

Leaders Retreat

Narrabri Peace Memorial Uniting Church

Welcome to Your Retreat
Sit Dream Relax
Pray Worship
Rejuvenate



**Copeton State Waters Recreation Park
September 2010**



Winter & Spring and the Rhythm of Life

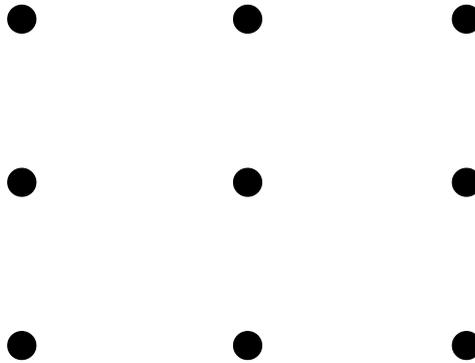
Friday September 10 th			Saturday September 11 th		Sunday September 12 th
		8.00 am	Breakfast	8.00 am	Breakfast
		9.00	Morning Prayer	9.00	Morning Prayer
		9.15	Session 2	9.15	Session 5
		10.45	Morning Tea	10.45	Morning Tea
		11.30	Session 3	11.15	Morning Worship and Holy Communion
		1.00 pm	Lunch	12.00 pm	Lunch
		2.00	Free Time and/or Quiet Time	1.00 pm	Home
		3.30	Afternoon Tea		
		4.00	Session 4		
		5.30	Free Time		
7.00 pm	Dinner	6.30	Dinner		
8.00	Session 1	7.30	Film		
9.30	Supper	9.30	Supper and debrief		



- Session 1: Knowing Me, Knowing You and Knowing God
- Session 2: Seasons of Life and the Rhythm of Ministry
- Session 3: Communing with God
- Session 4: The Challenge of facing the new Season
- Session 5: Life, Death and New Life

Session Two:

Something to ponder about life





Session 2:

Experiencing Grace in our Lives

Reflect and make notes in your journal on the following:

How has God strengthened you in times of weakness, despair, and fatigue?

In what places have you experienced God's grace?

In whose company have you experienced God's grace?

Have you experienced God's grace through literature, art or music?

How has God answered your prayers?

What miracles and wonders have you witnessed?

When have you experienced a supernatural peace?

When have you felt or known that you are unconditionally loved by God?

What are some of the unexpected ways you have experienced God's grace?

What prevents you from experiencing God's grace?

After reflecting on the above questions take an A5 piece of paper from the table and some colour pencils and either write or draw, on several pieces of paper, the ways, the places and the spaces in which you experience God's grace.

When we come back together we will place these on the floor and group them around the cross.

Mark 4:35-38 The Storm

Reflective Questions:

1. Have you ever been caught out in a storm?

2. What were the sensations?

3. What other storms of life have you gone through and will yet have to go through to reach the other side?



Session 3:

Communing With God

Do at least one of these four activities as you meditate on the following questions:

***What does God require of me at this time?
What do I require of God?***

1. Pray while sanding your holding cross, also thinking about who might hold it and how it might hold them.
2. Simply talk to God and hear his still small voice.
3. Without too much pondering, write a conversation between you and God. Let the pen go freely and let the conversation flow.
4. Follow this guided prayer:
 - *Find a place and space where you can be alone with God.*
 - *Have a single focus in mind – this can be an image, a word, a phrase of scripture, or a short meditative prayer that you repeat.*
 - *When distractions come, or you feel anxious or sleepy, acknowledge the distraction [don't fight it] then simply return to your image, phrase or scripture.*

- *Embrace the silence between the repetitions in prayer – this is how you create space for God to be present.*
- *Sometimes, within our sacred time and place and focus, God speaks a simple word for us to hear. Learn to listen to the still, small voice. [Henry Nouwen’s Spiritual Direction]*

[You are invited to follow this prayer discipline for ten minutes a day or so for one week and then discuss your experience with someone else from the camp].



Session 4:

The challenge of facing the New Season

[a] Communing with God provides us with challenges

[b] What passage [story] in the Bible do you find most challenging or difficult? Why?

Journal your response.

How does it resonate or jar with your own experience or beliefs?

- Do you dismiss it?
- Do you live in the tension?
- Do you somehow incorporate it into your own beliefs and experiences?

[c] Coping and working with Challenge

1. Giving in not giving up:

a. Trust – What do we learn about trust from these passages?

John 4: 1-42 and John 9: 18-25

b. Choice – God has already chosen us. Read Luke 5:12-13 and Luke 6: 12-16

c. Worry – Read Matthew 6:25-34

2. We do not need to face these challenges by ourselves.

Additional Reading: "Solitude, Community & Ministry: Three Ways to Create Space for God"

Fr. Henri Nouwen

There is a very beautiful story about Jesus that tells us He went up to the mountain to pray and He spent the whole night in solitude with God. In the morning, He came down from the mountain and created a small community around him, giving each one his name and calling them apostles. In the afternoon with that community, He went to a stretch of level ground and there spoke to the crowds about the Good News of God and healed all the sick.

What I find so moving here is that Jesus went from solitude to community to ministry. I would like to talk to you about solitude, community and ministry as three ways to create space for God. Let me start talking to you about solitude.

I wonder if solitude is important for you. I think for anyone who wants to live a spiritual life, solitude is essential. Solitude is the place where we can listen to the Voice

who calls us the "the beloved." That is what solitude is. It is being alone with God and hearing a Voice there that says, "You are my beloved, on you my favour rests." I think we really have to keep hearing that Voice, because there is a constant temptation to say we are no good; we are useless. If people really knew how I feel, they wouldn't like me.

I live in a community of people with severe handicaps. The problem is not so much that they have handicaps, but that they think they are not loved. That is true for every human person. We are always tempted to say that we are no good; people really don't like us. We are always filled with feelings of guilt, feelings of shame, with many worries. In that way, we really lose touch with the truths about ourselves. The truth is that God loves us, has loved us from all eternity and holds us safe. God has moulded us in the depths of the earth, has knitted us together in our mother's womb, and we really belong in God's arms. In that embrace, we can hear again and again, "You are my beloved

daughter. You are my beloved son.
You are my beloved child."

I think that is why we have to create some solitude in our life so we don't lose touch with that Voice.

Otherwise, we keep begging, going around and saying, "Do you love me? Do you care for me?" We become very restless, anxious people who are never sure that we are really safe, that we are really well loved.

Solitude is creating a little space for God in your life where God can speak to you and where in the midst of all the other voices that ask you do this, to go there, and to be involved to death, you can hear that very Gentle Person saying, "I love you. You are safe. I embrace you. You don't have to beg for love. You are mine and I am yours."

I think that is why Jesus spent the night in prayer, the night in solitude. Sometimes it is hard, because it is night. It is dark and we are not always sure if we are going to hear that Voice, but we have to trust. Once we know that we are the beloved and once we know that we are well held, we can go down from the mountain and start creating community. Every time we live solitude well, we will find ourselves called out of solitude to create community.

There are two qualities of community that I want to talk to you about. They are forgiveness and celebration. That is what makes community, whether it is a formal community, whether it is family community, whether it is a parish community, or whether it is an intentional community. These things -- forgiveness and celebration -- are essential.

Forgiveness means the willingness to always forgive people for not being able to fulfil all your needs. I feel that constantly. I expect people to fulfil all my needs. I expect people to love me unconditionally, and they can't. My father cannot, my mother cannot, my brothers and sisters, my church, the people around me cannot. In a way, I always bump into the reality that people are limited and I want them to be unlimited lovers.

Well, I'm disappointed again and again and again. That disappointment should lead me to forgive my fellow human beings for not being God, for not being able to give me all I need and all I desire. I should also ask forgiveness constantly, again and again, that I cannot offer people that unconditional love I would like to offer. People are disappointed in me, also, because I am not being for them what they hoped I could be.

Forgiveness is really essential. If you want to live in community, you have to forgive, not once in a while, but every day. I think that before breakfast you have had ten chances to forgive, just the way you think, the way you feel. You have so much anger, so much jealousy, so much resentment. We have to keep forgiving. Once we forgive, we can celebrate.

Celebration means to lift up the gifts of the people with whom we live. To lift them up and say, "Hey, brother, hey, sister, I see something beautiful in you and I want to lift it up. I want to celebrate it. I want you to recognize your goodness. You have a gift, a gift of welcome. You have a gift of hospitality; you have a gift of gentleness; you have a gift of humour. I want you to recognize it."

When we forgive people that they cannot give it all, we can celebrate what they have to give us. They can recognize that their gifts are a limited expression of God's unconditional love and a reflection of that. We can rejoice in it and say, "You and you and you all have gifts that make me think of God's unconditional love. If I see you all together, then I start seeing more and more of God right among the people I'm living with."

I discovered that in my community

with mentally handicapped people. They have incredible gifts and I rejoice in these gifts more every day. Once we have a community of forgiveness and celebration, then we can go out and do ministry together. We can go out to people and announce Good News.

What is ministry? Well, ministry is very simple. It is to lay down your life for your friends, to let the way you live your life be a source of hope for others. Every human being is called to do ministry -- you and I, wherever we are. It is not actually a thing we do. It happens wherever we go, when we are living in the spirit of Christ. I want to give you two words that express ministry -- the word "compassion" and the word "gratitude."

Ministry is to be compassionate. In the midst of a very competitive world where we are always comparing ourselves with others and are always fighting -- there is so much rivalry -- we are called to be compassionate. True ministry means, "I am with you. Even though I can't solve your problems, I am with you. Even though I can't fix all the problems, I am with you. I love you." Compassion means to be with people where they are hurting; be with people where they are suffering; be with people who don't know what to do. Just be there and say, "I am your brother. I am your

sister. I am not going to let you alone. I am going to enter in the place of pain with you and that is where you will find healing."

The second quality of ministry is gratitude. We live in a world that is filled with resentment, cold anger. There is so much resentment in this world and we have to move from resentment to gratitude. Real ministry is to say, "I am grateful for you. There is something beautiful in you and I am going to say thank you to you."

Ministry is not just giving but, first of all, it is receiving the gifts of others and being joyful about it. We can do that every moment of our life. We can say, "There is something beautiful in you and I thank you. I thank you for your goodness, for your gentleness, for your smile, for inviting me, but I thank you for just being you and it is good." When you are grateful, then gradually people can let go of their resentment, their anger and discover their own beauty. Through compassion and through gratitude, we can really be people who are a

gift to the world and be people of joy.

Let me conclude. I want to ask you very simply to give a little time in your life for solitude, a few moments a day to be alone with God and hear the Voice that calls you "the beloved" that says, "You are my beloved daughter. You are my beloved son." Can you develop a little community in your family, among your friends, in your parish, with people who love you and who care for you in a limited way and live a life of forgiveness and live a life of celebration together? Can you keep going out to the places of hurt, where there are people who are in pain? Sometimes they are right around you. You don't have to go far. You can just look around in your family, among your friends. Go to people and say, "How are you doing? I see there is some pain there. Can I be with you for a moment?" As you do that, you will discover you will enter into a life of compassion and a life of gratitude. That is the life that Jesus calls us to. That is the life that Jesus lived and He asks us to live with Him, compassionate and always grateful.

Everything will be ok...

As things move and change, making most of us uncomfortable, and uncertain of what may happen next, please hear that "Everything will be OK. God is working things out."

As I write this hub, I think about Paul - who sets an excellent example that reminds us to encourage ourselves - if need be - as he did while locked away in prison. He kept focused on Jesus and his works and his sacrifice. He kept the word of God on his lips at all times and in his heart he nurtured it. He never allowed his faith to wither - not for one moment. He kept pressure on the enemy who was assigned with the mission to destroy his faith.

I keep all kinds of words of encouragement around me in my office. For here is where I spend most of my time during the week and I feel good surrounded by goodness and encouraging reminders that despite it all - Everything will be OK.

My newest, yet one of the most valuable reminders to date, is a little posted note that is simply stuck on my computer that says, "Everything will be OK... God is working things out." I see this everyday first thing in the morning. It makes me feel happy when I look at it because it reminds me that even though everything is changing, moving,

decisions being made, etc. all will work out - with me in mind. God has not forgotten me and my problems.

Especially on those days when the enemy gets a good shot in on one of my weak spots, I just lift up my head and I see my little posted note reminding me and encouraging me that "Everything will be OK. God is working things out." and it fills me with strength and confidence again. I am able to stand strong again. Despite what is going on that I know about and all that I don't. I am refreshed and after glancing over to read it over and over a few times, I am back, good as new. Amen!

Who would have thought that this little yellow posted note would do so much for one woman and her spiritual walk?

This little piece of paper has gained so much value with me. There is nothing fancy about it, it's not marked up with different coloured highlighters, covered with rose petal flowers or even typed out. It's just written in my own handwriting with a regular black pen. Underlined to confirm what is written.

Before I had written it, I use to get at work in my office and begin to flashback and forward about what may happen and what should I do

to prepare as I unfold my day.
But, now that I've had it here on the lower left of my computer for about a month or so I don't find myself anticipating what to do next when... I don't care who sees it, in fact I hope it helps anyone else who lays eyes on it for that is its purpose.

The God we serve is a thorough planner. He has knowledge of our tomorrows that we have no idea about so he is equipped to create a master plan that will allow us to gain the victory over all of our situations if we just keep our faith and trust on him. One of the best pieces of news I can share with you is - you, me - WE ARE ALL INCLUDED IN HIS MASTER PLAN AND HIS PLANS NEVER FAILS! So relax.

We can place our trust our burdens on the threshold of the Lord and he will include them in his planning and rezoning. He will have them all worked out all the way through to the last details - Showing you justice

and equality. Awarding you miracles delivered to your door by your worst enemy. He just asks us to step aside (be still) and allow him to do his work. All we have to do is "trust" in him and his abilities.

So, I close to say, if you need some encouragement, some uplifting good news on a daily basis. Get yourself a little posted note and write yourself a reminder and when those rainy days come, and your faith gets shaken up, glance over to your little posted note and rest assured that all - truly will be OK, because God is working things out for you and me.

Be blessed, hold your heads high and be the child of God he has called you to be. We are separate and different from the world. We must shine from the inside out. We are to be an example of Christ. I love you all, in Jesus Name I pray. Amen.

<http://hubpages.com/hub/Everything-will-be-okGod-is-working-things-out-You-are-in-his-plans-and-his-plans-never-fail>

To end Session 4 :

Take time to consider the five questions and journal your responses to the first three – feel free to find your own space in which to ponder.

- What needs to die for you in your ministry in order for new life to come?
- What has died in your ministry that needs to be raised again?
- Where is your Galilee – the place of beginnings and new beginnings?

Write your responses to the next two questions on the paper provided – they will form part of your offering during the service tomorrow morning.

- What would you like to hand over to God [a grief, a bad habit, a pain, a longing]?
- What spiritual gift or grace or skill would you like to present to God as an acknowledgement of his goodness to you?

Tonight’s movie will challenge many. For some it will provide a new way of seeing. Consider this question when watching:

Is there a message or a new challenge for Narrabri UCA or you personally from this movie?

Study from the Reel Spirituality Institute of the The Brehm Center at Fuller Theological Seminary

INTRODUCTION

Lars and the Real Girl is a postmodern parable about childlike faith and love. It is a sweet, heartfelt portrait of the kingdom of God in action. This faith-affirming

dramedy contains the rarest of cinematic treasures—emotional honesty.

The premise seems ripe for exploitation and cheap jokes. Lars Lindstrom is so lonely that he purchases a life-size, anatomically correct doll. Yet, his love for “Bianca” remains remarkably pure.

Lying on his back in a tree, Lars sings Nat “King” Cole’s classic song “L-O-V-E” to Bianca with innocence and joy.

The entire community is challenged to adopt Lars’ childlike approach to life and love. The results are both comedic and touching. The film could have been dark, twisted and awful. Yet, *Lars and the Real Girl* upholds goodness and light.

Screenwriter Nancy Oliver explains her aspirations, “It seemed to me there were a lot of movies that were dark, edgy, sarcastic and sometimes mean-spirited. I wanted to write something about compassion and goodness, something that was sincere, because I wasn’t seeing that anywhere.”

Lars and the Real Girl reminds us of Jesus’ challenging words, “Unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven”

LONELINESS or NEIGHBOURLINESS REFLECTION:

Lev. 19:18

Luke 10:25-37

Matthew 22:34-40

Romans 13:9-10

The theme of *Lars and the Real Girl* is announced in the priest’s homily, “Love one another.”

Consider the variety of biblical texts which reinforce this commandment. Leviticus 19:18 challenges us to “Love your neighbour as yourself.”

In the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10), Jesus answered the question, “Who is my neighbour?” He expands our definition behind the people next door. Neighbourliness must extend to anyone who is hungry, hurting, downtrodden, or abused. Jesus gathers all of the Law and the prophets in two commandments— “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all mind” and “Love your neighbour as yourself.” (Matthew 22:34-40).

St. Paul reiterates this resounding theme, calling “Love the fulfilment of the law.” The only debt we owe is “the continuing debt to love one another.” (Romans 13:8-10) Lars is brought out of his isolation by the love of others: his family and his girlfriend, Bianca.

QUESTIONS:

1. Do you know people who are isolated and alone like Lars? Who is your neighbour?
2. What kind of hospitality and neighbourliness can you practice? A call, a visit, an invitation to a meal?
3. How far would you go, (even tackling a person like Lars!), to be a good neighbour?

FOOLISHNESS or GOODNESS REFLECTION:

I Corinthians 3:18-19

Matt 11:25

Matthew 7:1-5
Romans 2:1

Gus and Karin struggle with the public's perception of Lars. Gus doesn't want to appear foolish by treating Bianca and Lars as 'normal'. They are challenged to adopt a countercultural biblical attitude. St. Paul explains the upside down thinking of God's kingdom in I Corinthians 3:18-19.

"If any one of you think he is wise by the standards of this age, he should become a "fool" so that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight."

What seems "crazy" or "foolish" to Gus, may have a definite value in the divine perspective. Jesus talked about how God hid things from the wise and learned, revealing them to little children (Matthew 11:25). Gus is challenged to suspend judgment of his brother's behaviour. Jesus offered plenty of warnings against the blindness that accompanies judging others.

St. Paul provided an extensive list of sins in Romans 1. Yet, it was simply to prepare us for his main point in Romans 2:1, "At whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things."

Before Gus dismisses Lars, he must examine his own actions. Gus is snapped back to years earlier, when he left Lars behind with their grieving father. Gus admits, "It's all my fault. I left here as fast as I could. I never thought about him."

QUESTIONS:

- 1. What makes you feel foolish? Whose opinions do you fear?*
- 2. Who have you pre-judged in your community? What would Jesus do?*
- 3. What personal failings do you need to address rather than projecting them onto others?*

CHILDISHNESS or CHILDLIKENESS

REFLECTION:

Mark 10:14-15
Matthew 18:1-6
I Corinthians 13:11
Acts 20:35

Due to a painful past, Lars struggles with human touch. He is locked into a childlike state. Yet, Jesus demonstrated a special burden towards children. He told his disciples to *"Let the children come to me and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these"* (Mark 10:14).

Jesus turned childlikeness into a virtue, declaring, *"Anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it"* (Mark 10:15).

Lars carries out a chaste and pure relationship with Bianca. While the community may be tempted to judge him, Lars emerges beyond reproach. Jesus celebrates such innocence, challenging his disciples, "Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." Yet childlikeness doesn't mean we can act childish. St. Paul shows that love requires a combination of innocence and maturity. We must put away childish ways, putting others interests before our own. Lars must learn how to let go of Bianca, to seek her best interests. Such self-sacrifice is the mark of a deeper love— both innocent and knowing, informed and transformed. Lars and his local community put into practice Jesus' enduring words, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

QUESTIONS:

- 1. What painful aspects of your upbringing make your leery of human contact or close relationships? Ask God to heal those areas and perhaps seek professional help like Dr. Dagmar offers in *Lars and the Real Girl*.*
- 2. Like Lars, in what ways are you still childish, being jealous of others or possessive of relationships?*

Who might you need to free up to serve others?

What rites of passage can help you attain maturity in Christ?

Does your Christian community nurture you? Where can you give back to your local (or global!) community?

CONCLUSION

Lars and the Real Girl is a cinematic delight. Like *Lars Lindstrom*, it is rare, refreshing and deserving of special attention. The movie needs to be savoured and nurtured. At first it may appear off-putting, but patient viewers will be rewarded with a sweet satisfaction.

Lars and the Real Girl sneaks up on audiences, building towards a hard-fought, satisfying conclusion. It wrings genuine laughter and honest tears from an absurd situation. In a world of cynical manipulation, *Lars and the Real Girl* feels authentic, full of lived-religion. From the winter locations to the heartfelt performances through the nuanced script, *Lars and the Real Girl* restores my faith in the movies and in God's people. Make a memorable date with *Lars*. And figure out how you can give back to your community.



Session 5:

Life, Death and New Life

Today we are going to focus on our new lives – so we begin with the six pointers to experiencing new life or to rediscovering new life.

1. Being grounded in the knowledge that God is with us always – he is our bedrock – our foundation – Christ does not take us out of Good Friday but through it – walking with us every step of the way.
2. We need to plunge in and take a deep gulp – not timidly dip a toe into the waters of life – we need to plan extravagantly – unhindered by limitations – if God gives us the vision he will provide.
3. Remember you are set apart – you are commissioned – you must be true to yourself and what you believe – integrity is the key.

4. Keep an eye on the future – don't limit ideas just of the present – Read Romans 8:28 – God works all things to the good.

5. I did it my way! Use your own technique.

6. Do it NOW! Live now – the time is now - what are we waiting for?

Rain – A Nooma video by Rob Bell

Things don't always work out the way we want them to or the way we think they will. Sometimes we don't even see it coming. We get hit with some form of pain out of nowhere, leaving us feeling depressed and helpless. That's the way life is. Still it makes us wonder how God can let these things happen to us.

Questions:

How can God just stand by and watch us suffer.

Where is God when it really hurts.

Maybe God is actually closer to us than we think. Maybe it's when we are in these situations, where everything seems to be falling apart, that God get an opportunity to remind us of how much he really loves us.

Find someone with which to share a fear or anxiety with – an area of life when you and they are feeling alone, or hurt, or scared, or broken.

Pray for each other now and ask if you are both willing to prayed over and your fears over the next week.

Challenge each other to reflect over the next week on God's love and commit to seek to trust God with that fear.

Challenge each other to look for ways you can comfort a friend who is experiencing storms in their life.

Trees – A Nooma Video by Rob Bell

We want to know why we are here. If our life really matters. How our religion is relevant to this life. Today. We want to understand what significance this minute, hour, week, month and year has to our lives. To our world. We need a God who cares about this life, in this world, right now. We want to understand why everything we think, everything we say and everything we do matters. We don't want to just sit back and wait for something to happen or someday to come. We want to know if all the choices we make now will shape our world and lives for eternity.

Questions

Is the world getting better or worse?

In light of your belief, is it hard or easy to believe God's claim that he will make all things new?

Do you believe that you are a part of that plan?

How does loving others make the world into the place God intended it to be?

If God gave people the freedom to choose to live any way they want, why is the world so messed up?

In what ways does our culture teach that life is irrelevant and meaningless?

In what ways are you partnering with God to make this world the place he intended it to be? Can you do more?



Sunday worship

Opening Song

[Tune: To God be the Glory]

Verse 1

Alive to the presence and purpose of God
In Christ name we're gathered
The people of God
Alive to God's presence
And open to hear
God's word in our lives
And God's call to come near.
Come and sing! Praises bring!
In Jesus we live! Come and praise!
Laugh and sing! New hope God will give!
Alive to the presence
And purpose of God
God's word in our lives
And God's call to come near.

Verse 2

Alive to the presence
Of God in the world
Who meets us in strangers,
The young and the old
Alive to the closeness
Of Jesus set free
To live out the good news
through you and through me.
Come and sing! Praises bring!
In Jesus we live! Come and praise!
Laugh and sing! New hope God will give!
Alive to the presence
And purpose of God
Who lives out the Good News
through you and through me.

Verse 3

Alive to the God's purpose
Of justice and care,
To build a new future,
Defeating despair
Alive to God's newness,
New days will unfold
God's spirit gives new ways
in place of the old.
Come and sing! Praises bring!
In Jesus we live! Come and praise!
Laugh and sing! New hope God will give!
Alive to the presence
And purpose of God
God's spirit gives new ways in place of the
old.

Psalm 146 [CEV]:

Shout Praises to the LORD

[Presentation of Holding Crosses]

¹Shout praises to the LORD!

With all that I am,
I will shout his praises.

²I will sing and praise
the LORD God for as long as I live.

³You can't depend on anyone,
not even a great leader.

⁴Once they die and are buried,
that will be the end of all their plans.

⁵The LORD God of Jacob blesses
Everyone who trusts him
and depends on him.

⁶God made heaven and earth;
He created the sea and everything else.
God always keeps his word.
⁷He gives justice to the poor
and food to the hungry.
The LORD sets prisoners free
⁸and heals blind eyes.
He gives a helping hand
to everyone who falls.
The LORD loves good people
⁹and looks after strangers.
He defends the rights
of orphans and widows,
but destroys the wicked.
¹⁰The LORD God of Zion
will rule forever!
Shout praises to the LORD!

The Wellspring of Life

Chorus:

***Like the woman of old, each day – we go
To the wellsprings of life
to find Jesus there.***

Verse 1

*Some days the well seems dry.
We can't reach the water – it's too hard.
Some days, our legs won't take us,
Our hearts are aching, crying...*

Chorus

Verse 2:

*Some days, our minds are reeling.
There's too much happening, we need to
stop.
Some days, our souls are parched,
We need the water – so thirsty...*

Chorus

*Some days, there's no escape,
Life's routine and madness.
Some days, we don't want to go
We can't see the rhyme or reason.*

Chorus

*Some days, we're resurrected
We feel new life inside us.
Some days, our faith moves mountains
We feel life's glory - earth and heaven.*

Chorus

The Benediction

Blessed be the longing that brought you here and that quickens your soul with wonder. May you have the courage to befriend your eternal longing. May you enjoy the critical and creative companionship of the question: "Who am I?" And may that brighten your longing. May a secret providence guide your thought and shelter your feelings. May your mind inhabit your life with the same sureness with which your body belongs in the world. May the sense of something absent enlarge your life. May your soul be as free as the ever new waves of the sea. May you succumb to the danger of growth. May you live in the neighbourhood of wonder. May you belong to love in the wildness of dance. May you know that you are ever-embraced in the kind circle of God.
Amen

John O'Donohue, Eternal Echoes.

