



# From the Director

*“Sabbath time is a revolutionary challenge to the violence of overwork because it honours the necessary wisdom of dormancy. During Sabbath, when we take our hands from the plough and let the earth care for things, while we drink, if just briefly, from the fountain of rest and delight.”*

Wayne Muller ‘The Sabbath’

“Every day after school, the son of a well-known Rabbi would enter his house, place his back pack on the dining room table, leave the house through the back door, and head into the woods behind the house.

At first, the Rabbi gave little thought to his son’s ritual. But it continued for days, and then for weeks. Every day, out into the woods for almost half an hour. The Rabbi grew concerned.

“My son”, he said one day. “I noticed that every day you leave our home to spend some time in the woods. What is it you are doing there?”

“Oh papa”, the son replied. “There is no need to worry. I go into the woods to pray. It is in the woods that I can talk to God.”

“Oh” the Rabbi said, clearly relieved. “But, as a son of a Rabbi you should know that God is the same everywhere.”

“Yes Papa, I know that God is the same everywhere, but I am not.”

The little boy knew, instinctively, that there are two spaces. Both of them important. In one space we generate productivity, accomplishment, action and busyness. It is a necessary space! In the other space we find quiet, reflection, prayer, contemplation and renewal. This second space is the Sabbath space. Sabbath space in our modern society is seldom encouraged because we are always rushing from one task to the next.

I believe that deep down all of us know the importance of the Sabbath space. Unfortunately it appears too many of us are not prepared to take seriously the wisdom of taking this time seriously.



*Photo courtesy Rosemary Wehbe 2014*

Your Sabbath space does not have to be in the woods. It can be in your garden, in your car while commuting, by a lake or river, in a particular quiet corner of your home or in some prayer space in a chapel or church. The venues are many and varied. Wherever that space may be we can be grateful for the wisdom of the Rabbi's son. He knew that the key ingredient was not the actual physical space but devoting some quality time while in that special place. "I go there", he told his father, "to listen".

A short story by a Vietnamese, Zen Roshi, reminded me of the importance of being present and aware of God's presence in our midst as we move through our daily routine. He reflected "During the Vietnam war we were so busy helping the wounded that we sometimes forgot to smell the flowers. Night has a very pleasant smell in Vietnam, especially in the country. But we would forget to pay attention to the smell of mint, coriander, thyme and sage."

Taking the Sabbath time more seriously might just help us to become better listeners and more in tune to where God is waiting to reveal his many gifts to us.

**Br Bill Sullivan**  
Director