

REPORT FROM ABERDEENSHIRE 2010-2011

A Spiritual Conversation Course has begun with Judith Irving and Carole Phelan as local tutors and Cath McManus travelling up to join them. Moira Donnelly will also be giving some input. There are 9 participants including 2 clergy but only one man. It is interesting that there is a participant travelling from Glasgow.

There has just been a Retreat in Daily Life offered for a week in St Drostan's Lodge, Tarfside. The guides were Carole Phelan and an Aberdeenshire priest who completed the SD course in Aberdeen 2 years ago. There were 9 retreatants of whom 7 stayed for the whole week. Participants came from outside Aberdeenshire and some had heard about it from the Epiphany group website, Diocesan newsletter, interest following on from the 'Big Silence' TV series and my own email list of those interested in such events. There were clergy and laity from 3 denominations.

The Retreat in Daily Life offered last Advent introduced some to the idea of Ignatian spirituality and has resulted in continued Spiritual Direction for some of the participants.

The Support Group which grew out of the Spiritual Direction course has continued to meet. In April a minister, Lorna Murray, who has had a lot of experience in the field of mental health spoke about the search for well-being and fullness of life. Recently John Dunne has returned to give us a talk about Thomas Merton. We have also

continued to meet at regular intervals for group supervision.

Spiritual Direction appears to be more and more widely known about and a few students are now amongst those exploring the possibility of receiving help in discerning God's will in their lives.

The networking between those in different churches and no particular church still excites me and the way we can help and support one another in our various journeys. It also still frustrates me that the Church as a whole does not always help and encourage us to explore our own personal relationships with God.

Judith Irving has helped in some Weeks of Guided Prayer based in Montrose. These have taken place in Boswell House which is a House of Prayer located in the heart of the town of Montrose. The most recent Week of Guided Prayer took place in early April, 2011. There were a good few participants coming from a geographical spread of Montrose itself, Arbroath and the nearby coastal village of Gourdon. The guides were Judith Irving and Sr. Elizabeth Moran. Boswell House is well placed to serve a more southern area of the north east and people continue to come for regular spiritual direction, and, in the summer, for 8 day retreats.

Judith and Carole have taken opportunities to attend Epiphany Group seminars and meetings when they can and Judith is of course part of the Core Group.