



Catholic Spirituality Network

CATHOLIC SPIRITUALITY NETWORK

NEWSLETTER EDITION 4

50TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

1967 - 2017

NOVEMBER 2017

THE COMMITTEE IS PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE
OUR 2018 DAY CONFERENCE

In a Year's Turning Four Seasons of Spiritual Growth



Members have requested a Conference about the spiritual significance of the life cycle and the process of ageing, This is a key area both for our own formation and to support our accompaniment of others. We are delighted that Christopher Chapman has agreed to explore this theme with us from the perspective of the seasons and the natural world.

In the Bible, spiritual growth is likened to the natural development processes of plants, and the part played by gardeners, whether human or divine. *In a Year's Turning* will explore four recurring movements of this growth:

- Becoming rooted and grounded in God
- Emerging into being in response to God's invitation
- Struggling towards abundance through resistance
- Bearing fruit and being willing to fall

These four are movements, not stages. They are seasons that meet us afresh within a lifetime of growing, stirring us once more into abundant life.



Christopher Chapman is an experienced retreat leader and spiritual director. Chris is the author of *Seeing in the Dark* [2013] and *Earthed in God: Four movements of spiritual growth* [due to be published by Canterbury Press in spring 2018]. He is a regular guest director at St.

Beuno's Spiritual Exercises Centre. Formerly he was the Spirituality Adviser for the Anglican Diocese of Southwark. He also co-led spiritual direction programmes at the Franciscan Study Centre in Canterbury.

Chris says: *'The ever turning seasons of the year and the rhythms of life within the natural world have helped me understand the different movements of God within my experience. I hope this day will enable us to sense how we can co-operate with God as we are drawn into a more fruitful life.'*

THE CONFERENCE WILL TAKE PLACE ON SATURDAY 28 APRIL 2018 AT ST ALOYSIUS CHURCH HALL, LONDON NW1, NEAR EUSTON STATION. BOOKINGS ARE OPEN. PLEASE CONTACT MARGARET IN THE OFFICE FOR MORE INFORMATION AND BOOKING FORMS. www.csn.retreats.org.uk

CSN GOLDEN JUBILEE

It is 50 years since we began life as the National Retreat Movement. See P 2 for a reflection on this momentous event from our long-standing Membership Secretary, Margaret Palladino. As members will know, it is not always easy to keep going as a religious organisation on a shoestring, so it is right both to congratulate ourselves on this achievement and to acknowledge our gratitude to those who have preceded us - serving on the Committee and in the wider membership. We hope to use the time between now and our next AGM at the April Conference to raise some additional funds to keep us going for another 50 years!



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50 NOT OUT!

Margaret Palladino, our Membership Secretary reflects, a little belatedly, on our 50th Anniversary this year!



The uncharacteristic silence on this momentous event has caused me to reflect and my reflections were interrupted when I caught sight of the news of the death of John Ruming on the *Jesuits in Britain* website. John would not

have forgotten this Golden Jubilee. John was an active member of the network until he moved to the Sussex Coast into real retirement and would always get in touch to remind of a golden nugget of information which linked into the history of the Catholic Network. He was a man with great attention to detail, more later. Back to the Network's Golden Jubilee.

What a vision those early pioneers of the group had and I hope they would not be disappointed at the way things are going 50 years on. Following in the wisdom of many Chairs and Executive Committees, the network has weathered many storms and is still standing together with other denominational groups at the heart of the Retreat Association, and also exploring with the Bishops' Conference ways to support and resource Catholic Dioceses and Parishes. We have an amazingly supportive and encouraging group of members, many of whom can remember far further back than I can and I feel very positive for the future. The development programme of the past two years, energised and supported by Jill Keegan, has given us a boost into the 21st Century. The network is definitely continuing the journey.

What makes a network strong is its membership and CSN has many loyal and committed long-standing members. It would be lovely to receive and collate any memories you would like to send us of key points in the network's history. If we receive enough we might create something for our archive to add to the story. Many of our previous Chairs are still in membership and very active in support, sharing wisdom and encouraging from the floor at Conferences and in so many ways. If you would be willing to send us something, a golden nugget of your time in leadership..... It is important to mark an anniversary as important as this one is.

2017 is the beginning of these anniversary celebrations – let's continue them into 2018 – thanking God for our founders, our companions on the journey and those who have gone before us and will come after us.

Ad Multos Annos

An additional thought. An unsung hero in any Executive group is the Treasurer and in our present treasurer we have a real gift. In our meeting David Shaw is the one who challenges us and gives the reality check. We exist on the proverbial shoe-string! and in the years when we do not have a residential conference we struggle to keep afloat. David asks the hard questions and we so value it – had we always had someone like him (and Pat Tyler before him), we would not be quite as low in funds as we are!!!! The last meeting was no exception and we resisted the suggestion of raising subscriptions and other tough ideas for yet another year but the Executive recognised we really do need to challenge ourselves in the fund-raising area.

Perhaps as a one off for this year we could ALL join in and give the network a small but special anniversary gift. During this year could we ask if you might each think of a small fund-raising/Sponsor idea to be done locally specifically for the network. I will leave you to ponder and hopefully we will put a huge smile on David's face at the 2018 AGM!

John Ruming RIP

I was saddened to read of the news of John's death. Until he moved to the South Coast he was a very active member of the network. He moved with the times and was always supportive of new initiatives. I remember the enthusiasm with which he embraced Spiritual Conversation when he felt his time as a Spiritual Director was drawing to a close. John had a great gift for growing old gracefully, he knew when to let go and to leave it to others! He was an active member of *Christian Life Community* and served it too. He was a founder member of the *Southern Ignatian Network* with Paddy Purnell and served on the Core Group. He was active in Southwark Diocese Justice and Peace, *Pax Christi* and *Cafod – Live Simply* – was a passion and epitomised John. He was chair of this network when it was NRM. One of my earliest memories in the Bermondsey Office is the 'Mailing Days' when John would always join us in the office. I remember him too at the Retreat Association Conferences when he would lead a regular walking workshop to the Midland Railway Centre.

Margaret Palladino

"He was a good man: may he rest in peace."

See Phil Kerton's Obituary in Independent Catholic News
<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/33379>



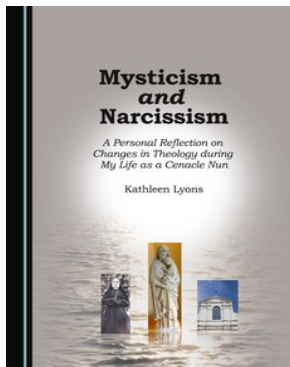
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MYSTICISM AND NARCISSISM



Welcome news from Kathleen Lyons rc about her book, ***Mysticism and Narcissism***, published in 2015 and based on her PhD completed the previous year. The book provides an

excellent consideration of the impact of Vatican II on women's religious orders and women's self-understanding aligned with her 70 years as a Religious. Kathleen was Director of the Ignatian Spirituality Course in London for many years. She has been an inspirational and leading member of the Catholic Spirituality Network since its early days as the National Retreat Movement. Congratulations and gratitude are due to Kathleen for producing a work of such significance. *She writes:*



Mysticism and Narcissism is the title of the publication of my Ph.D. with the sub-title '*Changes in theology during my years as a Cenacle sister*'. In it I record how we responded to the invitation of Vatican II

Council to Religious orders to return to the 'profound intention of the founders' and to 'the signs of the times'. Our sisters were instrumental at the inception of the National Catholic Retreat Movement when fifty years ago it came into being. We were excited about the Council and the breath of fresh air it brought into the Church and consequently into Religious Life. It enabled Religious Women to share with all people the spiritual riches they had enjoyed in their semi-

monastic life. One such gift was the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius which had been open to all through the Jesuits. The concept of '*Ignatian Mysticism*' is not written about in the early years (before 1930) but by the time of the Council '*Ignatian mysticism*' is understood as prophetic discipleship. It was not Ignatius' elevated states of prayer that made him a mystic but his prophetic apostolic ministry through the Spiritual Exercises. Many people came to the Cenacle for the experience of the *Spiritual Exercises* but. after the foundation days. the sisters had been restricted to a supportive role in the background while 'Father' preached the retreat. After the Council, if we were to be faithful to our charism to give the retreats ourselves, a profound awareness of how to recognise the signs of the Holy Spirit required a sound theological training in addition to skills in communicating.

A significant claim I make is that mysticism facilitates a breakthrough from our tendency to narcissism because it requires us to enter fully into the relational process which is at the heart of reality. I draw on the recent work of an Israeli/French psychoanalyst* to describe the generative process beginning at conception, with the feminine playing the mediating role. We have, inscribed into our make- up, a potentiality for inter-relatedness from the very beginning. However, this gift is frequently thwarted and undermined by the rationalism and competitive individualism of our inherited patriarchal culture. I revisit certain biblical passages that shed new light on the familiar stories and reveal Mary to be so much more than the familiar icon that tradition has painted. I believe her to be a woman showing every other woman, not how she ought to be, but how she is!

*Ettinger, Bracha L '*Matrixial Trans-Subjectivity*' *Theory, Culture, and Society* 23 2006 p218-22.

Note: *Mysticism and Narcissism* is available for purchase on Amazon.



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Retreat in Malta Report



When I saw earlier in the year that Tom McGuinness and Magdalen Lawler were leading a retreat in Malta, "Christ our Morning Star" using the Art and inspiration of Sieger Köder, I regretted that I had a prior engagement and would not be able to take part. However, about 10 days

before the retreat was due to begin, I suddenly found that I had the time free. I had never been to Malta but had heard about its fascinating history and interesting places to visit. I arrived in Valletta mid-afternoon on 27 April. The retreat house was easy to find and spacious and comfortable. On Saturday morning we started a pre-retreat pilgrimage. We visited the oldest standing Neolithic temples, St John's Cathedral in Valetta with its famous Caravaggio masterpiece of the Beheading of John the Baptist, the ancient and modern city of Mdina, the Catacombs of St Paul and many other places of spiritual and historical interest. In each one we had a short reflection and prayer. On Sunday we visited St Paul's Bay and viewed the island where it is thought St Paul was washed ashore as related in the Acts of the Apostles.



The retreat days were based on a gentle input each morning using reflective slides with Magdalen, and poetry and songs by Tom. Many of the group enjoyed an afternoon opportunity to share on the theme of the

day. Others simply enjoyed the quiet space – but all gathered for a quiet Eucharist before supper. I have to say the meals were wonderful...satisfyingly Mediterranean at midday ... and the evening salad presentation a highlight of the day for some!

The whole experience was a real gift and I am very grateful that I had the opportunity for this retreat. I would certainly recommend it to anyone who is looking for spiritual, cultural and physical refreshment.

Helen Bamber shcj

A similar retreat will be offered in early May 2018. See the website of Mount St Joseph Retreat Centre, Malta, www.mtsjoseph.org

CSN DAY REPORT 14 Oct 2017

LOVE BADE ME WELCOME



The Kairos Centre was pleased to host its first CSN day on 14th October. The 'Love Bade Me Welcome' day was led by long-time

Network member, Sister Magdalen Lawler SND. Sister Magdalen, through a selection of the paintings of Sieger Köder and the poetry of George Herbert, offered participants ideas as a launch-pad to reflect on their own prayer and experience. The general feedback was that everyone received a great deal from Sister Magdalen's input and the hospitality and comfort of the Kairos Centre. The day coincided with the close of the Poor Servants of the Mother of God General Chapter and apart from a not so quiet, quiet period in the afternoon, the two events rubbed along together nicely. *Michael O'Halloran, Director*

The day came at the end of a very busy week and was rich for me in so many ways. I love the art of Sieger Köder but had not spent time with 'The Table' and was fascinated to explore the guests seated there. Linking this to the poem of George Herbert gave fuller meaning to God's invitation to each to 'Come closer and share everything with Him'. During lunch it was good to renew membership friendships and to meet new people from the locality including those who had come from local parishes on their first taste of a quiet day. During the afternoon Magdalen opened and revealed hidden layers of Rublev's Hospitality icon and it was a gift to sit and be drawn into relationship with the Trinity in the company of others. I really do hope that these days will grow and develop in the network as they surely build for the individual, the local group and the wider community of network, parish and diocese.

Margaret Palladino



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EVENTS

RETREAT ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE 2018 SOUNDING THE SILENCE

Exploring Depths in Stillness and Speech

We hope many members will join the Retreat Association for the three-yearly ecumenical Conference 18 – 21 June 2018 at the Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire.

Key Catholic contributors are Sara Maitland, Professor Peter Tyler and liturgist Frances Novillo. Other keynote speakers include Martin Laird, author of *Into the Silent Land*, and Rev Graham Sparkes. Malcolm Guite will be resident poet. This rich line-up will focus on the theme of silence both in the context of retreat and in the unspoken areas of our lives. There will be opportunities for joining together in silent reflection during the Conference.

<http://www.retreats.org.uk/conference.php>

CSN DAY in DERBYSHIRE! 27 January 2018

Speaker: Fr Chris Thomas, Director of the Irenaeus Project, Liverpool.

Venue: Our Lady of Lourdes Church Hall, Mickleover, Derby.

Theme: *Spirituality and the Mystery of Humanity* (or "Holiness is for Everyone")

PLEASE CONTACT THE OFFICE TO BOOK

CSN DAY IN LEWISHAM 12 May 2018

We are looking forward to a return visit to the Sisters of St Andrew in Lewisham on 12 May 2018. Happy memories of last year's day on Julian of Norwich with Chris Chapman! Thank you to the Sisters for offering to host us again. [MORE INFORMATION IN THE NEW YEAR](#)

CSN RETREAT – NEW VENTURE!

The Committee proposes holding a weekend CSN Retreat in our Day Conference year. This will serve the double purpose of enabling us to come together and raising some additional funds to help us through the year.

We are grateful to the Kairos Centre for offering to host the retreat and to Tom McGuinness SJ and Sr Magdalen Lawler for offering to lead us. The date will be 23-25 November 2018 and the retreat will lead us gently into Advent. [More information to come in the May Newsletter.](#)

CONFERENCE ON SUFFERING, DIMINISHMENT AND THE CHRISTIAN LIFE



The Centre for Catholic Studies at Durham University is holding this Conference 8 – 10 January 2018 at Ushaw College, Durham. Professor Karen Kilby is one of the

keynote speakers. Many members will remember Karen as the main speaker at our 2016 Conference and how good she was. She has been chosen as one of the 100 most influential Catholics by *the Tablet* this year! The Conference will seek to explore the status and meaning of suffering in Christian life and Christian theology and to ask whether love is intrinsically linked to suffering.

<https://www.dur.ac.uk/theology.religion/ccs/new/?itemno=32136>

HEYTHROP COLLEGE CONFERENCE, JULY 2018

Sadly, Heythrop College, a work of the British Jesuits and loved and valued by many, is to close in the summer of 2018. Planning is underway for closing events including a major Conference 5- 7 July 2018. There will also be a day Conference for staff and alumni on Saturday 12 May. More information will be made available on the Events page of their website in due course.

<http://www.heythrop.ac.uk/about-us/events>

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Executive Committee: David Lonsdale (Chair), David Shaw (Treasurer), Barbara Strong, Sister Teresa Kennedy, Michael O'Halloran.

Many thanks to Christopher Simon-Evans who has had to resign from the Committee due to a family move to France. We wish him all well and hope he keeps in touch.

Membership Secretary: Margaret Palladino

Newsletter and Development: Jill Keegan. *Please send newsletter contributions to the email below.*

Contact: Margaret Palladino

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