

ENFOLDED IN LOVE: A REFLECTION....



It's Friday evening. 7pm. One by one the women arrive, feeling their way up the steep external stairs of the old timber cottage. A conversational hum welcomes them as they join those gathered in the kitchen. Refreshment is fruit and licorice teas, served in Art Deco tea cups. Dark chocolate, ginger and a choice of nuts complement the beverages.

On a weekday morning another group gathers, and the verandah becomes the sharing space. It's birdsong among the greenery of the garden that greets those gathered, while the hum of traffic reminds us that we live in the world, even when called to be apart from it.

Who are these women, and why are we meeting?

The groups are an outcome of a 6 day silent retreat held last year. **Enfolded in Love** – a retreat guided by Dr Kerrie Hide and directed by Sr Catherine Hefferan focused on exploring and experiencing Love's evolving through reflecting on the wisdom of Julian, Mechtild, Ilia, Teilhard and others. Through embracing silence and stillness we '*became aware of the essential relatedness of all things in a single centre of Love.*' (Duckett 2014) and a deep yearning emerged: to

*become a point of light within the world.
At the present time a map
is being unfolded made of the lights
of the lovers of God.
The purpose of this light
is to change the inner energy structure of the planet'.*

(Llewellyn Vaughn-Lee: Spiritual Ecology)

Enfolded in Love gatherings were born.

Monthly gatherings bring matters of the heart to the light of Love for the healing of our planet. During the first 20 minutes a theme emerges which frames our intention for the silent space. Environmental and relevant social justice issues are usually uppermost. Preparation time follows: wisdom from the retreat, poem, reflection from ancient or modern mystic. How often the pre-selected extract dovetails perfectly into the intention for that gathering...

And so, to silence. '*we are ... drawn into a more profound enfolding and all-encompassing union:
a communion of hearts indwelling each other in love....
we become universally human and common-ally conscious.*

We move into the cottage's inner space. Candle glow illuminates the darkness, choral and Celtic voices prepare us to deepen our practice and Tibetan bowl sings for the period of heart-silence to begin. Love's energy rises and Golden Retriever Adele enters, visiting each enfolded in turn, settling down in our midst: a non-human reminder of the universal nature of Love's enfolding.

Bowl sings again to end our formal session. Silence continues, too deep for utterance. One by one enfolded arise, embracing the night as they leave. No verbal farewells: heartfelt hugs conclude the evening. It is understood that we take our silence with us into the world beyond these walls.

In the morning gatherings it is Creation that calls us to silence. We drink in summer's warmth and sink deeply into that space. Our intention will be different from Friday night, but the format and atmosphere is the same. A silent farewell hug, and the formal time is over. What continues is the ongoing impact of our silence experience: viscerally, emotionally, spiritually.

Once again our gatherings have woven their magic: enriching us with the felt awareness of Divinity in our midst, and our role in bringing to light the ever unfolding Love that is around and within all.