

# BREATHING

**BREATHE-RESPIRA**

Breathe—Respira  
NEWSLETTER

**Volume 1, Issue 4**

## Joy and a Lenten spirituality

Antonio Ramirez de Leon, Ph.D.

Do you know that the term "spirituality" was not used until the 17TH century in France? That this word did not have a very positive meaning, because they lived in an Era where the reason was enthroned, as it is now in some circles. All the "spiritual" was seen as suspicious, because it was not "measurable, manageable, and often not observable". It was the time of positivist philosophy that open the way to the scientific method, which until recently was thought completely objective and definitive.

Today, the word spirituality is not only fashionable, but it is

used in different circles, including the scientific. The scientists say today, that what had previously seemed orderly and predictable, is really mysterious and open to all possibilities. Moreover, they don't speak of the "universe" but possible "universes" or "multiverse". A good scientist is always open to new information and rectifies his theories to new evidence. There is something called today "quantum spirituality," imagine that!

Spirituality, has religious and philosophical foundations and is now a term used in traditionally secular

areas. We know that there are religious spiritualities as Christian, Jewish, Muslim, or Buddhist. There are also native or "indigenous" spiritualities. And now we have secular spirituality. They speak of spirituality in the social sciences, in psychotherapy, medical health, in sports and even in business! And I'm just mentioning some novel areas of spirituality. There is much more.

(For more information, read the book: "A very brief introduction to Spirituality" by Sheldreke)

(Cont pg 2)

### Seeing the Beauty and Goodness in Front of Us

We don't have to go far to find the treasure we are seeking. There is beauty and goodness right where we are. And only when we can see the beauty and goodness that are close by can we recognize beauty and goodness on our travels far and wide.....

Let's try to see the beauty and goodness in front of us before we go elsewhere to look for it.

*Henri Nouwen*

## THE ART OF CULTIVATING POSITIVE EMOTIONS

By Amira Valle

William James, the father of Psychology, once said: "That in which we fix our attention determines the quality of our life experience."

In order to understand his words, let's imagine that

we are at the top of a mountain, contemplating the landscape surrounding us. Mindfulness is like a spyglass; a lens through which we can carefully observe things, and that we can direct wherever we

want.

The view is magnificent from the top of the mountain, but, What happens if we suddenly (cont pg 2)

**Interested in Talks or Counseling?**

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## Joy and a Lenten spirituality

(Cont)

There are no "General" spiritualities, because all have something in particular. In my case, I try to live a Catholic Christian spirituality. However, within this same spirituality there are specific nuances or emphasis, for example there are spiritualities more ascetic (strict and with lot of discipline), mystical (based on inner experience), ordinary / practices (every day), and prophetic - critical (struggle for social justice).

Without going to much into the topic of spirituality that we are studying in the 8 week course at Holy Trinity, I would like to invite you to increase and deepen your own and particular spiri-

tuality. Especially now that lent begins. Now, we could speak of a Lenten spirituality, which can be defined, as a path of transformation and



purification of what prevents us from being free and love with greater sincerity.

Perhaps you, like many of us, you decide on Ash Wednesday to put ash on your forehead. Ash can represent your desire and commitment to live an authentic life and your wish to be transformed by the One who loves and wants the best for you. That love becomes a source of joy even in the Lenten time. If you don't believe me, read the words of Francisco, the human Pope, and the Happy Pope: "Life is full of joy for those whom let themselves be found by Jesus". **Jesus, the man-God: LOVE.**



### THE ART OF CULTIVATING POSITIVE EMOTIONS

(Cont)

perceive a garbage dump? Our habitual reaction is to keep our attention fixed in this unpleasant event, unable to get our minds away from it. This is what is called rumination of our negative experiences. This attitude brings us anger and leads us to perceive an unpleasant and threatening world, but we can always direct our spy-glass towards the beautiful part of the landscape!

A good idea is to make a list of that which makes us happy, that we enjoy, like hugging our children, or walking the dogs, or go for a walk, or sharing dinner with the family...Once we've managed to direct our attention towards something positive or beautiful, we most stop to examine it intently, and to savor every minute detail.

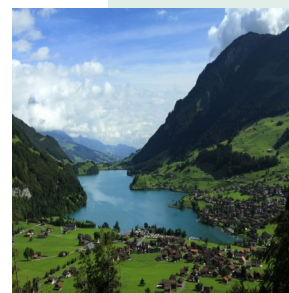
When we open ourselves to the delight and joy of positive emotions, we allow them to linger in us, they permeate us, and we build neuronal pathways in our brain that produce this state of mind. This is called neuroplasticity.

If we mentally recreate the situations in which we've experienced positive emotions in our life and we try to make this image as vivid as possible, to retain it in our minds as long as possible, and to enjoy this emotion fully conscious. We will be creating the brain circuits that will enable us to perceive and enjoy the good things that are continuously presented to us in our lives, but which regrettably pass inadvertently by us.

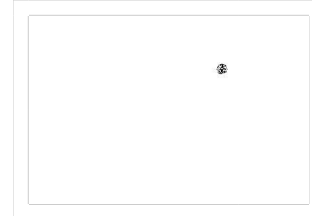
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"let's imagine that we are at the top of a mountain, contemplating the landscape surrounding us. ..."


**What do you see?**



**And, what do you see here?**



# March 2014

Dom	Lun	Mar	Mier	Jue	Vie	Sab
						<b>1</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> ASH WEDNESDAY	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> 	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>					

## Mark your Calendars

- **3/6** 10 am—12 noon  
Teologia & Espiritualidad
- **3/13** 10 am—12 noon  
Teologia & Espiritualidad
- **3/20** 10 am—12 noon  
Teologia & Espiritualidad
- **3/20** 7pm—830 pm  
Theology & Spirituality  
(English)
- **3/27** 10 am—12 noon  
Teologia & Espiritualidad

**Check our website for new upcoming events**

Theology & Spirituality  
Faith Formation Building at  
Holy Trinity Catholic Church  
San Antonio Texas

## THE ART OF CULTIVATING POSITIVE EMOTIONS

(cont)

Creating a positive emotion is an art that can be cultivated. It requires that we direct our attention to that which is pleasant to us and which makes us happy. It also implies training our mind to fully enjoy each moment, with no hurry, and to register this memory consciously in our brain, in our memory and in our heart.

***It is sure worth trying!***

Amira's  page in Facebook:

***Elephant-Wise-LLC-A-Journey-to-a-Mindful***

