

Contemplative Fire Post

August 2017 – no.24

Wisdom On The Way
Saturday 11th November

LIVING TOWARDS DEATH AND THE TRANSFORMING HEREAFTER



The Woodland Hall, Greenacres Chiltern
Potkilm Lane, Jordans,
Beaconsfield, Bucks HP9 2XB
Led by Tom Hinds and Helen Fitch-Hunter

Weekend Retreat
16th – 18th Feb 2018
Holland House, Pershore, Worcs
Led by Rae Moyise & Sue Riddell

Beyond these shores



Rae Moyise & Sue Riddell write:

The ancient Celtic saints such as St Brendan model for us a willingness to set out from the known world to what lies beyond. This weekend gives an opportunity to reflect on the encouragement and challenge they offer us to journey from and beyond the familiar to the new.



Holland House

BE PART OF RESOURCING OUR COMMUNITY LIFE DURING ADVENT AND LENT

Sharon Roberts & Diane Rutter write:

Spiritual food for deep journeying during these special times of attentiveness and preparation has been offered by a wide variety of Companions since the early days of Contemplative Fire.

These reflections and catalysts have blessed many of us. There is a special sense of community as we explore them each week, wherever we are, knowing that other Companions are praying and reflecting with the same shared offerings.



Photograph by Jeremy Timm from Iona

Taking the form of a weekly e-mail to all in the Community, they invite journeying alongside in a particularly creative and personal way and become a rich blessing, both to the Companions who offer them and the rest of us who have opportunity to engage with them, as we move towards the God-giveness of Christmas and Easter.

Most of us will know how creative, varied and deeply prayed over these offerings are. Those who have prepared them in the past also know what a blessing there is in that prayerful preparation time, as we sit in spaciousness with God and they “come to birth.” Often the Sunday readings that are set for that year reveal a theme or direction of exploration. Sometimes a different approach emerges as a framework.

We are a skilled and deeply prayerful community with many spiritual insights. Most of us would be able to create such resources for our fellow Companions.

So here is an invitation. Please would you consider being willing to prepare an offering for a future Lent or Advent, in 2018 or beyond? Usually two Companions would come together to do this. You could think about whom you resonate with and approach a fellow Companion to ask if they would be willing to do this with you. And there is a guidance sheet to get you started.

Support is on hand if required but the treasure of these resources is that they are personal to us, set, of course, within the general framework and ethos of Contemplative Fire. Please do prayerfully dwell on the possibilities of offering your gifting in this way, and be in touch if you are able to explore further.

*There is an old Christian tradition
that God sends each person into this world
with a special message to deliver,
with a special song to sing for others,
with a special act of love to bestow.
No one else can speak my message,
or sing my song,
or offer my act of love.
These are entrusted only to me.*

John Powell, writing in “*Through Seasons of the Heart*” (Collins 1988)

Food and drink ...Building Community



Jeremy Timm writes:

On Saturday 5th August, Companions and friends gathered to simply enjoy each other's company, and a glass of wine, and what turned out to be a wonderful spread for lunch at Saltmarshe.

When we meet it is normally with a specific purpose in mind, so the idea was to meet up with no agenda, relax and chat. Everyone brought food to share resulting in a feast which, after a short sunny walk, was appreciated by all.



John, Di, Jacky, Gill, Simon, Caroline, Viv, Malcolm, Catherine, Sheila, Jane (in part – apologies Jane!)

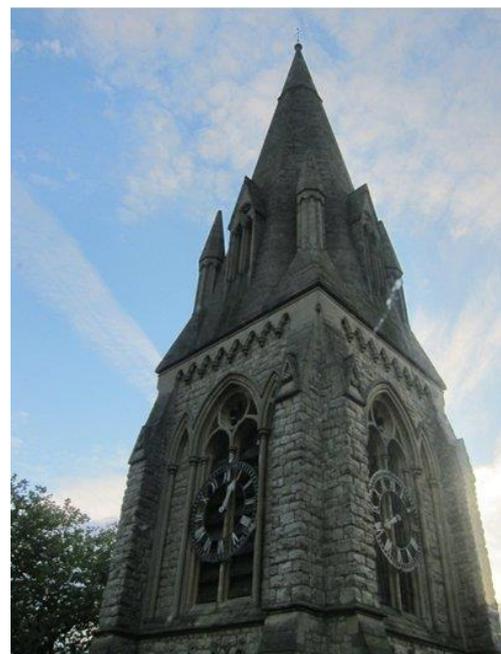
The Contemplative School of the Heart

Sister Rosemary writes:

Most of my time away this year was in Ireland in a hermitage in Co Sligo (wonderful!) but the last weekend was with a friend, Julienne McLean, in London. She used to know Philip in the early days of CF in Amersham, so was interested in my link with you now. She asked me to pass on to you and any Companions who might be interested the details of her Rose Window Hermitage in Kilburn, North London and the facilities available there for groups or individuals. These can be found on the Contemplative Spirituality Network website, with other interesting things – do have a look under 'Hermitage', and you might like to include it in the next CF Post.

<http://www.contemplativespirituality.org/hermitage.html>

The Contemplative School of the Heart is seeking to explore, and participate in, the modern recovery of the ancient and essential Christian contemplative, mystical or wisdom tradition in our time. This renewal started with Thomas Merton in the 1950's and 1960's and is now spreading through all Christian denominations like 'treasure hidden in a field' (Matthew 13:44).



View from the kitchen!

Mystic in Motion

Anne Crosthwait writes:

I was preparing yesterday for a meeting with a team from Contemplative Fire who has over the years helped me discern our way forward. As I was gathering my thoughts together I was outlining some of nudges I'd received during retreat times regarding Contemplative Fire both over the years and during my Sabbath Leave. Then something I hadn't considered before emerged – What is Contemplative Fire's True Self?



As part of my spiritual journey along the contemplative pathway, I've done lots of work around my own false self. Again during my Sabbath Leave, I was taken to places that removed some more ingrained layers. I appreciate Keating's descriptive phrase 'those childhood patterns of happiness', those ways that we learnt to survive in life that no longer are needed. The contemplative work peels away layers of the false self so I might live more fully from my True Self. For me it has often been hard work, but healing work. I'm grateful for it. And I trust those who keep me company in this life appreciate it too!

So...do communities have false and true selves? Do families? Do marriages? I haven't read anything about that specifically, maybe some of you have and could let me know. With church communities and families we will speak of generational sin and the accumulation of spiritual energy that can be very negative, but we seldom talk of the original vision of a community. Once, in Contemplative Fire, we asked the question, "Why has God birthed

Contemplative Fire at this time and place?" Some wonderful discussions and images emerged.

As I return to my role as Community Leader with Contemplative Fire Canada, we are engaging in the process of discerning our way forward. I wonder if we might consider again, why Contemplative Fire was birthed. Do we have a True Self in our community calling? Perhaps then we can live more closely to our True Self, the fullness of who we are as a community.

Please pray for Contemplative Fire as we discern our way forward. Are you part of another faith community? Does it have a sense of why it was created, and is it living within the founding vision? Or your family? Your marriage?

Love and prayers

Anne, Community Leader Canada

<https://mysticmotion.org/>



Terry Waite returns to CRE for the first time in more than 20 years, to talk about the depths of faith, hope and love that sustained him through his five-year captivity and beyond.

Twenty-five years ago last November (2016), Terry was released from captivity in Beirut. As the Archbishop of Canterbury's special envoy, he had been held hostage for five years; four of them in solitary confinement. During this time he was chained, beaten, frequently blindfolded and subjected to a mock execution.

A British Quaker and Anglican, Terry will be at CRE 2017 (Thu 19 Oct) to talk about and sign his book Out of the Silence (SPCK) in which he recalls the highs and lows of his life, both during that ordeal and throughout the happier

times of humanitarian work that have followed.

Out of the Silence bears witness to the enduring power of forgiveness, truth and reconciliation in the face of the adverse forces still at work in the world today. Now in his seventies, Terry holds many honorary doctorates, both in the UK and overseas, and continues to work for a range of humanitarian causes, including prisoners, the homeless, hostages and their families, and overseas development.



It will be Terry's first visit to CRE since 1995.

<http://creonline.co.uk/terrys-return-will-worth-wait/>

Sandown Park, Esher, Surrey, 17-19 October



Dear Friend,

We are pleased to say that our two pilot Living Conversation Groups are underway in Selby and London. We will let you know how those go and what guidance we are then able to produce for others wanting to start similar groups in their area. All good wishes,

Petra Griffiths
Living Spirituality Connections Coordinator

15-17 September – Anam Cara : exploring spiritual friendship. Birmingham.

www.woodbrooke.org.uk.

An 'anam cara' is a soul friend, offering companionship, support and spiritual nourishment. This weekend offers an opportunity to explore what spiritual friendship

is and how we can initiate and sustain such relationships. We will spend time together as soul friends reflecting, sharing and listening, beginning to know one another better in the "things that are eternal" and deepening our spiritual lives. We will practise deep, attentive listening to one another and gather ideas for framing spiritual friendships.

18-21 September – Sacred Circle Dancing: Breath of Life. The joy of dancing as a unit until a sense of oneness and peace enfolds you. Led by Judy Harvey. Near Bath.

www.ammerdown.org

19 - 22 September – CANA Gathering: Sacred Incarnation. Holland House, Worcestershire. Exploring our connections with Nature, our individual ecological niche on the Earth and our collective level of service to the wellbeing of the Planet and its cargo. Full information on cost and booking:

www.christiansawakening.org/wpcontent/uploads/2017/06/HH4xA5Flyer-copy.pdf.

25-29 September – Mystics, Rebels and Prophets. Retreat for Women led by Edwina Gateley. Exploring women of spirit who have gone before us and walk with us today. North East Wales. www.beunos.com

25-29 September – Rediscovering the Ministry of Blessing led by Rev Dr Russ Parker. Gower Peninsula. www.nicholastonhouse.org

29 September-1 October – The Cradle of Christianity led by Dom Brendan Thomas. Discover the beginnings of Christianity in the saints, apostles and spiritual riches of Syria. Herefordshire. www.belmontabbey.org.uk



The Monastery of Ostrog, Montenegro, dedicated to St Basil who was buried here. Photo Gill Greenwood