

LORETO SPIRITUALITY CENTRE NEWSLETTER

March 2022



WELCOME to our first edition of the Loreto Spirituality Centre News.

We are beginning a new phase of the life of the Centre. Sr Anne Mullan, who has worked tirelessly at the Centre for many years, retired in October. We will always be grateful for the legacy she left to the Centre, and we hope that she is now, finally, having a good rest!

In this first edition of a Newsletter, we will introduce you to our new team, share with you any news that might be of interest, and remind you of some of our events in the near future. We will also share with you something about who we are.



The Centre is run by the IBVM/Loreto Sisters, who, following the way of our foundress Mary Ward, have the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola at the centre of our lives. We aim to create a space for people of all denominations and walks of life to encounter God, who is present in the reality of our daily lives. The setting of the Centre on the beautiful North Wales coastline, five minutes away from the shore, offers ample opportunity for rest and prayer. We hope that all who come here find the space they need.



On the last page of this newsletter, we tell you a little more about Mary Ward, and also tell you about an event that is taking place which might be of interest.

These are difficult years for everyone. Thankfully, here we have all stayed well and we continue to remember in prayer all who are ill, bereaved, or otherwise affected by the pandemic. We have tried, as far as possible, to stay open and we continue to welcome retreatants as safely as we can.

All our bedrooms are now ensuite. For groups we offer full board, and there is limited self-catering available for individuals who wish to have some quiet time with us. The large conference room is fully equipped with a sound system, projector and loop system. Smaller meeting rooms are also available. We can therefore welcome individuals and also groups, for residential, or just one day events. There is a large car park available. Our expert gardener has ambitious plans for the garden and our first class chef grows produce that is used in our kitchen.



During the pandemic, we began to offer individual direction, as well as some other events, online. This of course reaches beyond any geographical boundaries, and makes it possible for people to avail of individual spiritual direction from their own homes. We will therefore continue to offer online ongoing spiritual direction and individually guided retreats for those who wish.

The Team - We would like to introduce you to some new members and some familiar ones too.



Julie Williamson

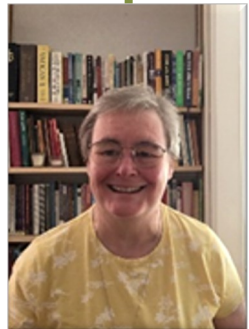
I was born in Wrexham and can speak some Welsh, but would not consider myself fluent. Most of my working life has been spent working in health and social care, mainly with older people. I returned to full time education as a mature student and gained my BA Hons. from the University of Central Lancashire in 1998, reading Social Policy. On completion of my degree I went to work for Rochdale Borough Council and joined a management team in a large home for older people. I enjoyed this job very much but decided I wanted to return to live in Wales, and moved to Prestatyn in 2005. My career then deviated from managing services for older people to training staff working in care settings. I worked as an assessor, delivering all levels of care qualifications up to when I began work at the Centre in December 2021.

I am thoroughly enjoying my new role and look forward to meeting many of you when you visit the Centre during the year.



Anne McEvoy IBVM

I belong to the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Loreto Sisters) and joined the Loreto Spirituality Centre Team at the beginning of January this year. I came to this country from Ireland in 1963 to join the Loreto Sisters and my ministries have included teaching, financial management and leadership. Ten years ago I spent ten weeks in St Beuno's doing the training course for Spiritual Directors and have worked with the Wrexham Diocesan Outreach team as a prayer guide, both leading prayer groups and individuals in a retreat in daily life as well as ongoing spiritual direction.



Una Coogan IBVM

I joined the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary in 1997. After the novitiate, I worked for a couple of years as a school chaplain, before moving to my 'dream job' as a retreat director in the Loyola Hall Jesuit Spirituality Centre near Liverpool where I also helped train new spiritual directors on their training courses. After four years I left to help run our Loreto Retreat Centre in Llandudno. I was given the opportunity to undertake a part-time doctorate in ministry, my topic being "a contemporary study of the Ignatian understanding and discernment of mission". I now work as a university chaplain. I have trained in canon law, gaining my JCL from KU Leuven, Belgium. I have had the privilege of undertaking the full spiritual exercises in a 30-Day retreat on two occasions. I am interested in finding ways in which film and photography can help people explore their spirituality.



Ewa Bem IBVM

I came to Loreto Centre in 2014, after the closure of Loyola Hall where I worked for many years. My main role is to offer retreats and spiritual direction. In recent years, however, my circumstances are such that I now work mainly online. With so much scope for this since the pandemic, and no geographical boundaries, I am keen to use this to its full potential.

I very much like living in Llandudno, and it gives me great joy to see how our retreatants appreciate the beauty of nature surrounding us and encountering God in their experience.

We will introduce you to the Staff in the next edition!

In the coming months . . .

Individually Guided Retreats

There are still spaces available on the following silent, individually guided retreats:

17 - 24 May 6 Day Retreat

13 - 20 June 6 Day Retreat

Praying with Scripture

Praying with St Paul 1 - 3 April

Led by Sean Ryan, a biblical scholar with a particular interest in prayer and worship in the New Testament.

Praying with Wisdom literature 10 - 12 June

Led by Karen Eliassen, a retreat director working on the St Beuno's Team, with a particular interest in Old Testament studies.

Holy Week Retreat

Wednesday 13 - Sunday 17 April

A time to celebrate the liturgies of Holy Week in the context of a prayerful retreat.

Led by Michael Barnes SJ and the Loreto Centre Team

'Let me hear what you will speak' retreat for the Friends of Mary Ward (and anyone else interested!)

Weekend 6 - 8 May

Reflecting on fragments of Mary Ward's life and vision, we will ponder on our call to a vocation of love, and on what might help us to find God in all things.

Led by Carmel Swords IBVM, from the Irish Province

For more IGRs, our Preached Retreats and Advent Triduum, our themed retreats later in the year, and our Living Theology Summer School, please see our website or contact the Centre for a programme.

We need your help . . .

These are difficult times for many and all of us have been badly affected by Covid and the financial crisis. We would like to welcome everyone to Loreto Centre including those who cannot afford the full cost of an event. We have a small bursary fund and would like to add to this so that those who need can avail of it. Any donation towards this fund, however small, will be gratefully received. You can do this by cheque or bank transfer and if you are a tax payer you can gift aid your donation. If you would like to make a donation towards the upkeep of the Centre that would also be very welcome.

Cheques should be made payable to Loreto Centre and the details for a bank transfer are as follows:

Cooperative Bank, PO Box 101, 1 Balloon Street, Manchester M60 4EP

Account Name: Loreto Sisters-Loreto Centre

Account No. 65498136

Sort Code: 08 90 00

International Bank a/c number

GB34 CPBK 0890 0065 4981 36

Bank Identification Code

CPBK GB22

From the Mary Ward Family

Who was Mary Ward?

Mary Ward was a Yorkshire woman, born in 1585 at a time of civil unrest following the Reformation. Convinced that she was drawn to some form of life devoted to God and neighbour, she pioneered a new way of religious life for women. The prevailing opinion in the church at that time was that women could live an enclosed religious life or marry, but they were incapable of active service. Mary, however, felt God's call to her to 'something different', in response to the needs of her time.

Mary and her early companions sought to show that women could educate and support people on their faith journey. She established schools for girls across Europe, travelling on foot and often living in dire poverty. She also sent her companions back to England to work under cover with Catholic families there.

Her prayer journals show the importance she placed on reflecting on experience and indicate a warm and loving relationship with God, whom she often addressed as 'Parent of parents and Friend of friends'. Mary believed that her companions and followers were called to live a life imbued with 'freedom, justice and sincerity'.

*'I saw Him immediately and very clearly go into my heart,
and little by little settle himself in it . . . He held my heart.'*

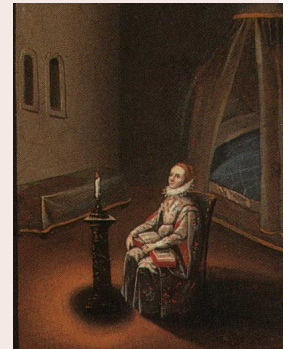
(M.W. Retreat Notes, 1619)

Mary presented to the Pope a plan for an independent order of women, following the Jesuit rule, ready to perform any work he might require. The church leaders of the day were unnerved by her vision, which challenged their expectations of women. They condemned her and her works and disbanded the fledgling order. Mary, however, continued to trust that if this work was of God, God would ensure it prospered. She remained convinced that 'women in time to come will do much'. She died in 1645, urging her companions to trust in their vocation and let it be 'constant, efficacious and loving'.

Her companions persevered in their lifestyle and works, but it was not until the 20th Century that Mary Ward was recognised in any way by Church authority. Her followers today work in every continent and try to live by her ideals, promoting the gifts of women in 'freedom, justice and sincerity', in a way of life that places emphasis on reflection and action, to serve the Gospel 'wherever the need is greatest'.

The Friends of Mary Ward

The Friends of Mary Ward are a group of lay people inspired by the life and mission of Mary Ward who aspire to follow in her footsteps in their daily life. For more information please contact Ewa at the Centre or see: www.congregationofjesus.org.uk/spirituality/friends-mary-ward



Mary Ward at Prayer
(Painted Life of Mary Ward)
www.congregationofjesus.org

Coming up . . .

An international group of Mary Ward sisters are leading a workshop on Christian discernment and decision making on the afternoon of Saturday 23rd April 2022. This is open to anyone, but particularly intended for people who are making significant life choices.



Which Way, Lord?

An opportunity to reflect on discernment in our daily life

Speaker: Gemma Simmonds CJ
Saturday 23 April, 3-6 pm (CET).

The workshop will be led by Mary Ward sisters (CJ and IBVM)
from across Europe.

To register please contact us: marywardonline@gmail.com

For more information about the Mary Ward sisters, please visit our website www.ibvm.org.uk
or contact Ewa Bem at the Centre.