

General Editor:

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Editorial

The theme of the First Friday retreat mornings at the ISC this year has been 'Finding God's Dream for you' (cf. p.4), which at one level sounds simple, but at another is more complex.

Part of the complexity lies in the fact of who we are. Yes, we are gifted individuals, but we are also part of, intricately connected to, and therefore have an essential place in the single living organism that we call creation. God's dream for us as individuals, therefore, is likely to be connected to God's dream for the whole. Another part of the complexity lies in the fact that we are situated within the dynamic process of history. This means that, once we have 'discovered' God's dream, we must be constantly open to the 'shifts' that the dynamic of history will bring to the understanding of that dream as well as to the practicalities of realising it.

Only last week the world celebrated the life of Nelson Mandela as he was laid to rest in his beloved South Africa. No one, I am sure, can fail to have identified with him in his dream - of a united South Africa where each individual could enjoy equal citizenship, with equal basic human rights and equal access to the provision of those rights. No one can fail to have been awe-struck by his single-minded commitment to the realisation of that dream, even at the potential cost of his own life. No one is ever likely to forget the day he was released from prison, a 'free' man, but still without having achieved his dream, though on the way towards it. And no one is likely to forget that calendar-marking day when non-white South Africans took the first step to active participation in the direction of their country by enacting their newly-given right to vote.

Perhaps one of the most striking things about Mandela, however, was the way in which he 'accommodated' his approach to the surrounding circumstances. He moved from non-violent protest, to 'tolerating' violence as a last resort, to invisible leadership from the confines of prison, to a genuine statesman who effected reconciliation between oppressors and oppressed through forgiveness - forgiving the sinners without hiding either their sin or

his own. Forgiveness 'freed' each community to move forward for the benefit of the whole.

Mandela's prison years were formative. They 'withdrew' him from the immediate situation, gave him the opportunity to reflect on it at a position of once-removed, and allowed him to re-shape his approach so that when official channels of communication were opened, he had a sense of direction. This pattern of reflection - action - reflection, so essential for the effective realisation of Mandela's dream, (which, it is worth noting, was not focussed on himself), is equally important for each of us in the 'discovery' and effective realisation of our dreams. In her wisdom the Church provides us with annual opportunities for such reflection in the Liturgical Year. Advent in particular is the time to take a fresh look at the present, to dream anew with God, and to sense a direction for the year ahead.

One of the difficulties that many people encounter when they engage in this process is that of being virtually paralysed by the needs of our world as they bombard our consciousness through the media. But this needn't be the case. This newsletter shows that large numbers of people are carving out reflection- and dream-space for themselves. It also shows (cf. pp.11-12) that those who have completed the training programmes are consciously using their gifts to help others reflect and dream, and they do this in ever widening circles, starting with the family and moving out to parish, universities, those on the margins, other faith traditions etc. Perhaps our paralysis would give way to energy if we really believed that our small part in the big plan was (1) essential - there is no one else with my skills in my unique position with my opportunities, and (2) as a pebble that truly sends ripples beyond itself. St Paul would encourage us to see our roles as **essential** to the maintenance of the cosmic body of Christ.

May your Advent dreams, however small, become reality as you move forward into the year ahead. Happy Christmas to each one.

Eileen Cassidy snd



IGNATIANT
SPIRITUALITY CENTRE
GLASGOW

The Poetry of Place

Scottish Poetry and Literature with Some Echoes of Gerard Manley Hopkins

Led by Ronnie Renton



Our programme year began formally on Sunday Sept 22nd with an inspiring afternoon led by Ronnie Renton. A full Conference Room gathered for this event. As a teacher of literature, Ronnie is well known for his knowledge and love of Scottish people and poetry. He also has a great awareness of the inner landscape in the work of the Jesuit poet Gerard Manley Hopkins. With this in mind he began his presentation with two of Hopkins' poems – *Pied Beauty*, written at St Beuno's in North Wales, and *Inversnaid*, written in Glasgow after a visit to the now iconic waterfall on the banks of Loch Lomond. Both touched on the sense of God's beautiful and powerful presence in the wildness of nature.

*Glory be to God for dappled things-
For skies of couple-colour as a brinded cow;
For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;
Fresh-firecoal chestnut falls; finches' wings...*
(from *Pied Beauty*)

*What would the world be, once bereft
Of wet and of wildness? Let them be left,
O let them be left, wildness and wet;
Long live the weeds and the wilderness yet.*
(from *Inversnaid*)

Ronnie was assisted by Fr Peter Banyard SJ of the Jesuit Community in Glasgow. Colleagues of long-standing, they made a delightful team, with Fr Banyard reading a number of the poems – and not least one of his own later in the afternoon.

Ronnie described how Gerard Manley Hopkins had spent a number of years in Glasgow, a time which brought him in touch with real poverty and hardship. It was expressed in Edwin Morgan's short but powerful poem: *G.M. Hopkins in Glasgow*

*The load
Of coal-black darkness clattering on his head
Half-crushed, half-fed the bluely burning need
that trudged him back along North Woodside
Road.*

(from *G.M. Hopkins in Glasgow*)

Edwin Morgan was also represented by a reading of his intriguing poem *Message Clear*, written at the time of the death of his father, and recorded by himself. Built in a series of fragments and word patterns this piece ends with the moving line: *I am the resurrection and the life.*

We were treated to some spirited rendering by Ronnie himself, whose sense of the colour and vibrancy of the spoken word was used to great effect in his reading of *The Innumerable Christ*, a poem in Scots by Hugh MacDiarmid. It is a remarkable meditation on the theme of Christian redemption and other worlds.

Both contemporary and older Scottish poets were included in the presentations. The simplicity of *Two Girls Singing* by contemporary poet Iain Crichton Smith was strikingly contrasted with Ronnie's dramatic reading of the 15th C. *Done is the Battle on the Dragon Black* by William Dunbar.

*and it wasn't the words or the tune. It was the
singing.
It was the human sweetness in that yellow,
the unpredicted voices of our kind.*
(from *Two Girls Singing*)

*Done is a battle on the dragon black,
Our champion Christ counfoundit has his force;
The yetis of hell are broken with a crack,
The sign triumphal raisit is of the cross,
The devillis trymmillis with hiddous voce,
The saulis are borrowit and to the bliss can go,
Christ with his bloud our ransonis dois indoce:
Surrexit Dominus de sepulchre*
(from *Done is a Battle on The Dragon Black*)

We were treated to two Scottish poems with familiar melodies: *All people that on earth do dwell* by William Kethe and *Leanabh An Aigh (Child In The Manger)* by Mairi Dhomhnallach (*Mary MacDonald*). There was even a sermon from Orkney poet George Mackay Brown's beautiful piece, *A Treading of Grapes*, with its sense of God being in the sacred and solid earth of everyday life and love.

A highlight towards the end of the afternoon was a further poem about Hopkins, a tribute to his Glasgow years: *To Father Hopkins on his anniversary June 8th*, read beautifully by the poet himself, Fr Peter Banyard – with a unanimous request from everyone to hear it a second time. Conscious of some of the harsher conditions in Glasgow during Hopkins' time, this poem ends with great tenderness written on an early summer day by the White Cart River in Pollock Park:



*A lone white iris, touched with gold,
Reminds me of you
And the purity of poetry
Forged in the furnace of your mind.
from To Father Hopkins on his anniversary
June 8th*

Ronnie's final piece was a prayer attributed to St Columba called *Adiutor Laborantium (Helper of Workers)*. It includes the touching image of Columba – or all of us - as voyagers on the sea of life, praying for Christ's protection.

I beg that me, a little man
trembling and most wretched,
rowing through the infinite storm
of this age,
Christ may draw after Him to the lofty
most beautiful haven of life....

from Adiutor Laborantium

Such a stimulating afternoon would not have been complete without the addition of a special tea to celebrate the opening of the year and share comments and conversation with each other. This and some moments of introduction about the coming year's programme at the ISC rounded off a remarkable and fascinating event.

We look forward to a sequel when David Lonsdale will come to lead our Closing Day on Saturday June 14th 2014. Both the Opening and Closing Days of the year were deliberately linked with the theme of spirituality and literature. David's Closing Day is entitled: ***The Literature of Love. The Spirituality of Ignatius of Loyola and Some Echoes in a Love of Literature.*** We look forward to another inspiring day. For details and booking form please contact the ISC.

Tom McGuinness, SJ

Eat, Pray, Breathe Tuesday Lunchtimes at the ISC

I have been coming to *Eat, Pray, Breathe* – Tuesday lunchtime silent prayer at the ISC - for roughly 18 months, since starting work at St Aloysius Church which is close by. This is the most peaceful half hour of my week, giving me time to pause, reflect and pray in an atmosphere of stillness after a short guided and skilled input by the team. I appreciate the silence, soothing music, and inspirational words of the message for each day. The beauty of the chapel at the Ignatian Centre makes me feel welcome and comfortable, and lifts me into the spiritual. The centrepiece on the floor reflects the topic of the day in its arrangement and inspiring colours. Flickering candles are often part of the arrangements: they are comforting and provide a point of focus. I have introduced my friends to *Eat, Pray, Breathe*, and they take as much comfort from it as I do.



Alison Fletcher

Beginnings and Continuations

Following the launch of the ISC programme year by guest speaker, Ronnie Renton, the team has been delighted to welcome old friends and new to our programme events.

We are heartened to see the small beginnings of last year now take root: the September taster day, the non-residential silent retreat weekends, and the Tuesday lunchtime half hour of silent prayer. Numbers fluctuate but we are encouraged by both a steady core and changing new faces. Film evening attendance has varied from 0 on Halloween weekend – poor planning on our part - to 35 on another evening!! We'll persevere. The few people who faithfully come to our carers' afternoons appreciate the space that these afternoons provide.



We are delighted to see the events of some years standing now firmly rooted, namely the Taizé evenings, First Friday retreat mornings and Advent retreat days. Taizé evenings have a steady core of people and attract a few new ones. First Friday retreat mornings, whose numbers remained small for several years, are now reaching capacity; and the Advent days continue to nourish a large number of people. You can read about some of these both above and below.

This year we offered people the opportunity of an Autumn walk. Not many subscribed, but those who did found it nourishing. Another innovation is an opportunity to 'dance in the Spirit'

two Monday evenings each month. While only a few people attend, they enjoy the evening, particularly the twenty minutes or so of silent meditation at the end. One participant, on reading our programme, said that the one thing she would definitely not come to was the 'dance'. As things have worked out, this is the one event to which she regularly comes!

In the last newsletter there was a reflection on the monthly series that we offered to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of the Second Vatican Council. We have followed this with another monthly series, *A New Moment for Church: Franciscan and Ignatian Influences*. Like last year, this is drawing new people to the ISC and is generating encouraging discussions about the future of our Church. Something good is happening here, and we hope and pray that it will bear good fruit, fruit that will last (see page 7).

Finally, for the first time and in collaboration with the Bishops' Committee for Interreligious Dialogue, we are offering a 7 session series, entitled *Conversations in Faith*, to help foster understanding and respect among people of faith. Our hope is that this very small contribution towards creating an interreligious community of faith in and around Glasgow will make some contribution to world peace, however small or apparently insignificant that may be.

Eileen Cassidy snd

First Fridays at the ISC

When I started attending First Friday morning retreats three years ago the group was small, only four or five people, but numbers have steadily increased so that now there are often as many as seventeen participants. That so many people attend regularly says it all. These mornings are an opportunity to withdraw from the demands of everyday life and to be refreshed for the month that lies ahead.



There is a theme which runs through the year's programme, but each session stands on its own, so that no one need feel excluded by not being able to attend each month. This year's theme is 'Finding God's dream for you'.

Despite a given theme, there is always a choice of materials for prayer. These can include texts from Scripture and other sources, and also pictures etc. Depending on where you are as an individual, the texts can be peaceful or uncomfortable. Whatever their impact, they are always revealing and thought provoking.

One morning, for example, we were offered Sieger Köder's painting of 'Noah's Ark', which depicts the aftermath of the flood. While portraying a familiar story, the picture made everyone look at it anew. From the sharing that followed, it was clear that it had led to a lot of inner questions, and had made us think very deeply about what it all meant, both in terms of the flood itself and of its significance for the new world in which Noah and his family found themselves.

Whatever form these mornings take, I always leave them feeling uplifted. They meet me where I am. This is helped by the fact that each person is free to choose how to use the suggested materials, and to decide how much, if anything, they wish to share.

First Friday retreat mornings take place on the first Friday of each month, except July and August. If you are able to come, they are a wonderful way to nourish mind and spirit in the midst of daily life.

- - Margery Strattan

An Introduction to Theological Reflection for Spiritual Accompaniers

An Ongoing Formation Event Led by Paul Nicholson SJ

The first Saturday of November saw a group of around 15 gather at the ISC for a day of "ongoing formation for trained spiritual accompaniers". It was led by Paul Nicholson SJ. Paul is based in Birmingham as novice director for the British Province of Jesuits and has long experience in retreat work and spiritual direction. We were grateful recipients of the depth of his experience during the course of the day.



There were three main themes to the day: (1) reflecting on the underlying theological strands in the spiritual exercises; (2) examining and sharing some of our own theological assumptions; and (3) raising awareness of the spectrum of theological stances among those we accompany.

Paul ably guided us through each of these themes with a short presentation to introduce each topic, followed by group discussion and a plenary session. For those unable to attend appropriate 'homework' might possibly be to reflect on some of

the questions we examined, bearing in mind that one of the functions of prayer guiding is to help people come to a clearer and more adequate knowledge of God, and that our attitude in accompaniment should mirror that of an open, accepting God who is interested in each person's faith journey. The questions that we worked on included the following: What is theology? What is our "working definition" of it? Why is it important to a prayer accompanier? Where do we get our theology from? How is it passed on? And finally, what theological issues have we encountered in accompanying others?

The timetable of the day also included opportunities for personal prayer, for catching up with old friends over welcome coffee and lunch breaks, and for making new acquaintances. Always a rich part of the day. The closing liturgy drew our day to a fitting conclusion, while at the same time opening a door for our fresh insights and awareness to be put in to practice.

- - James MacLellan

Emmanuel Christmas, God is with us.
My body is His temple,
Profound and holy.

Celebrating Advent

The Gospel of the first Sunday of Advent exhorted us to “stay awake, for you do not know the day when your master is coming”.

This proclamation had a particular resonance this Advent as we learned with shock and disbelief of the helicopter crash in Glasgow; a literal fall from the heavens with a terrible loss of life. It was very much in the minds of those who gathered at the ISC on Saturday 30th November and Sunday 5th December to start the Advent season in a spirit of quiet and listening.

Tom McGuinness and Magdalen Lawler led a group on the Saturday through a day of reflection on “A Word Announced in Silence”. Tom started the day by asking us to consider where it is we meet God. Through poetry and beautiful visual images of the Scottish hills he led us into quiet reflection and an opportunity to sit in the silence and allow “what God was there to make himself felt”. This merged into the second part of the morning as Magdalen spoke of Fra Angelico’s Annunciation images, created to assist the 15th century Dominican monks of the San Marco monastery in Florence in contemplative prayer. We too reflected on the message of the angel, imparted to Mary who was ever sensitive to the touch of the Holy Spirit in her life.

After lunch we reassembled and listened to a section from Kathleen Raine’s Northumberland Sequence: “A Virgin’s Song”. This dramatic poem reminded us through vivid imagery of the tremendous and awesome power of the Spirit bestowed on Mary and of her struggle to acquiesce to that same Spirit in order that the Word might become flesh – “Let in the wound, Let in the pain, Let in your child tonight.” “I am the handmaid of the Lord. Let it be according to his word” (Luke).

At the end of the day we listened to Tom McGuinness’s Annunciation song that speaks of Mary lost in the moment of her listening and answering. In her silence God was very near. We finished the day with that same hope of recognizing God’s nearness during our days of Advent.

On Sunday 5th December we welcomed back to the Centre Ali Newell who with her husband Philip led an Advent afternoon on “The Re-Birthing

of God: Christianity in Labour”. It was an afternoon to treasure, scattered with the gems of Philip’s erudition and the pearls of Ali’s wisdom!

Philip opened the afternoon with a short prayer followed by input on creation and God’s presence therein. He transported us in our imaginations to the island of Iona, to the machair and the hill of the angels where St Columba found a solitary place of prayer, and he reminded us of the spirituality of the Celts and their sensitivity to the connectedness between the earthly and the spiritual. With references to the work of the poet Mary Oliver and anecdotes of Iona this was a talk rich in spiritual wisdom.



The thread of Celtic influence was picked up in the afternoon when Ali gave a presentation on how “from the beginning until now the entire creation, as we know, has been groaning in one great act of giving birth”. Using pictures and quotations from Christianity, other faiths and philosophies, she led us through a reflection on the spirituality of creation. The depiction of St Bridget being transported by the heavenly host across the sea from Ireland to Bethlehem to be the midwife at the birth of Christ was fascinating; a Celtic tale serving to remind us all of our vocation to bring forth Christ in our lives.

Advent can be a stressful and fraught time. The ISC offered welcome relief from all of that busy-ness in these two days and certainly provided an opportunity for us to reflect on God’s presence in our lives during the Advent season and how to respond to that presence – perhaps like Mary “pondering these things” in our hearts as we move towards the celebration of Christmas.



-- Mary Callaghan

Whispers of the Spirit

I first became aware of these 'whispers' when Pope Francis was elected in March 2013: something different was happening for our church. In April I listened to Gerry O' Hanlon SJ's inspiring talk 'Whispers of the Spirit: The Church of the Future', and the whispers got louder. Around the same time I read an article in Glasgow's Archdiocesan monthly newspaper, suggesting that lay Catholics need a synod where they can express their wishes for the church.



Late October, with 300 others representing each English and Welsh diocese, I attended the Second National Meeting in Birmingham of 'A Call to Action',¹ a group of Catholics who are 'still inspired by Vatican II' and 'want to contribute fully to the life of our church so that we may be a more effective sign of the Kingdom of God'. At the conference, entitled 'Courageous Conversations', Professor John Sullivan described what is required within our church for us to be 'Ecclesial Citizens and Not Sheep', Professor Ursula King spoke to the title 'The Church in Dialogue with Women?' and Gerry J Hughes SJ thoughtfully suggested ways we could move forward by focussing on 'less radical or contentious topics which do not involve doctrinal issues'. As a first stage women might be encouraged to conduct communion services when it is not possible to celebrate Mass in every parish, or the church might return to the 1998 version of 'The New Translation' which 'our own Bishops have approved'. The conference encouraged prayerful and courteous reflection on things that concern us all and it proposed ways forward.

In November I attended the Conference 'The Role of the Laity in the Governance of the Church'² which was arranged by 'Open House' Magazine in Glasgow - another event where all available places were taken and the energy and involvement of

those present was palpable. Canon Lawyer, Dr Helen Costigane SHCJ, enumerated the relevant paragraphs of Canon Law which describe the many opportunities for the laity to participate in the ministry and administration of the church. Few of these are implemented. Canon 129, for example, states that lay people can 'co-operate' in the governance of the Church.

Rev David Jasper of the Episcopal Church and Professor of Theology and Literature at Glasgow University, and Very Rev Sheilagh Kesting of the Church of Scotland, responded to Dr Costigane's talk. In their churches there is fuller participation of the laity, but not without obstacles, such as the cost of employing lay people in 'official' roles, and pre-existing biases among church members. An ecumenical perspective was welcome. Professor Jasper's quote from John Henry Newman that 'in order to remain the same, we must change' has stuck in my mind, as has Rev. Kesting's question and answer to herself, 'Are we less clerical? I'm not sure!' Something for the future, perhaps, was Rev Jasper's challenge that, to prevent our churches 'dying', we might need 'a visionary process in which the sharp division between lay and ordained is blurred but reviewed with theological and spiritual clarity within the traditions to which we are bound and which we seek to maintain'.

In Ireland too the spirit is moving! The Association of Catholics in Ireland [ACI],³ a new group for Irish Catholics committed to reform in the Church, was formally launched in June 2013. In November Robert Mickens, The Tablet's Vatican correspondent, addressed a meeting convened by ACI and the Association of Catholic Priests⁴ on the theme 'Can Pope Francis deliver real reform?'. The address was honest, insightful, challenging and entertaining, and gave some lovely insights into Pope Francis. One of the ISC team was there. She

¹ A CALL TO ACTION <http://www.acalltoaction.org.uk/>.

The papers by Professor John Sullivan 'Being a Citizen in the Church' and Gerry J Hughes SJ 'Where do we go from here?' can be found on the website under 'Documents'.

² OPEN HOUSE <http://www.openhousescotland.co.uk>.

The papers by Dr Helen Costigane, Professor David

Jasper and Rev Sheila Kesting can be found on this website

³ ASSOCIATION OF CATHOLICS IN IRELAND <http://www.acireland.ie>

⁴ ASSOCIATION OF CATHOLIC PRIESTS <http://www.associationofcatholicpriests.ie>

noted that the questions and comments of the 400+ participants was evidence of a laity well in tune with the 'whispers of the Spirit'.

This month at the ISC we listened to Fr Jim Lawlor's thought provoking and inspiring talk, entitled 'Rebuild my Church' in which he asked what 'church' really was and, in an echo of Pope Francis' recent Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium*, asked us to think about three 'Ms – Mission, Margins and Mercy'. So we are back to Pope Francis and also to our own role in shaping our church.

I can't avoid the thought that, throughout this year, the voice of the Holy Spirit has become more than a whisper and will continue to increase in strength! If you are interested in joining a small and informal brainstorming group in Glasgow to listen to these whispers and reflect on their 'call', please see the invitation below. You will be most welcome.

- - Ahilya Noone

LISTENING TO THE WHISPERS OF THE SPIRIT

A small planning meeting to reflect prayerfully on what we, lay members of the church, can do to listen to and take forward these 'Whispers of the Spirit' We might begin by listening thoughtfully to each other and sharing our ideas.

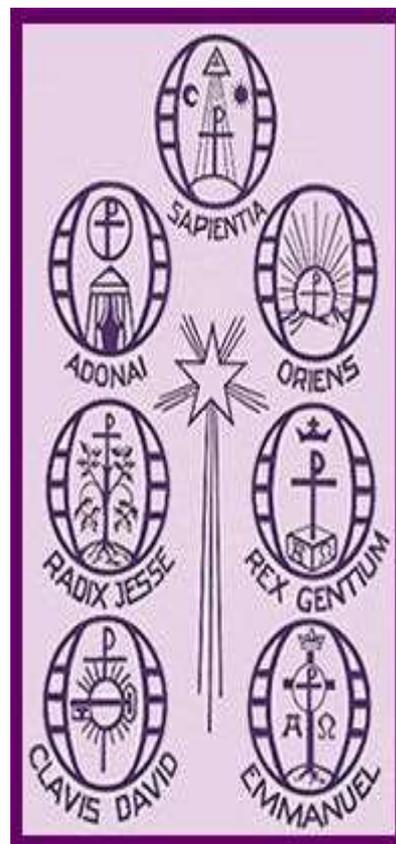
Friday 28th February, 7.00pm

Ignatian Spirituality Centre 35, Scott Street, G3 6PE

Please email pamela.noone@btinternet.com if you are coming so that we know how many to expect.

Advent Antiphons of Longing

- Dec 17th O Wisdom of the Most High, ordering all things together in a strong yet gentle manner, come to teach us the way of truth. .
- Dec 18th O Lord and Leader of Israel, you appeared to Moses in a burning bush and you gave him the law on Sinai. O come and save us with your mighty power.
- Dec 19th O Stock of Jesse, you stand as a signal for the nations; kings fall silent before you whom the people acclaim. O come to deliver us and do not delay.
- Dec 20th O Key of David and Sceptre of Israel, what you open no one else can close again: what you close no one can open. O come to lead the captive from prison; free those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.
- Dec 21st O Rising Sun, you are the splendour of eternal light and the sun of justice. O come and enlighten those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.
- Dec 22nd O King whom all the peoples desire, you are the cornerstone which makes all one. O come and save us whom you made from clay.
- Dec 23rd O Emmanuel, you are our king and judge, the one whom the people await and their Saviour. O come and save us, Lord, our God.





‘The dearest freshness deep down things’ – The Sacredness of Life in Ignatius of Loyola and the Celtic Mystics Epiphany Group Conference 2013

As a nomadic / pilgrim people, the Epiphany Group took the road north, to host this year’s conference at ‘The Burn’, a gracious late eighteenth century mansion in Edzell village, near Brechin. Having taken the risk of moving the conference out of Scotland’s central belt, we were not disappointed.

The 200 acres of beautiful grounds sparkled with bright autumnal colours in what turned out to be a warm and sunny October weekend. Here indeed was the ‘dearest freshness deep down things’ of which Gerard Manley Hopkins wrote. And the clear beauty of the night skies saw participants awestruck as some lay on the grass to better contemplate the wonder of the Milky Way!

‘It was my greatest consolation to gaze upon the heavens and the stars, which I often did, and for long stretches at a time, and felt myself drawn to serve the Lord’ – so said St Ignatius. Making the connection between Ignatius and the Celtic mystics seemed surprisingly easy and natural as we were invited by Rev Ali Newell and Dr Judith Irving to explore the various ways in which these great spiritual explorers viewed and shared their insights on the Incarnation and the challenge of the Gospel.

Quoting Fr Roland Walls, Ali reminded us that ‘the bible is a book of stories where people get it wrong and God loves them anyway’ – something that is very close to the message being offered by the first Jesuit Pope, Francis. Guided by Judith, we looked at our own story, in the light of the bigger Story; we

were invited to remember that ‘the shortest distance between truth and human being is story’ (Anthony de Mello SJ). We were encouraged to create a book to hold some glimpses of our own story. And through the Ignatian gift of imaginative contemplation, reconnected with some of the stories that Jesus told and, like the disciples, saw things afresh; saw ourselves in a new light.

Over our weekend together – 30 EG members and friends – we continued our exploration of the Sacredness of Creation and the Sacredness of Story; we also contemplated the Body as Sacred and expressed in different prayerful ways the Sacredness of Relationship.

As is the custom at EG conferences, members offered times of reflection and prayer in the evenings and mornings – and it was a delight to be guided by some of our newer members whose individual gifts and prayerfulness set the scene for our times of input and sharing. One of the most affecting moments of prayer – and an unscheduled one at that – was Cath McGowan’s signing of ‘I Arise Today’. These simple gestures expressed something beyond the beauty of the words and brought us to that contemplative silence that needs no embellishment.



From the depths of that silence – and from the laughter and warmth of shared meals and social time – we experienced something of ‘spirituality as relational consciousness’ (David Hay). Throughout the weekend, Ignatian spirituality – and real, earthed Celtic spirituality – was experienced in life and prayer and relationship.



Often we were challenged: to reflect on how our times of prayer, in the Exercises, affected our relationships; how it felt when our physicality and our spirituality come together; how we live with a sense of helplessness and how pain can unite rather than isolate us.

If, as Jerome Nadal wrote: ‘the firmament appeared to him (Ignatius) as an immense act of

love’ then the challenge for Ignatius, as it was for the Celtic mystics and is for us in the 21st century, is to allow those cosmic feelings to be transformed into dynamic action. For Ignatius and the Celtic mystics, for those who today are inspired to find God in the book of scripture and in the book of creation, there lies the way of divine enfleshment, the sacredness of human be-ing. It was therefore with gratitude to Ali

and Judith – and to one another - that we gathered our experience of the weekend into our closing liturgy, aware we had truly touched something of the ‘dearest freshness, deep down things’. We left the Burn with much to savour!

Barbara Buda – EG Co-ordinator

Come, Prince of Peace

O sad and troubled Bethlehem
 We hear your longing cry
 For peace and justice to be born
 And cruel oppression die.
 How deep your need for that great gift
 Of love in human form,
 Let Christ in you be seen again
 And hearts by hope made warm.

While morning stars and evening
 stars
 Shine out in your dark sky,
 Despair now stalks your troubled
 streets
 Where innocents still die.
 And Jesus, child of Mary,
 Whose love will never cease,
 Feels even now your pain and fear,
 Longs with you for your peace.

Amazingly and lovingly
 Jesus, the child, has come
 And, brought to birth through human pain,
 makes broken hearts his home.
 He comes to comfort all who weep,
 To challenge every wrong
 And, living with the weak and poor,
 becomes their hope, their song.



This alternative version of one of our most traditional carols can be sung to the familiar tune. Pax Christi can provide a pack of pictures to help focus our minds on the desperate situation in Bethlehem today, Bethlehem being a symbol of so many other places in the Middle East whose people are longing for PEACE! Let our prayer be for them.

. . . . Rippling Out



Parish . . Universities . . Other Faith Traditions

Margaret Linforth

I completed the Spiritual Accompaniment Course at the ISC in 2010. While sad to part company with 'my group', I felt anticipation and excitement about what lay ahead. I remember Rob Marsh SJ, who put great emphasis on Ignatius' use of "etc" - a challenge and a call for the rest of my life.

I had already led some Advent and Lent reflection evenings in my parish and introduced parishioners to "Ignatian ways". So, when the course ended, I asked if any parishioners would like to go on a weekend retreat. Ten signed up. We spent the weekend at Leighton House, the self-catering part of Scottish Churches House in Dunblane, now sadly closed. Our parish priest, a keen cook, did the catering. The retreat had an autumn theme, since it was October, and we were blessed with a sunny weekend which was great for reflective walks along the Allan Water. I offered guided meditations, some body prayer, time for private prayer and time for sharing. It was a privilege to be with the group, nine of whom had never had been on retreat before, and to share their openness to God and their enthusiasm. They have asked when we might go again, but it is now more difficult to find a suitable venue.

In Autumn 2010 I started as a tutor on the Growth in Prayer and Reflective Living Course in Edinburgh, run by the Epiphany Group. It was great to be with people discovering Ignatian spirituality and to hear comments like "Why haven't I heard of this before?"

The following summer I led a bread making reflection day in the parish. We started the dough in the morning and were then free to reflect until lunch when we shared a meal. We then baked the bread and each person took home their tiny loaf or

rolls. Participants enjoyed making the bread and reflecting on the process. The hands-on activity was like praying with clay and was a soothing way to find God in all things.



In the years since the course I have been a guide on several Retreats in Daily Life in Edinburgh and at Edinburgh and St Andrews universities. I am due to embark on another in the new year. I enjoy guiding people from all faith backgrounds and am struck by their dedication in the midst of busy lives. It is a challenge to encounter beliefs and images of God different from my own, but this is also an invitation to stand back, to let go and let God.

I now accompany people on a regular basis both at home and in a residential care facility. I also have the opportunity to work with offenders, which involves listening rather than explicit spiritual accompaniment.

I enjoyed the Spiritual Accompaniment course and am grateful for the avenues it has opened up for me and for all the people I have travelled with. It is a tribute to Ignatius that "his" spirituality paves the way for a felt experience of God in all the circumstances of life.

-- Margaret Linforth

Margaret is leading a bread-making day with reflection at the ISC on Saturday, April 12th, 10:30 am – 4:30 pm



Out, about . . and family life

Claire Starr



I finished my Spiritual Direction course at The House of Prayer in Nile Grove in spring 2004, almost ten years ago now, and have been using the skills I developed there ever since. I accompany people in their spiritual journeys in one to one meetings, as a tutor on the Growth in Prayer and Reflective Living course, at the prison, and in a course called Play and Pray where parents/grandparents come with their preschool children/grandchildren and use different “stations” to explore God, prayer and who they are to God in everyday ways. However, I think it is not just those who come and ask for spiritual accompaniment that benefit from the Ignatian formation I received.

I was first introduced to a taster of Ignatian spirituality 18 years ago when Bishop Gregor Macgregor offered members of the congregation to which I belong a day of Ignatian prayer during which we were introduced to Imaginative Contemplation and a form of the Examen. A few years later I rediscovered Ignatius on a course called *Life of Prayer*, run by Scottish Churches Open College and led by Ali Newell. I learned more about Ignatius and about discernment, and I began to have a hunger to make the Exercises, which I did as a 19th Annotation experience with Alison Moody.

During this time my young family was growing up and there were many times when decisions had to be made and challenges met. I think our children grew up, finding who they are being created to be and living out of who they are. I told my oldest son I would be writing this article and how I felt that this spiritual formation has affected family life. I said I thought that it had made a difference in how we made decisions and that it had helped them to make decisions. He replied that the ways in which he made decisions seemed good to him and natural, and that he hadn't noticed that it had been introduced to him. We had a discussion about whether it was because I had been living or desiring to live an Ignatian way since he was quite young – probably about 7 years of age – or whether an Ignatian way

was a natural way of being that resonated with him – was like water on a sponge, rather than splashing on a stone. We thought it could be a mixture of both, but he liked the way he made decisions and that he was supported in doing so.

I feel also that the skills I have learned in spiritual direction have helped me to be more attentive in listening, particularly to my children and especially in times of challenge: instead of giving advice I hope what it has made possible is to enable them to discover who they are and the way forward at any given point in life. I hope it also enables them to be open to God in their lives – particularly as they grapple with the big questions in life and also discover who God is and how God relates to them. My eldest son has always questioned God or asked questions about God: he has gone through times of not believing and certainly doesn't believe in a conventional way. My second son says he doesn't believe in God, but my youngest two children do believe, but have quite different theologies: my daughter is quite liberal in her approach, whilst my youngest son has quite conservative views. Both enjoy contemporary worship. But all of them are open to conversation and I trust God will never let them go. I think their struggles with God are healthy and I consider Jacob wrestling with God when I see their journeys.

Over all I think Ignatian practice has encouraged and enabled healthy and open conversation in our family, hopefully respecting one another's views, recognising each of us as good, unique and precious in the eyes of God. My desire is that this will always be a part of both our life as a family, but also as individuals and that each of us will grow more and more to reflect in our own unique and precious ways who God is in the world.



- - Claire Starr

For Reflection

Journey of the Magi (Matthew 2:1-12)

A cold coming we had of it,
 Just the worst time of the year
 For a journey, and such a long journey:
 The ways deep and the weather sharp,
 The very dead of winter.
 And the camels galled, sore-footed, refractory,
 Lying down in the melting snow.
 There were times when we regretted
 The summer palaces on slopes, the terraces,
 And the silken girls bringing sherbet.
 Then the camel men cursing and grumbling
 And running away, and wanting their liquor and women,
 And the night-fires going out, and the lack of shelters,
 And the cities dirty and the towns unfriendly
 And the villages dirty and charging high prices:
 A hard time we had of it.
 At the end we preferred to travel all night,
 Sleeping in snatches,
 With the voices singing in our ears, saying
 That this was all folly.

Then at dawn we came down to a temperate valley,
 Wet, below the snow line, smelling of vegetation;
 With a running stream and a water mill beating the
 darkness,
 And three trees on the low sky,
 And an old white horse galloped away in the meadow.
 Then we came to a tavern with vine-leaves over the lintel,
 Six hands at an open door dicing for pieces of silver,
 And feet kicking the empty wineskins.
 But there was no information, and so we continued
 And arrived at evening, not a moment too soon
 Finding the place; it was (you may say) satisfactory.

All this was a long time ago, I remember,
 And I would do it again, but set down
 This set down
 This: were we led all that way for
 Birth or Death? There was a Birth, certainly,
 We had evidence and no doubt.
 I had seen birth and death,
 But had thought they were different; this Birth was
 Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death.
 We returned to our places, these Kingdoms,
 But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation,
 With an alien people clutching their gods.
 I should be glad of another death.

- - T.S. Eliot



Follow the journey as told by Matthew (Mt 2:1-12) and T.S Eliot:

- + What is the desire of your heart that draws you on to something 'more'?
- + What keeps you going?
- + What helps you find direction when the way ahead is unclear?
- + Where do you find companionship in your faith?
- + What tempts you to go off course and what helps you maintain your course?
- + Where have you been surprised by God in your life's journey, and where have you found and encountered God in unexpected ways?
- + Where have you received the giftedness of others during your journey and what has God gifted you with that you might share with others?
- + How have you been changed by an encounter with God? And - has your
- + sense of God been changed through encounter?



ANNOUNCING

Series, Events and Retreats: January – April 2014

See programmes and websites for further details. Please contact by telephone or e-mail

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On-Going Formation

(For those trained in Spiritual Accompaniment)

- *God, Creation and the First Week of the Spiritual Exercises.* Guest presenters, Anna Hainey CP and Margaret Rose McSparran CP, March 1st (Full Day)

Drop-In (No Booking Required)

- Taizé Evenings, Third Monday of Month, 7:30–8:30
- Retreat Mornings, First Friday of month, 10:00–1:00, except January, Jan 10th
- Eat, Pray, Breathe, Every Tuesday 1:00-1:30 – a quiet reflective half hour
- Carers' Renewal Afternoons, Last Tuesday of month, 1:30-4:00
- Films and a Chat: Jan 27th (Mon evening – see Series below) and then Friday evenings, 7:00-9:30, Jan 31st, Apr 4th. See website for film title nearer to the dates.
- *Dancing in the Spirit*, Monday Evenings, 7:00 – 8:00, Jan 13th, Feb 3rd, Feb 10th, led by Isabel Smyth SND.

Series:

- *A New Moment for Church as Inspired by Francis and Ignatius*, Monthly on Sunday afternoons, 2:00 – 4:00, Jan 19, Feb 16 and Mar 16. Speakers and topics on website.
- *Supporting Interreligious Dialogue: Conversations in Faith*, Mon, Jan 27th (Film, *The Pianist*); Wed, Mar 26th, (Bahai).

Events

- Introduction to Myers Briggs personality Types, led by Mary Ross SND, Saturday, Feb 1st (Full Day)

Lent

- *From Death to Life*, A day to contemplate images from classical and contemporary art, led by Geoffrey Wheaton SJ. Sat 8th March (Full Day).
- *Come Be With Me*, A day of prayer led by Magdalen Lawler SND. Sat, 29th March (Full Day)
- *Bread Broken and Shared: Prepare for Holy Thursday by making bread and sharing together.* Led by Margaret Linforth. Sat, 12th April (Full Day).

RETREATS

Lent

- Lent Retreat in Daily Life, Monday evenings, March 3rd – April 14th. See website for details.

Non-Residential Weekend

- *Finding God in All Things*, Sat 22nd – Sun 23rd February 2014, 10:30 – 4:30 each day

ISC Continued

Residential

- *A Midsummer Pilgrimage Retreat Weekend on Iona*, Friday June 20th (pm) – Monday June 23rd (am). **Full**
- Silent and individually guided, Drumalis Retreat Centre, Larne, N. Ireland, either 3 day or 6 day, June 28th – July 5th 2014
- Silent and individually guided, Catholic House of Prayer, Iona, July 12th – 19th, 2014. **Full**
- Mid-Week autumn retreat, The Bield, Blackruthven, Tues Oct 14th (pm) – Fri Oct 17th (am) 2014

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