



Catholic Spirituality Network

CATHOLIC SPIRITUALITY NETWORK

NEWSLETTER EDITION 12

AUTUMN 2021

CSN DAY CONFERENCE 2022



EVERYDAY SPIRITUALITY

*Speaker: Fr Chris
Thomas*

Saturday 26 March 2022

Irenaeus Centre, 32 Great Georges Road,
Waterloo, Liverpool L22 1RD

*(The Centre is a very short walk from Waterloo train
station on Liverpool Merseyrail.)*

Everyday Spirituality – Trusting that the Ordinary is Sacred. Our one-day 2022 Conference will help us explore where we find God in the ordinariness of life, how that sense of the presence of God enables us to recognise that we live on holy ground, and that indeed we are blessed. We will also be reminded of the calling to share the truth of the sacredness of all things with others. There will be times of input with music and film, times of shared silence and times of sharing with others.

We look forward to meeting again face to face with new and old friends. All are welcome! Please contact Margaret in the office to book. More information will be circulated to members and will also be available on our website.

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Chris Thomas is a Liverpoolian and a priest of that diocese. In June 2002 Archbishop Patrick Kelly released him from parish work and the 'Irenaeus' project was born. Irenaeus was a second century Bishop who said the '*glory of God is a person fully alive*'. Spirituality is vital in the process by which we become fully alive.

The Project is an attempt to highlight the whole area of spirituality not just for those who can afford a retreat centre, but for those who can't. So along with Sr Moira Meeghan and a group of volunteers he works all over the Archdiocese and further afield to help people have the opportunities to pray, explore the Scriptures, reflect on what it means to be human and alive and to know the truth that God is with us. He has spoken all over Britain and Ireland as well as in mainland Europe. Chris is the author of ten books which are full of encounters with people and their spiritual journeys. Nationally Chris is a member of CREW trust and part of the Harvesters men's steering group. He has been part of the Executive Committee of the Catholic Spirituality network for four years. Personally, he loves football, food, music, theatre, books and antiques although most of his friends will tell you what he collects is junk!

We are delighted that Chris has agreed to be our speaker for the 2022 Day Conference. The vision he brings to CSN is vital and it will be a great opportunity to spend time with him in person in Liverpool.



Catholic Spirituality Network

PASSIONIST SPIRITUALITY REFLECTION



HOLY HOPE – OUR ANCHOR

In speaking of optimism and hope,

Pope Francis says, ‘It is useful not to confuse optimism and hope. Optimism is a psychological attitude to life. Hope goes further; it is an anchor thrown to the future, which allows one to pull on its rope to arrive at the goal one longs for, by using our effort to move in the right direction. In addition, hope is theological: God is there in the middle of it. For all these reasons, I believe that life is going to triumph.’

Why does Pope Francis say the anchor has a ‘rope’ and not a ‘chain’? Perhaps because it belongs to only a small boat like the apostles used. We, as people of faith, are only a small boat in the great sea of God’s love. The gift of faith and hope is the ‘treasure’ we have carried and still carry in our life – especially in these challenging times. The boat has been steered by mystics, missionaries and martyrs, so many saints. We have held and still hold such a great treasure to be shared and proclaimed: The spirit of hope is an anchor thrown to the future which allows one to pull on its rope to arrive at the goal one longs for, by using our effort to move in the right direction.

In our Passionist prayer tradition, we have a feast to Mary entitled Our Lady of Holy Hope. Our founder, St Paul of the Cross, received from the Jesuits an Italian-style image of the Madonna with the infant Jesus holding



a cross in his hands in the direction of the beholder. It was the wish of St Paul of the Cross that the image be in all our cells to encourage our prayer. Recently an icon of the image was presented to the Sisters of the Cross and Passion here in England.

The original meaning of an icon is a religious image that invites us to ‘gaze upon’ in a contemplative way – towards the truth which it signifies beyond itself. So, we gaze at Mary, Our Lady of Holy Hope. As she gave birth to and now ‘holds out’ the child to us, she invites us to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. This practice has been a deep source of courage and life for our Passionist community during this time of pandemic.

Mary fills us with hope that we will share the fruits of Christ’s Paschal Mystery. Mary shared in the Passion of her divine Son by her love for him. She kept her station at the Cross of Jesus, and she will remain with us too. When we keep gazing at our Lady of Hope in prayer, we can be sure that we have a mother who is with us, protects us and accompanies us, even in such difficult times.

Fr Tomy Rockey CP

Many thanks to Fr Tomy for sharing with us again the wisdom of the Passionist tradition. We are grateful for his concern to help us navigate our way in troubled times.



Catholic Spirituality Network

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



Autumn is increasingly translating itself into wintry skies and starlit nights. Along with nature's cry to protect our vulnerable planet, the season prompts us to hallow the remembrance of so many Holy Souls,

and also hope for a more usual celebration of Christmas this year with family and friends.

The journey of CSN during the year includes much to be grateful for. A second online Conference, this time with Bernadette Farrell and Michael Barnes SJ, opened us up to insightful perspectives on interreligious dialogue, challenging us to become attuned to the encounter of people of all faiths with God, and thus to become people of hospitality, extending welcome beyond our own comfortable circles.

In September, we found ourselves online for a second AGM. The sense of community was inspiring, and the readiness of all to engage with the evolution of CSN in terms of vision and organisation felt very encouraging.

We held a late afternoon prayer and reflection on 31 October for All Saints and All Souls, and I was touched by the readiness of members to gather in this way online. There is clearly a wish for the provision of similar gatherings in future, and I welcome offers from any member willing to facilitate a time of prayer on behalf of CSN.

Along the way, we celebrate the fruits of all who have gone before us on the spiritual journey who have shaped our CSN history. We celebrate the many life-giving events offered by Retreat Centres and Houses of Prayer. We welcome the harvest of new members, including parish clergy and our new member of the Executive, Jo Alstott. And we appreciate the continued support and shared wisdom of our friends in the Retreat Association as we look forward to the publication of *Retreats* for 2022.

Going forward, we invite you to book in for our online Advent Day on 11 December, ***Drawn by the mystery of God-With-Us.***



We also hope to meet you in person for our Liverpool-based day Conference in March 2022: ***Everyday Spirituality - trusting that the ordinary is sacred.***

As we reflect on the fruits of our lives at this time, I pray that our connection with one another will continue to build our community into a diverse group of people, ready to accompany and be accompanied by all who feel drawn into the mystery of God.

Shirley Taylor, CSN Chair

CSN AGM & VISION

Committee member, Mary Nono, introduced a report at our online AGM in September from the Vision sub-committee. This group has been meeting to look at both where we are now and how to develop the role of CSN within the Catholic Church, the Retreat Association, and the wider community.

The group has now redesigned our publicity cards and is seeking to find ways to raise the profile of CSN in the local Catholic Community. They have identified a real desire to become more diverse and inclusive and encouraging to the younger generation.

The Vision group is mindful of our history and wishes to embrace the future, recognising the new world post Covid-19 and the advent of online and hybrid events. In the coming year the group will open deliberations to the membership and seek their contributions to this discernment process.

Margaret Palladino



Catholic Spirituality Network

CONFERENCE REPORT 2021

Infinite Riches Romans 11:33

embracing Interreligious Encounter, and expanding our response to the God who awaits

The Catholic Spirituality Network 2021 Conference took place online this June. Bernadette Farrell led the liturgies with a skilful combination of images and chants from different faiths and some of her own compositions which mirrored perfectly the five contributions by Fr Michael Barnes SJ. With such rich talks it is only possible to provide a flavour of the content and my thanks to Sr Marie Grogan for her notes.

Michael began with three encounters: the angels visiting Abraham, the angel Gabriel greeting Mary and the prophet Muhammad's encounter with the angel. It is in the light of others that we come to know ourselves better. For Benedictines all guests are welcomed as Christ. What do we say to an unexpected approach? Hospitality may open up all sorts of possibilities.

Michael's second talk, *Keeping the memory alive*, concentrated on the Jewish revelation and its relationship to Christianity. The idea of bathing yourself in the text was called the 'liturgy of study'. We are invited to listen to the Word and engage with the Word made flesh. Jews and Christians are like siblings both called to be signs of redemption in the world.

Session 3, *Reciting God's words*, considered Islam with its emphasis on 'recite'. The three principles of spirituality, rationality and justice may be seen as prayer, intellectual enquiry and action to do what is right. The three Abrahamic religions are responses to different but perhaps complementary imperatives which could be described as Listen, Follow and Recite.

Session 4, *Journeying into the heart*, considered Hindu responses to God. Drawing on his vast experience and many images of Southall and India, Michael portrayed a world of happy pluralism.

Session 5, *Awakening Compassion*, considered the Buddha. The Buddha's teaching can be seen as practical and spiritual rather than theistic. His Middle Way enlightens all living beings. The aim is to become a certain type of person with other suffering sentient beings.

In conclusion Michael showed an image of Christ the drummer. The sound gathers people together. The Word of God within the community resonates far beyond the community. We must listen to the infinite richness of a loving God. In the stranger we find ourselves. There is only One Mystery of creation and redemption.

Bernadette Farrell's song seemed to sum up the message of the Conference: *'Make us now your living sign, recreate us for your purpose in this place and in this time'*.

John Woodhouse

Thanks are due to John for this report. A longer version can be found on the Independent Catholic News website.

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/42480>

Tom McGuinness SJ has reviewed Michael's book, *Ignatian Spirituality & Interreligious Dialogue, Reading Love's Mystery* for the Jesuit website, *Thinking Faith*. Tom writes:

'Underlying the whole book is the author's own commitment to the Ignatian presupposition that truth, in God's own unique forms, will appear through the generous and patient work of mutual and respectful listening and sharing. As the title suggests, "reading" the people and lived experience of other traditions is to be open to the mystery of love waiting to be revealed there.'

<https://www.thinkingfaith.org/articles/ignatian-n-spirituality-and-interreligious-dialogue-reading-love's-mystery>



Catholic Spirituality Network

EVENTS

Saturday 11th December

10.30 am – 3.30 pm

ADVENT DAY OF REFLECTION *online*

Drawn into the mystery of God-with-us

with CSN Executive: David Tobin IC, Mary Nono, Shirley Taylor & Tomy Rockey CP

Reflecting on our passage through the weeks of Advent as we negotiate global events and personal experiences.

We will draw upon the Scripture of the liturgical cycle – Year C to support our reflection and prayer.

Bookings are open.

Donations for CSN invited £10-£15.

contact: catholicspiritualitynetwork@gmail.com

CSN CONFERENCE 26 March 2022

Everyday Spirituality

Irenaeus Centre, Liverpool

See front page and our website for more information.

<http://csnretreats.org.uk/conference.php>

RETREAT ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE 2022

Living with Courage

27-29 June 2022 *online*

Contributors include Pádraig Ó Tuama, Jane Shaw, Ched Myers & Rachel Mann.

Find out more

<https://www.retreats.org.uk/conference>

everyday thought

There are things you can't reach. But you can reach out to them, and all day long.

The wind, the bird flying away. The idea of God.

And it can keep you as busy as anything else, and happier.

I look; morning to night I am never done with looking.

Looking I mean not just standing around, but standing around as though with your arms open.

*from Where Does the Temple Begin, Where Does It End?
Mary Oliver*



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).

Membership Secretary: Margaret Palladino.

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

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