

**Contemplating Dementia:
Weaving Strands of Pastoral
Care on the Loom of
Palliative Care**

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The Pastoral Landscape

Pastoral Care

Contemplation

Action

Prayer

Service

Contemplating Dementia

Who am I?

“Who do you say I am”?
(Matthew 16:13-16)

“Is cognition the only measure of our presence amongst you?...Certainly my capacity for accurate communication of thought is diminishing daily. It is difficult to find the words for the pictures in my head to communicate with you.....Even if these pictures may themselves one day fade, is my soul connected with this failing cognition: I do not believe this is so. ... I might have difficulty being unable to speak the words of a prayer in my mind, but I can commune without words. As my cognition fades, my spirituality can flourish as an important source of identity. As I lose an identity in the world around me, which is so anxious to define me by what I do and say, rather than who I am, I can seek an identity by simply being me, a person created in the image of god.”


Bryden, C. (2005) *Dancing with Dementia: My Story of Living Positively with Dementia*, Jessica Kingsley Publishers: London

Caring for the person with *Dementia*.....

Caring for the *person* with Dementia

Kitwood, T. (1997) *Dementia Reconsidered: The Person Comes First*, Buckingham, Open University Press.


“Behind your image, below your words, above your thoughts, the silence of another world waits. A world lives within you. You are the one and only threshold of an inner world.”



O'Donohue, J. (1997) *Anam Cara: Spiritual Wisdom from The Celtic World*, Bantam Press: London, Sydney, Toronto.

Authentic Pastoral Presence Exquisite Witnessing


Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
and where there is sadness, joy.



O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive;
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.
Amen

Prayer of St Francis of Assisi

Honouring the Human Story




Presence is a time and a place where we can tell stories of our life.

“Who will tell my story well....when I have forgotten who I am?”

Swinton, J. (2012) *Dementia: Living in the Memory of God*, Eerdmans Publishing Co., Michigan, U.S.A.

Forget Me Not...Hold Me Well



“I may forget who I am, others may name me as a dementia sufferer, but you can still hold me well. Hold me in my past by remembering and respecting what I have been. Hold me in the present as you take time to notice me and remember what the future is for me. Hold me in a possible future, where I can trust that you will continue to love me and not forget me.”

Bryden, C. (2005) *Dancing with Dementia: My Story of Living Positively with Dementia*, p 173. Jessica Kingsley Publishers: London

Living in the Memory of God


‘I will not forget you. I have carved you on the palm of my hand.’



(Isaiah 49: 15-16)

The Fabric of Life

Transition and change, grief and loss are woven through the fabric of life.



Ministry of Memories

Spiritual reminiscence unlocks memories.



The Arts as Key to Memory



“The perennial power of poetry is a privileged medium for the way human beings most meaningfully deliver their lives to one another, and in the process become more whole and healed.”

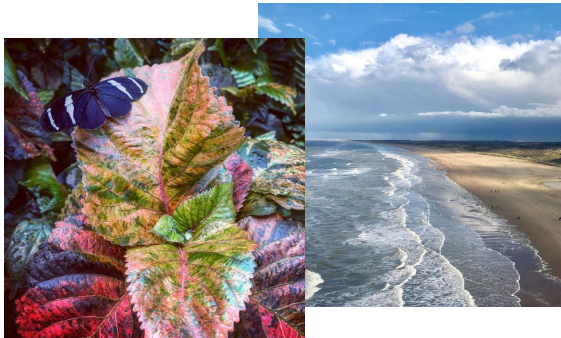
Capp, D. (1993) *The Poet's Gift: Toward the Renewal of Pastoral Care*, John Knox: Louisville, Westminster.



Ritual and Remembering



The Senses as Divine Thresholds



The Mystery of Presence

Knowing about God.....Knowing God



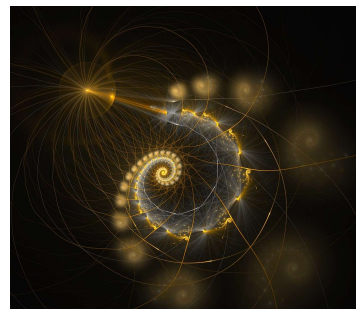
Swinton, J. (2012) *Dementia: Living in the Memory of God*, Eerdmans Publishing Co., Michigan, U.S.A.

Watch With Me

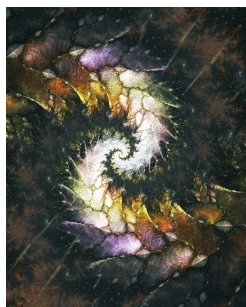
“‘Watch with me’ means more than all our learning of skills. It means also a great deal that cannot be understood. However much we can ease distress, however much we can help individuals to find a new meaning in what is happening, there will always be the place where we will have to know that we are really helpless. To hold the space wherein the miraculous and mysterious can happen is not so much about the skills that I have but the self who I am”.

Saunders, C. (1965) "Watch with me." *Nursing Times*, (26 Nov), 1615-1617.

Cultivating the Art of Presence – The Golden Threads of Stillness and Silence



The Ministry of Absence



Wholesome Weavers

“To be wholesome, we must remain truthful to our vulnerable complexity....In order to keep our balance, we need to hold the interior and exterior, visible and invisible, human and divine, known and unknown, temporal and eternal together.”

O'Donohue, J. (1997) *Anam Cara: Spiritual Wisdom from The Celtic World*, Bantam Press: London, Sydney, Toronto.



Community of Weavers



Soul Song

Silent silence, sleepless sleep... in endless,
timeless time ... a soul song sings in voiceless
voice ... on an empty strand ... in no man's land.

Standing on the shifting sand ... in spirit of
persistence....

Sensing the empty nothing of a worldly world ...
encountering the eternal Everything ... of a
blessed and broken existence.

Martina Corrigan