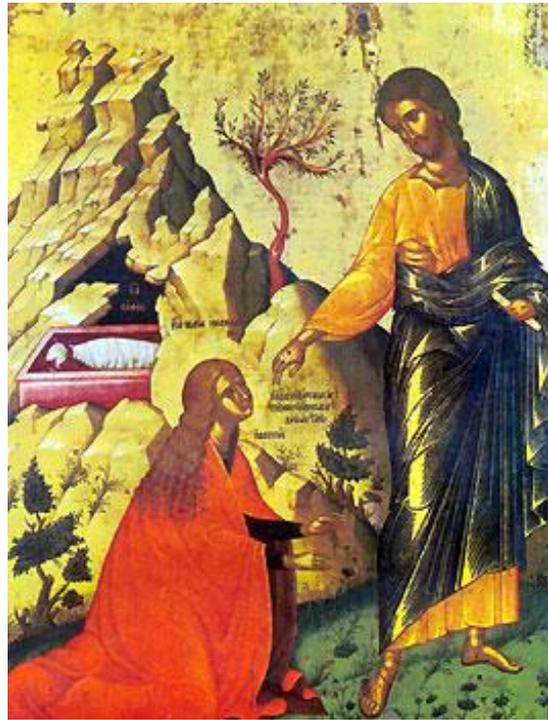


# Formed by the Spirit

The Newsletter of the Southwark Diocesan Spiritual Formation Group

Opportunities, events, resources and articles  
on prayer and spirituality

## Issue 11: Easter 2012



### Contents:

What's on? Events, courses, opportunities...	2-4
Tools for Prayer: Lifelines	5
Tools for Prayer: Thanksgiving / Pauses	6
Reflection: And so faith, hope and love abide	7
Reflection: Living Easter Day by Day	8

When our hearts are wintry, grieving, or in pain,  
Thy touch can call us back to life again;  
Fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been:  
Love is come again, like wheat that springeth green.

From the hymn: Now the Green Blade Riseth: Words: John Crum, 1928

# What's on?

Events, courses, opportunities...



And now  
faith, hope and love  
abide,  
these three,  
and the greatest of these  
is love

[1 Corinthians 13: 13]

'Faith, hope and love' is not only the theme of Bishop Christopher's call to mission but at the heart of how we experience and respond to God.

I have prepared some input pages with associated readings and prayer exercises which you are welcome to use for personal reflection or for group work in your setting. There is also a powerpoint presentation based around these themes.

You'll find these at:

<http://www.southwark.anglican.org/FaithHopeLove/fhl-personal-resources>

Other resources are also available on this theme within the faith, hope, love area of the diocesan website:

<http://www.southwark.anglican.org/FaithHopeLove/fhl-main>

## Explorations in Christian Spirituality

At Trinity House, 4 Chapel Court,  
London SE1 1HW, 7pm to 9pm

April 18th **On Holy Ground**

- Reflecting on our experience of God.
- What is 'spirituality'?

April 25th **The shape of the journey**

- What does God desire to bring about in us and through us, and how can we co-operate with this?
- Drawing on insights from the Benedictine tradition

May 2nd **Prayer and Presence**

- What is God doing and what are we doing when we pray?
- Drawing on insights from Teresa of Avila

May 9th **Sin and its remedy**

- What is sin and how do we respond to it?
- Drawing on insights from Julian of Norwich

May 16th **Letting go and letting God**

- Our attitudes to 'possessions' and to relationships
- Drawing on insights from the Franciscan tradition

May 30th **Choosing life**

- How do we listen to God in the midst of life as we seek to 'choose life'?
- Drawing on insights from the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises

June 13th **Living with mystery**

- Openness before God and before the mysteries of life and death
- With insights from *the Cloud of Unknowing*

**Suggested donation for the course: £25**

Cheques made payable to South London Church Fund

**To book** contact Chris Chapman,  
[chris.chapman@southwark.anglican.org](mailto:chris.chapman@southwark.anglican.org)

## **Where are you leading me?**

*Exploring the Ministry  
of Spiritual Guidance*

Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> April, 7pm to 9pm  
in St. Matthew's House Croydon  
[near East Croydon station]

Spiritual guides offer one to one support  
in learning to listen and respond to the  
work of the Spirit in one's life.

Is this something that would help you?  
Or do you feel drawn towards this  
ministry?

This session provides a space to explore  
questions about giving or receiving  
spiritual guidance.

Led by members of the SPIDIR spiritual  
direction network. To book contact:  
[sue.maree@southwark.anglican.org](mailto:sue.maree@southwark.anglican.org)

## **Quiet mornings 2012 at St. Alphege Centre for Prayer,**

King's Bench Street, Southwark,  
London, SE1 0QZ

*Second Saturday of each month  
from 10am to 1pm*

### **May 12<sup>th</sup> Encountering the risen Jesus**

An invitation to spend time in stillness,  
reflection and prayer as we explore  
some of the accounts of Jesus'  
resurrection meetings with his disciples  
and others.

Led by Jane Hoskins, SPA at St. James'  
Riddlesdown and quiet day leader

### **June 9<sup>th</sup> Benedictine Spirituality:**

A reflection on the application of the  
monastic wisdom to our life today.

Led by Ray Andrews, Priest-in-Charge of  
St George the Martyr with St Alphege  
and St Judes,

You are welcome to come without  
booking. For travel details contact  
[chris.chapman@southwark.anglican.org](mailto:chris.chapman@southwark.anglican.org)

## **SPIDIR Training Course in Spiritual Direction 2012 – 2014**

This course starting on the 8<sup>th</sup> May 2012 is  
ecumenical and open to all will take  
place at St George the Martyr, Borough  
High Street SE 1 on the second Tuesday  
of each month, excluding August,  
10 30am – 3 30pm, over two years.

There will a 24 hour residential retreat in  
the Spring of each year (dates to be  
confirmed).

Cost is £75 per term.

Further enquiries and explanation of the  
application process can be obtained  
from the course leaders:

Caroline Clarke 020 7622 0765  
[clarkecaroline@hotmail.com](mailto:clarkecaroline@hotmail.com)

Penny Francis 020 8940 7648  
[spidirnewsletter@aol.com](mailto:spidirnewsletter@aol.com)

Paul Keogh 020 8850 9958  
[pak.6378@btinternet.com](mailto:pak.6378@btinternet.com)



### **"Mystics:**

### **Pioneers of Consciousness"**

An evening lecture with Matthew Fox  
4th April 2012, 7.30PM

The Window, 13 Windsor St,  
London N1 8QG

Matthew Fox is an internationally acclaimed  
theologian who was a member of the  
Dominican Order for 34 years. He holds a  
doctorate, summa cum laude, in the History  
and Theology of Spirituality from the Institute  
Catholique de Paris. Matthew Fox is author  
of 29 books that have been translated into  
43 languages

Link to website leaflet and booking form:  
<http://www.scimednet.org/mystics-pioneers-of-consciousness/>

Or contact: Scientific and Medical  
Network: E: [info@scimednet.org](mailto:info@scimednet.org),  
T: 01608 652000 Cost: £15.00

## **St. Alfege pilgrimage, 19 April 2012,**

St Alfege, Archbishop of Canterbury, was killed 1000 years ago on Easter Sunday, 19 April 1012, on the site where St. Alfege Church in Greenwich stands. There are a number of opportunities to share in this day of prayer and pilgrimage:

12 noon Service in Southwark Cathedral welcome by the Bishop of Southwark, Christopher Chessun, and the Archbishop of Canterbury, After this service pilgrims can make their way to an afternoon gathering in St Alfege Park in Greenwich on foot, cycle or public transport, where there will be a re-creation of Anglo Saxon village life, Walking pilgrims will follow a guided route. There will be a ticket only Eucharist in St. Alfege Greenwich at 4.30pm.

For full details go to [www.st-alfege.org](http://www.st-alfege.org)  
There will also be a Eucharist in St. Alphege's Southwark, King's Bench Street,, London, SE1 0QZ

You'll note that Alfege and Alphege are one and the same person, but a 1000 years is a long time for alternative spellings to develop!

### **Full Stops and Commas:**

*The Poetry of Spiritual Adventure"*

SPIDIR Annual Conference 2012  
Thursday, 7 June 2012: 10.00am-3.30pm  
In St Andrew's, Waterloo Short Street,  
(off the Cut), London SE1 8LJ,  
Speaker: Canon Mark Oakley  
Treasurer of St. Paul's - with responsibility  
for the treasures of the cathedral and  
the Visual Arts  
Coffee and Tea from 10.00am  
AGM 10.30am  
Conference 11.00am-3.30pm  
Open to all £10 with concessions  
available.

Contact: Tony Sheeran:

[tony.sheeran@hotmail.com](mailto:tony.sheeran@hotmail.com)

## **Drawing from Imagination**

Seeing and drawing with the 'eye of the heart', using Cecil Collins' teaching and techniques.

Includes music, silence and time to reflect on the images.

Led by Clare Allen



Three Saturday afternoons, 2 to 5pm  
April 21st, May 12th, May 26th  
At 89 Minet Avenue, London NW10  
Cost £40 for 3 classes, all materials  
and tea and biscuits provided  
Space limited – please pre-book  
For details & other dates please  
contact: [clare.allen@zen.co.uk](mailto:clare.allen@zen.co.uk)  
or 07931 344805 / 020 8961 8158

### **Show me the way I should go**

Tools for making life choices  
Wednesday June 20<sup>th</sup> and June 27<sup>th</sup>  
7pm to 9pm  
at St. Matthew's House, Croydon  
Close to East Croydon station  
These two evenings will give the space  
to consider life choices that face us  
through input, reflection exercises and  
times of prayer

Contact Chris Chapman, Spiritual  
Formation Adviser

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

## Tools for Prayer

### Lifelines

Lifeline: definition: *A rope or line used for life-saving, typically one thrown to rescue someone in water or one used by sailors to secure themselves to a boat.*

When we are tired and feel we are sinking under the waves of daily pressures we need a lifeline. My lifelines to God are short, often single line quotes from the bible, from hymns or from poetry that I have committed to my memory and come back to me when I need them. Here are some examples:

Do not be afraid, I have redeemed you. I have called you by your name, you are mine. [Isaiah 43:1]

I can do all things through him who strengthens me [[Philippians 4:13]

At night there are tears but joy comes with the morning [Psalm 30.5]

Some of my lifelines remind me that I meet God in the midst of daily life and I experience his goodness in many forms:

I greet him the days I meet him,  
and bless when I understand  
[Gerard Manley Hopkins]

To see a World in a Grain of Sand  
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower,  
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand  
And Eternity in an hour.  
[William Blake]

Each of these lifelines connects in some way with my story and experience – or rather God's story in me. They connect me back into God's generous and faithful care.

Some come back to me unbidden as I walk along, especially the lines of hymns or of psalms I have sung in the past.

### What are your lifelines?

What words from the bible, from a hymn or psalm or poem have become important to you, reminding you of God's presence within your story? Ask God to help bring them to mind.



Your word is a lamp to my feet  
And a light for my path

Psalm 119:105

These lifelines express the Gospel of Christ's work in your life, the Creed that arises from your personal experience.

Commit these lifelines to your memory so that you carry them around with you to surface when you most need them.

You may find it helpful to take one lifeline with you into your day – to recall it and say it aloud to yourself as you enter into the business and busyness of your day. Say the lifeline quietly to yourself at different points of the day – allow it to lead you back in that moment into awareness of God's presence and care.

If you have a prayer space in your home you might want to have some lifelines visibly there as reminders. Leave space for more to be added as your story moves on and as another 'word' becomes important for you.

## Tools for Prayer

### Thanksgiving

*Bless the Lord O my soul  
And do not forget all his benefits*

Psalm 103.2

Each day brings its gifts: –a kindness shown to us, a sight or sound that lifts our spirits, no matter how small.

Life is sometimes difficult, painful and challenging. It can at first seem there's little to give thanks for on days like these. But God chooses to be alongside us in life just as it is – in sorrow and in joy - and gratitude awakes us to this presence.

Thanksgiving reminds us that all that we have flows from God, who gives freely and gladly.

The practice of thanksgiving begins to root and establish our lives in love.

Gratitude becomes the seedbed of a generously lived life.

Towards the end of the day find a few minutes to recall the gifts you have received. It might be on your walk home from the train station after work or in the moments before you go to sleep. Here are some questions to help you remember:

- Who showed me care and consideration today?
- What did I enjoy?
- How were my senses touched by beauty?
- What did I see, hear, read or sense that gladdened my heart, even for a moment?
- What new understanding was given to me today?
- How in all these things have I met you Lord?

*Bless the Lord O my soul  
And do not forget all his benefits*

### Pauses

Many of us find an unbroken and regular block of time to set aside for prayer elusive. But even when life is demanding and unpredictable there are pauses, and these can become rich moments of encounter with God.

- The quiet moments when we are absorbed in a task that leaves our mind free
- The 5 minutes we take to wander around the garden and see what has come up
- The walk with the dog around the local park
- The time between pushing the 'on' button on your computer and it becoming fully functional.
- The train journey into work
- Washing the dishes and gazing out of the window
- The ten minutes we take in a lunch-break to get out of the office and away from the phone

There are daily tasks when we are naturally more at ease and self-forgetful – what are these for you? They may also be times to rest in the presence of God.

One early Christian teacher put it this way: *I will show you how I do not cease praying, simply by going on with my work. I am sitting there in God's presence. And when I put my little leaves to soak and when I start to weave a rope I say, 'Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love' [Psalm 51.3] Is that not a prayer?'*

'I am sitting there in God's presence'...  
Prayer can be as simple as that.

Turn your heart towards God who is with you in this place.

Use words if you want to or simply 'be there'.

Turn aside from the drivenness of 'things to do' for a moment by simply being present to what is around you – What you can see, hear and sense? God is in these things.

Pause... in God's presence...

**And so  
faith, hope and love abide –  
these three,  
and the greatest of these  
is love.**

[1 Corinthians 13: 13]

The beginning, despite the word order of Paul's sentence, is love.  
The beginning is God.

Your faith journey begins with God.  
It is God who creates you, and goes on drawing you into being.  
It is God who in Christ the Word comes to seek you, to call you by name, to invite you into relationship.



It is the Spirit of God, gifted to you out of love, who enables you to hear this invitation and to respond.

Love comes first, and from this we learn that God gives freely, generously, unconditionally.  
Our value lies in God's beholding rather than in anything we achieve.  
All notions that you or I have to earn our worth to be loved by God fall away.

Love is God's name, and God's only activity. The pattern never changes.

If we begin with faith and hope we might forget that the beginning is always in God.

Our prayer, no matter how focused and attentive, doesn't make God present. God is already there.  
Our good works do not earn God's favour.

God gives favour without ever considering if we deserve it or whether it is wise to give so much.

The real question is whether we will choose to align our lives with this Love that God is. Will you and I turn our lives towards Love? Will we respond when Love invites? Will our relationship with the God who loves first become the foundation of all we do and are?

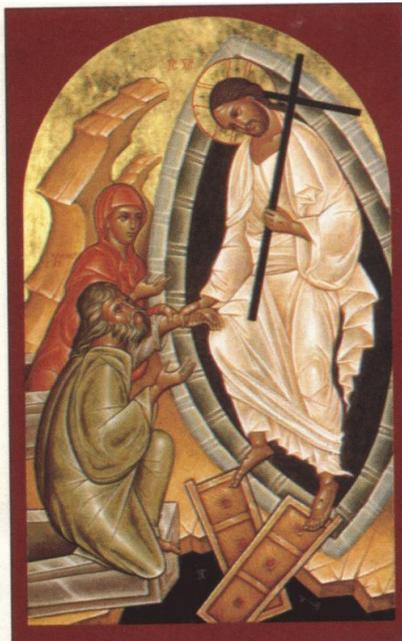
The choice is faith,  
the fruit is the active hope through which we begin to express the love in which is all beginning.

**And so faith, hope and love  
abide – these three,  
and the greatest of these is love.**

## Living Easter Day by Day

Easter Day comes. The awful desolation of Good Friday is over. We can move over decisively into joy with alleluia as our song.

Except it is often not like that. The difficult in our lives remains. We are not delivered forever from fear and doubt, even if we recognise that Christ's rising has set us free from death and made all things new. We may have had our alleluia moments in the past when Christ's presence felt tangible and hope abounded in the heart. But we are not guaranteed to feel that way when Easter Day comes. We may still be awaiting our own resurrection in an unresolved area of our life.



We can take heart that it was so for the first disciples too. We see Mary Magdalene weeping in the garden where Jesus was laid. Peter and his companions try to put of their minds the trauma of the death of their friend by returning to their fishing. Two companions take the long road home to Emmaus, mourning the loss of their

dream. Recognition of a new reality comes in a moment – the calling of a name, an unexpected haul of fish, the familiar movement of a stranger breaking bread. The risen Jesus meets them, and meets us, at the unanticipated moment and within the dark as well as the light of our days. We greet him not so much in the removal of our troubles but as he breaks bread with us within them.

And then the moment is gone. Mary Magdala cannot hold on to Jesus and we cannot grasp this Easter Day experience or make it happen again at our will.

But also the moment is not gone; it dwells in the storehouse of our memory. We can ponder it, returning to that time when difficulty envelops us and we can no longer see our way. Hope has found a home within, and if we search deeply enough it will find us again.

There are surprises too in the account of Jesus' death. Amidst the desolation the author of John's Gospel sees water flowing from Jesus' side [John 19:34]. I think of Ezekiel's vision of a life-giving stream of water flowing from the Temple [Ezekiel 47]. Wherever the river flows, life teems; the salt water becomes fresh; the trees that grow on its bank are for the healing of the nations. This Good Friday is also Easter Day.

Perhaps we too might experience resurrection not after our difficulties and struggles are resolved but in their very midst. Because it is in their very midst that Christ is, and life-giving water is ever flowing from his side.