

June 24, 2015



**SPIRITUALITY** - It was supposed to be an online initiative of the Irish Jesuits for Lent 1999, a daily tool of prayer for those who are always online. But It was so successful that for all these years sacredspace.ie continued to "give to high numbers of people an experience of intimacy and communion", in the words of Jesuit Fr **Alan McGuckian**, an initiator of the website, enabling those who felt alienated to be reconnected with God and with an orating community in an anonymous way, as a first step in their journey back home". Today the website is available in 22 languages including Arabic, Chinese, Korean, Russian, with approximately 13 thousand Internet accesses a day. "It's a contemporary form of apostolate that uses the Internet as a bridge connecting Christians and the secularised world",

**Patrick Muldoon**

told Sarah Numico for SIR Europe. Muldoon is a lay person that since 2008 has been following the website's activity, that he considers "an excellent tool for the new evangelization, an answer of the Church to the challenge of communicating Christian faith in societies and cultures undergoing constant transformation".

***Could you tell us what the website offers?***

"It draws inspiration from the spirituality of Saint Ignatius of Loyola and the pages are meant to inspire web users at a time of personal prayer in six steps, starting with the preparation of the body and mind including reflection on a passage from the Scriptures selected on a daily basis. It's an exercise of meditation to establish a contact with God and to the presence of God in our lives. It's an encouragement to recover God's presence in everything, also when we're in front of a computer screen, with other people near us, or distracting noises. The 'Living Space' section features commentaries on readings for the entire liturgical year. 'Online retreats' are offered for the period of Advent and Lent in cooperation with 'Pray as you go', another website for accompaniment to prayer, useful for all those who with an MP3 reader pray when going to work or at school".

***Who visits the website?***

"It's an orating community worldwide with prayers also for the intention of other visitors posted in the 'intentions chapel': thanksgiving, for peace, for the tormented areas of our world, for the sick, for those who have exams to take or decisions to make. There are also three contemplative female communities that include them in their prayers. In Ireland the Cistercian

nuns of the Saint Mary abbey, in the county of Waterford and the Carmelite nuns in the monastery of St. Joseph, Kilmacud, Dublin, as well as a Carmelite monastery in Auckland, New Zealand.

***When was it made available in other languages?***

"The development of Sacred Space in different linguistic versions was initiated the moment the website was opened. Pages in Arabic and Chinese were launched respectively in 2012 and 2014. There is consistent traffic regarding the versions in Arabic and Chinese that contributed to the evangelization work through Internet frontiers, in the territories where these languages are used. Sacred Space is meant to be accessible to Christians of all denominations".

***How do updates work?***

"There is a group of Jesuits and Irish cooperators who prepare the documents to be published on the website a month before, and on the day of publication make it available to the language teams (Jesuits and lay volunteers) who translate and publish the texts in their language versions. Some language versions also produce content. The pages in Finnish and Danish cooperate with the members of Catholic and Lutheran Churches".

***What about the feedback?***

"We receive many messages of compliments from the users of the website and their feedback shows that Sacred Space is useful for their prayers. The latest messages have come from the US, Zambia, Slovenia, Canada, South Africa. For example, a couple from Bulgaria wrote: 'We often live distant because of our work, but we pray together with Sacred Space and distance doesn't exist. We pray together, we share texts and reflections, as when we are together, and our love is growing.' From Serbia: 'I have been using this website for the past 15 years. It always helped me enormously.'"

Source: Servizio Informazione Religiosa, June 17, 2015