

*High Horses, Scapegoats and Donkeys*  
*A Lenten Odyssey*



*It is a sober cheer that the time will come to all of us,  
when we shall play parts no more,  
neither with others, nor with ourselves, nor yet with God.*

Fr. Frederick Faber Conference

# INFORMATION PAGE

*If the material world is beautiful for its wisdom and power,  
the spiritual world is more beautiful for its mercy and compassion.*

Frederick Faber "Spiritual Conferences"



This retreat takes us into the realm of tears, the tears of compunction that St Benedict talks about in his chapter on Reverence in Prayer (RB 20). It is a calling forth of ourselves to a new and more authentic living; a dive into the deep; a naming of the truth of who we are before God. It is not a fear based compunction that we will enter into, but rather a compunction based on a deep desire to be in oneness with God. The basic meaning of compunction in the Greek and Latin is to "prick" or "pierce" and St. Benedict uses the word to encourage his followers to stir up within themselves sorrow and repentance for their sins.

St. Gregory the Great sees the soul as experiencing an intense longing for its heavenly home once it feels the prick of compunction. He emphasises the point that a person can never understand fully the effects of sin unless he has experienced in contemplative prayer a foretaste of the joys of heaven. He contrasts compunction caused by fear, and compunction brought about by desire and longing for God.

This retreat is not about entering the murky waters of a fear based compunction. Rather it is about taking a step back to look honestly into our heart and soul and to courageously identify that which blocks our capacity to draw closer to God; it is to dip our toe, even just a little, into the healing waters of the tears of compunction, and to experience the full warmth of those waters as we immerse ourselves more fully; it is to be prepared to feel the prick that will come with self-knowledge; and it is to come to ourselves in the reality of who we are.

Perhaps there will be the experience of the physical act of crying or perhaps it will be a different expression of tears. Whatever the case this will be our labour during the retreat, in order to enable us to more readily stand in the truth. When we stand in the truth of who we are, then we are truly free; and when we are truly free we are able to stand in the reality of who we are in relationship to Jesus: we are not fearful, but rather full of confidence in his unbounding mercy and compassion. Then, and only then, is our relationship with him real, personal, and full of the passion that comes with what Benedictines refer to as, "Liberty of Spirit".

"Our hearts overflowing with the inexpressible delight of love." RB Prologue 4

This is a five week retreat with one conference for each week of Lent. If you are unable to make the retreat during the Lenten five weeks this does not matter. You can make it at any time and at your own pace.

## A Retreat with Sr Antonia osb



### **ABOUT SR. ANTONIA**

Sr. Antonia entered the Benedictine Abbey at Jamberoo, Australia, in 1990 and made her Solemn Profession in 1996. In 1997, she was appointed novice mistress and continued in that role for the next seventeen years. In 2001, she was appointed novice mistress at our foundation of Our Lady of the Desert in New Mexico, USA, and in 2004 was again at Our Lady of the Desert, this time as Prioress.

Sr Antonia was awarded a Certificate in Spiritual Direction from the Centre for Religious Development, Cambridge Massachusetts USA in 1995 and has worked as a spiritual director in our guest cottages during the ensuing years.

At present Sr Antonia gives conferences on the vows to our sisters in formation and writes our Chronicles. As well she has a reflections page on our website.

Sr Antonia would like to thank her sisters in community who have been so supportive and helpful in putting this retreat together.

## **THE RETREAT IS FOR YOU IF YOU DESIRE:**

To unburden yourself of the negatives within that weigh you down.

To look honestly at who you are

To stand in the truth of who you are before God

To make some changes in your life.

To live in harmony with yourself and with others.

To love God more authentically.

To live more authentically as a Christian in relationship with others.

To love your neighbour as yourself.

# AN OVERVIEW OF THE RETREAT

## + CONFERENCE TOPICS

### CONFERENCE ONE

#### High Horses



*Dappled Grey Horse* Theodore Gericault

### CONFERENCE TWO

#### The Taming



*Alekuwka (Dreamstime)*

### CONFERENCE THREE

#### Scapegoats



*The Scapegoat* William Holman Hunt

### CONFERENCE FOUR

#### Donkeys



*Burro Donkey* Diane Whitehead

### CONFERENCE FIVE

#### The Gift of Tears



*Healing Waters* Sr Mary Barnes osb

## **THE STRUCTURE OF EACH CONFERENCE**

The conference will include:

- A video talk by Sr Antonia
- Transcript of the talk
- Suggestions for your prayer and reflection
- Links to download the material in PDF format

## **YOUR COMMITMENT**

You will need to be able to commit to one hour of prayer time per day.

## **WHAT YOU WILL NEED**

- A Bible
- A journal
- Coloured pencils, pens, paints or tools for another medium you would prefer such as clay or photography.
- A prayer space either in your home, or elsewhere such as a Church or chapel, a garden or park where you can be in silence to pray and meditate without interruption.

## **ONE FACE TO FACE MEETING WITH SR. ANTONIA**

There is an opportunity for you to have one Zoom session of one hour or less with Sr Antonia during the retreat. This session can be anything you choose: a clarification of the material, a sharing of your journal, seeking spiritual guidance, or simply talking about it all.

This zoom is optional. Appointments with Sr Antonia are limited and need to be arranged well in advance. Please email [onlineretreat@jamberoobbey.org.au](mailto:onlineretreat@jamberoobbey.org.au) to book a time.