



**Oases Community Learning Activity**  
at the Augustine Centre, Hawthorn, Melbourne

## Augustine Contemplative Path & Cloud Mountain Retreat



The contemplative path program at Augustine (Habitat) offers you an opportunity to participate in an on going practice group. Contemplation is an ancient meditation practice which stresses the need to develop a direct intuitive awareness of our own ground, the great empty ground (unity) of all life.

The early Christian monastic's spent time alone and in community, settling in breath and silence as a way of deepening into loving compassion. While we live different lives, the need is just as great. Finding centeredness in a busy world, we can awaken and clarify what is most important.

### **Core Program**

**Practice group:** Every Wednesday 6-7.15pm. 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesdays 7.15 following contemplation coffee/tea & discussion around contemplative themes.

**Saturday Contemplation:** These are held four times over the year.

**February 27<sup>th</sup>, Saturday 9.30-4pm: 'Being a transformative presence into the world'**-Contemplative practice/Contemplative Psychology' (1) with Paul Sanders & Peter Ross. The day draws upon the contemplative mystical tradition and contemporary psychology. The day is divided between (contemplation) and reflection on themes related to being a conscious presence in the world of our every day.

**Venue - The habitat for spirituality (Augustine Centre) 2 Minona Street Hawthorn, 9819 2844 No need to book. Suggested donation \$20 BYO lunch .**

Other dates for contemplation Saturdays **June 19, Sept 18. Nov. to be announced.**

**Contemplative Retreat: July 9-11/12.** Further details in newsletter.

### **Cloud mountain Retreat:**

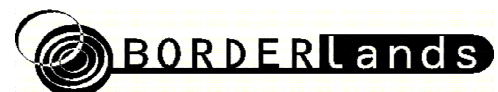
A retreat house in the Southern Grampians for those who would like to take some time for practice and rest. The house is a zen/contemplative environment, designed for those who would like to take some time out for rest, reflection and restoration. Costs have been kept to a minimum to provide this service. Email: cloudmountain97@bigpond.com ph 55772354 0407833515.

**Teachers: Rev. Paul Sanders** has undertaken training in contemplative meditation. Paul is a Uniting church minister and a senior Zen student. He lives and works from cloud mountain retreat in Dunkeld, Southern Grampians.

**Peter Ross** is a psychologist and therapist and has keen interest in how the best of western psychology can compliment and support mystical practices.

**PTO** for further information about the Contemplative Path-room, ritual and structure and approach.

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### ***The Contemplation room , ritual and approach***

The contemplative path as we received it was developed by Willigis Jager a German Benedictine priest who was also a Zen teacher. The Christian Apophatic path (objectless meditation, away from images) shared a great deal with Zen.

The Christian tradition had no actual instructional style or tradition of room etiquette; while this had its own freedom it lacked a unified way of holding a community of mediators, so the Zen style was adopted for this purpose.

**The room structure:** is crafted to give practitioners a container in which to practice. This minimises the need for verbal instruction and holds our intention without needing to worry, allowing concentration on just this moment.

-The room is set in a Zen dojo style 'facing in'.

-There are no actual formal spots except for the timer. (This spot is indicated by the bell, clappers and timer).

-Find a seat, stool or cushion. The best way to use a stool is to take the stool in you preferred hand, place it over your lower legs (legs tucked underneath) and then sit back.

-The room time keeper will call the bell (3 rings beginning and 2 rings afterwards for walking and 1 ring to end the full sitting period) indicating the periods of sitting broken by walking contemplation. Normal periods of contemplation are for exactly 25minutes with walking following.

-The bell is called to indicate beginning and ending of sessions.

-The clappers are sounded to begin and end walking.

-If you need to take a toilet break, best to leave between contemplation sittings and return joining the contemplation walking line. You will then be ready for the next contemplation period.

-There will be on occasion's opportunity to talk with the teacher. The timer indicates this by asking you to place out in front of you the reading booklet. ( this indicates who wants to take opportunity for an interview)

The order of interview is clockwise from the timekeeper who goes first. The time keeper will indicate your turn.

### ***Posture:***

Posture is very important because it sets our attention and mind in the right way. Sitting up straight, body relaxed and alert, eyes half open, cast downwards, hands folded, right hand up, left placed inside with thumbs gently touching. Please do not force anything, work within your physical capacities. If the body is present the mind will centre and if the mind is accepting and open the body will unfold.

### ***Interviews:***

These are vital exchanges between students of the way and teacher. (both who are students of the way) They offer opportunity to clarify questions and approaches around practice. It is a good thing to check in, but this is not compulsory, just encouraged. Normally they are short and allow us to speak to matters related to practice.

### **Encouraging words for practice**

Our practice is to learn acceptance and non-striving. The way is fully open and available. We are learning, and this never ceases. Every time we stop, and be still, we show a willingness to see. We refuse nothing and avoid creating anything. The whole of practice is to allow the Self to emerge, which has been present all along; we just forgot how to notice. Contemplation is an act of attention and allowing each act to widen in its scope. However, we are trained through habit, so developing concentration and keeping a consistent mindful practice breaks old habits and literally trains our minds to be receptive. We are Spirit, Spirit in a particular wonderful energetic form. Our ego (which is very time bound) needs to recognise its conceptual limitation, for Mind (or God/Spirit) is a Unitive whole. Much of our practice is softening our defences and allowing an appropriate functional role for ego. By maintaining our commitment to wake up, our practice opens the heart and compassion towards ourselves, others and the world, which is the way itself.

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