

Growing in Wisdom: Seeking Deeper Generativity

TWO YEARS OF LEARNING AND EXPLORING FOR THOSE SEEKING A SPIRITUALITY FOR THEIR WISDOM YEARS

*Inspired by and drawing various resources from the Forest Dwelling Program
at Oblate School of Theology*

Upcoming Dates:

- June 4 & 5 - a two day “Come and See” where you will learn more about this two-year program. Program being offered on Zoom. Visit [Growing in Wisdom: Seeking Deeper Generativity \(retreatportal.com\)](https://retreatportal.com)
- September 15-18 - First Intensive (dates might be slightly adjusted)
- February 2022 - 2nd Intensive; September 2022 - 3rd Intensive; February 2023 - 4th Intensive
Dates to be confirmed in the coming weeks
- This program will always be offered on Zoom. Select in-person gatherings at various retreat centres will be offered when possible throughout the two-year program. The first intensive will be offered exclusively on Zoom.

Growing in Wisdom: Seeking Deeper Generativity is a program designed for those seeking to engage in their maturing years with wisdom and grace. This is a time in which we can begin to look back on the life we have lived and find openness to new or previously undeveloped inner vistas. It is a time to begin to come to terms with our own mortality and the grace we find in facing this part of our lives with wisdom and satisfaction. This two-year program is a dynamic interplay between and among each participant, the **Growing in Wisdom** Community, and Divine Mystery, assisting in the inner transformation of participants as the journey unfolds. This program is not designed as a traditional educational program with highly structured material and outcomes. Rather, it is an invitation to a delicious smorgasbord of spiritual and intellectual materials, ideas, experiences, people, poetry, arts and Mystery in which you are invited to taste, chew on, set down, go back for more, spit out, or simply marvel at the wonders of the program. Of course, the “treasures” that are discovered in these months will be different for you in the second half of life than they might have been in the first half of your life – the releasing of old identities and our self-importance, to name two of the many “surrenders” that life asks of us in these years. In this program we will explore what is most fruitful and life-giving for us, especially as we age, and what a maturing relationship with God (by whatever name you use) could look like. **Growing in Wisdom: Seeking Deeper Generativity** invites you to explore how you might commit yourself to giving both your life and your death to the world, in a way that both are the ultimate gift and blessing that you give to others.

In **Phase 1** you will begin your journey by setting your intention and exploring what you need to pack for this journey, and equally important what you will need to unpack – old ideas, spiritual understandings, beliefs, and wounds. It is a time to explore new ways of stepping apart for reflection, including the ancient Celtic ways of doing so. A time to explore and deepen new ways of seeing, and new contemplative practices. What is your relationship to your body, your community, your God, and how can this expand and deepen in the ripening elder years? In Phase 1 we will encounter and engage with the biological, psychological, emotional, and spiritual changes which are pushing us out from the familiar territory of our younger life, into the unknown.

In **Phase 2** we wander into new territory, encountering what no longer works, confronting fears, noticing the emotions that come when we are no longer valued in the ways we once were. It is a time for facing and befriending our shadows and discovering new spiritual practices, finding a new rhythm, a new Sabbath in keeping with our changing lives. We are learning to “rest in God instead of restlessly seeking God” (Ron Rolheiser). This is a time of Holy Wandering, leading to new experiences of Divine Presence within and all around us. It is this unsettling that encourages us to practice in solidarity with the Earth beneath our feet: “life right here, right now” (Mary Earle).

In **Phase 3** we begin to make discoveries amidst the realities of aging. Being fully present to the burdens and blessings of the aging process invites us into acceptance of the final season of our lives. We encounter a shift from activities of achievement and being self-important to one of fruitfulness, passivity and facing our deaths, often within spiritual darkness. The aging process is “bringing us into the deeper realm of the spiritual” (Kathleen Dowling Singh) and Mystery unfolds in us as individuals and as a community of dwellers. How will we “be” in the challenges we face? How much kinder would we be to ourselves, how much wiser, if we were to have already transformed loneliness into aloneness, far before the time of our death? (Kathleen Dowling Singh, *The Grace in Aging*). How are we transformed as we discover freedom from old habits and withdraw from old ways of doing and being? In this phase we are invited to discover the joy of liberation from the demand for perfection, and to savour an unexpected release as our attitude of attachment softens into loving detachment.

In **Phase 4** we prepare for the journey onward as “holy fools” (Richard Rohr). Invitations for us include how we will continue to learn to live in a new, mystical understanding of the Body of Christ, living with mature paradigms of Resurrection and the afterlife, and finding the peace of living in shared humanity. As we harvest the fruits of this journey, **Growing in Wisdom**, each participant will encounter questions such as: “what will I have to give away? How will I share this growing freedom that comes with the unpacking of old wounds, the flowing of love and compassion for all, including myself? Who am I as I leave this time of rich learning and experience? How will I live in the Light of a new wisdom, a deeper generativity, informed and willing to surrender fully to life as it is?”

Themes may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Achievement to Fruitfulness
- An Anthropology and Spirituality of Aging and Dying
- Our Last Greatest Gift: Giving our Deaths Away
- Mystical Images for Prayer: Contemplative Awareness and Practices
- Holy Wandering: Pilgrimage in the Currents of Divine Love
- The Earth Beneath my Feet: Life Right Here, Right Now
- Weaving a New Shelter: Celtic Perspectives on Aging
- Diminishment and Vitalities – Becoming a Wise Elder
- Hallowing our Passivities

For more information, please contact Nancy Phillips, Growing in Wisdom Program Coordinator

Cell: 204-470-9437

Email: dnphil@mymts.net