

Attending to the body in spiritual direction

INTRODUCTION and ORIENTATION [30 Mins]
HANDOUT and 15 Minutes alone
SHARE IN PAIRS 10 Minutes back.
CONCLUDING Trauma/Prayer and SD Drawing all together [30 Mins]

BRIEF BODY AWARENESS EXERCISE TAPPING – WAKING UP ETC

'For it is not knowing much, but realising and relishing things interiorly, that contents and satisfies the soul' [2]

This is a key phrase from St Ignatius as we begin attending to the body in Spiritual Direction. The Spanish word used here is *SENTIR*
And can be translated '*felt knowing*' '*heart knowing*'

'Let the same mind be in you that you have in Christ Jesus' Philippians 2: 5

Elsewhere in Corinthians 'you have the mind of Christ' 1 cor 2 16

'mind of Christ' = 'nous Christou' (Greek)
'nous Christou' = 'sensus Christi' (Latin vulgate)

Mind is more than what we understand as mind. Whole person. The latin translation 'faculty of perceiving; perception, feeling, sensation, sense'¹

nous Christou = understanding sensation and feeling

"the Spirit's temple," and the "Christ's body" are valid translations to the multifaceted reality of having the *nous Christou*.²

'Mind of Christ' = Christ's own experience of knowing or the heart knowing of Christ

There is a Mystery surrounding embodiment.....

We don't really know what 'Body' is. As Gabriel Marcel argued in 1949
'I do not have my body, I am my body.'³

This insight is still quite revolutionary in the Christian tradition.

Descartes following Plato wrote:

'The soul by which I am what I am is entirely distinct from body.'⁴

Richard Rohr suggests that the Church follows 'plato' rather than Christ

¹ <https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/sensus>

² Kenneth Mmuobonam., *Nous Christou and Communal Transformation: A Rhetorical and Literary Reading of 1 Cor 2:16*

³ Katharine Farrier, (trans). *Gabriel Marcel, Being and Having* (Winchester: Dacre Press,1949), 157–183.

⁴ Elizabeth Haldane & G.R.T.Ross, (trans). *The Philosophical Works of Descartes* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 101.

Separating body and soul is not congruent with Jesus' own understanding. Jesus was informed by the Hebrew word *nephesh* usually translated as *soul* which refers to a *living breathing being* or *whole being* not a *soul* separated from a body.⁵

From Biblical scholar Phillis Tribble,

'My soul (*nephesh*) longs for you my God' becomes: 'My *whole being* longs for you my God.' (Ps 42.2) Here *whole being* refers to both body and soul.

According to our local scholar Kathleen Rushton both these terms in the New Testament *body* (*soma* in Greek) and *soul* (*psyche* in Greek) '... speak of Jesus as a whole person.'⁶ Jesus had a wholistic understanding of embodiment consistent with: '*I am my body.*'

BODY AWARENESS BREAK	BODY SENSATION EXERCISE
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The Body I am is Sacred

There is a deep knowing of a sacredness in the core of our bodies and at the heart of all life. Not long ago in our Christian history the Body was not seen as sacred. To attain Union with God the seeker was taught to shun the world including the Body.

E.g. 'Imitation of Christ' *The greatest wisdom was to seek the kingdom of heaven through contempt of the world.*

Engaging the senses as prayer, 'realising and relishing things interiorly', in the Spiritual Exercises is in the form of incarnation not elevation or a flight from the world (*fuga mundi*), but through a kenotic movement of incarnation in the world and for the world. SD's call is incarnational, in the world for the world in the body for others

'Pelagius' around 400 CE taught '*what is deepest in every human being is sacred. We carry within us the dignity of the divine.*'

'In Celtic wisdom the sacred is as present on earth as it is in heaven, as immanent as it is transcendent, as human as it is divine, as physical as it is spiritual', Writes Phillip Newall, 'The sacred can be breathed in, tasted, touched, heard, and seen as much in the body of the earth and the body of another living being as in the body of religion.'⁷

In today's scientific understanding some of these connections are now being made where there is a growing consciousness of interconnectedness

Science today confirms that the body is a living matrix interconnected and interrelated, mirroring nature and the cosmos on every scale.⁸

Matter and therefore body can be considered as interconnected webs of energy.⁹ For Delio, 'Reality by its very nature is interconnectedness.'¹⁰

Therefore, **the body is a site of connectedness with all reality.**

Creation, Creature and Creator.

⁵ Phillis Tribble, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1992), 147.

⁶ Kathleen Rushton, *Drawn towards the Light* (Dunedin: Tui Motu Interislands: Independent Catholic Magazines Ltd: April 2013), 26.

⁷ Phillip Newall p 5

⁸ James L. Oschman, & Nora H. Oschman, *Somatic Recall. Part 1 Soft Tissue Memory* (Massage Therapy Journal, Summer 1995) VOL. 34, No. 3.

⁹ Delio, *The Emergent Christ.*, 81

¹⁰ Delio, *The Emergent Christ.*, 82

MAYBE ANOTHER MOMENT TO SIT AND BREATHE

This understanding is affirmed in most indigenous cultures...

In Māori Spirituality: Richard Kerr-Bell (teaches on Te Wairua Mahi)

Whakapapa and Karakia are understood as Relationship

Whakapapa – the relationship of all things in creation, from the creator

Karakia – speaking into the relationship

Maori Language often reflects these connections Whenua (Land) – Whenua (Placenta)

The body then is a **site of connectedness with all reality.**

For Ignatius in the SE:

The Body is the **Site of Encounter with God** (which amounts to the same) The body is the site of the indwelling of God

Ignatius understood this.... Contemplations in the second week TEMPLE scenes offered....
5/day last apply senses

The word **Temple** has emerged from an old latin word **Templum**.

Templum is a Diminutive of **Tempus**, generally translated as **'time'**.

Among the Romans the Templum was a defined *open space* of sky or earth sectioned off to read the signs (often in the entrails of birds or nature's movements in the sky etc).

Temple is the *open space* to look at *the inside of things*.

The word **Contemplation** also derives from Templum.

Contemplation has been described as taking *'a long loving look at the real'*¹¹

[235] *'...So He dwells in me and gives me being, life, sensation, intelligence; and makes a temple of me, since I am created in the likeness and image of the Divine Majesty.'*

The body is the open space, site of the indwelling of God

This process of 'making a temple of me' through contemplation, repetition and applying the senses relishing and savouring interiorly. Intimacy is enlivened in applying the senses to the experiences of contemplation

A process of deepening.

The movement of the body from wounded in the First Week, to intimacy in the Second Week, to being emptied in the Third Week, to a growing recognition of the body as prayer for the world Fourth week.

¹

The Body is the **Site of God's Encounter and Indwelling**

Early Christians understood this: **Symeon CHRIST'S BODY**

READ

Handout – Silence – 20 mins

BREAK MAYBE 15 MINS HANDOUT Simeon New Theologian/quotes SILENCE
SHARING IN PAIRS

¹¹ Walter Burghardt, *'Contemplation: A Long, Loving Look at the Real'*, Church, 14 (Winter 1989), 15.

PART 2 Spiritual direction our wounds and the Body

The Story of Sue Spiegel.

Sue is a colleague who was formed as an SD in the SEED course in CHCH 2001 and 2002

I use her story with her permission

Sue was artist in residence in the Cathedral Her room under the tower and spire was at the end of a narrow stone stairway. 22 steps... Sue loved her little room in the Cathedral in the middle of the city which suited her work. Where she could make quilts for the cathedral and some to sell in the cathedral shop.

THE QUILT Offered as a gift for the SEED course. It was mounted at the first discernment weekend at HOC in Wellington as we discerned our way forward.

WOMAN IN THE WINDOW (Recorded in Martin Van Beynen's book TRAPPED" This and other images of Sue were seen around the world. During the ordeal Sue describes thinking; '*I could die in here this is the sort of thing people die of.* Then I thought *I'm not ready to die* and thought about my grandson Jacob 22 months. Earlier a friend had sent me a sign which read *Don't let worries kill you, let the church help*, I started to laugh because the Church was trying to kill me.

Recovery; 'In the two years after the earthquakes, I spent most of my time looking out the window at Governors Bay, mediation/prayer, loving so much this earth that shook. Given plenty of time by family and friends, I finally got tired of being the "woman in the window" and got up and resumed my changed life'

We all carry traumas in our body...

Trauma happens to everybody. Individually and collectively we carry a backlog of pain that has never been heard because we miss narratives to help us share, witness or hold space for each other's deepest wounds. Trauma cannot always be conquered, fixed, or resolved but it can be heard, held and loved.

The word "trauma" comes from an ancient Greek word meaning 'a wound'.

Trauma has profound effects on the body, both physically and psychologically. The experience of trauma can disrupt the body's normal functioning, leading to a variety of symptoms that can persist long after the traumatic event has passed.

Our life experiences either positive or negative live on in our bodies...

'All our Issues are in our Tissues'

*"...Trauma demands a change of vision. Trauma is an invitation to change. Trauma is an invitation onto the spiritual path"*ⁱ

Prayer/spirituality/SD

HOW ARE YOU RIGHT NOW? SHARE with someone

Gentle loving attention is what our 'issues' in our tissues *need* to heal

ROBERT WICKS story

PRAYER AND SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

Prayer and spiritual direction can be powerful in helping heal our traumatised selves and experience being fully alive in God

The body is already present to the divine....the problem is often that I have 'gone'

Prayer, spiritual practices, and spiritual direction can facilitate healing of traumatic experiences during the various stages of recovery from early to late recovery. Our experience of the loving compassionate God, foster's healing of the whole person – body, mind, heart, spirit, relationshipsⁱⁱ. (Conroy M. , 2012)

Noticing in SD practice and the body

- Accessing the body in SD
- Some struggle to relay feelings
- Body language of Directee – tap tap, swing foot, etc
- The body language of experience – Where in your body are you noticing?can you remain present?.....what else is emerging?
- Body language of Director – the body as a 'register'?
- Contemplative stance and Body-Body noticing in director

'It is my belief that the primary task of spiritual directors is to encourage within themselves this moment – by – moment attention towards God as frequently as possible during spiritual direction sessions.¹²

This is a good description of the contemplative stance

SHARE WITH ANOTHER SOMETHING OF YOUR CONTEMPLATIVE STANCE

May continues to underlie the '**absolute necessity**' to **ones own prayer and being in spiritual direction oneself**

Our Experience of a loving compassionate God fosters healing of the whole person. God's compassionate love is the greatest healer of our wounds.ⁱⁱⁱ

"...go to the place of need, because that is a threshold at which Christ stands; our need is an evidence of God."^{iv}

The trauma experienced in earthquakes can trigger memories of earlier experiences of trauma. Unsettle a person out of their defences holding back the floodgates of life's wounds which lie hidden in the unconscious. No trauma is out of reach of the healing presence of God. " ...*God does not shy away from the most tragic and destructive traumas of our lives. Great pain and deep shame do not distance God*"^v

ⁱ Robert Grant Ph.D The Way of The Wound P.9

ⁱⁱ Maureen Conroy, Course notes , (2012 p3)

ⁱⁱⁱ Maureen Conroy 'God is Love' course notes. (2012 p 3)

^{iv} Ian Matthew Mt Carmel (Sept 1999 p 37)

^v Maureen Conroy course notes p 16)