



## Walking the Mystical Path Contemporary Mystics show us the way...

*Union and uniformity are two different journeys with very different strategies. Religion frequently seeks uniformity; the mystics seek and enjoy the foundation itself –  
Divine union, totally given. – Richard Rohr –*

*Walking the Mystical Path* programme is for those wishing to integrate a contemplative dimension into their lives. Many of us have walked the way of uniformity as it has a certitude about it that is/was very attractive in these years of considerable upheaval and unease...

Many of us too have looked east, west, north and south to discover what might lie behind the veils of dissatisfaction, Merton's 'false self' and then the promise of heaven after death, or the contemplative Merton again, 'union with the true Self'. Fortunately now is one of the best times to be alive because we are a century into a growing community of contemplatives who have the dual gifts of being both mystics and grand story tellers of their experiences.

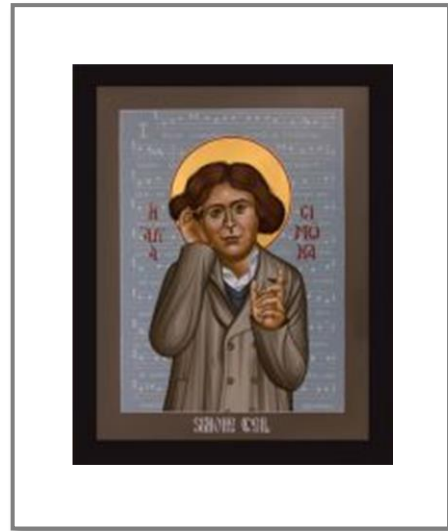
While the stories they tell stem from the growth of Wisdom from antiquity, they are permeated with not only a contemplative understanding of the deeper wisdom teachings of the Torah and then Jesus the Christ, but are positively influenced by the developing understanding of psychology, neurophysiology, astral-physics, quantum entanglement, poetry, art, embodiment...

What these sages have to teach us is learning to see as the mystics see and learning to experience what the mystics' experience: *Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear?* Mark 8:18.

### Who Might Be Interested in This Program?

This program is for anyone who feels drawn to contemplative spirituality and who:

- Desires a deepening relationship with Life and to live out of that relationship
- Acknowledges that it is not so much *what* we do, but *how* we do it and *why*
- Wishes to develop or deepen a consistent spiritual practice
- Is keen to explore and learn within a broad ecumenical Christ centered framework, enhanced by the wisdom of all traditions, creativity and their life so far
- Is growing in surrendering control and becoming unattached to outcome
- Longs to be a transforming and supportive presence in the 'community'
- Wants to share this part of the 'journey home' with the guidance of a spiritual companion



### Program Components

- The programme is designed to be completed from home over an eight month period
- There are five themes of material and short steps-in-between emailed out
- The programme begins with an Interest Form and then a hand-out on *The Art of Reading...*
- Four sessions of spiritual companioning by Skype or phone

The programme content is developed around five strands leading towards 'mystical union' with examples of contemporary mystics who embody them. Naturally the strands intersect each other and will include simple spiritual practices that the mystics have embodied.

The five strands for the purposes of this programme are:

- **Theology and Cosmology:** Underhill, Panikkar, Geering, Dalio, Fox, Rohr, Newell
- **Contemplation:** Main, Keating, Cowley, Bourgeault, Finley,
- **Compassion:** Aubert, , Catherine Doherty, Mother Theresa, Merton, the Dalai Lama,
- **Co-Creation:** Baxter, Spangler, Angelou, Wheen, M.C. Richards, Michael Leunig
- **Sacred Activicism:** Joan Chittister, Teresa Forcades, MT King, Rev Tutu, Andrew Harvey

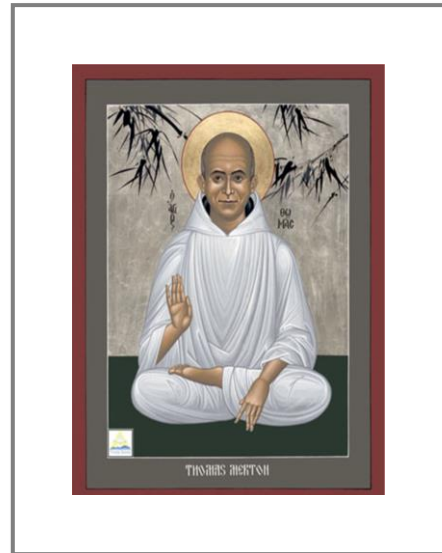
Understanding and practicing a more contemplative and simple lifestyle may require guidance and support of a kind easily read about but not easily available. *Walking the Mystical Path* is a programme comprised of experiential learning, reflection, spiritual practices, exploration of contemporary sages and mystics, readings and individual spiritual companioning sessions. It is hoped that participants imbed these components in a way that will best serve their own spiritual deepening.

There are no prerequisites for this program, and if you are interested contact Pip for either a phone or email chat.

### Programme Leader

Pip Nicholls has had many influences in her life with not the least being cradled in the beauty of Wellington and the whole of Aotearoa, New Zealand. Other formative places, people and events have been the Erskine College chapel in Island Bay, being a member of the Aubert, Baxter, Merton, Kirk community in Featherston since 1975, a year in a Thai Buddhist monastery in the late '70's, meeting Thinly Norbu Rimpoche and Mother Theresa, returning to Catholic roots through the teachings of Tessa Bielecki (now a hermit in Colorado) and being involved in contemplative practices and studies from her early 20s. She attended Richard Rohr's *Living School* from 2013-15.

In addition, she has worked 25 years within the disability sector and became a Spiritual Companion in 2006. She is a member of the Contemplative Network, Aotearoa and the NZ Association of Spiritual Directors.



**Information:** If you want to find out more about the programme or to get an Interest Form please contact Pip: on (04) 562 6364 or: [pip.nicholls@xtra.co.nz](mailto:pip.nicholls@xtra.co.nz)

**Start Date:** The programme runs over eight months beginning the week of the 27<sup>th</sup> March 2018

**Fee:** \$330 (plus postage and photocopying if you don't have access to email).

A \$130 deposit needs to be paid and an Interest Form completed by the 9<sup>th</sup> March 2018.

**If for any reason the fee is prohibiting you joining, please contact Pip to discuss some arrangement.**

### Feedback from previous years:

- *Very wide ranging programme and not pushing a particular barrow*
- *Helped deepen my understanding and experience of spiritual awakening with simple steps*
- *Very broad and interesting range of topics and mystics – terrific, now to continue to do it!*
- *Thank you for not bringing dogma into it... more about experience than a set of beliefs*
- *Helped me to let go of old beliefs and feel confident to trust the 'spaciousness'*
- *Yes, what I've understood to be right for me and some practices are more deeply embedded*