

## Book Review

### ***Sleeping with Bread – a Simple Way to Prayer***

Linn, S, M & D. (1995) Paulist Press

There is a little book called *Sleeping with Bread* (Linn 1995). It offers a form of prayer that goes like this. At the end of each day as you are drifting off to sleep, think over the events of the day, without judging just as if you were watching a movie of your day and ask yourself three questions:

- For what today am I most grateful?
- For what today am I least grateful?
- What might God be saying to me in this?

Sound simple? It is but it is also a profound experience. What happens if you are able to do this for any length of time say a week or a month is that you begin to really discern what is important in your life and why and also what gives in your life gives you life and energy. It also identifies with activities that drain you of life and energy. What also happens is that you will often be surprised by what emerges as the things you are most grateful for. It may be something as simple as a kind word or smile, a little pause in the day where you were able to take stock and re-energise or it may be a flower that caused you to pause for a moment. They are often things that would simply pass us by if we didn't take a moment to appreciate them.

With events for which you are least grateful, these can also be surprises, but more likely things you do but at a deeper level know they don't give you life. It may have been an unkind comment, a judgment by yourself or someone else or simply a feeling of being overwhelmed. There may be things you can change or they may be things you can't but may be able to change your perspective about.

This simple exercise begins to impact your day in unexpected ways, for example you may be enjoying a moment with a friend, a sunny spot in which to reflect or the laugh of a child and you think 'I wonder if this will be my most grateful moment' but in that simple question is a real shift in your outlook, for you are discerning as you go through your day. You begin to notice the small things and appreciate them. Sometimes something unhelpful happens, someone is rude or cuts you off when you are driving or you catch yourself saying something that causes hurt or discomfort to another and you say 'I bet this will be my most ungrateful moment'. Again the discernment and awareness is slowly emerging in the living of your daily life.

This can be done with your children. I use it often with my six year old daughter, I ask her what she most liked about today. It always surprises me. It is rarely the things I think may be most enjoyed like the trip to the zoo or ice cream after school. It more often than not involves a story I read or playing with Daddy or the spider's web she found in the garage. I find it challenges my idea of how I parent her. It affirms to me that it is not the big expensive or planned events that really matter to her but more the little things that crop up in the day.

This exercise can also be done as a couple or in a safe and trusting group. You may choose to do it as part of a study group for either the day before or the time since you last met. Some people choose to hold a retreat around the theme and ask the question of the year. How might it work at a board level? In a sermon?

For me it continues to remind me of God's loving presence in the world. God is there whether I notice or not. God is in not just the smile, the peace, the kindness but also in the judging, the rudeness or the disappointment. God reminds us that we are loved fully, deeply and generously when we are at our most compassionate and creative and also in our foibles and mistakes. Sometimes we need to be reminded of that.

– Kristen Hobby, 2010