

PSYCHOANALYSIS AS SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

by Sister Linda Julian, OSH

As I have gradually shifted my ministry over the last several years from spiritual direction toward psychoanalysis, I have had to consider deeply how this work, which is certainly not taught as a spiritual discipline, could come to be that for me and the people I serve.

Psychoanalysis began in a very equivocal position as regards religion and spirituality, mainly owing to the nature and opinions of its founder, Sigmund Freud, who essentially set up his new science in opposition to the religious practices of his era. He thus left a legacy of suspicion in the field of psychoanalysis regarding any form of religion, traditional or otherwise. Freud saw religious belief and practice as essentially repressive and used by individuals mainly as a means of defense against coming to an honest reckoning with the truths of one's own nature and of the real world.

It has certainly been the case that psychology and religion have been uneasy with each other well into our own time. It is still possible to take one's pressing spiritual concerns to a psychiatrist or a clinical social worker only to find those concerns discounted as irrelevant, or worse, considered to be a major cause of whatever unease has brought one to seek help. We thus feel safer, and with good reason sometimes, with traditionally trained priests or spiritual directors, who,

though they may not have much insight into the deeper causes of our pain, can at least help us penetrate some of the mysterious ways that God works in our lives. This is a huge gift and never to be underestimated. I have been a spiritual director for many years, and I know how grace can operate when a dedicated listener and a true seeker for God come together in deep interaction in the tradition of spiritual direction.

There can be, however, times in our lives when a once-a-month hour with a director, however important, is unable to address deep psychic pain. Something more, and slightly different in method, is needed. As a director, I often experienced frustration at having to let a directee go away for as long as a month just when we were getting to the heart of something. My frustration might also arise from knowing that although this person was in a therapy relationship with another person, I sensed the lack of a spiritual dimension that I felt was needed there. I was frustrated also by not being able to refer some of my directees to the therapy I was sure they needed because of prior experiences of having had their spirituality "pathologized" by therapists.

Then, too, there was sometimes the plain fact that directees could not afford therapy. A therapist of my own once insisted that not choosing therapy was never really about money, but I beg to

differ. There are many people in our society who are deprived of the help they need because they cannot meet even the sliding-scale fees of most



therapists. Insurance companies, even when they have mental health programs, are too often controlling and invasive; fewer and fewer health-care professionals are willing to jump through the hoops necessary to assist the patient in receiving adequate reimbursement. They maintain relationships with insurance companies only for as long as it takes them to fill their practices with full-fee patients.

All of these considerations led me, some years ago now, to train as a psychoanalyst. I chose psychoanalysis over clinical social work, whose emphasis would, of necessity, be on

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COMMUNITY NEWS AND VIEWS

The sisters in Manhattan and Vails Gate hosted OSH Associates gatherings during the past quarter. The sisters in the Augusta convent hosted their third annual New Year's Eve Candlelight Vigil, sharing the evening with forty guests from near and far.

In November, **Sr Mary Therese** attended the national church Native American Youth and Young Adult Gathering in NYC where she worked as a volunteer and met young leaders. She will soon begin ongoing support work through the Native American Missioners Office in NYC. On December 12, **Mary Therese** attended a Mass in a Monticello NY grocery store. The Mass was said in Spanish, and her 5' x 7' painting of Our Lady of Guadalupe was gifted at that time to the St John's Episcopal Church community in Monticello. **Mary Therese's** greatest prayer challenge now is finding her "singing voice," an ongoing project of discovery.

Sr Jean Campbell has been singing with a choral group, Cappella Festiva, in Poughkeepsie NY for the past year and sang in two concerts and in Christmas Lessons and Carols at Vassar College. **Jean** continues as Dean of the Southern Dutchess Clericus Group. In January **Jean** attended the meeting of the Executive Committee of Associated Parishes for Liturgy and Mission in San Francisco.

Sr Ellen Francis traveled to Iran in December where she reunited with family members she'd not seen in many years. She asks prayers for a peaceful resolution to the nuclear standoff in Iran and the Middle East and writes, "My prayers and best wishes are with you, our readers, for a healthy and peaceful 2006."

Sr Benedicta led a weekend mission for a Connecticut parish. **Sr Veronica** accompanied her, and they enjoyed one another's traveling company. **Benedicta** has been tutoring young math students, a kind of work dear to her heart.

Sr June Thomas participated in the fall concert of the Orange County Classic Choral Society which presented performances of *Magnificat* by Bach and Rutter.

Sr Magdalene has been buried in applications, interviews, and numerous variations of her spiritual autobiography for the diocesan discernment process for the priesthood and for seminary. For the Thanksgiving holidays **Magdalene** thoroughly enjoyed the Augusta sisters' five-day vacation at Norm and Linda Miville's mountain home in Balsam NC. The sisters were treated to a sumptuous turkey dinner hosted by Grace In The Mountains Episcopal Church. In December **Magdalene** teamed up with Fr Damian Higgins, a Byzantine Catholic priest, to lead a workshop on praying with icons. She also led a quiet day for Holy Spirit Episcopal Church, Mars Hill NC, entitled "Creative Waiting." In January **Magdalene** attended a class on Byzantine-Russian iconography taught by master iconographer Vladislav Andrejev. In this New Year, **Magdalene** wishes you inner peace, stillness of mind, and joyful enlightenment.



Above: Breakfast celebration Nov 8, 2005, the 60th anniversary of the founding of OSH. Below: Srs Elsie and Clare in Augusta.



Above: Sr Mary Therese gifts her painting of Our Lady of Guadalupe to St John's Episcopal Church Monticello NY. The Rev Ninon Hutchinson, rector of St John's (right) looks on with the Rev Canon Edmond Desueza (left). Below: Srs Cintra Pemberton and Linda receive the first shipment of the newly published monastic edition of the OSH Breviary.



In November, **Sr Barbara Lee** participated in a workshop for adult catechuminate training at Ballard First Lutheran Church in Seattle and took a class on natural landscaping for the home garden. On Thanksgiving Day she sang with the Phinney Ridge Lutheran Church choir and volunteered at Calvary Lutheran Church's Thanksgiving dinner for the homeless. **Barbara Lee** assists the Phinney Ridge Food Bank by taking phone reservations for clients. She writes to you, "Out of darkness comes Light, out of sadness comes Joy, out of despair comes Hope, out of conflict comes Peace. May the Light of Christ bring you Joy, Hope, and Peace in the New Year!"

Sister Mary Michael Simpson attended a November meeting at St Bartholomew's Episcopal Church where The Very Rev James P Morton spoke about his years at the Cathedral of St John the Divine. As those were also **Mary Michael's** years on staff there, she found it fascinating to hear his understanding of the theoretical framework for events at that time. On Christmas Day, she flew to Texas to be with her family. In January she attended a meeting at St Peter's Lutheran Church, where the Presiding Bishop, Frank Griswold, officiated. **Mary Michael** writes, "I wish for all of us as we begin a New Year that our understandings from experiencing 2005 will make for a better 2006."

Sr Clare is recovering from a breathing accident on Christmas day. **Sr Elsie** is her "primary care" sister.

Sr Rosina was the main speaker for the Daughters of the King during their diocesan meeting at St Thomas Episcopal Church in Savannah GA in November. She spent the weekend of December 16 at Grace Episcopal Church in Morganton NC where she preached, met with the adult bible study group, and gave an evening of story telling. **Rosina** continues with spiritual direction and supply work in and around Augusta. She prays in 2006, "Peace on earth for all God's children."

In late fall **Sr Ann Prentice** visited her mother in Nebraska and enjoyed the serene beauty of the plains after harvest and before snow. **Ann** served as a spiritual director at Mount St Alphonus in Esopus NY during the first weekend in Advent. She offers thanks for much improvement in her knees. **Ann's** New Year prayer is that God grant each of us the grace to embody the newness of life for which we long. "Be it, live it!"

Sr Ruth Juchter sang as cantor at the Rev Donna Arnold's ordination to the priesthood in the Diocese of Albany NY.

Sr Claire Lofgren has settled in at Vails Gate where she is building her practice as a spiritual director and working with a number of local parishes.

Sister Linda Julian returned on January 19 from a two-week sabbatical entitled, "In the Footsteps of C J Jung in India." She wishes our Associates and friends a God-filled New Year.

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On January 18, Sophia Woods was received as a postulant into the Order of St Helena at Vails Gate. She is originally from New Jersey and Pennsylvania, is an Episcopal priest, and a former sister of the Community of the Holy Spirit. For nine months prior to entering OSH, Sophia Woods lived alongside the sisters in Augusta where her liturgical gifts, nursing skills, and sense of humor were much appreciated. She loves the out-of-doors and has a special fondness for horses. Please join us in welcoming Sophia Woods as a new postulant!

The last several months have been busy ones for Sr Cornelia. December with all its holiday preparations included an Advent quiet day and a children's Sunday school Christmas pageant (the first pageant in twenty years at the Church of our Savior NYC). January included vacation days in Santa Barbara CA. "May the New Year bring more peace into the world," is Cornelia's hope.



Sr Cornelia recently completed this banner for the Episcopal Church of Our Savior in NYC.

Sr Ellen Stephen gave the eulogy at the memorial service for OSH Associate M Scott Peck at Christ United Methodist Church in Manhattan. She attended a conference at the Manhattan convent of the Sisters of the Holy Spirit for persons responsible for vocation and formation in area religious communities. In January ES worked with the Community of St John Baptist in Mendham NJ as a consultant for their Chapter discussions. She has completed her book on the religious life and continues other writing. ES sends best wishes and prayers to all our readers for God's grace and blessing in this New Year ahead!

Sr Linda spent a week in retreat just before Christmas. At the New Year's Eve Vigil, she read aloud the children's storybook, *Big Mama Makes the World* by Phyllis Root, a terrific hit with guests. Linda feels especially grateful for Sophia Woods' nine-month stay with the Augusta sisters prior to entering OSH in

January. Linda wishes that all people may know they are rooted and grounded in divine love.

Sister Cintra Pemberton choreographed the New Years Eve Candlelight Vigil in Augusta. In January, she traveled to New Orleans to visit her family and the city itself.

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Email augustaoffice@osh.org if your mailing information changes.

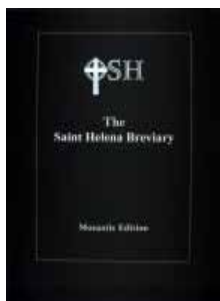
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Please remember us in your will.

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NOW AVAILABLE!

The Saint Helena Breviary, Monastic Edition contains the complete breviary with music and a guide to the Daily Office. Book size is approximately 9" x 6". You may order through the mail by sending a check to "OSH" for \$80 (\$75 breviary, \$5 postage) c/o Office Manager at either Vails Gate or Augusta. Please include your mailing address, email address and phone number with the order.



short-term, fix-it types of therapy. Rather, I wanted to do deeper work, long-term and low-fee if necessary. I wanted work that makes possible uncovering the pain we so often carry, that strangles at the root the abundance of life that Christ promises us, and keeps us out of true relationship with the God who made us and who yearns for our growth into the experience of holiness and joy that is the life in Christ. Our personal stories are so often tangled and troubled, and full of old fears and angers which are incomprehensible to us, and which give rise to negative compulsions that we cannot seem to shake, no matter how dedicated, prayerful and self-giving our lives are.

There is, of course, no universal panacea for the troubles of the human condition, and I am not presenting psychoanalysis as one. But I will dare to say that I found my spiritual teacher in an analyst who, though he would never call himself a Christian, has led me toward God more effectively than most of my directors, or my own strangled praying, ever have.

I can also say that, as I grow in my practice—a thing I hoped and prayed for but did not know would happen until it has—I become more and more aware that there is no line, at least in my analytical work, between spiritual direction and analysis. They are a seamless web, sometimes overtly, sometimes less so. God may be mentioned, or not, but "called or not called, God will be there."* The journey, whatever dark passages it reaches into, is always toward the light. I feel strongly called to both spiritual direction and psychoanalysis and am grateful for the privilege of being able to offer such important works of ministry in times that try all of our souls.

**A translation of the Latin inscription over the door of C J Jung's house in Kusnacht, Switzerland*



CONVENT PROGRAMS 2006

Augusta

FEB 25 – Introduction to World Religions

led by Dr James Cutsinger, PhD Harvard

This day offers a brief introduction to the beliefs and spiritual practices of four of the world's religions: Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam and the Sun Dance Religion of the Plains Indians.

MAR 3-5 – The Pastoral Aspect of Holy Week

silent Lenten retreat led by Sr Rosina Ampah, OSH

Come explore the meaning of Christ's actions regarding the Passover meal and his washing the disciples' feet. Explore also the meaning of Christ's redemption for us as individuals and humanity as a whole.

APR 29 – Humor in the Bible

led by the Rev Linda M Scales, EdD

"God is not a God of sadness, death, etc...Christ is a Lord of joy, and so the Scriptures often say that we should rejoice..." (Martin Luther). The Bible speaks of all human emotions and circumstances, ranging from sin and suffering to joy and humor. We generally approach the Scriptures very seriously, and that is not bad. We can also approach Scripture willing to see the humor in some of the stories and situations. It is a joy to realize Jesus had a sense of humor!

Linda Scales has been an Episcopal deacon since 1990 and presently serves at The Church of Our Savior in Martinez GA. Her education includes Music Education and Education Administration degrees, Counseling Master's degree from Boston University, and Education Doctorate from Temple University. She has endeared herself to the sisters by her listening presence and great sense of humor!

MAY 12-14 – Mother-Daughter Weekend

coordinated by Sr Magdalene

A retreat to experience monastic hospitality and feminine creativity. Join us for a fun-filled weekend which includes walking a labyrinth, circle dancing, singing, sharing stories, and listening to the Augusta Chamber Singers perform in our acoustically vibrant chapel.

MAY 25 – Ascension Day Celebration, 11:00-2:00, Holy Eucharist with the Rev Canon Neal J Phelps, presiding, and the Rev Canon Henry L Atkins Jr, preaching. Festive lunch follows.

Neal Phelps and Henry Atkins are longtime friends of the Order of St Helena. For many years, Henry has facilitated OSH Chapter meetings and the work of the OSH Leadership Council. Currently the rector of St Thomas Episcopal Church in Hanover NH, Henry is also active in theological education and civil rights issues in Central America. *Join us for this fortieth anniversary of the dedication of the Augusta convent!*

Vails Gate

FEB 24-26 – Journeying with Christ

Lenten retreat led by Sr Veronica, OSH

MAR 10-12 – You Will Show Me the Path of Life

Lenten retreat led by Sr Ann Prentice, OSH

APR 18-22 – Rest and recuperation for guests during the week following Easter Day

APR 28-30 – Crafts Weekend led by OSH sisters. Bring your craft project and enjoy a guilt-free weekend working on it in the company of others and in the context of daily prayer.

MAY 19-21 – ASSOCIATES WEEKEND

led by Sr Mary Lois, OSH

JUN 9-11 – Living within the Sacred Hoop of God's Creation led by Sr Mary Therese, Novice/OSH

Part one of a retreat/workshop series exploring Native American spirituality and monasticism in daily life. You are invited to a "Gathering"—an experiential journey using the crossroads of two paths to reaffirm our roots and the purpose of our lives.

JUN 23-25 – Praying with Hymns

summer retreat led by Sr Veronica, OSH

JUN 30-JUL 2 – Drawing Retreat

led by Sr Ellen Francis, OSH

The rich diversity of creation in the woods and grounds at Vails Gate will provide subject matter for quiet contemplation and for drawing. This retreat is for anyone who would like to spend time in prayer in a natural setting. No training or "talent" in art is required.

OCT 13-15 – ASSOCIATES WEEKEND

Making Prayerful Choices led by Sr Cornelia Ransom

*In all of life we are faced with choices. We have decisions to make, from small ones to life-changing ones. Beginning with St Ignatius' "Rules for Discernment," we will look at some of the practices of spiritual discernment within the Christian tradition, practices that can help us on this journey of choosing wisely in our lives. **The OSH sisters in Augusta recommend this presentation!***

Writers may wish to reserve the Hermitage at Vails Gate.

Both women and men are welcome at convent programs.

Contact the appropriate house's guest coordinator to register.



A GUEST AND A GIFT OF GOD

by Sister Ellen Francis, OSH

In 2003 and 2004, I was fortunate to make trips to Afghanistan to learn about the lives and development projects in support of Afghan women. Each time that I flew between Dubai and Kabul, the airplane passed over Iran and my heart was torn, knowing that I was so near and yet so far from the family who meant so much to me many years ago.

I was married to an Iranian and lived in Iran during the 1960s and '70s, but I left in the summer of 1978 just as the Iranian Revolution was starting. My husband and I divorced shortly afterwards, and I thought that I would never see my wonderful Iranian family again. They had welcomed me into the family as their own, and my mother-in-law had once even said that I was exactly the same to her as her eldest daughter. During all the subsequent years, I held them in my prayers and often wished I could at least know where they were and how they were doing.

Early in the spring of 2005, one of my sisters-in-law found me on the internet and called me. Between our tears, she told me that my father- and mother-in-law had asked repeatedly that she try to find me. She told me that my father-in-law had been praying for me and my son every day for the past 27 years. Many emails and webcam sessions later, we began to fill in what had happened in the intervening years and to get reacquainted.

Then another miracle happened. The Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR) sponsored a peace and friendship delegation to Iran in early December 2005, and I was asked to be a co-leader. FOR is an international and interfaith peace and justice organization, and the purpose of the trip was to meet Iranians, to hear their stories and learn about their current situation, to present a friendly face of Americans in Iran, and finally to tell the story of our trip when we got back home.*

In spite of concerns about our safety, we found the Iranians whom we met extremely gracious and hospitable. There is a Farsi expression, "A guest is a gift of God," and we were indeed treated like honored guests. Many Iranians said to us, "We *really* love Americans. Tell this to everyone back in America. Tell your friends to come to Iran too." The highlights of the trip included discussions with representatives of some of the religious minorities in Iran: Armenian Christians, Zoroastrians, and Jews (Iran has the second oldest Jewish community in the world, after Israel). They spoke of the advances they perceived in the rights and support of their communities in Iran.

We spent the last few days in Teheran where I was able to spend some time with my family and to meet nieces and nephews who had been born after I left Iran. I also caught up with sisters- and brothers-in-law whom I hadn't seen for all those years. Best of all was the chance to see Nana and Baba, who are now quite elderly, but who still have many memories. It is their custom for women to serve a meal and

often not eat until everyone else is served. Nana remembered that I had once insisted I would not eat until she sat down to eat with the family, and I remembered that she once brought me some precious, imported canned pineapple when I first arrived in Iran and was hungry and not yet used to Iranian cooking.

Our time together was an extraordinary gift for healing and a new beginning. I am so grateful to the Order of St Helena and to FOR for making this reunion possible, and always to my sisters in Christ for their love and support and prayers. I can genuinely say, "I couldn't have done these things and I wouldn't be who I am today without you, my sisters." Thanks be to God.

*Read more about the Fellowship of Reconciliation and the Iran project on their website: www.forusa.org. *If you know of any groups who would like to hear a presentation about Iran, please contact Sister Ellen Francis. A member of the delegation may be living in your area.*



Above: The Fellowship of Reconciliation group, dressed in traditional hijab, entering a mosque in Isfahan, Iran. Below: Sr Ellen Francis speaking Farsi with Iranian schoolboys.



The Order of St Helena is a religious community for women in the Anglican Communion, founded in 1945, which witnesses to a contemporary version of traditional monasticism.



Articles in this issue contributed by OSH sisters living in the Manhattan convent, New York City

Bringing Altruism to the Streets, Nun Leads Outreach Programs That Make a Difference
Sister Mary Lois: Charity in Action

Mid-town, Sister Mary Lois moves from one holy place to another to work. A sister for ten years in the Order of St Helena, an Episcopal community on East 28th Street, she leaves her order every day to assist with the three main arms of the community outreach program of St Bartholomew's Church: its food pantry, soup kitchen and homeless shelter.

Mary Lois is the only sister of 22 to work outside the convent in this respect. "Religious life exists for people who are called to God—they don't have to be ordained," she says. "For people who want to do ministry, it's a thrilling empowerment."

On an aspirant visit to the religious community where Sister Mary Lois would eventually begin her training, the native of Savannah GA toured the inner city of nearby Newburgh NY, where she saw firsthand the culture of poverty and the desperation of those trying to survive daily. The sight of people huddled for warmth around a fire in a barrel was a defining moment for her. "It struck my heart, and I thought I wanted to do what I could to alleviate their suffering," she says from her basement office at the Park Avenue church. "And I knew then that would be the direction of my ministry."

When she moved to New York City, Mary Lois searched for Episcopal churches with outreach programs and started cold-calling. "People naturally come to a church for help," she says, so she felt it would be only a matter of time before she found one that, in turn, needed her help. J D Clarke, St Bart's director of community ministry, offered her the non-salaried position of assistant director, and with the blessing of her order, Mary Lois moved into her office at the church and started reaching out to the community.

Her first task was matching the observed need to the available services, so she polled various resources, compiling a list of places where homeless people could get a meal, a shower, shoes, and clothing. Then she ensured that St Bart's offerings didn't duplicate those of other nearby programs. People come by referral or word of mouth, and those staying in the eight-bed shelter must be enrolled in a work or social-services program.

Sister Mary Lois has seen the population served by St Bart's change according to social and economic trends. Today, she says, a lot of people lining up for meals are immigrants who may be afraid to get government assistance because of their

excerpt from New York Resident
May 9, 2005
by Lana Bortolot, reprinted with permission

alien status. St Bart's programs receive assistance through the Human Resource Administration's Food for Survival Program. They also have received a grant from United Way, and the church picks up what the relief agencies don't.

Corporate midtown neighbors also help out with toy drives and employee volunteer drives. Still, Sister Mary



Lois says, "Such a small amount of money is available compared to the need." At the end of the day, Mary Lois heads downtown to her contemplative life. Though her two worlds are far apart in context, she says there is no disconnect between her life as a nun and as an administrator. "The convent gives me prayerful space, and St Bart's gives me the place to act it out."

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