



# Catholic Spirituality Network

CATHOLIC SPIRITUALITY NETWORK

NEWSLETTER EDITION 19

SUMMER 2025

CSN CONFERENCE

14-16 April 2026

## SHORELINES



### FINDING GOD ON THE BOUNDARIES

We are pleased to announce news of our next residential Conference in 2026. Christine Dodd will speak to us about Shorelines.

Shorelines are boundary places where sea and land meet, places where things shift and change; where land is taken away and new land created. Our Conference will explore the shoreline as an image for the spiritual journey.

*Bookings open in the autumn. Look out for email notification to members or check the website. Early booking will be advised!*

## THE FRANCISCAN CENTRE LADYWELL



The Franciscan Centre Ladywell is home to the Franciscan Missionaries of the Divine Motherhood – including Sr Marie Grogan of the CSN Committee. We are grateful to Marie for inviting us to continue our retreat centre journey around the CSN network for the annual Conference.

The Franciscan Centre is located in Godalming, Surrey. It has recently been refurbished and offers a space of peace, beauty, prayer and reflection.

*Godalming station is a 40/45-minute ride from London Waterloo. From there it is about a mile to Ladywell.*

We are delighted that **Christine Dodd** has agreed to lead our Conference. Prior to retirement, Christine was Director of Adult Formation and Spirituality for the Diocese of Hallam. She was also Chairperson of the Creative Arts Retreat Movement (CARM). Christine continues to work as a spiritual director and retreat-giver.



[www.csnretreats.org.uk/conference.php](http://www.csnretreats.org.uk/conference.php)



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## POPE FRANCIS

### JORGE MARIO BERGOGLIO

17 DECEMBER 1936 -21 APRIL 2025



Photo by [Ashwin Vaswani](#) on [Unsplash](#)

On Saturday 26 April 2025 around 25 of us gathered for our CSN day Conference at the Irenaeus Centre in Liverpool, hosted by Fr Chris Thomas and his welcoming team. It was the Saturday after Easter.

**On Easter Monday 21 April our dear Pope Francis died at the age of 88.**

The Vatican chose Saturday 26 April for the funeral, and we wondered whether to go ahead with the Conference. We decided that we wanted to gather and pray together for the Pope who had meant so much to the Church. So, in Morning Prayer we remembered the wisdom, dedication and holiness of our first Jesuit Pope.

“O God, faithful rewarder of souls,  
grant that your departed servant Pope Francis,  
whom you made successor of Peter  
and shepherd of your Church,  
may happily enjoy for ever in your presence in heaven  
the mysteries of your grace and compassion,  
which he faithfully ministered on earth.”

## CONFERENCE REPORT 2025

Fr Lister Tonge, now a Catholic priest in Liverpool archdiocese, led morning and afternoon sessions on *‘Listening to our Life’*. In the morning Lister talked about *‘letting our souls catch up’*: taking time to find out how we are (how we really are) and asking God for what we need. God is at work in our prayer when we are both honest and open with our desire. We can take the fruits of prayer to the next thing we do. And God can surprise us: one prayer time may change our life!

In the afternoon Lister moved on to the **Examen**. He said this is a prayer that we can’t do often enough!

- Start the day with thanksgiving/ gratitude which lead us to generosity and the question, what can I give?
- For what am I most grateful? Relish/ taste and see/ bask in the gratitude!
- For what am I not most grateful? Notice it, interrogate it...
- Gently enquire about the things for which I am less grateful.
- Ask for help to change aspects of how I relate to life.
- We are not seeking perfection through our own efforts. God will help us.

We ended the day with Mass for Sunday, celebrated by Fr Tomy from the Committee.

Grateful thanks were offered to Lister for his wisdom and generosity in sharing with us.





## THE IRENAEUS CENTRE: A NEW MODEL OF RETREAT CENTRE?

*Fr Chris Thomas was asked at Conference to write a short piece for this newsletter about what the Irenaeus Centre offers and ways in which it might be a blueprint for the future.*



In 2020, I received a phone call to say that our Liverpool parish would not re-open after the Covid-19 pandemic. The good news was that we were offered the chance to take the buildings and turn them into a Centre for Spirituality and Outreach. We already had a small retreat centre in the old presbytery. Some trusted people prayed. It was unanimous – we should go ahead!

The Irenaeus Project had begun in 2002 when Archbishop Patrick Kelly released me from parish work to help people pray and explore the Scriptures in a different way. Our small team worked across the archdiocese and further afield offering 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. We run parish missions and retreats, weeks of guided prayer, weekends of reflection on Scripture, and we are invited to speak at various conferences.

We had always wanted a Centre so, when the buildings were offered, we set about fundraising – and the money poured in as people caught our vision for a Centre that would be open to whoever walked through its doors. Within 18 months we had raised £150,000. Now we have a space that includes an oratory and a meeting room for 120.

The development of a Centre has allowed us to continue offering short courses on prayer and Scripture and to host study days. People come and stay, spending times in quiet and speaking to one or other of our staff. Reflection on the Scriptures and prayer always has a concrete expression in our desire for justice and our willingness to be open to others. So, our Centre also became the means by which we reach out to the poor and those in need.

We run a dementia singalong, and we have space for those with mental health issues and addiction problems. We try to respond to asylum seekers and refugees. Food is often at the centre of what we do and each day there is toast, tea and coffee available. A local baker and several supermarkets provide food for people to eat on site and to take away from 'Mo's Pantry'. The Centre provides a safe haven for many vulnerable groups as we listen to their stories, pray with them and for them and, where we can, signpost them to other agencies.

Each day we have a focus on spirituality and people who have not practised faith for years are slowly finding a



way back. We ask no questions, we just listen and love and affirm the humanity of each who comes, as I believe God does. I don't know if we are modelling something that others could follow or if, in some way, we are showing a way forward. I only know that this model of church is something that I have been called to. Maybe it could be that for you too.

*Pray for us and for the Centre and, if you're in Liverpool, why not pop in and see us?*



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## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

As we journey through the Jubilee Year of Hope, it feels vital to respond to the many signs of hope calling us in times of global conflict and challenge.

Our CSN Conference in April with Fr Lister Tonge drew our attention to the riches of hope found in *Listening to Our Life* – hope leading us beyond ourselves into the ‘more’ of God’s life at work in us and the world. The pilgrim journey of investment, availability, recognition and renewal shapes us into signs of hope for others.

In light of this, I ask each pilgrim of hope invested in the future of CSN to actively join us in inviting others to consider membership of CSN – whether through conversation, sharing of your story or in offering website details – all outreach can enrich our community for the future.

Recent weeks have reminded us that life is dynamic and uncertain. We give thanks for the legacy of Pope Francis, expressed powerfully through his inspirational thinking and compassionate spirit. We are blessed in Pope Leo, whose path has so clearly shaped him as a voice for our time.

We were well represented at the ecumenical Retreat Association Conference in mid-June. It was a very fruitful gathering, exploring *Creative Encounters* and *Imaginative Paths to God*.

Remember to save the date of our 2026 CSN Conference as we walk the *Shorelines* of the spiritual life together at The Franciscan Centre Ladywell.

Shirley Taylor

## THAT LIGHT GUIDED ME

How well I know that fountain,  
filling, running,  
although it is the night.



That eternal fountain, hidden away,  
I know its haven and its secrecy  
although it is the night...

from *Station Island* by Seamus Heaney

## Catholic Spirituality Network

**Executive Committee:** Shirley Taylor (Chair), Eamonn Hamilton (Treasurer), Mary Nono, Fr Chris Thomas (Diocesan rep), Sr Marie Grogan FMDM, Christine Dodd, Fr Tomy Rockey CP (Passionist Spirituality rep), Jo Alstott (Youth rep), Sr Margaret Mattison (*co-opted*).

**Membership Secretary:** Margaret Palladino.

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

Contact: Margaret Palladino, Membership Secretary, Catholic Spirituality Network (CSN), St George’s Cathedral, Westminster Bridge Rd, London SE1 7HY Tel: 07756 864784

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