

LORETO SPIRITUALITY CENTRE NEWSLETTER

January 2025



WELCOME to our Winter/Spring edition of the
Loreto Spirituality Centre News.



Pope Francis has designated this year as a Year of Hope, calling us back to the God whose heart is always open. In the midst of ever-growing turmoil in our world, the words of his Christmas message are comforting and challenging:

Brothers and sisters, do not be afraid! The Door is open, the door is wide open! There is no need to knock on the door. It is open. Come! Let us be reconciled with God, and then we will be reconciled with ourselves and able to be reconciled with one another, even our enemies. God's mercy can do all things. It unties every knot; it tears down every wall of division; God's mercy dispels hatred and the spirit of revenge. Come! Jesus is the Door of Peace.

["Urbi et Orbi" - Christmas 2024 | Francis](#)

Our hope at the Centre is to offer opportunities for people of all walks of life to 'come away and rest a while' in that quiet space that we all crave. The icon of the Beloved Disciple in our small oratory is one in front of which many retreatants find consolation as they encounter Jesus' open heart.



We hope that you will find something of interest in our programmed events. We are also able to provide the space for parish and other groups to avail of our facilities for a retreat or a quiet break.

A new initiative this year is a three-day course in Lent, called **Understanding our Everyday Beliefs**. This is designed to offer space for an exploration of the faith

we profess. Pope Francis' call to Synodality is also a call to adult faith formation, and this course would be suitable as a refresher for catechists, for anyone following the RCIA programme, and for anyone who just wants to explore their faith more deeply. There will be plenty of time for discussion and questions, and it is designed so that if you cannot attend the full three days, it is possible to come for only a part and still benefit from a full module. Please see our website or ask us for more information.

Changes on the Team

Sadly, we have said goodbye to Julie, our Centre Manager, who left us at Christmas to go to pastures new. We are grateful to her for all that she has contributed to the Centre over the last three years, and wish her well.

Many of you will already know Josette, an IBVM sister who has been involved in the work of the Centre for a number of years. Josette has now moved to Llandudno permanently, and is fully engaged in the programme.



Originally from Malta, she joined the IBVM in 1991 and worked as a teacher and then, following theology studies, as a retreat director. Her main area of interest is Scripture, particularly the letters of Paul.

As we begin the new year, we ask you to keep us and the work of the Centre in your prayer, as we do you. May this truly be a Year of Hope for us, and for the world.

*For more information, and other events,
please see our website or contact the Centre for a programme.*

Reflection on Living Theology 2024 at Loreto Centre

Faith is, in part, an intellectual exercise. We may have questions about our church, scripture and doctrine and how these integrate with our daily lives and the society we live in. As someone whose formal religious education ended aged 16 with GCSE R.E, I'm curious about theology. While I enjoy a rich spiritual life in a caring church community, my theological knowledge is lacking. Enter Living Theology! This is a vibrant, engaging weekend of talks relevant to theology of daily life with opportunities for reflection and discussion. Last year, 2024, marked the 10th year of the Living Theology weekend in the Loreto Spirituality Centre, Llandudno. The venue offers tranquillity, a very warm welcome and a picturesque coastal location.

The format involves a key note lecture which is attended by all on Friday evening, then 3 small group talks on Saturday and Sunday which are chosen from a list of available courses. Interspersed with this are regular coffee breaks and a delicious, generous lunch. There's also ample time in the evenings to chat with others, relax, watch a film or enjoy a short walk by the sea or up the slopes of the Great Orme.

Karen Eliason, from the team at St Beuno's, gave the excellent, inspiring key note talk on Old Testament Listening Ideals. Starting with the Shema, the beautiful Hebrew prayer which opens Jewish prayer with the words "Hear, O Israel," we were introduced and led through the theme and power of listening in Deuteronomy and for Moses. A highlight for me was discovering, through Karen's talk, the transformative power of listening through listening with openness, attention and positive regard for the other. This has direct relevance for me in my job and I suspect will be helpful for many others in their daily lives, particularly in our increasingly polarised society.

Also topical was "Liberation Theology: origins and enduring relevance," a very engaging course given by Ethna Regan CHF, Associate Professor of Theology and Ethics at Dublin City University. This gave an enlightening historical perspective of the recognition of those experiencing economic poverty which is inevitably due to injustice. Their position as oppressed peoples and the call to all of us to notice, stand in solidarity and work to end economic inequality encouraged discussion. Particularly enlightening for me was learning that one of the first advocates of the underprivileged lived and wrote in the 1500s, Bartolome de Las Casas, a Dominican, and perhaps the first academic activist. The course took us right up to the present day with reflecting on Pope Francis' encyclical "Fratelli Tutti", including the metaphor of the Church as a Field hospital. We also reflected on the woundedness of the church, particularly on the institutional abuse that has occurred. Learning about Liberation Theology gave me some tools to face dealing with injustice. The process of reflecting on our reality in the light of the gospels, scrutinising the signs of the times, particularly spoke to me.

In his illuminating course, "God East and West," Mike Barnes SJ explored the two different types of spiritual languages: the prophetic and the mystical through Hindu, Sikh and Christian texts. The commonality of "the Word" as a manifestation of God was discussed in this interactive course, we were encouraged to express our interpretations of the texts in this wonderfully challenging exploration of prophets and mystics who teach us about God. For me, this gave a great foundation for inter-religious dialogue.

Overall, this weekend provides fuel and nourishment for everyday life. It inspires and encourages. It opens up possibilities. I'd recommend the Living Theology weekend to anyone curious and keen to explore their faith, to those who would like to hear and share ideas in a friendly, supportive and accessible setting.

Nikki Paul

The next Living Theology Summer School takes place 10 - 13 July 2025.

In the coming months . . .

For retreats later in the year please see the website or phone for a flyer

Individually Guided Retreats

20 - 29 January Up to 8 Days Retreat,
(reduced rate)
28 April - 7 May Up to 8 Days Retreat
23 - 30 June 6 Day Retreat
19 - 28 July 8 Day Retreat

Preached Retreats

12 - 19 May Conversion: Climbing the Seven-
Storey Mountain with the Saints.
Fr John Udris
1 - 8 July Finding our Hidden Treasure.
Fr Peter Verity

Holy Week Retreat

16 - 20 April
An opportunity to celebrate the liturgies of Holy
Week in the context of a prayerful retreat.

Themed Retreats

21 - 23 February 'I saw Him . . . go into my heart and little by little hide Himself . . .'
Praying alongside Mary Ward. *Josette Zammit-Mangion IBVM*

28 February - 2 March 'For the Praise of His Glory.'
Praying with Elizabeth of the Trinity and Ann Griffiths (Welsh Hymn Writer).
Ioan ap Dewi OCDS and Ewa Bem IBVM

30 May - 1 June Moved by the Spirit: a reflective retreat using Scripture, Poetry and Music.
Josette Zammit-Mangion IBVM & Bernadette Turtle IBVM

Loreto Days of Prayer 2025

Loreto Days of Prayer take place one day each month. Please ask for more details.

10am coffee for a 10.30 start, and ending at 3.30pm with tea for those who wish.
No need to book, just come along and bring a friend!

Courses in Faith Formation

12 - 15 March **Understanding our Everyday Beliefs:** Exploring our faith in a prayerful context
For further information please see this link:
[Understanding Our Everyday Beliefs – Loreto Spirituality Centre](#)

10 - 13 July **Living Theology: A 3-Day Summer School** - more information available soon

We need your help . . .

These are difficult times for many and all of us have been badly affected by 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.

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

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

International Bank a/c number
GB34 CPBK 0890 0065 4981 36
Bank Identification Code
CPBK GB22

LORETO LLANDUDNO – THE FOUNDATION PART 2

In the last newsletter (July 2024) we outlined the history of the Loreto Sisters' presence in Llandudno from its beginning to the late 20th Century. If you haven't seen it, you will find it on our website. We pick up the story . . .

In 1970, the numbers in the novitiate no longer warranted a large building, following Vatican II's encouragement of the laity to a full participation of the Church's mission. As a result, part of the building was developed to accommodate groups for the spiritual formation of the laity.

Also in 1970, it was decided to close the boarding school, there being less need, and the Diocese of Menevia acquired the property for a Middle (9-13) School, for Catholic children in the area. The school continued for over ten years, but when numbers decreased, neither the Local Authority or Diocese could support it financially any longer.

In 1987 the buildings were reacquired by Loreto and it was decided to expand the work of the Centre into

Clifton Lodge and The Hall for self-catering options for "quiet time", retreats, and day meetings. Early in the 1990s also, St Buenos' Outreach asked to use the lower part of Eithinog for its Ignatian Spirituality programme in this part of the Diocese.

Anyone who came this way in the 2010s saw the enormous expansion. The building and refurbishment which took place, resulted in the building of Loreto House and the subsequent establishment of Loreto Spirituality Centre in the old Convent building.

If walls could speak, they would tell of the lives and dedication of the generations of sisters who welcomed the boarders, children on holiday, other sisters from across the world, and then retreatants to the Spirituality Centre. Today, they would also tell us of the dedication of all the staff who work at the Centre, and those who work at Loreto House, looking after some of those sisters at the last stages of their lives.

Source: Much of this material is taken from our Archivist, Clare Walsh's work for the Centenary Celebrations in 2019.

LORETO HOUSE TODAY



LORETO SP CENTRE TODAY

