

## Contemplative Fire Post

June 2017 – no.22

Wisdom On The Way, 13<sup>th</sup> May  
White Waltham

*Jesus said, "I am come that you may have  
fullness of life"*



Companion Jo Rowbotham (RMN) led the day on *"Life in its Fullness – An Integral Exploration of Spirituality and Mental Health"*, reminding us that unaddressed mental health problems can have a major impact on both length and quality of life. She spoke about Integral Theory and the writings of Ken Wilber and its application in mental health care.

The integral quadrants of this approach are a way of opening up and sustaining a dialogue between the four perspectives or voices, without any of them becoming drowned out. In mental health care today, the quadrants don't always match up – they aren't always the same size. If we simply identify and treat the objective symptoms, which may seem the easiest and most 'efficient' solution, we risk losing our sense of the whole and also the person's own voice.

In child mental health, there is a particular focus on the relationship between a child's physical and emotional environment and their developing ability to relate, learn and live life to the full. With a "dysregulated" child, there is a failure of the limbic and cognitive systems of the brain to sooth the angry or distressed emotional response.

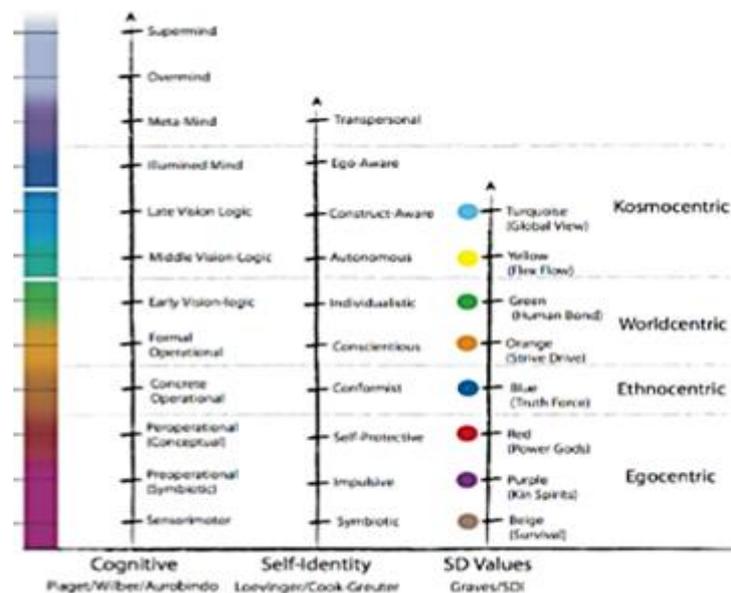
If something frightens or startles us, our ancient 'prehistoric' stress response gets activated. We may have to learn to laboriously apply the 'manual override' of our later cognitive functions in order to calm ourselves down again.

And if our nervous systems are skewed by chronic depression or anxiety, we may be living



on a constant adrenalin alert which never drains away, creating a hypervigilant outlook and permanent state of dread, instead of being able to rebalance and enjoy our sensory existence in the here and now. Every human treads, individually within their own development, the evolutionary path of our ancestors; a baby's primary need for food and safety has to be satisfied before it can become social; a toddler has to learn to share; adolescents have to learn to regulate their emotions and acquire resilience and motivation to live fulfilled lives.

"Attachment theory" – which Paul Arnesen spoke about at one Community Weekend – highlights the consequences of the failure to develop that sense of safety. Without secure attachments and a sense of belonging to create one's sense of personal identity, a child cannot self-soothe or self-regulate and will struggle to relate to others, with significant implications for future mental wellbeing. When looking at the colour-coding of the Integral stages of consciousness, it is possible to see similarities between these descriptions of ordinary child development and the wider human potential movement that takes us beyond the human ego into higher states of consciousness, while containing and integrating the stages that went before.



Reference: *Overview of Developmental Stages of Consciousness – Compiled by Barrett C Brown, Integral Institute, 2006*

**Pilgrimage To Now/here, Saltmarshe,  
22<sup>nd</sup> April**

*Led by Di Williams & Jane Johnston*

John 10 speaks of 'fullness of life' and its opposite – the 'thief' that comes to steal, kill and destroy. This is a good description of the effects of severe and long-lasting mental illness.

When Jesus says "Love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength and love your neighbour as yourself", was this a recipe for mental well-being? With each loving act of generosity, to oneself or to someone else, are we replenishing what the thief may have taken away?



**Paradox**

Pillars of trees standing in  
A tributary of joyous praise,  
Their upstretched branches  
Supporting the weighted weightlessness,  
Of unseen draughts of wind and air.

Lush, soft carpet underfoot,  
A patchwork of subdued green,  
Blue and white flecks interwoven,  
Mirroring the artist's palette colours  
Of clouds across clear sky - unseen.

A serenade filters down  
Through soaring tree canopy,  
From a myriad of sweet voices  
Singing out their bright hymnal of praise,  
To the heavenly Deity, unseen.

Heavy, verdant-fresh incense  
Drowsy hangs in the air,  
Muffling all into the stillness  
Of active tranquillity, poised calm.  
I know I stand unknowingly,  
Great Mystery, blindly seen.

*Kathy Marsh, White Waltham*

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**EMMAUS ROAD**

We are disappointed and worn down.

**Lord, walk with us.**

We doubt what we believe.

**Lord, teach us.**

We need a sign.

**Lord, break the bread.**

We seek your kingdom.

**Lord, fill our hearts with fire.**

*Nick Burden*



**TWO FRIENDS Luke 24:13-33** *Jan Sutch Pickard*

**A/B** Two friends on our way  
**A** on the dusty road  
**B** talking, listening,  
**A** sharing pain and confusion.

**A** Another walks with us-  
**B** unknown-  
**A** looks into our eyes  
**B** listens to lost hopes  
and wild rumours.

**A** He speaks; we hear  
the story of salvation  
as though for the first time.  
**A/B** as we travel on.

**A** We have arrived;  
**B** he wants to go further-  
on his way;  
**A** we ask him to stay  
as dusk falls  
on the dusty road.

**B** We go indoors,  
sit, tired, at a table  
to share a meal.

**A** He takes bread, blesses it,  
breaks and offers it to us  
**B** who then see who is our companion-  
**A** but he has gone.

**A/B** We remember

B the journey, the words we heard,  
 A the everyday presence of road, table  
 and broken bread-  
 B we know the news that must be shared.

A We cannot stay put,  
 B but here and now, set out,  
 back along the dusty road:  
 A/B two friends on God's way.

**Resources taken from Fire and Bread by members  
 of the Iona Community**

*A Companion writes:*

"I was not in a good place when I arrived at Saltmarshe for the Pilgrimage. Circumstances in my life had been very difficult and, whilst things were beginning to get a little lighter, many days still felt dark. We set off on our silent walk, but in a different direction to the one we had always taken on previous Pilgrimages, which added to my dark mood – I wanted the familiar path. We stopped and Di and Jane offered us a moment to have a conversation with Jesus on the road to Emmaus. My ego self was very determined to do no such thing. We walked on and the water flowing into the river was muddy and sluggish.



We stopped again and were offered a second moment to have a conversation with Jesus – was there anything we wanted to ask Him for? This time yes, yes – for my heart to be open and full of compassion and love in the circumstances God has given me. We walked on and the water flowing into the river was sparkling and clear.



And so to rest at journey's end and a silent song:

*"Take O take me as I am,  
 Summon out what I shall be,  
 Set your seal upon my heart  
 And live in me."* (John L Bell)

Thank you for the blessing of Companionship on the journey."




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**The Hub, Friday 30<sup>th</sup> June**



*Whirlow Chapel, Sheffield*

Members of the Hub travelled up to Sheffield for their third meeting. Items discussed included:

- progress on the scope for a Midlands group and the possible use of Mount St Bernard, Leicestershire, (already booked for Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2018 for WOTW or similar, with option of overnight stay)

- Contemplative Fire Prayer Cycle (see below)

- planning WOTW, Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> November

- Weekend Retreat, 16<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> Feb 2018, Holland House, Pershore, Worcs WR10 3NB

- update on the new website from Mina Nielsen
- planning Advent and Lent Resources

-finalising planning for the Community Weekend

### Future Dates

**2017**

- ✚ 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> Sept , Community Weekend, Felden Lodge, Hemel Hempstead
- ✚ Sat 11<sup>th</sup> Nov, WOTW

**2018**

- ✚ Fri 16<sup>th</sup> – Sun 18<sup>th</sup> Feb, Weekend Retreat, Holland House, Worcs
- ✚ Sat 10<sup>th</sup> March, Mount St Bernard, Leics
- ✚ Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> May, WOTW
- ✚ Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> July, WOTW
- ✚ Fri 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> Sept, Community Weekend

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### Contemplative Fire Prayer Cycle



*The Hub writes:*

A strong part of Contemplative Fire is to build a sense of community 'at the edge'. This is not always easy in a dispersed community; indeed it can be difficult even in a geographically close community. We aim to accompany each other in a deep and mindful way, maybe practically if we can, but certainly from the heart. It can be hard to know what is happening in each other's lives if we don't know people very well and we often don't want to 'burden' others with our worries or 'interfere'. But to be able to ask for prayer and to feel the arms of our friends and fellow travellers in prayer, and Christ at our back, can be very comforting. And to give contemplative time to others in our community can be part of our rhythm of both prayer and compassionate action.

Currently our fellow Companion Beatrice Hillman holds the Intercessions Group database, receiving any requests and then turning them round and sending them out

again, often with a special reflective prayer to help our work. Some of you may have been in the Contemplative Fire intercessions group over the years, but some may be unaware of its existence. We feel that now is a good time to refresh what was established many years ago, to make it more inclusive. We have decided to send out any requests for prayer to *all* our Companions. This will help us, if we wish, to get to understand something of each other's journeys and deepen our community. However, we are mindful that receiving the email is *only an invitation* and if anyone feels this would be too much for them to be receiving, please feel free to opt out whenever you choose, by emailing Beatrice with the words OPTOUT. (Beatrice's email address is [catherinehillman@hotmail.com](mailto:catherinehillman@hotmail.com), as some people know her by her first name, Catherine).

We would like to call the group the *Contemplative Fire Prayer Cycle* rather than Intercessions, which has its own connotations. In Beatrice's words:

*'Rather than it being a list of people to be cited, I guess for some of us it's more about holding these people in a quiet and deep place in our hearts, being available to be drawn by the Spirit into a place of attentiveness, focus and compassionate alignment with their needs and suffering. Or for some of us it may be about seeing people in God's light and love.'*

We hope that you will be content with this change and that you will feel free to email Beatrice with your request with, if you are able, a brief outline of the situation.

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### Pilgrimage – Camino de Santiago

"This Autumn, the "arrangers" have worked out an itinerary that gives only 10 miles a day with one at 12 miles. That is 5 gentle miles in the morning and the same in the afternoon, but at the halfway break a taxi can sort the rest if needed. Cost for a single room with baggage moved daily including dinner and breakfast daily in good three star accommodation is about £500-600 for a week's walking. Flights - this next stage is Fromista to Leon, so Leon airport is closest, flights daily from Gatwick at £220return. Do you think anyone would be interested?"

Blessings Tony Mealing

**Parcevall Hall Retreat**



From left (back row)– Ann, Charlotte, Jane, Peter, Hugh (CF Canada), Jeremy, Gill, (middle row) – Diane, Sally, Liz, Elaine, Anne (CF Canada), (front row) – Caroline, Caroline, Sharon, Beatrice. Photographer – Ann Worrall (thanks Ann!)



Me and my garden: 'It's a treasure to be shared. In summer we have parties of over 500 people'

Paul Bayes, Bishop of Liverpool, on the joys of hard labour, his first beehive and his stained-glass shed

<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2017/may/13/how-does-your-garden-grow-paul-bayes-liverpool>

**Community Weekend  
"Return to the Heart"**



**Fri 8<sup>th</sup>, Sat 9<sup>th</sup> – Sun 10<sup>th</sup> Sept  
Felden Lodge, Hemel Hempstead  
Bookings are now open**



**Coals In Your Neighbourhood**

Help us help you to connect with those who are near you! We have friends located in many parts of Canada, USA, UK, Australia, Sri Lanka and more.



Our initiative is to create a place where our friends are able to search for friends who may be sitting in their own back yard! We invite you to tell us where you are located, that way we may get this going. You can forward your information to [info@contemplativefire.ca](mailto:info@contemplativefire.ca)



The Hidden Houses of Prayer event on Saturday 28th October in Liverpool Cathedral - full details on the Liverpool Diocese website: <http://www.liverpool.anglican.org/Hidden-Houses-of-Prayer---October-28th-2017>

