



Catholic Spirituality Network

CATHOLIC SPIRITUALITY NETWORK

NEWSLETTER EDITION 20

AUTUMN 2025

CSN CONFERENCE

14-16 April 2026

SHORELINES

FINDING GOD ON THE BOUNDARIES



BOOKINGS OPEN!

BOOKINGS are now open for our 2026 residential Conference at the Franciscan Centre Ladywell in Godalming, Surrey, led by Christine Dodd. Please contact Margaret in the office on catholicspiritualitynetwork@gmail.com. Poster and booking form available on the website: www.csnretreats.org.uk. Numbers are limited so please book early to secure your place.

Christine Dodd comes from London but spent many years as Director for Adult Education and Spirituality for the Diocese of Hallam. She has a particular interest in spirituality and the arts and



was Chair of the Creative Arts Retreat Movement prior to her retirement. She was also a member of the Bishop's Spirituality Group working party and the drafting hand behind the Bishop's Conference document on Catholic spirituality, 'Do you Love Me?' Christine is the author of several books on spirituality and Scripture. She now lives in Worcestershire, where she continues to work as an experienced retreat-giver and spiritual director. Her hobbies include gardening and spending time in her art studio.

Christine has written the following Conference statement for us:

"We can be sure of one thing as we travel through life. Things change. Using the image of the ever-changing shoreline, this Conference will explore how God is with us as we stand on the many different changing points in our lives. Using photography, art and poetry we will reflect on how God is working as we stand on our own 'inner shores' as well as thinking about how we can accompany others as they too face change."

We look forward to a fruitful Conference. Everyone is welcome. Book soon!



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RETREAT ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE REPORT

In June this year around 130 members of the Retreat Association gathered together again in person at the Hayes Conference Centre in Swanwick, Derbyshire. It was good to be back! This was the first in-person gathering since the pandemic – a chance to meet old and new friends from the wider ecumenical community of the Retreat Association.

We were treated to a kaleidoscopic array of speakers and workshops on the theme of 'Creative Encounters – Exploring Imaginative Paths to God'. We heard talks on art, literature, film and poetry and found it hard to choose between multiple workshops along the same lines.

Mark Oakley shared his favourite poems with us on one memorable evening, and on another many of us took a midsummer walk together, gently meandering through the fields surrounding the Hayes.



Abbot Christopher Jamison OSB was there, proposing that 'True Story Telling is the Story of Life', and Christopher Chapman led workshops on praying the parables and the garden as a place for soul. Textile artist, Jacqui Parkinson, created an evocative art space, and we were supported by contemplative liturgies during early morning worship sessions and in the main group.



Too many highlights to mention them all! For everyone the Conference is both a coming together and also a personal journey through the programme with time to reflect alone, network with others and share deeper conversations. It left me reflecting on ways in which the imagination is so often our gateway to God. In the words of William Blake:

"When the sun rises, do you not see a round disc of fire somewhat like a guinea?" Oh! no, no! I see an innumerable company of the heavenly host, crying, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty!"

Many thanks to the speakers, workshop leaders, participants, sponsors, exhibitors and organising team. Special thanks to Alison MacTier, executive director of the Retreat Association, without whose hard work none of this could happen



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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

It feels as though we were building up to this year's Conference for a long while, with expectations of immersing ourselves anew into the art of listening to our lives. We were not disappointed. Alongside the synod on synodality, our communities and parishes have taken on listening with fresh heart in response to renewed invitation. Gathering in person at the Irenaeus Centre, it was a joy to find new members in attendance along with faithful companions of many years. The opportunity to be led by Lister Tonge through practices old yet new was refreshing. We found ourselves gathered for the Conference on the day of Pope Francis' funeral. We were able to begin the day in prayer and thanksgiving for his life and ministry and to offer Mass for his eternal repose. It was an extraordinary time to be together.

In early September the CSN Executive Committee gathered for a second time at the Dupuis Centre in Birmingham to make valuable preparation for the recent AGM and to plan ahead. We confirmed at that AGM that I would continue in the role of Chair for a further year, in light of the addition to the CSN constitution voted upon at the AGM in 2023. We are committed to streamlining our operations, continuing to build our network and ensuring broader opportunities for online events in tune with the feasts of the Church.

We are newly announcing the opening of bookings for *Shorelines - Finding God at the Boundaries*, our 2026 Conference, to be held at the Franciscan Centre, Ladywell. We are delighted to be led by Christine Dodd, a member of our executive committee, and to be able to spend time at another of our member retreat centres.

I was recently fortunate to attend the closing Mass of the Cenacle in Liverpool. It has remained a beacon of faith, hope and love for almost 120 years. I am mindful of the many Cenacle Sisters who have served NRM, CNRS*, CSN and the Retreat Association over time and formed many of our members in the work of Spirituality.

In a world stretched by times of intense challenge, it is a privilege to know the ways of God and to appreciate all whose generosity enables us to continue to be a unique network, seeking God's Spirit in our time.

Shirley Taylor

*Editor's note: Shirley is referring to our history as the National Retreat Movement and Catholic Network for Retreats and Spirituality before we became the Catholic Spirituality Network.

AGM REPORT

Our 2025 AGM was held via Zoom at 4 pm on Sunday 28 September. Our gathering prayer was a time to remember our membership past and present and this year our focus was on the closure



of the Liverpool Cenacle Retreat Centre – an occasion for thanksgiving but also a huge sense of loss. Sr Winifred Morley has been a constant presence throughout the life of NRM, CNRS and CSN, and we offer her and other members of the Cenacle community heartfelt thanks for all that the Liverpool Cenacle has been for so many in so many different ways.



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Throughout the meeting we were reminded of the openness of our Network to change. We noted the fact that we have adapted to smaller in-person conferences and the use of our member retreat centres to host them. We are grateful to Noddfa, the Irenaeus Centre and Ladywell for their generous hosting. The Executive shared some deliberations from our awayday gathering, including the wish to promote CSN in parishes and to focus on the younger age group. We mentioned how encouraging it is to see young adult groups increasing in many dioceses, and there is a great desire to introduce them to CSN. We renewed our commitment to extend our publicity and make personal outreach to each of our member centres, religious communities, parishes and groups. A dream of mine for many years has been to encourage individuals to support and network with their most local centre – mini local CSN groups.

An important feature of our AGM is the election of the Executive Committee, and we are pleased this year to welcome new members. Deacon Keith Ballard from Liverpool brings connections to the National Diaconate Conference. Fr Oliver Barry OMI from the Oblate Retreat Centre in Crewe, and Sr Margaret Mattison from St Paul's in Selly Park have offered to be co-opted members for as much time as their congregational responsibilities allow. We are grateful to all the Executive, who work tirelessly to support the growth of the Network. We are especially grateful for the services of Eamonn Hamilton who keeps good track of our finances in these challenging changing times.

We feel a great sense of an encouraging future and a strong commitment to work together for a fruitful year – to be surprised by what God has in store for us.

Margaret Palladino

LADYWELL RETREAT CENTRE



Ladywell is a Franciscan retreat centre set in the heart of Surrey. It is a place of peace inspired by the spirit of St Francis

and St Clare of Assisi. The Centre is the work of the Franciscan Missionaries of the Divine Motherhood.

We are very fortunate to have Sr Marie Grogan FMDM on our Executive Committee. Marie has kindly agreed that Ladywell will host our 2026

Conference, as we continue the journey around our own retreat centre network.



Marie has sent photos of Ladywell to give us an idea of its beauty and peace. She has included one of the moon and Saturn shining down on the house.

Prayer of St Clare

*What you hold, may you always hold,
what you do, may you always do
and never abandon.*

*But with swift pace, light step, unswerving feet,
so that even your steps stir up no dust,
may you go forward securely, joyfully and swiftly,
on the path of prudent happiness.*



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EVENTS

SATURDAY 1 NOVEMBER
10.30 am – 12.30 pm
Online Celebration of
SAINTS & SOULS



SATURDAY 29 NOVEMBER
Online CSN ADVENT DAY
10.30 am – 3.30 pm
Donations welcome



CSN ANNUAL CONFERENCE
14 – 16 APRIL 2026
SHORELINES
FRANCISCAN CENTRE LADYWELL



STOP AND LISTEN

From far away
The thin blue notes of a curlew
Trailing over miles of sand.



The sea and sky
Are rubbed together in grey light...
A flight of nothings rise in a trail, calling...

from Invergowrie by Kenneth Steven

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Executive Committee: Shirley Taylor (Chair), Eamonn Hamilton (Treasurer), Mary Nono, Sr Marie Grogan FMDM, Christine Dodd, Fr Tomy Rockey CP (Passionist Spirituality rep), Jo Alstott (Youth rep), Deacon Keith Ballard, Fr Chris Thomas (Conference of Religious rep), Sr Margaret Mattison (*co-opted*), Fr Oliver Barry OMI (*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

catholicspiritualitynetwork@gmail.com

www.csnretreats.org.uk