

Spiritual Directors in Europe

Early March saw around 50 people from around Europe gathering at Minsteracres for their annual Conference. It was the first time the conference had been held in the UK so there was a certain amount of pride that people from 17 nations would be coming to the north-east. Our visitors came from as far away as Moldova, Latvia and Estonia—as well as from Finland, Denmark, Norway and Iceland. There was even a special guest from the United States.

The theme of the Conference was “‘Nourishing Roots for ‘Dialogue and Peace’ in the land of the Northern Saints”. The keynote was set by Kathryn and Sr Sheila McNamara—looking at how Christianity was established in this part of the world and how it spread throughout Europe with missions from Iona and Lindisfarne. We each took two saints as models for different forms of spirituality and were delighted that folk took them to their hearts. In fact, several asked for the PowerPoint presentation to take back to share with their communities!

As we pointed out, it was hard to know whether it was the lives of these saints who made this part of the land holy—or the land that helped to make them holy! But we emphasised that these were very human saints—friends, in fact—who would have been delighted to welcome them as we did in their name.

Of course, it is one thing to be told about the land and its saints—and quite another actually to walk it and visit some of the places in person. Jarrow Hall—formerly Bede’s World—opened its doors early for our group who were welcomed with coffee and a soup lunch and a tour around the museum (currently being refurbished but re-opening soon). One real highlight for them was praying in St Paul’s church—in the very place where Bede himself would have prayed. On then to Durham for prayer at Cuthbert’s tomb and to choral evensong. The final pilgrimage involved a 6.30 start for Holy Island where some very hardy souls walked the pilgrim poles to the island!



Prayer in St Paul’s

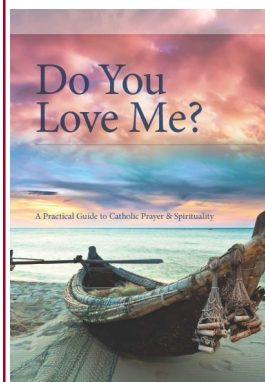
It was not all prayer and silence and conversation. Two evenings were given over to north-eastern entertainment—clog dancing and a ceilidh. It was great to hear people for whom English was a second (and even fourth) language joining in the singing of “Blaydon Races”.

Spiritual Directors in Europe was set up to support people in countries where the ministry is still being established—particularly in the east. It was wonderful to welcome the guests—to enrich their ministry—and to share the beauty and heritage of our countryside and saints with them all.




The Conference saw the first outing of the new labyrinth the Department has recently acquired. It is available for loan! Get in touch if interested!

Easter-time Reading



In previous issues of “Weavings”, we have mentioned the Bishop’s Conference book on Spirituality, “Do You Love Me?” You may be interested to know that we have managed to acquire some at a substantial reduction! We are able to offer them at £3.50 (cover price is £5.95).

It would make a good follow-up to Lent courses so if you would like a copy, please get in touch. 

Date for your Diary

Following the very successful Interfaith gathering reflecting on the Mercy of God, another event is being planned. It is some time away but please get the date in your diary!

Interfaith Peace Pilgrimage
to Flodden Field
and Crookham Peace Centre
21 October 2017

Contact Details

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Forward Together in Hope—along Cuddy's Corse

Soon after Tony Sacco took up his appointment as Development Officer for Forward Together in Hope, he mentioned an interest in organising a pilgrimage. Time passed but, as the process now enters a transition phase from consulting to implementing, it seemed a good opportunity to use St Cuthbert's Feast day as a day to walk and pray for our Diocese.

So, on a glorious spring day, around 25 people gathered in St Mary and St Cuthbert's Anglican church in Chester-le-Street to begin the pilgrimage. The church is close to the site where the body of St Cuthbert lay for over 100 years before the monks decided it needed to be moved. We do not know the exact route but Cuddy's Corse follows the progress of his body (or corpse/corse) from Chester-le-Street to Durham.

Pilgrims ranged in age from primary school children to people in their seventies. Apart from a couple of pulls, it is a comfortable walk taking in some

lovely views and variety of countryside.

People were able to join us around the halfway mark when we stopped for welcome refreshments at Finchale Priory. After ice-creams and coffee, we prayed in the Priory ruins—delighting other visitors with a rousing rendition of "One more step along the road I go"!



The walk continued alongside the walls of Frankland prison until the turning of a corner gave us a first glimpse of our destination—Durham Cathedral. Here, we prayed at Cuthbert's tomb—and concluded with a short reflection by the tomb of Bede. It was great fun—a mix

of walking—conversing and praying—as the best pilgrimages are!

Details of the pilgrimage route, with ideas for prayer along the way can be found on the diocesan website—along with other prayer walks around the diocese.

www.rcdhn.org.uk/spirituality/spirituality_walks.php



Upcoming Events in the Diocese and Local Centres

Minsteracres

QUIET DAYS OF REFLECTION:

Wednesday 5 April

10.00am–4.00pm

Sr Sheila McNamara, RSCJ

An opportunity to step aside during the season of Lent, listen to God in scripture and enjoy the peace and tranquillity of the countryside. Light lunch provided.

HOLY WEEK RETREAT:

Join the community on their journey towards Easter, including time for reflection and the opportunity to take part in the ceremonies of Holy Week. This retreat starts on Thursday 13 April at 6.30pm and ends on Sunday 16 April at 2.00pm. Led by the Minsteracres team.

WALKING RETREAT:

Saturday 29 April

10.00am - 5.00pm

Enjoy a walk of seven to ten miles through the beautiful countryside around Minsteracres, Please bring a packed lunch.

*More Information from
Minsteracres Retreat Centre
01434 673248*

St Antony's Priory

Together in Meditation:

Saturday 8 April

10.00am and 11.30am

Two separate hours of Meditation rooted in the Christian tradition. Come to either or both.

"A New Creation"

Saturday 29 April

10.00am–4.30pm

Led by David Kirkham. A writing course for the Easter Season following on from the well-received "Let the Spirit Flow" day, a further opportunity to use the resources of the Easter season and the Priory garden in springtime to express in writing, faith and meaning for each of the participants. (No Previous experience necessary) David's background is in English language teaching.

*More information from St Antony's Priory
info@stantonypriory.co.uk
0191 384 3747*



Centre for Prayer and Mission

ON-GOING FORMATION AND SPIRITUALITY

Tuesday evenings at 7.00pm – Seaham
All welcome

EXPLORING SCRIPTURE

Monday afternoons – 1.30pm -3.00pm

Icon Workshops:

In 2017 we hope to have two workshops as usual – one led by Catherine Ferguson and one by Sr Annette.

1st Icon workshop with Catherine Ferguson.

We hope this will be in the Spring Bank Holiday – from Monday to Friday, 29 May to 2 June. If you would like to do this workshop, Catherine has pre-prepared boards so that we can fit the workshop into 5 days.

2nd Icon Workshop with Sr Annette.

This will be from Saturday 15 July to Friday 21 July and will involve preparing our own boards.

Details of both workshops to be given nearer the time.

*More information from Sr Michael
marymichael.lee7@googlemail.com
(0191) 581 3249*