

SPIRITUAL DIRECTORS INTERNATIONAL - EUROPE

meeting in JÄRVENPÄÄ, FINLAND

February 8 - 11, 2002

There were twenty-four persons, members of SDI and others, present at the 3rd gathering of S.D.I., Europe which took place at THE INSTITUTE for ADVANCED TRAINING of the THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH, JÄRVENPÄÄ, FINLAND.

This year's meeting was most professionally organised and hosted by Seppo Häyrynen, Sisko Raitis and Heikki Kotila.

The venue added to the enjoyment of the event with its beautiful Agricolan Chapel, its bright, well-appointed spaces and its close proximity to "Ainola", the home of the Finnish composer Jean Sibelius.

At our Opening Meeting absent members were remembered and greetings were shared, new members were welcomed and familiar faces smiled, testimony to a happy supper and a life-giving ministry!

Heikki invited everyone to display their symbols in 'Luentosali 1' in preparation for Saturday's: "Sharing Our Gifts, Our Pains, and Discovering Our Hope".

Liisa Viitaniemi then led us gently through Evening Prayer, Taizé style, with chants and recorder playing.

On Saturday morning Patricia Roberts guided us in Body-Prayer with Tai-chi to greet the new day and the rich programme which lay ahead.

This comprised 'Sharing Our Symbols', an exercise which generated much interaction in the Plenary group and also lent itself to deep moments of sharing in small groups.

The afternoon visit to "Ainola" allowed us to reflect on and explore our Cultural identity and Spirituality in small groups. Henry Morgan's "Eucharist without words" was surely the most fitting 'sunset' to a very rich first day.

Sunday began with Anglican Morning Prayer led by Peter Ball, whose book Journey into Truth (Spiritual Direction in the Anglican Tradition) caused much interest.

The day was spent in two sets of small group meetings. In the morning there were triads in which everyone had the opportunity to be director, directee and observer. All felt that this was a most valuable session.

In the afternoon, the whole group selected a number of themes of general interest, which were whittled down to four by common consent: skills in spiritual direction, scripture in spiritual direction, relationships (including gender issues) in spiritual direction, and maintaining the spiritual focus in direction. Participants were free to move between the four groups as their interests led them.

The day ended with a Catholic Eucharist led by Bernard Kuhnert.

Monday's Morning Prayer was guided by Maike Ewert drawing on the elements of air, earth, fire and water.

The remainder of the closing day was devoted to evaluation and planning for the next meeting. There was great praise for the organizers of the Järvenpää meeting and for the steering group of the European Region of SDI. Johan Muijtjens, Pirkko Lehtiö and Henry Morgan were selected as the new steering group, who will choose the location and time for next year's meeting from the suggestions made by the members.

Frances Hurley and Myles Rearden