

# The Christian Community

Movement for Religious Renewal

Hollywood Congregation

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Newsletter for the week of Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> February.

Dear friends,

The current lockdown in Northern Ireland will last until at least the 5<sup>th</sup> of March.

Most churches here are streaming their services online.

But the regulations still allow you to leave your home to attend a place of worship.

Having services online is not an option for us so we will continue with our services in Hollywood on Thursdays and (most) Sundays.

We will carefully monitor the situation over the coming weeks but the Covid 19 rate in the North Down area is among the lowest in Northern Ireland and all over Northern Ireland the rate of infection is gradually coming down, so I feel that as long as we are very careful and keep to the regulations re face coverings and distancing we can continue with our services in Hollywood.

But this applies only to services, any other meetings, study groups etc. are not allowed under the current guidelines

Everyone will need to be extra aware that if you have any kind of symptoms of cough, cold or temperature or if you have been in contact with anyone who is ill you should not come.

And of course, if you do not feel safe then there is always the option of the quieter service on Thursdays or to accompany us in spirit from your home.

The situation is different in each of the Camphill communities.

In Mourne Grange most people have now received the second dose of the vaccine more than three weeks ago so this Saturday we will have one service for the whole community instead of having to celebrate the service twice for smaller groups.

Many people in Clanabogan have now also had their first dose of the vaccine last week but they have to wait a few more weeks before they can relax their precautions and start again with having services.

Transmission rates in county Monaghan are still high and all churches are still closed in the Republic so in Ballybay we will also have to wait.

Please get in touch if you have any questions or concerns.

Ben van Lieshout

## Hollywood

*For Sunday services, please ring (02890424254), text (07974960570) or email ([benvl@onetel.com](mailto:benvl@onetel.com)) to book a place as we can only seat 11-13 people.*

### **Epiphany**

Thursday 4 <sup>th</sup> February	The Act of Consecration of Man	10.00
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### **February**

Sunday 7 <sup>th</sup> February	The Act of Consecration of Man Followed by the next of a series of short talks on The Act of Consecration of Man as a path; "Transsubstantiation" (part 1)	
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Thursday 11 <sup>th</sup> February	The Act of Consecration of Man	10.00
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## Mourne Grange (in Dawn Hall !)

### **Epiphany**

Saturday 6 <sup>th</sup> February	The Act of Consecration of Man	10.15
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## The gospel for Sunday 7 February is Luke 8: 14-18

And as a great crowd had gathered, and ever more people streamed to him out of the cities, he spoke in a parable:



van Gogh

A sower went out to sow his seed. As he sowed, some seed fell on the path. It was trodden upon, and the birds of the air ate it up. Other seed fell upon the rocks, and as it sprouted, it withered, because it had no moisture. Still other seed fell under the thorns; the thorns grew with it and choked what came up. And some fell upon good soil, grew, and brought forth fruit a hundredfold. When he had said these things, he called out:

“He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”

His disciples asked him what this parable might mean. And he said:

To you it has been given the gift of being able to *understand* the mysteries of the kingdom of God; but to the others, it is given in pictures and parables, for they see and do not yet see, and hear, although they do not yet understand with their thinking. The meaning of the parable is this:



The seed is the Word of God. That which fell upon the path are those who hear it; afterward, the tempter comes and tears the Word out of their hearts so that they cannot find healing through the trusting power of faith working in them.

Those on the rock are those who, when they hear the Word, take it up with joy; but they remain without root. For a while, the power of their faith works in them, but in times of trial, they fall away.

What fell under the thorns are those who hear the Word from the spirit, and as they go on their way, the sorrows and the riches and the joys of life choke it, and they bring no fruit to maturity.

And the seed which fell in the good soil are those who hear the Word, and take it up into their hearts, feel its beauty, become noble and worthy and patiently keep it alive, tending it there until it brings forth fruit.

No one lights a light and hides it under a vessel or under a bench; instead, he places it on a lampstand so that all who come in see the light. For nothing is hidden which shall not be revealed, and nothing is secret which shall not be known and proclaimed. So attend to how you listen. For he who has enlivened in himself the power to bear the spirit, to him more will be given. He however who does not have this power, from him will be taken that which he thinks he has.

## A homily on Luke 8: 14 – 18

Anyone who has tried planting a garden knows: the conditions must be right. The right season, the right temperature, neither too hot nor too cold. The right level of moisture, neither too hard and dry, nor too muddy. The right level of fertility.

Our hearts are also gardens waiting to be cultivated; cultivated through art, through truth, through spiritual and religious practice. Some of us may be just starting. Or maybe we tried before, but we lacked sufficient depth. Or maybe our hearts wandered off into the busyness of life. But there comes a moment. The poet says:



vanGogh,  
the sower

My soul is a dark plowed field  
In the cold rain;  
My soul is a broken field  
Plowed by pain.

Where windy grass and flowers  
Were growing,  
The field lies broken now  
For another sowing.

Great Sower, when you tread  
My field again,  
Scatter the furrows there  
With better grain.          Sara Teasdale, "The Broken Field"

Our hearts plowed by life's sorrows, broken open with gratitude, watered by tears. And the Word-Seed is sown. Recognizing our fertility, our heart's potential, the Creator drops his Word – I AM – into our hearts.

And the Word-Seed takes root. We recognize that it has the potential to grow into a thing of beauty in us. And so we straighten up and do our best to cultivate the garden of our heart. With patient effort, we tend the Word-Seed. We keep our hearts moist and soft. We weed out our bad habits. With patient effort, we tend the creating Word in our hearts until it grows and blossoms forth in beauty of soul. Until it matures into fruitful deeds of love.

# February

A poem by Adam Bittleston from Meditative Prayers for Today.

He who walked the paths of Galilee,  
And streets of Jerusalem,  
Has come among us  
Everywhere on earth  
Though our eyes may not see Him.  
He shares man's grief,  
He suffers man's conflict,  
He breathes man's hope.  
He seeks disciples  
Who trust what can be seen  
When the heart's light opens.  
May we receive from Him  
The life that sustains  
Grace in the soul.  
May He speak in our conscience  
When we take up our work.  
May He be our shepherd  
When in the hours of sleep  
We move in the Spirit.