

Into a Strange Land

A Country Called Forgiveness



Information Page

In this five days retreat we will be walking the rather arduous and sometimes lonely journey from unforgiveness to forgiveness: the journey that has the possibility of leading to a deeper and richer relationship with Christ as well as a joy and peace of soul that remains elusive until we are able to let go and forgive.

Although it can be difficult, the journey is also enriching and fulfilling in ways that we could not imagine, because the Spirit is present and active in our hearts and minds if we are prepared to surrender, always gently guiding and inspiring us to “go where we would prefer not to go”. Jn. 21:18

“In the world we face the challenge to use our heart or throw it away, and the temptation is to give up on the heart and let down all those in the world who cry out to us ‘we need you love.’ We can hurt and be hurt, we can betray and be betrayed, we can damage and be damaged; we can offend and be offended. Our innocence is abused and we abuse innocence. The heart can be glad and the heart can

know a terrible bleakness. Not for nothing was this life called 'a vale of tears, but this life also contains a seed of something mysterious, strange, marvellous, if we keep faith with it, and undergo its existential blows, reversals, trials, for the sake of what is at stake – that it's possibility may not end in ruination, but may be redeemed, and hence bear fruit in the end.'

Jamie Moran "The Wound of Existence"

This retreat is for all those whose desire is:

- To be free. To be able to discard the heavy burden of the past and to move to a new level of self- acceptance and the reintegration of their whole being in Christ.
- To know themselves in a new way, having come to see the necessity of stripping off the old and tattered clothes of resentment, anger, blame, despondency and unforgiveness.
- To be prepared to allow the spirit to breathe within and through themselves to others, and most especially to the person or persons to whom they owe forgiveness.
- To be prepared to believe, to trust and to hope that God will be with them as they take the decision to move forward in their lives, embracing them, comforting them, encouraging and forgiving them, and loving them with a tender and infinite love.
- To be open to trust that God will send his angels to guard and protect them on the journey of forgiveness; that the Holy Spirit will be with them inspiring courage and wisdom and truth; and that in all of this they will be brought to the fullness of life in Christ in a most personal and intimate way.
- To know the joy and peace that comes with surrendering themselves to the gospel of Christ; the Christ who says "Come to me all you who labour and are overburdened and I will give you rest."

Anyone of any denomination and state in life is invited to make this retreat.

However, we would caution anyone who has experienced childhood sexual abuse or physical abuse. If you have not had professional help, we would recommend that you don't participate in this retreat until you have had that help.

NOTE: The five days are not necessarily interpreted literally. Rather they are used in a more biblical sense of a day being as long as we need it to be. Hence you might take five weeks or five months or a year to work toward the freedom that is the fruit of this labour of forgiveness. Forgiveness must not be hurried; you move from one “day” to the next day when you feel it is time to take the next step in the journey.

As this retreat unfolds you will come to understand, to know and to accept and embrace with gratitude, the truth that is revealed in the beatitudes:

Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called children of God.

Matt. 5-9

An Overview of the Retreat

A) YOUR COMMITMENT

You will need to be able to commit yourself to either one hour of prayer/ reflection/*lectio divina*/or meditation every day, whichever of these is your practice.

B) THE CONFERENCES

This retreat does not have to be completed during the specified time. The retreat may be joined at any time and all participants will find the material available on the retreat website.

CONFERENCE
The first day's journey - Streams and Pain
The second day's journey - Barricades and Bridges
The third day's journey - Encounters and Confidences
The fourth day's journey - Insights and Truths
The fifth day's journey - Settings and Surrenderings

C) THE STRUCTURE OF EACH DAYS CONFERENCE

Each conference will contain:

- A video of the talk by Sr Antonia
- Transcript of the talk if you would like to read or download it in PDF format
- Quotes from Scripture and other sources for reflection.
- Questions for you to consider
- Journal work.

D) 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 is optional. Appointments with Sr Antonia are limited and need to be arranged well in advance.

E) WHAT YOU WILL NEED

You will need to provide for yourself the following items for this retreat.

- A Bible
- A Journal
- Coloured pens or pencils for drawing.
- A space within your home, or elsewhere, for making the retreat. Make it your own special prayer space with a candle, and your Bible, maybe a crucifix or other symbols. Be creative and personal.

We would strongly recommend that you have a confidante or a spiritual companion with whom you can share during this retreat.