

Report from South-West Scotland - 2011

As I reported last year, the first **Growth in Prayer and Reflective Living** course in this region was held from October 2010 to May 2011. Only one of our 19 participants dropped out, for personal reasons. Amazingly, we weren't forced to cancel any weekend due to bad weather. The course was a great success. At least 2 or 3 participants, who were introduced to spiritual accompaniment by the course, are continuing, and a further two are making the Spiritual Exercises. Disappointingly, there wasn't sufficient interest to run a second GPRL this year.

In June I organised a week-long **Retreat in Daily Life**, led by Sr Eileen Cassidy from ISC, Glasgow. We had 14 participants who seemed to have a very positive experience. I am very grateful to Eileen and to Mary McHugh, Mags Bryan, Susannah Young and Edith Thorp for acting as prayer.

In response to an idea planted by Alison Moody, I am organising a series of days on aspects of spirituality under the general title "**Deep Oceans, Broad Horizons**" to run bi-monthly from September 2011 to May 2012. The initial intention was to offer topics that couldn't be included in the GPRL programme, but the idea took on a life of its own and the five days include the following topics:

(1) Desert Spirituality: the call to contemplation and Icons: a window onto eternity; (2) Celtic Spirituality and Cosmology & Ecology; (3) The Enneagram-day 1; (4) Justice & Peace and Poetry: a gateway to prayer; (5) The Challenge of Change: nourishing a 'spirituality of transition' (this day will be facilitated by Margaret Silf)

We average around 8-10 people per day which makes for a gentle atmosphere.

Another idea, this one suggested by Eileen, inspired me to approach our local Catholic priest, who is a 'contemplative in action', to suggest that we offer something based on the '**The Big Silence**'. As a result, we are offering three sessions in November on finding stillness in our life. The session includes a clip from the programme followed by an experience of different ways of praying, e.g. body awareness, *lectio divina* and imaginative contemplation. We were surprised and delighted that 13 attended the first session and 20 came to the second.

I continue to offer periodic **quiet days** from my home in Kirkcudbright. I have been joined by Harriet Oxley, a Galloway GPRL participant. She is very gifted and has an interest in working in the area of offering retreats. I'm absolutely delighted, and I feel that we will work well together.

Of the two women who started leading quiet days with me, Sarah has retired down South with her husband and Edith has decided to withdraw from leading quiet days for the time being. Thankfully, she continues to fulfil the equally important role of treasurer. I'm extremely grateful to both Sarah and Edith for their support in the early days, without which I am certain we would not be where we are today.

Rachel Inglis