

Desert Wisdom for Daily Living

A winter retreat with Sr Magdalen osb



I will lead you into the wilderness and speak to your heart. Hosea 2.14

And immediately the Spirit drove Jesus out into the wilderness, and he was in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild animals and the angels ministered unto him. Mark 1:12-13

The Israelites wandered in the desert for forty years, Jesus was in the wilderness for forty days and in early Christian times, women and men went into the desert to contemplate the gospel message and to pray. The wilderness of the desert is a compelling place and its invitation to enter into its vastness, reverberates in our inner depths ever seeking a response.

Do you have to be a desert monk, a hermit, or a full-time dweller in desert places in order to learn its wisdom? By no means. Desert wisdom invites us to an inner journey of the heart, one which helps us map our inner landscape, navigate its geography and learn to abide in the place where God simply is One, with us and in us. As with the teachings of Jesus, the wisdom teachings of desert mothers and fathers are always grounded in the reality of the present moment and in what is true, simple, accessible and pertinent to our daily lives.

In this retreat, we will explore and pray with riches of the desert teachings found within the context of the perennial wisdom tradition. Through the lens of the wisdom teachings of Jesus, the teachings of the Desert mothers and fathers of the fourth century and other early and late wisdom teachers, we experience how these teachings can enlighten and strengthen our contemplative prayer practice and inspire and deepen our commitment to the contemplative life and to the practice of the wisdom way of gospel living - today.

ABOUT SR MAGDALEN

Sr Magdalen entered the Benedictine Abbey at Jamberoo, Australia in 1996 and made her Solemn Monastic Profession in 2001. Since entering Sr Magdalen has studied for an MA (Theol.) which she completed in 2006. She has been certified in the formation of Prayer Companions program from Mary McKillop centre in North Sydney (1999) and has guided guests in spiritual direction for the last 21 years. She is currently studying with the Global Online Benedictine Spiritual Direction Program, taught from Benet Hill Monastery in Colorado USA, as on-going formation in the area of spiritual direction.



In 2008 she participated in the three month Monastic Formators program in Rome and has worked with sisters in formation in various capacities since 2005. Since 1998, Sr Magdalen has led retreats and offered regular weekly meditation and centering prayer sessions for our guests. Sr Magdalen also offers reflections which are posted on our website, and is involved in the development of online retreats. Sr Magdalen's love of music and song finds expression in the praise and prayer offered in the Divine Office and she is privileged to have the care of one of our dogs, beautiful Keira, our four-year-old German Shepherd.

ABOUT THE RETREAT

This retreat is for all those whose desire is:

- ✓ to embrace the invitation and opportunity to go deeper within, and explore the landscape of the contemplative heart of our being;
- ✓ to abide in the hospitable and unconditionally loving Divinity within;
- ✓ to practice abiding in the presence of the indwelling God through daily reflection and meditation;
- ✓ to explore the wisdom tradition, particularly the wisdom teaching of Jesus and the desert mothers and fathers and
- ✓ To open to the flow of the Spirit breathing within and extending out into each moment of the day;

All are warmly invited to make this retreat. It would be helpful if you had an established daily prayer and meditation practice and are familiar with the practice of *Lectio Divina* – although these are not essential to the retreat.

It would be helpful, though not essential, if you could set each Saturday aside as a retreat day.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE RETREAT

The conferences are available in the format of video talk.

WEEK	CONFERENCE
One	<i>Desert Wisdom: Teachings for the aspiring contemplative. Amma/Abba, give me a Word.</i>
Two	<i>Naming and releasing the thoughts that bind us: Power, prestige and possessions.</i>
Three	<i>Healing and transforming the thoughts that bind us: A work of Grace.</i>
Four	<i>Practices for daily contemplative living. Bringing it all together. Abiding in the Christ, the deep centre of being.</i>

LECTIO DIVINA AND REFLECTION MATERIAL

Each day following the conference, material will be made available which offers food for reflection. You will receive:

- ✓ Introductory material with information on *Lectio Divina*, Centering Prayer and additional recommended reading which may be helpful in enabling you to take full advantage of this retreat;
- ✓ Questions for you to consider;
- ✓ Suggestions for journal work or other creative expressions for you to try in the week ahead;
- ✓ All reflection material will be provided and available for you to download.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- ✓ Ideally you will be able to commit yourself to either one hour of prayer/ reflection/ *Lectio Divina*/ or meditation every day, whichever of these is your practice;
- ✓ In addition, you will need to have an hour for the weekly conference and an hour for the sharing and conversation on a Saturday morning (see the retreat structure for the details);
- ✓ A space within your home, or elsewhere, for making the retreat. Make it your own special prayer space, ensuring you can have as much space and silence as possible;
- ✓ A journal;
- ✓ Coloured pens or pencils for drawing.