



## NEWSLETTER SUMMER 2014

### Topics:

1. Towards Human Flourishing
  2. Ongoing impact of Bethlehem Unwrapped
  3. Charter for Compassion Membership
  4. Reports on talks by Rowan Williams, Ilia Delio and Diarmuid O'Murchu
  5. **LivingSpirituality** Equalist Group Report
  6. Spirituality and healthcare
  7. Drama, film and resources
  8. Collaborations
  9. Supporting **LivingSpirituality**
  10. Additional events June-July 2104
- 

### 1. Towards Human Flourishing

**Heather-Jane Ozanne, Nazareth, May 2014**

Yesterday, a day after the Pope's visit to Bethlehem I crossed a checkpoint into Jerusalem by local bus, conscious of the many people who are not permitted to make this journey or the journey the other way from Jerusalem into Bethlehem.

When Palestinians had to leave the bus to have their ID checked and soldiers boarded to see the passports of Internationals who remained on board, I was reminded of the title of a conference I had attended some years earlier -- 'Christ at the Checkpoint'.

The day before my bus journey, I had found it a moving experience to stand with others to welcome the Pope on his way to say Mass in Manger Square. A little way down the road from where I stood he made an unscheduled stop to pray at the huge, concrete security wall/ separation barrier which surrounds much of Palestinian Land, and the towns and villages, separating family members from each other and farmers from their crops and land. There are many messages written and painted on the wall expressing the anguish and anger of people surrounded by this gigantic, grey, man-made divider of people and land.

Later on the day of my bus journey the Pope was due to pray at another wall, one which is more ancient, sacred and beautiful and in the heart of the Old City in Jerusalem. This wall, known to some in the past as The Wailing Wall, now more usually called, The Western Wall, is also symbolic of human pain and longing. The Pope's visit turned my journey which usually takes about 35 minutes into one of more than two hours, as security was high and roads were closed. This left me plenty of time to ponder - 'what does it mean to hold the consciousness of Christ at the checkpoint where conflicting thoughts and emotions often arise when seeing one group holding sway over another? Where are the spiritual wisdom and tools to bring light, healing and transformation to a world torn by poverty, inequality, oppression and violence? How can our spirituality empower us to make a positive contribution to creating a world where all can flourish?

**Heather-Jane Ozanne** is founder-director of Spirit of Peace ([www.spiritofpeace.co.uk](http://www.spiritofpeace.co.uk)) and a member of the **LivingSpirituality** Steering Group.

## 2. Ongoing Impacts of the Bethlehem Unwrapped Festival

### Jo Hines and Lucy Winkett

The Bethlehem Unwrapped Festival at St James's Church Piccadilly, which ran from 23rd December 2013 to 5th January 2014 (covered in the January *LivingSpirituality* newsletter – [www.livingspirit.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014-january-newsletter.pdf](http://www.livingspirit.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014-january-newsletter.pdf)) aroused both passionate support and vehement opposition. The concerts, feast, and celebration events in support of the ordinary people of Bethlehem were packed out and large audiences were both appreciative of the artistic content and engaged with the political issues. The centrepiece of the festival was a full size (8 metre) replica of the concrete wall that separates Bethlehem from Jerusalem, which the Israeli government states has been responsible for reducing the numbers of deaths from terrorism in Israel, but which undoubtedly causes multiple injustices for Palestinians. An evening discussion 'Both Sides of the Barrier' ensured that the case for building the wall was put clearly alongside compelling criticism of its position, as it is often built on Palestinian land.

One legacy of Bethlehem Unwrapped has been our ongoing dialogue with both Muslims and Jewish groups. There have been several meetings with members of the Board of Deputies of British Jews which have been both challenging and respectful. These are ongoing, and we have been able to move beyond the original brief to engage with difficult, and perhaps unanswerable, questions such as: Is it possible for a Christian community to challenge specific policies of the Israeli government without being liable to accusations of anti-semitism? How can we celebrate our shared traditions and values while acknowledging the real differences that divide us?

Revd. **Lucy Winkett** is Rector of St James's Piccadilly and **Jo Hines** is Church Warden.

## 3. The Charter for Compassion launches membership scheme

The January *LivingSpirituality* Newsletter covered the work of the Charter, launched by Karen Armstrong, which seeks very practical ways of embodying understandings of the underlying unity of life (see [www.livingspirit.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014-january-newsletter.pdf](http://www.livingspirit.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014-january-newsletter.pdf)).

*"Our world is dangerously polarized. Together we can make an historic, practical and realistic contribution to the creation of a more equitable and peaceful global community and help to mitigate the prejudice and hatred that are so tragically and perilously dividing us. It has become imperative to apply the Golden Rule globally, ensuring that all peoples are treated as we would wish to be treated."*

The Charter is running campaigns including International Compassionate Cities, initiatives for compassionate education, enhanced transcultural understanding, healthcare, business, religious & spiritual communities, science & research projects.

To support this initiative, go to: [www.charterforcompassion.org](http://www.charterforcompassion.org).

## 4. Stimulating talks organised by Silence in the City and the London Centre for Spirituality

### 1. What Grows in the Gaps: Silence and Human Maturing

This was the title of an outstanding talk given by Rowan Williams, former Archbishop of Canterbury, in May. Silence is the place where the mystery of God happens. By letting God be in us through practising silence, we then transmit a sense of presence to others. The more willing we are to risk, the more aligned we will be. An mp3 (£3) or two CDs (£12) of this talk are available from [archie@agapeministries.co.uk](mailto:archie@agapeministries.co.uk).

## 2. God, Evolution and the Power of Love

Ilia Delio OSF summarised the impact of developing understandings of the cosmos, relativity and the interconnected, participatory universe we now understand ourselves to be part of. The impact of these new understandings on the form of Christianity emerging for the new times we are in is paradigm-shifting. Ilia Delio sees an “unbearable wholeness and goodness at the core of life”, and an evolving, outward moving divine presence within the world – God being the breath of love within all things. A relational God empowers a relational universe. Ilia Delio sees Christ as the first in God’s intention to love, and Jesus as bringing a new spirituality of whole-making. Death, including that of Jesus, needs to be seen as an integral part of life. Jesus’ resurrection began a new future for the whole cosmos; one in which all is gathered into unity. We are all called to be part of evolution, co-creating with the divine, and giving birth to God.

Where religious or other structures no longer fit the needs of the times, we should let them go, as well as releasing anything that isn’t deepening life. Along with Diarmuid O’Murchu (see below), and influenced by Teilhard de Chardin, Ilia Delio speaks of the attraction of the future, which we need to move towards in a clear way and play our part in co-creating it.

Two CDs of this talk are available for £12 from [archie@agapeministries.co.uk](mailto:archie@agapeministries.co.uk).

**Ilia Delio** is a Franciscan Sister of Washington D.C. and Director of Catholic Studies at Georgetown University, where she is Visiting Professor. She is part of Richard Rohr’s ‘Living School’. Her latest book is **The Unbearable Wholeness of Being: God, Evolution, and the Power of Love** (2013).

## 3. Diarmuid O’Murchu - The Meaning and Practice of Faith

Diarmuid gave an impressive talk in May on the themes of his new book, which is based on extensive work with groups of adults exploring Christian Spirituality afresh, seeking forms of articulation and practice that meet

the needs of contemporary adults. There were many themes in common between Ilia Delio and this talk.

Diarmuid’s themes included:

The need to move beyond parental language in talking about God

The primary encounter with God being through creation – panentheism (God is in all things and all things are in God – not the same as pantheism). The new story revealed by science is impacting on our spiritual understanding

Because we experience God as immersed in the world, we feel a responsibility towards the creation, and a commitment to social and environmental action. Contemplative ecology is a new development.

We need to reconnect with the wisdom of our mystical tradition

The importance of inter-spiritual work (see **Living Spirituality** Sept 2013 newsletter re Johnson and Ord’s book - [www.livingspirit.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013-sept-newsletter.pdf](http://www.livingspirit.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013-sept-newsletter.pdf)).

The relational nature of the Trinity and our need to relate in a deep way to both nature and one another.

Rather than the kingdom of God, a different translation that may be closer to the spoken Aramaic is the ‘Companionship of Empowerment’. Jesus pointed to a web of relationships rather than isolated individuals.

The importance, even primacy, of the Spirit.

Rituals as ways of engaging and participating rather than worshipping an external deity.

The importance of helping people to put language on their experience (an aspect that **Living Spirituality** sees as part of its role).

The divine as the great birther

As well as recognising the sacrament of the present moment, the lure of the future is drawing us forward into new things, powered by the Holy Spirit.

Diarmuid emphasised how important it is for people today to be proactive rather than passive in their approach to faith, and to explore freely within informal groups that which interests and inspires them. Many groups of this kind have gone on to develop a commitment to peace and justice work.

**Diarmuid O'Murchu**, a member of the Sacred Heart Missionary Order, is a social psychologist most of whose working life has been in social ministry, in London, the USA and other countries. He has worked as a couple's counsellor, in bereavement work, AIDS-HIV counselling, and with homeless people and refugees.

Diarmuid's latest book is **The Meaning and Practice of Faith** - A practical guide for seekers to discover their faith experiences and develop an authentic vocabulary to tell their emerging story in conversation or group exploration.

## 5. Living Spirituality Equalist Group

A fruitful meeting was held on 30 May on the topic of transcendence and immanence and the ways in which these have been linked with ideas of masculine and feminine. Inputs were made by John Newton based mainly on the work of feminist theologians Sallie McFague (**Models of God. Theology for an Ecological, Nuclear Age**) and Rosemary Radford Ruether (**Sexism and God Talk**); by David Carter on Beatrice as a possible type, or embodiment, of Holy Wisdom/Sophia and her role of in inspiring and guiding Dante; and by myself based on Lucy Goodison's book **Moving Heaven and Earth**, showing that there is evidence of an early form of religion in Crete that wasn't based on either patriarchy or matriarchy, and where the sun, as a religious symbol, was seen as female.

As one of many possible sources for our future work towards more integrated forms of language and liturgy within the Christian

tradition, we began to look at the work of Genia Pauli Haddon (author of **Body Metaphors, Releasing God-Feminine in Us All**, and **Uniting Sex, Self and Spirit; Let the body be your guide in to New Consciousness and Deeper Spirituality in a Changing Age**). Genia Pauli Haddon trained as a biologist, a Jungian therapist and a Minister in the United Church of Christ. She draws on all these sources to present a vision of the divine and of humans that includes equally both active and receptive forms of masculinity and femininity, and gives sample liturgies in which each of these aspects is focused on.

Our **LS Equalist Special Interest Group** has decided to meet monthly on a Friday evening in Notting Hill Gate to explore for ourselves forms of liturgy that are rooted in the Christian tradition, and experiment with more rounded ways of conceptualising and relating to the sacred. We welcome contributions from members at a distance, as well as those able to come to meetings.

The group's meeting on **4 July** involves a visit to the National Gallery where David Carter will guide us round some of the paintings based on the theme: **Gender and power relations in heaven and on earth**.

Please contact **David Carter** by email: [drc.book1@gmail.com](mailto:drc.book1@gmail.com) for further information or to book for the National Gallery visit.

## 6. Reflections on the British Association for the Study of Spirituality Conference on Healthcare

**Linda Pearson**

This conference in May had an impressive range of topics examining spirituality in many aspects of healthcare. The venue was Ashridge Business School in Berkhamsted – in hundreds of acres of beautiful gardens and woodland. People who were studying at Ashridge attended the conference, alongside academics, health and social care

professionals, and agencies from all over the world. .

The conference was held over three days, with some splendid keynote speakers and five rooms of parallel sessions. I particularly enjoyed hearing Prof Margaret Holloway speak about Spiritual Care at the Sharp End in social work – she focused on issues around the care of people with Alzheimer's, people who are dying, and people involved in abuse. Her description of the purpose and values of Social Work echoed the purpose and values of spiritual care.

My own presentation was to stimulate discussion around the ways we can give nurses experience of using creativity to understand their own lives and tensions. Once experienced, the tools and processes can then be used whenever needed – as creative reflection for professional and personal development. I wanted to tell people about these tools and processes that I had experienced during a two year part time experiential course in Personal and Spiritual Development at St Bede's Pastoral Centre in York. Nursing in the current NHS can be extremely challenging, and I think we need as many ways of building our resilience and our sense that we too matter.

Spirituality to me isn't about something added on to care, or that is to do with people who are religious, or who are dying. Rather it is about life itself – and how much we feel we belong and are a part of life. I presented a number of slides from the NASA website of galaxies and an image taken soon after the 'big bang' (which is a misnomer because it would have happened in silence). Mystics have told us for centuries that everything belongs, and that everything is one – and now the new science is telling us the same – that everything in the cosmos and its millions of galaxies, stars, planets, moons, and life on earth developed from a singularity. This singularity is thought to have been no larger than a tennis ball.

The question to me is how can we all know and experience that we belong and are a part

of the whole in a world that is fast and full of noise. I talked through ideas I had experienced through the personal and spiritual development course - learning to slow down, using things like drawing and using the labyrinth, creative writing, drawing the shape of our lives... Each person will have preferences and discover the tools that work for them. The purpose is to 'know thyself' rather than bottle things up.

I showed people how to draw a labyrinth within my presentation – and to my joy, there was a large grass labyrinth in the grounds of Ashridge.

**Linda Pearson** gave a conference presentation on 'The use of creative reflection on self – important for nursing practice and spiritual care?'. Linda is an Associate member of the Centre for Spirituality Studies, University of Hull, and a member of the Steering Committee and North East regional contact for ***Living Spirituality***.

British Association for the Study of Spirituality website - [www.basspirituality.org.uk](http://www.basspirituality.org.uk).

## 7. Drama, Film, Resources

### **The Testament of Mary by Colm Tóibín: One woman show with Fiona Shaw**

This was much more than a play. It is an utterly involving event, in which we hear the story of Jesus as told by his mother Mary after his death. It imagines the human responses that Mary would have had to key events in Jesus' life, and to his death, its aftermath, and to others' understanding of what took place. I found it cathartic and compelling to hear the raw responses of an ordinary woman caught up in world shattering events that she can't grasp. A very unorthodox view of Mary.

This performance was at the Barbican in May 2014. Colm Toibin's book is also called **The Testament of Mary**.

## Nebraska on DVD (Director Alexander Payne)

A road story in which the main character, Woody Grant (Bruce Dern), who is beginning to lose his bearings, wants to go to Nebraska to claim winnings in a sweepstake, which his son David realises is fraudulent. Although this film is described as a comedy drama, in my view it is like a parable. David received very little of what he needed from his parents. His father had been very neglectful and his mother was very prone to shout and complain. His father now is wandering down roads in a forgetful state, and his mother wants to put him in a home.

Yet David consistently makes choices to give his father what he says he wants at this late stage in his life. Rather than taking an attitude that he had not received what he needed and taking that out on his parents, he finds within him the grace to go to great lengths to make sure his father realises his late dreams, as far as is in his grasp. He is also endlessly accepting towards his mother who says a series of horrendous things. As a result of David's acceptance, the relationship develops on screen and Woody's motivations become clearer.

Although full of mean, unsatisfactory characters, and described as 'miserable' by one critic whose review I read, this story spoke to me of our capacity to make life-enhancing choices about how we respond to past offences and deficiencies and can move towards letting go and forgiveness, transforming long standing grievances and bringing the possibility of peace and fulfilment to the present.

This film came out in 2013 and is now available on DVD.

## Rich new resource of spiritual practices for all

**Ian Adams** has brought out an excellent new book called **Running on Rocks, Spiritual Practices to Transform Tough Times**, which is divided into sections on Practices of Earth and Body, Practices of Stillness and

Movement, Practices of Descent, Practices of Ascent, Practices of Possibility, Practices of Peace, Practices of the Beloved Life, and Practices of Love. Ian is inspired by the "ancient and unfolding" Jesus tradition and sees Jesus as inviting us to move from absence towards a life of presence. Each practice is offered as a means of moving away from destructive and despairing ways of life towards the more creative and hopeful ways that we already have within us, waiting to be encountered and lived. Ian's vision is of body, mind and spirit working as a whole, leading to wellbeing, rather than seeing them as in contradiction. We come home to all these aspects of ourselves, live the seasons of life, and experience our connectedness to others and to the earth. The dark, difficult experiences of life are integral and we need practices to help us to move towards acceptance of these.

Ian Adams is a poet, author, workshop leader, Anglican priest and Associate Missioner for Fresh Expressions, living in Devon. Ian's website is [www.belovedlife.org](http://www.belovedlife.org) - "spiritual practices, reshaping us, reshaping the world". Along with Matthew Rees, Ian also runs an organisation called Stillpoint, which runs several events each year - [www.thestillpoint.org.uk](http://www.thestillpoint.org.uk).

## Online Abbey of the Arts resources

People who subscribe to the Abbey of the Arts newsletter will find two free resources - reflective journals about using the arts in our lives and meditation - [www.abbeyofthearts.com](http://www.abbeyofthearts.com).

**Linda Pearson**, Coordinator of the LS Art and Spirituality Special Interest Group ([www.livingspirit.org.uk/special-interest-groups/art-sig](http://www.livingspirit.org.uk/special-interest-groups/art-sig)).

## 8. Collaborations that *LivingSpirituality* is pursuing

### One Spirit Alliance

***LivingSpirituality*** is one of the collaborating organisations (along with others) for a day called Spirit in Action on 28 June in London. “As the ‘new story’ and new ways of doing things emerge, people of love and goodwill are uniting and forming visible and invisible networks of inter-connection with each other and the whole web of life. The One Spirit Alliance is a space for enabling these deeper connections to develop. There is a common understanding that we are now being called to bring our various Spirit-inspired visions together to change the way the live.” Further information from their website – [www.onespiritalliance.net](http://www.onespiritalliance.net) - and from [info@onespiritalliance.net](mailto:info@onespiritalliance.net).

### CANA (Christians Awakening to a New Awareness)

We are discussing with CANA’s core group how LS can work more closely with CANA so that our activities are complementary and mutually supportive. CANA see their starting point as Christian but are open to the moving of the Spirit to seek and explore God and the spiritual dimensions of life, in a way that is open-ended and free from the boundaries that most religious frameworks and structures have imposed.

## 9. Supporting the work of *LivingSpirituality*

We request that everyone who values receiving our newsletter and events listing considers contributing between £10 and £20 a year (or what you can afford) to enable us to meet the costs of publicising our work and maintaining our website. Please email me directly for details about how to do this - [petragriffiths@livingspirit.org.uk](mailto:petragriffiths@livingspirit.org.uk).

## 10. Events update

There are a few additional events in June and July that we have been asked to remind you of, or which weren’t in our quarterly listing. These are on the next page. The quarterly events listing will be sent out in July covering August-October.

Best wishes,

*Petra*

Petra Griffiths  
Coordinator  
***LivingSpirituality***

For details of the ***LivingSpirituality*** Steering Group, go to [www.livingspirit.org.uk/who-we-are/steering-group](http://www.livingspirit.org.uk/who-we-are/steering-group).

## ADDITIONAL EVENTS JUNE - JULY 2014

### 16-18 June, Reclaiming the Sacred Feminine – Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre, Birmingham

[www.woodbrooke.org.uk](http://www.woodbrooke.org.uk) This retreat for women offers each participant an opportunity to nourish her soul with feminine images of the divine, drawn from many sources; enabling her to have a body-felt experience of the sacredness of her own femininity and her relationship with the source of life. The process will immerse participants in images of the divine feminine in sacred literature, nature, poetry and art and in their own dreams and stories. Integration of the material will be mostly experiential emphasising movement and body work. Tutor(s): **Madeleine O’Callaghan and Pauline Sayhi**

### 18 June 6.30pm, Cosmos and Creation - Professor Bernard Carr, Meditatio Centre, London [www.wccmmeditatio.org](http://www.wccmmeditatio.org) Science and spirituality series

Cosmology addresses fundamental questions about the Universe of the kind which have traditionally been in the religious domain. At first sight this perspective seems to pull science and religion apart removing any need for the divine. However recent developments have led to a reversal of this trend suggesting that consciousness, mind and spirit are an integral part of the universe.

**Bernard Carr** is Professor of Mathematics and Astronomy at Queen Mary University of London. His area of research is cosmology and he has a long-standing interest in the relationship between science and spirituality. He is the editor of “Universe or Multiverse?”. He is currently chair of The Scientific & Medical Network.

### 25 June, 6pm. Divine Discontent : the prophetic voice of Thomas Merton. St James’s Piccadilly [www.sjp.org.uk](http://www.sjp.org.uk)

Talk and launch by The Most Revd Dr **Rowan Williams**. Questions and answers with the author, Very Revd **Dr John Moses**, Dean Emeritus of St Paul’s Cathedral, and the Rector of St James’s, Revd. **Lucy Winkett**.

### 27 June – Quiet Day – Journey of the Heart at Ammerdown near Bath

[www.ammerdown.org](http://www.ammerdown.org) Led by Libby Dobson and Sarah Chabowska . Ammerdown Quiet Days offer an opportunity to take time out from our busy lives to pray, reflect and meditate in the Christian tradition. Libby and Sarah invite you to travel with God on a journey of discovery. The theme for this year will be 'Journey of the Heart - Travelling Home to Love'.

### 1 July, 7.30 pm, Karen Armstrong and Irina Bokova in Conversation at the Royal Opera House

UNESCO Director General Irina Bokova and internationally renowned scholar on comparative religions Karen Armstrong FRSL and founder of the Charter for Compassion International, in conversation to discuss religion and conflict in the world today. In a year marking the centenary of the first World War, when arguably the world increasingly seems to resemble the world of 1914, how do we contend with a global environment that is increasingly multipolar, unpredictable and ravaged by conflicts driven by ethnic and religious divides?

To book go to:

[www.roh.org.uk/insights/insights-why-the-world-needs-compassion-now](http://www.roh.org.uk/insights/insights-why-the-world-needs-compassion-now).

## **2 July, 9-3.15, Charter for Compassion hosts a meeting at Initiatives of Change London SW1.**

An opportunity to meet fellow city organisers, Charter partners and supporters. An experiential meeting in which we get to know one another, build strong local networks, and assist in laying plans for a new geographic hub. We will be joined by one of our Global Compassion Council members, Dr. Patrick Pietroni, who has agreed to direct this new effort.

To register, go to:

<https://charterforcompassion.org/civicrm/event/info?reset=1&id=7>.

**4 July, 6.45-7.45**, (gather at 6.30), **Living Spirituality Equalist Group** session **Gender and power relations in heaven and on earth** – a guided tour led by David Carter of relevant artworks at the **National Gallery**, London WC2.

All welcome. Booking essential. Please contact David Carter at [drc.book1@gmail.com](mailto:drc.book1@gmail.com) to book a place and for more information.

## **5 July, 2 - 4 pm Meister Eckhart Group London NW2**

Meetings start with a “Lectio Divina” in several sections – just over an hour of meditation, contemplation and spontaneous contributions – followed by about 10 minutes reading of an Eckhart sermon, then silent meditation. Finally, tea.

Free of charge. Newcomers to Eckhart are always welcome. Contact **Jim Coakes** on 07788 485086 or [jim.coakes@btinternet.com](mailto:jim.coakes@btinternet.com).

## **18-20 July Sacred Sites and Sounds, Tintern Abbey, Wye Valley, Gwent. Scientific & Medical Network**

For reasons of geography or human history, certain locations have special, perhaps sacred qualities. Some have natural sounds,

from wind, water or stone; or resonances that make them special musical venues. Tintern Abbey in the Wye Valley has all of these. A sacred Christian site for over 1,000 years, it was a monastic centre for the Cistercians in Medieval times and, even after it fell into ruin, inspired romantic poets and painters and thousands of pilgrims and travellers.

This conference is part of the Tintern Sacred Site and Sound Festival. The timeless quality of the river, an oft quoted metaphor for the inexhaustible flow of time, is a theme which runs through the whole festival, beginning with a meditation on music, poetry and light at St Michael's Church and culminating in the Abbey ruins the following evening with an orchestral concert, choir and surround-sound installation of Sir John Tavener's Towards Silence.

Speakers: **Paul Devereux** - Myth Legend and Place, **Prof Paul Robertson** - Music, Mind and Spirit, **Dr Madeleine Gray** - The Cistercian Way of Life and Death

Leaflet and booking:

[www.scimednet.org/assets/images/TINTON-ABBEY-Single-v3.pdf](http://www.scimednet.org/assets/images/TINTON-ABBEY-Single-v3.pdf).

**21- 26 July Contemplative Fire Retreat: Contemplatives in the City. Near Chester** with Revd Susan Blagden and Revd Susan Bowden-Pickstock.

Exploring the writings of Catherine of Siena, Julian of Norwich and Thomas Merton. “It is too easy to think that contemplative prayer needs spaciousness and beauty to be effective. Each of these Christian mystics practised a life of contemplative prayer within an urban context and out of this they found a voice to address the personal, social and political needs of their day.” During the week we will be exploring their writings as well as our understanding of the metaphor of ‘the city’ and how we can engage in prayer for our cities.

Booking: [www.contemplativefire.org](http://www.contemplativefire.org).

The Retreat Centre is on a hillside over the Dee Estuary.