

News from Epiphany Group in the North, 2009

It has been another active year for members of the group in the North. Our number has increased from three to five as Chris Sadler in Inverness has joined the Epiphany Group and Glynis Stranraer-Mull has moved across from Ellon to Muir of Ord. All of us have been involved in retreat giving in various ways and also are available to offer spiritual direction to individuals.

The Coach House, Kilmuir.

Joyce and Ruth continue to offer individually guided retreats across the year. Despite the recession people have still been choosing to make a retreat with new enquiries and contacts being made via the website. We have had 3 specific times set aside when the entire house was in silence for Ignatian Retreats. Before Easter, we ran a 6 day Individually Guided Retreat, in August we ran an 8 day IGR and again one in November. We have a maximum of five or six retreatants at any one time which enables us to offer a homely and peaceful atmosphere.

A 30day Retreat was run at the Coach House from Sept 2nd to October 6th. We decided to have a maximum of four retreatants for this. All involved experienced this to be a deeply special time with many insights and graces being received and worked with. Joyce and Ruth also continue to offer 19th Annotation Retreats for individuals and supervision for spiritual directors and pastoral workers

A new venture for us in this region has been to run a 'Training in Spiritual Direction' course. This has been made possible by the commitment as well of Alison Moody who has joined us as an experienced Epiphany Group tutor. In consultation with Joyce and Ruth, she has given much time to adapting and developing the existing course to meet the needs and experience of the 7 participants here. The shape of it is different again from elsewhere with 6 x 2day sessions to make travelling from a distance to the Coach House worthwhile.

We much appreciated Gero McLoughlin coming north to the Coach House in May to give a group of fifteen a reflective day 'Image of Faith'. With his help we looked carefully at five great paintings, and were then encouraged to reflect further, looking prayerfully for the presence of God in our own lives and how God may be inviting us to respond.

Details for the Coach House Kilmuir Trust 2010 programme of retreats and workshops will be available shortly on our website www.coachhousekilmuir.org

Elgin Area Quite Times

Ruth Tait. Birnie. Elgin.

General Observations

There is a strong desire in our area, within a twenty-mile radius of Elgin, for a place and a time, with minimal structure and guidance, in which people can walk alone with God. In a discussion after one of our quiet mornings pilgrims said that they did not want group activity or discussions, (those were for other times) but simply silence in a safe place, held for them, and this I have tried to provide.

Since Susie Alexander moved away from the area we have lost both her help and the use of her house which was designed to provide a place for quiet days and retreats: my house is in a beautiful setting, but the silence and space have to be negotiated!

We have welcomed several new pilgrims over the year, said goodbye to one or two who have moved away and mourned the death, after a long time of ill health, of one of our original pilgrims, Carola McRae.

Quiet mornings/evenings/days

I have tried this year to have more Quiet Mornings (Saturdays) and have experimented with one Quiet (Midsummer) Evening which was much appreciated. We had a break over the summer holiday, but have been able to have Quiet Mornings in both September and October. Our last meeting before Christmas and New Year will be an Advent Quiet Day Retreat on the eve of Advent Sunday, when we invite people to come and walk the labyrinth as well as spending time in meditation. We are holding it in St. Margaret's Episcopal Church in Lossiemouth which has provided a warm and welcoming space for all sorts of activities by investing in moveable, stackable, comfortable chairs, a small coffee bar space, a loo and a small garden; access to the beach is a bonus, (though maybe not at the end of November - but we hope for a fine day.)

THE WEEK'S INDIVIDUALLY GUIDED RETREAT IN DAILY LIFE.

After Easter, we held our usual Week's Individually Guided Retreat in Daily Life. Joyce Ferne and Ruth Flockhart from the Coach House at Kilmuir, Inverness, travelled here every day to be, with myself, the guides for the week. We had 12 participants.

As always, we were amazed by the wonderful ways in which God leads our pilgrims on their journey through the week, so that, at the end of the week, we can truly give thanks at our final service.

Our Week's IGR in Daily Life for 2010 will be from 11 – 17 April.

Epiphany Group Members in the North

Joyce Ferne, Ruth Flockhart, Chris Sadler, Glynis Stranraer-Mull, Ruth Tait