

Workshops

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workshop 1 – Switzerland

Does Spirituality contribute to happiness?

Introduction

The violent crises we face today affect all areas of life, even the most personal.

The number of people who feel unhappy is continuously increasing. Similarly, are the offers that propose happiness sincere or dishonest? Advertising and the media are full of them.

What do we think about happiness as Christians? Are we happy? Do we want to be happy in the face of increasing misery?

What kind of happiness do we find desirable and what is not?

Was Jesus a happy man? What role does spirituality play in our search for happiness?

Workshop structure

First, we discuss our personal experiences of happiness. We compile a few and compare them to find possible similarities.

Then we turn to the Beatitudes in the Gospel according to Saint Matthew. What light do they shed on our experiences and convictions? Do we feel convinced, where are we challenged?

In the third step, each person reflects in silence on what is most important to them, what they want to put into practice in everyday life and draw inspiration from it. Each person is free to share their point of view.

We conclude with a moment of meditation.

workshop 2 – **Belgiun frenchspeaking**

A journey of ecospirituality

We are proposing a moment of meditation, sharing and creativity.

What does the word « ecospirituality » mean?

Many people think more and more that ecology and spirituality make a whole. From there, this new word. In the background of this concept lies a new vision of our place in the world: humans are part of the living which is part of them.

Ecospirituality offers a way of changing course in a world in crisis. Our era is dominated by a logic of growth, production and consumption. We are poisoned by competition, selfishness, avidity, profit and fear. We are prisoners of all what we are induced to buy, to long for. That doesn't make us happy; on the contrary, that leads us to inward-looking. Moreover, it generates unbearable inequities and exhausts our planet.

A large environmental and social transition is essential, a mutation towards a society that sustains the living. But society can not change without a profound changing of the human being. To realize this changing we need a spiritual path, an interior transition. When cultivating virtues like gratitude, humility, compassion, courage and solidarity, the interior transition increases our ability to accept the renunciations and sacrifices – in terms of comfort and consumption – we are called to by taking the social, ecosystem-based and climate upsettings seriously.

Spirituality as energy towards transition. Transition as energy towards spirituality. Building a regenerating culture by cultivating and re-harmonizing four links: to oneself, to others, to the living, to what is taller than us. Those links will enable us to sustain and make the alternatives, the fights and the individual and collective resilience more powerful. A meaningful and relying path to make us able to go through the coming tempests.

This journey is inspired by « Reliance. Manuel de transition intérieure » edited by Actes Sud in 2023.

workshop **3 - France**

Sharing spiritual experiences

Moderated by Gilbert and Marie-Pascale Clavel

Each and every one of us, individually or in groups, has had significant spiritual experiences.

This workshop will provide an opportunity to share experiences and ask questions about what we mean by spirituality, the context that makes such experiences possible, and the contributions and effects of these experiences for ourselves and the community.

workshop **4 – Netherlands**

New rituals

Practical exercises with new rituals.

‘Many people have a personal relationship with the mystery and wonder of life. Through love or relationships, through connections with nature, through music, or other arts, pain, illness, or experiences with psychedelics. I think those are very important. That we can evoke a deep sense of connection to life and a sense of wonder about our existence is beneficial and even crucial for the survival of the world. It makes us see ourselves less as masters of the universe.’(Joost Vervoort)

- 1) Introduction round
 - 2) Which ritual once impressed you? Can you indicate why?
 - 3) We think up and perform a new ritual, arising from each other's experiences. e.g. in mourning and death, transition to another life situation or based on a theme such as water, earth, climate, war and peace.
 - 4) In principle, if possible, we can use the whole building and also the outside space
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workshop 5 - Austria

The communitarian dimension of spirituality

Introduction

For grassroots communities, the community dimension of their spirituality is a pivotal issue. As grassroots communities we discovered very early that *belonging* precedes *believing*. A spirituality that remains isolated, detached from its community dimension, remains ineffective and shortlived. The exchange in this workshop helps us to find out what has motivated us over the years to share our lives with others, as brothers and sisters, equal in dignity and belonging in grassroots communities.

We are invited to follow the story of coming together and strengthening our community bonds. We see how we have met different people, “strangers” and became closer to each other. We see how we have networked with other communities, how we are related to the first Christian communities and how we are united with Jesus, his disciples and his work of liberation and new creation. This process can even allow us to experience how, like the people of Israel, we are liberated together from every foreign rule. In all these layers we discover and share the common ground, the unifying spirituality, the rich community-building resources that connect us with each other and with the many others, without forgetting the people who are still 'foreign' and isolated and who still suffer under the consequences of multiple foreign rule.

workshop 6 - Spain

The Reasons that move us and give meaning to our lives

We are in a time of transit, of identity adjustments. Postmodernity has brought us perplexity and disenchantment. The great narratives have weakened and it seems to us that we walk on the sea instead of on dry land, that we float in a metaphysical void, without referents, with a lot of hubbub, where hoaxes and influencers triumph.

Family, sexuality, social structure are no longer the same. Wars that we thought were over are back. Politics has become polarised, fascism, militarism and segregation are revived. We move like sparrows en masse from here to there, invading harbours and mountains, under the algorithms

of AI and at the whim of unjust world trade. Every day we are more and more spied on by the eye of social media.

In this context, **religion fades or implodes into fanaticism**. In minority sectors it is transformed into a supra-ethics and a new spirituality. It seems that the cloud of God is no longer in front. The most sacred is shaken and the most mundane is dignified as sacred. The planet and our societies take on the face of a woman on fire. Our mystery is no longer the mystery of the hereafter but the mystery of the here and **our way of saying "God" is no longer religious**. The moral and political causes that have so captivated us are changing their foundations.

And that is why:

AIM OF THE WORKSHOP

This workshop aims to offer new reasons for hope, not so much derived from outdated myths as from a scientific and poetic look at the incessant creativity that brought us into the world and recreates us. The workshop will illuminate a change of underwear, another model of hope. A rediscovery of the sacred at the heart of science, political love and life. At the exit of the temple.

STRUCTURE OF THE WORKSHOP

1. Introductions and listening (awareness-raising).
 2. Our causes and hopes: from the working class world to vulnerable peoples, to pacifism and ecofeminism (brief memory of liberating experiences).
 3. The post-religious and post-ist transition. The Reinvention of the Sacred (exhibition)
 4. Where I am, what moves me (practical exercise)
 5. The well of hopes
 6. The Hope International and the "wisdom" of Jesus of Nazareth (homework)
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workshops **7 - Belgium flanders**

Integral spirituality

The classic "image of God" no longer works. More and more people are abandoning it. What's more, back home in Flanders, there's a hostile atmosphere: "believing" in God, Father Christmas or Saint Nicholas has nothing to do with reality or scientific knowledge. Believing in God is ridiculous. When I tell people around me that spirituality is my passion, they look at me with disdain. Yet it is widely accepted - even by atheists - that 'believing' increases the mental strength of individuals and the cohesion of society. As José Arregi taught us this morning: we need to enlarge the "image of God". We all know that, but you can't convince non-believers simply by broadening the "image of God". Yet this would be a service to people and to society, and what's more, it's a task that Jesus has entrusted to us.

In order to enlarge this "image of God", we need to get back to basics: What is the scientific essence of religion, religious experience and spirituality, and how can we formulate it today? What needs to be done to bring more spirituality, love and compassion into the world in a way that is manageable, scientifically grounded and fits into a contemporary worldview?

In this workshop, we'll be looking for the answer. There are so many definitions for the words religiosity and spirituality and we'll be adding another to them, not because it's the truth, but simply to make sure we're talking about the same thing so there are no misunderstandings. After this weekend you can forget about them. What is the *raison d'être* of religions? What is the biological process that makes us believe? What is my individual image of God? How did the universe come into being? What is a contemporary world view? And finally, how can we promote an integral spirituality?

I'll try to explain these concepts to you in a half-hour introduction, than we will discuss it all together.