

Contemplative Fire Post

April 2016 – no.12

Sunday 10th April, Thame Barn Philip and Jill's Retirement Party

Preparing for the arrivals



Behind the scenes



Table and barn decorated, food ready



Presentation



Circle dancing



Memory book and gift for Marlowe Sands break





Behind the scenes at the day's end



"A Bad Sonnet For A Very Good Couple"

When Jill and Phil were called to serve the church
In diocese of Oxford's education team,
The 80's beckoned us with hope that we might
search

New ways of focussing the Gospel beam.
With energy and much creative skill
Phil offered Wisdom's word about our God,
That humankind, yes *all* might have their fill
Of treasure old and new – and some quite odd;
Like Dionysius, pseudo Areopagite
And other mystics, via negativa
Turning souls darkness into light,
Transforming life for many a non-believer.
So change and hope revived and took its place,
And in new ways of worship we found Grace.

But Philip's searching and creative mind
Reached out again to those who sense was
blurred
By noise and clatter making deaf and blind
Good folk, for whom God's voice was never
heard.
So 'Quiet Gardens' bloomed, their senses to
enhance,
Gave space for ears to hear and eyes to see,
And perhaps within the silence, just the chance
That they might capture God's own majesty.
And so in gardens up and down the nation
Like Eden re-born, quiet reigned in God's
creation.

Then out of this the Rodericks' gaze rose higher,
Conceived a bonding in a pilgrim trail
Of those of those who search and wish the fire
Lit by the Spirit, not to fail.

So in the early days the Peregrini,¹
Learned in our search to affirm and test each
other,
Belonging together and to every teeny
Creature; as Francis said 'Our sister and our
brother'.

With bongo drums and dancing in the wood,
We formed a vibrant new community,
With prayer and fun, exploring what we could
Of how a 'many' forge a unity.

But Founder dear, as now from leadership you
bid 'Adieu'
Know that in our hearts, the 'Fire' personifies
you.

Composed and read by Vincent Strudwick

¹ A term Philip researched for a group of pilgrims on mission

"What a lovely occasion it was yesterday in Thame Barns! Jill and I enjoyed the whole event! The table decorations really worked, the food was delicious, the poetry and the music spot on, the circle dance excellent and the Gathering/ eucharist seemed to provide a fitting focus and conclusion to the event. It felt good, once again, to be part of our gathered community.

Philip and Jill"



May the blessing of Light be on you
Light without and light within.
May the blessed sunlight shine upon you
And warm your heart till it glows like
A great peat fire, so that the stranger
May come and warm herself at it
As well as the friend.
And may the light shine out of the eyes of you,
Like a candle set in the windows of a house,
Bidding the wanderer to come in out of the
storm.

And may the blessing of the Rain be on you
The soft sweet rain. May it fall upon your spirit
So that all the little flowers may spring up,
And shed their sweetness on the air.
And may the blessing of the great rains be on
you,
May they beat upon your spirit
And wash it fair and clean,
And leave there many a shining pool
Where the blue of heaven shines,
And sometimes a star.

And may the blessing of the Earth be on you
The great round earth; may you ever have
A kindly greeting for people you pass
As you're going along the road.

And now may the Lord bless you and bless you
kindly.

Hello Gill,

I would like to thank everyone at Contemplative Fire for some very fruitful years alongside Companions - it has been very formative for me. I wonder if you could pass this on for me?

I am always welcoming Companions who might be visiting Norfolk! Susan

Revd Susan Bowden-Pickstock
Rector of the Saxon Shore Benefice
Ordained Pioneer Minister
revroses@gmail.com

Solitude Connected



Philip Roderick writes:

The next national gathering of the Hidden Houses of Prayer will be Saturday 28th October 2017 in Liverpool Cathedral.



Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) consultation

From 1 April to 10 June, the government is finally consulting on proposals for charitable companies and community interest companies (CICs) to convert to CIO status.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/converting-to-a-charitable-incorporated-organisation>

Saltmarshe, 16th April

CF North Companion Fiona Watson has trained to teach relaxation and mindfulness, reconnecting with self, environment and the present moment. This path was closely linked to her own spiritual journey which she shared at this Pilgrimage to Now/here. We shared mindfulness practice and what it means to allow ourselves to be led by love not fear, using material from Henri Nouwen, Julian of Norwich and Paul Tillich. And we were delighted that Charlotte and Peter Wright were able to join us.



"Grace strikes us ...when we walk through the dark valley of a meaningless and empty life... It strikes us when our disgust for our own being, our indifference, our weakness, our hostility, and our lack of direction and composure have become intolerable to us. It strikes us when, year after year, the longed-for perfection of life does not appear..."

Sometimes at that moment a wave of light breaks into our darkness, and it is as though a voice were saying: "You are accepted. You are accepted, accepted by that which is greater than you... Do not seek for anything... Simply accept the fact that you are accepted."

If that happens to us we experience grace. ... In that moment, grace conquers sin, and reconciliation bridges the gulf of estrangement."

Paul Tillich - *You Are Accepted* in *The Shaking of the Foundations*

"Feeding the Flames in the Hearth"

A Learning Day Together

Hearing, reading, sharing, discussing, exploring, making suggestions on how we encourage the next stage in developing the spirit and ethos of Contemplative Fire

Saturday 22nd October 2016, 10am to 4pm
The Boxmoor Trust, Hemel Hempstead

With input from Tom Hinds, Soobie Whitfield and Sally Wright, drawing on a book* (which you will NOT need to have read in advance!)

Refreshments provided, bring your own lunch.

Contact Sarah Burns at

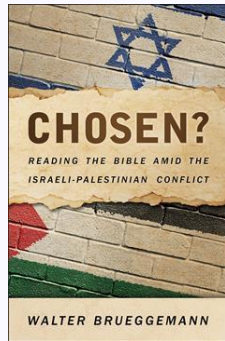
burnssj43@googlemail.com

(*The proposal from CF North which led to the setting up of the Companions' Review Group said: "The model of a "teal" organisation as set out in Frederic Laloux's book *Reinventing Organisations* is of real value in terms of on-the-ground organisation and could also be addressed by the Review Group, which became part of the "B" list).



Tom Hinds writes:

Walter Brueggemann's "Chosen? Reading the Bible amid the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict".



I am looking for five Companions to read alone, to meet together, to share, explore and discuss this 80 page book. (I will lend you a copy of it). Please contact Tom if you are interested on 01753 858 123.

Finding Home - A Monastic Journey

Gill Greenwood writes:

In April, two brothers from the Community of the Resurrection, Mirfield, West Yorkshire came to the Whirlow Spirituality Centre in Sheffield to speak about the Benedictine tradition. Brother Dennis Berk left copies of a book he had written called *Finding Home – A Monastic Journey*. The following is from his book (pp44-45).



"Entering a religious community has not removed me from contact with real people or the real world. In fact I find myself confronted with harsh realism to an even deeper extent because of the constant face-to-face interactions that are an unavoidable part of living together. The intensity of our shared life can result in friction and irritation, but as Martin Israel says: "An

emotional life devoid of anger would be tepid and unreal. Where there was no anger, there might be no strong affection either; relationships would amount to the exchange of pleasantries and a moderate overall goodwill, but with little commitment to put oneself to any trouble in helping a fellow creature." *The whole panoply of human emotions, including anger, is present within this community. However, in each person there also is a clearly detectable core of strong affection. It is this foundation of love for one another as individuals, and for God whom we strive to worship and serve, which is the adhesive that holds together this motley collection of men.*" Brother Dennis also quotes this:

"The problem, when speaking of charity,
Is how to define it with clarity
For between the ideal
And the actually real,
We notice a certain disparity" (!)

SJ Forrest, *Love All in Parson's Play-pen*

**The Trustees will be meeting on
Wednesday 22nd June at a venue in
the Midlands. All Companions are
welcome.**

Friends of Kianjai, Kenya Rehema Respite Centre

Caroline Newton & Sally Livsey write:

I am writing today with some challenging news and a heavy heart. Today we have learned that our final container is still at the docks and despite committing further large sums of cash and given assurances that this would be repaid we have had demands for more money. This is the container carrying precious equipment for our disabled community including prototype all-terrain wheel chairs and other aids. Caroline is going over to Kenya in a few days to make a final attempt to rescue both the container and our money. However this has had a serious effect on our cash flow and has put our projects over the next 6 months in peril.

Currently we are spending on average £1400 per month on feeding and supporting our 13 special units with nutritionists, physiotherapists and community support workshops. We have recently been given the opportunity to join with a local community project at our Rehema centre to bring water to the centre. The community is digging trenches and now is the perfect time to lay our pipes in those trenches and save substantial sums of money. The cost of this is around £2000. So to manage our cash flow crisis and also take the opportunity to fund the water project we need £5000 to come in over the next 6 months.

Can you do a fund raising initiative to help us?
Can you bake cakes, do a sporting challenge, a fire walk or a sponsored event? Every amount you can raise will make a huge difference to us.
Thank-you for reading this to the end

Registered Charity number 1143972

www.friendsofkianjai.com



Glass "Arcusine" quiche dish left at Thame Barn on 10th April – contact Gill on contemplativefire2016@gmail.com



Resetting the Seeds of Eden

Seeking a new moral economy for sustainable living with Michael Northcott, Professor of Ethics, University of Edinburgh

Hilfield Friary, Dorchester DT2 7BE

Saturday 7th May
10am to 4pm



Come for all or part of the day.
Be prepared for some outdoor activities.
Bring a picnic lunch. Hot drinks provided. Further details and bookings phone 01300 341741 or email hilfieldfriary@franciscans.org.uk

A free event. Donations welcome.

We can meet trains at Sherborne or Yetminster if booked well in advance.
There is limited overnight accommodation available.