

Voices of Mercy

The **Voices of Mercy** series of talks and reflection began with an inspiring evening at St Mary's, Sunderland. The sessions are being run with the Departments for Justice and Peace and Interreligious Dialogue.

The first evening was both inspiring and humbling as the people gathered heard from people who were involved in supporting those in prison.

We were joined by Fr Chris Hughes who spoke of his experiences of prison chaplaincy - inviting us to think of something we had done in the past that we are ashamed of and then to imagine living as if that was the only thing that defined us. Try it - it is a very effective exercise! He then spoke of chaplaincy as helping people to see that they are more than the worst they have ever done.

Rachel Waller spoke of the work of Open Gate - a charity that supports women before and after release from Low Newton. A very small team offers practical and emotional support to women at a very challenging time of their life. Many have lost everything - home, relationships, contact with their children. They may have drug or alcohol issues - and, too often, serious mental health problems.



Talking about the work of Open Gate

Finally, we heard from Liz who spoke as someone who had been at the receiving end of the work of Open Gate. She described aspects of prison life—and its aftermath—with humour but also with a directness that showed that much of what the media reports as luxury-living is completely wrong. She spoke warmly of the Open Gate team and the amazing women who do so much to make a difference.

The audience then split into smaller groups with one of the speakers in each to have more focused conversations which were enlightening - shocking - and inspiring.

Rachel is willing to come to parishes to talk about the work of Open Gate and help them to explore ways in which they can support it. Fr Chris also spoke about Prison Matters, a group that offers a 2x2hour course learning more about prison life and how parishes and groups can support people during and after their imprisonment. Both can be contacted via the Department—details opposite.

The same team will be running a session in **St Patrick's, Hartlepool on 16 March, 7pm**—it is well worth attending

Themes, dates and venues can be found overleaf. ☞

Reaching out in Mercy



The Celebrations of God's Mercy liturgies have been very well attended and stories are coming back to us of blessings that people have received—including those of people for whom coming back into a church was a massive step.

They continue in the following locations:

Wednesday 9 March,
St Mary's, Hexham
Wednesday 16 March,
St Mary Magdalene,
Seaham

Thursday 14 April	English Martyrs, Fenham
Thursday 28 April	St Joseph's, Durham
Wednesday 11 May	Immaculate Heart of Mary, Lobley Hill
Wednesday 25 May	St Mary's, Bishop Auckland
Thursday 9 June	St Patrick's, Consett
Thursday 23 June	St Joseph's, Sunderland
Thursday 7 July	St Bede's, Jarrow
Thursday 21 July	St Edward's, Whitley Bay

Watch out for more information locally and come along to one near you —with your own burdens and to support others.

And a reminder, if you are one of the "Anchors" in our diocese or a person who prays often at home, please pray for those who might be thinking of coming. Please pray in the time leading up to each service and, if you can, during it so that God's grace and mercy will touch those in need of them. Thank-you! ☞

It is amazing what you can spot when you keep your eyes open. Carrying in resources for a Day of Reflection at Minsteracres, this was spotted on the doorstep. It looks like a holding cross but was, in fact, dried mud from a boot. By the end of the day, rain had washed it away—but a reminder that you can truly find God in all things! ☞



Contact Details

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www.facebook.com/spiritualityHN



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Upcoming Events in the Diocese and Local Centres

Voices of Mercy

Revisiting the Works of Mercy—
alive and active in our region

Wednesday 16 March—
Visit the Imprisoned
led by Open Gate Team
St Patrick's, Hartlepool

Wednesday 13 April
Feed the Hungry/Give drink to the
Thirsty/Clothe the Naked
Speakers: TBC
St Cuthbert's, Crook

25 May—Visit the Sick,
Led Dr Kathryn Mannix, Clinical Lead,
Supportive, Palliative and End of Life Care
and Michael Lockie, Chaplain
St Cuthbert's, Chester-le-Street

Wednesday 15 June
Shelter the Homeless
Led by Alison Gelder,
CEO of Housing Justice
St Mary's, Hexham

Wednesday 20 July
Shelter the Homeless
Led by Alison Gelder,
CEO of Housing Justice
St Joseph's, North Shields

St Antony's Priory

**Saturday 12 March, 10am-11am ,
11.30am-12.30 pm**
Together in Meditation

Two separate hours of silent meditation
rooted in the Christian tradition

Thursday 17 March 6.30pm-8pm
Spring Sing

Spring Sing, which falls on St. Patrick's
Day, will focus on songs and verse from
the Emerald Isle.

Music to lift your spirit and get your feet
tapping and soul soaring.

Led By Lynn Nausner – St Antony's Priory

**Saturday 9 April, 10am-11am ,11.30am-
12.30pm**

Together in Meditation

Two separate hours of silent meditation
rooted in the Christian tradition

Saturday 23 April ,10am-3.30pm
"Downwardly mobile into life"

Drawing on the work of Henri Nouwen
and Jean Vanier to find new freedom in
Christ's way of humility.

Leader: Janet McHugh who has been
inspired by their writings

More information from
www.stantonypriory.co.uk
info@stantonypriory.co.uk,
0191 384 3747

Centre for Prayer and Mission, Seaham

Tuesday Evenings
8 March

The Restorative Face of Mercy
15 March

The Suffering Face of Mercy - through
a Taizé reflective evening

Monday afternoons – 1.30 pm -3.00 pm
Exploring Scripture
for those who wish to go deeper into
understanding the Word of God

16-22 July

Icon Workshop with Sr Annette
Artistic ability not essential – these are
primarily spiritual experiences. If you
are interested please send for
Application Form and details.
All materials available.

More information from
Sr Michael on 0191 581 3249
marymichael.lee7@gmail.com

Saturday 25 - Sunday 26 June Diocesan Festival 2016

'Limitless Love: Making All Things New'



A weekend of talks, music,
conversation and good company!

With Karen Kilby,
Steve Murray

and Barry and Margaret Mizen.

More information from
Diocesan Festival bookings
Emmaus Youth Village, Allensford,
Consett,
DH8 9BA
festival@diocesehn.org.uk

Minsteracres

Quiet Days of Reflection during Lent
Each day runs 10am - 4pm
9 March - Rosarie Spence
16 March - Anne McCarthy RSCJ

Walking Retreat
19 March 10.00 am - 4.00 pm

Holy Week Retreat
24 March- 4.00 pm -
27 March 2.30 pm

Join the community on their journey
towards Easter, including time for
reflection and the opportunity to take
part in the ceremonies of Holy Week.

1- 3 April

Gain confidence in singing for your soul
with Janet Swan

This weekend will give you the
opportunity to sing songs from faith
traditions around the world in simple
three or four part harmony – no matter
what others tell you about your voice,
You do not need to be able to read music.
Janet Swan is a member of the Natural
Voice Practitioners Network and leader of
a number of choirs in east Lancashire.

01- 03 April

Where is my faith life at the moment?
Where is my faith life at the moment?

What would it cost me to say it?
Am I open to the grace which promises to
takes me beyond all I ever thought
possible?

With Fr Chris Thomas and Pat Kennedy

8- 10 April

Christian meditation

This retreat explores the roots of
Christian meditation and reflects on the
ways in which this type of practice builds
community and a better world. There will
be periods of silence during the weekend.
Terry Doyle acts as UK co-ordinator for
developing meditation for people living
on the margins of society.

More information from Minsteracres
01434 673 248 or info@minsteracres.org

