

My Journey

By Bob Colaresi

Bob Colaresi serves as Convener of Illinois M.A.L.Es and is on the Illuman Board of Directors.

How and when were you introduced to male spirituality? Being a Carmelite Priest, I've always been pursuing a deeper spirituality, in community with my religious brothers and in service to people of faith. But often, driven by a strong ego, it turned into pursuing my own needs and dreams in the world of work and ideas. Eventually I felt empty, and that emptiness drove me to seek other ways. The teachings of Richard Rohr and participating in the Men's Rites of Passage were major experiential awakenings for me of that deeper reality and freedom for which I longed.

How has your participation in Illuman/M.A.L.Es fostered the use and development of your gifts? Just being around and sharing life with other men who are serious about the spiritual journey has helped me to live a more intentional, authentic life—not playing roles, but being present to life as it happens within and around me. Organizing and participating in spirituality and growth programs has tapped my gifts of organization in ways that are life-giving to others and myself. Being with other serious men has humbled me before their sincerity and honest commitment, and inspired me to be a better man.

Describe a recent Illuman/M.A.L.Es event you attended. What was the impact on you? A Nature Weekend with Belden Lane at Pilgrim Park, to listen to the lessons and teachers of nature. Belden Lane is such a passionate inspiration. During our silent times in nature, I felt drawn to listen to trees who had been uprooted by recent storms, but were leaning against other trees so that they could not fall completely and become part of the humus and nurture the next generation of new trees. They whispered to me of how challenging it is to get off the stage, especially for an Enneagram 3 like me!

What's one thing you'd recommend to a man starting on the spiritual journey? Be still and aware of what is truly going on within you. Find another man or group of men whom you trust to share and listen.

What's the best thing about doing this work? I've experienced a new, inner freedom—a sense of truly being myself as a beloved son of God, and a freer

energy in my responsibility as son and builder of God's kingdom—as well as the empowering fellowship with many brothers.

Concluding thoughts? God is good and never gives up on us, even as He depends on our partnership with divine dreams and our brothers. It is never too late to wake up!