

DeMello Spirituality Retreat

May 16-18, 2003

DeMello Spirituality Retreat

Co-sponsored by the *Center for Religion and Spirituality* at Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles, and the *DeMello Spirituality Center* at Fordham University, New York.

Location: Serra Retreat House; 3401 Serra Rd., Malibu, CA (off Pacific Coast Hwy). *This Franciscan Retreat House is surrounded by quiet canyons with a panoramic view of the Pacific Ocean.*

For a tour of the grounds, and driving directions, see the [Serra Retreat House](#) website.

For more information about the presenters, see the website of Fordham University's [DeMello Spirituality Center](#).

Retreat Guides:

Rev. J. Francis Stroud, S.J. produces books, video cassettes and audio tapes of Tony DeMello, and lectures frequently on Spirituality. After studying in India with Tony DeMello at the Sadhana Institute, he came to Fordham University where he is a Campus Minister and the Executive Director of the DeMello Spirituality Center.

Jonathan Galente is a Trustee of the DeMello Spirituality Center and member of the Psychology Department of Fordham University. Jonathan presents exercises to integrate the spiritual themes presented by Fr. Stroud. These Exercises can enrich and transform your life.

Joan Ann Budilovsky is a certified teacher of yoga and massage and is an award-winning author of books, articles, audio and videotapes on her specialties. She is a featured columnist for LIFE Newspapers and offers complementary classes in yoga and massage during the DeMello Spirituality Conferences.

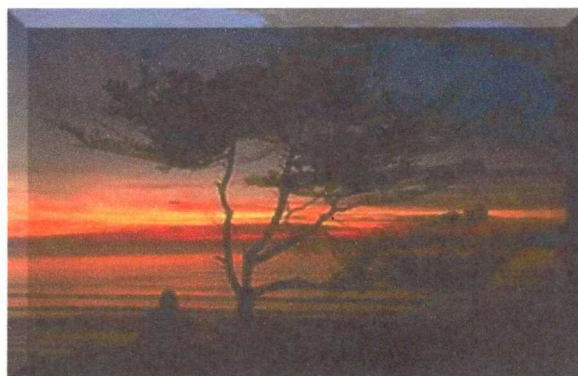
Registrations will be available through LMU beginning January 2003.
(Please do *not* contact the retreat house directly; they will *not* be able to register you.)

****To receive a brochure in the mail, please please fill out our online [Inquiry Form](#)****



Yoga Tips

My Heart belongs to Daddy,



and it broke in June when my Fr. Frank died. For the past decade we traveled together, with Jonathan Galante and Fr. Richard McHugh, giving deMello conferences on "Awareness." These conferences sparkled with physical and mental exercises for releasing emotional baggage and creating new beginnings of hope and wonder...

Close your eyes. Hold your partner's hands. Do not say a word. Get to know your partner through their hands: their strengths, vulnerabilities, sadnesses, joys...

Anthony deMello was a Jesuit Priest. He was the author of many popular books, his most famous simply called, Awareness. He died prematurely in his mid-50's, right before he was to present for a large conference at Fordham University in the Bronx. Fr. J. Francis Stroud was his agent. He booked all Fr. deMello's worldwide speaking engagements. He also was responsible for internationally publishing deMello's many books.

It was 1987, and Fr. Frank was quite excited for me to meet deMello. In a way, Fr. Frank was also my agent. He came to most all of my nightclub performances. He even arranged a regular singing engagement for me at a popular Manhattan club. The club was called, Chelsea Place, and it was the kind of nightclub a jazz singer, like me, dreamt about. It was hugely popular at the time, and so this transplanted Chicagoan, through the aid of this kindly priest from the Bronx, came into a readymade New York audience. Chelsea Place was a large tri-level jewel in the heart of the Chelsea district of Manhattan. It looked like a normal little shop from the street, although tough looking bouncers would greet the long lines at the door, and if you were lucky enough to receive their bouncer blessings, they would beckon you into the club through the small speak-easy styled door. Upon entering you would be greeted to a vast wonderland of good music, spirits and food. Rock and Pop musicians played the first floor entry and it was not easy getting through the mobs of people dancing to the quaint Italian-lighted restaurant at the far end of the club. Struggling through the maze of dancers was worth it, as the restaurant was one of the highest rated in Manhattan at the time, serving an exquisite Italian fare in honor of its native founder, Giancarlo Santini.

In the middle of the club was an unassuming winding staircase that took the daring adventurer to the intimate jazz club upstairs. This is where I sang with a trio several nights a week. I knew hundreds of songs, and was accompanied by my grand pianist, Alan Kamen, who knew even more. If it became too quiet upstairs, Johnny Parker, the resident trumpeter, would make sure the downstairs partiers took notice of the staircase. Although the upstairs was never as frenetic as downstairs, it seemed to be filled through the wee hours with just the right amount of people to make a memorable evening of jazz.

Along my years in New York, Fr. Frank would generously give me presents of deMello's books and tape cassettes. I eagerly read or listened to every gift. I wasn't raised Catholic, but have always held a deep respect and interest in all religions. I was honored Fr. Frank took such an interest in me and my night clubby ways. One need not be Catholic to be influenced by deMello's universal appeal:

The Question:

Said the monk, "All these mountains, and the rivers and the earth and the stars - where do they come from?"

Said the master, "Where does your question come from?"

From deMello's Book...Song of the Bird

But, even more endearing to me than Fr. deMello's exquisite teachings were the life lessons of Fr. Frank. His gift of friendship was a celebration, a reinforcement of the many beautiful possibilities there in front of us. He was a solid reminder, like my parents before him, that the best of dreams could indeed come true. His fun enthusiasm for life was rare and I was delighted to be a part of it. I noticed he seemed to wear his priestly collar more in his later

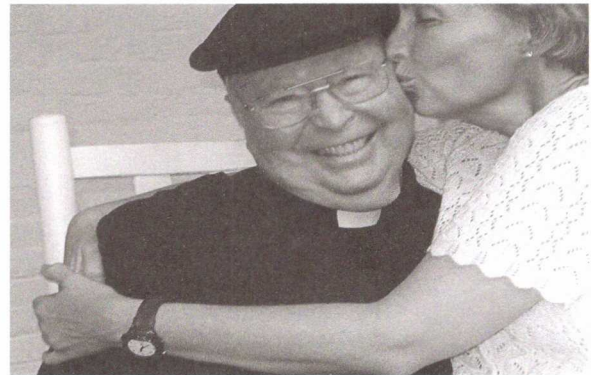
years. He used to say people treated him exceptionally well in his travels when he wore it. I saw this first hand. We depend more on the 'kindness of strangers' as we age, and he was a man who lived a life well deserving of his collar and the extra kindnesses it drew forth.

Fr. Frank gave me the deMello gifts with a wink and a 'think you might enjoy this' type of way. Twenty years later, I wrote a doctoral dissertation on the relationship of Anthony deMello's writings to the Yoga Sutras. Fr. deMello, after all, was from India. It's as if Fr. Frank knew I would eventually grow tired of nightclubs and venture the philosophical path - he often seemed to be ahead of the game, after all.

I had planned to visit him the Saturday he died in New York. It was the last weekend in June. It was going to be a surprise visit, but the business of life here in Chicago delayed my trip, so Frank surprised me instead and died that very day. He was always full of surprises. Death is so permanent, yet his life is engraved in my beating heart.

A friend from the deMello conferences, Rocco Marinaro, sent me this photo today....

The picture was taken in the summer of 2002 on the porch of the Jesuit Retreat Center of St Charles College in beautiful Grand Coteau, Louisiana. The southern charm of this particular retreat center is one I will never forget - we gave numerous deMello conferences here over the years. This particular photo was taken during one of those conferences.



Frank was outside on the large southern porch meditating, when I snuck up to give him a kiss. Rocco captured the moment so beautifully with his photo.

Fr. Frank meditated consistently for many years, every night for over an hour- and no doubt more. He experimented with different meditation techniques to deepen his practice, and was always open to a new approach, yet he did not take his meditations lightly. He steadily worked with any new approach for months, hours a day, to be able to see what affect its regular practice had on his life. He knew the long lasting effects of meditation did not come from an occasional try - it took regular and concentrated efforts to reap its deep inner rewards. He openly discussed the meditation methods he found most helpful and brought these insights into the conferences we taught together. The meditation technique he was working on at the time of this photo was of listening to nature sounds to effortlessly bring the brain waves into deeper functioning realms. My kiss, only a temporary pause to a heart already deep in song.

Thank you, Fr. Frank, for your wonderful life and the incredibly powerful examples you gave us for exploring ways to enrich ours. Through regular meditation practice I join you in song... and will see you again.

“All you want to be you already are,
And in that place
To which your best dreams take you,
There are those who have been waiting for you.”
Fr. John Culkin

Fr. J Francis Stroud's latest book, *Praying Naked*, (Doubleday) and Fr. Anthony deMello's books can be found in bookstores and at the Anthony deMello website www.demello.org.

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A deMello spirituality retreat

By Joan Budilovsky

A long, winding mountain road unveiled the beautiful lush nature of Malibu, California. Tears of joy welled up in my eyes as I approached the Serra Retreat Center. How was I so blessed to be among this splendor at such a difficult emotional time in my life? My only brother had died eight months before. I was still grieving. The sadness of his passing was still very real and painful within me.

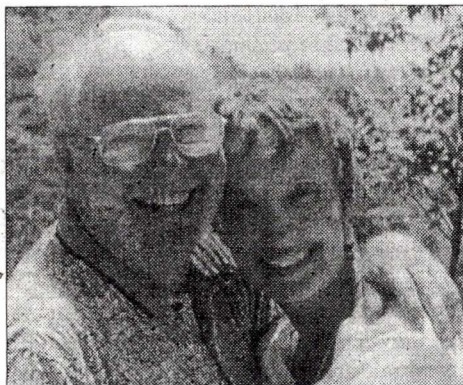
I wanted to go on a retreat. I needed to go on a retreat. Over the past year, I had been drifting away from loved ones in my self-imposed isolation. Inexplicably, I was embracing solitude as I longed for the embrace of others. Perhaps a retreat would offer some answers. I had explored various retreat options but could not make a decision on where and when to go. Decisions in general had become difficult for me ever since our family decision had been made to take my brother off life-support eight months ago. He had suffered long enough. Our decision was made November 13. It was a Friday. I somehow got through the rest of the school year as a teacher. The strength of the students' interest in deeper understandings of yoga carried me through. I decided to take the summer off from teaching. The candle was fading inside. I needed a retreat.

June passed; still no summer plans were made. Early July, my dear friend, Father Frank Stroud, invited me to a retreat he was giving with another Jesuit priest, Richard McHugh. The retreat would be held in Malibu, July 16-18, and was called the "deMello Spirituality Retreat." My decision was made. I was going to Malibu!

Anthony deMello had been a Jesuit priest whose teachings and writings reflected ancient yogic traditions within the spirituality of St. Ignatius. He died suddenly in 1987, a few days before I was to have met him at a conference he was giving in New York City. I have since read all of his books, which have truly inspired me over the years. As the airline tickets were arranged for me, I picked up one of my favorite deMello books, *The Song of the Bird*, and read: "The way to truth is narrow. You always walk alone." As I read these words, I thanked God for the

kindness of Father Frank Stroud.

On a mountain top overlooking the Pacific Ocean, amidst fields of flowers sprinkled with hummingbirds, the retreat began...



Joan Budilovsky and J. Francis Stroud, S.J.

Father Stroud: "Forgive everyone and everything. Forgive yourself."

Tears well up in my eyes. I cannot hold them back any longer. They run down my face like an open faucet. My brother's death was slow and difficult. He was unconscious his last month of life. I am missing the closure of love and peace between us. A final exchange of loving words that will never be. My brother is dead.

Father McHugh: "Let us do some awareness exercises."

We proceed to be led, by this kind soul, into an ever-expanding series of awareness exercises, each exercise a study of deepening beauty.

Father McHugh: "Close your eyes. Reach out to the hands of the person next to you. Get to know them through their hands. What do their hands tell you?"

Sensitive beauty encompasses me through the delicate touch of my partner. We explore each other's hands for some time. I am a trained massage therapist, but I have not been able to touch someone deeply with my hands for months...for eight months. My hands slowly open, truly feeling again, for the first time, the beauty of the present moment. Exercise ending—our eyes open together in tears.

The body/mind/spirit connection is deeply ingrained in the teachings of these two men—Francis Stroud and Richard McHugh.

Father Stroud: "An illusion of happiness is that 'it's important to be important'—to be the King of this insane world."

He spoke of releasing the "ego" without ever mentioning the word. His words rang simple, true, and clear.

Father McHugh: "Search inside yourself and find something about yourself that is very intimate and personal."

We form two circles of people, an inner circle facing an outer circle.

Father McHugh: "Now share this most intimate secret with the person facing you. You each have one minute to share. The more intimate you are, the more you will receive."

After one minute the inner circle moves one person to the left. Each person then has a new person to share their deep intimacy with. Only one minute per person.

"My brother died a few months ago, and I think about him every moment."

The inner circle moves on. I stay with my feet firmly grounded in the outer circle. Compassionate eyes studying, sharing, embracing, continuing to move, continuing to come. Tears, smiles, hope, wonder, continual movements of consciousness. The fluctuating inner circle stops. Awareness. Mass is given.

A long, winding mountain road unveils the beautiful lush nature of Malibu, California.

DeMello Spirituality Conferences are given worldwide. For more information on the conferences or to order books and tapes by Anthony deMello contact: J. Francis Stroud, S.J., deMello Spirituality Center, Fordham University Faber Hall, Bronx, NY 10458, phone: 718.817.4508; fax: 718.817.4518; e-mail: jstroud@cyburban.com; home page: www.demello.org; and www.demello.org/mail (for newsletter). Serra Retreat Center: 310-456-6631.

Joan Budilovsky is a yoga teacher and author of numerous books, including co-author of the trilogy series: *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Yoga*, *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Massage*, and *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Meditation*. Her website is www.yoyoga.com.