

Formed by the Spirit

The Newsletter of the Southwark
Diocesan Spiritual Formation Group

Opportunities, events, resources and articles
on prayer and spirituality

Issue 24: April 2015



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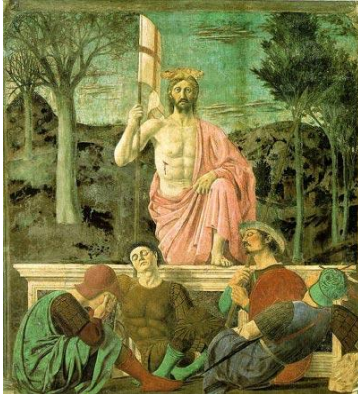
My mind was lifted up to heaven and I saw our Lord as a lord in his own house where he had called his much-loved friends and servants to a banquet. I saw that the Lord did not sit in one place but ranged throughout the house, filling it with joy and gladness. Completely relaxed and courteous, he was himself the happiness and peace of his dear friends, his beautiful face radiating measureless love like a marvellous symphony; and it was that wonderful face shining with the beauty of God that filled that heavenly place with joy and light.

[Julian of Norwich's picture of the house of the Lord to which we journey and where we are even now, at home]

What's on? Events, courses, opportunities...

Exsultet! Rejoice!

Reflecting on the Easter Mysteries through scripture, paintings and poetry



April 21st and 28th 6.30pm to 8.30pm
in Trinity House, London SE1 1HW
Led by Sr. Magdalen Lawler SND

These evenings aim to deepen our understanding of the Easter Season using scripture, enhanced by the contemplation of well-known paintings. Poetry will help us to find language for the unfolding mystery of death and resurrection within our own lives. To book contact

chris.chapman@southwark.anglican.org
020 79399474

Walk the Labyrinth

on World Labyrinth Day

St John's Church, Waterloo

(opposite IMAX/main line station

Saturday 2nd May 10am - 3.30pm

With introductory workshops

at 10.30am & 2pm

and 1 pm **'Walk as One at 1'**

Joining others around the globe to create a wave of peaceful energy washing across the time zones.



the labyrinth has a long history as a contemplative walking-prayer experience. this day presents a rare opportunity to walk a full-size Chartres-style labyrinth and to reflect upon the experience.

Further information from
lesacklam@gmail.com

Jesus at prayer

Guidance on prayer
that meets the reality of our lives



Tuesdays May 5th and 12th 10.30am to 1pm
in Trinity House, London SE1 1HW

Led by Chris Chapman,

Gazing at Jesus, what do we learn about the what, why, when and how of prayer? We will explore Jesus' teaching and practice concerning prayer and the practical help this might provide us. In the first session we will reflect on Jesus at prayer at pivotal points in his ministry. In the second session we will open up Jesus' words on prayer and how these might speak to our own context.

We will use insights from the Gospels and spiritual writings across time.

To book contact: 020 79399474

chris.chapman@southwark.anglican.org

Seeking Stillness

River of Life

Saturday 25th April 10 am– 12.45pm

Venue: St James, Riddlesdown

As the river runs across smooth, sandy, muddy or stony places, so does the course of life. Allow yourself some time this morning to explore the ebb and flow of life with the imagery of the river.

Rainbow and Cloud

Thursday 21st May 7pm -9pm

Venue: St James, Riddlesdown

Even amidst the cloudiest days light and colour are waiting. Clouds may obscure our light, but they cannot destroy the source which has been in the centre of creation from its very beginning. Here rainbows may be found, symbol of hope and promise.

For further information and to book please

e-mail: j.hoskins233@btinternet.com

Open Evening for the Encounter (Spiritual Direction) course

on May 14th, from 6pm-7.30pm
London Spirituality Centre
Lombard Street EC3V 9EA



Encounter is a formation programme in spiritual direction. It draws its inspiration from ancient and contemporary practice in Christian spiritual direction, modern psychological insights and the wisdom tradition found in all religions and cultures. *Encounter* is an ecumenical programme rooted in the Christian tradition and is open to people from any background who want to explore and develop their vocation in helping others discern and respond to God's Spirit in everyday life.

Encounter is an experiential and practical programme led by an experienced team of spiritual directors with related expertise and training, including theology, pastoral care, Christian spirituality and psychotherapy.

<http://www.spiritualitycentre.org/index.php/developing/encounter-the-london-course>

Contact Gaynor Harper:

encounter@spiritualitycentre.org

or tel. 020 7621 1391

The Director of Encounter is Julie Dunstan

SPIDIR Annual Conference



Letting Go, Letting God

Led by Jennifer Kavanagh,

author of *The World is my Cloister* and *The Little World of Unknowing*

Monday June 8th

Southwark Cathedral Library

11am to 3.30pm

All welcome

Sisters of Saint Andrew Open Afternoon

Sunday 17th May

99 Belmont Hill, Lewisham, London SE13 5DY



Come any time between 2 and 5.30pm.

Prayer with the community at 4.30pm.

The Sisters of Saint Andrew have been in their new home in Lewisham for over a year now and have begun offering regular quiet days, training events and longer retreats.

The house is available for individual retreats [For details www.sisters-of-st-andrew.com]

This is an opportunity to meet the community, to look over the house and grounds and to meet others.

If you plan to come please email

welcome@sisters-of-st-andrew.com or

phone 020 8853 1662

Water's Edge

A two day course for women
in the second half of life

28th to 29th May, 8.45am to 5pm

Royal Foundation of Saint Katherine
2 Butchers Row E14 8DS

Led by Jan Selby and Eleanor Brown

All that we do

is touched with ocean, yet we remain

on the shores of what we know



This two day non-residential course explores new times in our lives from a spiritual, psychological and creative arts perspective. The cost is £156 which includes meals, refreshments and all materials.

For more information and an application form contact Jan Selby

janselby@onetel.com

Ways into Franciscan Spirituality

Saturday 4th July

St. Mary's Sanderstead

Purley Oaks Road, CR2 ONY

Led by Sister Sue from the Community of Saint Francis

10am to 1pm with tea and coffee from 9.30am. To register and more information contact Jane Hoskins

j.hoskins233@btinternet.com

This is another morning offered by 'Ways in to Prayer' - a group of ecumenical prayer leaders in the South Croydon and Purley area.

Christian community in practice:

I have had a number of conversations in recent months with people who in one way or another feel drawn to setting up some form of community based in the local parish. Common denominators seem to be: the desire to offer hospitality based on a set apart space / house; the desire to provide prayer related opportunities to those seeking a deeper relationship with God and the recognition that these activities rest on the common life of a core of people who regularly pray together whilst living in their own homes.

Would you be interested in taking part in a gathering to explore what a local Christian community might mean in practice?

An initial meeting might usefully explore the basic principles of Christian community life and how core practices – such as a common Rule of Life – might express these.

We might also look at what can be learnt from existing Christian communities, whether gathered or dispersed.

If you are interested please get in touch with me:

chris.chapman@southwark.anglican.org

Depending on what it is people are looking for we will then set up an initial gathering to share ideas, experiences and insights.

Reflection

I have a past, I have a future

The following is a group response which was part of a short course led by Rev Hilary Fife, Chaplain at Croydon University Hospital, and entitled 'Pastoral care for people with dementia' The group was asked to consider where personhood, selfhood and spirituality lie if those things which have identified us are no more. What happens to our selfhood as we lose our identity in the world around us, since it defines us by what we think, say, and do rather than who we are.

What makes us a person?

Descartes wrote 'I think therefore I am'

I can no longer think.

Does that mean I no longer am?

I live, I breathe, hear, see, touch, feel.....

I can respond to God's creation

I have a past. I have a future.

I am created in God's image

I am still loved by God and others

I still have something to give and to teach you

I have reciprocity and relationship with you and with God

I am an inheritor of God's promise of eternal life and my personhood is part of that.

Jennie South

Reflection

Waiting for Easter

Spring comes, but unevenly. Walking through our local woods on Easter Day new life seemed to be breaking through all about me. Wood anemones waved their gentle nodding heads in the breeze ; bluebells, in a hurry to flower, were rushing their green leaves through the spent leaves of autumn before the unfurling canopy of surrounding trees stole their light. Birdsong crossed this way and that way through the wood. Spring was rising from the earth and Christ was rising from the tomb and any weariness or frustration I might have felt fell away in the experience of Easter.



The next day I walked again in the woods, but along a different path. Here it seemed spring had not yet come. There were few if any flecks of green on the trees. Beneath my feet was not a tapestry of flowers but the tired, grey-brown leaf waste of winter. Here, it seemed, birds neither sung nor flew. Was it that the soil here was less nurturing, or the shade deeper or the trees more exposed to the cold winds of the last months? I was unsure. All I knew was that Easter hadn't reached here yet.

Easter, like spring, comes but does so unevenly. In one area of our life we experience new life breaking through. We see on what were once the dry, bare branches of a difficult experience the unexpected buds of new hope, meaning and purpose. Where we once thought ourselves alone and helpless we discover Jesus with us and find that we can trust him to lead us into new beginnings.

But there may be other parts of our life that seem stubbornly stuck in winter. We are not yet healed of our hurt. We meet the worst of ourselves, seeing afresh our capacity to harm ourselves and others. We see, as yet, no way, no path out of this particular difficulty nor can we perceive the presence of one who will take us from this place.

But this is the way of Easter; it comes unevenly but come it will. In a few more weeks I will go through the dead wood and see it too bursting into life; the warmth and light might be delayed but in time I will walk below the green of trees.

It will take longer for us – to be complete at least a lifetime, and even then there will be more Eastering to do. This is one reason we celebrate Easter not once in a lifetime but every year. It takes that long for us to learn to co-operate with the work of Love. There is much to heal, and more to disentangle, and yet more to wake into life.

Yet Easter is absolute: it is for all and for every part of us. The risen Christ will not cease from this labour however many the seasons that pass.

Tools for prayer

Talking heart to heart

Prayer is heart to heart dialogue; not only our words to God but God's word to us. Prayer is as much about sharing feeling as thought, and the psalms in particular give us the language and imagery to express what is deep within: our longing, fear, need, gratitude, joy or pain. Here too we can also sense the heart of God reaching out to us.

*You are a hiding-place for me;
you preserve me from trouble;
you surround me
with glad cries of deliverance.*

*I will instruct you and teach you
the way you should go;
I will counsel you
with my eye upon you.*

From psalm32



Write your own psalm expressing the words you want to express to God from your heart. You may also sense words from God's heart to you and these too might become part of your psalm.

You may find it helpful to use some of the following headings as starting points for your psalm. Add your own words to the end of these sentences:

Lord you are...

I am...

Today I feel...

I don't understand why...

I long for...

I picture my life today as like...

I remember your goodness to me when...

I look to you for...

I sense you say to me...

Lord you are my...