



# Restoration Ministries

He Restores My Soul

Summer 2013

*Dear Friends,*

About two months ago Rose and I had the privilege of participating in a conference in New Mexico. I had been invited to be the pre-conference speaker, looking at the community and justice aspects of the theme. The main contributors were Richard Rohr and James Finlay, and the theme was “Intimacy – the Divine Ambush.” James Finlay was a one-time novice of Thomas Merton. Nearly every sentence was a gem. At one point he said, “We are addicted to the finite in the perception that that is enough for us. Our finite feelings are our comfort zone. We are afraid to pass beyond the frontiers – but – what if infinite love has set its eyes on you for itself alone?” This is the call of the Beloved, of God to each one of us to dare to move beyond the familiar into the realms of mystery. It is an invitation to dare to believe that we are more than the anxieties, the hopes, the worries, the baggage that we carry with us and that we assume are what determine our life story. It is a challenge to awaken from the sleep of two dimensional living and to believe that there is something hidden beyond what we already know, waiting for each of us. What is hidden and yearning to be revealed is infinite love, is the desire in the heart of God to woo us into deeper and deeper love relationship with himself, into that mutuality of belovedness that is the inheritance of every child of God. If you have read this far, then know that Infinite Love is already on tiptoe with expectancy. Our part is to risk passing beyond the frontiers of the familiarity of our particular comfort zone and to wait in the silence for the recognition, the awakening that will lure us onward. Richard Rohr pointed to the same truth when he said, “Spiritual life is about responding to allurements. Religion is a matter of divine seduction, not a worthiness contest.” So it’s not so much about ‘doing’ more as about being and about letting go – letting go of some of our attitudes that act as obstacles, of the conditions we might insist upon before venturing into unknown territory, of the fears, anxieties and grudges that we clutch so tightly to ourselves. And actually you never know how freeing such an exercise is until you start to do it. If letting go became positively addictive, we would be in a very different place in our world than the one we find ourselves in at present.

In late May I went to Canada for three weeks at the invitation of L’Arche, Canada. It was such a privilege to be involved in their National Assembly in Vancouver, to give two public talks on Pathways to Peace, to facilitate a reflection day for L’Arche, Greater Vancouver and then in Calgary to share in a conference entitled ‘Wisdom on the Journey: Walking to a Sacred Place.’ This gathering, supporting the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, brought together people from diverse communities and examined the legacy of Indian Residential Schools. Its purpose was to build and strengthen bridges of understanding and friendship among Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. To respond to the invitation to share something of my own story and the communal story of Northern Ireland over the past forty years was very special. For me it was an experience of metaphorically taking off my shoes before the holy ground of other people’s painful and tortured history and to recognise again our place within a common humanity. I came back with the conviction that we in Ireland still have a song to sing from our broken places of the past that the world needs to hear – a song of hope. But perhaps even more importantly, the onus is also on us to begin to listen with deep sensitivity to the ‘songs’ of others from so many anguished parts of the world – and learn from their courage, their dignity, their endurance, their generosity.

My external travelling is over for the summer but my prayer for myself would be that the inner journey would continue. And for you, dear friends of Restoration Ministries, wherever you travel over these next few months, may your pilgrimage, both outer and inner, be blessed, protected and enlivened by the Spirit.

*Ruth*

# **What a difference a year makes!**

New House!

New Directors!

New Direction!



Same commitment!

Same faithful friends!

Same need of support & encouragement!

Same 'keeping on keeping on'!

Last but not least

## **New website - check it out!**

*We are grateful to Eileen Regan for all her work in re-creating our web to suit our new situation.*

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