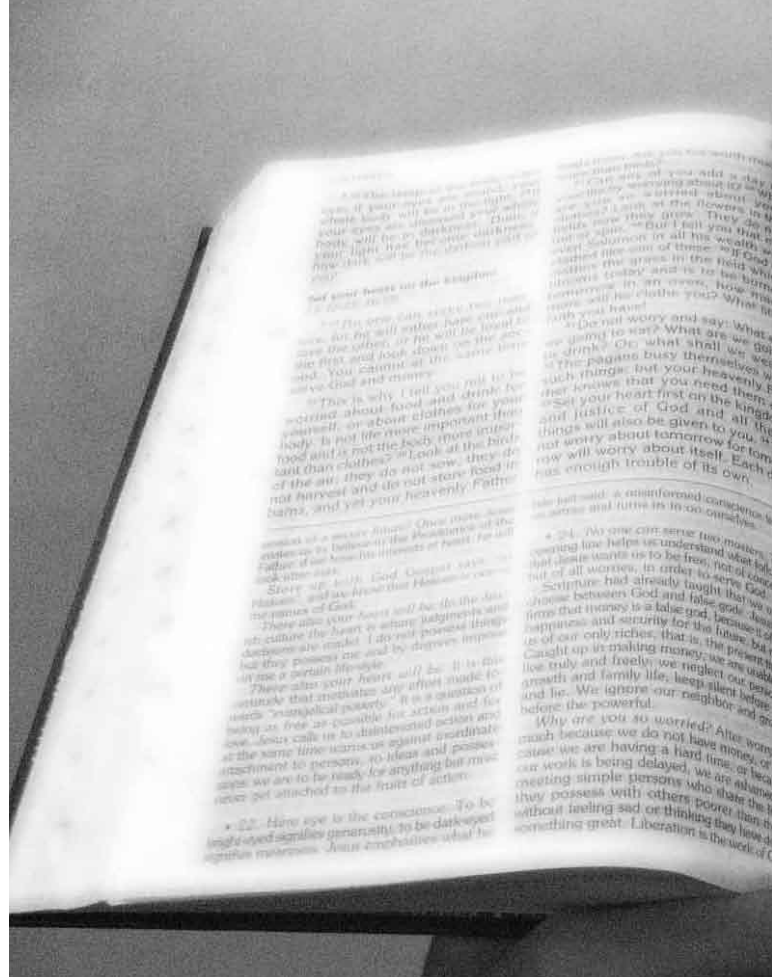


A Catholic understanding of Scripture Interpretation



Fr Pat Collins C.M. is a speaker, retreat leader and author of many books on spirituality. He is based in Dublin.

Sad to say, there are still practicing Catholics who rarely if ever read and pray the scriptures. Only two days ago I heard one of them say that they consider it a Protestant practice in spite of the fact that for many years now the Church has encouraged its members to foster a Bible centred spirituality. In par. 133 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church we read, "The Church forcefully and specifically exhorts all the Christian faithful . . . to learn the surpassing knowledge of Jesus Christ, by frequent reading of the scriptures." Pope Benedict said in par. 86 of his Apostolic Declaration on the Word of God, "The word of God is at the basis of all authentic Christian spirituality . . . Let Catholics remember that prayer should accompany the reading of sacred Scripture."

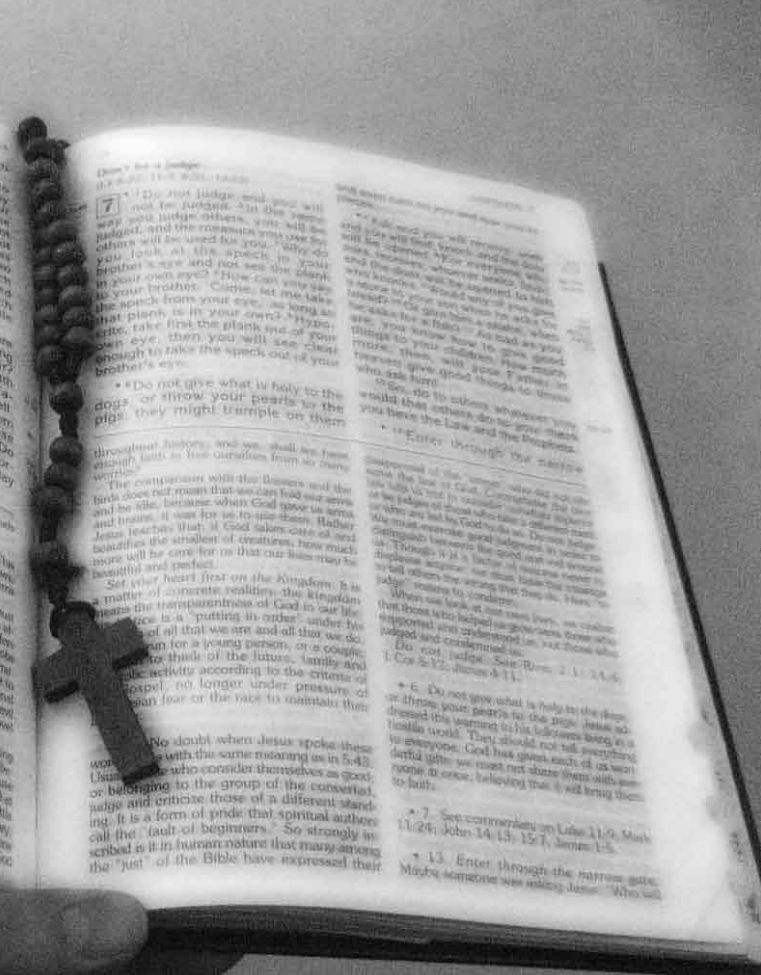
Avoiding fundamentalism

When we read the Bible, we should avoid a literal, fundamentalist interpretation. Pope Benedict XVI said in par. 44 of *The Word of God*, "The literalism championed by the fundamentalist approach actually represents a betrayal of both the literal and the spiritual sense." For example, in Matthew's Gospel we are told that, "*Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod*" (Mt 2:1). We know from history that Herod the Great died in 4 B.C. at the age of seventy. In Luke's Gospel we are told that Jesus was born at the time when "*Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. This was*

the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria" (Lk 2:1-2). We know from the writings of Jewish historian Josephus, that this census took place between 6 and 7 A.D. In other words, there is a discrepancy of ten years in the accounts of the two evangelists as regards the date of Jesus' birth. The only way to understand this anomaly is to say that Matthew and Luke were writing about the nativity of Jesus from a theological rather than a strictly historical perspective.

The historical critical approach

Contemporary scripture scholars rely a good deal on what is referred to as the historical critical approach to biblical texts. This method, which is widely used in the Church, is a form of biblical study and interpretation which seeks to better understand the historical and cultural context in which the various books of the Bible were written. In the introduction to his book *Jesus of Nazareth*, Pope Benedict said, "The historical-critical method is an indispensable tool, given the structure of the Christian faith." But he warned that the historical-critical method needs to be used within the wider context of the whole Bible. He refers to this methodology as "canonical exegesis." It is an holistic approach that sees individual passages not only in the context of their historical situation, but also in the context of the entire bible which has a Christ centred dimension from beginning to end. It also takes account of Church Tradition, i.e., the tried and tested interpretations of the Church Fathers, which both reflect and form the faith of the people of God.



The Traditional Senses of Scripture

When it came to the interpretation of scripture the saints had a good deal of valuable guidance to offer. St Bede wrote in the 8th century: "The sacred scriptures are interpreted in a fourfold way." Speaking about this, pars 115-118 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church say, "According to an ancient tradition, one can distinguish between two senses of Scripture: the literal and the spiritual, the latter being subdivided into the allegorical, moral and anagogical senses."

1] THE LITERAL SENSE is the meaning conveyed by the words of Scripture and discovered by the historical-critical method which follows rules of sound interpretation. For example, archaeology has discovered a lot about the Jewish temple which was built by ten thousand men during the reign of King Herod the Great just before Jesus was born. Not many of us, however, are trained scripture scholars. But all of us can make use of reliable scripture books such as The Collegeville Bible Commentary, in order to discover the literal meaning of the text.

2] THE SPIRITUAL SENSE. Thanks to the unity of God's plan, not only the text of scripture but also the realities and events about which it speaks can be symbolic. For example, Jesus referred to his body in a metaphorical way as a temple. He said, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days" (Jn 2:19).

A] THE ALLEGORICAL SENSE. We can acquire a more profound understanding of events by recognizing their Christian significance. For instance, the temple in Jerusalem can be seen as a symbol of the human body. St Paul said: "Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple" (1 Cor 3:16-17).

B] THE MORAL SENSE. The events reported in Scripture ought to lead us to act justly. With this in mind St Paul says: "Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor 6:18-19).

C] THE ANAGOGICAL SENSE looks at realities and events in terms of their eternal significance. For instance in Rev 11:19 the temple becomes a symbol of God's eternal dwelling: "Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and within his temple was seen the ark of his covenant."

Problematic passages in the Bible

Anyone who reads the Bible, especially the Old Testament, is well aware that it contains very off-putting material to do with wanton violence and immorality. For example in Ps 137:8 we read these vengeful words, "blessed the one who seizes your children and smashes them against the rock." How should we interpret off-putting verses like this? In par. 42 of the Word of God, Pope Benedict says, "it must be remembered first and foremost that biblical revelation is deeply rooted in history. God's plan is manifested progressively and it is accomplished slowly, in successive stages and despite human resistance. God chose a people and patiently worked to guide and educate them. Revelation is suited to the cultural and moral level of distant times and thus describes facts and customs, such as cheating and trickery, and acts of violence and massacre, without explicitly denouncing the immorality of such things."

In other words, there is an evolution of moral and religious consciousness evident in the Old Testament. Whereas in the earliest passages there is a tendency to project human characteristics on to God, such as anger, retribution, and jealousy, in the later writings anthropomorphic tendencies are less in evidence. For example, whereas King David was a violent man, his descendent Jesus was opposed to violence.

It seems to me that two extremes have to be avoided when reading and praying the scriptures. On the one hand, we have to avoid fundamentalism. On the other hand, we have to avoid putting too much emphasis on a rationalistic, un-supernatural approach to the Biblical texts. It could be said that piety without scholarship can lead to naïve forms of subjectivism; while scholarship without piety can lead to lifeless head knowledge; but scholarship informed by heartfelt piety leads to a transformation of one's Christian understanding and way of acting.

Read my Word



Charles Whitehead reveals why the Word of God means so much to him.

I was baptised in the Holy Spirit in 1976 and an immediate result was that I began to pray with a new enthusiasm and commitment. As I prayed I became aware that God was speaking to me in a variety of ways - speaking into different areas of my life and making his desires for me known. The first and by far the most powerful message I heard was three simple words - "Read My Word!" New and inexperienced in hearing God's voice though I was, I could not fail to understand what he was saying to me. As I reflected on these three simple words, I acknowledged that I was not familiar with the Scriptures, the Word of God. Of course I was used to listening to the readings at Mass, so I knew many of the most popular Old Testament and Gospel stories - they were fairly easy to remember. However, I knew little else in the Old Testament and very little from the New Testament letters of Paul, Peter and the others, so I had no idea how the Bible might reveal God to me, or provide me with a road map for my journey through life.

I began to apply my new insights and ways of thinking in my daily life with remarkable results

So I took God's command to "Read My Word!" very seriously, and for two full years I read little apart from my Bible. I read it in all sorts of ways - chronologically; according to particular themes; following the readings of the Church liturgy; using systems like reading through the Bible in a year, the Word Among Us etc. I highlighted, underlined and annotated texts everywhere, I wrote comments on most pages and so gradually became familiar with the teachings and revelation contained in the Scriptures. Of course real familiarity with God's Word is the journey of a lifetime, but at least I made a start. So how did this new knowledge affect me? The answer is simple - it was life-changing. Things that had always puzzled me became clear; the basic truths of the Christian message were repeated and clarified; the extent of God's revelation of himself and his desires for us, his children, became clear. I began to apply my new insights and ways of thinking in my daily life with remarkable results. As I learned to hear the voice of God through his Word, I tried to put what I was hearing into practice. He spoke to me about his great love for me and revealed his true nature - God is love (1 John 4:8) which he had demonstrated by sending his only Son into the world for you and me (verse 9). I soon found out that I was growing in my love for other people as I learned more and more about the love God had for me and for them - I knew what he meant when he told us we were to love one another. I began to understand the Great Commission and that I

was called to go and make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19). I also realised that *"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work"* (2 Timothy 3:16).

As I continued to read and reflect on the Word I discovered to my great joy that I really was being more and more *"thoroughly equipped for every good work"*. If I wanted to know God more and more, if I wanted to learn to recognise his voice and to know when he was speaking to me, I needed to know his Word. As the Church tells us, God seeks contact with us in many ways - in human encounters, in the challenges and the suffering we face there is a message from God to us. He speaks even more clearly in his Word and we need to trust him completely, learn to understand him better and better, and accept his will without reservation (YOUCAT 20). I now feel somehow incomplete and impoverished if I do not start my day by reading and reflecting on Scripture *"For the Word of God is living and active.....it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart"* (Hebrews 4:12). In my daily life God's Word really is *"a lamp to my feet and a light for my path"* (Psalm 119:105) and I have come to know that *"my word that goes out from my mouth will not return to me empty but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it"* (Isaiah 55:11).

As I read the Scriptures the Lord often prepares me for something He is going to do, for something I am going to encounter, for an opportunity or a challenge He is going to lay before me

In my experience this is true of the Word of Scripture, of Jesus the Word made flesh, of the personal word spoken in my heart and of the prophetic word which is discerned as coming from the Lord. As I read the Scriptures the Lord often prepares me for something He is going to do, for something I am going to encounter, for an opportunity or a challenge he is going to lay before me. Reading the Scriptures, with the Holy Spirit enlightening and inspiring me, has transformed my life - not only my spiritual life but equally the day to day reality of all the normal things I have to do.

I love the Bible and I have many different translations to which I can refer. My favourite remains my first Jerusalem Bible which I bought in 1976 when God said to me "Read My Word!" and I can think of no better way to grow in my relationship with Him than by reading, reflecting on and listening deeply to His Word in my heart. It remains for me a life-changing experience.

(c) Charles Whitehead

TWO IN ONE FLESH SPIRITUALITY OF MARRIAGE

Goodnews reports on the publication of “I am with You”, a 3 volume resource of weekly reflections on the Sunday Mass readings to help promote a mature and meaningful marriage spirituality.

In our consumerist, individualistic Western culture marriage seems an increasingly fragile institution. Many young people don't bother getting married at all and those who do, find it difficult to stay together, with people divorcing both in the very early years of marriage and now increasingly even after 30 or 40 years together. Sadly despite the Church's idealistic teaching, marriage breakdown among Christians is not much different from the rest of society.

Concerned at what they were seeing, nine years ago, a group of Catholic married couples who had got to know each other through their leadership of the Marriage Encounter Movement, began to meet together to try and formulate a spirituality of marriage which could be helpful to married couples wanting to bring their Christian faith into their relationship in a practical way.

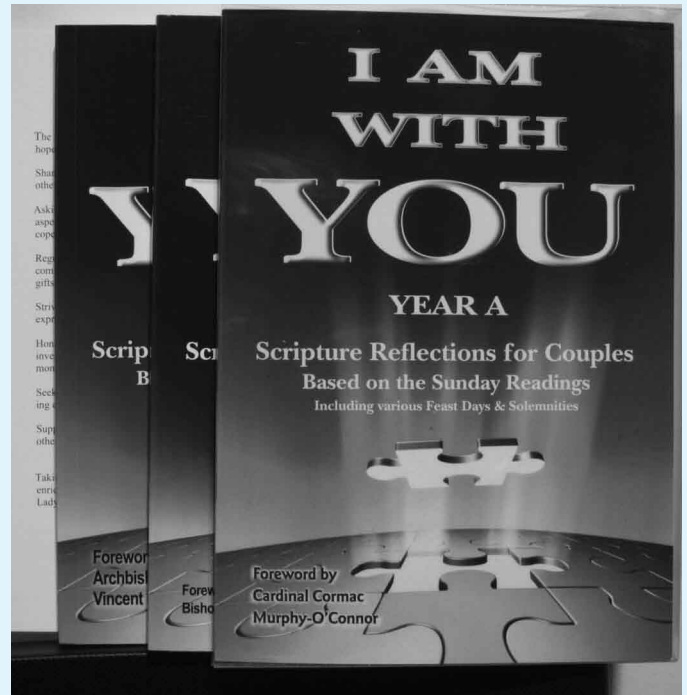


Brian Devine, one of them, comments, “It seemed to us that our clergy, in not wanting to be seen as critical or condemning of those who had been through the trauma of the collapse of their marriages were, out of sensitivity to them, shying away from the subject altogether. But what of the rest of us, that did need to hear the Good News about

marriage and did need support on how to live that out?”

Over a period of two years, meeting two or three times a year, the group distinguished between what they saw to be marital spirituality and family spirituality. Brian comments, “It seemed to us that for the Church marriage was or had been subsumed under the general heading of the all embracing word “family” and we needed a distinctive spirituality for marriage itself.” From these initial reflections some years ago came the booklet “Two in One Flesh”, a name that the group adopted for themselves too.

The Two in One Flesh team, after six years have now written a series of reflections based on the Sunday Mass Readings for years A,B and C to help Catholic married couples ground their marriages in their faith in an ongoing way.



The three volume work has received enthusiastic praise from many quarters. Cardinal Cormac Murphy O'Connor writing the forward to one of the volumes writes “This book is an invaluable contribution to the task of returning us to the sacred Word of God which offers sustenance, inspiration and encouragement.” Geoff and Gina Poulter, directors of the Catholic Bible School commented, “Truly wonderful and thought provoking books.. written and compiled by couples for couples... couples who obviously practice what they preach.”

Tony Castle, who works for the diocese of Brentwood, commented, “three words run through the whole of these books: Sacrament of love. For couples who recognize their marriage to be just that, these admirable books will deepen and enrich their union. For couples for whom the concept is challenging, it will open up an understanding and a relationship with Christ that they never dreamed possible.” Other glowing endorsements include Fr Daniel O'Leary who writes, “Because of their hard but loving experiences, the authors write with unique honesty. Each page offers wise ways of recovering, sustaining and increasing intimacy in marriage – unconditionally.” Archbishop Vincent Nichols writes, “The I am With You Trilogy of books are not just reflections for spouses based on the Sunday readings. The timing of this work is also of profound significance. Many in the Church at this time as well as society at large are expressing anxiety and concern over the status of marriage. May the same Lord portrayed in Scripture fulfill His promise of undying love for all those who will benefit from using these books week by week”.

For more details contact Brian and Maureen Devine 01702 472848 email maurbril3@yahoo.co.uk

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The *unfinished* business of Vatican II (part 2)



Marcellino d'Ambrosio continues his overview of Vatican II, its legacy and what still remains to be done from his point of view

The Second Vatican Council's teaching on the nature and mission of the Church is extensive. A full treatment of it would demand an entire book, not an article such as this. Here we'll limit ourselves to only a few observations on the broadest features. The first thing to note is the fundamental model of the Church in the Council documents. Cardinal Avery Dulles, in his famous book "Models of the Church", points out that all of us at least subconsciously operate with a fundamental paradigm of what the Church of Christ is and ought to do. The Protestant Reformation tended to minimize the apostolic structure and visible nature of the Church. In response, many Catholic theologians felt compelled to defend the Church as an institution and visible society, leading to an emphasis on the hierarchy and their governmental authority for the next several hundred years. Vatican II, while reaffirming the Church's hierarchical character, wished instead to return the more biblical and patristic vision of the Church as a communion of persons flowing from the loving relationship of the three divine persons of the Most Holy Trinity. This "communio ecclesiology" undergirds all the Council's documents and is commented on widely after the Council by, among others, John Paul II and Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger who became Pope Benedict XVI. It colours the Catechism of the Catholic Church, one of the great achievements of the post-conciliar period which can be seen as a synthesis and popular expression of the Council's teaching. The Code of Canon law was even revised in 1983 so that law and governmental structures would follow the priority of personal relationship with God and with one another.

The Church as Communio

So the Communio ecclesiology of the council has had great impact in many respects. Yet regrettably, the way in which the pastoral

structures of the Church function on a day to day basis often appear untouched by the vision of the Church as a communio. One example of this is with regard to the role of bishop in a diocese. The bishop is primarily a father whose role it is to teach, pastor, and sanctify the faithful and in a special way, the brother priests and deacons who assist him in carrying out his pastoral mission. Yet still in many circumstances, the bishop functions more as an administrator than as a father. One of the seldom noted causes of several priestly pedophilia scandals, in my view, is that bishops often do not know many of their priests personally. Priests' training, selection, and assignments are usually delegated to others. In an internationally publicized pedophilia lawsuit in the early nineties, it emerged that a lengthy letter was written to the bishop from one of his priests which detailed the alarming and inappropriate activity of another priest later convicted of abominable crimes. The jury was shocked to learn that the letter was never even read by the bishop but was rather reviewed by the bishop's staff. There are some things that can and must be delegated to assistants by any leader. But if the Church is first and foremost a communion of persons, a family as it were, personal care and communication cannot be delegated. If a bishop or pastor becomes inaccessible, barricaded behind various levels of committees, we are dealing with bureaucracy and not communio.

As Archbishop of Buenos Aires and now as Bishop of Rome and successor of Peter, Pope Francis has set a wonderful example of the implications of the Council's Communio ecclesiology for the life and ministry of the Church's ministers. I am hopeful that leaders at every level of the Church's life from dioceses to parishes to Catholic schools will take their cue from Pope Francis in furthering the Council's agenda in this regard.

The Laity, Tradition, and Religious Education

The Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, Dei Verbum (DV), was one of the last documents of the Council to be finalized because the issues it treated were so delicate and complex. One of those issues was the nature of Tradition. The Council of Trent,

in the face of the Protestant revolt, had reaffirmed the authority of “Traditions” as well as Scripture. But it never really described the nature of Tradition and its special role in the transmission of revealed truth. This is precisely one of the great achievements of Dei Verbum, drawing on important theological spadework done by Yves Congar and others. The content of Tradition cannot be limited to specific doctrines or practices, but consists rather in “all that the Church is and believes (DV 8).” It is an entire heritage, a vision of God and indeed of all reality, that is passed on from generation to generation under the watchful eye of the bishops, the successors of the apostles, with laity and clergy participating in the process as in “a single, common effort” (DV 10). There are aspects of Tradition’s content that must be “caught” and not simply taught. That is to say that it needs to be passed on through living practice and prayer.

This deeper insight into the rich content and distinct process of Tradition has many implications that were understood by the Council Fathers. The family, the domestic church, is the place where impressionable young people spend the most time and so must be the key place where the transmission of the Catholic Tradition must take place. Parents must be recognized, says the Council, as the primary religious educators of their children and must be equipped for this task with adequate formation in Christian doctrine (LG 35; AA 28-32).

The religious education programmes in many Catholic parishes have not yet caught up with this conciliar vision. If they had, adult education and parenting courses would be top priority in parish faith formation programmes. Though some strides have been made in this direction (the RCIA is one), by and large adult education outside of RCIA is often regarded as an optional extra. Evangelical Churches generally put Catholic parishes to shame in the emphasis placed on continuing adult education which is focused on bible study, parenting and Christian family life.

Ecumenism and Evangelization

The Second Vatican Council’s decrees on Ecumenism (UR), the Apostolate of the Laity (AA), and Missions (AGD) all outline the vigorous apostolic action of the part of the entire Church, clergy and laity, in the areas of Ecumenism and Evangelisation, which are targeted as twin pastoral priorities of the age. All are to be engaged in praying and working for the restoration of full Christian unity and the proclamation of the Gospel to all who need to hear it, from the primitive peoples in remote, unevangelised corners of the world to the inactive Catholic next door.

Despite the flurry of ecumenical activity immediately after the Council, today we see little ecumenical awareness at the parish level. Petitions for Christian unity seldom appear in the prayer of the faithful. There is little talk about the topic and even less action. Some notable models of successful collaboration in mission over the past years has been Alpha, where many churches in a given locale collaborate in advertising a course proclaiming the basic gospel message. And without cooperation between Protestants and Catholics, Mel Gibson’s movie “The Passion of the Christ” would have never made it past the Hollywood blockade to become the international evangelistic success that it was. This is progress

beyond where things stood in 1962, but much more needs to be done.

Apart from these two notable exceptions, our worst record, perhaps, is in the very area of evangelisation. Vatican II proclaimed evangelisation as top priority, saying that the task of carrying the gospel of Jesus Christ to those who have not yet accepted it is more urgent now than ever (AGD 1 and 7). All must be involved in this work not only through witness of life but in words as well, able and ready to provide a reason for the hope they have in Christ (AA6 and AGD 23). All the forms of social communication must be utilized, including modern mass media. John Paul II wrote in 1983 in Redemptoris Missio 3 that “the time has come to devote all of the Church’s energies to new evangelisation.”

Yet fifty years after the Council, it is rather rare to find a parish where the evangelisation of the inactive and the unchurched has any prominent place in the parish mission statement –to find a parish where there is any effective training in such evangelisation is even rarer. The vast majority of Catholics, including not a few clergy, don’t have the faintest idea of where to start to bring an unchurched person to faith in Christ and participation in the life of the Church. Clearly, when it comes to making evangelisation a top priority, more than a few have dropped the ball.

The Task at Hand

Fortunately, when someone fumbles the ball, a teammate is free to pick it up and run it across the goal line. The story about Trent and the seminary system should encourage us that it is not too late to pick up the work of implementing the Council and move it towards completion. In all the areas we have spoken about—inward liturgical renewal, a shift in religious education, the triumph of a true *communio ecclesiology*, and effective commitment to ecumenism and evangelisation—the task is not changing texts or structures. Rather, it is about changing people. Human beings are creatures of habit. And habits take time to change. And when you are trying to change attitudes and habits of a community one billion strong, change simply takes a long time and a lot of energy.

So it should not surprise us that, fifty years after the close of the Council, much of the Council’s vision still remains to be implemented. Much prayer and hard work lie ahead of us. But I can think of one intercessor whose prayers we can count on for assistance—Pope John Paul II. This pontiff, who many believe should be called “the Great,” assumed the double name of the two popes of the Second Vatican Council in order to demonstrate that his entire pontificate was dedicated to the implementation of that Council’s directives. May he never cease praying for us as we seek to carry out his unfinished work under the inspiring leadership of his successor, Pope Francis, who so embodies the spirit of the Council.

Marcellino D’Ambrosio, aka “Dr. Italy,” writes from Texas. For additional resources on Vatican II or info on his pilgrimages to Rome & the Holy Land, visit www.crossroadsinitiative.com



Small is beautiful

Fr Chris Thomas reflects on the fact that the early Christian Communities were small house churches of disciples.

Many years ago I was in Dublin working with a group of young people when a punk rocker who was living on the streets came into the room. He challenged me and said he didn't believe that people could have an experience of Jesus. He felt that most Christians believed in Christianity because it suited their particular understanding of the world. I asked him to go away and to read John 3:16 and to think about it. He came back the next day. He wept as he told the group that as he had reflected on that Gospel passage, Jesus had reached into his life and begun a process of transformation in him.

When Paul of Tarsus and the early evangelists proclaimed the Gospel they didn't see it just as a set of ideas or philosophies. For them the proclamation that Jesus has died and is risen and is Lord of the whole universe was a means by which God reached into the hearts and minds of people and enabled them to enter into the process of transformation.

Formation of communities of love

This process of transformation meant that they grew in love and formed communities of love. It meant that people were transformed within because of this gift of God and it meant that they were prepared to suffer for the sake of their new way of living because it meant everything to them. To go back to an ordinary way of life after an authentic Jesus experience is almost impossible because it's not life it's just existence.

However we sometimes get the wrong impression about the early Church. I guess it's because we filter our understanding through our 21st century western cultural assumptions we presume that Christianity swept across the world with huge numbers involved. In fact the churches that Paul and the others founded were small house churches that met at Dorcas' house or Priscilla and Aquila's house. Some of the scholars tell us that they were at most forty strong. It wasn't until the advent of Constantine in the fourth century when Christianity became the official religion of the empire that numbers began to really swell as cultural Christianity became a reality. The first Church communities were small groups of people sharing their lives and allowing the grace of God to transform them. I wish we had the same sense of God's grace working in our lives as those early Church communities had. We seem to put all our hopes for people's conversion on this programme

and that programme without recognising that it's God's work. We seem to think that if we give people lots of information that they will be transformed when in fact it's the Spirit of God that does the transformation.

If our lives are not being transformed then we are not Gospel people

Transformation is the essence of the Gospel. If our lives are not being transformed then we're not Gospel people. It doesn't matter how many Masses we go to or how often we pray for the healing of the family tree that still doesn't make us Gospel people. How prepared are we to take the risk to change deeply within? Is the bitterness and anger and self righteousness within us being softened and altered? How much in touch are we with our vulnerability and our weakness? How willing are we to look foolish to others? How open are we to the Spirit and the way in which we're prompted by that Spirit? It's our willingness to enter into the process of transformation that makes us Gospel people on fire for Jesus.

It's our willingness to enter into the process of transformation that makes us Gospel people on fire for Jesus.

Paul and the others founded small communities of people who had an experience of the risen Christ and because of that were into transformation. It seems to me, however, that very few people seem to want to be transformed. Very few

people desire God enough to really want to open themselves up to the overwhelming of the Holy Spirit.

The numbers of people who want to be genuinely transformed will always be small just as they were in the early Church. So don't lose heart when the numbers in your prayer community are falling. Don't be upset when the Life in the spirit seminar isn't full or nothing seems to happen. Don't become disillusioned when the numbers at the Day of Renewal seem to be falling off. Keep on offering the space and the time for the Spirit to work the miracle of transformation. For those who meet the Risen Christ real life will happen and if it is only one person who begins to respond to the Gospel then rejoice in the salvation that that person experiences.



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

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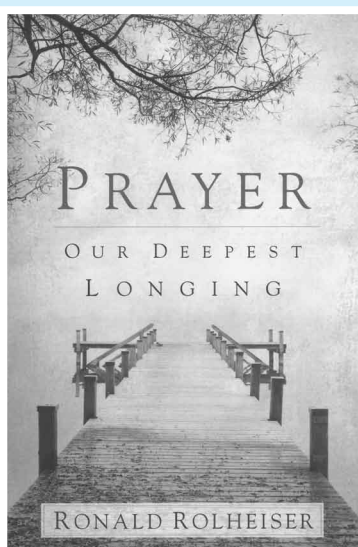
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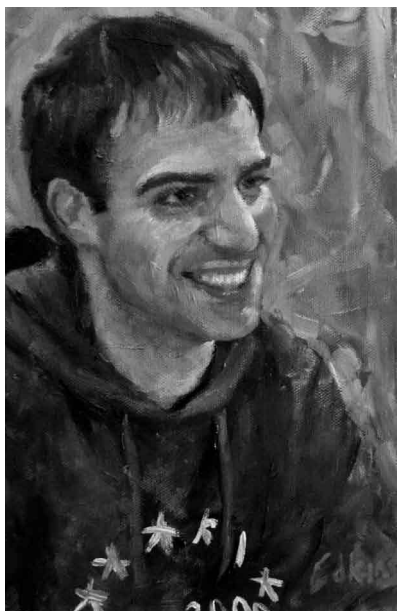
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Letting go of Daniel

Fiona Mansford reflects on the life of Daniel Brudney, who was one of the leaders of YOUTH 2000 and who died tragically last autumn at the age of 33 in a car accident.

I first met Daniel in 2010 when I started working for Youth 2000 and he was part of the leadership team. We often have to make the best out of what we have on Youth 2000 retreats because of lack of resources and personnel, but I knew if something broke I didn't have to worry. Dan would always know how to fix it, or what to do to solve a problem. He had this incredible ability to serve with joy and enthusiasm. Daniel had a brilliant mind: He was a medical doctor and even though he was only 33, he was a consultant in microbiology and worked at the Lister Hospital in Stevenage. Most participants at our retreats, however, would have known him as the go-to man in wellies with marigold gloves, who fixed the plumbing and electrics and cleaned the loos, or pegged down the marquee when the winds got up at our summer festival at Walsingham.

Our retreats are very reflective and we place a lot of emphasis on Eucharistic adoration and silence, but Daniel wasn't one for sitting around in silent prayer a lot. I know initially, I wondered about this. How and when did Daniel pray? What was his faith like? He made me realize that there is not a template for holiness but each person follows God in a unique and personal way. Daniel's way of loving and serving God was to clean, fix and help whoever and wherever needed!

We were all perhaps a bit over dependent on Daniel and this summer he began to train up some younger guys to take over the site management for the Walsingham Youth Festival. For the first time there were other young people running around whereas before it would have just been him. At times, I could see that something wasn't quite working as it should have been. My initial reaction was to ask Daniel to sort it

out. But, referring to the new team he told me: "They are figuring things out. It will be fine" and he was right. We were all shocked when we heard the news of Daniel's death. He died on Friday (13th September 2013) a week after his 33rd birthday. It was a dark, rainy evening and he was driving home from work when his car came off the road. No other cars were involved and he died of internal injuries in the ambulance on the way to hospital. For all of us there has been a sense of "Why?" You can't help it; when someone so young who is doing such good work for the Lord, dies so suddenly.

I was much more touched by Daniel's death than I expected. When I was leading a retreat, if he was there, I would feel this sense of security. Daniel is here so everything will be okay. I wouldn't have called myself a close friend of Daniel's, but his death has left a big gap and I miss him. If I could change things I certainly would have wanted him always to be here and would never let him go.

Because of his activity in Youth 2000 and other groups, a lot of people in the Catholic London scene knew Daniel and loved him. One of the great helps for us has been that we have been able to grieve together and share our memories and stories about him, which are legendary. One of his close friends commented, "Daniel never wasted a moment. Everything he did had a meaning. He made me think I want to be more like that."

Some years ago, there was a young guy who was struggling with his faith. Janet, one the Youth 2000 Leadership Team, suggested that he look for someone whom he admired and whom he might take as a role model. The guy brushed the suggestion aside as there was nobody. After Daniel died, this guy said to her "I have been thinking about that conversation we had two years ago.... I have found someone I want to be like ... Daniel." And for me, whatever his human imperfections that's the sign of a saint.

CHEMIN NEUF and a NEW WORK OF UNITY IN THE UK

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, announced last November that he had asked the Chemin Neuf community, a Charismatic Covenant community to come and live at Lambeth Palace and to pray and work for the ecumenical and international dimensions of his work. Who are Chemin Neuf and why would a Roman Catholic community be asked to take on such a responsibility and be invited to such intimacy with the primate of the Anglican communion?

Although Chemin Neuf was founded by a Jesuit priest (Fr Laurent Fabre) and a group of Catholic students in Lyon, France, in the early 1970s, right from its initial foundation it has had a concern for Christian Unity. This ecumenical vocation intensified over the years as members from other denominations felt called to join while retaining their own Christian traditions. Difference was seen as a source of enrichment rather than division and these close relationships helped fuel the calling to pray and work for Reconciliation within the body of Christ. Every day the community, which has now spread to 28 different countries, prays that the Church would be one. Although Roman Catholic members predominate in most countries this has not been the case in the UK where there is a much more of a mix and it was actually Anglicans who invited the community to come to England. Fifteen years ago, Charles and Felicity Hadley, an Anglican clergyman and his wife, inspired by what they saw of Chemin Neuf while visiting in France, encouraged the community to come to the West Country and set up a foundation at St Gildas in Langport. Here Chemin Neuf has run a formation and retreat centre with courses on spirituality and worked for Christian unity in often small and unseen ways.

For much of this time the community in the UK was led by Dominique and Marie Christine Ferry, a French Catholic couple who, sensing a strong calling and at great personal sacrifice left their homeland to come to help found the community in England. Within a few years, Dominique in recognition of his personal gifts, was invited to join the English NSC for CCR. The couple had always hoped that Chemin Neuf would be able to run a hall of residence for Catholic university students in London, which had been a key way that the community had evangelized in France. But this was not to be. In the meantime, however, as is so often the case, the Lord was planting even more important seeds for the future through them and others in the community. One of the close friendships they developed was with a then

little known Anglican priest called Justin Welby. He was very touched by the spirituality of Chemin Neuf and became a great supporter. Because of these long standing relationships of trust and the strong Anglican dimension of Chemin Neuf in the UK, it is perhaps understandable now that Archbishop Welby should want the experience and commitment of such a community by his side, in his difficult and demanding role. The Chemin Neuf community living in Lambeth Palace will be made up of four people. Alan Morley Fletcher, an Anglican layman, and the new leader of Chemin Neuf in the UK and his wife, Ione; Oliver Matri, (a Lutheran training for the ministry) and Ula Michlowicz (a Roman Catholic consecrated sister).

If this was not enough, further seeds the community planted over the years have also suddenly sprung to life recently. The Community has been invited by Archbishop Vincent Nichols to take on responsibility for the Christ the King parish at Cockfosters in North London. The installation of the new parish priest Fr. Michel Le Piuoff, took place on 8th December. The intention is that he will eventually be joined

by a seminarian, a consecrated celibate sister and some young community members from Chemin Neuf. It is interesting that it should be this particular parish which the community has been given as it has long been the home of ecumenical activity. First through the work of the well known charismatic Benedictine monk, Benedict Heron OSB and then through the famous ecumenical prayer group he founded at Cockfosters, which is still going 40 years later and which has been a hub of healing, evangelization and conversion

for many years. Fr Michael recently visited Dom Benedict, who is now in a nursing home, and received his blessing and encouragement for the new mission and the future.

Meanwhile with the lease at St Gildas due to expire at the end of 2014 the main Chemin Neuf community house in the UK will be moving to Storrington near Arundel. Here the Norbertine Canons Regular have offered a long lease to the community for the beautiful and historic Priory of Our Lady of England. The priory needs substantial renovation to upgrade the fire and safety systems but the community hope that it will be up and running by the second half of 2014. Meanwhile up north Chemin Neuf's presence continues in Liverpool through the witness of Tim and Kate Watson who serve both the Anglican and Catholic churches as well as holding a weekly prayer group and engaging with other Christian denominations in Liverpool. Tim who is an Anglican priest, serves as a curate in the Anglican cathedral and in a parish, while his wife, Kate, who is a Catholic works as an assistant to the Catholic chaplain in Hope University.



Left to right: Oliver Matri, Ula Michlowicz, Ione & Alan Morley-Fletcher

Tel: 01903 742 150 - www.chemin-neuf.org.uk

CCR Centre



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

We have been continuing our monthly outreach in the colonnade of Our Lady of Dolours Church and our volunteers have been very excited at the conversations they have been having with people and the opportunity to pray with some of them. On Mondays (2-4pm) we also have a small group of volunteers who have committed to come and pray for healing. This is meeting a real need and bearing fruit (thank you Eileen, Kate, Neal and Niru). We thank the Lord for others who are already helping (Maureen, Monica and Pauline) but as time goes on more needs are uncovered by the ministry and we really do need more volunteers to help us in every aspect of the work of the Centre. This includes answering the phone and office administration, prayer ministry, keeping the place clean and tidy and helping with the cooking. We would also like help at weekends manning the Goodnews stall at various events and to run some CaFE courses possibly in the evening or lunch time at the Centre. At the moment we have a monthly intercession meeting on the 3rd Wednesdays but we would really like to start a regular weekly prayer meeting too. To do this we need to ensure that we have enough people to form a core team which would take responsibility for the development of this. So if you would like to be part of the CCR Centre community and offer time on a regular basis please do contact Gabriele (020 7352 5298 / email ccruk @ onetel.com) or speak to me, Tim (07875 848138 email tim.stevens6 @ btinternet.com) and discuss what you might be able to offer.

The CREW Trust has its Trustees meetings here on a regular basis as well as the Goodnews Editorial meetings. If there are any prayer groups or ministries that would like to use our facilities – particularly the meeting room - on an occasional basis please speak to me or Gabriele to see what might be available.

In November we have had quite a few visitors. Fr Soji and four of his team from Sehion UK came on the 5th November to meet Michelle and share with her what they have been doing. These included his co workers Jackson Jose and Jose Joseph, as well as Sr Mina (who used to be part of the leadership of the Westminster Cathedral Hall prayer group) and Deacon David Palmer (who used to be part of the CaFE team). David moved to the Midlands a couple of years ago and recently has started helping Fr Soji's ministry. You can read about some of Sehion UK's evangelistic work in Kristina's report on page 12. At the end of November

we welcomed Teresa Pereira and Monica de Jesus Novak (C a n ç ã o Nova) and Emanuela Cardoso (S h a l o m Community) two of the l a r g e s t



communities from Brazil (see picture), which now have communities in London. They discussed with Michelle their vision and plans for the future. These meetings are a way of building community between the English NSC and the many different foreign communities that are now working the UK.

We have had some occasional visitors coming too. Rose Boon from Singapore came with two friends Jacob and Thomas, while they were in London. Sr Edith Stein from the Beatitudes also dropped by with a couple of friends to see the new centre. Helen Kars as she was originally known was one of the founding members of Myles Dempsey's prayer group in New Eltham 30 years ago before she joined the Beatitudes. It was she who got Myles to pray with her agnostic brother, Jean Rodolphe Kars, then an international concert pianist, who through Myles' ministry had a conversion experience and eventually became a priest with the Emmanuel community in France. Fr Jean Rodolphe now serves as a chaplain at Paray Le Monial.

We have been blessed in the past with having had a very low rent at Allen Hall and not even having to pay rent while we stayed at CAFOD, but we now have to pay, what for us is, a very substantial rent. As the activities of the Centre don't generate income as such, we are thus dependent on donations to help us to continue our work. Thank you very much to those who already do send us financial donations. Without your support we would not be able to continue. Please pray for us and the future development of the Centre that we may prayerfully discern what the Lord is calling us to do and carry out His will and that the Lord will continue to provide for our needs.

Following the very successful Mass we had last year to celebrate the opening of the CCR Centre, we plan to have this on an annual basis for our supporters and friends. This year's Mass will be on Thursday, 27th March at 6.30pm. All welcome.

FIRST JOINT RETREAT ORGANISED BY TRAVELLER COMMUNITY AND CCR

Irish Travellers are known for their strong Roman Catholic culture but in recent years many are increasingly being wooed away by anti-Catholic evangelicals, which causes all kinds of social problems within the community. Travellers' Renewal led by Margaret Doran and Ann Casey, together with friends from the CCR, have organized a special weekend of Renewal and Healing. Through this they hope to encourage those who have never had a personal experience of Christ or who have left the Church to come back and find Jesus in their own tradition. This will take place at St Anslem's Church, The Green, Southall 10th-12th January. Fr Pat Collins is coming over from Dublin to lead the weekend gathering, which is non-residential and will be a combination of preaching, apologetics and healing. Archbishop Kevin McDonald is also showing his support for the group, who have often experienced rejection in the Church, and he will celebrate Mass on Saturday and take part in the Question and Answer panel. Travellers' Renewal would like as many as possible of their friends in the CCR to come and support the venture which they want to be a witness of unity, love and solidarity in Christ. Please pray for the event that there will be many conversions and healings of past hurts. ALL WELCOME.



GREAT HUNGER FOR THE SCRIPTURES FOLLOWING JEFF CAVINS VISIT



The visit of Jeff Cavins, the American Catholic apologist and teacher, who developed the Catholic Bible Timeline and toured the UK 11th-16th November last year, was a huge success. A brilliant communicator Jeff spoke at various venues in Manchester, Birmingham, Liverpool, Portsmouth and London to very appreciative audiences, hungry to know more about the Scriptures in a Catholic context. On Saturday 16th November, he ran a whole day seminar to explain the Bible Timeline at Westminster Cathedral Hall. The Bible Timeline is a simple way to understand the salvation story, by identifying in the Old Testament the key narrative books, and showing how they prepare for the coming of Christ. Goodnews Books, who ran the bookstall at all his talks were overwhelmed with people wanting to buy the Ascension Press Scripture resources. Up until now there has been a difficulty in getting some of these, which include DVD and CD courses as well as books and other materials. However with the coming over of two of the Ascension Publishers' sales team, Lynn and John, this looks like it will be no longer a problem. The team said they had never seen such hunger for the Word and many people signed cards saying they would be willing to run Jeff's DVD bible series in their parishes, as well as buying the DVDs and CDs. Advice is available from Ascension Press email studyconsultant@ascensionpress.com or by calling 001 608 565 2020. **All Jeff Cavins material is available from Goodnews Books 01582 571011 or email toni@goodnewsbooks.net**



Jersey Island Mission

Last September (2013) the island of Jersey experienced a mission with a difference, when 55 members of the Sion Community for Evangelism and their team, spent three weeks sharing the gospel in the homes, streets, school, prisons and seven churches of the island. The visit was at the invitation of Mgr Nicholas France, the parish priest of Jersey, and a culmination of the Year of Faith. The aim was to encourage all his parishioners to be able to share their faith better and to reach out to resting Catholics and those who had never heard the Good News of the Gospel. As well as visiting thousands of homes, the team visited 15 primary and secondary schools, Catholic and secular, and led 17 seminars, workshops and evangelisation training days, as well as 9 mission services. Fr Simon Penhalagan, the president of Sion, commented, "We saw amazing fruits, both from being able to be there for a more extended time than normal and being able to develop deeper relationships with people and because the parish took the risk of trying new things."

It was a completely free festival of food, activities and entertainment which attracted over 1000 people. This facilitated a lot of one to one evangelistic conversations, as well as being great fun for all the participants. Parishioners backed up the event with Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and the day culminated in a 300 strong Eucharistic procession back to the parish church. About 30 parishioners, accompanied by members of the Sion community, went onto the streets of St Aubin, which has a lively night life, and invited them to come and light candles and pray in the church, where the Blessed Sacrament was exposed. The mission culminated with all the Catholics of the island being asked to gather for a single celebration of the Mass in Fort Regent (Jersey's version of the O2 Arena). Two thousand people attended the beautiful liturgy, which was preached by Fr Ged Kelly from Sion, with worship led by a joint choir of the seven churches. Fr Simon commented, "It was truly a fitting way to end what had been an extraordinary three weeks, both in the outpouring of faith and the growth in the sharing of that faith."

MASS FOR THE FRIENDS OF CATHOLIC CHARISMATIC RENEWAL

Following last year's very successful Mass to celebrate the opening of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Centre in Chelsea it has been decided to make this an annual event for our supporters. **Archbishop Kevin McDonald**, the liaison bishop for the CCR will concelebrate the 6.30pm Mass at Our Lady of Dolours Church, 264 Fulham Road, London SW10 9EL on Thursday, 27th March 2014. All Welcome.



NEW INFORMATION/CONTACT COORDINATOR

Eddie Drozdziak, from the English NSC will be the new National coordinator for the Diocesan information contact.

Eddie can be contacted at 0161 962 9459
email: eddiedrozdziak@bulldoghome.com



CHARISM SCHOOL

CHARISM SCHOOL (residential) with Damian Stayne at Cor Lumen Christi, Cumbria 28th February–2nd March 2014. See back page 36 for details.

NEW WEB SITE ADDRESS FOR DERBY HEALING LIGHT MINISTRY

The Derby Healing Light Ministry website has been hacked into so they have had to close it down. Their new web site address is www.healinglightministry-derby.com tel 01332 347995 or 01332 830491

LIFT JESUS HIGHER NEW YEAR'S EVE GATHERING

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Praise and worship, adoration, fellowship and Mass. **Bring food to share.** contact 07767 765262
www.dayofrenewal.co.uk



FR AIRTON FREIRE founder of *Fundação Terra in Brazil* will be leading a retreat 28th Feb-2nd March at Pantasaph Retreat Centre. Contact: Fr Keith OFM Cap, Franciscan Friary, Pantasaph, Holywell, Flintshire CH8 8PE.
Tel: 01352 711 053

www.pantasaph.org.uk pantasaph@gmail.com

BIRMINGHAM CCR CONFERENCE MOVES LOCATION

The Birmingham CCR Conference, which has been held annually for the last five years at the Paragon Hotel in Birmingham, this summer will move to a new venue, St John's Hotel, in Solihull. See advert next page.

WEEKEND OF RENEWAL with ROS POWELL

22nd-23rd February at St Matthew's, 23 Hallowell Rd, Northwood, Middx HA6 1DW

Registration essential before 1st February.
Contact Pat 07918 128248

SHREWSBURY CCR CONFERENCE

14th-16th February at Pantasaph Retreat Centre.
Speaker Fr Ged Kelly.
Further details Ann Murray 0151 645 5514
or Pat McNeil 01928 722670

ENGLISH NSC changes Thank you Pat and Dominique

Last year saw Dominique Ferry and Pat Kennedy stepping down from the English NSC after many years of fruitful service.



Dominique, who was the head of the Chemin Neuf community in this country for 10 years, has now returned to France with his wife Marie Christine. He will be remembered for his wisdom, humility and teaching ability, as well as all he contributed to the NSC while he was here.



Pat Kennedy, who is the chairwoman of the Diocesan Service Team for CCR (Hexham & Newcastle), also contributed a lot to the NSC through her passion, her prophetic and administration gifts as well as her teaching and leadership. Involved in the Healing & Deliverance ministry for many years, she was responsible for drawing up health and safety guidelines for the healing ministry, which have been taken up in many dioceses. They will both be very missed.

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ON THE MOVE



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Year's for our 2014 Conference 11th to 15th August



The Birmingham Catholic Charismatic Renewal Conference is on the move after many blessed years at the Paragon. The Paragon is about to be refurbished so we are moving to St John's which is on the outskirts of Birmingham and still within The Archdiocese of Birmingham.

This new venue will give the Conference more space and facilities for the Talks, Young Adults and Children's Streams. We will also have a larger Chapel and rooms for additional talks together with a designated reception area and is set in pleasant grounds. The staff have been very welcoming.

All bedrooms have been recently refurbished and are en-suite. St John's is very well located for buses from almost every part of Birmingham and for local trains and is just 5 minutes off the M42 The station is ideal for trains from all points including London, Oxford and the North.

Ray Russell is available for further information on 0121060 3842 or visit our website: www.Bccrc.org.uk



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SEPT 14TH – 20TH - HOLYWELL, NORTH WALES

FOR OUTREACH DAYS, PARISH MISSIONS AND FURTHER COURSES PLEASE SEE OUR WEBSITE!

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E mail: bookings@littlewayhealingministries.com

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Pauline's book "A Little Way of Healing" is available from the website.



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