

Food for Mind, Body & Soul Retreat

For Mature Catholic
Women who feel on the
fringe of the church

Venue:

Mt Schoenstatt Spirituality Centre
Joseph Kentenich House
230 Fairlight Road, Mulgoa, NSW

Date:

22-24 March, 2019

Cost Includes:

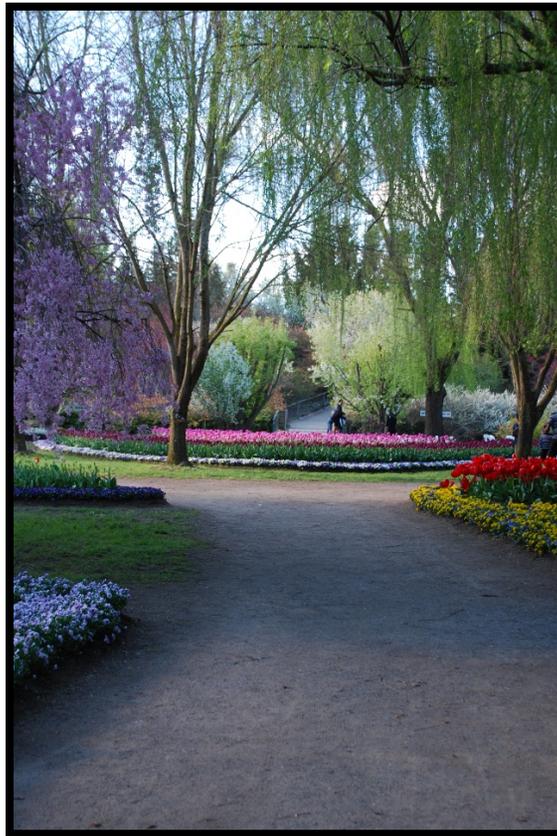
Private ensuite rooms, linen,
towel and all meals.

Early Bird Registration: \$230

Obtain a registration form at:

info@schoenstatt.org.au or

Phone: Ann-Maree
on 02 4773 8338



ABOUT THE RETREAT

An ambitious retreat program developed by Andrea Dean will be offered in March, 2019.

The weekend program will focus on mature Catholic women who feel on the fringe of the Catholic Church.

Scheduled for March 22-24, the venue will be the Mt Schoenstatt Spirituality Centre, Mulgoa at the foothills of the Blue Mountains of NSW.

Andrea Dean, a former Josephite sister and an experienced facilitator of spiritual days for Catholic educators hopes that the weekend will be a restorative and reconciling experience.

'Traditionally, Catholic women have been the foundation of the church, attending Mass, doing much of the volunteer work and passing on the faith to younger generations', she said.

'I have however noticed a phenomenon of 'dis-identification' or drifting away from the Catholic Church in some women. Some women no longer identify as Catholic, others just feel on the fringe of the Catholic community and appreciate opportunities beyond parish to rekindle and deepen their relationship with God.'

The retreat program will invite reflection on personal faith stories, a healthy Catholic spirituality, a 'second half of life' spirituality and the various ways that women can nurture and develop their spirituality.

It will include semi-structured activities with the whole group, as well as opportunities for individual prayer and reflection.

Individual sessions with an experienced spiritual director will also be offered.

The program is ideally suited for mature Catholic women who seek to renew and reinvigorate their relationship with Church.



Here are answers to the frequently asked questions:

Why would I go on a retreat?

People go on retreat for many reasons. A Christian retreat has a focus on providing time for the participant to develop their relationship with God. However, you may have a sense of being burdened or troubled or have a major decision that you have to make. Sometimes you don't have a very clear sense of God in your life at all. Often the focus is seeking peace. This metaphor shared by author Ruth Haley Barton is helpful. She tells of hitting a difficult time in her busy life. A wise person told her, "Ruth, you are like a jar of river water all shaken up. What you need is to sit still long enough that the sediment can settle, and the water can become clear."

A retreat is an invitation to become still and peaceful.

Why would I go on this retreat?

There are various styles of retreats, for example Ignatian retreats and art retreats, and there are retreats that are provided for groups of people with shared concerns.

In this case, Andrea has designed a retreat program with a very particular group in mind, that is mature women who feel on the fringe of the Catholic Church. Andrea is not trying to draw people away from the Church but she does recognize that there are some women who feel disassociated with the Catholic Church.

If you are a mature Catholic woman who feels that your sense of connection with the Church has changed and that you recognise a certain grief as a result, this retreat could be helpful.

What would I do on this retreat?

Remember that a retreat is not a training program, a course, or a holiday. There will be some stimulus material in the form of presentations and readings. Usually this will be followed by quiet time for you to reflect on the ideas or issues raised. Later there might be time

for you to talk over your response and feelings with like-minded women. There will be opportunities for simple shared prayer and liturgy. Though there will be quiet periods in the day, there will also be times of companionship and joy. Over shared meals there will be a sharing of stories too. In the times of talking over your responses and feelings you will be listened to respectfully and even reverently.

As your meals are provided and your rooms are prepared for you, there will be a sense of ease to the time of retreat and you can get plenty of rest. Physical renewal is an aspect of a retreat too.

The Retreat Centre set on 50 acres of bushland and open fields. There will be opportunity for exploring the environment and talking walks.

If you are a person who likes to reflect or relax through craft or art, there will be times when you can write, knit, paint or doodle. The quiet voice of God can come to us in various ways.

Do I need to do anything to prepare?

Other than organising your travel and packing (bring warm/cool comfortable casual clothing) you might start by reflecting on some of these questions—and listening for God:

- What am I bringing into this retreat?
- What is my physical condition lately?
- What concerns and questions have been occupying my mind and heart?
- What am I celebrating?
- What am I wondering about?
- Where do I hurt?
- Where have I seen God at work?
- What do I think God is inviting me into?

What if I feel hurt and angry with the Church or with God?

The retreat is not intended to fix or change you but it will allow you time for the deep questions or issues to emerge. As well as the semi-structured activities with the whole group, there will be opportunities for individual sessions with an

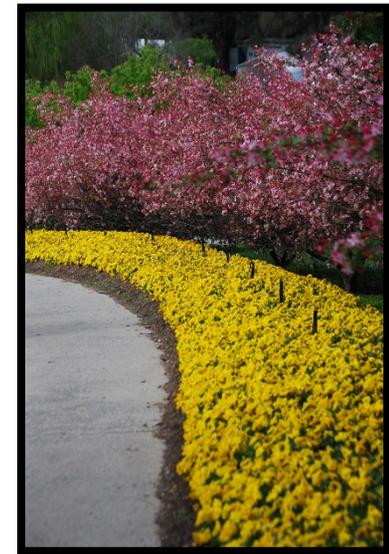
experienced spiritual director. And there will be tissues available.

What topics or themes will be on the program? Each session will have a focus. These include:

- Exploring your personal and family story of religious faith and spirituality
- Learning about the characteristics of spirituality in the first and second half of life
- Recognizing the features of spirituality in general and of women's spirituality in particular
- Identifying the qualities of a healthy Catholic spirituality
- Becoming familiar with simple, sustaining and empowering Catholic spiritual practices

What will the timetable look like?

Please arrive in time for 6 pm dinner on Friday evening (if possible). The retreat will finish after lunch on Sunday, at approximately 2 pm. Sessions are between 60-90 minutes and will involve times of input, quiet, discussion, prayer, walking.



Photos were taken at Tulip Top Gardens in Sutton NSW.