

# THIS MUSTARD SEED GREW!

A PERSONAL HISTORY OF THE WEEK OF GUIDED PRAYER

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## THIS MUSTARD SEED GREW!

Fr. John Veltri, S.J. was a larger than life character even in the wheelchair that he occupied for decades. One afternoon as my spouse, Barbara, drove us out of the Ignatius Jesuit Centre, John was wheeling down the road from the opposite direction. When he saw who was in the driver's seat he suddenly veered into the centre of the road playing 'chicken' with our car. A huge infectious grin played across his round face.

John Veltri had a passion for making the genius of the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius of Loyola available to all who might be interested and his materials are still available on the Internet, updated since his death in 2008 by Jean-Marc Laporte, S.J. He wrote in his booklet, *Week of Directed Prayer in a Church Setting*, that "It really began when I was helping out with a workshop in Victoria. The workshop was part of a training program for prayer companions in the Diocese of Victoria. One day, Bishop Remi de Roo made the remark, 'I'd like to find a way in this diocese to teach lumber jacks how to pray on the job!'" Back in Guelph, Fr. Veltri experimented with a Weekend-In-A-Series during which the same individual would come for three weekends, each

weekend event separated by a month or so, although he was never satisfied with the methodology.

During the summer of 1982 while planning for the upcoming internship program at Loyola House, Fr. Veltri was aware that there were three weeks for which he had to supply some field work for six interns. Taking an Ignatian experience to a parish occurred to him as a practical way of occupying the time of those interns. The idea was elegant in its simplicity: There would be an opening group session; each participant would be assigned an intern as a spiritual director who would see their people on each of the following weekdays and each participant would be asked to spend 30 to 45 minutes daily in prayer; the week would close with participants being invited to experience a group Examen, invited to share with each other their week of personal prayer experiences.

The first person Fr. Veltri approached with the idea was Jeannette Hiller, CND, who communicated the idea to the pastor of Nativity Parish in Etobicoke, Toronto. Rev. Ted Fournier agreed, and in January 1983 a two-week format for sixty-seven people was arranged. The second person he approached was Ellice Oliver, a member of Harcourt Memorial United Church in Guelph. He thought he was talking to Barbara, my spouse! Ellice still remembers vividly exactly where the conversation took place, the dining room of Ignatius College. She passed the idea on to me, and I presented it to the congregation's Christian Education Committee which agreed to sponsor

a one week event. In due course, the second Week of Guided Prayer occurred from the 16th to the 22nd of January 1983.

But how on earth did members of a United Church of Canada congregation become involved in a Roman Catholic retreat centre in the first place and then have a congregationally sponsored event where all the leadership was provided by Roman Catholics? I put it down to a process of profound mystery, a deep sense of grace, of confirmation that the Spirit blows where it wills, all beginning with two seemingly random events that turned into graced mustard seeds: My spouse Barbara noticed a footnote and I wrote a letter that began, “To whom it may concern.”

A few years earlier, in 1976, our family moved to Guelph, Ontario, and I began a new ministry in the suburban congregation of Harcourt Memorial United Church. As preparation, I read a number of books and in one of them Barbara noticed a footnote reference to *The Workbook of Living Prayer*, an Upper Room publication written by Maxie Dunnam. After purchasing the book and doing the daily exercises over six weeks, Barbara suggested I should consider offering it to the congregation so that the book could be experienced by congregational members in a group setting. Thus, within months of starting my new pastorate, I began to lead a succession of several groups using *The Workbook* and subsequent workbooks written by Maxie Dunam (*The Workbook of Inter-*

*cessory Prayer, The Workbook on Spiritual Disciplines*). In addition, in the first months of being in Guelph I heard a presentation at a meeting of the Guelph Ministerial by a Jesuit priest about the ‘apostolates’ of the Jesuit retreat centre and farm at the north end of Guelph. After the presentation, I wrote a letter to Loyola House with, as I remember it, the salutation, “To whom it may concern.” Fr. John Haley, another Jesuit spiritual director at Loyola House, eventually phoned me. I was told later that my letter passed round and round the circle of Loyola retreat staff until he said, “OK, I’ll phone him!”

For a person steeped in the United Church of Canada’s social gospel tradition and social justice initiatives and in ten years of academic studies, no one could have convinced me beforehand that I would lead sharing prayer groups and start going to a Jesuit retreat centre within months of starting a new ministry in a suburban congregation. Way out of my comfort zone! But it all happened over several months starting in late 1976 and early 1977. I was now being thrown far out of my previous mainline Protestant spiritual and religious experiences by a hunger or desire that had been growing and fermenting as a result of the first initial years in ministry after ordination in 1970. As I began monthly meetings with Fr. John Haley, I did not easily understand what he was talking about. His language and images were beyond my United Church categories: Gospel contemplation, lectio divina, the daily awareness Examen, review, repetition,



discernment of spirits, finding God in all things, listening for God, noticing without judgment, meditation, silence, journaling. I truly felt I had entered a foreign land, even if it was only 7 km from home.

To help, John Haley gave me books to read one of which had a particular impact with its prime image contained in its very title, *Poverty of Spirit* by Johannes Metz. A key early turning point was the invitation to come to Ignatius College for my appointments but to stay in one of the bedrooms for the morning or afternoon and just ‘be’ in silence. The early desert truth of “Enter your cell and let your cell teach you” began to take on lived experience. In addition, I began to soak up a variety of books and courses on prayer, healing, meditation, and related topics at Five Oaks and the continuing education programs then offered through the Toronto School of Theology. Amazingly, my social justice and academic interests were not obliterated by the process but rather enhanced and deepened. Most importantly for the future unfolding of this story, I began to talk publicly within the Harcourt congregation about my experiences, so much so that some thought I was headed for conversion to Catholicism. (I am still a United Church minister!) Of more significance, a number in the sharing prayer groups began to turn up for retreats at Loyola House, but this is getting ahead of the story.

The response in Harcourt Memorial United Church to the first Week of Guided Prayer in January 1983 was en-

thusiastic, although I have no record how many attended. In my date book for 1983 I labeled it “Prayer Mission.” John Veltri initially called it “Retreat Goes to Parish”, but I felt that this would not connect to Protestants. As a consequence, I labelled it for the congregational announcements as “the Week of Directed Prayer”. It gradually took on the name of “Week of Guided Prayer” over the next year or two, although how that name change evolved is now lost from memory.

One congregational member vividly remembers being at that first Week of Guided Prayer in Harcourt Church. Lorraine Dykman writes: “When I sit quietly and invite memories of that time in January I remember both an excitement and a nervousness in our Harcourt Church community. This was a very daring ecumenical adventure at that time; there was an underground sense of pushing past barriers and defying old taboos. Our Roman Catholic friends from Loyola House were working in a Protestant house of worship for the first time – I remember both John Veltri and John Haley being introduced at Harcourt. For some of the interns it was their very first time just being in a Protestant church building. And as for our Protestant friends, they were opening themselves to a spiritual practice that some were afraid might be – embarrassing. Some of us were hesitant and awkward. But I remember, as well, the sense that there was something holy and wonderful going on, a sense of the Spirit at work. For by the end of the Week we had

all made the delightful discovery that, while doctrine and tradition may divide Christian communities, prayer is a deep root that we all share. We had no reason to be nervous.” Ellice Oliver also wrote of that first Week that, “The Week of Guided Prayer offered an opportunity to set aside our masks and share who we really were.”

After the first Week, there was lots of energy for a second. Even more importantly for the future of the program, a few Harcourt Church members began to make more direct personal contact with Loyola House. One of those, Ellice Oliver, did the Spiritual Exercises and extra training over the next year so that in 1984 she was one of the guides for the second offering of the Week of Guided Prayer. Lorraine Dykman and I soon followed. In 1984, in a series of eight day silent retreats, John Haley led me through The Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola, and I followed that by taking a training program at Loyola House, “Retreat Directors Workshop.” Subsequently, I was asked to guest direct under supervision on one of Loyola’s regularly scheduled eight day retreats. Others also experienced various iterations of the Exercises, the vast majority through the 19th Annotation. The Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola are classically given in a forty day retreat of which thirty days are in silence. However, he offered in the 19th Annotation (a kind of footnote to the main text) that the Exercises could be done by an individual through a daily prayer period and seeing a director once a week over an extended period of

time, normally about forty weeks.

Within a couple of years it became unfeasible to use the interns at Loyola House. Local leadership was absolutely necessary if the guided prayer experience was to continue within Harcourt Church. Sue Anderson, a Mennonite lay woman who eventually became an Anglican priest, provided a kind of 'preached' Week of Guided Prayer in January 1987. However, between individuals from Harcourt Church and others in the larger ecumenical community plus those who had been trained by John Veltri through his Weekend-In-A-Series programs that were now discontinued, a substantial cadre of spiritual directors (or spiritual companions as they are more popularly known in the Protestant world) began to be developed. The Guelph Week of Guided Prayer evolved into the Guelph Ecumenical Week of Guided Prayer, although its administration was maintained faithfully through Lorraine Dykman and the Lay Ministry Committee of Harcourt Memorial United Church. Participants and guides from the very start came from many denominations, and some participants from none, but it would take upwards of fifteen to twenty years before the administration of the program moved out of Harcourt Church's oversight and budgeting responsibility.

Meanwhile, other things were percolating. Maybe it was while driving to our weekly game of curling or at a Family Cluster gathering at Harcourt Church, but Rev. Henk Dykman, another United Church minister

and chaplain at the Guelph Reformatory, told me that he was ‘jealous’ (or some equivalent word) of my relationship with John Haley. That sparked the development of a prayer and support group for clergy that met every three weeks for twenty-five years. Although its membership shifted and changed, sometimes including lay people, it had a marked influence on many leaders in ministry and a direct impact on the evolution of the Week of Guided Prayer. Henk called it ‘the Haley bunch’, but its identity was larger than one person and thrived long after John Haley left the Jesuits and married in 1989.

One of the individuals who joined that group was the Rev. Bruce Seebach. Bruce and I had co-chaired the Waterloo Presbytery Education and Students Committee in the late 1970s and when the ‘Haley bunch’ formed I hoped Bruce would be interested in participating. He was, and Bruce subsequently asked John Haley to be his spiritual director. At one point in the life of the group and because of the success of the first two Weeks of Guided Prayer in Harcourt Church, John offered to provide leadership for other congregations. Bruce took him up on the offer at Emmanuel United Church in Hamilton so that John Haley with interns and assorted others provided a Week of Guided Prayer in 1985. After two such weeks, John encouraged Bruce and Emmanuel to develop their own forms of this ministry. Another minister who also accepted John Haley’s invitation was the Rev. Bob Hyde serving St. Paul’s United Church in Milton. Years

later when Bob died of ALS, John Haley and I shared in his funeral, John providing the eulogy and I the sermon.

About the same time, another member of the clergy prayer-support group, Anne Eng (now Weng In-Ng), then on staff of Hamilton Conference of the United Church of Canada, began exploration groups that helped result in the establishment of the Lowville Prayer Centre (founded by Rev. Wayne Irwin and Flora Litt). A few years later, in 1989, Lowville Prayer Centre through its Nurturing and Companionship Committee, assumed oversight for these community Weeks of Guided Prayer that had originated with Bruce Seebach's church in Hamilton. In 2003 as the Lowville Prayer Centre was completing its ministry and winding down, the work evolved into the Week of Guided Prayer Network of Hamilton Conference of The United Church of Canada. The Network continues to provide about two dozen retreats in congregations throughout Ontario and sometimes beyond with about 500 participants a year. In one respect, this form of the Week of Guided Prayer differs from that first developed by Fr. Veltri. Directors or guides in the original form have done the Ignatian Exercises plus received some training. The Hamilton Conference Network prepares a scriptural theme focus for each year and guides known as Companions are usually members of the local congregation who have received training in prayerful listening. Nonetheless, this change in format has not diminished the powerful and personal transformative experiences that

were from the very beginning intrinsic to the first Weeks of Guided Prayer.

As noted, one of the first participants at Harcourt Church was Lorraine Dykman, a teacher and librarian who felt a particular call to the ministry of spiritual direction. After experiencing the Exercises and receiving further training, Lorraine felt uneasy about simply putting a sign out as an isolated spiritual director. Out of a conversation with me, the Board of Harcourt Church was approached with a proposal for a covenant between Lorraine and Harcourt Church so that she would be named as an unpaid but accountable designated Spiritual Companion of Harcourt Church. The Board agreed as did the insurance company regarding liability, the covenanting service took place in 1996, and a Spiritual Companionship Committee was formed to provide oversight. Although Lorraine thought she might be offering this ministry primarily to those within the congregation it turned out that others from outside Harcourt Church began to benefit more directly from her ministry. Lorraine also provided countless hours to the emerging Spiritual Directors of Ontario. Other congregational members, having done the Exercises, also applied to become covenanted Spiritual Companions such that these Companions and the Committee became a force both within the congregation and beyond.

The Spiritual Companionship Committee evolved into the Spiritual Life Committee which has developed a min-

istry not only of general encouragement and nurturing of the spiritual life within a mainstream Protestant congregation but also the development of specific programs. One of these was a monthly “Awakening” series in which an individual in the congregation provided a short account in Sunday worship of an experience of ‘awakening’ preceded by an article in the congregational newsletter. Also, a ‘Holy Listening Circle’ has evolved, particularly after the first worship service, where individuals share using the ‘Ignatian two rounds’ method that Fr. John English of Loyola House developed. In the two rounds of sharing system, each person is offered an opportunity to share in turn a response to the worship service just finished or to a life experience of the previous week, followed by a period of silent reflection and then a second sharing based on what has been heard and reflected upon. In addition, over the 2012/2013 period, one of the covenanted Spiritual Companions, Kerry Wilson, led a community youth production of ‘Les Mis’ with participants coming from many congregations in the area where the focus was not just the development of a theatrical production but also the introduction of the youth to spiritual practices that could be used as Christian responses to social justice issues. Many individuals with Ignatian training, almost all laypeople, provided leadership for this theatrical project. Another spiritual companion at Harcourt United Church, Andre Auger, has launched a website on spiritual practices, [www.spiritualpractice.ca](http://www.spiritualpractice.ca)



Over the years, first the Spiritual Companionship Committee and then the Spiritual Life Committee, have been instrumental in organizing a number of opportunities for individuals, both within Harcourt Church and beyond, to experience the Spiritual Exercises in either a communal form (Ellice Oliver and I offered one such group) or in a personally directed 19th Annotation format with some group content (offered several times by Lorraine Dykman and Rev. David Howells, an Anglican priest, and organized more recently by Andre Auger). In addition, Lorraine Dykman developed resources that were more accessible to women, Protestants and laypeople and these have proven invaluable to many. An alternative form of the Exercises has been experienced in the Guelph area thanks to the work of former Jesuit, Louis M. Savary and his book, *The New Exercises* which presents them through the lens of the Jesuit and scientist, Teilhard de Chardin. The Harcourt Church Spiritual Life Committee joined forces with others in the Guelph community to bring Louis Savary and his wife from their home in Florida to provide an initial weekend introduction of his work; that venture was so successful that Loyola House brought him to Guelph a second time in the summer of 2013 for a well attended eight day preached retreat.

As part of her larger ministry of spiritual direction, Lorraine Dykman introduced the Ignatian Exercises to Five Oaks, a United Church education and retreat centre an hour from Guelph. Its director at that time, Mardi

Tindal, with others connected to Five Oaks experienced the Exercises and from that a 'Listening Ministry' was born that continues to offer monthly 'days away' and several weekend-length silent retreats annually.

Over the years, as I have indicated, a critical mass of individuals in Guelph from many different denominations experienced the Exercises. Out of those numbers a Guelph Ecumenical Guild of Ignatian Spiritual Direction evolved that for a few years, particularly from 2003 to 2005, was very energetic in developing ongoing support and enrichment. Members of the Guild developed 'continuing education' programs and reflected on 'professional accountability' issues but differences of opinion plus clashing approaches taken by different generations and denominations resulted in the Guild devolving to a looser collective. However, it is members of the Guild who provide the leadership every year for the Guelph Ecumenical Week of Guided Prayer and it was those same members who pitched in to help with the youth production of 'Les Mis' and have provided leadership for Harcourt Church's Spiritual Life Committee's provision of 19th Annotation experiences. Another place where members of the Guild provided leadership was in the Ignatian School of Spirituality which was formed out of staffing decisions made at Loyola House. For a number of years, the School was very energetic in providing workshops and educational experiences for the laity in the city and beyond.

In addition, because of my involvement with other church institutions I began to realize that there were a number of sectors, Protestant and Roman Catholic, who had an Ignatian connection but no necessary relationship with each other. With Fr. Jim Profit, S.J., Superior of the Ignatius Jesuit Centre and Ms. Patti Melanson, Director of Loyola House, I proposed that it was time to meet each other directly. In April 2004 a very enthusiastic gathering of 'Ignatian Connection, Exchange and Celebration' took place at the Ignatius Jesuit Centre. Nine different groups were represented: Loyola House, The Guelph Ecumenical Guild of Ignatian Spiritual Direction, Hamilton Conference Week of Guided Prayer, Five Oaks, the Jesuit Ecology Project, the Jesuit Coffee Group, the Spiritual Directors of Ontario, and the Christian Life Communities. The day was led by a professional facilitator, and it became very obvious that although we might be divided by denominational and institutional boundaries the Ignatian charism bound us together in a profound unity in Christ.

Fr. Veltri's idea of 'retreat goes to parish' did not take root only in the Guelph area, but the fact that it did take root in this area provided a living example for the various interns who came from different parts of the world to study and learn at Loyola House. With a fresh group of interns each year some of those interns spread the word. An internet search for 'Week of Guided Prayer' will reveal similar programs in countries as diverse as New Zealand,

Singapore, Australia, Great Britain, Malta, South Africa, the United States of America and beyond.

There is no way to accurately trace how these Weeks have spread. Here are just a few examples. According to Ruth Holgate, Director of Loyola Hall near Liverpool, England, an Irish Jesuit, Dermot Mansfield, S.J., carried the idea from Guelph to Manresa House, a Jesuit retreat centre in Dublin, Ireland. In turn, Sheila Mulryan, IBVM, learned about it in Ireland, possibly in the early 1980s, and brought the idea to Loyola Hall where she worked on the retreat team. Since that time, Loyola Hall has been offering between three and eight Weeks a year in local parishes depending on the team and the number of prayer guides available. They also gave one in a local prison a few times in the late 1990s. However, most of Loyola Hall's Weeks, twelve to fourteen a year, are done in universities. One of the Loyola Hall team members, Stephen Hoyland, travels around the country for part of the year giving a Week on each of various campuses. He has been known to direct as many as fifteen people a day but also uses other guides and spiritual directors who have been trained at Loyola Hall (including Protestants). As well as the directing, he offers three workshops during the Week for the participants and anyone else who wants to come: 'Ways of praying,' 'Images of God' and 'Discernment.' In all there are about 250 participants each year in these university retreats and approximately 70 to 100 on the parish retreats. In ad-

dition, the idea has travelled from Loyola Hall to other denominations in Britain. As one example, Pastor Mike Tydeman was trained at Loyola Hall and in his ministry at Bloxham Baptist Church, Oxfordshire, offers Weeks of Guided Prayer as well as helping at the Week of Guided Prayer in Oxford University each November.

Ironically, the idea travelled back to North America from Ireland and Britain. In western Canada, the Weeks of Guided Prayer are offered through the Christian Life Centre of the Faithful Companions of Jesus in Calgary, Alberta. Sr. Cecilia Connolly, fcJ, was trained in Wales at St. Beuno's Ignatian Spirituality Centre in spiritual direction and retreat giving, especially in the Week of Guided Prayer. From Wales she brought the program back to Canada.

If the program travelled from Guelph overseas and back to western Canada, it followed a similar path to the United States. Sr. Mary Funge, a member of the Society of Helpers, U.S.A. (formerly the Helpers of the Holy Souls, an international religious order based on Ignatian spirituality), moved from the States in about 1991 to live for two years with her sisters in Huyton, a village close to Liverpool, England. At the time, one of her sisters, Sr. Mary Rose Fitzsimmons, had begun Weeks of Guided Prayer in England and Scotland, having learned about them while visiting Ireland. Sr. Funge remembers being part of an ecumenical team traveling around England and Scotland. Their largest retreat was seventy people, and

over a two year period she served in eight such retreats.

Interestingly, Sr. Funge made an eight-day retreat with Fr. John Veltri in Guelph soon after she returned to the United States in 1993. She spent her first year in Chicago and organized six Weeks of Guided Prayer in that area. Just by chance, she made a trip to St. Louis, where she had previously worked in several parishes. There she became acquainted with the 'Bridges Program' (the 19th Annotation and a follow up training program called 'Prayer Companions'). Impressed with the many people who had experienced 'Bridges' including Joan Felling, who, with her husband, had spent some years in Canada as teachers and were friends with Bishop Remi De Roo, the same bishop who had influenced Fr. John Veltri in the first place, Sr. Mary decided to move to St. Louis. Joined with many of these Prayer Companions, she led about thirty-five Weeks of Guided Prayer retreats over the next decade including three retreats for women in prison. In 2003, Sr. Mary met Clarence Heller, a layman who was at that time studying at Aquinas Institute of Theology pursuing a Masters in Pastoral Studies and a Certificate in Spiritual Direction. She invited him to join with the community of prayer guides by serving in some of the Weeks of Guided Prayer. About a year later, she asked Clarence to take over as the coordinator of the ministry. After an apprentice year, Clarence assumed full responsibility in the summer of 2005 as coordinator of this ministry. Since that time, the number of prayer guides

in the community has grown (many of them graduates of the Aquinas Institute spiritual direction program), the month long retreat format introduced, the number of retreats increased to seven per year, and the ecumenical aspect of the ministry strengthened.

That this idea of ‘retreat goes to parish’ as originally conceived by Fa. John Veltri has spread around the world is rather remarkable, and it has left a trail of grace where people’s lives have been transformed. To mark the 30th anniversary in Guelph people were invited to write their remembrances, and one of those who responded was Sara Smith. Like others, her life took a different turn as a result of her first Week of Guided Prayer.

She wrote: “My first experience as a retreatant I cried the whole week. However being with a compassionate guide, Henk Dykman, I realized that I wanted a deeper prayer life and values that centered from this prayer life. I wanted an authentic life. I also wanted to come back to The Week of Guided Prayer again. This week makes me aware of our inward journey. Out of a Week of Guided Prayer I made the decision to do The Forty Day Institute at Loyola House. These forty days were so profound for me. From here I went on to do the Retreat Director’s Workshop, and the outcome has been to be able to be a guide for The Week of Guided Prayer. I realize that my forte is working with a women’s spirituality group which I do for twelve weeks of the year. I do a spring unit in Guelph at Three Willows United Church. We have par-

ticipants come from outside the church as well. We have been together now for seven years. I also lead a women's spirituality group in Florida. We have been together now for five years. This group takes place at St. Alfred's Episcopal Church in Palm Harbor, Florida. One year at an opening Tarcia Gerwig in her gospel contemplation of Christ's baptism brought me in prayer to feel being a blessed daughter. It was a powerful moment. One retreatant stands out who was a minister who said that the duties she was involved in kept her from doing contemplative prayer. After a week she found she loved this type of prayer and had engaged in deepening her prayer life."

Lives have been changed. From understanding prayer as talking, forming fully formed sentences in one's head or reading prayers to experiencing it as paying attention, listening for the Holy Spirit and intimacy with the deepest part of Self, is transformative. And in a culture where the inner life is easily discounted, the Week of Guided Prayer is profoundly counter cultural. Lorraine Dykman shared at the 30th anniversary of the Guelph Ecumenical Week of Guided Prayer that, "having a guide to help me notice what my inner experiences were, helped me validate my inner life, my spirituality, my life in God, and to begin the long process of learning the grammar of the heart." She went on to acknowledge that "the Week's emphasis on prayerful practice and experience, apart from particular denominational beliefs and church memberships, an-



anticipated a coming change in religious sensibilities very evident now in the 21st century.” Citing Diana Butler Bass and her book *Christianity After Religion*, Lorraine suggested that “the continuation of Christian communities on our (North American) continent will depend on a reversal of the old emphasis on belief and membership to putting the emphasis on relationship and practice and the affirmation of experience. I think the Guelph Ecumenical Week of Guided Prayer has been doing that for the past 30 years. It is my prayer that it may continue to help us all listen for the deep, interior leading of Spirit in this new time.”

Mustard seeds do grow! Bishop Remi de Roo’s ‘throw-away’ comment about lumber jacks planted a seed in Fr. John Veltri’s fertile mind. And by accidents of grace, a Roman Catholic expression of faith and practice became an ecumenical program that has rooted itself in a number of places in Canada and beyond and been the catalyst for other forms of ministry and witness.

In her lectures around North America and in her book, *The Great Emergence: How Christianity is Changing and Why*, Phyllis Tickle quotes the Right Rev. Mark Dyer, an Anglican Bishop who suggests that the only way to understand early 21st century Christianity is to realize that about every five hundred years the Church feels compelled to hold a giant rummage sale. She argues that we are experiencing one of those rummage sales. (Or in Guelph we would call it a gigantic garage sale!) No one

can foretell the future shape of the Christian community, but I would suggest that at least one aspect of a renewed future church is a deepened respect for and nurturing of the inner life and a sharing of that life with others. The story of the ecumenical Weeks of Guided Prayer and the offshoots of those Weeks are expressions of that direction.





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- Veltri, John. *Week of Directed Prayer in a Church Setting*.



## LINKS

Andre Auger's website on spiritual practices, Guelph  
[www.spiritualpractice.ca](http://www.spiritualpractice.ca)

The Christian Life Centre of the Faithful Companions of  
Jesus, Calgary, Alberta  
[www.fcjsisters.ca](http://www.fcjsisters.ca)

Father John Veltri's writing  
[www.jesuits.ca/orientations/](http://www.jesuits.ca/orientations/)

Five Oaks Educational Retreat Centre  
[www.fiveoaks.on.ca](http://www.fiveoaks.on.ca)

Guelph Ecumenical Week of Guided Prayer, Guelph  
<http://guidedprayer.webs.com/>

Harcourt Memorial United Church, Guelph  
[www.harcourtuc.ca](http://www.harcourtuc.ca).

Ignatius Jesuit Centre, Guelph  
[www.ignatiusguelph.ca](http://www.ignatiusguelph.ca)

Loyola Hall, Liverpool, England  
[www.loyolahall.co.uk](http://www.loyolahall.co.uk)

Manresa House, Dublin, Ireland  
[www.manresa.ie](http://www.manresa.ie)

Society of Helpers, U.S.A.

[www.helpers.org](http://www.helpers.org)

Spiritual Directors of Ontario

[www.sdo-network.com](http://www.sdo-network.com)

St. Beuno's Ignatian Spirituality Centre, Wales

[www.beunos.com](http://www.beunos.com)

Weeks of Guided Prayer, St. Louis, Missouri

[www.weekofguidedprayer.org](http://www.weekofguidedprayer.org)

Week of Guided Prayer Network, Hamilton

[www.weekofguidedprayer.ca](http://www.weekofguidedprayer.ca)