

Formed by the Spirit

The Newsletter of the Southwark Diocesan Spiritual Formation Group

Opportunities, events, resources and articles on prayer and spirituality Issue 16: March 2013



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But famished field and blackened tree
Bear flowers in Eden never known.
Blossoms of grief and charity
Bloom in these darkened fields alone.
What had Eden ever to say
Of hope and faith and pity and love
Until was buried all its day
And memory found its treasure trove?
Strange blessings never in Paradise
Fall from these beclouded skies.

[From *One Foot in Eden*, by Edwin Muir]

What's On? Events, Courses, Opportunities

God in the Garden

*Rooted in God's goodness,
Growing in God's life,
Bearing fruit for sharing*

Mondays 13th May, 20th May & June 3rd
7pm to 9pm
in St. Matthew's House,
Croydon, CR0 1PE

[close to East Croydon station]

The bible and the Christian spiritual tradition repeatedly use imagery drawn from natural processes of growth to explore the development of God's life within us. Using input, discussion and prayer exercises these three evenings will explore how we enable our lives to become rooted in God, to grow in God's life and so bear fruit.

You don't need to be a gardener!

Led by Chris Chapman, Spiritual Formation Adviser for the Diocese.

A balm for all wounds

The spirituality of Etty Hillesum 1914 -1943



Thursdays May 16th **and** May 23rd 1
0.30am to 1pm in Trinity House

Led by Chris Chapman, Spiritual Formation Adviser

Etty Hillesum, a young Dutch woman of Jewish descent kept a diary describing her search to live life at depth amidst increasing Nazi persecution. These two evenings will unfold the relevance of her seeking for our own quest to be centred in God amidst the challenges life brings.

Praying the Bible



Tuesday 4th June, 10.30am to 1pm
Trinity House, 4 Chapel Court
London SE1 1HW

The Word of God is food for Christian living. How do we make room for this word in prayer? We will explore a range of ways of prayerful reflection based on bible passages

This will be a largely experiential session. We will explore different ways of biblically rooted prayer by trying them out, and then consider how we might use them for our own resourcing or with others.

You are invited to a Book Launch...

Seeing in the Dark

Christopher Chapman

Tuesday April 9th,

6.30pm

Newcomen Room

Trinity House

4 Chapel Court, Borough High St.
London SE1 1HW

In *Seeing in the Dark* I explore how we can draw on the Christian spiritual tradition to explore the part suffering plays within human growth and our experience of God.

To book or for information on any of the courses and events on this page contact:

chris.chapman@southwark.anglican.org

020 7939 9474

Contemplative Outreach London
The Cloud of Unknowing Revisited

A day workshop
led by Cynthia Bourgeault
Saturday June 1st
10.15am to 5.15pm
St. John's Waterloo

Cynthia Bourgeault is an Episcopal priest, writer and internationally renowned retreat and conference leader with a passion for teaching the practice of Centering Prayer. For more information and to book go to:
<http://cynthiabourgeault.eventbrite.co.uk>

Connected Solitude

Saturday 22 June 2013
10.00am till 4.00pm
St Martin's Hall, Lower Crypt,
St Martin-in-the-Fields,
Trafalgar Square, London WC2N 4JH

Revd Philip Roderick and team will share the vision for Hidden Houses of Prayer and explore ways of praying in connected solitude, including:

- household spirituality
- prayer in the wee hours
- contemplative intercession
- the gift of tears

Suggested donation £20. (Please bring own lunch or use St Martin's café. Teas and coffee provided.

Philip Roderick is an Anglican priest, percussionist and educator. He is Founder-Director of The Quiet Garden Movement (www.quietgarden.org), Community Leader of Contemplative Fire (www.contemplativefire.org), Advisor in Spirituality to the Bishop of Sheffield and Chaplain of Whirlow Grange Spirituality Centre.

For further information re Hidden Houses of Prayer, contact Philip at
hiddenhousesofprayer@hotmail.co.uk

Mornings of prayer and reflection
St. Alphege Southwark,
King's Bench St. SE1 0QZ,
Saturdays 10am to 1pm



These mornings are open to all. There is no charge; a small donation to cover any costs is welcome. Each morning has a theme and includes input, prayer exercises and suggested reflection material. There are times for quiet personal prayer within St. Alphege, or you can take a guided walk through the local area. If you can't make the whole morning you are welcome to come for a couple of hours.

St Alphege is close to Southwark tube [Jubilee Line], Borough tube [Northern Line] and Waterloo stations. For directions contact Chris Chapman. It's helpful to have an idea of numbers attending in advance.

Saturday May 4th, 10am to 1pm

Who are you O my God.... and who am I?

Reflections on these prayer words of St. Francis of Assisi, with times of quiet, and a several creative possibilities to help us explore something more of the mystery of God, ourselves, and our awareness of connection or not, on that particular day.
Led by Sister Sue CSF

Saturday June 1st, 10am to 1pm

The Spirituality of Ageing:

Reflections and meditations on the spirituality of growing older.

All ages welcome

Led by Rev. Ray Andrews

Saturday July 6th, 10am to 1pm

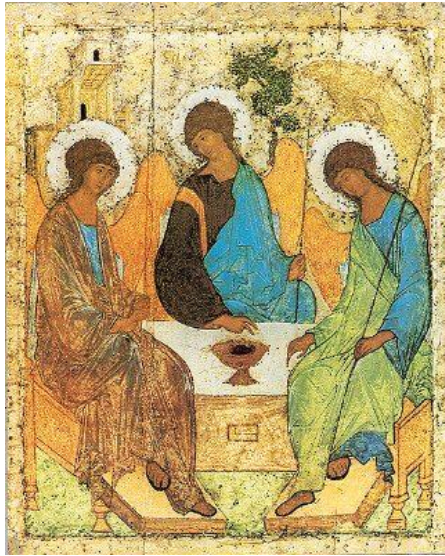
God in creation - Seeing God in all things'

God is expressed in the world we are part of and through our daily experience.

How do we learn to perceive and respond to this presence?

Led by Rev. Cynthia Jackson

Diocesan Prayer and Spirituality Day Meeting Places



Saturday November 16th
in Southwark Cathedral

Speakers:

Revd. Rosemary Lain-Priestley and
Bishop Christopher Chessun

A day to explore our meeting places with God through input, a wide variety of workshops and prayer spaces.

More details will be sent out with a mailing in the summer but for now please note the date.

Resources for you and your church

You can find a variety of tools for prayer, resource material for Bishop Christopher's call to 'Faith, Hope and Love' and past issues of this newsletter on the Southwark Diocesan website at <http://www.southwark.anglican.org/prayer/prayer-spirituality>

*Two opportunities
for prayer and reflection at
St. James Riddlesdown*

Easter Seedings

Saturday 13th April 2013

10am-12.30pm

St James, Riddlesdown

Leader: Jane Hoskins

'Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains a single seed.'

John 12:24

An opportunity to spend time with the Easter message in prayer, stillness and scripture.

Tea/coffee/creative space

Suggested donation £6

In the Stillness of the Garden

A Quiet Day

Saturday 22nd June 2013

10am – 4pm

St James, Riddlesdown

Leader: Jane Hoskins

Whether a garden is of National Trust proportions, a small plot around one's house, or the window box on a balcony - our creator God's presence is ever near.

Tea/coffee/creative space

Suggested donation £8 For further information and to book a place please contact Jane Hoskins

01883 344916 or e-mail:

j.hoskins233@btinternet.com

Joseph Haydn's "The Seven Last Words of Christ from the Cross".

Free, lunchtime performance for Holy Week
at the London Centre for Spirituality
The Church of St Edmund the King
Lombard Street ,London EC3V 9EA

Wednesday 27th March 2013

12.15 pm - 1.15 pm

All welcome

www.spiritualitycentre.org



Inspiring you on your journey of prayer.

Father Martin Powell writes:

There are so many pressures in life. Family, work or school as well as our leisure time means that often prayer can get squeezed out in the busy-ness of it all. What happens is we might fail to pray at all, or we feel frustrated that we are not living up to an ideal of prayer, an ideal that is often unachievable.

'Pray as you can and not as you can't.' This was the pithy advice given by Benedictine Abbot John Chapman (1865–1933) to the laypeople, monks, nuns, and priests who wrote to him seeking guidance in a life of prayer. The idea of encouraging others to pray in a realistic, achievable and relevant way is what lies behind ipray. 'Pray as you can and not as you can't' is a mantra which we should all adopt in the journey of prayer we embark upon with God.

Many of us don't leave home without our mobile phones, they are part of our busy lives connecting us to family friends and colleagues. ipray enables this technology to help us build connection with God too. **ipray** is a text messaging service with prayer pointers, scripture passages and inspirational ideas to inspire prayer. The content

comes via text message, (no more than three times a week), via email (frmartinpowell@blueyonder.co.uk) or from the twitter feed @ipraytweet. The messages encourage the recipient to build regular prayer, even just for a moment or two, into daily life.

Recent ipray messages include:

ipray- "Prayer should be the key of the day and the lock of the night." George Herbert. Make the last thing you say today a prayer of thanks

ipray -'go & be reconciled to your brother or sister' Mt 5.24 Who are you at odds with? Pray for reconciliation & call them to make it happen.

ipray- 'There is nothing on this earth more to be prized than true friendship' T Aquinas. Give thanks to God for your friends & tell them.

There are currently around 80 people receiving ipray messages, and it is steadily growing after recent publicity in the Metro and on BBC Radio London Sunday morning show. One ipray recipient said, "It pings into my life just at the right moment, and reminds me to sit and listen to God. It really helps me to focus on God during my busy week."

You can sign up by texting '**ipray**' to 07906263764, emailing frmartinpowell@blueyonder.co.uk or by following us on Twitter @ipraytweet.

ipray is based at St Edward in New Addington in the Croydon Episcopal Area, and plans are beginning to take shape to expand ipray to a network of ipray facilitators and guest contributors across the Diocese. If you would like to know more about ipray, or are thinking of starting something like ipray in your own church, please do not hesitate to contact Fr Martin Powell, he would be happy to talk to you. You can contact him at the address above.

Staying still to perceive movement

*Morning by morning he wakens – wakens
my ear, to listen as those who are taught*
[Isaiah 50.4]



Walking today I saw a kestrel hovering in the sky over a single point, eyes intent on the ground below, seeking out the slightest movement.

The attentiveness sometimes took some effort: the kestrel beat its wings not to travel but to remain in that one place.

At other times the moving air by itself seemed to hold it in position. But when a change in the wind began to move the kestrel away it resumed its wing beat to return to its watch.

Living in attentiveness to God's presence in all things has something in common with the kestrel's flight. It begins with a wing-beat, turning ourselves towards God and seeking his presence. We light a candle as the day begins, or say a prayer, or read words of scripture. In this way or that way we seek God who is ever in search in us.

There are moments within the day when it seems no wing-beat is needed; the moving air holds us in awareness of God-with-us.

Tools for Prayer

But in another moment our focus is lost; we are no longer in the seeing place, the hearing place. Instead we become lost in the demands we make of ourselves or others make of us, beaten about by the swirling currents of our needs and desires, without the steady gaze on God that can help make sense of these things. The beat of a wing is needed to bring us back until we can rest again on the uplifting air.

The kestrel has eyes and ears for its prey; stillness helps it be sensitive to movement.

Our steady focus helps us sense the movement of the Spirit:

- What is it Lord that I see?
- Why does that sight so touch me?
- Why when I read those words from the bible does my heart beat faster?
- Why do I feel such excitement or sadness, attraction or fear?
- What are you showing me Lord as I keep my gaze on you?
- What is the significance of what I hear and how are you inviting me to respond?
- How are you at work in my life, and how can I co-operate with you?'

We hover over the moment, avoiding the temptation to simply move on. There is something to see here: - something to learn. But to perceive it we must stay still.

*Morning by morning he wakens,
wakens my ear to listen
as those who are taught.*

An Easter Reflection: Seeds and their growth

The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. [Mark 4: 26-28]

I am waiting for the weather to be a little kinder before I begin sowing seeds. I have packet upon packet of them collected from the dried seed pods of plants I grew last year: peas and beans, cornflowers and scabious, lettuce and sunflowers, cosmos and cucumber.

In themselves they are not much to look at: a small, dimpled round ball, a speck of dust so easily taken away by the wind, a bell-shaped piece of grit. To a casual observer they seem to hold little sign of life, in their greys and browns, and hard, dry coats.

And yet they hold inexpressible, irrepressible life.

Hold one of those small seeds in the palm of your hand and wonder:

How can this piece of nothingness hold within it a tender shoot, the first green leaves, a stalk that sways in the breeze, questing roots that seek out nurture from the dark earth, a flower that stretches to the sky, and even a seedhead to give life and colour for a time yet to come?

Different images spring to mind:

The seed is the word God sows in you: his word about who you are and what your life is for; the first glimmering of understanding of his desire for you.

If you make my word your home you are truly my disciples; you will learn the truth, and the truth will make you free [John 8:31]

The seed is Christ, the grain of wheat that falls to the earth and dies, and so bears a rich harvest: The garden tomb is where life stirs on Easter Day. As the seed coat breaks, the stone is rolled away. Our lives awaken in Christ.

What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. 1 Corinthians 15: 42-43]

The seed is the hope we sow when we go where God invites us and act in response to God's call: the smallest of seeds will become a great tree where the birds of the air will find shelter.

With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.' [Mark 4: 30-32]

You and I are seeds. God is drawing forth our hidden self

I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever. Amen. [Ephesians 3: 14-21]

Labyrinths in London Underground Stations

<http://art.tfl.gov.uk/projects/detail/10679/>

The artist Mark Wallinger has been commissioned to design and install finger labyrinths in all 270 London Underground stations to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the tube system. Some have appeared already, and all are planned to be complete by the summer.

You will find them on wall plaques, sometimes obvious to see and sometimes a little hidden away. Each has a red arrow to indicate the entrance to the labyrinth, and you can trace the journey with your finger to the centre and then back again to where you began.



The labyrinth is an ancient pattern, going back to pre-Christian times, but adopted by the church as a symbol of the spiritual journey. In the Middle Ages many churches had labyrinths, for example the one that remains in Chartres Cathedral.

Labyrinths and mazes are often confused. A labyrinth is not a maze. A maze is like a puzzle to be solved. It has twists, turns, and blind alleys. A labyrinth has only one path. The way in is the way out. There are no blind alleys. The path leads you on a circuitous path to the centre and out again.

The Labyrinth journey echoes our own life path with its twists and turns. Though we are not always aware of it, we move in the presence of God. Even when we feel we have lost our way and are far from the home our deepest self seeks, the Spirit leads us deeper into God.

The Labyrinth is a prayer journey to our own centre, the place where God dwells and where we come to know who we really are. Having made this inward journey we travel back out again into the world.

Entering the labyrinth can be seen as a symbol of orientating ourselves to God, recognising our need of forgiveness and healing, letting go of all that holds us back.

The centre can be seen as representing our resting place in God, where we receive life, light, healing, understanding, and love; the gift will be different for different people and at different times.

Having stopped for a while in the centre we follow our path out of the labyrinth and back into the world, taking with us what we have received and letting that shape our lives and relationships.

If you find a labyrinth in an underground station you use, take some time to follow its path with your finger. We make physical journeys all the time but there is another, more significant journey you and I have embarked on: inwardly, into our centre where Christ dwells and we come to know ourselves for the first time; and outwardly, to share in Christ's compassionate engagement with the world.