

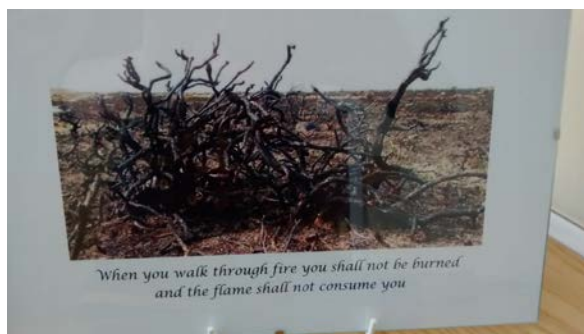
Contemplative Fire Post

September 2015 – no.5

Community Weekend
12th – 13th September

“Let us praise the grace and risk of Fire”
(from Benedictus by John O’Donohue)

This issue includes some of the words and images from the Community Weekend.



Charlotte Wright: ‘Cor’ Space

“I would like to share with you some reflections about the heart, or the ‘cor’, of Contemplative Fire. I found myself wondering - what if we are privileged to be sharing in and experiencing an amazing charism, an extraordinary dimension of God, which is Contemplative Fire - not of us or formed by us, but entirely other, of God, given as gift and to be received?

And what if the Community of Contemplative Fire could be understood as a sacrament or a ‘sign of the sacred’ that points towards this charism, this special quality of God, which is the spiritual gift of Contemplative Fire?

Also, what if *every one* of us can be Contemplative Fire -as a spark or a flame - even when alone and dispersed? As we gather together, as many individual flames, to share our lived experience of this special gifting, how we might see the fire leap into life and dance! As we each learn to live more and more in



the energy of Contemplative Fire the charism, the potential for Contemplative Fire the Community, could be transformative. As a wise, old abbot once urged us, ‘Live the charism!’

So what might it mean to ‘live the charism?’ and to ‘be’ Contemplative Fire? How would it shape our Community - in our care and oversight of it?”



The chapel was set up as a ‘cor’ or heart space, as a place for personal reflection, where we could reflect further about the charism of Contemplative Fire and what it might mean to ‘be’ Contemplative Fire.

In the ‘cor’ space was the trefoil to walk with, a painting with the energy of flame to gaze at, the poem ‘*In Praise of Fire*’ to meditate with and music to play and respond to. A charred cross was made in response to prayer images of wood that had been burnt and charred. This was a place to reflect on our call to walk together throughout the year ahead, and express our intentions for our calling, our vocation, individually, together, in Community.



(The cross is now with CF North).

Sister Rosemary spoke about “*Listening With Our Whole Selves*” – about Evelyn Glennie the percussionist; about W B Yeats’ “flock of selves” – our personal many selves and those we bring in from others; about “*The Living Flame of Love*” by John of the Cross; about a way of knowing we cannot grasp at, making space for something fresh to be heard.

Philip Roderick spoke about “*CF: the Original Vision, the Call*”, beginning with Ephesians 4. He spoke of empowering people to step into their own authority, of each of us being called by God; of Brian McLaren’s image of a tree growing: the rings embracing, enfolding, integrating the past while extending into the new.



He spoke of Kallistos Ware’s distinction between tradition becoming static and tradition remaining dynamic; of the complementary early models of ministry and outreach – Jesus’ seeming to flow from the immediacy of the now

and St Paul’s from establishing and nurturing local communities and their leadership. We are called into the vision and structure of the trinity trefoil, valuing the known and also the unknowable.

Six Stopping Places for stillness and reflection in the grounds of Felden Lodge, or on a walk from Felden Lodge via Bury Wood and Sheethanger Common.

(Francoise Pinteaux-Jones)



On 23rd November, 1654 Blaise Pascal had a dramatic encounter with God. He wrote of his experience, and sewed it into the liner of his coat. It wasn't until after his death that people learned of this and realized everywhere he went Pascal carried this experience with him. This encounter has become known as "Pascal's Night of Fire."



(Keith Armitage – Reach For The Stars)



(Berlinde De Bruyckere J.L 2005)

Community Catch Up

Finance

The Treasurer, Chris Holmes, thanked Diane Rutter for her guidance on issues of corporate governance and spoke of the levels of financial control. He said our income was about £50,000 (£40,000 from donations, 80 monthly and 7 annual) and expenditure about £50,000, with £35,000 on staff costs and a small deficit of £187 covered by reserves.

Social media - HipChat

Jane McBane spoke about HipChat, the closed group chat room used by CF North as a way of communication with each other and there was some interest in exploring whether this might work for the community as a whole. Phil Cheney from CF Canada welcomed us to the international directory of "Teals", which linked people internationally around the Teal ethos: <http://www.philcheney.com/Teal/welcome>

Now New Testament

Richard Craig has been working on a version of his blog about the synoptic gospels for possible publication as a little book and would value some opinions on whether it's worth taking any further. Are there a couple of Companions who would be interested in reading it and giving honest reactions? thenowshow@icloud.com

CF Canada

We were delighted to welcome four Companions from Canada: Hugh Crosthwait, Myrna Gadsby, and Manuela and Phil Cheney (see photo below!) Phil spoke about his book *Energizing Love*, and a personal story of bonding and synchronicity on the Camino de Santiago. <http://www.christian-alternative.com/books/energizing-love>

There is a report available called **Overview of Contemplative Fire (Canada) Community Life 2014**. Below are some comments from the report:

"Most of the life is centred in the Toronto area. It continues gently and with good/healthy life. Some testimonials:

- *"Contemplative Fire has given me the opportunity to explore God's world beyond the church pew"*
- "I have discovered a new experiential form of worship, and a variety of contemplative prayer and study practices"
- *"The past five years have sharpened my sense of curiosity to see what happens next on this spiritual path I am following"*
- "Contemplative Fire encourages me to develop and use the skills of meditation and contemplation. Meeting in small or large groups, with creative guidance, I have learned to slow my busy life for a time allowing me peace and growth in my relationship with God. Email messages with thought-provoking ideas encourage me to use meditation in my personal prayer life. For me, Contemplative Fire is an island in a fast flowing stream"
- *"Our study group is 'deceptively simple', deeply transformative and the devotion of the members has impacted my soul"*
- "The learning is profound".



(Phil, Philip, Hugh, Manuela & Myrna)

3s and Open Forum

The weekend included time in 3s to sit with two questions about leadership and discernment, to hear from the 3s (notes to follow) and an Open Forum, chaired by Françoise. The outcome from that forum was the proposal for a Review Group which has been circulated to Companions.

Compline

Led by Ali Dorey.

Trasna – the Crossing Place

Elaine Wilkins was due to have led this, but was unable to come at the last minute due to ill-health.

*"The pilgrims paused on the ancient stones
in the mountain gap.
Behind them stretched the roadway they had
travelled.
Ahead, mist hid the track.
Unspoken the question hovered:
Why go on? Is life not short enough?
Why seek to pierce its mystery?
Why venture further on strange paths, risking
all?
Surely that is a gamble for fools - or lovers.
Why not return quietly to the known road?
Why be a pilgrim still?"*

A voice they knew called to them, saying:

*This is Trasna, the crossing place.
Choose! Go back if you must.
You will find your way easily by yesterday's fires,*

there may be life in the embers yet.

*If that is not your deep desire,
stand still. Lay down your load.*

*Take your life firmly in your two hands,
(Gently... you are trusted with something
precious)
While you search your heart's yearnings:
What am I seeking? What is my quest?*

*When your flame rises deep within,
Trust yourself to its leading.*

*You will have the fire for first steps.
This is Trasna, the crossing place.*

*Choose!
This is Trasna, the crossing place*

*Come! (Sr Raphael Consedine PBVM –
adapted slightly for CF Community Weekend)*

Contemplative Eucharist & Recommitment

Led by Di Williams and Jeremy Timm, and Sr Rosemary and Philip.

Thank you to:

Companions who were able to come to the weekend, those who helped assist and accommodate our Canadian Companions and all the many and varied contributions to the weekend and since.



*Throughout
my life ...
the world
has little by
little caught
fire in my
sight until
afame all
around me,
it has
become
almost
luminous
from within
... such has
been my
experience
in contact
with the
earth - the
diaphany at
the heart of
the universe
on fire.
Teilhard de Chardin
- Heart of the
Matter*