



Catholic Spirituality Network

CATHOLIC SPIRITUALITY NETWORK

NEWSLETTER EDITION 13

SPRING 2022

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



Writing this message for our Spring newsletter feels significantly different from the previous period as new life continues to stir among us and our communities.

There has been a strong sense of returning to business as usual across the Network and for the myriad events taking place at the retreat centres. It is as if there is a profound thirst for the connection that sparks life in us from personal encounter.

CONFERENCE

It feels freeing to speak of our own recent in-person Conference led ably by Fr Chris Thomas on the theme of *Everyday Spirituality*. The energy among those present was refreshing as we reflected, considered, prayed and relaxed together in a shared space away from the challenges of virtual encounter. We are deeply grateful to Chris and the Irenaeus Centre for hosting our one-day Conference and for offering such a warm welcome. See our Events page for news of an online repetition!

It was encouraging to have new members attending our day Conference and to receive generous offers from those willing to stand for election to the Executive at our next AGM on Sunday 11 September.

MEMBERS

We were saddened to hear of the death of long-standing CSN member, Rosemary Moffat, last autumn. We are also very grateful to Rosemary as we unexpectedly find ourselves in a more secure place financially, having received a welcome donation from her estate. We do miss her warm presence and are touched by her generosity to CSN. Please remember her in your prayer.

We additionally pray for Sr Kathleen Lyons rc who died shortly before Easter.

LOCAL EVENTS

Please consider organising local events in the name of CSN if you are able. One such event over the summer will be a second opportunity to join the Thames River Walk, offering a path of inspiration, prayer and reflection in a shared walk from the oldest church in London to the beautiful setting of the Royal Foundation of St Katharine in East London on Saturday 2 July.

As we continue to move through the Easter season, I pray that you will be surprised by new life in all that you undertake and ready for a powerful outpouring of God's Spirit this Pentecost both in our lives and in our world.



NEW LIFE IN YOU

Shirley Taylor, CSN Chair



Catholic Spirituality Network



In Memory of Sr Kathleen Lyons, Religious of the Cenacle 1945 - 2022

I feel privileged to write about Kathleen Lyons rc who died on 22nd March and had been an ardent supporter of CSN and the Retreat Association throughout many years. Her recent funeral, presided over by Fr Diarmuid O' Muirchu, was a moving gathering of her Cenacle community, family members and friends from as far afield as Europe, Australia, America and New Zealand.

It feels important to acknowledge Kathleen's dedication to Our Lady of the Cenacle, her grasp of the Spiritual Exercises and her intellectual rigour expressed through writing her PhD on *Mysticism and Narcissism*. Later published as a vital historic account of the journey that she had made as the Church negotiated pre- and post-Vatican II times, the text also reflects the vision that spoke to Kathleen of the place of women in the Church and the world, inspired by the work of theologians and psychologists.

Many have benefitted from Kathleen's contribution to training in the work of the Spiritual Exercises both through the original programme set up with Fr Christopher Lowe and subsequently as part of the London Centre for Spiritual Direction, shaping us to be skilled companions on the spiritual journey.

Kathleen additionally worked at the Psychosynthesis and Education Trust in London and impacted the lives of others with her unique grasp of the challenge of being transformed and made whole.

As a distinctively extrovert woman of the Gospel, she lived both monastic and apostolic expressions of religious life, with increasing zest for life as she found scope to teach while grappling with her own unique personality and capacity for joy in living. She was well known by many of us, working with religious orders, alongside those responsible for the formation of others, by many retreat houses and centres for spirituality and through offering workshops on several continents.

Kathleen celebrated 75 years of Cenacle life while in lockdown and remained grateful for the support and kindness she received from those who kept in touch using social media and the internet during those days, as well as the support of her loving community and generous carers. At that time she expressed the hope of living out her remaining years as a *'digital mystic'*.

I would suggest that each of us who knew her takes time to recall our shared moments of encounter with her as 13th July approaches, the day on which she would have celebrated her 100th birthday. We might give thanks for an extraordinary woman whose vision will undoubtedly outlive her. And, in the words of the closing funeral litany, addressed to inspirational women of God gone before her, add our voice in praying,

*'Befriend Kathleen on the
journey forth...'*

Shirley Taylor



Catholic Spirituality Network

DAY CONFERENCE REPORT 26 MARCH 2022

Our annual Conference is a major event in the life of the Network and this year was no exception. The Executive felt it was the right time to begin the return to face to face meetings and were delighted when Chris Thomas accepted our invitation to facilitate the day and offered to host it in Liverpool. There were some mixed feelings during the preparation time. We have been really fortunate to have so much technical support and expertise throughout the pandemic and we have had a number of excellent events on ZOOM – they will certainly be a part of our network life for the future. However we felt the time was right and continued planning despite lower than usual numbers for the early days and so many requests for a hybrid event.

Chris’s presentation highlighted the rightness of the decision. Finding God’s presence in the ordinary and everyday, allowing God’s Spirit to meet us in video clips and songs we recognised and silently sang/hummed along with. Times to reflect in the garden and in the beautiful



setting of the Irenaeus Centre, alongside the many local people for whom this wonderful venue was ‘home’, all underpinned the central

message - God is with us where we are if we give the time and space to see and recognise God’s Spirit, who is always with us. The day was a true gift – time to live in the moment in a free, open generous space created in Love. Thank you, Chris, for your gifted insights into daily life. My own special highlight was so unexpected. **Goodnight Mister Tom** has been a special film and read for me over many years, but my eyes and senses have been charged to a different level since that weekend.

Encountering old and new friends was very special, lunch time in the garden was a joyful experience. Meeting old and new members, making new friends and even gathering interested prospective new Executive members! ready for the AGM on 11 September. Another fruitful experience.



MARY G, MARY N, CHRIS, SHIRLEY, MARGARET & TOMY

For the Executive it is a time to thank the team at Irenaeus for their welcome and hospitality making it possible to hold this event. I am sure, if you will have us, we will return someday, individually and maybe with others! A huge thank you to Chris for the day and for the offer to repeat it on ZOOM in October for those who were unable to make the journey.

Margaret Palladino



Catholic Spirituality Network

PASSIONIST SPIRITUALITY REFLECTION

GIFT OF PEACE *from the TREE OF LIFE*

The contemplative Carthusians have the motto: *“The Cross is steady while the world turns “.*



As we emerge out of the Covid crisis, we have been struck by the terrible war in Ukraine, which has resulted in thousands of deaths, millions of refugees and a huge disruption to the global economy. We have all seen the heart-rending pictures in the papers and on TV from the conflict and heard unbearable stories of loss and destruction.

Now think who is in a similar way – the disciples of Jesus, who were completely devastated by the experience of His passion and death on a Cross. But what are the first words of the risen Lord to them when he first appeared after his three days in the tomb? It was to hear: *‘Peace be with you!’*. The appearance gave them profound joy and also a new-found profound peace the world could not offer.

Now the Cross has come from a Tree. The first story of a tree in Scripture starts with the Genesis story of the tree that bore the apple that Adam and Eve disobediently ate. This act led to their downfall, expelled from the garden. Yet God had made them in His image. But now this image was lost. It had to be re-discovered, humanity had to be restored to this early joy and delight of living! So the Creator, God the Father, gave us his Son, the second Adam to restore us to our rightful place in God’s order of creation. In Genesis we are told that Adam/Eve are the ones finally created after the rest of creation in His own image. So in Christ, the first Adam, the whole of Creation is destined to fullness of life, sharing in Christ’s presence and life in him beyond death – a heavenly existence with God’s eternal presence.

It is this extraordinary destiny that is ours in Christ, to live fully in a human way on earth by his example and the gift of the Spirit with us but also inherit a life eternal that is divine as well! So, the Cross was a tree of death that sprung into a tree of life because of who we nailed to it - Christ himself. And our peace and joy are found not in a superficial human way but anchored in Christ himself – it is literally a ‘Divine Joy’ and a Divine Peace the world is incapable of giving.

*“Make me a channel of your peace
Where there's despair in life let me bring hope
Where there is darkness only light
And where there's sadness ever joy.”*

Fr Tomy Rockey CP

The Passionist tradition has much to teach us during these times of crisis about keeping steady and staying at the foot of the Cross.



Catholic Spirituality Network

EVENTS



THAMES RIVER WALK II

We last walked along the river together in 2018. Join us for another reflective walk by the Thames with CSN Executive members.

Saturday 2 July

Meet All Hallows by the Tower Church, Tower Hill 10.30 am. EC3R 5BJ

Let us know if you plan to join us so we can look out for you! *Donations invited for CSN.*
contact: catholicspiritualitynetwork@gmail.com

CSN ONLINE CONFERENCE

Everyday Spirituality

Saturday 1 October 10 am – 3 pm

Chris Thomas will reprise the very successful 2022 in-person Conference as an online event. Contact Margaret in the office to book.

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

RETREAT ASSOCIATION

CONFERENCE 2022

Living with Courage

27-29 June 2022 online

Book for this cutting-edge Conference and join for one day or the whole event from your own home. Spend time with Pádraig Ó Tuama, Jane Shaw, Ched Myers, Graham Sparkes, Rachel Mann (poet), Alison Adam (liturgist) and Carol Marples (artist).

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

THE GIFT OF SPRING



How fresh, oh Lord, how sweet and clean are thy returns!...

Grief melts away
Like snow in May,

As if there were no such cold thing.

Who would have thought my shrivelled heart
Could have recovered greenness?

from The Flower, George Herbert

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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