

• A • m • i • s •



A Gift of Friendship
A Journey of Growth
An Adventure for Life
for the sake of the World



Welcome!

Welcome to **Amis**. **Amis** is the French word for “friends”. It is not only one of the most beautiful words, but friends, a friend and friendship are by nature perhaps some of the most meaningful concepts and aspects of life. Look at these quotes:

"Friendship is born at that moment when one person says to another: What! You too? I thought I was the only one."

C.S. Lewis

"Nothing makes the earth seem so spacious as to have friends at a distance; they make the latitudes and longitudes."

Henry David Thoreau

"A good friend is like a four-leaf clover; hard to find and lucky to have."

Irish Proverb

"I would rather walk with a friend in the dark, than alone in the light."

Helen Keller

Amis is an opportunity to reflect on life, spirituality, meaning, growth and time. It will be an online opportunity to think about your life, to engage and learn from others and to share your thoughts. I hope it will also be a group which will create community. With email and the internet, we can do that from all over the world.

You can engage with **Amis** for a longer or shorter period as you wish.

In **Amis**, we will hopefully learn from each other, near and far, but also from those who have come before us. We will live with the words that Jesus said to his disciples: "I call you friends".

Introduction

Amis hopes to be **many** things.

Amis is... a journey; a process of discovery; an opportunity for growth; a course in spirituality; an opportunity for gaining self-knowledge; it is a circle of friends; and much more...

Amis is

... a journey

The image of journey is well-known and has gained much popularity during the last few years. Pilgrimages as journeys have boomed in popularity. More people are walking the Camino now than ever before. (To be fair... there are more people on

the planet now than ever before). It seems as if half the world is constantly on some sort of journey – look at the number of people on airports and train stations. The image of journey is also found in abundance in the Bible. We will get back to that later. The main idea of a journey is that it does not leave you where you are. You cannot be on a journey and stay put. Movement is involved. Hopefully it is progressive movement.

...a process of discovery

Journeys might sometimes be well planned and organised, for example: a well-planned Mediterranean cruise holiday or a journey back home. Even the most common journey is a process of discovery as it is unfolding time. Nobody knows the future. A carefully designed trip abroad might be interrupted by delays in flights or illness. You might meet someone unexpectedly, or lose your credit card or phone or – very annoying these days – lose your connectivity. Every day, every moment becomes a process of discovery. The basic attitude is that of openness and awareness. **Amis** is an opportunity to discover, perhaps in a way you haven't done before.

...an opportunity for growth

The word “change” has become a buzz-word – and an even bigger reality. Not all change is positive, but inner and outer change gives us the opportunity for growth. Growth has built into it something of an expanding of knowledge, insight, understanding, influence, openness, vulnerability. It is an adventure. Perhaps it is more a deepening of insight than mere progress.

“Once we accept our limits, we go beyond them.” Albert Einstein

...a course in spirituality

Spirituality is a word and concept which has gained rapid popularity in the last 20 years. Quite often you hear someone saying, “I am not religious, but I am spiritual.” Spirituality is not dogmatism or prescription. It has to do with all the senses but more than just the 5 senses. In the first place, spirituality has to do with oneself and the way the individual perceives her- or himself. It is a way of orientating oneself towards the whole of reality. **Amis** is meant as a course in spirituality. I hope that it would lead you in exploring the world of spirituality and opening new perspectives and knowledge.

We live in a world where different forms of spirituality are available. **Amis** will lead us deeper into the world of Christian spirituality. It will open the wide horizon of a

variety of predecessors and guides. In that sense it serves as a window to the world and a mirror to oneself.

... an opportunity for growing in self-knowledge

The Greek philosopher Socrates was a stirrer; someone who caused a good level of discomfort by asking questions. He was not malicious, but wanted to make people think - and discover more about themselves. Two of his popular quotes:

- True wisdom comes to each of us when we realize how little we understand about life, ourselves, and the world around us.
- The unexamined life is not worth living.

He was not the first nor the last in the line of guides on the way to discovery.

“The more I read, the more I acquire, the more certain I am that I know nothing.”

Voltaire

Jesus too asked questions and told stories to help us gain insight into ourselves.

...a growing circle of friends

Amis, is much more than getting to know yourself. By reading quotes, bits of biographies, thoughts of a wide variety of people, we will get to know them better and discover them as friends, although we meet them in the pages of literature.

We will travel through the history making friends with those known as masters, mentors and guides. You will meet Philo, Clemens of Alexandria, the Desert Father Anthony, Anselm of Canterbury as well as Thomas Merton and Henri Nouwen, to name just a few. But there will also be other people on this journey of course. You might meet up with them – either online or face to face. This will enlarge our circle of friends, our worlds.

Why?

For the sake of the world.

Welcome!

The word “Amis”

Why use this word?

Friendship is one of the most wonderful aspects of our lives. The more I read the Bible, the more I discover the idea of “friendship” at the root of it. Even science

leads us to sharing and friendship! We find joy, hope, adventure and belonging with our friends. Sometimes it is our friends who hurt us most. But the words friend, friends and friendship contain some of the most meaningful nuances and facets of our lives. It contains love, community, openness, it is inviting and welcoming, it is life-giving and full of hope. Friendship is one of the most value-adding and joyful realities. Friendship carries us through the dark times and brings abundance in the good times.

The word is fundamental in the Bible.

In the Gospel of John (ch 15:13-15) we find these words:

“No one shows greater love than when he lays down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants anymore, because a servant does not know what his master is doing. But I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father.”

“Il n'y a pas de plus grand amour que de donner sa vie pour ses amis. Vous êtes mes amis, si vous faites ce que je vous commande. Je ne vous appelle plus serviteurs, parce que le serviteur ne sait pas ce que fait son maître; mais je vous ai appelés amis, parce que je vous ai fait connaître tout ce que j'ai appris de mon Père.”

These words give the idea of “friends” a divine colour. We will, in due course, reflect on this even more.

The idea of friendship was very popular amongst the ancient Greek philosophers too. They used the word φιλία for friendship – one of the words the Greeks used for love.

Thus to be “a friend”, gives you status, a role to fulfil and a safe place to be.

“Who can be un Ami/une Amie?”

Anyone.

We all are **Amis**.

There are no restrictions except willingness, enthusiasm and internet access of course!

“How will it work?”

Amis will be “online” for 3 blocks of 2 months each:
Sept – Oct; Jan – Feb; May – June.

Each week you will receive a 1 to 2-page document called “**Amis Letter**”. This letter will introduce us to someone or a specific topic. It will also contain questions and statements for reflection and/or discussion called “Conversation”.

During the following week there is time to read and reflect on this letter. Questions and comments can be mailed to amisskp@gmail.com. A Facebook closed page for **Amis** is available for online sharing and discussion. This is a safe space to share and ask questions without judgement, bullying, harassment or fear. Self-organised groups are an option for those who live within the same community. *Keeping a journal is strongly advised.*

“How do I become part of Amis?”

To join Amis:

By now you have already sent your email to amisskp@gmail.com indicating your interest. If you wish to continue, you do not have to do anything at this point. You will receive the first **Amis Letter** by email at the beginning of September. If you do not want to receive any further emails, please write asking to be removed from the mailing list. **The CLOSING DATE for joining this cycle is: Thursday 30 August 2018.**

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2. **A Letter** will be emailed weekly to all in the email list. This letter will contain a reading, picture, poem, quote or an introduction to a topic, friend, guide or mentor. There will also be some thoughts and/or questions to reflect on.
3. You can spend time with this all on your own or you could share with some of you friends informally or formally (by starting a group). You are welcome to invite your friends to join the **Amis** list too.
4. There is no obligation to reply or take part in any discussion. You could just receive the weekly letter. But there is an opportunity to take part in the online discussion or email me on the amisskp@gmail.com address.

5. The Facebook page is a closed group called **Amis Discussion Group**. You will find it by typing “**Amis Discussion Group**” on the Facebook search. Click on “Like” or “Follow”. Your request will be sent to the admin team and then will be accepted. This is a closed group which means others will be able to find the group but have to be part to see postings.

For any other questions: please send email to **amisskp@gmail.com**

