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***Ecumenical Community of***

***Spiritual Directors***

***Summer Newsletter***

***July 2019***

*12th July 2019*

Dear Colleagues

In this season of summer warmth and breeze, with opportunity for rest, relaxation and recreation, I send this brief newsletter with some important bits of information.

**The first item** is a thank you for holding and sustaining the ministry of spiritual direction and accompaniment. I feel we sometimes under-estimate how important it is to give the gift of gratitude and appreciation to others and receive it for ourselves. In “*Befriending Ourselves: an invitation to Love*”[[1]](#footnote-2) Byron Katie writes:

*“Everything flourishes in the nourishment of our appreciation. If we are interested in greater flourishing in our lives, it will surely serve us to surrender the burden of incessant goals, shoulds, aspirations, and the need for accomplishments. We can release the litany of ideas about what we must have and need to fix, who we should be, and whose permission we might require before we can be grateful for who we are. We can even set down many of the confines of how we have learned to identify ourselves in the world. We do not need to do, have, or be anything to be worthy of receiving our own acceptance and kindness. Instead, we can turn towards ourselves, extending the gifts of more merciful appreciation for every aspect of who we are, exactly as we are. All of it. Here. Now. Perfectly imperfect. Imperfectly perfect”.*

1. **A DAY OF REFLECTION – WHERE IS GOD IN ALL OF THIS?**

The details of the next training and development are confirmed for **Saturday 2nd November 2019** from 9.30am – 4.00 pm which will explore a question favoured by spiritual directors: **Where is God in all this**? **Details of venue will be sent out by e-mail shortly –** butit’s likely to be in Gloucester or Cheltenham.

The day will be led by Julian Maddock who says he has been serving an apprenticeship as a spiritual director and supervisor since undergoing the 3-month course in Apostolic Spirituality at St Beuno's in 1989. He has also been hospital chaplain and has led both the 2nd and 3rd years of the Ignatian Spirituality Course at the London Centre for Spiritual Direction. Julian writes about the body, prayer, and the relationship with God at [www.thisbody.info](http://www.thisbody.info). He is also a [supervisor](http://www.thisbody.info/about/supervision/), [trainer](http://www.thisbody.info/about/training-facilitation-teaching/), and [writer](http://www.thisbody.info/why-this-body/).

He says: “***Where is God in all this****?” is a question much-beloved of spiritual directors. However, if God is ‘in all things’ then this question makes no sense. What is the purpose of this question? What are we really asking? What are better ways of addressing this? These questions get right to the heart of what spiritual direction is and what makes it different from other listening disciplines.*

*The God we seek is here. As spiritual directors, our craft is to live this. On this day we will pray together, explore our notions of God, play with our craft, seek courage to practise Presence, and explore how we might ask about God with those who come to talk with us”.*

* **The cost for the day will be £20.00 and you are most warmly invited to attend and support this event.**
* **To book your place, please complete and return the booking form attached between Monday 1st September and Friday 13th October**

***PAYMENT:***

* **Please make a cheque payable to ‘Spirituality Network for Gloucestershire’ and send this to me at my home address -** *details at end of newsletter*

***OR***

* **complete an online bank transfer to:**

Account Number 72011286

Sort Code 09 01 54

Please write your surname as the reference so that the payment can be identified on the SNG Bank Statement.

**Programme**

9.30 – 10.00am Arrivals and refreshments

10.00 – 10.15am Welcome, introductions and a time of reflection

10.15 – 11.15am Session 1

11.15 – 11.45am Break

11.45 – 12.30pm Session 2

12.30 – 1.00pm Presentation: The Gloucestershire Spiritual Direction Trust

1.00 – 1.45pm Lunch break. **Please bring your own packed lunch**.

1.45 – 3.00pm Session 3

3.00 – 3.30pm Break -

3.30 – 4.00pm Plenary and closing prayer

**2. HOT NEWS - THE GLOUCESTERSHIRE SPIRITUAL DIRECTION TRUST**

There isan exciting and innovative development in process, namely a proposal to establish a Gloucestershire Spiritual Direction Trust. **The details of this can be found as an attachment to this e-mail. Please do take a look - I would be grateful for your careful consideration of it in readiness for the meeting on 2nd November.**

**3. INFORMAL MEETINGS OF SPIRITUAL DRECTORS**

The informal gatherings of spiritual directors have been very well received (14th May, 3rd July) and details of the last event in 2019 are shown below. The aim is to nurture and build a community of fellowship within a ministry which is frequently experienced as isolating and ‘on the edge.’

This also enables the team members involved in considering requests for direction to get to know directors on a more personal basis.

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| **North** |
| Gloucester  Christ Church, Abbeydale  GL4 5EQ |
| Thursday  October 10th 2.00pm |

I extend a warm welcome to Rachel Beere, Sheila Appleton and Joe Neary as the most recent members of the Community who have joined us this year.

**AN INVITATION FROM SIOBHAN SMITH ABOUT THE TRAINING OF SPIRITUAL DIRECTORS**

**Siobhan writes: “** This coming year the tutors, alongside interested others, will be having a sabbatical year with the express intention of reviewing the course in all its aspects: venue, timing/format of the day, delivery of content, content itself, participants, the ‘community aspect’ of the student body.

If you have attended the GISD/Companion’s Way Course, we have two questions for you:

1. **What do you feel were the main strengths and weaknesses of the course for you personally?**
2. **From your experience working in SD is there anything you feel might have been usefully added to, or was missing from the course, or that could have been approached differently, that could have better prepared you to undertake the work of SD?’**

If you received training from a different course we would appreciate similar reflections from you too.

Please specify which course you attended and approximate year.

**Please email all comments to** [**siobhanimasmith@gmail.com**](mailto:siobhanimasmith@gmail.com)

With deepest gratitude for your time and reflection – **from The Tutor Team - A Companion’s Way**”

This newsletter comes with my prayers and warmest wishes

Chris

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1. https://gratefulness.org/blog/befriending-ourselves-an-invitation-to-love/ [↑](#footnote-ref-2)