



# Catholic Spirituality Network

CATHOLIC SPIRITUALITY NETWORK

NEWSLETTER EDITION 7

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## COME TO THE WATERS

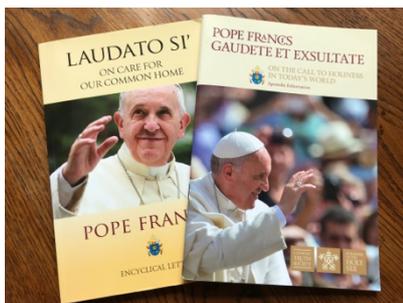


### CSN CONFERENCE 2020

We are pleased to announce news of our 2020 Conference, ***Come to the Waters***. The Conference will explore **everyday living and the call to holiness** through reflection on Scripture, the *'cloud of witnesses'* who have travelled the road before us, and recent encyclicals from Pope Francis. Our speaker will be Christopher Chapman.

The Conference will take place over the weekend of 20 – 22 March 2020 at the Hayes Conference Centre in Swanwick, Derbyshire. Workshops will form part of the Conference and more news will follow about our liturgist.

**Rejoice and Be Glad! (Mt 5:12)** In *Gaudete et Exsultate*, Pope Francis proposes that each one of us is



called to holiness *'in a practical way for our own time, with all its risks, challenges and opportunities'*.

He speaks of the holiness of *'small gestures'* and the joy that springs from the ways in which God becomes manifest in the ordinary.

**Laudato Si'**: the call of St Francis to let God be praised in all things! This encyclical invites us into the joy of ecological spirituality and the *'interior awe'* of St John of the Cross, who said of the mountains and the valleys that he could not separate them from his experience of God: *'These mountains are what my Beloved is to me...These valleys are what my Beloved is to me.'*

**Christopher Chapman** has worked as a priest in parish ministry, as a spiritual director providing one-to-one support, as a mentor for those working in pastoral care, and as a retreat-giver. He is the author of *Seeing in the Dark* and *Earthed in God*, both published by Canterbury Press. He lives in Kent.



Chris is known to many of us already through CSN days, as well as our 2018 Day Conference and Advent retreat, These events have mainly taken place in the South-East, meaning not everyone is able to attend, so we are delighted that Chris has agreed to lead our residential Conference in 2020. One of the best things about CSN events is the sense of returning to *'home ground'*, and we are grateful to Chris for his ongoing commitment to our Network and look forward to building on this connection into the future.

Booking information will follow later in the year. Check our website for updates.

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

Email Margaret in the office for further information. [catholicspiritualitynetwork@gmail.com](mailto:catholicspiritualitynetwork@gmail.com)



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## CONFERENCE REPORT 2019

### WINDING THE WAY



This year's annual Conference of the Catholic Spirituality Network was held at the Hayes Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire on the weekend of 15/17 March. The keynote speaker was Michael Kirwan SJ, and his topic was *Living a spiritual life with the help of Gerard Manley Hopkins and the Spiritual Exercises*. Around 60 members of the Network attended, together with a few, like me, who were probably attracted by the Hopkins connection.

Michael's five sessions were wide-ranging and thought-provoking. He has a natural inclination to involve members of his audience and I felt strongly that I was part of a communal celebration of the subject matter and not being lectured to! Singing and reading poems, hymns, prayers and reflections together made this an inclusive and refreshing experience.

During his 21 years of Jesuit life, Hopkins made 22 retreats. Twenty were 8-day retreats and two were 'long retreats' of 30 days following the Spiritual Exercises - one as a novice in 1868 and the other as a tertian in 1881. The Exercises are traditionally arranged into four Weeks. The First Week begins with a concise statement of the meaning and purpose of human existence; the Second is concerned with the earthly ministry of Jesus; the Third and Fourth focus upon Holy Week and the Resurrection respectively.

I felt during this weekend that the poetry of Hopkins spoke most powerfully and convincingly in relation to Weeks One and Four. Week One opens, famously, with the First Principle and Foundation: "Man is created to praise, reverence and serve God our Lord ...the other things on the face of the earth are created for human beings in order to help them pursue the end for which they are created". Whatever we may feel about this, it seems to me not too far removed from Hopkins'

characteristically ecstatic celebration of the created world, such as we find in *God's Grandeur*, *Spring*, *Pied Beauty*, *Hurrahing in Harvest* and many more. Indeed, Michael opened the weekend with *As kingfishers catch fire...* and its compelling statement of 'this-ness' in:

*Each mortal thing does one thing and the same:  
Deals out that being indoors each one dwells....*

and leading to Hopkins' confident: *I say more ... for Christ plays in ten thousand places...*

Ignatius introduces Week Four, dedicated to the Resurrection, with an assertion of the grace to be prayed for: "*What I want here will be to ask for grace to feel gladness and to rejoice intensely over the great glory and joy of Christ our Lord*". Michael directed us to *The Blessed Virgin compared to the Air we Breathe*, *The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo* and, especially, *That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire...* This was read with great effect by Michael, who highlighted the abrupt transition towards the end from '*death blots black out*' to:

*Enough! the Resurrection, A heart's clarion!*

The Exercises end with a Contemplation for Attaining Love. In his presentation of this, I remember a telling statement from Michael: '*the entirety of creation is soaked with the love of God*'.

So... many thanks to Michael for such interesting insights, to



Tom McGuinness SJ and Magdalen Lawler SND for their readings and music, to Margaret Palladino for her quietly efficient administration, to the Hayes Centre for their comfortable but unpretentious hospitality and to all the other participants for their company.

Driving home through Matlock and Bakewell, I hoped to see some racing lambs having fair their fling. No luck. What I got was an impressive hail storm and roaring streams around Buxton, a covering of snow on distant hills and open country as far as the eye could see. Yes, indeed - *nature is never spent*.

*Dudley Harrop  
Member of the Hopkins Society*

*Many thanks to Dudley for permission to reproduce this report which he wrote for the Hopkins Society.*



# Catholic Spirituality Network

## REPORT ON PRE-ADVENT RETREAT 2018

This was the first time the Network has held a residential event in the year we do not have a weekend Conference. Seventeen of us gathered at the Kairos Centre to enter into a time of silence and input based around the themes of Waiting, Watching and Wonderment. For each session handouts were given summarising the spoken input, together with relevant poems and thoughts to ponder in the space. Each session had visuals, spoken input and music.

After a talking supper on the Friday we met for a time of introduction to the Retreat, and were reminded of a few pointers to aid us as we entered into silence until lunchtime on Sunday. We ended the session by listening to the Winter *O Antiphons*, written by Joyce Rupp and Macrina Wiederkehr, which I found really beautiful.

The next day, Saturday, we looked at two themes. First in the morning, *Waiting*, in which we were led from the demands of the world of today into a place of stillness. We were again invited to slow down and open ourselves to receiving God.

Later during the morning, if we wished, there was a time of reflection with the chance to share what had come up for us in a supportive environment. We also looked at the *O Antiphons* with linking passages from Scripture. I found this moving and was inspired to write my own version, based on some of the Advent themes.

After lunch there was free time until we returned for a late afternoon session on the theme of *Watching*, in which we looked at light and hope through images of stars. These images were very helpful images, and included some paintings I had never seen before by an artist called Arcabas, which were very moving. After supper another reflection followed and the day ended with night prayer.

On our final day, Sunday, the theme was *Wonderment*, following the same pattern as before. We were invited to pray with Mary through icons, poems and Scripture passages. A Eucharist followed before our final lunch and saying our goodbyes.



I would like to thank Christopher and Magdalen for leading the retreat in a very meaningful, moving and beautiful way, sharing their gifts with us all, and for preparing the handouts for all sessions.

And many thanks to Margaret and the Kairos Centre for their very warm welcome and excellent hospitality.

Diana Pinchin

## CSN DAY REPORT - DERBY

23 February 2019 was a day eagerly looked forward to by many in the parishes of Derby, as it was the day Fr Chris Thomas of the Irenaeus Project was coming to lead our day together. As our Diocesan spirituality programme is centred on *Discipleship*, Chris themed the day **“Called to Follow” – a reflection on the Beatitudes**. And what a reflection it was!

The community of one of the Derby parishes, *Holy Family*, Allestree, had offered both their church and parish centre as our meeting place, and had taken care of all that was necessary to make the day as worthwhile and welcoming for everyone as possible.

Having set up a wonderful centring display to help us focus, and accompanied by visuals, Chris led us through the day, reflecting on each Beatitude as perhaps we had never reflected before - seeing them as woven into our living rather than as simply platitudes to honour, thus helping us to understand that the Gospel call is a call to transformative living.



We began by exploring something of what it means to be a disciple. Following Jesus changes everything. Living a life of love, even though it might lead to messy places, defines us as followers rather than *'fans'*! Jesus is the embodiment of the Kingdom to which we are all called, and is the new Moses leading us from slavery into freedom, through which we are invited into a whole new way of seeing and living as the beloved children of God.

During short periods of silence, welcomed by all, participants were able to walk outside or simply to move into the side chapel before the Blessed Sacrament for personal reflection.

As we ended the day, there was a clear sense of gratitude and appreciation for all that had been heard and experienced, and a feeling was expressed by many that this day was just what we needed at this time in our spiritual lives. We give thanks!

Sister Teresa Kennedy, PBVM



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## EVENTS

### RA SUMMER EVENT

The Retreat Association is holding a Summer Event on 3 July this year at the Royal Foundation of St Katharine in East London. Guest speakers are Fr Stephen Platt from the Russian Orthodox tradition, Fr Anastosios Salaptas from the Greek Orthodox tradition, and Rev Graham Sparkes, Baptist minister and Patron of the RA. They will be reflecting on how icons speak to us in our contemporary world. <http://www.retreats.org.uk/summerevent.php>

*The Retreat Association now has its own icon: see below for an invitation from Alison MacTier, Executive Director, to host the splendid icon of the Woman at the Well.*



#### WOULD YOU LIKE TO HOST THE RETREAT ASSOCIATION ICON IN 2020?

As many of you will have seen from the recent Retreat Association news bulletin, the [Retreat Association Icon](#) of the Samaritan

Woman at the Well is currently on display at a number of venues across the UK. These may be retreat centres, churches and cathedrals or any public place of prayer where we can offer others the opportunity to see this beautiful icon.

We have a full [programme of bookings](#) for the rest of 2019 but, if you know of any venues that would like to display the icon in 2020, we would be glad to hear from you – [info@retreats.org.uk](mailto:info@retreats.org.uk).

## CSN EVENTS

Many thanks to member, Diana Pinchin, and Committee member, Teresa Kennedy, for their reports in this newsletter.

We are also grateful to Committee member, Fr Chris Thomas, who gave the CSN day in Derby. Chris is the Director of the Irenaeus Project in Liverpool, which seeks to support spirituality and growth at parish level. One of the dreams of the Committee continues to be how we can resource our parishes and let people know how rich the tradition of the Catholic Church is! Find out more about the Irenaeus Project at <https://irenaeus.co.uk>

#### INVITATION

Would you consider holding a CSN day or event in your own retreat centre or home area? We are very grateful to the Sisters of St Andrew in Lewisham who have invited us to return for a second year this June. It would be wonderful to enhance awareness of the Network through holding days in other regions where we have members. It can be as simple as adding the CSN name to an event you are already putting on as a retreat centre, or organising something at parish level in the way that Teresa describes in this newsletter. The London region is hoping to offer another reflective walk this autumn. No date yet, but look out for further news!

DO get in touch with Margaret in the office if you have any ideas or anything you can offer towards this dream!

## Catholic Spirituality Network

**Executive Committee:** Shirley Taylor (Chair), Eamonn Hamilton (Treasurer) Mary Groom, Audrey Hamilton, Sr Teresa Kennedy, Michael O'Halloran, Fr Chris Thomas.

Many thanks are due to David Lonsdale who completed his 6-year term as Chair at Conference this year.

**Membership Secretary:** Margaret Palladino.

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

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