



Touching Place

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Issue No. 15, August 2008

Keeping Christian Communities in touch.

Welcome to the latest edition of *Touching Place*. Many thanks to all those who supported Pilsdon's 50th Anniversary Pilgrimage. Mike and Roberta raised £400 towards development work and refurbishment at Pilsdon in Dorset.

We really welcome news and information about your communities—in fact this newsletter cannot continue without this—and we especially need more people to contribute to the *Community Focus* and *Places* slots. So please get your fingers on the keyboards and send us a short article about your community or place of rest and retreat, our email and postal addresses are below.

On the back page is an idea for a comprehensive directory of all Christian communities and we'd really like your opinions on this.

Roberta and Pam, editors.

Community Focus

August News from Taizé

During the month of August our closeness with the Orthodox Churches is underlined by the icons that invite us to prayer. An icon of the Virgin Mary, painted by one of the brothers and intended for a parish in Germany, was first of all placed in the choir of the church. Then there was the icon of the Transfiguration which, around the 6 August, recalled the Feast that is so important for all the Christians of the East. Finally, the icon of Friendship recalled the memory of Brother Roger, who died exactly three years ago, on 16 August 2005.

For the very large number of young adults present from, among other countries, Germany, Lithuania, Portugal, and Romania, the life commitment of Brother Wojtek, from Poland, offered a very special moment of prayer, where each person was invited to reflect on God's call in his or her own life.

Several church leaders spent some days in Taizé. Right after the Anglican Lambeth Conference, the Archbishop of York, John Sentamu, came with a group of young adults. Two bishops came from nearby: the Bishop of Autun, Mgr Benoît Rivière, then the Archbishop of Dijon, Mgr Roland Minnerath. Still other bishops, Catholic, Anglican and Methodist, came from the USA, the United Kingdom and from Bangladesh, as well as a group of twelve Protestant pastors from Indonesia.

During his stay in Taizé, Mgr Johan Bonny, of the Council

for the Unity of Christians in Rome, took part in a meeting with young people belonging to several Orthodox and Oriental Churches from various countries: Russia, Romania, Serbia, Ukraine, Egypt, and India. One of the young people, Joe from India, writes: "Each one was able to present the situation of their Church and the challenges facing it at the present time. The meeting helped me to understand and to know the elements of a wide diversity of which each Church is a witness. As for Father Bonny, he offered us encouragement in our commitment to seek ways of unity with our friends from the other Churches. As young adults, may this desire for Christian unity continue to be our driving force!"

- In the face of suffering... indifference or solidarity?

Gisele, from Burkino Fasso, took part in a workshop led by young people from different continents. The theme was: "When indifference in the face of suffering gets the upper hand... what can we do?" Based on the story of the feeding of the five thousand, in Mark 6,35-44, the aim was to reflect on concrete situations where apparently we bear no responsibility. But even in sensitive situations, young people can get involved and offer practical help. Like the disciples in the Gospel, we are sometimes called to start off with very little. You don't have to go very far in order to transform situations of suffering into occasions of practical solidarity.

The President of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the Unity of Christians, Cardinal Kasper, recalled the figure of Brother Roger, three years after his death, on 16 August 2005. Here are some extracts from the interview published by *Osservatore Romano*, the Vatican newspaper: "Few persons of our generation have incarnated with such transparency the gentle and humble face of Jesus Christ... Brother Roger was a man of communion, who found it hard to tolerate any form of antagonism or rivalry between persons or communities... The search for unity was for him a kind of guideline in even the most concrete decisions of each day... Born in a Reformed family, Brother Roger had studied theology and had become a pastor in that same Reformed tradition... As the years passed, the faith of the prior of Taizé was progressively enriched by the patrimony of faith of the Catholic Church... In his conscience, he had entered into the mystery of the Catholic faith like someone who grows into it, without having to "abandon" or "break" with what he had received and lived beforehand... In Taizé the young people find a kind of "parable of community" that helps to go beyond the rifts of the past and to look towards a future of communion and friendship... I would like to repeat to Brother Alois and to the whole Taizé Community my great esteem for their friendship, their life of prayer and their desire for unity. Thanks to them, the gentle face of Brother Roger remains familiar to us."

Events



The Minster Church of St. Mary
the Virgin, Reading
Sunday 14th September 2008,
2.30 p.m.

“Wisdom of Age” - A Service of
Celebration and Thanksgiving.

Much is spoken today about a ‘demographic time bomb’ or a ‘pension burden’ but little is said about what older people have to offer to the rest of our society. Many are still in gainful employment or they offer huge amounts of time and expertise on a voluntary basis. Others offer childcare to grandchildren on a daily basis or during school holidays whilst parents are at work and many care for their own parents.

For some disabilities or frailty mean that person can no longer get around as they once did or that help may be needed with daily living. But the older person often has huge amounts of love, time, understanding, information or wisdom to share.

Full details are available from
Janet Parker, **Advisor for SCOP.**
Telephone 01367 870 394 **or email**
janet_scop@onetel.com



The Northumbria
Community

Mon–Thurs 1st-4th September
A Still Point in a Turning World
Fees: £105

An opportunity to seek God through quiet personal reflection around the rhythm of the day, giving time and space for self and God.

Mon - Thurs 8th-11th September
Seeking God
Fees: £120

An individually guided retreat

Fri - Sun 19th - 21st September
Treasures of Darkness
Fees: £80

A led retreat exploring aspects of Dark Night spirituality from John of the Cross to the present day with a contemporary application.

Mon-Thurs 22nd -25th September
Seeking God
Fees: £120

An individually guided retreat

The Community of the Christian Retreat



We live in the midst of a noisy, busy world. Life rushes on and takes us with it. Sometimes a deep yearning for silence and peace may surface within us.

Being in a relationship with another person is a journey into joy. It is a dynamic process where we come to know, respect and love the other. This same dynamic underlies the experience of a retreat. A retreat is a journey through knowledge into a deeper love of God.

The congregation offers retreats in England, Switzerland and France -

England: The House of Prayer

Switzerland: email info@retraite-chretienne.org

France: email info@retraite-chretienne.org

For more information please visit www.christian-retreat.org

Fr Laurence Freeman OSB is speaking in the London area



There are several opportunities to hear Fr Laurence speak September:

Croydon, St Mildred's Church, Bingham
Road, Addiscombe CR0 7EB

Tuesday 16 September, 7.30pm
‘What on Earth – Today – is Prayer?’

No need to book.

For further info phone Philip Kitchen **on** 01372 200558
or email surreymeditation@yahoo.co.uk

Hatfield, Marychurch, Salisbury Square AL9 5JD

Wednesday 17 September, 7.30pm
‘Christian Meditation: living out the gospel in the
21st century’

No need to book

For further info phone Jo Chambers **on** 01707 895093
or email jo.chmbrs@ntlworld.com

In addition we are particularly delighted that St Pauls' Cathedral have agreed to host a visit from Fr Laurence:

St Paul's Cathedral (St Faith's Chapel, NW Crypt
entrance)

**Monday 15 September, 7 – 9 pm (doors
open 6.30pm)**

‘Take the Direct Path to Yourself’ Charge £10
If you want to be sure of a place, you can book ahead by
emailing uk@wccm.org or phone 020 7833 9615.
(There are steps down to the chapel so if you need step
free access, you must let us know so that we can arrange
alternative access.)

**For more information about Father Lawrence and
the World Community for Christian Meditation
please visit** www.christian-meditation.org.uk





Guy Chester
Centre

Events at the Guy Chester Centre

Saturdays, 10.00am to 4.00pm

including lunch. Usually in Hazlehurst, a delightful Edwardian villa with gardens and access to the grounds, an ideal quiet place.

Donations accepted - suggested £25.

18th October 2008

Keeping Company with God

Discover prayer as companionship rather than ritual.

Leader: Carol Foster

22nd November 2008

Finding God when you look up!

An opportunity to discover God in the bigger picture of life.

Leader: Rex Morton

6th December 2008

Pause for Advent

Treat yourself to a pause, in the pre-Christmas rush, to reflect on God's gift to you, Immanuel.

Leader: Anne Marie Farrell



Lee Abbey

**8 - 12 September 2008
(Mon-Fri)**

Past Community: 1946 to 1979

Richard More & others. Were you part of Lee Abbey's history by serving on Community in its first 34 years? We invite you to enjoy a very special reunion week. With Richard More, author of 'The Lee Abbey Story', and other former Chaplains as guest speakers, it will be far more than just a trip down Memory Lane!

6 - 10 October

Mission-shaped heartbeat

Paul Bayes. What kind of people must we be to drink from God's 'fountain of sending love'? This week we'll seek God's grace to develop as people who live mission, not just do it. Paul Bayes, the Church of England's National Mission & Evangelism Advisor, has for 25 years been a local church leader, University Chaplain and church planter.

7 - 9 November 2008 (Fri-Sun)

Every place is under the stars

Adrian Snell. Come and join musician and music therapist Adrian Snell as he invites you to explore themes suggested by his album with the same title. Come prepared to paint, sing, play, photograph, build, collect, listen, perform ... and anything else you can think of that will draw from the creative person that IS within you!

Events cont'd.



Turvey Abbey

The nuns at the Priory of Our Lady of Peace are a Roman Catholic community living according to the Rule of Saint Benedict and belonging to the Olivetan family of Benedictines. We live side by side at Turvey with the monks of the Monastery

**Life
AND
Peace**

of Christ our Saviour, with whom we share daily worship. We seek God in prayer and by trying to live out Gospel values, in love and mutual service, open to the needs of the contemporary world.



14-16 November

The Benedictine Way

Fees: £90 including a £25 non-returnable deposit

A weekend for Benedictine Oblates. Seek wholeness and balance through Benedictine spirituality and prayer.

For more information contact Sr. Miriam

Friday 3.30 pm 21-23 November

Enneagram and Transformation

Fees: £100 including at £25 non-returnable deposit

Learning to transcend the compulsive self and grow in wholeness

For more information contact Sr. Lucy

12-14 December

And the desert shall blossom

Fees: £90 including at £25 non-returnable deposit

A silent weekend sharing the peace and beauty of Advent with the Turvey Communities.

For more information contact Sr. Miriam



Future Directory

DO WE NEED TO CREATE A CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES DIRECTORY?

I am aware that since the closing down of the National Association of Christian Communities and Networks (NACCAN) there is no comprehensive directory of the many Christian Intentional Communities in the UK.

The *Touching Place* mailing list keeps quite a few communities in touch with each other, but is not easily accessible to enquirers and other interested individuals or groups and its information sharing is quite random.

Would you be interested in creating an on line website and hard copy directory?

I am aware that there is "Diggers & Dreamers" that some Communities are in and there is also the "Anglican Religious Communities Year Book" and the "Benedictine Directory" for Religious Orders. There is also the Annual Retreat Magazine and the Church of England Year Book but none of these is comprehensive of Christian Communities.

Do you know of any other Directories?

Do you think there is a gap that we could fill?

We could identify communities by what they offer, for example, hospitality, accommodation for the homeless, direct access, therapeutic, healing, conference facilities, courses and teaching programmes, pilgrimage, retreats, supported accommodation, drug and alcohol rehabilitation, working, living alongside, respite; as well as by geographical location, financial and lifestyle expectations, worship and theological or denominational emphasis.

The purpose of the directory would be to keep communities up to date on such things as information about how to apply to visit, website details, etc, so that the general enquirer has something to refer to when the place they are hoping to visit is full and they would like to find somewhere else comparable.

If you are interested in developing this idea, please let us know by writing to or emailing

Touching Place – just one line will do or if you have ideas, please share them.

touchingplace@googlemail.com

Touching Place, Pilsdon at Malling Community, 27, Water Lane, West Malling ME19 6HH.

Thanks

The Rev. Peter Barnett
(Guardian, Pilsdon at Malling)

Places

Lee Abbey
Christian Community part of The Lee Abbey Movement

Lee Abbey is home to a Christian Community that hosts a Conference, Retreat and Holiday Centre, set in a spacious 280 acres of farm and woodland, overlooking the dramatic North Devon coast near Lynton. As a guest, you are free to join in as many (or as few!) programme sessions as you like. Their vision is that guests experience a new or renewed encounter with the living Lord Jesus Christ.

The Community is an interdenominational Christian team of around 90 individuals and families brought together from across the globe by God's call to live for and serve Him, developing new skills and broadening their experience.



Lee Abbey offers a varied and creative programme that will stimulate and provide food for the soul. You can take time out of your usual routine to visit for a long or short break, a silent retreat or a holiday getaway and you're free to join in with some or all the activities and talks, or just do your own thing - it's your choice!

Church groups are welcome as are families and children who are expertly cared for. Accommodation is in the main house or in three self catering cottages.

Lee Abbey makes a great base from which to explore North Devon and Exmoor as well as the Abbey estate. Whether it's the serene calm of winter, the green of summer or the beautiful purples and oranges of the leaves and heather in autumn, the area is a great place to explore.

Lee Abbey, LYNTON, North Devon, EX35 6JJ

Freephone 0800 389 1189 or 01598 752621

<http://www.leeabbey.org.uk>