



Catholic Spirituality Network

November 2016

Welcome to the second edition of the Catholic Spirituality Network Newsletter.

2017 CSN CONFERENCE THE WORD IN THE WORLD



Reading the Scriptures in Hard Times

We welcome two main speakers to next year's Conference Fri 17 - Sun 19 March 2017. They both offer interesting ways into our theme, but from very different backgrounds and angles.



Pádraig Ó Tuama is a poet and theologian and, since 2014, leader of the Corrymeela Community, Ireland's oldest peace and reconciliation community. In the past he has

developed community- and school-based resources exploring conflict, the uses of story, grief, anger, forgiveness and reconciliation. In his recent theological work he has focused on interpersonal encounters in the gospels as a guide to practice, especially in conflictual and contentious situations. His book of biblical reflections, *In the Shelter: Finding a Home in the World*, was published in 2016. More information about Pádraig can be found at www.padraigtuama.com



Susan Docherty is especially interested in ways in which different communities, both Jewish and Christian, receive and interpret the Old Testament in relation to their own lives and times.

Against that background we are looking forward particularly to her reflections on reading and assimilating the Book of Exodus in the midst of experiences of 'exodus' in today's world. Susan is Professor of New Testament and Early Judaism at Newman University in Birmingham and more information about her can be found at: <http://www.newman.ac.uk/profile/1432/dr-susan-docherty>.

Prayer and Liturgy

Regula Hug will once again lead the liturgy. She is a member of the community of the Sisters of St Andrew. She worked for many years with the Taizé community and since coming to Britain she has been a prison chaplain and a mental health chaplain in the NHS. Regula has been involved in spiritual accompaniment and retreat work since the 1980s and music and liturgy have always been an important part of her ministry, whether in prison, hospital or elsewhere.

Rosemary Sefton returns to provide musical accompaniment for our prayer. She plays the organ and works with instrumentalists and singers in the parish and school of St. Gregory's, Northampton.

- 17 - 19 March 2017 at the Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire
- Booking forms are available on the website www.csn.retreats.org.uk
- Early bird booking up to 24 December 2016



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RETREATS ABROAD

CSN Members offer a May retreat in Malta



an invitation from Tom McGuinness SJ

Two well-known members of CSN, Magdalen Lawler SND and myself, are off to Malta 29th April – 5th May 2017. The invitation came from the Jesuit Retreat Centre: Mount St Joseph www.mtsjoseph.org for us to lead a five-day retreat on that historic island with its long and fascinating history associated with Christianity and St Paul. I have known a number of the Jesuits in Malta over the years and was keen to support them in this venture. I remember the island having a fascinating heritage as a cultural crossroads (sea roads!) with history that goes back to pre-Christian times. I have good memories also of Mount St Joseph...images of spaciousness and sun.

The Retreat Centre team in Malta were interested in offering something for English-speaking people that would be enjoyable, quiet, restful and deepening and were enthusiastic about the suggestion of five days based on the now well-loved work of the priest-artist, Sieger Köder. Magdalen's book: *Christ Our Morning Star* will focus the retreat days, and I hope that some of my own meditation songs will add a gentle and reflective dimension. The Mount St Joseph Team are offering an additional possibility for the two days before the retreat: a pilgrimage-tour of historic Malta to taste the atmosphere and Christian heritage of the island before the retreat begins.

Magdalen and I are looking forward to this venture very much. As both of us have been Chair of CSN in recent years, we have many friends in the network. It would be good to be able to share this time with friends old and new who might be drawn to a week of Maltese sun (nice weather in early May we are told – hence the timing) in a quiet atmosphere of friendship and prayer.

For information contact info@mtsjoseph.org

Spain & Rome in the footsteps of St Ignatius

David Birchall SJ writes from Glasgow ISC

The Ignatian Spirituality Centre is a Jesuit-run centre in Glasgow. One advantage of being a Spirituality Centre with no residential accommodation is that we have great flexibility when looking for places to hold our residential retreats. This year for the first time we decided to offer the full Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius in his hometown, Loyola, in the Basque Country of Spain.

Sixteen people made the silent retreat in the beautiful Jesuit retreat house set in the green hill country of northern Spain. Although it was Spain, those from Britain felt at home as the weather was frequently cloudy and it rained a few times, and there was nothing like the heat of the rest of Spain.

The group found the Spiritual Exercises deeply moving – healing and inspiring. It was certainly true to say that no one returned unchanged. There is something about doing your daily prayer in the same room where Ignatius lay on his sickbed, that seems to touch a deep chord. Loyola was certainly an amazing and beautiful setting for such a retreat, with such a variety of places to pray including a lovely chapel on the hill with magnificent views.



Most of the group who went on the retreat continued on after the retreat with a pilgrimage to see the rest of Ignatian Spain – Pamplona, Montserrat, Manresa and Barcelona. It was certainly a memorable time, for both the group who did the full Spiritual Exercises and those who did the one-week pilgrimage. It all went so well, that we have decided not just to run the Spiritual Exercises again in Loyola next year, and offer the one week 'Spain of Ignatius Loyola', but also add 'Rome of Ignatius Loyola' another pilgrimage next October.

www.iscglasgow.co.uk



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REPORT

2016 Spiritual Exercises Network Conference

The recent SEN Conference, held 15 - 19 August at Hinsley Hall, Leeds, considered **'Where are the Exercises taking us now?'**.

The Conference offered inspiration for promoting the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius in new and innovative ways. It explored aspects of ageing presented by Bishop Emeritus Brian Noble; using Youtube as a means of developing interiority by Nikolaas Sintobin SJ, a Dutch Jesuit working in Amsterdam; and the challenge of working with deeper attention to cultural difference, with Annemarie Paulin-Campbell and Puleng Matsaneng from the Jesuit Institute in South Africa.

In line with the trend to work creatively in a digital age, Bishop Brian joined the gathering via Skype, responding to the ageing process from a consideration of the dynamics of the journey of the Exercises. Supported by his reading of the 1973 prayer of an elderly Jesuit which begins, *'Dear Lord, teach me to grow old gracefully'*, the particular grace that Brian attended to was that of the Principle and Foundation. Brian's own presence through Skype embodied the humility and wisdom of one who continues to seek meaning through surrender to God's choice, God's will. He affirmed a profound sense of the whole life journey, challenging us to remain alert to the movement of God's Spirit in those we accompany. He invited us to recognise that, while undergoing physical ageing, opportunities for spiritual growth continue until God's final call, and the pattern of the Exercises can support the transitions of the ageing process in body, mind, imagination, spirit, senses, feeling. A sense of the joy of growing old gracefully was tangible throughout the presentation and beyond.

Nikolaas Sintobin brought us a world of inspiration in our secular age. He invited us to receive his insights on the power of media to move beyond words to touch the ordinary in life, where God is to be found. His work of making Youtube clips accessible to all ages can be experienced through his own webpage www.seeingmore.org, where he actively promotes interiority. His criteria for selecting appropriate clips to use is that they be extremely brief, ordinary, without words and affirming of life, and he also encourages the use of humour. Such a contemporary approach to God in all things proves powerful, reminding us that where life is, God is.

Annemarie and Puleng offered profound insight into the complexities of life in post-apartheid South Africa, where communities thirst for God in the everyday while bearing the wounds of history. Their work with the Exercises for a radical transformation of consciousness, for healing and reconciliation with people in Johannesburg and in Soweto, revealed the need for a fresh mindset when accompanying people from differing cultural contexts. Their work goes beyond the usual adaptations of the Exercises to accommodate the work of the group, where to consider oneself is to know oneself in the context of family, community, and ancestors. The interconnectedness of generations, evident in the story of the one making the Exercises, calls for a breadth in spiritual conversation, in presentation of the material for prayer and in discerning God's voice. Their moving accounts of ministry challenge us all to renewed respect for the way the Creator regards each creature.



Annemarie & Puleng at Hinsley Hall

Along with the diverse range of workshops provided, the opportunities for personal and group reflection, the integrating moments of liturgy - all contributed to make this one of the most exciting and stimulating SEN conferences to date.

Visit the website: www.spiritualexercisesnetwork.uk

Our thanks to Shirley Taylor for this report. Shirley is a long-standing member of both CSN and our sister network, SEN, and was the liturgist for this Conference. We are always interested to hear news from other networks.



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EVENTS

CATHOLIC SPIRITUALITY NETWORK DAYS

Both retreat houses and individuals have responded to the call in our first newsletter to offer CSN days to help us build our network. These days will provide additional opportunities outside the Conference to meet and enjoy time for reflection, input and networking.

FIRST CSN DAY!

Thanks to Shirley Taylor for organising our very first CSN day. We gathered for prayer and orientation in the chapel of LSU school and then moved across to Hampstead Heath for a time of guided reflective walking. Participants hope to continue exploring London's green spaces as a walking spirituality group!



We are very grateful to generous donors who supported this day with a much-needed boost to CSN funds.

CSN DAY IN LEWISHAM

Saturday 13 May 2017

LOVE IS HIS MEANING: At Prayer with Julian of Norwich

Julian of Norwich was a woman of prayer, a spiritual guide and the most down to earth of theologians. She lived in a turbulent time and sought to make sense of how a good God could allow difficult things to happen. In this day we will explore the relevance of Julian's teaching on prayer for our own sometimes complex and challenging lives. Alongside input there will be spaces for personal prayer and reflection. Booking information nearer the time.

The day will be led by Christopher Chapman, an experienced spiritual director and retreat leader, and author of *Seeing in the Dark*, Canterbury Press 2013.



Our venue will be the 'urban oasis' of the Sisters of St Andrew in Lewisham.

www.sisters-of-st-andrew.com

CSN DAY AT KAIROS

The Kairos Centre in Roehampton will host a CSN day on the rearranged date of **Saturday 14 October 2017** led by Sister Magdalen Lawler SND. We will provide further information about the day in our next newsletter.

There is no limit on the number of CSN days, so please get in touch if you would like to plan one, especially if you are able to offer something in a different region. This could be a way of strengthening our regional connections.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT CSN DAYS ON OUR WEBSITE.

Catholic Spirituality Network

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