

My Journey

By Chris Mihai

Chris Mihai is Teaching Elder for the NorCal MALES Chapter and a participant in Illuman's first Elder Cohort.

How and when were you introduced to male spirituality?

My initial contact with the concept of male spirituality was in 2008/2009 when a family member gave me a book by Richard Rohr. I had a lot of questions at the time, being in the middle of an existential crisis of sorts. Reading Rohr helped me, not so much in getting answers, but in living with the questions. After decades of being steeped in dogma and theology, I started getting a glimpse of the Mystery.

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

After my own initiation rites in November 2011, I offered to become a teaching elder for the NorCal Chapter of Illuman. While I had very little knowledge of the breadth of the MROP events, I found myself experiencing the rites in an even more meaningful way as part of the staff. Every time I partake in Illuman events, I enrich my own spiritual walk through connecting, gathering, and sharing with other men. Furthermore, I get a chance to use my gifts as a teacher and communicator alongside other men.

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

In August 2017, I attended the MROP event in Northern California, again as a teaching elder. After that I went to Soularize near Albuquerque, where I had the opportunity to share my story in Council with two other men, in front of all the attendees. I connected through my story with many men in the room whose souls resonated with my journey. My gesture of vulnerability and openness to the group allowed other men to come forward and be vulnerable as well. I feel that every time I get to teach or share anything, I benefit from that event as much as—or sometimes more than—the men who are listening.

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

To any man who is searching for spiritual and emotional growth, I would say that putting aside expectations would be a very good first step. Being willing to become a learner, a novice, a disciple of all

that there is, seen and unseen, is a useful attitude. Also, connecting with men who are on a similar path would be very useful.

What's the best thing about doing this work?

I feel that this type of spiritual work gives me the permission to be myself, to be "seen" by other men, as I am, with no pretense, no props, and no outside sense of value or validation. Also, realizing—every time—that I am not alone in my imperfection is quite a gift.

Concluding thoughts?

Many times, in this sort of work, transformation occurs in spite of one's own efforts and intentions. Being close to the fire of men's work can lead to "spiritual combustion" by proxy. The paradox of this work is that, though questions are not answered, a man learns to live with the mystery of it and wordless knowledge can be found beyond theology, dogma, or even achievements.