

## Meeting with Pain

I have a particular interest in working with those experiencing chronic pain and for some years have run a project enabling individuals to explore how to 'be' in pain. The work of the project is not primarily about reducing pain levels – i.e. it is not pain management in the sense that the term is used by the medical profession. Rather it is about learning to live abundantly, even if pain or dis-ease is an on-going feature of life.

Confronted by such upheaval in their lives, individuals come face to face with some fundamental questions. The 'Why?' or 'Why me?' type of question. Not to have answers, but to be willing to live the questions is a large part of the work. Carers may also find themselves experiencing similar questions and part of the work is to enable them to discover what their role is as a helper.

Taking responsibility for how things really are and living out of that, rather than how we might like it to be can be liberating, once an individual has faced their situation honestly.

One of the themes of the work is that of 'meeting the pain'. Many of those who live with a chronic condition spend much time running from it. The challenge is to cease to run, to turn around and face the distress. By doing so, it is possible to enter the distress, find the possibility of moving through it and to find a serenity and peace in the midst of dis-ease.

I am available to work with either individuals or groups and to provide workshops around the issues of living with pain.

This aspect to my work arose out of my own experience of chronic pain and illness.

## Costs

As any religious must, I need to generate a small income. Therefore, work has to be charged for, although at modest rates.

My ministry is supported by the Annunciation Trust.

For one to one work, I ask for a donation to be made to the Annunciation Trust at a rate set by the trustees. This amount will vary, depending on individual circumstances and can be gift-aided where appropriate.

Charges for group work are negotiable.

## The Annunciation Trust

The Annunciation Trust was formed in 1993. It is a charity that supports the work of spiritual direction and the development of individual spirituality.

The Trust has an ethos based around the annunciation story (Luke 1:26-38), which tells of a young woman hearing a call from God which both terrifies and excites her. Sustained by God, she accepts the call and brings the Christ child to birth. This story speaks both to our own condition and to the ministry in which we find ourselves engaged.

For more information about the Trust, or if you are interested in giving to the Trust to help support my ministry, please ask me for further details or visit our website at the address below.

Our patrons are:

The Rt. Rev Michael Whinney  
The Rt. Rev. Edward Holland  
The Rt. Rev. Jack Nicholls

The Annunciation Trust  
Registered charity Number: 1017702  
[www.annunciationtrust.org.uk](http://www.annunciationtrust.org.uk)

## Sr Rachel



*'To be human now is the reason  
we follow the star..'*

*W H Auden*

**Spiritual Direction**  
**Retreats and quiet days**  
**Spirituality training**  
**Personal development**  
**Living and meeting with pain**

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Rachel C. Overton  
Part of the Annunciation Trust

## Sr Rachel

Part of being human is that innate but almost indefinable sense of experiencing something which is both other and beyond ourselves.

After qualifying in medicine, exploring this sense took me to live within a religious community for 23 years, and more recently to live as a solitary religious.

Increasing our awareness of how we relate to ourselves, to other people, to the world around us and to that sense of the Divine - whatever name we may give it - we can take our place within creation and live abundantly as the people we were created to be.

This is about learning to be human: to be able to experience and move through the joys and sorrows, the muddle and mess as well as the glorious beauty and fun of life.

My work involves walking alongside others in this process of discovery, as I continue to seek and learn through our walking together.

My own path is rooted within a framework of daily prayer and worship and I receive regular spiritual direction and supervision. I work with those of all faiths and of none.

The influences on my understanding of this work are many and include: the English mystics, St Aelred, St Benedict, Rumi, and nearer our own time, Carl Rogers, Paul Tournier, Belden Lane, Joseph Campbell, Brian Thorne and Bryce Taylor.

I am a harpist and play the organ. I am also passionate about enabling others to find their voice and sing.

## Spiritual Direction or Accompaniment

Spiritual direction is a relationship which creates the space for discerning the presence of God in life's experiences and for increasing our awareness of how to live out of that Presence.

There are many differing ways of describing this journey. The strands of the work may include:

- Learning about our real identity: we are not simply what we have, or what we do, nor are we what others say about us. Rather we need to discover who we are in the depths of our Being.
- Opening ourselves to the many ways in which we experience the Divine Presence throughout life: increasing our awareness of God, ourselves and the world around us. Thus our daily experiences in life gradually find a way of meeting and resonating with our deepest Self. Increasing our awareness in this way requires us to develop a practice of prayer or meditation that will both sustain and nourish us.
- As we travel in the company of all humanity, we discover that this is not only 'my journey' but also 'our journey', and we must seek to find ways of carrying ourselves in the world with compassion and to discover what that asks of us.

Spiritual direction involves a regular meeting usually every one to three months, the frequency being determined by the individual and their circumstances.

## Personal Development work

This work involves journeying alongside someone, enabling them to reflect on their life and experiences and on the themes and issues that are prominent or recur. Thus the individual can discover how to live and work more fully. It does not have any overt spiritual framework, but in that it allows the other to live life more abundantly, it will include those things that might be termed 'of the soul'.

### Retreats and Quiet Days

I offer to lead both quiet days and retreats for groups. These are times when we can step aside from the ordinary everyday routine in order to listen more closely to God.

Retreats can be residential, or they can be provided on an 'Open door' type basis. In the latter, the retreat is non-residential, and undertaken within the group's 'home ground', but participants commit themselves to participating in all the sessions over the course of the retreat. In this way, it is possible to reduce the costs of such an event, in order to make it available to more people.

I am also available to lead Advent or Lent courses or to speak and preach.

### Other group work

I also undertake group work in the areas of:

- Spirituality training : workshops on aspects of prayer and spirituality
- Training in listening and communication skills
- Facilitation of group work