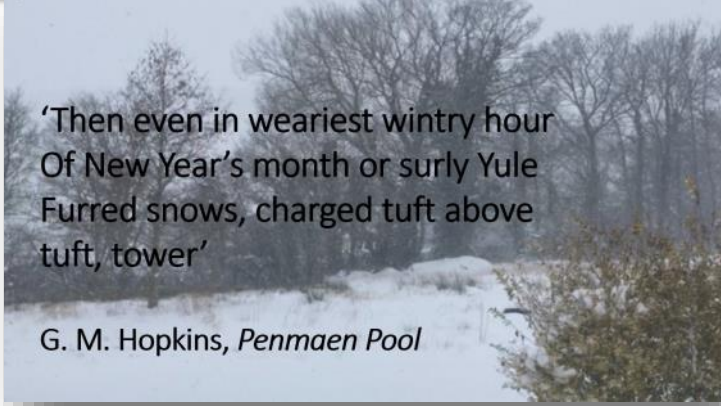


'I remember a house where all were good to me' (Gerard Manley Hopkins SJ)

Friends of *St Beuno's* E-News



'Then even in weariest wintry hour
Of New Year's month or surly Yule
Furred snows, charged tuft above
tuft, tower'

G. M. Hopkins, *Penmaen Pool*

Editor's Note

In this edition...

Greetings to all our Friends this February—a month that has moved from very windy and wintry (even snowy) to spring-like during the last week here at St Beuno's!

This month we were sad to bid farewell to a very valued member of the team in Sr Josephine Badali who had been with us on a six month internship from her religious community in Canada. While we invite you to keep her and the next stage of her ministry in your prayers, we share a parting gift from her in the form of a reflection on her time with us at St Beuno's and on the fundamental mission of the house: *My one, wild, wonderful life*.

That famous line from the poem, *The Summer Day*, of course brings to mind with gratitude the work and life of its author, the American poet Mary Oliver, who died last month at the age of 83. Celebrating the gift of poetry, this month we share the words of another Friend of St Beuno's who attended our 'Prayer and poetry' retreat back in July, entitled, *Expect*.

Lastly, as we all experience a seasonal shift from winter to the first tentative shoots of spring, St Beuno's own Iona Reid-DalGLISH rediscovers the power of scriptural images of life, death and growth in, *God in the garden: a living parable*.

This last month we have said goodbye to those who were with us since the New Year making the Full Spiritual Exercises and welcomed new groups into the house for both retreats of various length and some of our training courses, including the Prayer Guides course and the Introduction to Spiritual Accompaniment course. We had a fantastic response to Fr Roger's additional 'Life before death: the psychology of human flourishing' weekend which brought in a large number of people new to St Beuno's and Ignatian spirituality.

We also had a very enjoyable and inspiring Friends of St Beuno's weekend in which Fr Damian Howard, the Jesuit Provincial, put the work of the house and the role of the Friends into the wider context of the Jesuits' mission in the Church and the world. We will say a bit more about his talk and some of the exciting ideas that came out of the weekend in our next issue of the e-news, so watch this space!

Over the last week, we have seen scaffolding go up and the south wing of the house disappear for the next few months as essential repair work begins to the stonework. Fr Roger will update you all soon on the next phase of our building plans for the house.

In the meantime, please do keep us all, and those we walk with, in your prayers and be assured of ours for you, wherever and however you are.

With my prayers and best wishes,

Tim



My one, wild, wonderful life—Josephine Badali CND

What is it you plan to do with your “one, wild, wonderful life?” asks Mary Oliver in her poem, *A Summer Day*.

A year ago, I would never have included even the possibility of a 6 month internship, *Training in Spirituality*, at St. Beuno’s, as one of the “wild and wonderful” things that would shape my life! I first arrived at St. Beuno’s from Canada because my Religious Community had offered me the privilege of a sabbatical year. As I planned this precious gift, I did some internet research and discovered the 10 week “Course in Retreat Giving and Spiritual Guidance” that was being offered here. I considered that this program would both confirm and grow some of the personal gifts with which I thought that I had been graced. After I had completed the training and formation program, a position for an internship opened up; I applied and here I am.



Returning as an intern was different from arriving the first time at St. Beuno’s. I knew a little more about the building, its location and more importantly, the service that is so generously and lovingly offered here. But I have so much more to learn. Each day offers some new experience, some new learning and some new insight into how God desires to love life into us. Not the least to be mentioned is the spirit of St. Ignatius which continues to universally inspire and to guide people in their search for meaning and for hope. His own spirit hovers throughout the house as well as over the hills and valleys that are near and far.

Soon after my arrival, I was shown the nooks and crannies, the cellars and hidden spaces of this house that has a history of over 170 years of Ignatian spirituality and influence. I’m sure that the spirits of Gerard Manley Hopkins, Michael Ivins and so many others still linger here. I meet them in the hallways and in the various rooms that feature samples of their works and their pictures!

I was soon introduced to my co-workers, personnel who work in the numerous and various services. When you visit St. Beuno’s, you will note that there is among the whole staff, a great desire to cooperate and to collaborate by contributing their own personal gifts and expertise toward the facilitation of the ministry of the centre.

It amazes me how there is a constant ebb and flow of people at St. Beuno’s. Some retreatants who have been here for 3 day, 7 day, 2 day, 8 day, or 30 day retreats, themed retreats or Individually Guided Retreats (IGRs) leave in the morning. Other groups arrive in the afternoon, while others continue their chosen retreat in the cherished silence of the house and grounds. In the meantime, the housekeeping staff are preparing rooms for new arrivals; retreat staff are arranging and distributing flowers and welcoming messages for each retreatants’ room; the administration and catering staff are forging forward; the bee hives are being monitored and the production of apple juice is in process! There are truly *a variety of gifts* among us.

What, though, is at the heart of the ministry being offered here? What uniquely and profoundly stirs the spirit of each one who enters these hallowed halls? For me, the deep call is to listen, to hear and to respond to God’s desire for our universe. *What is God’s desire? What is my desire?*

The response is as unique and as different as is each one of us. Yes, it is to deepen my relationship with Jesus, the Christ! Yes, it is to find God in all things! Yes, it is to reflect upon my personal experience and to notice where are the stirrings and movements of the Spirit of Love and Hope and Joy, of light and of darkness! Yes it is to express to God my longings and my aching. Yes, it is simply to BE in God’s presence and in God’s embracing love. Each of us

could add to this list of desires. What we add will be coloured by the shape and texture of our own daily lives.

People arrive at St. Beuno's from the peripheries both existential and physical. They carry different expectations and needs as well as diverse experiences and images of God. Some are anxious, exhausted and filled with the "busyness, muchness and moreness" of their daily lives. Others are bent over like the woman in the Gospel; burdened with problems and concerns, suffering of all kinds. Others don't really know what are their needs and they just desire to be here. Each one is welcomed just as he or she is.

No matter how a person is drawn to St. Beuno's, the Centre offers a safe and silent space, a welcoming and prayerful environment where we can gently and deliberately pursue God's desires for us. St. Beuno's is where we may search for the face of God; where we may discover the sacred path that is ours and where we are free to open our hearts to God's great love.

Is that not a precious gift for our *wild and wonderful lives*?

News for the Friends:

For those interested in a holiday/pilgrimage following in the footsteps of Ignatius, the ISC in Glasgow is offering the following this summer:

The Spain of St Ignatius Loyola: A Pilgrimage,

27th July to 3rd August 2019

An enjoyable, relaxed and informative visit to Spain with the Ignatian Spirituality Centre, Glasgow.

Visiting Loyola, Pamplona, Montserrat, Manresa and Barcelona.

Find out more about the story and spirit of Saint Ignatius of Loyola and see many of the places he visited. Hotel accommodation. Air-conditioned Coach travel. Mass in English in many of the shrines.

For more details and to book online please visit:

<http://www.iscglasgow.co.uk/pilgrimagespain.html>

Or contact for a booking form:

**The Secretary,
Ignatian Spirituality Centre, Glasgow,
35 Scott Street
GLASGOW
G3 6PE**

Tel: 0141 354 0077



Spaces still available on upcoming retreats:

'Preparing the Holy Week liturgies: A Workshop'

26-29 March 2019

Vron Smith and Sarah Young

This workshop is suitable for those who would welcome a simple exploration of this special time of the Church's year with some intellectual and prayerful engagement with the liturgies of the Easter Triduum. It is not a silent retreat.

To book or for more information please contact Sue, Beth or Tracey in the office:

01745 583 444

Explore— An Anonymous Friend of St Beuno's

Before I came
this word – Expect.
Kept on recurring.

At close of Sunday's silent
prayer,
A door, within me opened.
No exhilaration

Bemused, feet stepped stairs,
While mind meandered.
Wondering,

Always, in this somehow, vital place
Expect.

Receiving later – Emerging
Answers.

Written while on the 'Prayer and Poetry' retreat at St Beuno's,
July 2018.



Contact us:

To contribute an article, story, prayer (or request for prayer), or to share some news please email Tim at friends@beunos.com. Or write to Tim McEvoy at St Beuno's Jesuit Spirituality Centre
St Asaph, North Wales, LL17 0AS

God in the garden: a living parable – Iona Reid-DalGLISH

Images taken from natural systems and processes are littered throughout scripture, and particularly in the New Testament. Jesus' parables are full of them. They seem, for him, to have been an obvious way of understanding what God's vision of life is about. It wasn't until I began a project with my brother recently, involving growing our own food on the land, organically and according to permaculture principles, that the vibrancy of some of these images really came to light. It's all good and well, in theory, pondering the fact that *'unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.'* (Jn 12:24, NRSV). Or the some-

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St Beuno's Spirituality
Centre
St Asaph

-what threatening admonition *'I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit... Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned.'* (Jn 15:1-3,6, NRSV). They are effective images, they get a message across. But living something of their reality, it turns out (for me at least) adds a whole new layer of flesh and blood, or maybe more aptly, mud and worms, to the images.

In natural systems, nothing is wasted. Death and decay are in fact the very birth-place of life. Neither exists without the other. At home, when we remove grass from around the beds where our fruit and veg are growing, we turn it over and lay it back down, roots upwards to dry in the sun, so that it mulches down to become rich green matter for the soil, to feed those same fruit and veg. Similarly, if there is pruning to be done, the pruned branches, leaves, sections, are again left to lie



and compost around the base of the pruned plant. Sometimes I find the images of cutting away those branches that do not bear fruit in scripture sound harsh, almost brutal – as though there are elements of me that are inherently bad or wrong which need to be destroyed and got rid of. Growing our own food at home has shown me a much richer, more all-encompassing, side to this image. In those elements that need to die, or to be let go of, there too is life and nourishment, which will continue feeding into the system, continue nourishing the plant. They are not being jettisoned into outer space somewhere, ostracized, but rather re-oriented, allowed to enter a new phase of life, death and growth, which ultimately feeds and nourishes the whole system. Nothing is wasted. Nothing is deemed, in nature, as unacceptable. For me, our garden is teaching me something about God, and how God works. I suppose in a sense my garden is for me a living parable and I am finding what a difference it makes engaging with scriptural images I actually inhabit in my daily life, and the little details and truths that stand out anew when I do.



We leave you this month with some images of the impact the recent snows had on our surrounding landscape. What begin as a white blanket settling on the distant mountains across the valley ended up enveloping us for several days and resulted in some spectacular sights (see overleaf):



Above: the Rock Chapel glimpsed through the trees

Below: snowdrops... in the snow!

