

# Formed by the Spirit

The Newsletter of the Southwark Diocesan Spiritual Formation Group

Opportunities, events, resources and articles  
on prayer and spirituality  
**Issue 8: March 2011**



## Contents:

What's On? ...events, courses, opportunities	2-4
Tools for Prayer: Letting Go and Letting God	5
A way of Life for a Local Church	6-7
A Reflection for Lent: Where am I going?	8
From anxiety to hope	9

## What's On?

### Courses in prayer and spirituality

#### **Water from the Well: Teresa of Avila's guidance on growth in prayer:**

What part do we play, and what part does God play in the growth of our prayer?

The 16<sup>th</sup> century Spanish mystic Teresa of Avila drew from her own experience to provide guidance on the changing experience and effects of prayer as we seek greater openness to God.

March 23<sup>rd</sup> and March 30<sup>th</sup>. 7pm to 9pm, in Trinity House Led by Sheila Grimwood



#### **Dance into worship: exploring ways of using the body in prayer.**

In daily life we take movement for granted with every breath we take, every move we make. Our body expresses what we feel within. These two sessions offer an opportunity to experience some of the ways in which our spiritual life can be enriched by movement, ranging from hand prayers to simple dance.

NB you do not need to be super-fit and supple to do this!

17<sup>th</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup> May, 7pm to 9pm in Trinity House, led by members of the Dance into Worship group.

#### **Using visualisation and the imagination in prayer:**

Our encounter with God through the use of imagination and memory in prayer.

We will look at the use of the imagination in Ignatian style Guided Contemplation and in Anthony de Mello's *Sadhana* exercises. We will explore the use of visualisation in healing memories and alleviating worry and fear.

Led by Penny Bird, June 8<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> in St. Matthew's House in Croydon, 7pm to 9pm



#### **These gifts we bring: Reviewing the use of our time and resources, drawing on insights from the Iona Community rule of life.**

What are we to do with what we have? How do we find a rhythm of life that keeps us in balance and open to God in all things? Session one will look at the way we use time and our resources, and session two, our attitude to creation, and the spaces we make for prayer and bible reading.

Led by Richard Lane, Vicar of Christ Church, West Wimbledon

Tuesday June 21<sup>st</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>, 7pm to 9pm in Trinity House.

**For more details or to book for any of these courses contact Chris Chapman, 020 7939 9474**  
[chris.chapman@southwark.anglican.org](mailto:chris.chapman@southwark.anglican.org)

#### **A Celebration of Age:** Saturday July 2<sup>nd</sup> at 4pm in Southwark Cathedral.

Celebrating the contribution older people make to church and society, and exploring the spiritual challenges and opportunities ageing brings.

Preacher is Bishop Jack Nicholls. All are welcome

## **Diocesan Prayer and Spirituality Day:**

Saturday November 19<sup>th</sup> 2011, 10am to 4pm in Southwark Cathedral.  
The day will include input from David Runcorn and Alison Milbank, a variety of workshops exploring different spiritual practices and paths, prayer spaces, and a marketplace of resources and organisations. More details will follow in future issues.

## **St Francis Yesterday and Today:**

St John's Waterloo, Saturday June 18<sup>th</sup> 2011, 10am to 3.30pm  
Includes a solo presentation of the Life of St. Francis by Paul Alexander.  
Young people are particularly welcome. Tickets available from Denise Mumford – booking required 020 8946 5343

## **Quiet days at Wychcroft**

16<sup>th</sup> April, **'Sunset, Silence and Sunrise':**

An opportunity to step aside from the busyness of daily living, and to meet with God in stillness, as we prepare for Holy Week and Easter, led by Jane Hoskins



June 4<sup>th</sup>, **'Martha, Mary... and Abraham: New implications from old ikons',**

Led by Revd. John Ansell

Cost of these days £25 which includes lunch  
To book contact:

Chris Chapman, 020 7939 9474  
[chris.chapman@southwark.anglican.org](mailto:chris.chapman@southwark.anglican.org)

Wychcroft is the Diocesan retreat and conference centre near Bletchingley, Redhill.

## **Quiet mornings at St. Alphege Centre for Prayer, Southwark**

All from 10am to 1pm on Saturdays

**March 5<sup>th</sup> Mirror of eternity:**

Journeying through Lent with St. Clare of Assisi. Led by Sister Sue CSF

**April 2<sup>nd</sup> Growing in God Love**

Reflections from Ephesians 3 on being rooted and established in God's Love.  
Led by Sue McKinney

**May 7<sup>th</sup> Loving difficult neighbours!**

The love of God is expressed in loving our neighbour. But what do we do when we don't like them, or when we feel hurt by their actions? We will draw on insights from the monastic tradition.  
Led by Chris Chapman

**June 4<sup>th</sup> Living Flame of Love:**

Imagery for God's work within us drawn from the writings of John of the Cross.  
Led by Chris Chapman

**July 2<sup>nd</sup> Water of Life:**

Seeking Stillness and Refreshment through music, word and imagery.  
Led by Jane Hoskins

**September 3<sup>rd</sup>: Praying into Scripture,** with

Jesus as companion for the journey.  
Led by Hilary Rock-Gormley

**For details of how to find St. Alphege** contact

Chris Chapman 020 7939 9474  
[chris.chapman@southwark.anglican.org](mailto:chris.chapman@southwark.anglican.org)

**'Walking the Valleys...Climbing the Hills'** Saturday 26th March 2011 10am-4pm

A Lenten Quiet Day, with stillness, music, prayer and creative space.

At: Elmore Pond Cottage, High Road, Chipstead, Surrey.

Leader: Jane Hoskins. Cost £8 Bring your bible and a packed lunch.

To book or for further information please e-mail [j.hoskins233@btinternet.com](mailto:j.hoskins233@btinternet.com) 020 8660 7796

**'From Shadows to Light'** Saturday 7th May 2011 2pm-4.30pm

An opportunity to explore the Easter message in word, music and imagery.

At: St Mildred's Church, Addiscombe, [Croydon]. Leader: Jane Hoskins

To book or for further information please e-mail [j.hoskins233@btinternet.com](mailto:j.hoskins233@btinternet.com) 020 8660 7796

**SPIDIR Spiritual Direction Network Annual Address** Wednesday 15 June 2011 at Christ Church, Blackfriars Rd, London SE1 8NY. A day led by **Angela Ashwin, writer and retreat giver, 11am to 3.30pm, preceded by the SPIDIR AGM at 10.30am.** Entrance £10 with concessions - All welcome.

**Mortlake Quiet Gardens** (affiliated to the Quiet Gardens Trust) will be holding a Lenten meeting, led by Revd Nicholas Roberts, at St Mary the Virgin Church in Mortlake High Street, SW14 8JA on Saturday 9th April 2pm - 4pm (tea and coffee served from 1.30pm). Do come and join us as part of your Lenten journey. An Advent afternoon is planned for Saturday 26th November.

**St. Michael's Convent, Ham:** has a Garden Open Day on Sunday 10 April from 2 - 5pm, £3 in support of the National Gardens Scheme. The garden has a variety of prayer spaces and is well worth a visit. For details of this and other events at St. Michael's go to:

[http://www.sistersofthechurch.org/uk/Hospitality\\_Ministry\\_at\\_Ham\\_Common\\_UK.html](http://www.sistersofthechurch.org/uk/Hospitality_Ministry_at_Ham_Common_UK.html)

**Leading quiet days: A gathering for those currently involved in leading quiet days and retreats and those who hope to develop this ministry**

Trinity House [near London Bridge] Saturday March 12<sup>th</sup>, 10am to 12.30pm

We will explore the possibility of greater local networking, idea-sharing and support for those currently involved in leading quiet days and retreats and those who hope to develop this ministry. This initial gathering is a starting point

Contact [chris.chapman@southwark.anglican.org](mailto:chris.chapman@southwark.anglican.org)

**Retreat Association training day: Leading a quiet day:**

Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> June, 10am to 4pm At St. Andrew's Edenbridge.

For details look at the website [www.sisters-of-st-andrew.com](http://www.sisters-of-st-andrew.com) where you will also see details of a variety of quiet day and retreat opportunities.

**Drawing Workshops**, based on the work of visionary artist Cecil Collins 1908-1089 at The School of Economic Science 11 Mandeville Place London W1U 3AJ on the 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> April 2011.

For more details go to: [www.lynettehowellsmoore.co.uk](http://www.lynettehowellsmoore.co.uk)

**Be still and know . . . - a creative retreat**, Guy Chester Centre, Muswell Hill, Friday 25<sup>th</sup> 6pm – 2pm 27<sup>th</sup> March. £115 fully residential or £65 non-residential. Enjoy time and space this weekend with your God in creativity, reflection and prayer. An opportunity to try something different in the company of gentle and encouraging leaders

020 8883 8204, email [admin@chestercentre.org.uk](mailto:admin@chestercentre.org.uk)

## Letting go and letting God:

Whether we are seeking to grow in prayer, or become free of what we have come to recognise as life-diminishing ways of acting or thinking, or to know what it is God wants us to do, it is in letting go that we make room for God. It is the Spirit that roots and grounds us in God, draws us into wholeness and guides us along the way that leads to life. If we try too hard, believing that it is only through the sheer force of our will and effort that change can happen, we leave little room for God. Everything is gift.

However 'letting go' is in itself a work, for our natural inclination tends towards keeping life in our minute control, depending entirely on our own resources rather than being open to another's help, and bringing about change by the strength of our will and endeavour. To go against this instinct for self-sufficiency and self-definition can feel daunting; yet we let go not into nothingness but to 'let God' be active in our lives. In doing so we find that we too are alive in a way we have never been before.

- Put a stone in your hand to represent that which you desire to let go to God.
- Place a candle or cross nearby to symbolize the place of letting go.
- Use the reflection below may help you to identify what you want to put in God's hands:

**We let go to God our regrets about the past** – the choices we have made however we now feel about them, whatever has happened to us for good and for harm. God is in the place where we are, however we got there.

**We let go to God our anxiety about the future.** We cannot control what is in essence beyond our control – instead of torturing ourselves with fears that begin 'what if...' we let go to God who will always be alongside us in 'what is'.

**We let go to God what hurts.** True we cannot switch off our painful feelings; they flow into our lives, but if we do not cling to them they will flow from us again, carried in the stream of God's presence and care.

**We let go to God our resentment.** Even though the anger may not die down in our hearts we consent not to hold on to our need to get even; we give to God to heal what we cannot heal by ourselves

**We let go to God our need to be good enough.** God gives freely what we can never earn. We are valued, loved and believed in as we are.

**We let go to God our desire for growth.** It is God who continues to create us and who works to make us whole.

**We let go to God the choices we face today.** Though we do not know what to do, as we choose to listen, God will lead us along the unseen way.

**We let go into God's working:** We consent to be drawn this day into the stream of God's life: to become the activity of Love in that part of the world that is ours.

- As you sense something you want to let go to let God, put down your stone by the candle or cross.
- There may be feelings you need to share with God before you feel ready to let go: fears, hopes, doubts, desires or pains. You may sense you are not ready yet to let go and let God in this area of your life; if so, let go at whatever level you are able to today, with your ambivalent feelings and doubts.
- You will probably find that on another day you will need to let go in this area all over again. Letting go is rarely a 'done deal'; it is a process where little by little we allow God to become the source of our life.

## A Way of Life for a local church

What is distinctive about the attitudes and practices that belong to Christians as followers of Christ, 'the Way' [John 14:6]? Adopting a 'way of life' can help a local church have a sense of shared identity. It reminds us that we are not just another social grouping: our common life and mission is rooted in God.

A way of life also provides a framework for individual Christians to consider how their discipleship is expressed in practice. This is an example that can be adapted to your context.

### **Our mission**

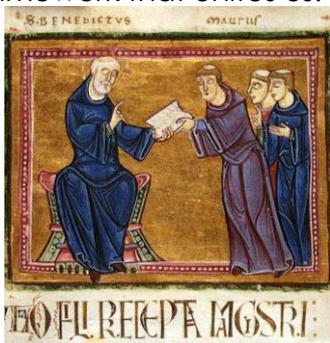
We are called  
to follow Christ our Way in...

### **Seeking God**

**Building community**  
**Serving one another**

The following 'way of life' seeks to express how this understanding of mission as a church plays out in practice. It is not intended as a burdensome rule but a framework that helps us see and own what we share as disciples of Jesus Christ. It reminds us of who we are and the life we seek to live with the help of God.

As individuals our life circumstances are very different. The manner in which individuals apply this way of life will therefore vary considerably – one will serve in this way and another in that way; one will pray for a set period in the morning and another in the evening. Yet in this difference we have one guiding framework that unites us.



*What is more delightful than this voice of the Lord calling to us? See how the Lord in his love shows us the way of life. Clothed then with faith and the performance of good works, let us set out on this way, with the Gospel for our guide*  
Prologue: The Rule of St. Benedict

## A way to seek God

*Eternal Life is this: to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent [John 17:3]*

As a church we express our commitment to make openness to God the centre of our shared life  
As individual church members we set ourselves to seek God in the following ways:

### **a) Making a commitment to personal prayer:**

We will set aside regular space in daily life for prayer.

### **b) Reading the scriptures:**

We seek to set aside time in each week to read and reflect on the bible [or other spiritual writings]

### **c) Sharing in worship:**

We commit ourselves to regular participation in prayer with others.

### **d) Being open to learn and grow:**

We aim to take part each year in a course or programme of study related to prayer, Christian living or spiritual development.



*Immediately he regained his sight and followed him along the way [Mark 10.52]*

## A Way of Life for a local church

### **Building community: the way of love**

*Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. [1 Corinthians 12:27]*

*Though we are individual people, living in different contexts and equipped with varied gifts, we are also 'one body', called to support and encourage one another as we deepen our life in Christ. Our shared life is therefore called to be a living sign of the love of God. As individual church members we seek to express this love in the following ways:*

#### **a) Using our skills and time to contribute to life and work of the church:**

We commit ourselves to contribute in some way to the welfare and mission of the faith community we together form

#### **b) Seeking to see and love Christ in all:**

We set ourselves to see Christ in one another by actively befriending people, making newcomers welcome, and respecting differences of culture, personality and viewpoint.

#### **c) Showing respect and care for our own wellbeing:**

We honour God's gift of life to us by caring for our own practical needs, through making time for rest, recreation and our key relationships



*The faithful all lived together and held everything in common; they sold their goods and possessions and shared out the proceeds among themselves according to what each one needed. [Acts 9.2]*

## A way of service

*You shall love your neighbour as yourself  
[Leviticus 19:18]*

*We affirm that God calls us to be alongside the people within our parish in friendship, through the provision of practical care, eagerness to share the Good News of God's love for all, and willingness to work in partnership with other churches and organisations for the good of the local community. As individuals we seek to be salt, light and yeast for the Kingdom within our relationships and through our work.*

**a) Volunteering:** We set ourselves to commit time on a regular or occasional basis in support of initiatives aimed at furthering the wellbeing of local people, particular groups in need, or fairness in the wider world

**b) Paid work:** We pledge ourselves to do our work responsibly, honestly and with respect for those we work with and serve

**c) Looking out for neighbours and friends:** We seek to be considerate and trustworthy friends and neighbours willing to listen and offer practical support

**d) Sharing the Good News of God's Love:** We affirm our readiness to share our faith in God when others look for this from us

**e) Respecting the gift of the created world:** We seek to care for the world by avoiding the waste of earth's precious resources, and by looking after our local environment

**f) Living simply and generously:** Since all comes as gift from God we seek to avoid greed or possessiveness, being open to enjoy good things but without making them the focus of our desire. We seek to be generous with what we have, especially with those who lack such resources

## Where am I going?

I am driving purposefully, signalling my intentions to cars around, moving forwards towards...  
Hold on...where am I going?  
I am going entirely the wrong way!

The trouble was the beginning of the journey was part of a familiar route and I'd gone into automatic pilot. I didn't need to think about where to turn and why. So when I should have turned left I carried straight on – good for the journey I'd made many times in the past but not at all related to where I had to get to today.

Lent is a time for waking from the dream and more consciously thinking about where we are going. If I carry on this way will I come to a place I really want to get to, or am I simply going with momentum – the draw of the familiar.

What do I live for? Who am I? What matters more and what matters less? What is my time for...my life for? What does the current course of my life say about these things? Which way is my life facing and what will happen if I carry on moving this way?  
There is a sense for many of us that we fall into a path others determine for us – be that to do with job, lifestyle or the roles we play; and there is often much that is good and true and necessary about this. But is this our all?

John of the Cross wrote of how there is an alternative gravity that draws us deep in our hearts – something that those who heard Jesus responded to intuitively. It is the call to authenticity, to move towards our truth. No that we know what this truth is, but we sense it lies here and not there. This gravity draws us into relationship with One who names us and who brings us into being; it leads us into meaningful living; it helps us face our lack of wholeness and our entanglement, but gives us hope of integration and freedom.

The soul feels that she is rushing toward God  
as rapidly as a falling stone when nearing its centre.  
She also feels that she is like wax in which an impression,  
though being made, is not yet complete.  
She knows, too, that she is like a sketch or the first draft of a drawing  
and calls out to the one who did this sketch to finish the painting and image.

[text from John of the Cross, *the Spiritual Canticle*, chapter 13]

Mark's Gospel summarises Jesus' Gospel this way:

'The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God has come near; repent and believe in the good news' [Mark 1:15].

Repentance carries with it this sense of stopping to consider where we are going; do I really want to continue in this way? Or is there another gravity that draws me? How do I hear this? Where does it draw me? How will I go with it?

Repentance is about desire and direction, not achievement or arrival. Those who responded to Jesus' call 'followed him'; they probably had little sense of where that journey would take them but chose all the same to go where he went. They sensed in their own unease the draw of another, inward gravity.

Where am I going?

## From anxiety to hope

Protect us from all anxiety  
as we wait in joyful hope  
for the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ  
[from the Roman Catholic Eucharistic Liturgy]



**Anxiety** says: 'what if?'

**Hope** deals creatively with what is

**Anxiety** seeks to grasp control over the unmanageable course of past and future events

**Hope** accepts messy reality, believing that here God is faithfully present.

**Anxiety** dissipates energy, and ultimately causes paralysis

**Hope** energises; it is purposeful and transformative.

**Anxiety** turns one in on oneself. It is a room where the doors are closed to keep threats out, though one fears that the bolts and locks used are too flimsy to keep danger at bay.

**Hope** faces out into the world; the doors are open

**Anxiety** turns its face to attempt to screen out suffering and difficulty

**Hope** accepts suffering as an integral part of life, and in doing so also embraces joy.

In **anxiety** we are separated from our best selves, from other people and from God

In **hope**, we are caught up in the stream of God's life, ever present, ever creative, ever making whole.

**May the God of hope fill you with joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit** [Romans 15:13]