

Being a member of a Spred Community is a profound and wonderful experience. Our friends and catechists follow and live out a shared vision. They are in essence spiritual companions who listen with an undivided heart to each other's personal story, encourage and affirm, and help to discern what God wants of us in the ordinary circumstances of our lives.

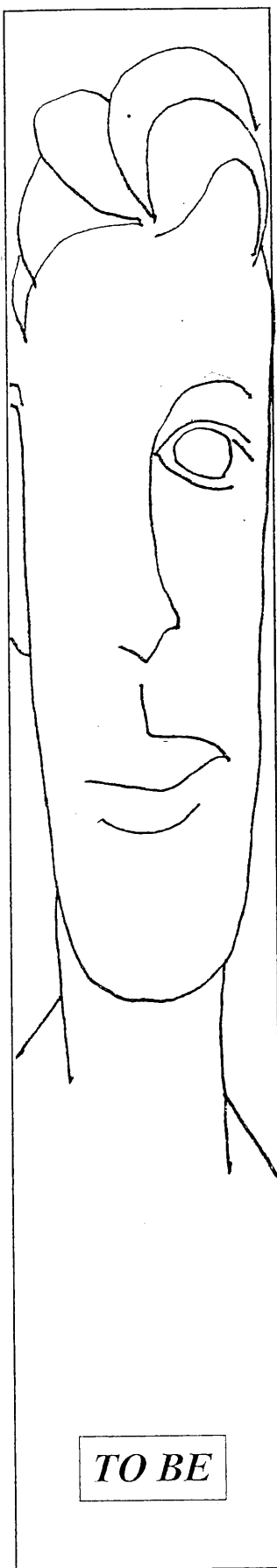
The members of our Spred community are warm, compassionate and caring individuals who inspire confidence in each other. Love underpins our spiritual friendship and we savour its beauty. Spred nourishes our gift in directing others, a capacity marked by compassion and gentleness. It provides for deep human friendships based on self-disclosure and mutual acceptance. It teaches us a Christian understanding of how to relate to one another.

On entering a Spred community, one disconnects from the everyday hassles in order to connect with each member of the group and enter into a different 'mind set', a different mentality. We all find sanctuary in that 'time' that we have the privilege to spend together. We stop, become mindful and delight in the life experiences around us. We are all called to do, not extraordinary things but very ordinary things, with an extraordinary love that flows from the heart of God.

Our everyday lives are full of fragmentation, obligations, problems, hassles and all of these can cause us to become somewhat frantic as we endeavor to deal with all the challenges and issues that arise. As a result, it is difficult to stop, to reflect, to become mindful, which are all very important aspects of this wonderful medium called Spred.

Our spiritual friendship helps us grow in love: love of each other and love of God. It is based on mutual dialogue, exchange, sharing, caring and self-giving. St. Aelred of Rievaul defined friendship as 'agreement on all things sacred and profane, accompanied by good will and love.' This definition very much describes our spiritual friendships, whereby each one shares, each listens, each gives and each receives. We emphasize the equality of all involved, where our friendship begins in Christ, continues in Christ and is perfected in Christ. We all make a conscious choice to be committed to our friendships and this element of choice means that our friendships will be free, open, and each person exercises personal responsibility for our spiritual friendship.

When we sit quietly, when we stop, we become mindful, we find tranquility, clarity, peace and an awareness of life. We become nourished and as a result many blessings emerge from each one:



kindness, concern, compassion, caring, sensitivity, meekness and creativity. 'Spred time' helps us to simplify things, to simplify life, to move away from complexities, and as a result, each one of us can focus on other members of the group, on their needs, their gifts, their talents, their beauty as individuals - namely unique human beings!

At the beginning of a Spred session, everyone is warmly greeted and introduced to everyone, settles into an activity such as drawing, painting, weaving, whatever attracts the person. At first, the effort can be resisted, we can be quiet on the outside but unsettled on the inside. It is so easy to chase every whiff of distraction and one's inner spirit can be worn out. To reverse this situation, time and effort is required. This time and effort is at the heart of the preparation phase of a Spred session. Time is needed to allow ourselves to slow down, to stop rushing, to be at peace, to carve out the possibility of being creative. It is difficult to be creative if one's inner space is cramped, crowded and unsettled. It is only when one's inner space is allowed to open out, to blossom, that the spirit of the person emerges in various creative ways. The activities assist us with the unfolding process.

The passage to the celebration room takes place when the group has taken ownership of that inner space and open time to celebrate the Liturgy of the Word. The session in the celebration room is all about being at ease with that given moment in time. We become familiar with the room, the people, the sounds, the sights, the smells, the music, the touches and the gestures. Our particular group is blessed in having a friend who expresses his spirituality through mime. This talent adds another dimension to our celebration.

Celebration is a communal experience of joy, a song of thanksgiving whereby we celebrate the fact of being together. We give thanks for the gifts and talents that we have been given. Celebration nourishes us, restores hope and gives us the strength to live with the difficulties and suffering that arises in the course of everyday life.

In the celebration room, we become familiar with the inner space among us, between us and within us. That space expands and grows bigger. It becomes beautiful to all of us. So much so, that we can learn from it and carry it out into our daily rhythm of life. We have undergone an experience, a Spred experience. We are no longer concerned about time; we are calm, thoughtful, reflective, 'in touch'. We are gentle; we see each other for who we are and what we are. Everyone belongs and together we are better. We listen attentively to each other because we are aware of the importance of each other. Empathy and trust are evident and form a platform for effective understanding, communication and relationships among the group.

We are now ready for fellowship around the table. We prepare a beautiful table together. We sit down quietly. We share food. We share conversation. We listen to each other's stories. We are happy and at peace. We are happy to be together as a family, sharing. As Spred members, we know what it means to stop, to carve out time and space within ourselves. Spred has been and continues to be a wonderful teacher. We learn how to listen to the word attentively. We learn how to be in communion with all those around us. We learn how to lift up our hearts. We learn how to bless God for the wonders around us and within us. We know how precious each person is in the group and that disability is no barrier to acceptance, that everyone is equal, all friends together.

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We know it is possible to delight in life in many different ways. If we see the day as full of 'presence' we will be at peace. We know that if we care for ourselves, we have a better chance of being kind to others. Spred teaches us to have an awakened heart. An awakened heart is soft, warm, generous and it is gentle. Spred teaches us to respond to each other's rhythms and as a result, we hear more accurately what is truly important and necessary.

We have become more acutely aware of nature and the environment. In his parables, Jesus often referred to nature - flowers, trees, the wind; and ordinary human activities - sowing, reaping, sharing a meal - to give insight into the mysteries of the kingdom. Jesus is the real vine, the genuine shepherd, the true light, the real food.

Spred helps us to be at ease with our own vulnerability and consequently we discover our strengths, our gifts, our talents and our wisdom. We have learned to yearn for the creation of a world family of love, justice, peace and liberation. While our world continues to struggle with religious fanaticism on the one hand and religious indifference on the other, our Spred spirituality explodes with new vision and fresh possibilities for inclusiveness, sharing, generosity and compassion - a more integrated world view.

In the midst of our hectic lives, we can easily become convinced that it takes something really 'big' to turn our lives around. During our Spred time we find a spiritual transformation through the ordinary humdrum of everyday life. We realize that the 'little things' are crucial and by paying attention to detail, little things can turn our lives around. Spiritual transformation is an on-going process for us and our members speak with sincerity and heartfelt appreciation.

Doors can be opened or closed, they can welcome or they can shut out, allow an entrance to or an exit from a place. A door was opened to us when we had the opportunity to join Spred and we are now journeying as a happy, contented family group. We would like to highlight the very special gifts and qualities which were illustrated at the recent commissioning of catechists in Edinburgh, Scotland.

Simplicity, which our friends teach us so openly each time we meet.

Presence, as each week we are totally present to one another through friendship, sharing and prayerful reflection.

Respect, which is totally evident in every interaction we have with one another.

Equality, for we are all precious and equal in each others' eyes and in the eyes of God.

Dedication, in faithfulness and the joyful commitment of our friends, our catechists, our families, our drivers, our priests and care givers.

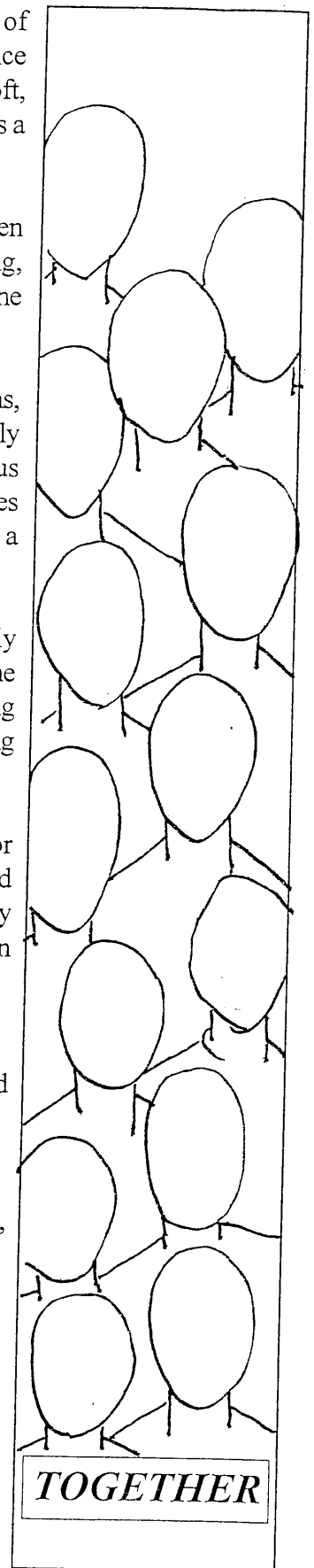
Love, which holds us all together and gives us life.

The Thursday Spred Group, Edinburgh Scotland

Maureen, June, Mary, Christine, Karen, Tom, Jacinta, Charlie, Clare, Stewart, Mary, Patricia, Rebecca and Frank

Jean Vanier, The Heart of L'Arche, Community and Growth, Treasures of the Heart.

Margaret Guenther, Holy Listening, The Art of Spiritual Direction.



SPRED CALENDAR

SPRED FAMILY LITURGIES

Nov. 6, Dec. 4, Feb. 5, March 4, April 1, May 6

SPRED TRAINING

Introduction to Spred

for parish chairpersons, leader and activity catechists.

Saturdays Feb. 11, 18, 25, 2012, 1 to 6 p.m.

Spred Center, 2956 So. Lowe, Chicago, 3rd fl.

312-842-1039 English and Spanish

Role Orientation (Resource Days)

For parish chairpersons, leaders and activity catechists in English and Spanish

Spred Center, 2956 So Lowe, Chicago

312-842-1039 Third floor over the church

Saturdays, March 10, 17, 2012 1:00 to 6:00

FUTURE PLANNING

Please let us know if we can be of assistance if you are thinking of including Spred in your estate plans.

Spred 312-842-1039

MAMRE AUTUMN DINNER DANCE

Saturday, Nov. 19, 2011

Crystal Sky at 47th and Joliet Road

Countryside

OBSERVATION

6-10 Mondays 6:00 p.m. Nov. 14, 28

11-16 Tuesday 7:00 p.m. Nov. 1, 15, 29

17-21 Tuesday 7:00 p.m. Nov. 1, 15, 29

22+ Mondays 7:00 p.m. Nov. 14, 28

Helper Catechist Training

Spred Center, 2956 So Lowe, Chicago, 312-842-1039

Saturday, Nov. 12, 1:00 to 6:00 p.m.

English; Sr. Susanne Gallagher, Mary Claps,

Spanish; Ramiro and Eva Hernandez

St. Francis de Sales Spred Center

Saturday, Feb. 4, 2012, 11:00 to 4:00

33 S Buesching Rd (lower church) Lake Zurich Il

English; Kelly Corrigan, 847-726-4742

All are invited

to a Christmas Family Mass and Breakfast

at Mundelein Seminary, Main Chapel, 11:00 a.m.

After breakfast...Santa!

as guests of the University of Notre Dame Club.

Donations accepted.

Directions:

Route 176, across from Carmel High School on the easter edge of Mundelein Il, Please follow ND signs to the Main Chapel. Questions? contact Terry

Kiwala at tekiwala@gmail.com

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