

Spiritual Director's workshop . . . Peter Chouinard, Earthen Vessel CLC

This past summer I was fortunate to participate in a 12 day Spiritual Director's Workshop at Loyola House in Guelph, Ontario. The workshop was based on the full Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. A prerequisite for this workshop is that one has already made the Spiritual Exercises, either in daily life (Annotation 19) or in a closed setting (Annotation 20). It is meant for people who are interested in learning how to direct others or in refining their directing skills. It gives one a new experience of the principle of discernment and the practice of decision-making as found in the Exercises.

There were thirty of us who gathered from various countries around the world, Nepal, Hong Kong, India, South Korea, Sweden, and from various parts of the USA – New Hampshire, New York, California, Ohio and from across Canada – Saskatoon, British Columbia, Calgary and two of us from New Brunswick.

We were Priests, Religious and lay brothers and sisters gathered to learn more about giving the Spiritual Exercises and to build on our experiences of being with people



those who journey with the Ignatian way of being and loving God.

Over twelve days we experienced workshops, small group experiences, team sharing, supervision, case studies and individual direction as well as two three retreats in which we were each on retreat being directed for three days and then three days in which we directed another.

The facilitators were Jesuit Priests from Loyola House – Fr. Eric Jensen, sj and Fr. Bill Clarke, sj and Lay Director Yvonne Prowse. They were supported and the workshop enhanced by additional input from three other local Jesuit trained Spiritual Directors – Alana Forrester, Marilyn Gostlin and Joe Waters.

We learned to want what God wanted for us in the way that God desired to give it to us. Sometimes this was difficult to accept but truly was a blessing as we discovered the gifts He had in store for us. Always it was a surprise!

It was a contemplative experience of grace and of challenge in the dynamics presented and was made in the context of the **Second Week of the Exercises.**

It was an invaluable experience and opportunity shared with like minded individuals, many of whom were very gifted in giving the Spiritual Exercises and in journeying with others one on one over the years.



Journeying through disposition day's right through to appropriation days, the workshop enabled us the opportunity to deepen our level of understanding of the Exercises and to be more effective in how we engage ourselves into our individual ministry calls.

Many of those in the workshop were new to directing individuals while others were not. Mass and daily Eucharist helped us to prepare ourselves for our journey as we

immersed ourselves into the dynamics offered.

The workshop, as the guide suggests, has given me a new experience of the principle of decision-making as found in the Exercises. I am thankful to all of those who prayed for me and to those who supported me helping to make this opportunity a reality for me. How God calls me moving forward remains to be seen but I am certain it will only be enhanced by the gift of my time in Guelph.