



# Catholic Spirituality Network

## CATHOLIC SPIRITUALITY NETWORK

### NEWSLETTER EDITION 10

### AUTUMN 2020

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



On the Feast of Christ the King we have much to reflect upon following our first online AGM, first online Conference and a fruitful time evaluating our CSN vision and way into the future. The newly

gathered executive has steered us through these events with confidence that CSN is alive and well and committed to growth and change reflective of these continuing challenging times.

The recent Conference is one of our highlights. I have immense gratitude for Christopher Chapman our speaker, Julie McCann our liturgist and Jo Alstott our Zoom co-ordinator. With the support of the executive, we have been assembled into a community made new, with insights and images that resound for our present world dilemmas and personal attentiveness to God's Spirit at work in our stories. Brought to new awareness we are challenged to evolve in ways that attend to the riches of our existence and our relationships with all creation and all people; a glimpse of the depths of God and God's activity within the depths of ourselves.

Remaining connected in spirit, we look forward to our upcoming online Advent Day to be led by Magdalen Lawler SND and Tom McGuinness SJ. We also hope that wherever you are based, you might be willing to offer events of a similar nature for the ongoing growth of our community of CSN. Thank you all for your affiliation, your inspiration and energy.

Wishing you generosity in responding to Christ's call and an Advent full of hope.

*Shirley Taylor, CSN Chair*

## CSN ONLINE ADVENT DAY

# THE WELL AT THE GATE TO BETHLEHEM

Magdalen Lawler SND & Tom McGuinness SJ

Saturday 5th December

10.30 am – 3.30 pm

For our next online event Magdalen and Tom will lead an Advent reflection day, incorporating scripture, images, poetry and prayer. We will look at 'Mary as the well we visit at the gate to Bethlehem' in



the morning, and in the afternoon Tom will lead us in 'a new version of the O Antiphons, which expresses our longing and thirsting for the living water'.

Bookings are open now: £10 members/£12 non-members, concessions available  
contact: [catholicspiritualitynetwork@gmail.com](mailto:catholicspiritualitynetwork@gmail.com)



# Catholic Spirituality Network

## 2020 CONFERENCE REPORT COME TO THE WATERS



The long-awaited Conference, which should have been held in the Spring, finally happened in November via Zoom facilitated by Christopher Chapman with the liturgy being led by Julie McCann and a wonderful person called Jo in charge of the Zoom operation which ran very smoothly.

Chris led some wonderful sessions around the *Come to the Waters* theme using materials written by Pope Francis as a starting-point. The title of the Friday evening talk was *'Who are you God and who am I'*, a general overview of what was to come over the weekend. At the start of the talk Chris asked the question, *'What is spirituality?'* which got me thinking. I also feel this was the same for a lot of the Conference members as it was brought up in various ways in the buzz groups and reflection groups held during the weekend. These groups worked better than I thought they would as people were willing to share what had come up for them, from the talks, or other thoughts.

In subsequent talks Chris talked about free flowing rivers and the fountain of living waters as opposed to cracked cisterns. Also about hope: what it is and is not, and the need for dialogue to create a community in which people can connect with each other in love, harmony and unity. The word 'encounter' played an important part and came up in various ways during the weekend.

We were challenged during the Conference to think about these topics; what stood out for me was are we were being called to be prophets, both as an individual and as a community? Also the question of how can we enter into dialogue and encounter others in love and harmony?

Julie led some very moving worship using members of the Conference to read. On the Saturday night she led us in a lovely and thought-provoking meditation using a piece of blue/green material to represent a river of our choosing, and inviting Jesus to walk alongside us as we met different groups of people near the river.

Towards the end of the Conference we were shown various images to see if any of them spoke to us which in many cases they did. At the very end there was a general time of sharing if people wished. A bonus was that Chris had put together a set of handouts with materials he had used for further reflection, together with some of the pictures he had used during his illustrated talks.

On the Saturday there was a discussion on **CSN Vision and Sustainability** in which members were encouraged to share ideas and thoughts which could grow and make the Network better known.

In ending this report, I give thanks to the Committee and all who were involved in making this online Conference happen.

*Diana Pinchin*

*And thank you to Diana, CSN member, for producing this report so quickly for the Autumn Newsletter.*

Our **2021 Conference** takes place **Mon 7 – Wed 9 June 2021** at the Hayes Conference Centre in Swanwick. We hope and expect that the residential option will be able to proceed next year. Please keep the dates free and note the change from a weekend Conference (due to availability at Swanwick with all the upheaval of 2020). News about speaker, theme and liturgist will follow soon.



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## PASSIONIST SPIRITUALITY REFLECTION



*“In the midst of winter, I found there was, within me, an invincible summer. And that makes me happy. For it says that no matter how hard the world pushes against me, within me, there’s something stronger – something better, pushing right back.”*

The above quote from the philosopher Albert Camus comes to my mind as I share a few lines for the newsletter introducing myself to the Catholic Spirituality Network. What strikes me most in the poem is the image of “the invincible summer within me”. Both images of winter and summer are used metaphorically. The invincible summer refers to the deeper dimension of our hearts, a little space of peace and joy always there within us.

The COVID-19-pandemic has affected our lives so much today. We struggle with bereavement, the fear of dying, loss of daily freedom, loneliness, the relational challenges of sharing the small spaces, anxiety about the future, making us feel an uneasy sense of doom all the more. As the poem reminds us, there is that invincible summer within us always, the presence of God within our hearts we must always hold onto at these challenging times.

As Passionist religious, we take a special vow to “keep alive the memory of Christ’s passion”. This means that we spend a particular time every day meditating on the Passion of Jesus, the overwhelming love of Christ for us that motivated his death: “No greater love than this, than to lay down one’s life for one’s friends” (Jn 15:13). Our prayer-filled gaze upon the Cross helps us to deepen the awareness of “the invincible summer within us” and calls us to share the gift of hope with the suffering people around us.

“The social distancing” is the buzz phrase we have been hearing from the beginning of the global pandemic. It tells us how we should avoid close face to face interaction with others in order to prevent the spread of the deadly virus. But that does not mean we should practise “spiritual distancing”. As followers of Jesus, we are called to respond to those around us who suffer. Since we are in the second national lockdown in the UK, I could find more personal time to pray for people who suffer. Of course, in a limited way, I could also find space for pastoral care for the sick and the dying in the hospital. As a religious, for me leading a funeral service at this difficult time is also a concrete expression of sharing of Jesus’s light to the bereaved family offering them comfort and hope. This is how, I believe, we allow “invincible summer” shining through our being; “In the midst of winter, I found there was, within me, an invincible summer”.

Fr Tomy Rockey, CP

*Fr Tomy has joined the Executive Committee in a non-voting capacity to strengthen our links with and deepen our understanding of Passionist spirituality. He is based at St Joseph’s Passionist Church in North London. We are grateful to him for joining us in this representative role, and for sharing his reflection on the difficult times we are living through.*



# Catholic Spirituality Network

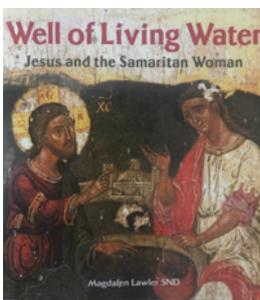
## BOOK LAUNCH WELL OF LIVING WATER



In February of this year, Magdalen Lawler SND (former Chair of CSN) launched her new book, *Well of Living Water*,

based on a little-known icon of Jesus and the Samaritan Woman which has its home in one of the community houses of the British Jesuits. Published by Messenger Publications in Dublin, the book is a resource not only for learning about icons, but also for a contemplative journey into the meaning of the Scripture story of the Woman at the Well and its homely but sensitive portrayal in this particular icon. The book launch was a happy gathering of friends at the Notre Dame School in Southwark, of the kind that we hope to be able to get back to very soon!

In this small book Magdalen intersperses her commentary on the icon with Scripture and prayerful reflections, all the time encouraging us to gaze at the icon and be drawn into the depths of what this meeting between Jesus and the woman reveals.



The appendix includes a new song, *Touching the Water*, by Tom McGuinness SJ (another former Chair of the Network). Tom's song concludes that, in our own encounter with Jesus at the well, we are

*'well-met, well-blessed, well-gifted in love's overflowing stream'.*

*Copies of the book can be obtained through Messenger Publications, Dublin. See front page for news of our upcoming online Advent Day with Magdalen and Tom.*

## Sister Margaret O'Shea PSMG

Margaret was a member of our Network long before I joined, and I remember clearly that wherever Margaret was there was always a lot of laughter. She had a great gift for hospitality wherever she was, and it was no surprise that, when the Retreat Association office moved from Bermondsey, she offered the Catholic Network Executive a room in St Philomena's Convent in Euston for meetings. Margaret herself was on the executive at that time as representative for the Conference of Religious. Both Margaret and Sr Julia Howard made everyone feel special and welcomed as they arrived.

When Margaret eventually returned to her beloved Ireland, she missed the many friends and visitors in St Philomena's and the Kairos Centre. She always sent a friendly message of encouragement to any of our mailings and loved the regular newsletters.



Since her retirement she had lived in the PSMG convent in Carrigtwohill, Cork. She died in hospital on 23 March 2020. Mass was celebrated for her in the Community and she was then taken to Cloyne, where she was met by her immediate family and buried with her parents in Cloyne. *May she rest in peace and rise in glory!*

Margaret will be missed by so many, her great personal interest in everything was amazing. She always responded to every contact email. She was a regular attender at both CSN and RA conferences and never missed an Executive meeting. Margaret had an insatiable love for people and she always remembered conversations. It was always a joy to spend time with her.

We send our sympathy to her family and to her Poor Servants of the Mother of God community.

*Margaret Palladino*



# Catholic Spirituality Network

## EVENTS

### CSN 2021 CONFERENCE

Mon 7 – Wed 9 June 2021

Hayes Conference Centre

Speaker and liturgist will be confirmed as soon as possible. Watch out for emails as soon as there is news, and check our website for up-to-date information.

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

## ONLINE

### EDINBURGH JESUIT CENTRE

We received news from a CSN member in Edinburgh that the Lauriston Jesuit Centre is changing its name to **Edinburgh Jesuit Centre**. There is an inaugural talk on 30 November with Sir Tom Devine, and very good talks every Tuesday evening online with guests discussing current events, including one of our previous CSN Conference speakers, Vatican Astronomer Br Guy Consolmagno, speaking about the Christmas Star on 22 December. Find out more:

<https://edinburghjesuitcentre.org.uk>

Also recommended are the Imagine meditations every other Wednesday on the **Pathways to God** website of the British Jesuits. These take place live on Zoom every other Wednesday at 8 pm.

<https://www.pathwaystogod.org/imagine>

There are many useful resources available online to help us through these challenging times. See the dedicated page on our **CSN website**:

<http://csn.retreats.org.uk/stay-and-pray.php>

## What Is Most Sure



“As sure as what is most sure, sure as that  
spring primroses

Shall new-dapple next year, sure as to-morrow  
morning,

Amongst come-back-again things, things with  
a revival, things with a recovery,

Thy name...”

*Gerard Manley Hopkins*

## Catholic Spirituality Network

**Executive Committee:** Shirley Taylor (Chair), Eamonn Hamilton (Treasurer) Mary Groom, Mary Nono, Fr Chris Thomas, Fr David Tobin, Sr Magdalen Lawler (COR rep), Fr Tomy Rockey CP (Passionist Spirituality rep), Jo Alstott (Youth rep).

*Thank you to Audrey Hamilton, who has resigned from the Committee - we are grateful for all the help she has given.*

*Welcome to Jo Alstott who hosted our online Conference and has now joined the Committee as rep for younger people.*

**Membership Secretary:** Margaret Palladino.

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

Contact: Margaret Palladino

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