Tickets | TryBooking Australia](#)

Reminder

Renewal of Memberships are now due. We appreciate your continued membership and are delighted with last year's increase to 118 members. A benefit of Membership for those not covered by insurance through religious institutions, is the inclusion of Professional Indemnity Insurance for Givers of the Full spiritual Exercises and Ignatian Spiritual Director Members, Ignatian Spiritual Director Members and Givers of the First Spiritual Exercise Members.

Please ensure you complete the Renewal of Membership form on the website when paying.

Committee Member Profiles

Terry Fanning - Terry was born and raised in Waterford Ireland. Completed nursing and midwifery studies in London where she worked in these fields before coming to Australia in 1978.

Terry married, and she and John have four daughters and they are the proud grandparents of seven beautiful grandchildren, six Aussies and one Kiwi.

Terry's Ignatian journey began in 2004 when she made the Full Spiritual Exercises in daily life. Since then Terry has completed The Arrupe Programme to become a giver of The Exercises and continued studies to take out a MASD in 2012. Since then, Terry has worked at Campion Centre of Ignatian Spirituality in Melbourne as a Spiritual director Pastoral Supervisor and Retreat facilitator.

Terry is a firm believer in the power and dynamic of The Exercises to enable one to experience God's loving and creative presence within and around one.

She is currently an active member of JISA and committee member of Companions.



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Wayne Brabin - Wayne spent his early life in New Zealand and moved to Adelaide with his wife Stephanie 45 years ago. They have 4 children and 7 grandchildren. Wayne's professional working life has focussed on human resource and human development across both the private and community sectors. He has been actively involved in the Ignatian spirituality ministry in South Australia for over 25 years. He is a trained spiritual director, giver of the spiritual exercises in all forms, and an experienced retreat facilitator. Wayne's particular interests are in offering spiritual formation and leadership support to those working in education and parishes and in adapting the Spiritual Exercises in all forms for men, for parishes and for those 'on the margins.'

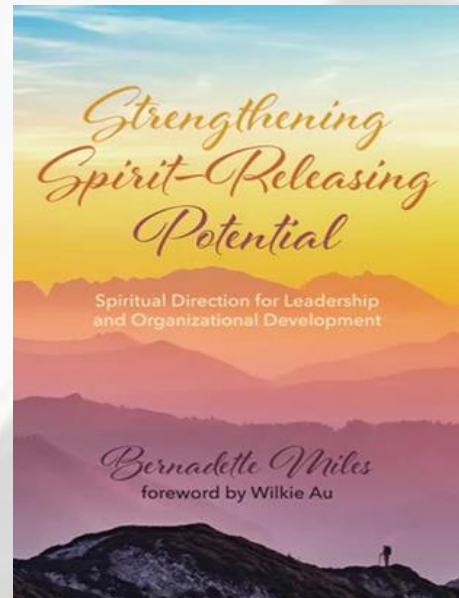
Wayne has generously accepted the role of President of Companions following discernment by the Committee and will take up the role at the AGM in August.

Fr Michael Smith SJ is the Associate Dean Arrupe® Program Forming spiritual directors in the Ignatian tradition at Jesuit College of Spirituality (JCS). Originally from New Zealand, Michael entered the Australian Province of the Society of Jesus in 1976 and was ordained a priest in 1984.

Michael has extensive academic qualifications from New Zealand, Australia and Chicago, in science, theology, marine biology, education, pastoral counselling, a Doctorate of Education in Counselling and Human Services and he is currently working towards a MA of Applied Positive Psychology.

Michael's ministry since the early 90s has included Director of Campion Centre of Ignatian Spirituality, Rector of the Jesuit Theological College in Melbourne, Academic Dean of JCS and International Education Officer and Director of Mission for Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) in Rome. Amongst Michael's many hobbies are scuba diving, playing the guitar, following the New Zealand All Blacks rugby team, and pilgrimages.

Book Review



Review Summary by Dr Kirsten Hobby

'Dr. Bernadette Miles weaves together the threads of her life, work, faith and research to offer new insights and wisdom into the application of spiritual direction and spirituality into the lives of leaders and organisations. This book speaks into the current challenges we face as a species with words of hope and inspiration for a new way of being in community with one another and our world. Gone are the days of seeing workers as machines as Miles ushers in a new way of considering leadership as a journey of increasing self-awareness and consciousness, for leaders to develop their capacity to know themselves more intimately, and to trust their sense of purpose.

..... In this clearly written book Miles has provided a practical and accessible guide to exploring the role that spiritual direction, the Ignatian spiritual exercises and a broader view of spirituality can have in the lives of leaders, teams and organizations as a support to raise consciousness through a culture of collaboration rather than a command and control. [Link to full Review will be placed on Companion's website.](#)