



SPRED

Archdiocese of Chicago



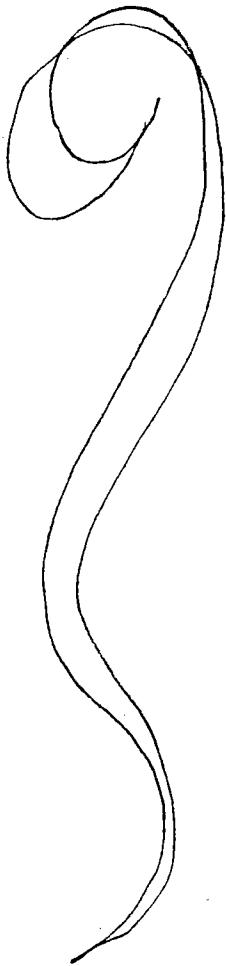
SPECIAL RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENT

2956 South Lowe Ave. Chicago, Illinois 60616

312-842-1039 www.spred-chicago.org

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THE

SPIRIT

"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep (deep space, maybe) and the Spirit of God moved over the face of the waters."

The elements of the universe are made up of atoms, and matter consists of many combinations of atoms. Hydrogen, used in the making of destructive bombs, has been used to bring death and destruction; it has only one particle. But Oxygen, the first thing we reach for in a life saving emergency, has eight particles. When hydrogen and oxygen unite there is 'room' for two hydrogen atoms to combine with one oxygen atom to produce H₂O, water, the essential element for life on earth.

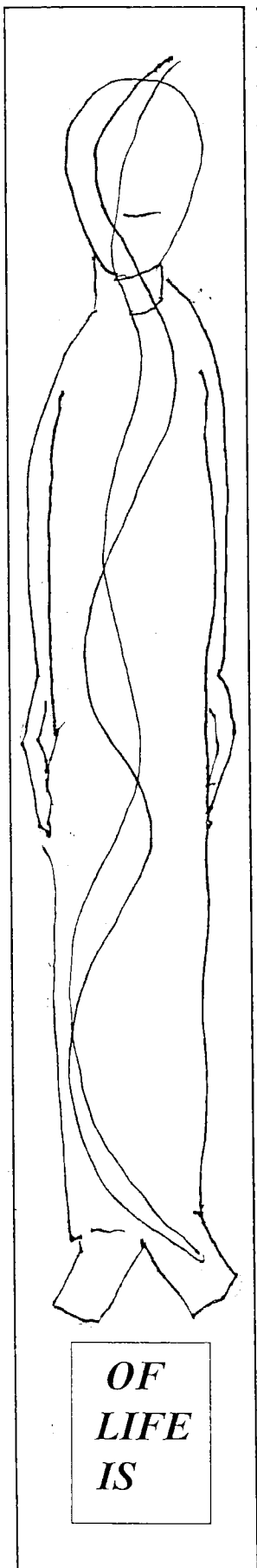
As Spred members we are perhaps more acutely aware of the properties and qualities of water. We frequently use water for our symbol, for liturgical references, and even for our activities but have you ever thought of water as a combination of different realities? Have you ever considered your Spred group being the result of a combination of different elements resulting in a new example of response to life? A group of united individuals assisting each other?

In Spred there is a group of Eight people who are busy, efficient, 'multi-taskers' who are glad to be able to give time and help to others. They make steady, and sometimes hectic, progress through life. Like St. Martha in the Gospel, they are 'busy about many things.'

There is also a group of Six people whose main focus is on the effort of the here and now. They follow a different kind of route through life. Society doesn't always have time to consider how to accompany them or enable them to make progress. Like the psalmist in the Scriptures, they 'wait for God's word'.

The group of Eight have responded to the Gospel call to service: "I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me." (Mt.25:35)

They give time, attention, effort, energy to the task set before them, but that task demands a change of pace, a change of outlook, a change of pathway. How is this achieved? Those of us in this group need to prepare, to move our focus from our busy competence to the quieter level of life in which the group of Six realize their potential. We, therefore have our extra meeting to quietly listen to one another's needs and stories.



The group of Six, on the other hand, are people who live with the necessity of managing the task in hand, of accepting the presence of others in their lives, of always being sure of the confirmation of the Scripture: "Lord you have the words of eternal life...we have come to know that you are the Holy One of God." Like Elijah they are able to identify the 'still, small voice.' (Kg.19:12)

So in our Spred groups we have two different elements of life, a group who are willing to change pace, and a group who are willing to be guided, but when these two groups combine something happens as well. What is the power of their combination? Each group helps the other to grow, to respond to God's presence, to be more aware of the church community. As we offer our responses to each other, we change, we grow in awareness, we move deeper into the mystery of God's presence, and we are aware of receiving, of having been gifted.

The growth which takes place is personal to each of us, but it is also a corporate growth, the development of a faith community in which each member contributes to the upbuilding of the whole and causes the group to flourish in unity, reaching out to those outside the group as a 'mini-powerhouse' of believers, a new reality, a corporate unit of attentiveness. Attentive to...what?

The creation of atoms, the existence of elements, the structure of the universe, the patterns of the planet, and the gift of life to the human race - and even the gift of a drink of water - all stem from one true source, our God, who made "all things out of nothing."

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God moved over the face of the waters."

The movement of God's Spirit is eternal movement, flowing from the heart of God to give existence to all that is, "to give life to all living things" - all the time. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God and all things were made through him."(Jn.1:1)

The flow of grace comes from the heart of God -an unending gift- and gives value to all existence. When "the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us" he spoke of living water, not the elemental H₂O variety, but the pure gift of life, flowing from the heart of God.

When Jesus spoke at the well with the woman of Samaria, he said: "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying 'give me a drink' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." (Jn 4:10) And he told her, "the water that I shall give will become a spring of water welling up to eternal life."(Jn. 4:14)

St. Hilary in his writings declares that "out of his heart will flow rivers of living water" refers to the Holy Spirit. "This river of God is brimful, for we are flooded with the gifts of the Holy Spirit. That spring of life, that river of God in full flood pours into us." (Discourse on the Psalms) This is true for each one who participates in a Spred group, no one is left out or short changed, but it is also true of each group as a whole. Each Spred group receives from the Holy Spirit the grace of becoming one in its attentiveness to God's Spirit.

A communal strength is granted to us through our service of each other. We are enriched with an awareness of God's love for us. It also reaches out from us to those around us. This woman of Samaria, when she listened to Jesus, realized that she was on the verge of an unfolding mystery. She went off and told others and brought them to the place where Jesus was so that they too could hear his words.

When our Spred group gathers in the place where we know that, though unseen, unheard, the Holy Spirit opens each heart and mind in whatever way he chooses, when we, disparate persons, gather together in our combined group, we call each other to 'come and see'. Our meeting place becomes for us a place of encounter. Like the Samaritan woman we may not feel that God's Spirit is working in us, but we know that there is a treasure for us in this place.

Each encounter with one another moulds us into unity, that unity of attentiveness which readies us to open ourselves to the presence of others and to their part in our movement toward God. We work together in quiet peacefulness and when we are at peace together we are able to move closer to the source of life.

The celebration space is where we gather to be prompted by the Holy Spirit to take another step along our own pathway to God. It becomes like the Upper Room in which the Apostles were ignited by the Spirit coming to rest on each of them. In our space, we wait together, we listen together, we receive the gifts of the Spirit and by the power of these gifts our hearts and minds are directed to the Scriptures. We only need to hear a very short passage of Scripture. The gentle repetition of those few words enables everyone to catch hold of them and enhances their meaning in our own spirits - no matter what human reaction may be taking place around us!

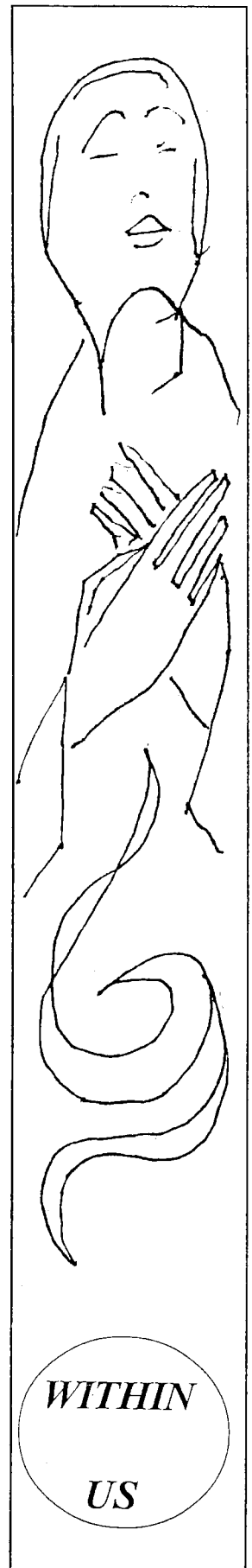
The receptiveness of the whole group means that the individual, personal message is received by each one with true sincerity. The responses are not all expressed in the same way. Gladness, wonder, puzzlement, challenge, these are all ways the human spirit acknowledges the presence of God's Spirit in the flow of life.

The flow of life coming from God since before time began is an eternal movement, but we need to interrupt time in order to attend to it, to re-awaken ourselves to its gifts, to refresh in our lives the influence it has on us. That is why we step out of time each week and gather as a Spred group, a preparing group one week, a group 'resting in the Spirit' the next week.

That flow of life is the 'living water' of which Jesus spoke. He said "Those who believe in me, out of their hearts shall flow rivers of living water. Now he said that about the Spirit which those who believed in him were to receive." (Jn 7:38) As we leave our Spred group week by week, we are each strengthened in the gifts of the Spirit we carry with us and we make our contribution to the community of believers to offer praise and thanks to our God.

"O living water, refresh my soul; O living water refresh my soul.
Spirit of joy, Lord of creation, Spirit of hope, Spirit of peace, Spirit of God."

Sr. Margaret Duffy, SND
Paisley, Scotland Spred



SPRED CALENDAR

Spred Training

Introduction to Spred, Feb. 9, 16, 23, Chicago 1-6pm

Spred Center, 30th and Lowe, 312-842-1039

Role Orientation, March 9, 16, Chicago 1-6pm

Spred Center, 30th and Lowe, 312-842-1039

Spred Family Liturgies, Chicago 11:00 am

Spred Chapel 30th & Lowe

Feb. 3, Mar. 3, April 7, May 5

Observation

6-10, 6:00 pm Monday Feb. 11, 25, March 11

11-16, 7:00 pm Tuesday Feb. 12, 26, March 12

17-21, 7:00 pm Tuesday Feb. 12, 26, March 12

22+, 7:00 pm Monday Feb. 11, 25, March 11

Spred Reflection Weekend, January 4th to 6th, 2019

St. Benedict Abbey, 12605 224th Ave. Benet Lake WI

Arrival 7pm Friday, Departure 2pm Sunday

Register: www.queenofangelsspred.org /Julia Hess 773-539-7510

SPRED

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Core Team Morning of Enrichment, Sat. Jan 19

10:00 am to 12:30 pm, Spred Center 30th and Lowe.

Above church, enter through parking lot to 3rd floor

RSVP Elizabeth Sivek, 312-842-1039 Ex. 220

Donation Requested