



The Ignatian Way I

Week 1

Live your life – The power of awareness

In preparation for this session, please listen to the [Week 1 podcast](#) and read the article from [Anne Long, *Listening*](#) (DLT, 1990) pp. 3-10.

Further material for reflection

*Sometime when the river is ice ask me
mistakes I have made. Ask me whether
what I have done is my life. Others
have come in their slow way into
my thought, and some have tried to help
or to hurt: ask me what difference
their strongest love or hate has made.*

*I will listen to what you say.
You and I can turn and look
at the silent river and wait. We know
the current is there, hidden; and there
are comings and goings from miles away
that hold this stillness exactly before us.
What the river says, that is what I say.*

William Stafford, 'Ask Me' (1977)
from The Way it is: New and Selected Poems (Graywolf Press, 2006)

Our invitation to you in preparation for our first meeting together is to reflect upon your life's journey so far:

- What does the river of your life look like?
- What is your sense of beginning, your source, your place of origin?
- Where has the river of your life flowed easily and gently?
- Where has the river's journey seemed more turbulent, like churning white-water through rapids?

- Have there been any waterfall moments?
- Have there been times in your life when you moved swiftly like fast-moving currents, or times when you have been slow and still?
- What has formed and decided the route your river has taken?

Perhaps you may like to draw your river on paper and indicate the significant waymarkers along the way. Events. Places. People. Experiences.

Or if this idea of the river of your life doesn't resonate with you, then please feel free to find another image or idea which does. Perhaps you might imagine your life as a fairground ride, or as a book or a film.

Whatever idea or image you settle upon to describe your life, try to find time before our in-person session for an hour of thoughtful reflection about your life, and notice how you feel as you do this.

In this week's article, Anne Long quotes from Gerard Hughes who says that 'God speaks to us in the depths of our being'. Or, as the Psalmist sings, 'Deep calls to deep at the roar of your waterfalls' (Psalm 42).

- In what ways do these ideas connect with you?
- What is your response in hearing that 'listening to yourself' is something worthwhile?
- What is your experience of listening to yourself, listening to the depths of your being?