



# What is Real?

**Fr Chris Thomas encourages us this Advent to reflect on the heart of the Gospel message.**

I spent my holiday in America this year and at one point when I was in Las Vegas. I was mesmerised by the size of the hotels and the themes that they are built around. I loved the lights which made it seem like day all the time and the fountains which danced majestically to wonderful music. I was amazed to find people at slot machines at 8.30 in the morning. While I enjoyed the buzz and the experience it struck me how unreal it all was and how all of it was built to serve the great god Mammon and to exploit our perceived need for wealth and material goods.

I was reminded of the story of the velveteen rabbit and the question asked of the old skin horse in the nursery: "what is real?" The answer given by the old nursery toy is that 'real' is when you have been loved, really loved, so much so that your joints grow slack and your ears get ripped and your eyes fall out but you don't really mind because love has made you real. There is a profound wisdom in the story, that love is the only authentic way to discover our own reality and everything else that we think might help pales into insignificance as we discover a life that is vibrant and fulfilling because of the power of love.

## **"It's all about love"**

In just a few weeks time we will celebrate Christmas which really is the feast of love. God became flesh to shatter our illusions about what reality is and to show us the only true reality Love. It's almost as though God has looked at humanity with such compassion and knowing that we will never, of ourselves, understand that love is what makes us real, becomes flesh. Why? To show us what human reality is all about. In the end to quote St Therese of Lisieux 'it's all about love.'

So the Advent journey is about preparing our minds and our hearts to see that love is at the core of what it means to be both human and divine and because of love we can discover who we really are, beloved children of God with a value and a dignity that no-one can take away from us. The challenge of Advent is to open ourselves up to the power of love.

How do we do that? Most of my work these days seems to be about encouraging people to take the time and space to pray and

reflect and allow God to work within us. Part of that process is always the difficult task of facing the things which control us. It's about looking at what motivates us and what at times threatens to engulf us.

## **Letting go is part of the spiritual life**

I'm involved in spiritual guidance and the more I talk to people the more aware I am of just how much 'letting go' is part of the spiritual life. Often the word I'm given when praying with people and listening to them is 'let go'. Many of us hold on to things that stop us seeing that love is the only way. We hold on to our resentment, our unforgiveness our small mindedness and our hurts that sour us and make us see the world through jaundiced eyes. Few of us are willing to recognise our self centredness or the desire we have for power. We desperately search for acceptance from others and play games with ourselves and with them to make that acceptance a reality.

We con ourselves that we follow the Gospel but use it as a means of shoring our poor self image without allowing it to transform us. Most of us never quite manage to let go of control. We cling on to our own strength and our own capabilities so that even when we cry out to God for help we are still trying to sort things out for ourselves and we call all of this human reality.

We are created for more. The deep discovery of love that knows no end is what makes us real. It's what turns our drab futile grey existence into vital pulsating life. God became flesh to show us what love is. Dare we this Advent open our hearts and minds to love that transforms and make us real? Take time each day to open yourself to God. Meet love and become love whatever the cost and know the truth that Jesus came that 'we might have life and have it to the full.'

**In just a few weeks time we will celebrate Christmas which really is the feast of love. God became flesh to shatter our illusions about what reality is and to show us the only true reality Love.**



**Fr. Chris Thomas heads up the Irenaeus Project. He is a member of the Emmaus Family of Prayer.**

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## PAT COLLINS VISIT TO THE EMMAUS PRAYER COMMUNITY

We had an amazing visit from Father Pat at the beginning of September. He gave four talks that truly inspired the people fortunate enough to be present. Fr Pat helps us to deepen our appreciation of the wonder of loving relationships, both in our families and with our brothers and sisters in the Christian Community.

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# CCR Centre



## TIM STEVENS BRINGS US UP TO DATE WITH WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE CCR CENTRE

It is already a whole year since we first moved into the crypt here at Our Lady of Dolours in Chelsea and established the new Catholic Charismatic Renewal Centre. It has been



a slow process but we are gradually getting a routine established. We were very fortunate over the summer that volunteer Maureen Evans and her husband, Roger came and did tremendous work clearing the patio at the back so on fine days we have been able to have lunch outside. A heating upgrade is being planned, so please pray that this will be resolved

before the winter properly sets in.

- Kate Moir and Eileen Brum who are part of the healing team of the Westminster Cathedral prayer group are coming regularly on Monday afternoons between 2pm-4pm and offering prayer for healing in the colonnade of the Church. If you would like prayer this is the time to come.

- Once a month, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday between 12 noon and 3pm, we have an evangelistic outreach led by Gabriele and volunteers who come from the different prayer groups to help. This consists of going into the street and giving out vouchers offering free tea and coffee in the colonnade. The team has been amazed at the numbers coming in, of all religions and none, whom they talk to and sometimes pray with. So if you would like to join this event, speak to Gabriele, the team leader and Centre Co-ordinator on 020 7352 5298 to find out more details.

- The third Wednesday of the month we have an intercession time when we pray for the centre and the future direction. At their September meeting the group had a word to pray and fast on Tuesdays for the success of Many Streams One River, the historic meeting in the UK of all the Ecclesial Movements and Communities at Westminster Methodist Central Hall on 9<sup>th</sup> November. (There are still tickets left so do call the office if you would like some or log on to [www.faithcafe.org](http://www.faithcafe.org)).



This autumn Michelle Moran, the chairperson of the English NSC is having one to one meetings with some of the leaders of the different foreign charismatic groups and communities working in the country to build a sense of community and rapport in the different expressions of the CCR in the UK. In October it was leaders of Filipino groups who had been invited including the

Lord of Pardon (see photo of Bro Jun and wife Vicky, with Michelle, Kristina and Gabriele), El Shaddai and the Filchamp community (based in Kilburn). In November Michelle will be meeting Fr Soji Olikal, the dynamic priest who is behind the amazing Second Saturday gatherings in West Bromwich, which was mentioned in Goodnews in the July issue. Gabriele and Kristina both visited in September and were very impressed with what they saw. Michelle also hopes this month (November) to meet some of the Brazilian leaders from Shalom and Cancao Nova and the Brazilian chaplaincy at St Anne's in Whitechapel. We are very blessed with the special fervour and contribution these different groups bring to the life of Catholic Charismatic Renewal in this country. See page 26 for a report about Shalom.

Fr Pat, the Parish Priest and Prior is keen to support a weekly afternoon prayer group and our planned Parents' CaFE coffee afternoons so there is a real sense of even closer relationship with our parish and community friends.

We are very grateful for the continued support of our volunteers, but are always on the look out for more, so we can increase the capacity of the centre and to be our representatives at the various charismatic events round the capital. We are delighted that Elizabeth Elive, one of our volunteers, has just got a job as a chaplain at the university at Gower Street. **If you feel you can help in any way please contact the office on 020 7352 5298 or email me at [tim@faithcafe.org](mailto:tim@faithcafe.org).**

**Thank you** to those who provided garden furniture. We are sorry but there were some offers we could not collect but we are always willing receive items by arrangement.

**If your prayer group would like to visit or hold an event in the Centre please do give us a call, we are there for you.**



## 30 YEARS AND STILL GROWING STRONG

### ST VINCENT'S PRAYER GROUP, OSTERLEY

On 16<sup>th</sup> September the prayer group at St Vincent's parish Osterley in Middlesex celebrated its 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. The group was started in 1983 by the then parish priest, Fr Ronald Richardson, who had been baptised in the Holy Spirit at the famous Hopwood Hall. He invited Joan Hampartsoumian, who had recently moved into the parish, to run the group. This she did with great trepidation as although she had been a member of St Margaret's prayer group in Twickenham, she had never opened her mouth there. About 40 people came to the first meeting whom the parish priest had personally invited. Joan carefully planned with prayers which she read out because she was too nervous to pray spontaneously and shared scripture meditations from a book she bought at a day of renewal

She says, she learnt as she went along how the Spirit could lead. "I remember instead of the hymn we had arranged to sing, another one came into my mind which was more appropriate". Despite the encouraging start numbers soon dropped, until there were only two or three people coming. Joan remembers, "This didn't worry me at all. I knew God had called me as it wasn't my idea and I left it in his hands." More people then did start coming and when numbers had grown to 8, Joan arranged for the whole group to do the Life in the Spirit seminars in Chiswick, where they were all baptized in the Holy Spirit. This had a big effect on the prayer group and they started exercising the gifts of the Spirit in their meetings and their numbers grew to up to 30 people coming each week. They also got a music ministry in the form of Jim, the husband of Monica, who had joined the group when a prayer group nearby closed down. He brought along his guitar and has been coming faithfully ever since.



As the St Vincent's group grew in confidence it was decided that the members of the prayer group themselves would give the talks and be small group leaders for next Life in the Spirit seminars they organised. Another fruit of the prayer group was the small team who included Joan and three others who became involved in a prison outreach to Feltham young offenders institute. Here the religious sister in charge, Sr Margaret had been praying for a charismatic prayer group to help with the prison work. Because of personal family responsibilities, Joan stepped down from leadership and handed over responsibility of the group to Joan Light who led for several years until she in turn handed over to current leader Joseph Andrew. The group has continued to flourish and over the years runs regular days of renewal and Life in the Spirit Seminars. Neil Kieran, who has been in the group for 28 years feels that the secret of its longevity has been the support it has always received over the years from the different parish priests, even if they haven't come to the group themselves. "That has made all the difference", he says.

A young man called David, from St Margaret's, has recently started coming to help out with the music, and a couple of weeks ago, two other young people travelled all the way from Liverpool Street in East London to attend, having seen it in Goodnews. "It's a great sign of new life and the Lord continuing to bless the group," says Joan.

### Revival Weekend at Camarthen

Canon Ambrose Walsh reports



The weekend, 30<sup>th</sup> August-1<sup>st</sup> September will, hopefully, prove to have been a turning point for Renewal in Wales. The Wales NSC had organised an annual week-long Carmarthen Conference for nearly twenty years but the event had run out of steam by the middle of the last decade. During this time, Renewal in three Welsh dioceses was greatly inspired by the Hereford Conference and in more recent years by the Celebrate weekends held in Cardiff. As a result of encouraging, prophetic words spoken at some days of renewal in recent times, it was decided that the moment had come for the NSC to start afresh. The conference was held at Trinity College, where it had begun.



Under the leadership of the principal speakers, Derek Williams and Andy Stayne, the Conference was led in two directions. From vibrant praise it entered into the heart of our life in the Spirit and outwards into mission. with an opportunity to engage in street ministry. Carmarthen already had a Christian street ministry and Conference members were sent out with them on Saturday afternoon. In short, if Revival in Wales means a commitment to a profound prayer life that leads to generous and courageous Gospel sharing, all who took part in the event came away with

the conviction that this is the way ahead. Canon Matthew Jones spoke of the renewed energy and commitment which those present had experienced saying it felt like an engine building up steam, getting ready to pull out of the station. For photos, reports and prophecies see the NSC website [www.ccrw.org.uk/](http://www.ccrw.org.uk/)

# One to One with the Pope

**Michelle Moran shares her memories of her sudden call to Rome for a special private audience with the pope in September this year,**

At the invitation of the NSC in Australia I was in Sydney for a couple of days at the beginning of September and then I headed up to Brisbane for the leaders' conference where I was the main speaker. However, on my arrival I got an email from Rome saying that Pope Francis had granted me a private audience in the Vatican at 12.00 noon on Monday September 9<sup>th</sup>, so please could I arrange things to be there! In Australia it was already Friday afternoon and just a couple of hours before the conference was to begin. So my lead into the first evening of preaching was a series of frantic telephone calls to travel agents and attempts to change my return flight. The main problem was there was very little flight availability and to get everything linking together to get me back to Rome in time for the appointment proved to be more than a challenge and was incredibly stressful. However, God was good and almost at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour we were finally able to book a flight to Rome which would allow me to do all that I needed to do in Australia and to get to Rome for 10am on Monday morning (you gain time when you fly back to Europe). The people in Australia were really excited by the prospect of the Pope granting me, a representative of CCR worldwide, a private audience so early in his pontificate. They saw this as a sign of the Holy Father's support for Charismatic Renewal. So they prayed with me and sent me out from the other side of the world promising to cover my many hours of travel in prayer.

Thankfully, by God's grace, after travelling 28 hours and the various flight connections working out and planes not too delayed and Monday morning traffic in Rome not too manic, I arrived at the Apostolic Palace in the Vatican with 20 mins to spare. Humanly speaking I certainly did not look or feel my best but inside I was so grateful to the Lord that he had made it possible. For the audience I was together with Matteo Callisi, the President of the Catholic Fraternity, an organisation with a similar standing to ICCRS that has responsibility for serving many of the Charismatic covenant communities throughout the world.


**The Holy Father emphasised the need to keep in good relationships and dialogue with Pentecostal leaders especially in Latin America**

Obviously the nature of a 'private audience' is that the conversation isn't for general publication, so I can only give you a general flavour of our 30 minutes with the Holy Father. In some ways the meeting was quite informal. We spoke as friends about times past when we had been together with him in Buenos Aires and he remembered with fondness some of those early encounters after he was 'converted' to the Charismatic Renewal. When I told him that I had just arrived from Australia, he spoke about Bishop Joe Grech RIP whom he had met at various CCR events in Argentina. The Holy Father emphasised the need to keep in good relationship and dialogue with Pentecostal leaders especially in Latin America.

**Fr Raniero Cantalamessa OFM Cap reappointed papal preacher**

He shared with us a few things about the present Church situation and re-affirmed the need to keep moving with the freedom of the Spirit in all areas of Church life. He said that he had re-appointed Fr Raniero Cantalamessa as the Papal Preacher. I told him about the fifth ICCRS Leadership Formation Institute that had just begun in Rome and he sent his greetings especially to the students from Argentina. We were able to present to him some of our future projects as we approach the Golden Jubilee of CCR. He was very encouraged by the plans for the 3<sup>rd</sup> worldwide Priest's retreat in Rome in 2015 and showed





a willingness to help and support us. As we said goodbye there was a great warmth of friendship between us and you almost got the impression that he was saying 'you know where I am, call me if you need anything'.


**Holy Father not just supportive of the Charismatic Renewal but he knows the Renewal from the inside**

We all know the great gift that Pope Francis is to our Church. However, it is wonderful to know that the Holy Father is not just supportive of Charismatic Renewal. He knows the Renewal from the inside and he has seen and been blessed by the fruits of the Renewal. So we should feel very encouraged during this season in the Church and do all that we can to help the Charismatic Renewal to keep growing in maturity and to keep making an impact through its service in the Church and in the world.

**HISTORIC MEETING OF THE MOVEMENTS  
IN THE UK – 9<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2013**

On 9<sup>th</sup> November a truly historic event will take place when for the very first time the major Ecclesial Movements and Communities in UK will come together for “Many Streams, One River”, a day of joint celebration at the Westminster Methodist Central Hall in central London. The meeting can be seen as a fruit of the call of Pope John Paul II in 1998 for the Ecclesial Movements and Communities to work together for the good of the local Church. This is the first step on a journey and promises to be a very exciting day.

*Tickets are £12 each plus p&p and can be obtained by contacting the CCR Centre, 020 7352 5298 or on the web site [www.manystreamsoneriver.org](http://www.manystreamsoneriver.org) - or on the door.*



Pope Francis shared with journalists on his flight back from World Youth Day this summer that he originally was rather suspicious of Charismatic Renewal “At the end of the 70s and 80s I wasn’t a big fan. I used to say they confused the holy liturgy with a school of samba. I was converted when I go to know them better and saw the good they do. In this moment in the life of the Church, the movements are necessary. They’re a grace of the Spirit and in general, they do much good for the Church. The charismatic renewal movement isn’t just about winning back a few Pentecostals, but it serves the Church and its renewal.”

## SION COMMUNITY TURNING TEENS INTO DISCIPLES



The Sion Community this year have just launched a special new three year long discipleship programme for keen teens (15-18) called

"Ascent". The core of this is three residential weekends a year. The first weekend (28<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> October 2013) was on the Bible and Salvation history, the second is on Sex and the Theology of the Body (21<sup>st</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> February 2014) and the third on leadership skills (25<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> July 2014). Small groups of disciples will be encouraged to form who will commit to one meeting a week (on line) to help encourage each other over the year. The weekends will be at Sion HQ in Brentwood and the cost is £225 for the year or this can be paid in installments. **Further details contact Sion Community, Sawyers Hall Lane, Brentwood, Essex CM15 9BX or see web site [www.sioncommunity.org.uk](http://www.sioncommunity.org.uk) tel 01277 234 401**

## ERRATUM

In the last issue we gave the wrong email for Jeanne Harper, for those who might be interested in a copy of the book about the life and ministry of her husband, Michael Harper, one of the great prophetic figures of the Charismatic Renewal. Her email, for those who would be interested in getting his book, is [aslanharper7@gmail.com](mailto:aslanharper7@gmail.com)

## Q & A

### QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS?

At New Dawn, one keen reader wondered if we could have a pastoral problem page in Goodnews. So if you do have theological and pastoral questions that you would like advice about, write to Goodnews and we will see what we can do. **Write to: Goodnews, CCR Centre, The Crypt, Our Lady of Dolours Church, 264 Fulham Road, London SW10 9EL or email [ccruk@onetel.com](mailto:ccruk@onetel.com)**

## JEFF CAVINS TOUR OF UK

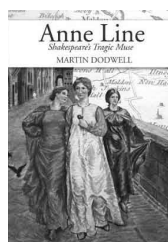
Jeff Cavins, a gifted communicator and Catholic bible teacher from the United States, who wowed participants at the New Dawn conference this summer, is touring the UK this month (11<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> Nov 2013), visiting Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester, Portsmouth and London. **See "Coming Events" Page 20.**



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## WAS SHAKESPEARE A CATHOLIC?

Martin Dodwell, who edited One magazine and in the 1990s did the layout for Goodnews, has just written a book called "Anne Line: Shakespeare's Tragic Muse" (published by Book Guild Publishing) and available on Amazon. In the book as well as writing a biography of Anne Line, one of the 40 English martyrs, he uncovers evidence suggesting that she was a secret muse of William Shakespeare whom he believes was a Catholic.

## SHERRY WEDDELL MAIN SPEAKER AT TINE CONFERENCE IN DUBLIN IN FEBRUARY 2014



Those who have read her challenging book "Forming Intentional Disciples" will be interested to know that author Sherry Weddell, the founder of the Sienna institute in Seattle, will be the keynote speaker at this year's annual Tine Conference at the Glenroyal Hotel in Maynooth, Ireland (14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> February 2014). The conference theme is "Forming Intentional Disciples" (**book on line at [www.tine-network.org](http://www.tine-network.org)**). Tine is a network of those involved in the New Evangelisation in the Catholic Church. Sherry will also be speaking in Malta at the Relay Conference (February 2014). **For further details see "Coming Events" page 21**



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(The Director of The Christian Healing Mission)

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(Chaplain of The Christian Healing Mission)

**The Church's ministry of healing - the  
good, the bad, the indifferent** –

Charles Whitehead (Past President of the  
International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Council)

**Help! - the challenges of mental illness** –

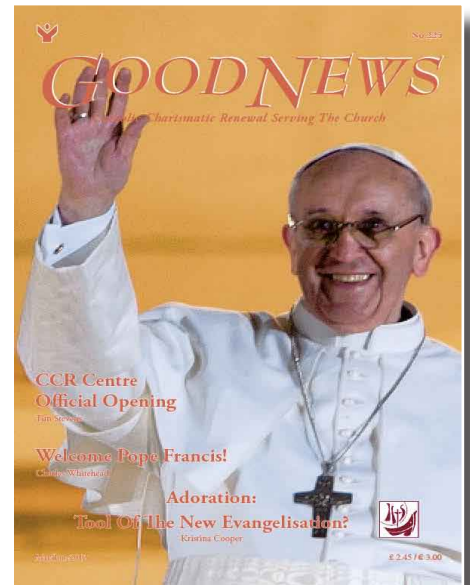
Dr Paul Worthley (Senior Physician at Burrowswood,  
a Christian Hospital)



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