

## Men's Group and the Enneagram

We have taken time to look anew at the Enneagram, the ancient personality system, developed in Egypt by the Desert Fathers and rediscovered by a Franciscan missionary in the 14th century. It helps us to recognize our "own addictive pattern of seeing and thinking" and is a "tool for discernment and a gift of the Spirit" writes Rohr.

2 personality types per session– listening to Richard Rohr on CD. It's not exactly a chore! We each are familiar with the work but this time get to reflect together on what new insights have offered themselves and bat them around, question ourselves.

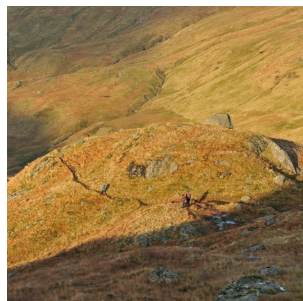


London street, David Marcu. Unsplash.com

The questions we find ourselves regularly asking are:

Who do I recoil from? Who am I moving towards? Given that all reflect the image of God, what do they each offer? Can I see Christ in either, in both?

And finally, ....



I will trust in the darkness and know  
That my times are still in Your hand.  
I will believe You for my future,  
Chapter by chapter, until all the story is written.  
Focus my mind and my heart upon You,  
My attention always on You without alteration.

*Brendan's Mountain Prayer, Celtic Daily Prayer*

March 2015

The Coracle Trust



Life is precious

Through the Advent narrative we perceived a theme of vulnerability - a baby and a plan entrusted to a collection of people who each in turn say 'Yes' to their God. The genocide in Galilee framed the account. The recent terrorist attacks in France too show us how deeply we rightly value life and abhor its being taken away. Life is precious. Life is wild.

The promise of a new year and the reflection on the past, with their shimmering hope ('taking the world into my arms' as Oliver puts it) and painful losses push us deeper into a wistful appreciation of all life. There are questions to ask and to hear. Jesus brings his spotlight to bear: What do you want me to do for you? What are you looking for? The invitation to pay attention, 'to fall down into the grass', and to let the 'the soft animal of your body love what it loves' becomes compelling as well as a necessity.



David Meier, hpicography.co



Amanda Sandlin, unsplash.com

The enthusiasm with which we receive life where it is offered to us, where we stand, is to be encouraged. For what could one give in exchange for your life, asks Jesus. What will we do with our wild and precious lives, with its questions and its joys? We share them. We talk round fires, whilst passing cups of tea and glasses of wine perhaps. Our shared discoveries enrich and transform us. A need for inns on roads/ islands in seas./Halts for discoveries/to be shared./Maps checked, notes compared. (Not Love Perhaps, ASJ Tessimond)

Our **new website launch in March**, together with its **brochure of topics**, aim to contribute to that storytelling; to be one of those inns or islands. And as we move through Lent, we share in the disciples' own observations of Jesus, specifically noting his postures, what may be conveyed through his non-verbal communication. A **Lent 2015 postcard** is enclosed gathering together these reflections.

Andrew Hook

## The Two Halves of Life—Mid-life spirituality

### Follow me

I see that the life of this place is always emerging beyond expectation or prediction or typicality, that it is unique, given to the world minute by minute, only once, never to be repeated. And this is when I see that this life is a miracle, absolutely worth having, absolutely worth saving. We are alive, within mystery, by miracle.

Wendell Berry



I came into my own 'second half of life' through a very narrow gate. In fact it was so narrow that I had to leave pretty much everything I had learned and believed about God at the threshold, otherwise I wouldn't have been able to get through! It was a process, born of particular and often painful seasons, and which I now see lies at the heart of what Jesus meant when he said, "Follow me". Richard Rohr describes the paradoxical movement of 'falling upward' as liberation borne from a kind of necessary suffering, which supports the possibility of transformation and enlarges the space in which we find ourselves. From this new vantage point the grander scheme emerges in which God (in all his or her varied expressions, forms and colours) can be seen at work in all things, and a certain joy found in discovering ways and means of participating in this creative endeavour.

And in keeping with the paradox that is God, this gift offered - the capacity for expansive living - contains within it the necessary condition of learning to die...many times over. How else otherwise is the necessary space shaped from which life can be borne?

I wonder if that's why Lazarus needed to die. Perhaps Jesus, fully human as he wept for his dead friend, needed to know this truth some place deep inside so that he too could follow..." Unless a seed falls to the ground..." he said. I ponder these things as part of my own spiritual labouring.

But I also think a lot about death and dying because most of my days are spent alongside those whose lives are fractured and thrown off balance by the diagnosis of a terminal disease. It is a profound and challenging undertaking to come alongside someone you don't know and offer yourself, your experience, knowledge and skills to guide and support the months, weeks, perhaps only days that lie ahead.

And the journey lies across a landscape which, over time and with experience I have learned to recognise, and which is not so far removed from each the of the many deaths - large and small - I too have avoided, resisted, wept over or given consent to along the way.

Lynn Darke

## E-Reflections — fortnightly reflections via email.

### The Questions of Jesus

"Jesus asks questions, good questions, unnerving questions, realigning questions, transforming questions. He leads us into liminal and therefore transformative space, much more than taking us into any moral high ground of immediate certitude or ego superiority...He leaves us betwixt and between, where God and grace can get at us, and where we are not all in control." (Richard Rohr)

Through 2015 we will submit ourselves to the light and glare of Jesus 'questions, as recorded throughout the Gospels.

Here's a sample and if you want to join the e-newsletter list tell us so.

### Who do you say I am?

You are the Messiah. *Matthew 16:15*

"Who do you say that I am?"  
I do not reply to those words at first.  
I let them echo and re-echo in my ears  
for quite some time,  
observing how my heart reacts to them.

And only when I can restrain myself no longer  
do I react to them  
-in just one word  
or silence.

Anthony de Mello



Christ in the wilderness: Consider the lilies, Stanley Spencer

### Notice

Who do I hope/want Jesus to be,  
to me, for me,  
at this moment in my life?

What might Messiah mean to you? How is he Messiah to you?  
Note, non-judgementally, your longings.

### A mosaic

Messiah. Dreamer. Leader. Big. Purposeful. Knowing. An outdoor type. Reflective. Introvert. Extrovert.

Quiet. To talk, anything! To make me lie down. To see what I see.  
Ubiquitous. Mystery. Seer into to my soul. One who strides across the waves to hold back earth's decay, and falling economies. Joker, to cheer my heart. Aragorn to stiffen sinews. Aslan to breath out hope. Florence to gently tend wounds.

Having noticed your longings, your responses, bring them in silence to Messiah.

Andrew Hook



## New website launch

This month sees a new look Coracle website being launched. The 'old' website has served us well and received many good reviews. However, through discussion with former trustee Justin Reynolds who developed the site, our shift towards being more offering based required a change in its technical foundation. This together with the fact that viewing the site via a mobile phone is poor and management of the content has become increasingly unwieldy we have reached the point of needing a new skin. All, or a significant amount, of the content from the old site has been moved to the new and reconfigured.

In accord with Tessimond's thought we aim to 'share discoveries' that each of the groups have generated and used as they have journeyed over the years. Poetry, meditations, readings, audio and videos plus retreat material has always been a feature and continues to be the case. So, to make the materials accessible and the site more usable, for other groups and individuals, the new site displays a different shape and will increasingly offer downloadable single A4 topic sheets.

We have made a start. There is a downloaded topics brochure\* showing topics (titles, thumbnail images and pithy quotes) and some 8 pdfs are currently available.

### Funding request

We are seeking funding to allow all topics to be so covered. If you are aware of funding sources that come to mind or would like to donate and see this project completed then go to the Donate/Support area of the website for the means available to give. PDFs available are:

- Acedia—Torpor and the refusal of joy.
- Lost—The old skin splits.
- Distance and Intimacy (the unitive life)
- Exhaustion—why am I so tired
- Gender and spirituality

The Topics brochure comprises 54 topics. The list of topics covered extends beyond the current brochure as groups continue to meet, and so the website will need to be refreshed and new editions of the brochure released.

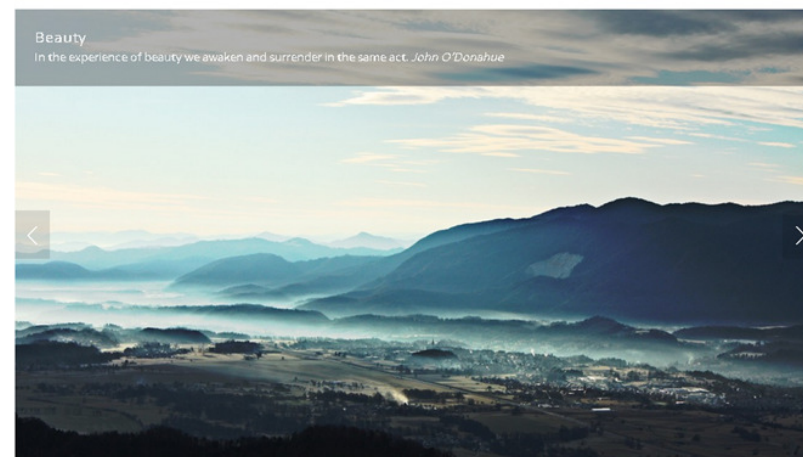


Front cover\*

## New website home page—snapshot

### THE CORACLE TRUST

HOME TOPICS REFLECTIONS EXPEDITIONS GROUPS ABOUT



Beauty

In the experience of beauty we awaken and surrender in the same act. John O'Donahue

SEARCH MORE TOPICS

#### WE AIM TO HELP TRANSITIONING IN FAITH THROUGH THE LIFESTAGES.

The Coracle Trust is a charity based in Edinburgh that offers places of hospitality for pilgrims and navigators to share stories, cultivate learning and instil an openness towards this Christ of the road, this God of the high seas\*.

#### REFLECTIONS



Regular, seasonal (Lent, Advent), magazine

#### GROUPS



Mid-life spirituality, Motherhood and God, Men's spirituality

#### NEWS AND FEATURES



KEY GUIDING THOUGHTS

A need for inns on roads, islands on seas\*.



ARTICLE IN EDGE PUBLICATION

An introduction to Coracle.



WHO SAYS WORDS (VIDEO)

I'm not lost but neither do I know where I am going.



FUNDING FOR TOPICS

DOWNLOAD PROJECT  
Funding sought for topic sheets project

## Discoveries shared— a sample page from the topics brochure



### Leavetaking and homecoming

The LORD had said to Abraham,  
“Leave your country, your people  
and your father’s household  
and go to the land  
I will show you.”



### True Self and False Self

Somewhere, somehow, we began to  
live as if we were separate, alone  
and in danger. Once afraid, we con-  
structed a self out of that fear and  
have been steadfastly defending it  
ever since.

*Kabir Helminski*



### The body

Our rootedness, our sense  
of place and space,  
is profoundly bodily.

God delights in being visible and  
tangible in human skin. The Blessed  
Trinity dwells deep within our bodies.

*Daniel O’Leary*



### Nature and the soul

Discreetly, secretly,  
someone is saying  
here I am,  
here I begin.

*Kenneth White*

## Trustee & Treasurer news

**Andy Davis** has stepped down as Treasurer. We thank him for his safe hands, his dry wit and helpful insights. We are searching for someone with a financial background to take his place. The tasks are not onerous or extensive - about 1 hour per month for payments, receipts and payroll plus some more for gathering together simple year end accounts. This is a non-remunerated post and Trusteeship is an option but not required. If you are interested (and ideally living within the Edinburgh area) please contact Nancy Adams at coracletrust@gmail.com for questions and to express interest.



## Coracle Retreat in Daily Life –some reflections



As I was reviewing the feedback we received, from the 12 participants who engaged with ‘Falling to Ground’, our pre- advent Retreat in Daily life in November, a number of things struck me:-

Firstly the Retreat in Daily life seemed to offer a **sacred held space**, which in itself seemed to bring life, a rekindling of relationship to God and refreshment to people who wanted to ‘stop’ and were longing for permission to do so. I wondered what it would take for each of us to find that sacred space in daily life –discipline..... Love.....Desire..... or strength to beat the ongoing narrative in our heads that tells us that we don’t have the time or are being selfish to make the time?

The second thing that I noticed was the **intentionality**- the way people in which people engaged with the retreat process, I wondered just how much impact this had on the outcome for participants? And at the same time, the having of an open hands and open heart posture to receive the gifts God wanted to give.

Finally, the guides, in being **witnesses** to times of transition and transformation, strengthened and encouraged retreatants through the process of change. In offering to be witnesses to the ‘other’ whether in joy, pain or transitions, we demonstrate God’s great heart of compassion and kindness and help others to stay focused on the mystery of their transition time. In this place of being known by an ‘other’, a witness to our life, we not only sense the impact on our spiritual journey but the greater benefit on our overall health and wellbeing.

- ✦ I wonder are you longing for that sacred space in daily life.
- ✦ You may consider writing some intentions for you day and notice the impact.
- ✦ Or you may want to list and give thanks for the witnesses to your life transitions, or give thanks for the gifts you were given, that enabled you to be witness for the ‘other.’

Photo: petadra, unsplash.com

Mags Bryan