

Light Over the Mountains

Voice of the Blue Mountains Interfaith Group

Volume 3 - November/December 2012

Statement of Purpose for The Blue Mountains Interfaith Group

We come together as representatives of the different religious and spiritual traditions in the Blue Mountains and we seek to work together on causes of common interest, such as the Care and Celebration of the Environment.

Each of us loves our own faith while respecting others who equally love their's.

We recognize the Truth, that is a deep transcendent reality common to all, coming to us by different historical, scientific and cultural paths. We believe that we are spiritually enriched by our mutual sharing. We are ready to share that richness more widely in the Mountains, catching a glimpse of sacred wonder in our Mountain surrounds.

Affiliated Traditions and Members:

Ansari Sufi Order, Shaykh Ibrahim Ansari, Yasmin Maine

Brahma Kumaris, Jessica Yuille, Sue Morrison, See Yeung Olivia Yao

Emmanuel Synagogue, Wollahra and the Jewish Community, Angela Moore

Ethical Humanists, Kon Karlos - **Lawson Catholic Church**, Fr. Eugene Stockton

Leura Uniting Church, James Tulip, Chrysanthe White, Bruce Ball, Alison Croft

Member of the Hindu Tradition, Ashok Nath - **Pagan Awareness Network**, Leah Marie Wilkinson

Siddhartha's Intent, Australia, Pamela Croci - **The Australian Buddhist Vihara**, Rene and Jane Buhler

The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), Glenda Marsh-Letts, Frank Lumley

The Thich Nhat Hanh Community, Miriam Brooks - **Kunsang Yeshe Retreat Centre**, Venerable Tencho

Editorial

It has been a pleasure to bring out this issue of "Light Over the Mountains". The Blue Mountains Interfaith Group has found in this and its other initiatives signs of its own growth to maturity. At first I think we all came together motivated by a kind of conscientiousness – "it is a good thing to do" – but more and more we have come to enjoy each other. We enjoy our diversity of religious expression. It is beautiful to see the different ways people are drawn out of themselves to transcendence, while feeling the strength of mutual solidarity against the shallow values of a materialistic, secular society. None has felt threatened in their own religious background, but rather enriched by what others hold dear. James Byrne in *God: Thoughts in an Age of Uncertainty* (2001:112) states that with the breakdown of the boundaries between religions we come to "regard all religious belief as *ours*, as human".

The general topic of this issue is death and dying. Death at first may appear a morbid subject, rather taboo in our society. But death is cast as tragic only when an inflated ego faces its total extinction. It will be seen that different religious systems offer a more positive approach to death. This is a good example of the enrichment we can look for from each other's religion.

For Australian Aborigines religion was a celebration of life: its underlying philosophy was one of assent to the received terms of life. This is a mood of accepting life as a mixture of good and bad, of joy and sorrow, and to celebrate it notwithstanding, warts and all. Even death, for all that it may be unwelcome, is one of life's gifts – it is part of the cycle of life. Respect for life allows respect for death. Assent to life is assent to death. Life consumes the living and brings forth new life.

Eugene Stockton 4759 1818

Pamela Croci 4757 2339

Angela Moore 0418 568 008

Jim Tulip 4758 8104

Please note that the contents of this newsletter are spiritual writings and that you should take care how you finally dispose of your copy.



Those wishing to subscribe to the online edition of LOTM can visit our website

<http://bluemountainheart.net/interfaith>

Facing Death and Finding Hope

“Out of the womb”, describes the experience of radical change. For the unborn baby, the womb has been a soft snug haven, until the time comes when there is no longer room and forces of rejection begin to be felt. Something is coming to an end and ahead lies a sort of death. Life is a series of calls to come out into a larger space, a continual tug into transcendence beyond the reality we know. Our journey is successively emergence from one womb-like existence into another more spacious, yet still transitory, moving into the next.

At each phase of our life we would like to rest where we are, for it is comfortable, familiar and defines our existence. Yet sooner or later our story comes to its term, the familiar enclosing world ceases to fit and death looms. At this crisis of life we want to cling to the old and to say No to death. The womb threatens to become our tomb.

Darryl Reaney observes how our ego clings on to its sense of self, filtering out the reality around us so as to survive at all cost. Radical change is dreaded, yet an “ego-death” is a rite of passage liberating our consciousness to one of greater depth.

Kevin O’Shea describes death, and all that is like death, as a “gentle letting go into a world of difference”.

Michael Kearney asserts for all the need of “a journey into depth”, which has as its threshold an awareness of death. He compares this with Buddhist daily exercise in death awareness, the death rehearsals of the *Ars Moriendi* (Art of Dying) from the European Middle Ages, and the threshold crossings ritualised by Aborigines and other primal peoples in their rites of initiation.

So one is not surprised at the centrality of the *bardo* in Buddhism, of *fana* in Sufism and of the paschal mystery in Christianity. The paschal mystery, foreshadowed by the passage (*pesech*) of the Israelites through the Red Sea to freedom from Egypt, is how the first Christians identified the passage of Jesus through death to new life. This is the breakthrough which is recognised as the recurring pattern of the Christian’s journey of life, “through a thousand little deaths and a thousand little deaths”, until finally death itself and what opens beyond.

Rumi: **Loss of self in love**

One went to the door of the Beloved and knocked,
A voice asked “Who is there?”
He answered “It is I.”
The voice said “There is not room for Me and Thee.”
The door was shut.

After a year of solitude and deprivation
he returned and knocked,
A voice from within asked “Who is there?”
The man said “It is Thee.”
The door was opened for him.

Jesus: **The Gospel paradox**

Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into
the earth and dies, it remains alone.
But if it dies, it bears much fruit,
He who loves his life, loses it,
and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for
eternal life.

Jn 12:24-5

Paul:

When the perishable puts on the imperishable,
and the mortal puts on immortality
then shall come to pass the saying that is written
Death is swallowed up in victory,
O death, where is thy victory?
O death, where is thy sting?

1 Cor. 15:54-5

P. Teilhard de Chardin: **Thoughts on death**

Death surrenders us completely to God: it makes us pass
into God
Those who dare to love Another more than themselves
in some sense
become the Other, finding life through death, the
rapturous moment of arriving at the threshold of their
new existence.

(Hymn of the Universe 1965 pp.150, 121)

Death causes us to lose our footing completely in
ourselves
so as to deliver us over to the powers of heaven and earth.
This is the final terror – but it is also, for the mystic,
the climax of his bliss.

(Writings in Time of War, 1968, p.132)

The only true death, good death, is a paroxysm of life.
Happy the world that is to end in ecstasy.

(The Heart of Matter, 1979 pp.190-1)

Paul:

It is no longer I who live
but Christ who lives in me.

Gal. 2:20

Contributed by Eugene Stockton

Prayer for the Grace of Age Well

When the signs of age begin to mark my body
when the ill that is to diminish me or carry me off
strikes from without or is born within me;
when the painful moment comes
in which I suddenly awaken
to the fact that I am ill or growing old;
and above all at that last moment
when I feel I am losing hold of myself
and am absolutely passive within the hands
of the great unknown forces that have formed me;
in all those dark moments, O God,
grant that I may understand that it is you
who are painfully parting the fibres of my being
in order to penetrate to the very marrow
of my substance and bear me away within yourself.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin SJ

Attentiveness is the path to true life;
Indifference is the path to death.
The attentive do not die;
The indifferent are as if they are dead already.

Dhammapada.

Moghavagan came to the Buddha. “I have come to you with a question. I am afraid of death. Is there any way to look upon the world so as not to be seen by the king of death?”

“Look upon the world as empty,” the Buddha replied. “This is the way to overcome death. Cease thinking of yourself as an entity that really exists. If you look on the world in this way, you will never be seen by the king of death.”

Sutta Nipata.

Death and Dying by Ibrahim Ansari

If nothing is permanent, why do we strive so hard for things like clothes, cars, position and jewellery? Probably because everyone around us is focused on achievements and things, and besides, what else is there?

Sufism addresses this illusion of permanence by offering the possibility that this world is a school. We are receiving specific lessons (whether we want them or not). One of these lessons may be how to reflect on our experiences and make better choices. So, reflection will take us to a point of understanding that if nothing is permanent why do we hold on so hard to so many strange things like a child grasping its favourite blanket? Shouldn't we be learning how to let go, so that it will be less painful when we have to let go of this body and mind, family and friends?

In Sufism we say it is vital to learn how to "Die before you die". We are referring to the practice of learning to let go. Of everything. Depending on the specific attachment, this may require therapy, a spiritual practice, repentance, an action, letter or motion of some kind. This practice of letting go is learning how to live which is also learning how to die: to surrender with grace, and understanding of Allah's Mercy and Compassion.

That reminds me of a Sufi story

There was once a Sufi Shaykh who had sixty disciples who he had taught as well as he could, and decided that the time had come for them to have a new experience. He told them that they must go on a long journey, and that something he knew not what would happen while they were on it. Those who had absorbed enough to enter this stage, he told them, would be able to go and remain with him on this journey.

He told them that they all had to memorize the phrase, "I must die instead of the Shaykh," and be prepared to shout it whenever the Shaykh raised both his arms. The disciples, upon hearing this, became suspicious of the Shaykh's motives and began muttering among themselves.

Fifty-nine of them deserted him, believing that he knew that he would be in danger at some point, and wanted to sacrifice them in his stead. They told him that they thought he might be planning a crime - even a murder and that they could not follow him under the conditions he demanded.

So, the Shaykh set out with his one remaining companion. They entered the nearest city not knowing that a wicked tyrant had taken it over. Wishing to consolidate his control of the city with a dramatic show of force, he assembled his soldiers together and told them to capture anyone passing through the town who looked harmless, and he would sentence them as a criminal. The soldiers obeyed him and set out into the streets to find such a wayfarer.

The first person they came upon was the disciple of the Shaykh, who they arrested. Followed by the Shaykh, they took the disciple to the king, where the populace, hearing the drum of death and already frightened, gathered around. The Shaykh's disciple was thrown in front of the king, who decreed that he had resolved to make an example of a vagabond to show them that he would not tolerate nonconformists or attempted escape, and sentenced the disciple to death.

Upon hearing this, the Shaykh called out to the king asking that he be allowed to die instead of the disciple, since he was to blame for having persuaded the disciple to embark on the life of a wayfarer. So saying the Shaykh raised both arms over his head, and the disciple cried out to the king begging to be allowed to die instead of the Shaykh.

The king was stunned. He asked his counselors for advice, wondering what kind of people the Shaykh and his disciple could be, vying with each other to die; he worried that if their actions were taken as heroism, the populace might turn against him.

After conferring with each other, the counselors told the king that if this was heroism, there was little they could do about it except to act even more cruelly until the people lost heart, but that they had nothing to lose by asking the Shaykh why he was so eager to die.

When asked, the Shaykh replied that it had been foretold that a man would die in that place and would rise again and thereafter be immortal, and that naturally both he and his disciple wanted to be that man.

The king wondered to himself why *he* should make another immortal when he was not himself, and after pondering it a moment, ordered that he should be executed right away instead of the Shaykh or his disciple.

Immediately the most evil of his accomplices, also eager for immortality, killed themselves. Neither they nor the king rose again, and the Shaykh and his disciple left in the midst of the confusion.ⁱ

Fana is the dissolving of the ego (*or nafs*), like sugar in water. This is what the ego must do to pass through the various veils.

The process of "dying before you die" consists of several layers:

Fanaful Shaykh – dissolving in the Shaykh

Fanaful Pir – dissolving in the Pir (founder of the Sufi order)

Fanaful Rasul – dissolving in the Messenger (Mohammad)

Fanafulallah – dissolving in Allah.

ⁱ From <http://www.Spiritual-Short-Stories.com>



Brahma Kumaris -

The journey of the soul

Brahma Kumaris (BKs) often refer to "leaving the body" rather than "dying". This is based on the core understanding of the BKs that all human beings are souls in bodies and that bodies are vehicles in which to move around in the physical world.

Each individual soul is an eternal point of light, residing in the body in the centre of the forehead. From this position the soul is like the driver of the vehicle of the body, operating its amazing machinery and directing behaviour through its thinking processes.

When the soul leaves the body, it enters a womb and takes a new body, just like changing a set of clothes for new ones.

Contributed by Jessica Yuille

A Hermit's Hymn

Alone with none but thee, my God,
I journey on my way;
What need I fear, when thou art near,
O King of night and day?
More safe am I within thy hand,
Than if a host did round me stand.

My destined time is fixed by thee,
And Death doth know his hour.
Did warriors strong around me throng,
They could not stay his power;
No walls of stone can man defend
When thou thy messenger dost send.

My life I yield to thy decree,
And bow to thy control
In peaceful calm, for from thine arm
No power can wrest my soul.
Could earthly omens e'er appal
A man that heeds the heavenly call!

The child of God can fear no ill,
His chosen dread no foe;
We leave our fate with thee, and wait
Thy bidding when to go.
Tis not from chance our comfort springs,
Thou art our trust, O King of kings.

From *Morning Prayer of Church's Office* (Thursday)

I Took It as a Sign

Someone sent a band to my house,
And it started playing
At five in the morning.

I took this as a sign
God wanted me to sing!

Then the moon joined in
And a few of the tenor-voice stars,
And the earth offered its lovely belly
As a drum.

Before I knew it,
I realized
All human beings could be happy

If they just had a few music lessons
From a Sweet Old Maestro
Like Hafiz.

(Poem from *I Heard God Laughing: Renderings of Hafiz*
by Daniel Ladinsky, Penguin Books, 2006)

Allah's Gift

There was a dervish (Sufi) on the Sufi path who was constantly beset with adversity. He lost his job and went crying to his shaykh (teacher), who told him, "Don't worry. Allah loves you. This is His gift to you."

After a time, the dervish's house burnt down and he went again distraught to his shaykh.

The shaykh said, "This is Allah's gift to you."

Some time later, the dervish lost his wife and he was practically out of his mind with grief. He went to his shaykh, who again told him that Allah loved him and that was His gift to him.

Finally, the dervish said, "O Allah, please stop loving me. Why don't you let me love You instead?"

(From *What About My Wood! 101 Sufi Stories*, by Es-Seyyid Es-Shaykh Taner Ansari, Ansari Publications, 2005)

Aboriginal Traditional Religion

Underlying Aboriginal traditional life is an all-pervading mysticism. Stanner describes how Aborigines see themselves in their own country:

But most of the choir and furniture of heaven and earth are regarded by the Aborigines as a vast sign-system. Anyone who, understandingly, has moved in the Australian bush with Aboriginal associates becomes aware of the fact. He moves, not in a landscape, but in a humanised realm saturated with significations. Here "something happens"; there "something portends". Aborigines, seeing the signs, defer to the significations, and watching others do so, seem to understand why.

Principles of Traditional Religion (after Stanner, Wilson)

1. The Aborigines universally believed that ancestral beings had left a *world full of signs* of their beneficent intent towards the men they had also brought into being. The wisdom about living given to men, cherished by traditional experience, could interpret these outward and visible signs as saying that men's lives had to follow a perennial pattern and, if they did so, men could live always under an assurance of providence.
2. The human person, compound of body and several spiritual principles or elements, *had value* in himself and for others, and there were spirits who cared.
3. The main religious cults were concerned to *renew and conserve life*, including the life-force that kept animating the world in which men subsisted and with which they were bonded in body, soul and spirit.
4. The material part of life, and of man himself, was *under spiritual authority*, and the souls of the dead shared in maintaining the authority and the providence over them.
5. The core of religious practice was to bring the life of a man under a *discipline* that required him to understand the sacred tradition of his group and to conform his life to the pattern ordained by that tradition.
6. The underlying philosophy of the religion was one of *assent to the received terms of life*; that is to say, it inculcated a strong disposition to accept life as a mixture of good with bad, of joy with suffering, but to *celebrate* it notwithstanding.
7. The major cults inculcated a *sense of mystery* by symbolisms pointing to ultimate or metaphysical realities which were thought to show themselves by signs.

The Creator

Did God create everything that exists? Does evil exist? Did God create evil?

A University professor at a well known institution of higher learning challenged his students with this question. "Did God create everything that exists?" A student bravely replied, "Yes he did!"

"God created everything?" The professor asked.

"Yes sir, he certainly did," the student replied.

The professor answered, "If God created everything; then God created evil.

And, since evil exists, and according to the principal that our works define who we are, then we can assume God is evil."

The student became quiet and did not answer the professor's hypothetical definition. The professor, quite pleased with himself, boasted to the students that he had proven once more that the Christian faith was a myth.

Another student raised his hand and said, "May I ask you a question, professor?" "Of course", replied the professor. The student stood up and asked, "Professor, does cold exist?"

"What kind of question is this? Of course it exists. Have you never been cold?" The other students snickered at the young man's question.

The young man replied, "In fact sir, cold does not exist. According to the laws of physics, what we consider cold is in reality the absence of heat. Every body or object is susceptible to study when it has or transmits energy, and heat is what makes a body or matter have or transmit energy.

Absolute zero (-460 F) is the total absence of heat; and all matter becomes inert and incapable of reaction at that temperature. Cold does not exist.

We have created this word to describe how we feel if we have no heat."

The student continued, "Professor, does darkness exist?" The professor responded, "Of course it does."

The student replied, "Once again you are wrong sir, darkness does not exist either. Darkness is in reality the absence of light. Light we can study, but not darkness. In fact, we can use Newton's prism to break white light into many colors and study the various wavelengths of each color.

You cannot measure darkness. A simple ray of light can break into a world of darkness and illuminate it. How can you know how dark a certain space is? You measure the amount of light present. Isn't this correct? Darkness is a term used by man to describe what happens when there is no light present."

Finally the young man asked the professor, "Sir, does evil exist?"

Now uncertain, the professor responded, "Of course, as I have already said.

We see it everyday. It is in the daily examples of man's inhumanity to man. It is in the multitude of crime and violence everywhere in the world.

These manifestations are nothing else but evil. To this the student replied, "Evil does not exist, sir, or at least it does not exist unto itself. Evil is simply the absence of God. It is just like darkness and cold, a word that man has created to describe the absence of God.

God did not create evil. Evil is the result of what happens when man does not have God's love present in his heart. It's like the cold that comes when there is no heat, or the darkness that comes when there is no light."

The professor sat down.

The young man's name -- ALBERT EINSTEIN

Contributed by Lorraine Phillips

Below are two pieces by Peter Millar from his book of meditative poems: *Remembering Dorothy*, Newtonmore, Scotland. March 2011.

Twenty-third Day

May I learn to be
at home in the dark
discovering
that the night
brings new horizons
further than the eye
can see.

For darkness
also gives birth
to love, to truth
and to the poet's song,
even if we at first fear
its embrace.

Morning may not quickly come,
but even in the dark
we are
companied by Light,
and One who is
gently smiling
is calling our name.

Twenty-fifth Day

Tears for my loved one,
tears for the hurting ones,
tears for our world,
tears for myself,
and through them all –
your tears.

We are not lost, nor in despair for everywhere are signs of light when we have eyes to see and the gift to free ourselves from ourselves. It's a new day – and the One who knows beyond our knowing is closer than we think.

In an instant and with no farewell
you left us who loved you so much,
and yet within our endless tears
we know that you are safe and held.

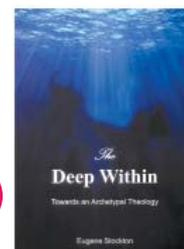
Contributed by Jim Tulip

The Deep Within

Towards an
Archetypal Theology

by Eugene Stockton

\$15.00
plus postage and
handling



available from
BLUE MOUNTAIN EDUCATION AND RESEARCH TRUST
phone 4759 1034 email olon@tpg.com.au

The Journey through Life and Death

According to the wisdom of Buddha, we *can* actually use our lives to prepare for death. We do not have to wait for the painful death of someone close to us or the shock of terminal illness to force us into looking at our lives. Nor are we condemned to go out empty-handed at death to meet the unknown. We can begin, here and now, to find meaning in our lives. We can make of every moment an opportunity to change and to prepare – wholeheartedly, precisely and with peace of mind – for death and eternity.

In the Buddhist approach, life and death are seen as one whole, where death is the beginning of another chapter of life. Death is a mirror in which the entire meaning of life is reflected.

This view is central to the teaching of the most ancient school of Tibetan Buddhism, found in the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*. In this wonderful teaching, we find the whole of life and death presented together as a series of constantly changing transitional realities known as *bardos*. The word “bardo” is commonly used to denote the intermediate state between death and rebirth, but in reality bardos *are occurring continuously throughout both life and death*, and are junctures when the possibility of liberation, or enlightenment, is heightened.

The bardos are particularly powerful opportunities for liberation because there are, the teachings show us, certain moments that are much more powerful than others and much more charged with potential, when whatever you do has a crucial and far-reaching effect. I think of a bardo as being like a moment when you step toward the edge of a precipice; such a moment, for example, is when a master introduces a disciple to the essential, original and innermost nature of his or her mind. The greatest and most charged of these moments, however, is the moment of death.

So from the Tibetan Buddhist point of view, we can divide our entire existence into four continuously interlinked realities: (1) life, (2) dying and death, (3) after death and (4) rebirth. These are known as the four bardos: (1) the natural bardo of this life, (2) the painful bardo of dying, (3) the luminous bardo of *dharmata* and (4) the karmic bardo of becoming.

Sogyal Rinpoche, *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying*, Random 1992

No Strings Attached

There was once a very wealthy man who decided that he wished to follow the Sufi path. He went to the shaykh and told him of his intentions.

The shaykh said, “You cannot follow this path. It is very difficult.”

The rich man begged him, “O Shaykh, please accept me as your dervish. I don’t care about the difficulties.”

The shaykh replied, “Then you must be willing to give up everything for Allah’s sake. Go and give up all your riches. Then you can be my dervish.”

The rich man returned to his home. He gathered all his gold and jewels and put them in a big bag. He tied the bag with a rope and attached the rope to a cliff at the shore. Then he threw the bag of riches into the sea.

When he went back to the shaykh to tell him of his deed, he saw that the shaykh was not happy. “O Shaykh,” he said, “I have done what you have asked me to do. Now will you accept me as your dervish?”

The shaykh then looked at him straight in the eye and said, “Not until you cut the rope.”

(From *What About My Wood! 101 Sufi Stories*, by Es-Seyyid Es-Shaykh Taner Ansari, Ansari Publications, 2005)

I Believe

One day I’ll hear the laugh of children in a world where war has been banned. One day I’ll see folk of all colours sharing words of love and devotion.

Stand up and feel the Holy Spirit, find the power of your faith, open your heart to those who need you, in the name of love and devotion.

Yes, I believe

I believe in the people of all nations to join and to care for love. I believe in a world where light will guide us and giving our love will make heaven on earth.

Yes, I believe

In believe in the people of all nations to join and to care for love. I believe in a world and giving our love will make heaven on earth.

Yes, I believe

Sung by Aled Jones – CD ABC Classics

Some Who Can Kiss God

Come to my house late at night –
Do not be shy.
Hafiz will be barefoot and dancing.

I will be
In such a grand and generous mood!

Come to my door at any hour,
Even if your eyes
Are frightened by my light.
My heart and arms are open
And need to rest –
They will always welcome you.

Come in, my dear,
From that harsh world
That has rained elements of stone
Upon your tender face.

Every soul
Should receive a toast from us
For bravery!

Bring all the bottles of wine you own
To this divine table – the earth
We share.

If your cellar is empty,
This whole Universe
Could drink forever
From mine!

(Poem from *I Heard God Laughing: Renderings of Hafiz* by Daniel Ladinsky, Penguin Books, 2006)

Prayer for all Faiths

God of the Universe,
In You we live, move and have our being.
We come from many lands.
We speak different languages.
We follow different ways.
We call You by different names.
But You are above all names,
beyond anything that we can understand,
yet You dwell in our innermost,
most intimate depths,
and You call all of us
to build peace and harmony
among us,
in our communities,
between our communities,
and in our world.
Guide us.
Bless us.
Transform us.
Mould us
. . . to follow You,
above all,
in all,
through all
We ask this prayer
in your Holy Name.
Amen

Fr. Patrick McInerney
Interfaith Summit, May 2012, Bangkok

All tremble when there is a weapon,
Everyone fears death;
Feeling for others as for oneself,
One should neither kill nor cause to kill.

Dhammapada.

While the Buddha was in the town of Shravasti, he called the monks to him and said, "I will teach you what is meant by knowing the best way to live independently."

"We are listening," the monks told him.

He said:

Do not go after the past,
Nor lose yourself in the future.
For the past no longer exists,
And the future is not yet here.
By looking deeply at things just as they are,
In this moment, here and now,
The seeker lives calmly and freely.
You should be attentive today,
For waiting until tomorrow is too late.
Death can come and take us by surprise -
How can we gainsay it?
The one who knows
How to live attentively
Night and day
Is the one who knows
The best way to be independent.

Bhaddekaratta Sutra

Affiliated Traditions and Members

Brahma Kumaris
Jessica Yuille, Sue Morrison,
See Yeung Olivia Yao

Kunsang Yeshe Retreat Centre
Venerable Tencho

Ansari Sufi Order
Shaykh Ibrahim, Yasmin Mayne

Lawson Catholic Church
Fr. Eugene Stockton, 4759 1818

Leura Uniting Church
James Tulip, 4758 8104
Alison Croft, Chrysanthe White

Member of the Hindu Tradition
Ashok Nath

Pagan Awareness Network
Leah Marie Wilkinson

Siddhartha's Intent, Australia
Pamela Croci 4757 2339

The Australian Buddhist Vihara
Rene and Jane Buhler

The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)
Glennnda Marsh-Letts, Frank Lumley

The Thich Nhat Hanh Community
Miriam Brooks

*Emanuel Synagogue,
Woollahra and the
Jewish Community*
Angela Moore
0418 568 008



<http://bluemountainheart.net/interfaith>

Death, be-not Proud

Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;
For those whom thou thinkst thou dost overthrow
Die not, poor Death, nor yet canst thou kill me.
From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be,
Much pleasure – then, from thee much more must flow;
And soonest our best men with thee do go,
Rest of their bones and soul's delivery.
Thou'rt slave to fate, chance, kings, and desperate men,
And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell;
And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well,
And better than thy stroke. Why swellst thou then?
One short sleep past, we wake eternally,
And death shall be no more. Death, thou shalt die.

John Donne 1572-1631

Author and Zen teacher Susan Murphy visited Blue Mountains Sunday, October 28 Santa Maria Centre, Lawson



25 people attended a day workshop on Sunday, October 28 facilitated by Susan Murphy with meditation, creative writing, storytelling and conversation around these themes.

The earth is astoundingly intelligent. It is also in trouble. But is the web of life frayed beyond repair? Are we stuck with a disaster we cannot hope to address?

"No", says acclaimed film maker, author, and Zen teacher, Susan Murphy. In her book *Minding the Earth, Mending the World*, she pulls off a brilliant rethink of the crisis we face, radically challenging the stories we tell ourselves about the world, and the ways humanity might become the solution, rather than the problem. We can learn to listen to the stories the earth tells and to our own essential nature, to be strengthened by earth's intelligence and the healing capacity in nature and ourselves.

Not only is it not too late, but we all have the capacity to embrace this challenge with courage and resolve, rather than fear. We're like a species in recovery, needing to relearn what it is to live within the terms of the Earth.

It was a true Interfaith event, organised by a team of people from Lawson Catholic Church, the Cloud Refuge Buddhist sangha, Goddess Pagaian community Mooncourt and the Thich Nhat Hanh sangha.

Contributed by Miriam Brooks

The Blue Mountain Centre for Religious Enquiry hosted a Forum entitled "Hinduism" on October 21 in the Santa Maria Centre Hall with 60 people in attendance.

Our speakers:

Acharya Rami Sivan is a Hindu priest and teacher of Yoga-Vedanta philosophy. Rami spoke on "Understanding Hinduism".

Sri Vasudevacharya is a teacher in Australia of Non-Duality. Sri spoke on "Introduction to Non-Duality".

GREGORIAN CHANT

Have you ever listened to Gregorian Chant, ethereal music of peace chanted by the monks in church liturgy. You can become part of it by joining our special choir, *Schola Cantorum*, or attend the Latin Mass in Lawson Catholic Church, at 5pm on the second Sunday of the month, with the full accompaniment of chant and action of a *Missa Cantata*.

Enquire from Father Eugene 4759 1818

THANK YOU

The Interfaith Editorial team would like to thank all our contributors and readers for your support and feedback to our 2012 Newsletters.

We wish you all Peace and Goodwill during the Christmas season and a Safe, Healthy New Year.

The next edition of *Light Over the Mountains* having as its general topic "Compassion" will be published in March/April 2013, please send any copy to allan.walsh@exemail.com.au.

Light Over the Mountains is published by Blue Mountain Education and Research Trust (BMERT), ABN 2828 431 2624
254 Great Western Highway, Lawson, NSW Australia 2783
Phone (02) 4759 1034, email olon@tpg.com.au
Designer Allan Walsh, email allan.walsh@exemail.com.au
Printed by Focus Press, phone (02) 8745 4000
Blue Mountains interfaith Group website
<http://bluemountainheart.net/interfaith>

Catholica is an internet cyber community seeking to foster communication with that now large part of the population that has been dropping out of regular religious practice but who still believe spirituality is important. It has been in existence for six years and has a monthly global unique visitor reach of over 30,000 people.



We welcome all people of good will who would like to join our conversation or subscribe to our daily or weekly newsletters. It is all **free**. We rely on donations, philanthropic support, and commissions from sales of books through Amazon, Fishpond, Garratt Publishing, Willow Publishing and the [Blue Mountain Education and Research Trust \(BMERT\)](#) to fund our endeavour. We seek to keep our website open to all people whatever their financial circumstances. Through our association with the [BMERT](#) we are endeavouring to bring the work being done here in the Blue Mountains to the attention of a wider global readership.

Please visit our promotion page for [BMERT](#): www.catholica.com.au/marketplace/bmert