

# Companions

In the Ministry of the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises

Conversar News: June 2022

*HOPE.....*



- Gods love can grace each of us with a lasting and sustaining hope, no matter how dark or confusing our situation.
- Life is often a desert, it is difficult to walk, but if we trust in God, it can become beautiful and wide as a highway. Never lose hope; continue to believe, always, in spite of everything. Hope opens new horizons, making us capable of dreaming what is not even imaginable.

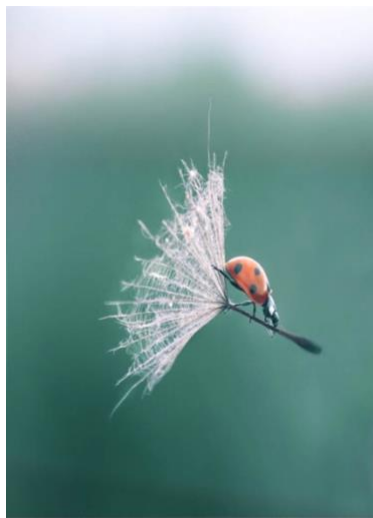
*Pope Francis*

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## From the Chair



Dear Companions

As I reflect on the past 6 months, I have been heartened by the connections that are continuing to develop with our members, through our monthly prayer reflections, Professional Development Gatherings and the many other informal connections between members. We are also connected within the wider JISA community and our many local and national spirituality ministries that continue to reach out and bring the gift of the Spiritual Exercises for nourishment and life. As our AGM is approaching I invite you to consider whether you would like to bring your gifts to share with and be a part of the Companions Committee.

Blessings Wayne

## Companioning Arrupe Students

The committee is in the process of testing a proposal put to us by Dr. Michael Lochnane to consider the possibility of Companions providing a means of support through companionship to the Arrupe students in their final year as they begin giving the Full Spiritual Exercises. Following several zoom meetings between Michael, Murray Adams, Terry Fanning and three of our most experienced members Joan Jennings, Liz Kerr and Kerry Holland a decision was made to begin with a pilot programme. This will entail meeting with the students in August via Zoom for conversation to establish how best to proceed.

It is seen as way of building community, staying connected to our roots and being generative, being loyal to our charism and learning from one another.

## Professional Development Gatherings

The second of our Gatherings was held on Saturday 25 June, facilitated by Michael Smith SJ and Murray Adams. Following the focus for 2022, 'Images of God and Self' the theme was 'Inner Critic, Inner Nurturer: a new way of talking about Interior Movements and the Discernment of Spirits'. The 'Matariki' prayer, presentation, guided meditation and opportunity for spiritual conversation were fully embraced by those who attended. Feedback comments included 'During the prayer I realized how harsh I had been with myself throughout my life', 'What a wonderful grace to speak my truth to a complete stranger who loved me in return', 'Marvellous insight to have these two means of reflection of life', 'Recognising God's kindness and gentleness to one's inner vulnerabilities and brokenness.....feeling loved'. A recording of Michael's presentation and accompanying notes and powerpoint are included on the website in the **Members Page / Members Menu / Professional Development Documents**. Our next Gathering will be on Saturday 29 October.

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### IM 22

#### Personal Reflections about IM22

As I ponder the graces received during IM22, I cannot help but feel a deep gratitude, humility, awe and oneness with God and all that God has created.

The creativity in blending Ignatius's story with those who gathered in prayer, engaged in spiritual conversation, listened to star gazing stories and viewed images of galaxies was a feast for the body, mind, heart and soul!

For me, personally, there was a transformation of consciousness way beyond my imagining. The audaciousness of these three days has given me a confidence and freedom to move forward in being a giver of the First Spiritual Exercises and Field Hospital Exercises in new places with new people who are seeking meaning in life, a place of belonging and deepening relationship with God and others.

I pray that the Spirit who guided and inspired the creators of IM22 will continue to inspire all participants, to serve generously with renewed faith, hope, love and courage to bring about the reign of God wherever our feet are planted.

**Anita Davine**

**Member of Vic. FSE Regional Team and Companions.**

The Spirit of Inigo's pilgrimage transformed ordinary things in life into God's extraordinary creation. So too was the experience of the IM22 Murmuration Conference. A transforming and extraordinary experience. Pilgrims from around the world gathered on zoom and watched in awe the dance of starling murmuration and the adagio of glittering stars. We listened with our hearts and our imagination to guided spiritual exercises, remembering stories of our ordinary lives which awakened in us God's extraordinary gifts.

While the Spirit held and guided us, we in turn held trusted sacred spaces for people we had never met. We listened in silence to extraordinary stories from extraordinary people. This exceptional three day experience highlighted just how much we are all connected in body mind and Spirit.....Just like the dancing stars which often called Inigo to silently gaze and weep tears of consolation in the still of the night and....just like the murmuration of flocked starlings, bound and swaying in a lofty corps de ballet, we gathered the fertile seeds of heart-felt love in the Adagio of God's Spirit.

**Annemaree Sutton**

**Coordinator of JISA Champion Corpus Christi Outreach Spirituality Ministry, FSE VIC Regional Team Leader, Member of the FSE National Training Team and Companions**



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### International Ignatian Ecospiritual Conference Reflection

#### Reflection from Peter Saunders (Conference Organising Committee Member)



As part of this Ignatian Year to celebrate the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the conversion of St Ignatius, the Australian Jesuit Province held an online International Ignatian Ecospiritual Conference from 25-30 April.

The conversion of St Ignatius of Loyola, which began during his recuperation at Loyola in 1521 was deepened later during his time at Manresa in 1522. It was during this time that Ignatius began to write down the *Spiritual Exercises*. Towards the end of the *Spiritual Exercises*, in the *Contemplatio*, Ignatius invites the one making the Exercises to experience the world in a new way, 'to look how God dwells in creatures; in the elements, giving them being; in the plants, giving them life; in the animals giving them feeling; in people giving them understanding.'

The aim of the conference was to invite participants into a greater experience of God's presence in all Creation that leads to an *Ecological Conversion* and a deeper desire to commit to caring for our common home. The conference was grounded in the process of the Spiritual Exercises and Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si: On Care for Our Common Home* (2015). Pope Francis wants us to realise that "The universe unfolds in God, who fills it completely. Hence, there is a mystical meaning to be found in a leaf, in a mountain trail, in a dew drop, in a poor person's face." (LS, n.233)

The theme of the conference was "Living with Earth: Our Ecological Conversion through being with God in Nature". This immersion experience conducted over five days involved 170 participants from 17 countries. After morning prayer each day the participants listened to a reflection on the theme of the day from the keynote speaker. These themes included – the God of Love in All Creation; Climate Change; Aboriginal Spirituality; Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration; Laudato Si Action Platform. Then in online and in-person Hubs, the participants shared their response to the talk. They then spent some contemplative time outside during the day with particular Spiritual Exercises in Nature, and came back later in the day to share their experience in the hub via spiritual conversation. Many then shared some of their experience on the private facebook page for the conference. Feedback from the hub facilitators and participants was their experience of God in Creation deepened as the 5 days went on. Some of the hubs have continued to meet since the conference ended.

The proceedings of the conference were recorded and post the conference a new website has been developed where all the video resources from the conference can be found. This includes – prayer sessions, reflections, keynote speaker talks, spiritual exercises in nature, additional resources and the full sessions from the conference. The new website can be found at: <https://godinnature.org.au> The resources are available for all to access for personal prayer, with groups on prayer day's or retreats.

*Creation is of the order of love. God's love is the fundamental moving force in all created things.* (LS, n.77)

**Peter Saunders, Companions Member**

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### Thought for the Day

‘What day is it?’ asked Pooh.  
‘It’s today,’ squeaked Piglet.  
‘My favourite day,’ said Pooh. *(AA Milne)*

### Invitation to an online consultation on supervision of spiritual directors

**Spiritual direction is a sacred trust. Life-giving, ethically responsible spiritual direction is fostered when spiritual directors have access to supervision.**

The Australian Ecumenical Council for Spiritual Direction (AECSD) invites you to an exciting and ground-breaking conversation on spiritual direction supervision, to inform the development of Formation Guidelines for Supervisors of Spiritual Directors. Whether you are a supervisor, a spiritual director receiving supervision, involved in a supervision formation program, or have another interest in this evolving area, we want to hear from you!

**When: Wednesday 3rd and Thursday 4th August 2022**

**Online: 9.30am-1pm AEST each day**

**Facilitator: Carey McIver**

Over these two days, we will review and discuss the draft initial Guidelines developed by AECSD’s Supervision Working Group. We will then hear about some of the different pathways to becoming a supervisor of spiritual directors. We also seek your feedback and ideas to inform the next phase of the Guidelines, which will identify criteria for recognition of formation pathways and programs.

To register: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/online-consultation-on-supervision-of-spiritual-directors-tickets-358300605757>

To help the consultation achieve its goals, we ask you to attend both half days, and to read the draft Formation Guidelines for Supervisors of Spiritual Directors beforehand. The draft initial Guidelines can be accessed at:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/9yvqx0bogz2t05f/Draft%20Formation%20Guidelines%20for%20Supervisors%20of%20Spiritual%20Directors.docx?dl=0>

You can read more about AECSD’s work on supervision at:

<https://spiritualdirection.org.au/services-associations/supervision/>



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### Annual General Meeting 2022

In our March 2022 edition of Conversar News, we indicated a probable date for our AGM would be following the Annual Conference in August. Your committee have since reviewed all options and have agreed the revised date for the AGM will be Saturday 1 October, 10.30am – 11.30am AEST. Full details will be advised separately within the timeframe set out in our constitution. In the meantime you may give some discerning thought to consider nominating for the Committee.

### Mary Visiting Elizabeth

During a recent Prayer Reflection, one of our Companion members, Lynne Head-Weir shared a painting of hers, 'Mary visiting Elizabeth'. We invited Lynne to share this with our wider Companions community, together with her reflection on the painting.



My painting initially related to a particular experience a few years ago. The spirit inside of me jumping for joy when reading "Soon enough, my spiritual journal will speak in the clear and extraordinary voice of the Holy Spirit" [Michael Hansens SJ, The First Spiritual Exercises p 350]. What immediately came to mind was "Luke 1:41 When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb,

and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit." I experienced a spiritual connection and confirmation that my drawings and my writing in my journals were expressions of the wonderful voice of the Holy Spirit.

On reflection, exploring more meaning of my artwork, I see Mary as the figure on the left. A strong committed mother of faith. Unborn Jesus is the shape of the whole world growing within her. The spiritual being in the process of existing and developing into human form. Elizabeth is on the right. The white circular shape in the background behind her means that she is of the world. Elizabeth has wings, which represents the Holy Spirit's presence within her.

The connection between Mary and Elizabeth is emphasised by the yellow swirling curve of light. This means that at the sound of Mary's words of greeting a joyousness in Elizabeth and her unborn child. It is also like a yellow arch or halo coming from the spiritual realm into an earthly world. The bright warm colours give the impression of an enjoyment and fun energy.

Their neutral facial expressions contribute to the mystery of what isn't totally known. It also helps to place myself within the character of Elizabeth. In doing this, I feel a sense of joy and wonder, remembering when I was pregnant and the miracle of a life forming within me. I feel grateful for the strong women of faith in my life who companion me too.

Using my imagination, I hold a conversation with Mary. I ask her "How are you feeling?" Her reply "I am grateful that Elizabeth and I can spend some time together. We are both pregnant and

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understand what we are going through.” I ask “Is it scary? She says “For God’s purpose, I am totally at peace, so my visiting Elizabeth and being gloriously pregnant with the son of God is meant be.”

In summary, the creative movement of the Holy Spirit revealed its mystery during my creative art, reflective, imaginative process.

### How does my artwork relate to Ignatian Spirituality?

Creative arts fits easily into the First Principle and Foundation of the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises by giving life for my soul and for others’ souls in sharing and encouraging others.

Creativity, as prayer and meditation, are dear playmates. As I open myself up to the gospel, I see and understand more about Mary visiting Elizabeth, myself and the spirit that moves through us. There is always more to be revealed as I welcome the Holy Spirit into the creative experience.

Creative arts is congruent with the Ignatian examen by reflecting on and reviewing my experiences of God in my life.

When I draw intuitively and spontaneously, I automatically let go of control and go with the flow. The outcome naturally unfolds, as I trust in the Holy Spirit at work. With spiritual freedom, I patiently let go and let God create through me, for his design and grace to be developed. I am not concerned about the end product. Afterwards, when reflecting on my experience of my creative process, the shapes, colours and lines are interpreted into new awareness, meaning and learnings. The invisible becomes visible.

All of us can create art and find meaning from the creative process because there is no judgement, no right or wrong. Our inner critic will tell us that we can’t do it but we can, when we listen to the voice of the true spirit. There is no pressure to have any artistic ability or to follow any techniques, rules or conformity. Ignatian spiritual freedom opens us up to experience and express God’s love and graces more deeply, if we are willing, open or called.

I would be interested to hear about your different or similar interpretations of my artwork or your creative art experiences. What do you see? What meaning does the image hold for you?

Creative Blessings

Lynne ( [lynne.head.weir@gmail.com](mailto:lynne.head.weir@gmail.com) )

## Prayer Reflections for 2022



Our monthly prayer reflections continue to provide the opportunity for us to ‘have some space’ to share quiet reflective prayer time. We are very conscious that for some who are working or have regular commitments on a Friday, attendance can be difficult. All are welcome whenever the opportunity arises.

Please note your calendars with the following 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday dates of the month for this year: **8 July, 12 August, 9 September, 14 October, 11 November, 9 December**. The time will always be 9.30am Eastern Australia Time. If any of you would like to offer to facilitate, with

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support, one of these prayer reflections, Terry Fanning would love to hear from you. [fanning.terry@gmail.com](mailto:fanning.terry@gmail.com)

### Conversar News – September 2022 Edition: Request for Articles

This is an invitation to you to submit any articles, prayers, items of interest, personal reflections or stories for inclusion in our next edition of Conversar News, due out in September 2022. We would particularly like to hear what other Companions are up to. As one of our members has said, 'I'm often inspired by others when they talk/write of 'their ordinary'. Sharing something of our journey/ministry can be a wonderful gift for others. Please can you send any suggestions or offerings to: [wayne.brabin@internode.on.net](mailto:wayne.brabin@internode.on.net).

### Website

If you 'look hard enough' you will notice there have been some 'minor' changes / additions to our website over the past couple of months. We have added an 'Events Page' that will include all upcoming events that we will be promoting for members. We have also added a 'Links Page' that identifies links to other appropriate websites. We have removed some outdated and duplicated information. On our Footer Page you will note that we have included an 'Acknowledgement of Country'.

We are also commencing to progressively review and update the 'Members Page' to add to the benefits that belonging to Companions can offer. The first of these is the inclusion of material used for the Professional Development Gatherings referred to earlier on page 2 of this newsletter. If you have any further suggestions as to what improvements you would like made or what you would like to see included, please send these to: [wayne.brabin@internode.on.net](mailto:wayne.brabin@internode.on.net)

### 'Mailbox'



We continue to encourage you to write to the committee with suggestions, comments, proposals for professional development, requests, additional members benefits, possibilities for 'outreach' etc. Please continue to send these to:

[secretary@companions.org.au](mailto:secretary@companions.org.au)

The sun hears the fields talking about effort  
and the sun smiles,  
and whispers to me,  
"Why don't the fields just rest, for  
I am willing to do everything  
to help them grow?"  
Rest, my dears, in Prayer

*Catherine of Siena*