

Spiritual Accompaniment Revisited

In his exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis has a section called: Personal accompaniment in processes of growth. In these few paragraphs, he offers some ideas that we might find useful for ourselves but also for our communities.

There is a ministry called spiritual direction—which most of the people involved in it think is wrongly named! It is much more about accompanying people on their spiritual journey—maybe offering pointers but certainly not in charge of the direction—that is the job of the Holy Spirit.

Spiritual accompaniment is, therefore, closer to the mark but there is still a temptation to leave it to “experts” or people who have been trained. There is a place for that—but Pope Francis is calling us to revisit and widen the ministry. He says,

‘The Church will have to initiate everyone – priests, religious and laity – into this “art of accompaniment” which teaches us to remove our sandals before the sacred ground of the other (cf. Ex 3:5). The pace of this accompaniment must be steady and reassuring, reflecting our closeness and our compassionate gaze which also heals, liberates and encourages growth in the Christian life.’

It is as if we are privileged to spend some time walking alongside others on their sacred journey towards God. We set our pace to match that of those we accompany—some of whom will need much patience and kindness as they work through things that block their path.

To do this, Pope Francis goes on to say,

‘We need to practice the art of listening, which is more than simply hearing. Listening, in communication, is an openness of heart which makes possible that closeness without which genuine spiritual encounter cannot occur. Listening helps us to find the right gesture and word which shows that we are more than simply bystanders. Only through such respectful and compassionate listening can we enter on the paths of true growth and awaken a yearning for the Christian ideal: the desire to respond fully to God’s love and to bring to fruition what he has sown in our lives.’

People have been doing this in parishes for generations, of course. Many of will identify those who are the good listeners—the ones who really hear what we are trying to say. We also know the ones who could do with a bit of practice!

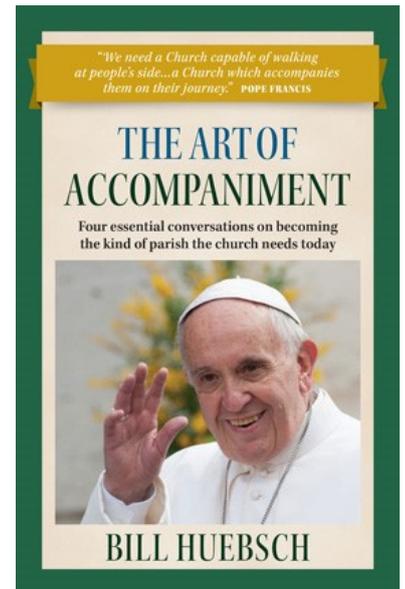
As our communities start working together, we will need to be good listeners—to the hopes and the fears—to the joys and deep sorrows. We will, in effect, need to be “spiritual companions” to each other—listening patiently and compassionately as people respond to the Holy Spirit’s invitation to grow in their faith.

In what might be a bit of providence, Bill Huebsch—who is known to many people in the Diocese—has written a book on “The Art of Accompaniment”. It offers ideas for

conversations and prayer leading up to the final chapter *The Hallmarks of an “Accompanying Parish”* in which people support not just their own community but who are able to accompany people who are on the edges

It is a small book (just 48 pages) but with lots in it. We have ordered a good stock of it as we feel that this has much to offer our communities at this time.

Please contact the Department for more information about getting hold of one or more copies! 



Spiritual Accompaniment Course

People who are interested in more formal training for the ministry of Spiritual accompaniment might like to investigate the course run at St Antony’s Priory. This is an ecumenical course and is recognised as good formation for spiritual accompaniment in the Diocese. Details overleaf.

What is happening in your Partnership?

At a recent meeting of the Spirituality Network, we reflected on some of the changes that lie ahead. One thing that we felt would be useful was to build up a picture of what is already happening—and what might be useful to Partnerships as they develop.

A couple of people have looked at what is already happening locally—and, unsurprisingly, have found some great things going on.

We hope to continue to learn more about the successes (and problems) so that we can share good practice across the Diocese.

If you have any information that you would like to share—please get in touch!

Contact Details

Head of the Department for Spirituality: Kathryn Turner

Administration Officers: Karen Brown & Claire Walton

St Vincent’s Offices, St Cuthbert’s House, West Road,
Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE15 7PY.

0191 243 3302 or 0753 0917 219

E-mail: spirituality@diocesehn.org.uk



www.facebook.com/spiritualityHN



[@spiritualityhn](https://twitter.com/spiritualityhn)

Upcoming Events in the Diocese and Local Centres

THE MINISTRY OF CONSOLATION

A day open to anyone interested in this vitally important ministry. Two key speakers are Paul Paes and Karen Groves MBE, both consultants in palliative medicine.

SATURDAY 10 JUNE 2017
10.30am—3.30pm

REFRESHMENTS FROM 10.00am
LUNCH WILL BE PROVIDED

**USHAW COLLEGE,
DURHAM DH7 9RH**

Limited places left!

BOOKING ESSENTIAL. FOR FURTHER INFORMATION OR TO BOOK PLEASE CONTACT
DEPARTMENT FOR SPIRITUALITY
TELEPHONE: 0191 243 3302 | EMAIL: spirituality@diocesehn.org.uk

DIocese of **Hexham & Newcastle**
Departments for Justice and Peace,
Interreligious Relations and Spirituality

**AN INSPIRING EVENING
WITH RICHARD MOORE**

Monday 12 June, 6pm



Richard was blinded by a rubber bullet at the age of 10 and has lived an incredible journey of forgiveness. He now uses his experience to improve the lives of young people throughout the world. Come and be inspired by Richard's story!

**St Cuthbert's Primary School, Lovaine Place,
North Shields,
NE29 0BU**

'I encourage people across the world to read what Richard has to say.'
The Dalai Lama.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT
DEPARTMENT FOR SPIRITUALITY
TELEPHONE: 0191 243 3302 | EMAIL: spirituality@diocesehn.org.uk

DIocese of **Hexham and Newcastle**
DIOCESAN FESTIVAL 2017

CHANGING HEARTS
The challenge of discipleship

With talks on the theme of discipleship from David Wells, Sr Judith Russi and Clare Dixon. Featuring RISE Theatre and More Than Dance. Including activities for families, children and young people. Music, meals, marketplace, education, crafts and much more.

Saturday 24 and Sunday 25 June 2017
Emmaus Youth Village, Consett

£13 per person (inc. both days) or £5 for Sunday only (under 18s free). Booking forms available in your parish or on our website: www.youth.org.uk. For more information contact: festival@diocesehn.org.uk / 01207 582244. Please book by 2 June 2017.

Life in the Spirit

24 Hour Prayer for Pentecost

As the Partnerships take shape, "Blackfriars" (covering Newcastle city centre and over to the west,) is holding a 24 Hour Prayer at English Martyrs church on Stamfordham Road (5 mins from A1 and on good bus routes from the city).

This is open to anyone who wants to come along and could be a good way for you to pray for your Partnership. It begins at 9am and will run until the 9.30am Mass for Pentecost Sunday. A great variety of sessions has been planned— with Sisters of the Sacred Heart and Missionaries of Charity— sessions led by people from the African, Indian and Filipino Communities— healing sessions—prayer for those who are dying or bereaved— and more! The timetable will be posted on the Spirituality Facebook page and you can follow it virtually on there as well! More information via the Department.

Celebrating the Ministry of Anchors

The ministry we now call "Anchors" - those who pray in their own homes— was developed from an idea called *Hidden Houses of Prayer*. This came from Philip Roderick who also instigated the Quiet Garden movement. There is to be a gathering in Liverpool on Saturday 28 October which could be great opportunity to share what we are doing with the Ministry of Anchors. If you have been involved in starting this up in your area and would like to represent the Diocese there, please get in touch. Funding could be available!

St Antony's Priory

Spiritual Accompaniment Course

A year-long course that gives an excellent grounding the skills needed for spiritual accompaniment. The course is made up of 18 Tuesday sessions, 1 residential weekend at Minsteracres and 1 non-residential. Assistance with cost may be available.

More information from St Antony's Priory
info@stantonyspriory.co.uk
0191 384 3747

Minsteracres

GARDEN RETREAT DAY

Saturday 10 June 10.00am - 5.00pm
An opportunity to spend a gentle day in the Peace Garden and Sanctuary building. Lunch provided. Led by Ross Menzies & Katrina Padmore.

QUIET DAY:

Wednesday 14 June 10.00am—4.00pm
An opportunity to step aside, listen to God in scripture and enjoy the peace and tranquility at Minsteracres. Coffee and tea are provided. Please bring a packed lunch.

WALKING RETREAT:

Saturday 24 June. 10.00am—5.00pm
Enjoy a walk of seven to ten miles through the beautiful countryside around Minsteracres, with time for prayer, reflection and sharing of the beauty of creation. You will need suitable walking boots and warm, weatherproof clothing. Please bring a packed lunch.

More Information from
Minsteracres Retreat Centre
01434 673248

Centre for Prayer and Mission

ON-GOING FORMATION/ SPIRITUALITY

Tuesday evenings at 7.00pm – Seaham
Our topic for this term is **Women of the Gospels, friends and disciples of Jesus.**

This will be a truly transforming experience with the Word of God and will help us to understand what it means to be called to follow Christ as disciples in our daily lives. Every Tuesday except 6th and 13th June and 18th July

EXPLORING SCRIPTURE

Monday afternoons – 1.30pm -3.00pm.
This term we will be exploring the second part of **John's Gospel : Word made Flesh.**

Meetings consist of reading, reflection, discussion and prayer. This in fact is a form of Lectio Divina – an ancient way of praying the Scriptures.
19, 26 June, 3, 10 and 24 July

Icon Painting Retreats/Workshops

Monday 12th June – Friday 16th June
Icon Workshop with prayer, painting and meditation - with Catherine Ferguson. Suitable for beginners but open to all. Boards are already prepared

More information from Sr Michael
marymichael.lee7@googlemail.com
(0191) 581 3249

