



# Catholic Spirituality Network

CATHOLIC SPIRITUALITY NETWORK

NEWSLETTER EDITION 5

MAY/JUNE 2018

CONFERENCE 2019 NEWS

THE COMMITTEE IS PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE  
OUR 2019 CONFERENCE

WINDING THE WAY

*Living a spiritual life with the help  
of Gerard Manley Hopkins and  
the Spiritual Exercises*



The plan for next year's Conference at the Hayes Conference Centre in Swanwick is to look at the movements of the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius through the poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins, himself a Jesuit priest who was formed by the Exercises. Join us to trace ways in which the themes of the Exercises appear in the poems, and can help us in our own daily lives and in our accompaniment of others on their way. Our keynote speaker will be **Dr Michael Kirwan SJ**, formerly head of the Theology Department at Heythrop College in London. Michael brings a wealth of wisdom and experience to this exposition of both Ignatius and Hopkins, and, because the Exercises are a guide to life, there will be a direct bearing on our own life journeys and choices.

THE CONFERENCE WILL TAKE PLACE 15-17 MARCH 2019 AT THE HAYES CONFERENCE CENTRE IN SWANWICK, DERBYSHIRE. MORE INFORMATION WILL BE AVAILABLE SOON. PLEASE PUT THE DATE IN YOUR DIARIES!

## 2018 CONFERENCE REPORT



The CSN Conference on Saturday 28 April this year was one day and was held at St. Aloysius RC Church in London. As a recently joined member, it was good to attend to get a flavour of what the CSN is about.

Following the AGM with its Conference Reports and a time of sharing and general discussions, we settled down to our keynote speaker, Christopher Chapman, who took as the theme of his talk, *In a Year's Turning: Four Seasons of Spiritual Growth*. Chris successfully linked the four seasons of the year to our own spiritual growth which, like nature, goes through a cycle.

In the morning session Chris focused on us becoming rooted and grounded, and then emerging into being and responding to God's invitation. Following lunch, we looked at struggling towards becoming abundance and then bearing fruit and being willing to fall.

His talk was illustrated throughout with references to how the Bible uses the imagery of nature. Examples included: for becoming rooted (*Genesis 2:4-9*); emerging into being (*Mark 4:26-29*); struggling towards abundance (*Mark 4:1-9*); and for bearing fruit and being willing to fall (*John 15:1-1*). Additionally, Chris used quotes from Thomas Merton and St. Benedict and poems by Gerard Manley Hopkins to illustrate what he was saying.



We were also encouraged to share in twos and threes after each 'season' about what had come up for us whilst Chris was talking. We were given some pointers for reflections if needed and invited to share back to the whole group if we wished. This sharing led to some interesting conversation amongst the whole group.

I found Christopher's talk very interesting and I am looking forward to reading his recently published book entitled *Earthed in God, Four movements of spiritual growth*, published by Canterbury Press, April 2018

Diana Pinchin

*Many thanks to Diana for writing this report and to Chris for the images, including Adam Delving from Canterbury Cathedral. About 40 of us gathered to hear Chris speak and it was good to welcome new members. We also held a Sustainability Sale on the day which raised £100 towards funds.*



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## CSN GOLDEN JUBILEE

*As we continue to reflect on our recent Jubilee, we are very grateful to former Chair, Christine Head RSCJ, for sharing these memories of her time at the helm when CSN was called NRM: National Retreat Movement.*

## Recollections of an NRM Chair Person before CSN was born

*from 2000-2003*



*Or When the boat comes in!*

*Or How do you like your roller coasters?*

*Or Those who are led by the Spirit are Sons and Daughters of God, Romans 8:14*

Privilege, awe, *aha* moments, work, laughter, connectedness, hellos and goodbyes, potluck lunches, a scary jacuzzi moment before the opening of a Conference, prayer times, agendas and the Retreat Association.

Before I go any further I want to loudly acclaim the immeasurable support, creativity and hard work of Paddy Lane as the Executive Officer of NRM now CSN, Mary Synnott who was the Administrator, and Margaret Palladino who also worked hard and supportively in the office and at Conferences.

In this write-up I am not going deeply into the input at each of the annual Conferences I chaired, because you each have your own memories and I do not wish to spoil those for you. However, I shall share some of the anecdotes of my time on the Committee. When I was elected onto the Committee, John Ruming was Chair and he was a very hard act to follow so, on being named, I went to John the same day and said, *"Please will you tell me about being Chair and what do I need to know?"*. He smiled pacifically and said, *"I shall not tell you anything as it is important that you do it your way, as yourself"*. First roller coaster! In preparing for my first Committee meeting, I wanted to have a time of reflection before the day began and to have potluck lunch half way through the day. My theme each time was liturgical and I sent out the theme to all who would be present at the meeting, so each Committee Member had time to reflect. On two occasions I was floored by the sharing on my themes.

One reflection time was very close to the Feast of the Sacred Heart. I had asked, "What does this title mean to you?" After several contributions, Paddy then spoke up and said she really did not know anything about the Feast or the Sacred Heart: the only thing she knew was that I was a Religious of the Sacred Heart, and her understanding of Sacred Heart came from what I conveyed by my life. Wow, that was a big responsibility on my part, it could have been an extreme roller coaster. Another time we were meeting in the week of Ash Wednesday, and I asked that on this occasion we share something of what Lent meant to us. As we went around the Committee, I was very aware that the energy in the room was fading considerably as reflections became more and more negative. However, Dom Brendan Thomas from Belmont Abbey was by then on the Committee, in his wisdom he waited to last to speak. He came out with this wonderful energy-raiser. He said St Benedict mentions Lent twice in his Rule and St Benedict says Lent is the time for anticipation of the joy of Easter. Relief came into the room and spirits rose ready for the rest of the day's agenda. I have always been grateful to Dom Brendan for hanging back with his contribution.

In those days the office was in Bermondsey, looking over a busy road, so we were not inclined to open any windows during the summer and the heat on some occasions was tremendous. I always felt very sorry for the person taking the minutes as it is not easy to write on damp paper. Gracious, this was before most people had laptops - now that dates me. We also had meetings with the members of the Retreat Association and we travelled far and wide for those. It felt very special to be in the company of Chairs and representatives of the other denominational groups and a non-denominational group was formed as well.

Another overwhelming roller coaster, personal to me though, was on arrival in Southport for another Conference. I was fortunate enough to be given a room with an en-suite. After travelling, and seeing over the setting up of the Conference, I went to have some time to myself and thought before I get changed ready to open the Conference, I would take a jacuzzi bath. Now, as a religious, this was going to be a very new but welcome adventure for me. How was I to know it would be more of a roller coaster than many other experiences. I was enjoying the jacuzzi effect and then, noticing my bottle of bubble bath on the edge of the bath, I squirted some in. How I got to the Conference Hall remains a mystery. I couldn't see for bubbles everywhere. At one point I wondered if I would ever see the bathroom door again. Battling with bubbles is an odd description for something



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so light, but, it was with great relief that I got down to the Conference Hall on time. I haven't told anyone about this before because I felt so stupid!

Battling was a good word though for trying to track a Conference speaker, **Nick King SJ** coming by boat, as he said, from South Africa. He did get to us on time fortunately, and then revealed during the Conference his love of cricket. What he didn't know was that, having been born and brought up in Kent by a father who was a cricket fanatic, I was able to bowl Nick a googly during my thankyou speech to him at the end of the Conference. It was not a case of a maiden over!!

Meeting **Joyce Rupp SM** at Southport Station, when she had missed her connection, was minor for me but, as she said, a great relief for her. Yes, other people too have roller coasters.



The **Rev Margaret Guenther**, during her first input, missed the mark as to the experience of her audience and gave rise to some of the membership wanting to have two types of Conference: one for those who had done more mileage and one for beginners. Yes, what a roller coaster until the next morning when, with gentle humility, she told us she was rueful of her mistake and in the course of that talk had us all grateful for her wisdom, and no further talk of a schism existed.

I do want to pay my respects, and offer my love and prayer, for two other Chairs of NRM and then CSN: John Ruming RIP, who I have mentioned, and also Sister Pia Buxton RIP. Pia had to cope with a roller coaster that was hard and harrowing. May they both rest in the exquisite peace of Christ which they both so earned.

My time as Chair was one of privilege to be with such like-minded people who are enablers of seekers. People who speak the language of peace and who are people of compassion and who are led by the Spirit. Thank you for all your help and support, I could not have done it without each and every one of you. Blessings on you all.

*Christine Head RSCJ*

*We are grateful to Christine and all our Chairs who offer themselves in a leadership role to the Network. Their commitment is invaluable in enabling CSN to survive and to flourish.*

*CSN Chair, David Lonsdale, composed and offered the following opening prayer at the beginning of our 2018 AGM. We are grateful to him for permission to reproduce part of it here, and he is happy for it to be used by anyone who wishes.*

## Prayer for a Golden Jubilee

At this moment of celebration of the Golden Jubilee of the Catholic Spirituality Network, let us pause for a moment or two and recall, with profound gratitude to God, the people and the gifts of nature and grace with which God has blessed this network, unstintingly, over the last fifty years.

For our friends, colleagues, partners, communities and families who support and accompany us in our ministries. *God of life, we give you thanks.*

For the men and women of vision who, in the early days of the network, saw in formation in prayer, contemplation, accompaniment and spiritual conversation, the potential for life. *God of life, we give you thanks.*

For those members of the network who over the years have inspired, initiated, guided or accompanied us in the ways of the Spirit. *God of life, we give you thanks.*

For the scholars, teachers and theologians who have helped us to understand more fully the mystery of Christ and the presence of God in the world and in the lives of human beings. *God of life, we give you thanks.*

For the writers, artists and musicians who have given us visions and shown us new pathways to God. *God of life, we give you thanks.*

For those women and men who showed us how to be attentive to others that they, our neighbours, might grow in grace. *God of life, we give you thanks.*

### Pause for silence to remember significant members

For all those times when, through the presence and ministries of members of this network, in our homes, in the countryside or on the streets of our cities, in our retreat houses and centres, notwithstanding our sinfulness and our limitations, you have:

brought good news to the poor  
welcomed prodigal sons and daughters  
set captives and the oppressed free  
given sight to the blind  
healed the sick and wounded  
mended the broken  
cast out demons  
and brought the *dead to life*

*God of life, we give you thanks.*

Let us pray together: Glory to God in the highest...

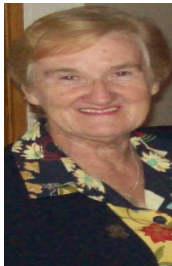
And may the blessing of almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, come down upon us and remain with us always. Amen.

*David Lonsdale, 24 April 2018*



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## CSN DAY REPORT



### ***Spirituality and the Mystery of Humanity - CSN Day in South Derbyshire***

As a member of the CSN Committee, my focus and hope for the Network is that it can reach out as far as possible and be of service to as many as possible in the whole area of spirituality. In my limited work in parishes I meet so many whose spiritual needs are not being met today.

So, following a decision at an Executive meeting to have a CSN day up the country, I set about organising one in my own Derby Deanery, choosing to use a parish centre in Mickleover as a venue, which offered all the necessary facilities and was easy to reach.

The main reason for the day was to expose, and so spiritually nourish, parishioners from the deanery in a spirituality for everyday life. I duly put together a small poster with relevant information, which I sent to each parish priest with a letter explaining the work of CSN and asking them to encourage parishioners to consider attending the day. Sadly, this information was not displayed in some cases.



A modest donation of £7.50 was suggested for the day, but any donation was acceptable if folk wanted to come. The day was attended by 50 people with many apologies. As an aid to evaluation of the day a small slip asking some relevant questions was offered to each person before departing.

The presenter for the day was Fr Chris Thomas, Director of the Irenaeus Project in Liverpool. His subject was *“Spirituality and the Mystery of Humanity”*. It was a perfect choice as evaluation slips confirmed – most participants declared that the day was much more than expected, and there

were very affirming comments regarding: the thought-provoking subject matter, presented in a varied, visual and challenging way; periods of silence; the heartfelt sense of God present; and the gentle action of the Spirit felt by many throughout the day.

Practically all departed saying that such days were so needed and vital for individuals’ growth in relationship with God in prayer. The welcome received and easy flow of the day was greatly appreciated. A follow-up from a small group already has resulted in a request for accompaniment in prayer, parish day on prayer, and possibly a Week of Guided Prayer later on.

*Sister Teresa Kennedy, PBVM*

*Please contact Margaret in the office if you feel inspired by Teresa’s report to offer a CSN day in your own locality. There is no blueprint – each day can be unique – but it’s great to hear of so many people being nourished like this at parish level. Many thanks to Teresa for organising it.*

## MISCELLANEOUS

### DATA PROTECTION

We are taking all the necessary steps to comply with the new legislation on data protection. Margaret has been in touch to ensure all members are happy with the details we hold and how we use them, and to request permission to continue for the future. If you have any queries, or wish to consult our Privacy Policy, please contact Margaret in the office.

*Thanks to Margaret for all her hard work.*

### FUNDRAISING

Our Treasurer, David Shaw, reminded us at the AGM that our financial position remains quite precarious. Please think about any ways you can fundraise and please also support our CSN events, especially the pre-Advent retreat – a new venture for our Day Conference year, which you can find out more about on the next page.



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## EVENTS

### WAITING, WATCHING AND WONDERMENT

#### PRAYING THE ADVENT MYSTERY THROUGH

#### ARTWORK, POETRY, AND THE RHYTHMS OF CREATION



FRIDAY NOVEMBER 23RD TO SUNDAY NOVEMBER 26TH  
2018

AT THE KAIROS CENTRE, ROEHAMPTON, LONDON

LED BY SR MAGDALEN LAWLER  
& CHRISTOPHER CHAPMAN

In this new venture of a **CSN Advent Retreat** we will use artwork, poetry and the rhythms of creation to explore how God comes afresh into our own waiting, watching and wonderment. Chris Chapman says:

*"As the autumn fall moves towards winter's stillness, the season of Advent shifts our gaze to the final days when so much that seemed important will be swept away. But Advent also bids us look forward to birth, beginning, and the budding of a yet hidden spring. We are taken back to the mother's womb. Life will be renewed in her child of love."*

**Magdalen Lawler** is a Sister of Notre Dame who has worked for many years in retreats and spiritual direction. She is the author of *Love bade me welcome, Christ our Morning Star and Show us the Father*.

**Christopher Chapman** is former Spirituality Adviser for the Diocese of Southwark and an experienced spiritual director and retreat leader. He is the author of *Seeing in the Dark and Earthed in God*.

*Please contact Margaret in the office for booking enquiries and further information.*

## SPIRITUAL EXERCISES NETWORK CONFERENCE

OUR SISTER NETWORK, SEN, IS HOLDING A CONFERENCE 13-17 AUGUST AT HINSLEY HALL, LEEDS, ON **THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES IN A FRACTURED WORLD**. THE CONFERENCE WILL EXPLORE THE RELEVANCE OF THE EXERCISES IN THIS CONTEXT FROM THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL SCALE, THROUGH COLLECTIVE MORALITY (OR LACK THEREOF) TO INDIVIDUAL BROKENNESS. KEYNOTE SPEAKERS ARE NICK AUSTIN SJ, JULIA MACDONALD AND EDEL MCCLEAN.

[www.spiritualexercisesnetwork.uk](http://www.spiritualexercisesnetwork.uk)

### Golden Jubilee Thames River Walk

Saturday 2 June  
2018



**A WALK TO CELEBRATE 50+ YEARS OF THE CATHOLIC SPIRITUALITY NETWORK. ALL WELCOME. FULL REPORT IN THE NEXT NEWSLETTER.**

## Catholic Spirituality Network

**Executive Committee:** David Lonsdale (Chair), David Shaw (Treasurer), Sister Teresa Kennedy, Michael O'Halloran, Fr Chris Thomas.

*Many thanks for all her support to Barbara Strong, who has resigned from the Committee at this year's AGM. Welcome to new member, Fr Chris Thomas, Director of the Iranaeus Project in Liverpool.*

**Membership Secretary:** Margaret Palladino

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

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