



The Art, Science & Practice of Sacred Relationship

A TWO YEAR ENGAGEMENT WITH THE TRADITION FAQ

What is the **BECOMING ANAMCARA** apprenticeship?

- Mary and Richard Groves founded the *Sacred Art of Living Community* in 1996 to teach ways of soulfully caring for the sick and dying. From their experience, Richard authored *The American Book of Living & Dying: Lessons in Healing Spiritual Pain*. The book confirmed the unique contributions of Celtic Healers in the ancient *Ars Moriendi* tradition.
- In 2006, after a decade of collaboration with pre-eminent Celtic scholars, the Groves established the **BECOMING ANAMCARA** apprenticeship as a two-year immersion in the study and practice of ancient Celtic traditions regarding healing sacred relationships.
- The Tradition is based on the Four Pillars of Soulfulness, Community, Skillfulness and Mentorship.
- Through retreats, webinars, mentorship, guided small groups and individual practice, apprentices learn the art and science of sacred relationship.
- **BECOMING ANAMCARA** is open to people from all backgrounds and life experience.
- As the term *anamcara** (Irish for 'soul friend') implies, the apprenticeship is a path of deep friendship with ourselves, with others, the natural world and Great Mystery, however we call it.

*Note that the term *anamcara* is two words in Irish: ANAM = SOUL and CÀRA = FRIEND. **BECOMING ANAMCARA** apprenticeship has created a one-word version of this term for the sake of distinction from other publications and references.

- *BECOMING ANAMCARA* seeks to quicken an individual's lifelong journey towards the sacred in every aspect of life. It is for each Anamcara Apprentice to discern how to apply what they learn given their unique talents and life circumstances.
- There are now many hundreds of Anamcara Graduates from more than 25 countries who are bringing this ancient wisdom tradition into the world.
- The reemergence of the Anamcara Tradition in our times is creating an international community of people dedicated to soulful and generous care of themselves, each other and the precious planet we call home.
- Participants are invited *to apprentice themselves* under the mentorship of respected elders and teachers of the Anamcara Tradition.

How are the two years of the apprenticeship structured?

- Each year of the *BECOMING ANAMCARA* apprenticeship begins and concludes with an intensive weekend retreat that provides both inspiration and learning for the next stage of the Anamcara journey. Each retreat includes an extended nature quest experience since in this tradition, the *scripture of nature* is also an anamcara wisdom teacher.
- **Year One** explores two pillars of the tradition: SOULFULNESS and COMMUNITY. SOULFULNESS draws on diverse practices that deepen relationship to the inner life. COMMUNITY is developed through regular engagement in the small group process called Circles of Trust© where teachings and practices can be explored and shared with fellow apprentices.

- **Year Two** explores the pillars of SKILLFULNESS and MENTORSHIP. While continuing to develop the insights of Year One, the second year offers a variety of practical study tracks under the supervision of mentors who support apprentices in translating their learning into their own lives.

Is *BECOMING ANAMCARA* a Religious Denomination?

- No. *BECOMING ANAMCARA* is an open community of seekers from all backgrounds and traditions. It does not ask that apprentices compromise their own beliefs and practices. It is an immersion in the remarkable myths, history and traditions of a culture that embraces a deep ecological and universal spiritual wisdom.

Is *BECOMING ANAMCARA* an academic pursuit?

- No. The apprenticeship requires personal and small group engagement and encourages an active integration of its teachings into each apprentice's life.

What are the historical roots of *BECOMING ANAMCARA*?

- The origins of Celtic Spirituality predate the arrival of Western Christianity by many centuries.
- As historical circumstances evolved, the Celts sought to integrate pre-Christian, Jewish and early Christian wisdom.
- The evolution of early Celtic Christian Spirituality was unique in never losing its love of nature as a primary wisdom teacher.
- Unlike the religion on Europe's continent that taught mistrust of human nature as well as a separation and domination of the natural world, the Celts taught about the "original blessing" of

all creation that emphasized a holistic and ecological worldview.

- *BECOMING ANAMCARA* draws from a period of time in Celtic history (4th to 8th centuries) when most of its sages and teachers had one foot in the world of indigenous pre-Christian culture and the other in the newly arriving religion of Europe. What emerged was a unique Celtic spiritual culture unlike anything at the time. It is this inclusive blend that is speaking to many today.

Who is welcome to *BECOMING ANAMCARA*?

- Sincere spiritual seekers of all backgrounds and traditions find a home under the welcoming hospitality of the wide “Celtic spiritual tent” which seeks to include rather than exclude and benefits from diversity of beliefs.
- Applicants might want to know that while the Groves were educated in the Judeo-Christian tradition (Richard was an ordained Catholic priest), they have been involved for decades with the interfaith “Deep Ecumenism” movement. From their many years as hospice educators the Groves created *Sacred Art of Living Community* as a place of learning and respect for persons of all faiths and cultural backgrounds.
- Today *Sacred Art of Living* is committed to the *BECOMING ANAMCARA* Apprenticeship because it speaks directly to our times of social polarization and the urgent needs of our planet.

*The Celtic soul takes the best from every culture and tradition
yet leaves its own gentle imprint. –Thomas Cahill*