



Growing in Wisdom: Seeking Deeper Generativity

TWO YEARS OF LEARNING AND EXPLORING FOR THOSE SEEKING
A SPIRITUALITY FOR THEIR WISDOM YEARS

*Inspired by and drawing various resources from the
Forest Dwelling Program at the Oblate School of Theology*

Upcoming Dates:

- First Intensive: Monday, September 28 - Friday, October 2, 2026
- Second Intensive: Monday, February 1 - Friday, February 5, 2027
- Third Intensive: Monday, September 27 - Friday, October 1, 2027
- Fourth Intensive: Monday, January 31 - Friday, February 4, 2028
- Final gathering (in-person on zoom) and Graduation Ritual: Tuesday, May 16 – Friday, May 19, 2028

This program is offered on Zoom, which allows participants to come together internationally in a way that is accessible and affordable.

Growing in Wisdom: Seeking Deeper Generativity is an ecumenical program, grounded in the mystical Christian Tradition, open to learning from other interfaith and spiritual traditions, and designed for those seeking to engage in their maturing years with wisdom and grace. It is a program that welcomes participants who have the time, interest and energy to engage in a dynamic two-year adventure of learning and exploration. This is a time in which we can begin to look back on the life we have lived and find openness to new or previously undeveloped inner vistas. It is a time to begin to come to terms with our own mortality and the grace we find in facing this part of our lives with wisdom and satisfaction. This program is a dynamic interplay between and among each participant, the Growing in Wisdom Community, and Divine Mystery, assisting in the inner transformation of participants as the journey unfolds. This program is not designed as a traditional educational program with highly structured material and outcomes. Rather, it is an invitation to a delicious smorgasbord of spiritual and intellectual materials, ideas, experiences, people, poetry, arts and Mystery in which you are invited to taste, chew on, set down, go back for more, discard, or simply marvel at the wonders of the program. Of course, the “treasures” that are discovered in these months will be different for you in the second half of life than they might have been in the first half of your life – the releasing of old identities and our self-importance, to name two of the many “surrenders” that life asks of us in these years. In this program we will explore what is most fruitful and life-giving for us, especially as we age, and what a maturing relationship with God (by whatever name you use) could look like. **Growing in Wisdom: Seeking Deeper Generativity** invites you to explore how you might commit yourself to giving both your life and your death to the world, in a way that both are the ultimate gift and blessing that you give to others.

In **Phase 1, Our Wisdom Years: Crossing the Threshold Into the Unknown**, you will begin your journey by setting your intention and exploring what you need to pack for this journey, and equally important what you will need to unpack – old ideas, spiritual understandings, beliefs, and wounds. It is a time to explore new ways of stepping apart for reflection, including the ancient Celtic ways of doing so. A time to explore and deepen new ways of seeing, and new contemplative practices. What is your relationship to your body, your community, your understanding of the Divine, and how can this expand and deepen in the ripening elder years? In Phase 1 we will encounter and engage with the biological, psychological, emotional, and spiritual changes which are pushing us out from the familiar territory of our younger life, into the unknown.

In **Phase 2, *The Sacredness of Our Bodies: Embracing and Releasing***, we wander into new territory, encountering what no longer works, confronting fears, noticing the emotions that come when we are no longer valued in the ways we once were. It is a time for facing and befriending our shadows and discovering new spiritual practices, finding a new rhythm, a new Sabbath in keeping with our changing lives. We are learning to “rest in God instead of restlessly seeking God” (Ron Rolheiser). This is a time of Holy Wandering, leading to new experiences of Divine Presence within and all around us. It is this unsettling that encourages us to practice in solidarity with the Earth beneath our feet: “life right here, right now” (Mary Earle). In this phase we will explore how to pray with our bodies, how we engage with our aging bodies, and how we are being invited to age into Gratitude and Forgiveness, rather than into Anger and Bitterness (Ron Rolheiser).

In **Phase 3, *Radical Discipleship: Preparing for the Autumn of Our Lives***, we begin to make discoveries amidst the realities of aging. Being fully present to the burdens and blessings of the aging process invites us into acceptance of the final season of our lives. We encounter a shift from activities of achievement and being self-important to one of fruitfulness, passivity and facing our deaths, often within spiritual darkness. The aging process is “bringing us into the deeper realm of the spiritual” (Kathleen Dowling Singh) and Mystery unfolds in us as individuals and as a community of dwellers. How will we “be” in the challenges we face? How much kinder would we be to ourselves, how much wiser, if we were to have already transformed loneliness into aloneness, far before the time of our death? (Kathleen Dowling Singh, *The Grace in Aging*). How are we transformed as we discover freedom from old habits and withdraw from old ways of doing and being? In this phase we are invited to discover the joy of liberation from the demand for perfection, and to savour an unexpected release as our attitude of attachment softens into loving detachment.

In **Phase 4, *We Are Elders Who Bless: Harvesting the Fruitfulness of Our Lives***, we prepare for the journey onward as “holy fools” (Richard Rohr). Invitations for us include how we will continue to learn to live in a new, mystical understanding of the Body of Christ, living with mature paradigms of Resurrection and the afterlife, and finding the peace of living in shared humanity. As we harvest the fruits of this journey, **Growing in Wisdom** participants will encounter questions such as: “what will I have to give away? How will I share this growing freedom that comes with the unpacking of old wounds, the flowing of love and compassion for all, including myself? Who am I as I leave this time of rich learning and experience? How will I live in the Light of a new wisdom, a deeper generativity, informed and willing to surrender fully to life as it is?”

Themes may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Achievement to Fruitfulness
- An Anthropology and Spirituality of Aging and Dying
- Mystical Images for Prayer: Contemplative Awareness and Practices
- Holy Wandering: Pilgrimage in the Currents of Divine Love
- The Earth Beneath my Feet: Life Right Here, Right Now
- Weaving a New Shelter: Celtic Perspectives on Aging
- Diminishment and Vitalities – Becoming a Wise Elder
- Hallowing our Passivities
- Our Last Greatest Gift: Giving our Deaths Away as our Final Gift and Blessing to the World

In addition to the four intensives, seekers will take part in facilitated monthly **Elder Circle Gatherings** with 7-9 other participants for ongoing community-building and spiritual support.

Optional monthly book studies, Going Deeper small groups, and additional workshops will also be offered to participants, at no extra cost. Participants will source the books for the book studies.

How much time would a participant want to commit to this program? Approximately 30-40 hours/month.

Consider the following:

30-60 minutes/day in prayer and reading

2 hours/month meeting with your elder circle

1 hour/month meeting with your spiritual director

2 hours/month participating in a book study or other workshops - this is optional

Plus four 5-day intensives twice a year in autumn and winter

TUITION FEES:

Full fee: \$3,500.00

25% discount for a family member living in the same home: \$2,625.00

For members of religious communities, full fee for first participant, and 50% discount for additional participants in your community:

- First tuition fee: \$3,500

- Additional participants belonging to the same religious community: \$1,750.00

Participants who are able to pay the full fee before September 2026 will receive an additional 10% discount. Participants who are able to pay tuition in two installments (September 2026 and September 2027) will receive a 5% discount.

Payment schedule:

\$50 non-refundable registration fee - to register visit: <https://growinginwisdom.ca/application/>

Payment schedule for those paying full fees, four times over 1.5 years:

\$825 – September 15, 2026

\$875 – January 15, 2027

\$875 – September 15, 2027

\$875 – January 15, 2028

There is a Growing in Wisdom Bursary, supported by past and current participants of this program. Please contact the Program Administrator if you would like to learn more about either applying for a limited bursary, or financially contributing to this bursary: growinginwisdom@outlook.com

For more information, please contact Nancy Phillips, Growing in Wisdom Program Coordinator

Email: growinginwisdom@outlook.com

Cell: 204-470-9437 (North America calls only please)

Please visit our website for all information and the application form:

www.growinginwisdom.ca