



# Catholic Spirituality Network

May 2016

Welcome to the first edition of the  
Catholic Spirituality Network Newsletter

PLEASE CONTACT THE EDITOR WITH IDEAS, FEEDBACK,  
CONTRIBUTIONS OR INFORMATION ABOUT UPCOMING  
EVENTS

## 2017 CONFERENCE

### THE WORD IN THE WORLD:

#### *READING THE SCRIPTURES IN HARD TIMES*

The plan for next year's conference at the Hayes Conference Centre in Swanwick is to refresh our relationship with Scripture in the context of the modern world and the many problems and difficulties that can stand in the way of our sense of God's loving presence in our lives. How can we best renew our own outlook and equally resource our ongoing use of Scripture with those we know or accompany?

Pádraig Ó Tuama from the Corrymeela community in Northern Ireland joins us as guest speaker. Regula Hug, from the Sisters of St Andrew, returns as liturgist. The programme will also offer workshops and opportunities to network, alongside informal times to get to know each other and take some time out for ourselves.

### *DATE 17-19 MARCH 2017*

More news to follow and early bird booking will open later in the year.

*"I value the conference because of the input and formation but also because it is a returning, welcoming group and network in which I can make contacts and meet friends. It's not an impersonal conference which is gone with the wind."*

*CSN member*

## CONFERENCE REPORT 2016

Late February 2016 saw members gathered at the Hayes for our Conference on *Love & Suffering: Discerning the movement of grace in times of loss and change*.

Our main speaker was Karen Kilby, Professor of Catholic Theology at Durham University. Karen spoke about the theology of suffering and how important it is to be true to a person's experience rather than imposing meaning. We may find meaning in the suffering that comes our way or that we see around us, but we can't find it for the other. If we are guiding someone, we need to be true and present to the person in front of us, and be prepared to hear about lack of meaning or growth as well as the movement of grace in life. Karen suggested that God never wants suffering, but it is sometimes inevitable. The subject matter was subtle as there are so many situations in which people suffer, and it's hard to find a theological position that fits all cases. Karen welcomed questions as we sought to apply theory and theology to experience and practice.

Teresa Brown's reflective liturgies, especially her solo violin playing, helped us to symbolise and to express without words our responses to what we had heard.



*Thanks go to CSN members who offered workshops: Felicity Young, Shirley Taylor, Anne Morris, Barbara Strong and Kathryn Turner. And special thanks to Sue Bennett, outgoing member of the Executive Committee, for her role in organising recent conferences.*



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## BOOK LAUNCH LOVE BADE ME WELCOME

On a cold day in February the Notre Dame School in Southwark played host to the launch of the latest book by Magdalen Lawler, long-standing member and former chair of the Catholic Spirituality Network.

The book is called ***Love Bade Me Welcome, Reflections on the Eucharist in the Art of Sieger Köder***, and is the latest in a series of beautifully designed reflection books from Pauline Books & Media.

*“...the paintings and the prayers widen our vision to include the current images of suffering and need in our modern world as displayed in the media...”*

On a cold and blustery day we were treated to a hospitable welcome at Notre Dame in the spirit of the eponymous poem. The school has a glass-fronted cafeteria looking out towards the Imperial War Museum. We gathered around tables and were served tea and strawberry cake among other delicacies. Magdalen introduced us to the new book and explained how it came into being. For a long time she has been involved in training young students from the school as Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist for the Cathedral. Some of them were there at the Launch. When the pamphlet she used to use for the training ran out, she enquired about a reprint, but was invited to write a book instead!

In collaboration with Tom McGuinness, another CSN member who contributed his prayerful poetry to the text, and Sr MaryLou Winters fsp, their gifted designer from the Daughters of St Paul, the new book was born.

Magdalen expressed her gratitude for the unforgettable art of Sieger Köder to whom the book is dedicated. She told us how, as a parish priest in Germany with a background in art, he began to give ‘painted homilies’, enabling his congregation to enter more deeply into the meaning of Scriptural scenes and stories. His distinctive style has made a unique contribution to the retreat movement. Many of us will have experience of contemplating Scripture through his images.

The afternoon ended with more networking and a book signing before departure. It was good to find out more about the genesis of a book and take away a copy to read and reflect with. Thanks are due to all involved.



TOM, MAGDALEN AND MARYLOU

*Magdalen and Tom jointly offer retreats using the art of Sieger Köder as a focus for reflection. The next one will be at Manresa House in Dublin from 3-8 July 2016. Contact Manresa directly for more information.*

***Love Bade Me Welcome*** is available from Pauline Books & Media, cost £6.99.



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## EVENTS

### Mary Colwell's Curlew Walk

*"A curlew can be **Numenius Arquata** to the scientifically minded, it can be a 'thought of God' as Thomas Merton would have said. They can be seen as specific creation of Allah, or as a spark of light from the flame of Lord Shiva. They could even just be a brown bird with a long nose and a beautiful bubbling call. All are valid, all have a place at the table."* (Mary Colwell)

Many will remember our 2013 conference, *Awakening the Dawn*, when Mary Colwell, radio and TV producer and writer, helped us explore a spirituality of understanding how to live well in our vibrant natural world. Mary has a special love of curlews, and is currently undertaking a lone 500 mile walk from the West of Ireland through Wales to the Wash in Norfolk. She is walking to raise awareness of serious threats to the continuance of the curlew in habitats threatened by environmental degradation and the ways in which land is managed.

#### *St Beuno and the Curlew*

Mary set out on her walk on 21st April, the feast of St Beuno. She tells the story of how the saint blessed a curlew for rescuing his prayer book from the waves, and promised that curlews would always be protected. Mary is walking to try and

refresh this protection. She ends her walk on 29<sup>th</sup> May, and welcomes invitations to speak and offers of hospitality on her way. The whole walk is documented with a blog, short films, and contributions from literary, spiritual and conservationist perspectives. Follow her progress on Twitter and at <http://www.curlewmedia.com/current-projects/>



CURLEW AT ST BEUNO'S

## SUMMER EVENT

The Retreat Association is holding a summer event on **Monday 6 June** at the Royal Foundation of St Katharine in East London. Peter Tyler will speak about Christian Mindfulness followed by a joint reflection on his talk by Christopher Jamison and Graham Sparkes. With Emily Walker as liturgist, and an update on the work of the Retreat Association, the day promises to be useful and memorable. CSN is a founder member of the RA, so do support the day if you can. See the Retreat Association website for more information and to book a place.

<http://www.retreats.org.uk/summer-event.html>



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## INTO THE FUTURE

This year marks a step forward for the Catholic member group of the ecumenical Retreat Association as we discern the way ahead in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. At the recent AGM those present voted unanimously to change the name of the Network for the second time.

This comes at a time when the Catholic Church is reclaiming the great traditions of spiritual direction through the work of the Bishop's Conference Spirituality Committee and the publication of '*Do You Love me? – a practical guide to Catholic Prayer & Spirituality*'.

The Bishop's Spirituality Committee has visited many of the Catholic dioceses, gathering together individuals involved in the various ministries. One diocese now has a full-time employed person with responsibility for co-ordinating and developing spirituality; another has established a Spirituality Commission; and others have flourishing diocesan groups which promote and develop the ministry.

As a national Catholic Spirituality Network, we have a commitment to support our Catholic people and their parishes alongside the many retreat centres who founded the National Retreat Movement, as it was known in the early years. CSN has always had a very close and important relationship with the Retreat Association and its other member groups, as we have sought to do together all we can in the service of our shared Christian faith, but our profile is very low within our Catholic parishes. Many do not know of our existence, let alone the wealth of experience and giftedness of our many members who are actively involved in developing aspects of spirituality in a whole variety of ways.

When we made the first change to our name in 2004 we became the Catholic Network for Retreats and Spirituality to place ourselves within the Catholic Church. We now wish to express in our NEW name a wider vision and hope to reach a wider membership: individuals, parishes, and groups, as well as the many retreat centres who have been the core and centre of our membership from the beginning. Our new name, Catholic Spirituality Network, simplifies who we are – and what we seek to be and do.

We trust that this new name will reinvigorate and grow the network, as we share the many resources we have and seek to work and grow together in that personal relationship of Christian discipleship which makes the world a better place.

*Margaret Palladino*

## CALLING RETREAT HOUSES

If you are a retreat house member, and have events or news that you would like to share with the membership, please contact the Newsletter.

With a view to making the network better known, would you consider hosting a **Catholic Spirituality Network Day** as part of your regular programme? It might be a quiet day or a day to explore some aspect of Christian spirituality. The day could be led by the in-house team or an invited network member. We hope that CSN 'days' will raise awareness of the network with potential new members and also provide an opportunity for us to meet up regionally. New publicity is being prepared to support wider networking. Please let us know if you can consider this.



MARGARET, DAVID, JILL AND SUE AT THE CONFERENCE

## Catholic Spirituality Network

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