

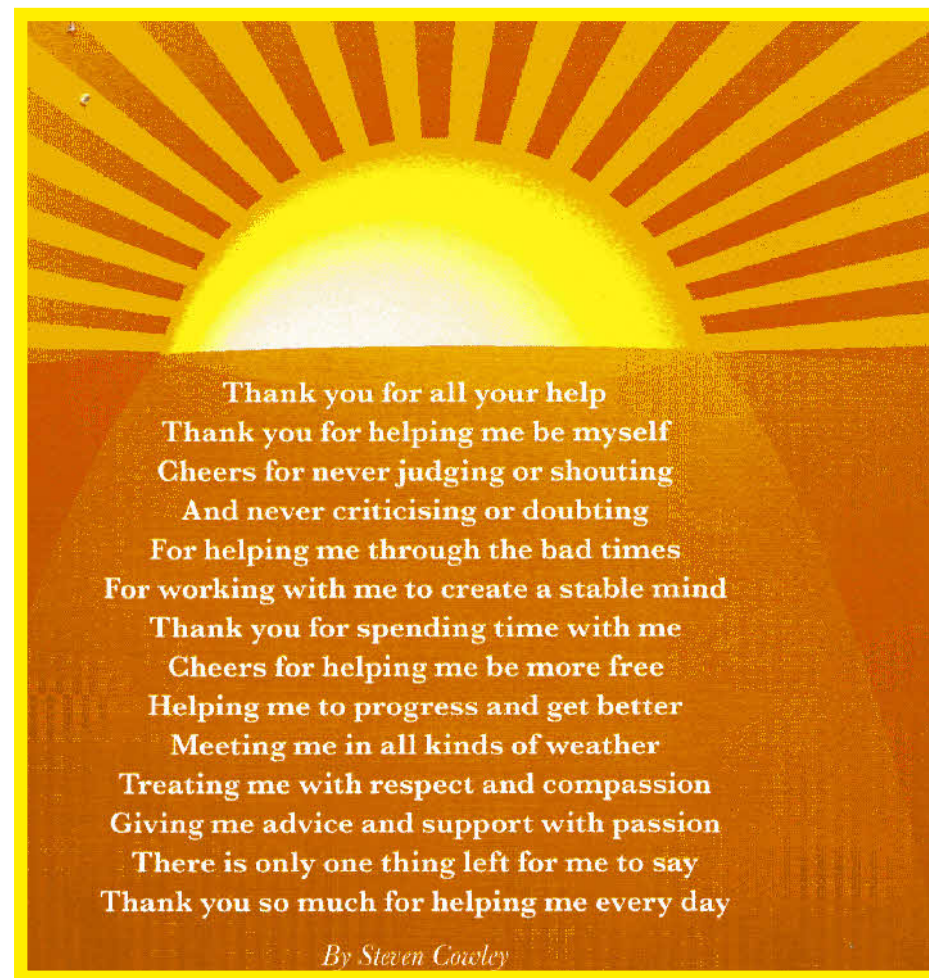


*an Ever Present Help:
site of
'Grace Darling's Lighthouse',
Longstone, Northumberland.*

*Below: Hairdressers in Sandown, Isle of Wight.
Perhaps it should read:
'Appointments not required, just knock and enter!'"?*




Being Alongside



The Barnabus Drop-In Sessions

'Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabus (which means Son Of Encouragement)' Acts 4:36

St. Paul's Community Project in partnership with APCMH

Mondays 2pm - 5pm

August Outing – to be arranged
September Story Telling
October Poetry
November First Aid

Plus various activities: Table tennis, dominoes, scrabble, art / craft, poetry reading, tea / sandwiches / cakes and chat.

Wednesday 10am - 12pm

A more reflective discussion time with tea and biscuits, an opportunity to all share concerns or to receive one-to-one support (by appointment).

Free All Welcome. Venue: St Paul's Church Centre, 3 Rossmore Rd, NW1 (5 mins walk from Marylebone Station; buses 139 & 189 stop outside)

call: Captain Mark Dadds, or Sister Theresa: 0207 724 8517

'When he arrived and saw the wonderful things God was doing, he was filled with excitement & joy, and encouraged the believers to stay close to The Lord whatever the cost. Barnabus was a kindly person, full of the Holy Spirit & strong in faith. As a result large numbers of people were added to the Lord. (Acts 11:19-24)

Mental Health Support Group

St Andrew's, Frognal, U R Church NW3

2nd and 4th Friday of each month

10.15am-12noon

Aiming to provide friendship and mutual support for those living with mental health concerns, both sufferers and carers, where matters may be explored and discussion encouraged.

contact: The Revd Jonathan Dean: 0207 435 5725
 or Jean Marsham: 0208 455 1240

Junction of Frognal Lane / West End Lane / Finchley Road;
 near Finchley Rd. (Met / Jub); 113, 82, 13, 46, 268, 328, 139, C11 (West End Green); Finchley Rd / Frognal (NL Metro), Hampstead (Northern); West Hampstead (1st Capital Direct)



The Who and What of APCMH

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Patron	Professor Andrew Sims	
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APCMH is a Christian based, voluntary association of individual members and affiliated groups who recognise the importance of spiritual values and support in mental health. It has a network of supporters throughout the United Kingdom and it welcomes and encourages people whatever their own faith or belief system.

Governed by its National Committee, APCMH is primarily concerned to promote and encourage "being alongside" people experiencing mental or emotional distress

For Specific Contacts, see above; for General Enquiries reach us:

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The views expressed in *Being Alongside* are
 not necessarily those of the Association.

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Conference

Date: Friday 14 September
Venue: Thistle City Barbican Hotel, 120 Central St, London EC14 8DS
Theme: Accepting and Working with Voice Hearing.
For: Voice hearers, vision see-ers, mental health professionals, friends & carers
Hosts: *Together* (020 7780 7300) supporting *World Hearing Voices Day*.
Fees: £10 unwaged - £120 private sector organisations. Inc lunch!
Contact: 020 7780 7372 / mandy-chainey@together-uk.org

Typically in the West, 'hearing voices' has been associated with mental illness and often seen as a symptom of schizophrenia. Yet many who hear voices do not have a mental illness & never seek help. Traditional treatment has involved major tranquillisers to reduce the 'delusions' and 'hallucinations'. However, not all respond to treatment & some doctors now recognise that talking about their voices is an important way for individuals to explore and accept them.

Speakers & Workshop Leaders include:

- David Crepaz-Keay, Senior Policy Advisor Patient and Public Involvement, *Mental Health Foundation*.
- Louise Pembroke: Survivor activist & voice-hearer.
- Phil Thomas: Professor of Philosophy; *Diversity & Mental Health Centre*.
- Tamasin Knight: researcher & author.
- Chas de Swiet: Head of Operations *Mental Health Media*.
- Peter Bullimore: *Hearing Voices Network*.
- Sara Stanton: Advocacy & Training Manager *Together*.
- Dirk Carstens: Social Psychiatrist & Psychotherapist.

This conference marks the second World Hearing Voices Day and aims to bring together experts with experience of hearing voices and professionals to share their understanding and explore exciting non medical ways to work with voices.

Topics will include:

- impact of hearing voices on people's lives.
- coping strategies from outside traditional psychiatric practice.
- alternative explanations for the causes
- dialogue with voices to discover alternative ways of relating to them.

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Dreams, Tears and Prayers

This piece, reproduced with permission, comes from 'Third Way' magazine. It tells of two people being gently nudged by each other and the Spirit. It has a beautiful, endearing ring, crying out to be shared.

We call him John. His key worker rang recently and said that in John's hostel, all the men had been asked to make a wish list - things they'd really like to do, dreams they'd like to fulfil. The point was that they would slowly work their way down their list and do these things, go to these places.

At the top of John's list was a visit to St Paul's Cathedral. Nothing very surprising in that you might think, it's a well known place and a tourist attraction as well as a working church. But John wanted to come in and meet someone inside because he used to sleep on its steps outside. He hadn't been to the cathedral for almost ten years, ever since he stopped drinking and accepted a place in the hostel. And he didn't want just to look around. He had a plan. We met in the cafe and had a cup of tea.

He had kind eyes, a bushy beard and the disarming honesty that comes with years of living with mental health problems. He said that he was extremely nervous walking down the aisle, but he made it to the vast space under the dome and we looked up. As he started to smile and relax, we made our way to the vestry where he'd requested a bowl of water.

We stood in and he asked me to did. He reached layers and pulled cross on a chain.

am I accepted here..?

placed it in the water and washed his face entirely. Refusing the towel that was offered to him, he put the wet cross back on and commented that when the voices come, the ones that tell him to kill his family or to stab himself in the eye, he would hold onto the cross that had been in holy water, and it would give him strength. We prayed for his family and for him.

Next we moved to the picture of the crucifixion painted by the Russian artist Sergei Chepik, himself no stranger to suffering. John wanted to light a candle and offered to light ours with his cigarette lighter; another prayer was said for his family and everyone who was suffering.

associated with mental health issues, and the damaging myths and misconceptions that may prevent people from seeking professional help.

Given how common mental health problems are throughout our life span, *The Mind: A User's Guide* could prove to be the most valuable reference book you own. I have read this with great interest and appreciation. It will be an invaluable, reader-friendly guide to mental health and its treatment.

Prof David Lodge

visit: www.pastoral.org.uk

National Carers' Week

The charity **Together** held a special meeting on 6 June to pay tribute to these vital members of the health care team who often feel alone and unheard.

Professor Tom Craig of Community and Social Psychiatry, at the Institute of Psychiatry, said that in the UK a million carers put in over fifty hours a week. One in three of those they help have severe mental illness.

- One in three carers live with the person being cared for.
- More women than men are carers.
- 20% of carers have measured mental health problems themselves.

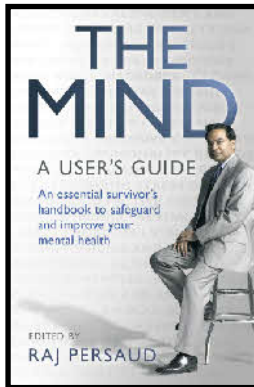
When someone in the family develops a problem other members experience bewilderment and fear and isolation, there is a sense of loss and guilt but eventually there can be hope.

The carer feels they cannot let "the cat out of the bag" and cannot have problems played out in public for fear of stigma.

In 2004 the Equal Opportunities Act was passed to recognise the holistic needs of carers. Carers are said to save the state £57 billion a year and a Local Authority has a duty to look after them. Support workers are available.

Fenella Denning

perspectives, suggesting lessons that can be learnt to improve the quality of care.



The Mind - A User's Guide: An essential Handbook to Safeguard and Improve your Mental Health.

ISBN: 0593056353

Bantam Press

512 pages

£14.99

This is a brilliant book setting out in jargon-free terms the many different aspects of mental ILL health. It is written by leading UK psychologists and psychiatrists under the editorship of Dr. Raj Persaud. Its aim is to inform and empower anyone with experience of a mental health problem and as such is an invaluable guide.

PART I consists of 27 chapters on Disorders of the Mind ranging from Alzheimer's Disease, to Anxiety and Panic, to Stalking.

PART II has 17 chapters on Managing the Mind including alcohol, bereavement, physical illness and chronic pain and spirituality.

Each chapter includes a typical case history, followed by a definition of their problem, an explanation of what the person is experiencing and then help options.

There is a resume by Dr. Persaud and finally a list of appropriate organisations and websites.

Fenella Denning

and there's more...

The Mind: A User's Guide aims to inform and empower anyone who has experience of a mental health problem, or who has an interest in safeguarding or improving their own emotional well-being. Edited by Dr Raj Persaud, with contributions from distinguished experts, this invaluable guide has been published in collaboration with the Royal College of Psychiatrists. It provides accessible, jargon-free information on the latest research into brain and mind sciences, and gives distinctive descriptions of behaviour, feelings and thoughts relating to a wide variety of conditions.

In addition to clarifying and helping us to understand symptoms, treatments and therapies, *The Mind* also challenges the stigma so often



Finally, we went to see the famous picture by Holman Hunt *The Light of the World*. Jesus is in a kind of Victorian kitchen garden with a lantern. He is standing outside a door which has no handle, knocking. It is for the soul inside to let him in as he can't force it open. In its day, this painting caused near hysteria among its devotees and before it settled in St Paul's, it was taken on a world trip, attracting crowds around the globe.

I have to confess that although the details move me - the fact that the lantern's light shines out through the carving not only of the cross but of a crescent and the star of David, and the fact that the face of Jesus was modelled on the Victorian writer Christina Rossetti - I have never really liked this painting. Its sentimentality is not for me.

John stood in front of it for a while, and then asked me to read the inscription along the bottom of the frame. I read '*Behold I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice, I will sup with him and he with me*'. John's face completely changed as he turned to me and said 'Did you say hearing voices? Does that mean there are schizophrenics like me in the Bible?' His key worker turned away with tears in her eyes and I replied with as steady a voice as I could muster 'Yes, I guess there are.'

***All the theological nuances
in the world did not help***

All the theological nuances in the world did not help me as his question about voices was really masking the question 'Am I really accepted here?' John found himself in a painting that, to my shame, I have probably secretly despised. His voices are truly terrible and frightening, and as he talked about them he was shaking. But he who had ears to hear instinctively heard the gospel and, with the elements of water and light, and hanging onto his cross, he showed me how to pray.

*Canon Lucy Winkett,
St Paul's Cathedral*



The Revd Lucy Winkett is Canon Precentor of St Paul's Cathedral. She is the first woman priest to be on the staff of St Paul's Cathedral.

The Precentor is responsible for the overall view of worship at the Cathedral including the liturgy, the musical foundation and the Cathedral School.

Lucy sings professionally and before ordination studied History at Cambridge University and singing at the Royal College of Music.

MSc in Spirituality, Health & Social Care

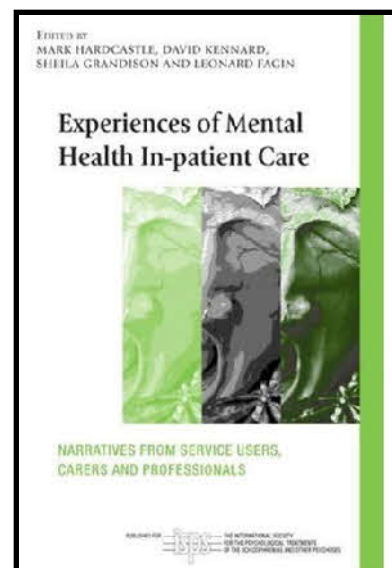
Staffordshire University is providing 'the 1st course of its kind to respond to growing challenge of implementing spiritual care across professional boundaries'.

'This MSc in Spirituality, Health & Social Care covers theoretical enquiry, ethical implications, values and diversity & aims to develop or enhance skills in the identification, evaluation and application of spiritual care; developing environments that value the diversity of spiritual / religious beliefs which exist in patient & client groups; & developing skills in research & learning to engage in the development of UK focused evidence base to support spiritual care development across health/social care environments'.

<http://www.staffs.ac.uk/maps/>
Rev. Rob Merchant

Principal Lecturer in Spirituality & Health
tel: 01785 353668; e: r.merchant@staffs.ac.uk

Book Reviews:



Experiences of Mental Health In-Patient Care
248 pages
Publisher: Routledge
ISBN-10: 0415410827
ISBN-13: 978-0415410823

This is the latest book published by the *International Society for Psychological Treatments of Schizophrenia and other Psychoses*. It includes narratives from service users, patients and professionals. The editors are a consultant nurse, a clinical psychologist and group analyst, the head of an Arts Therapies London Trust, and a consultant psychiatrist.

This book offers an insight into the experience of psychiatric in patient care from both a professional and user perspective. The editors highlight the problems in creating therapeutic environments within settings which are often poorly resourced, crisis driven and risk averse.

Malcolm Rae of the National Institute for Mental Health says: 'Hallelujah! In this enlightened book we have a bite-sized collection of intelligent, insightful and absorbing contributions which refreshes the soul. The book not only challenges but informs and inspires.'

Fenella Denning

and the Amazon review:

The contributors argue that for change to occur there needs first of all to be a genuine appreciation of the experiences of those involved in the unpredictable, anxiety-arousing and sometimes threatening environment of the psychiatric ward. Each chapter comprises a personal account of in-patient care by those in the front line: people who have been admitted to a psychiatric ward; their relatives; or those that provide the care. These accounts are followed by two commentaries written from different

church as well as society tends to deal with inadequately. As with death, it has often become a taboo subject. People ignore or pretend it does not exist, when it is all too real. This attitude needs to be challenged. It is at odds with a gospel message that shows light exposing and then overcoming darkness, and the example of Jesus who did not turn away when confronted with awkward situations.

I have had my share of struggles in this area, often because of past experiences of rejection and failure. One day perhaps I will get to tell my whole story. At times the pain is too much and the embarrassment too great and so for now I will only relate excerpts. Ironically, despite being more articulate than most, I still find some matters difficult to relate, fearing I will be misunderstood, misrepresented, lose peoples' respect or be humiliated. Yet God is delivering me from these fears so that I can now speak of these things openly, reverting perhaps to a childlike quality that expresses feelings honestly and openly and also lovingly.

For some, being acutely aware of the high ideals of living the Christian life evident from scripture, there comes a horrible feeling that, despite all we believe about victorious Christian living, being in the centre of God's will and having a mental health problem are mutually incompatible. I want to challenge such misconceptions, without ignoring the place of old-fashioned biblical repentance when there is sin to confess. When we are in a dark tunnel we often find it is difficult to let others know how we feel until after we emerge triumphant at the other end, even if the light at the end shines brightly. Sometimes I feel like one emerging from that darkness and realise that but for the grace of God I could so easily return to it.

One problem that faces those of us who are Christians, is that we often feel more comfortable telling a story of ultimate victory because that is what we feel people expect from us, than one where the battle is raging inside with ultimate triumph still some way off. Maybe it is me, but there were times when I have sat in a charismatic meeting feeling uncomfortable at the prospect of having to decide whether to join the hand waving throng or go to the front for prayer. On reflection, one reason for this was a feeling of my not being fully part of what was going on and frustration at not being able to relate to those who lead on an equal basis. This is a situation we have created for ourselves, losing that freedom to be ourselves, going around wearing masks, pretending to be what we think others expected us to be. But God dwells with the one *"that is of a contrite heart and a humble spirit"* Isaiah 58v15. He specialises in making successes out of failures. He accepts us just as we are. He wants me to be me and no one else. He wants a personal relationship with me.

John Barber

Happy Anniversary!

The Bishop of Woolwich, the Rt. Rev. Christopher Chessun attended a special service on 20 June to demonstrate his support for the APCMH Drop-In Centre in Forest Hill which was celebrating its 20th Anniversary.

The service was led by the Rev. Alan Dupuy and attended by local Anglican and Roman Catholic clergy, users and volunteers. Guests included Solomon Brown, ex-deputy mayor of Lewisham and past Chair of the branch, Dennis Murray past APCMH Development Officer, John Vallat APCMH Company Secretary, Sue Albery Croydon APCMH and Gail & Nick Cotton, two founder members of the Centre.

Set up in 1987 and run entirely by local volunteers, the Centre supports people with mental health problems, their families and carers.

Recent research shows that one in four people in the UK will experience depression or some other mental illness at some point in their life. Not surprisingly the Centre has become an important resource in the area over the past twenty years. Key to its success is the fact that it is run by volunteers, supported financially by local churches and organisations such as *Rotary*.

'This valuable resource could never have happened without the hard work and commitment of a fantastic group of local volunteers and the generous financial help of local churches of all denominations', said Gail Cotton.

At the party which followed the Bishop and other clergy stayed on to talk to users, volunteers and visitors.

The APCMH Centre is open every Wednesday from 6 30 – 8 30 at St Saviour's Parish Hall Brockley Rise, Forest Hill, SE23.

Gail Cotton

'Spam' to Inspire

When I was out shopping today, I found a penny on the pavement. I stopped and picked it up. I read the words, 'In God We Trust,' and had to laugh. I realized that I had been worrying and fretting in my mind about things I cannot change. Yes, God, I get the message..!

Have a blessed day!!

Write Afresh

Ann Vaughan-Williams reports on *Write Afresh*, a group of people who have used the Mental Health system. In July they published a first booklet from their regular writing time in the local library.

David Johnson, who has achieved a degree in Creative Writing wrote *The Moth*, a prose-poem: (The authors retain copyright)

I am a moth. I come out at night. I like the night but I am also attracted to the light. The golden globes attract me as I fly up close to a lamp. I am so small I inhabit my own world. A world of flying on the wind.

I see shapes, huge moving shapes but they don't bother me. Sometimes they are afraid of me. I know that my life is short but I live it to the fullest extent.

I am a moth. I lurk in corners. When I get settled I sleep for hours, till the rays of the sun disappear and the night begins. The night is my own, my own territory where I am free to travel.

The book contains narratives of the authors' lives. Here's an excerpt from *Irene* by Jane Dawnay:

We had some fun on the buses to school, seeing other folk and the conductors would often make us laugh, and we just got a fit of the giggles. There were three of us who travelled together, and one day the third girl turned to me and said "your mother is mad". I said nothing as I thought it was true, but Irene turned round and bashed the other girl with her satchel. She asked why I didn't defend my mother but she didn't understand how I thought.

Want to know more of what she thought? We are beginning to find how much can be done in this weekly gathering around a table and

Where I Come From

This extract - full details below - focuses on a most relevant, and painful, area for those suffering mental issues who have a Christian faith, or seek compassion, support and help from those who do. Perhaps, as with much of Christianity, it crudely boils down to whether 'improvement' leads to 'acceptance', or, 'acceptance' leads to 'improvement'.

Spirituality and Mental Health - a personal Christian perspective

by John Barber

ISBN 0-9537306-1-1 Second edition: July 2004 First edition: November 2001

Published by John Barber. Printed by: Accent Printing, Southend

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We tend to do and get involved in those things that interest us, not just because we have a fascination with the object of interest or even that it is especially important, but because it affects us personally, and often deeply. My own involvement in the area of mental health has been, to a significant extent, as a result of my own struggles for good mental health as well as a desire to address the tremendous needs and opportunities that seem to me to be so apparent. I know all too well the feelings of frustration, isolation and despair, and wondering whether there is a way out.

Someone once remarked that those who know something of the struggle for good mental health tend to attract others who are having similar struggles. Perhaps only those who have had those struggles themselves can truly understand something of what fellow sufferers are going through. While I am sometimes tempted to want to walk away from people with mental health problems and not get involved, realising how personally draining it can be, my more noble self wants to help. I am spurred on by an unease they may be poorly served by a system that has supposedly been set up to help, or are dismissed or ignored by those who ought to know better.

I consider issues to do with mental health should be among the most important issues facing the church and society today. (The church has many issues, not least knowing the power and presence of God). Not only is mental illness so prevalent in society but when we address this directly we engage in spiritual warfare and thus help to extend the Kingdom of God. It is God's will for people to be set free, to know his peace and to experience his wholeness. Sadly, mental health issues are those which the



WHOLENESS IN THE FOURTH AGE

Mental health needs
of older people

A Study Day for those involved in the pastoral or spiritual
care of older people with mental health needs,
particularly depression and dementia

Saturday 6 October 2007

10.00 am - 4.00 pm

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1 Shepherds Lane, Stoughton, Guildford GU2 9SJ

How do we achieve a person-centred approach to dementia?

What are the signs of depression in older people?

Who cares for the carers?

Where do we find meaning?

Cost: £20 per person

(includes lunch and refreshments)

For further information contact:

Wendy Bryant 01483 790327

wendy.bryant@cofeguildford.org.uk

To book your place contact:

Caroline Lazenby 01483 790320

caroline.lazenby@cofeguildford.org.uk

Emmanuel Parish Centre

is fully accessible for wheelchair users.

If you have particular communication needs,
e.g. BSL interpreter, please let us know

 THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND
THE DIOCESE OF GUILDFORD



refreshment. At the beginning any news is sifted, in friendship and support.

Terry West recalls his grandmother in *Murphy*, here's an acute child's eye:

She had an old rocking chair which was in need of repair but it was very comforting to sit in. She used to toast her bread on the fire with a toasting fork and do baked potatoes by the fire. I used to think it was dirty but all she would say is 'Jesus you will eat more dirt than that before you die, boy, get it down you.'

I remember the floor of the front room collapsing and the chair disappearing down into the room below. We stood out on the street waiting for the fire engine. My grandmother said 'Jesus, my feet are freezing! Can you go and get my slippers?' I went back up to her bedroom and got a pair. When I came back, my grandmother and my dad were shouting at one another. I will never forget the cold of the morning with my grandmother saying how cold it was standing there.

I love the authenticity and the insights into suffering and sensibility. The humour. Margaret Eley's *Penelope the Pig* is a short piece to savour:

My name is Penelope the pig. Why do they say 'Eat like a pig?' Although my flanks are bulging and I am well fleshed my appetite is healthy and governs my actions.

Apart from eating, I like to roll in the mud. It is cool and lovely. I sing a song of praise when I roll. God loves to hear a pig praise.

I know my master and mistress love me. The children come and tickle my ears. It is a wonderful life being a pig.

Ann Vaughan-Williams

visit: www.pastoral.org.uk

A First for Westminster Diocese!

"I am glad to be accompanying you again on our Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes. Along with my fellow bishops I want to extend a warm welcome to all of you, especially to the pilgrims from St Joseph's Pastoral Centre who are with us as a group for the first time. I know you will all find yourselves members of a very supportive and loving Diocesan family."

These were the words of the opening address of Cardinal Cormac Murphy O'Connor at the start of the Annual Pilgrimage to Lourdes for the Catholic Diocese of Westminster. St. Joseph's Pastoral Centre, the specialised centre at Hendon working to support individuals and families with learning difficulties and learning disabilities participated in the event for the first time. This significantly raises awareness of the issues facing pastoral care and certain aspects of disability within the diocese.



Helen O'Brien, Director, St. Joseph's Pastoral Centre, Hendon (photo left with some of the pilgrims and their helpers), commented on the pilgrimage blog: "We've been working really hard planning the pilgrimage to bring a group of people with learning difficulties to Lourdes. We have brought around 20 families some of whom have very little opportunity for pilgrimages or holidays. We have arranged some special liturgies and

we are thrilled to be holding a Confirmation Service for one of our group and we also have special Reconciliation Services. Our people are delighted to be here and we are getting a lovely reaction from everyone around us. It is going to mean a lot to us this week and also when we get back to London."

The Confirmation of one of their young pilgrims, Tikara Murphy was administered by Bishop Bernard Longley, auxiliary bishop in the diocese and Head of the Department for Pastoral Affairs which supports the work of the Centre. The Bishop anointed Tikara in the intimate and welcoming setting of St. Joseph's Chapel. Earlier in the Mass Pius and Medford (two of the students who attend the centre at Hendon) sign interpreted the Gospel story of Zacchaeus, the tax collector who climbed up a sycamore tree so that he might be able to see Jesus. In his Homily Bishop Bernard



made clear that like many people today, (especially those with special needs) Zacchaeus needed friendship. He emphasised that a pilgrimage to Lourdes allows people to better express their friendship towards one another and to God.

It is hoped that these events and many more in the diocese where we are trying to emphasize the theme of "Everybody's Welcome" (an initiative of the Catholic Bishop's Conference) will help inspire and encourage our parishes to be ever more generous in the way they seek to address the particular needs of persons with certain pastoral issues like those associated with disabilities or mental health. For more information on the work of the Department for Pastoral Affairs in the Diocese contact the Director, Edmund Adamus edmundadamus@rcdow.org.uk or go to www.rcdow.org.uk and click on 'Pastoral'.

Edmund Adamus

College of Health Care Chaplains Newsletter.

It is our aim to serve the needs of chaplains and chaplaincy volunteers through sharing resources and information. We also hope to encourage any who are involved in spiritual care services in mental health services to use our services as if fitting for their needs - and reading the newsletter is one way of sharing insights and opportunities.

The summer edition had three short pieces by chaplains working in different settings: part time in Southampton, whole time in Ashworth and in the charitable sector in Northamptonshire.

There are details of the annual chaplains study course in Nottingham, and an opportunity for chaplains to register their details for our data base.

The newsletter can be requested from Peter Richmond or visit the College of Health Care Chaplains web site: www.healthcarechaplains.org

Peter Richmond

Peter.Richmond@ekentmht.nhs.uk