

My Journey

By Richard Fay

Richard Fay is an MROP weaver in Australia.

How and when were you introduced to male spirituality?

I went through burnout and depression when I was pastoring a church in 2009 and did my rites in Australia that year. This introduced me to contemplative Christianity and to the second-half-of-life journey, at the age of 49.

How has your participation in Illuman/M.A.L.Es fostered the use and development of your gifts?

My involvement in Illuman has invited me personally to include what I had previously excluded, and then to journey with men to do the same. I recognize that I am able to speak, write, and attend to men pastorally, but the contemplative gaze has reordered my entire framework of how I express these gifts, making them sustainable, life-giving, and joyous.

Describe a recent Illuman/M.A.L.Es event you attended. What was the impact on you?

In May 2017, I co-facilitated a wilderness retreat for initiated men which was structured around nature and the Way of Council. The depth and courage shown by the participants was extraordinary, and I saw again the honesty of the work that MROP and the Journey of Illumination establishes in men. I found the retreat to be emotionally challenging but without the need for me to perform. This in turn allowed me to fully participate instead of lead. I contrast this with prior decades of burdened service that required me to be the expert and the focal point.

What's one thing you'd recommend to a man starting on the spiritual journey?

Trust the process! When things fall apart, men want to isolate themselves. It is then we need the containment of wise men who will not seek to control but will gently guide. Men starting the journey are often very nervous and want answers, yet know it must be challenging. Commit to a M.A.L.E.S group, embark on an MROP, and trust the process.

What's the best thing about doing this work?

That I live what I do. I am a recovering hypocrite. The man I was in public was not the man I was inside. Now, all of my energy, the

pleasant and the difficult, is included, and I can be myself, as I am, and no longer fear shame or judgment.

Concluding thoughts?

To be known, to be seen, to be heard, safely and truly, these are immense gifts. I would encourage any man reading this to know this is possible.