



**ST THEOSEVIA CENTRE FOR CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY
OPEN STUDY DAYS IN HILARY TERM 2014**

at St Theosevia House, 2 Canterbury Road, Oxford OX2 6LU

An Ecumenical Centre for Christian Spirituality in Oxford

www.theosevia.org

Saturday 8 March, 10.30 am – 4 pm:

**Christian Spirituality, Ecology and the Environment:
Ancient Wisdom, Present Crisis**

with

***Dr Esther de Waal, Dr Dimitri Conomos,
Martin Hodson***

Saturday 15 March, 10.30 am – 4 pm:

**Romanesque architecture in Normandy:
Cathedrals, Abbeys, Churches and Castles**

Illustrated lectures and discussion by Dr Nicholas Gendle

*St Theosevia House, 2 Canterbury Road, left off Banbury Rd just after North Parade.
Study days **FREE for students** with card. Non-students £5 (on door). No booking needed,
just come, for all or part of the day. Lunch break 1-2 pm (please provide your own lunch).*

Director: Revd Dr Liz Carmichael, St John's College

***Enquiries: Asst Director of Studies: Fr Tikhon Vasilyev, Wolfson College,
Tikhon.vasilyev@wolfson.ox.ac.uk, 01865 310341***

The St Theosevia Centre for Christian Spirituality

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From the Director

Revd Dr Liz Carmichael

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December 2013

Dear Friends of St Theosevia's,

Thank you for supporting last term's programme. People came in large numbers to reflect on the Spirituality and Legacies of Fr Sophrony and Metropolitan Anthony; and the room was full again for the study day on Christianity in Syria, its ancient and complex history and the travails of the present day. Some of the complexities of Islam also became apparent as the history of Syria down the ages was laid before us. Particularly fascinating was Tim Bowman's account of his year spent as a hermit at Mar Mousa monastery with its many guests from different churches and faiths, and his cave complete with other guests such as birds and spiders. Tim, a Roman Catholic, is more usually an engineer with Ford.

This term's Study Days are both in March. On Saturday 8 March (7th week) we look at the now very urgent question of how Christian spirituality responds to the natural environment in which we live. Esther de Waal explores the Benedictine and Cistercian relationship to the natural world in mediaeval times and today, seeing St Benedict (rather than the usual choice of Francis) as the 'patron saint of the environment'. Dimitri Conomos reflects on the Eucharist as profound encounter between God and his created world. Martin Hodson speaks on the facts and the urgency of the present ecological crisis, and ways in which Christians are responding. If large numbers attend, this day may be held in the church next door.

Then on Saturday 15 March (8th week) Dr Nicholas Gendle presents a day on the Romanesque architecture of Normandy. We may know Durham Cathedral, Iffley Church, and many other fine decorated examples of Norman work. This day takes us to its origins in the Romanesque styles of architecture and sculpture developed in northern France

LIZ CARMICHAEL

<p>Newsletter subscriptions for 2013-14: Please send at least £3 (cheques to 'St Theosevia Trust') to Newsletter, St Theosevia House, 2 Canterbury Rd, OX2 6LU.</p>
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- If you would like to receive newsletters and reminders by email, you can subscribe by sending a blank email to: theosevia-subscribe@yahoo.com
- Free tea and coffee are available at Study Days, from 10am and at lunch-time. Lunch break is about one hour, 1-2pm. Bring packed lunch, or you can buy food nearby in North Parade.
- If you are willing to help serve coffee for a study day you will have a free place. Please contact the Warden if you would like to help in this way

DETAILS OF EVENTS IN HILARY TERM

Saturday 8 March, 10.30 am – 4 pm

Christian Spirituality, Ecology and the Environment: Ancient Wisdom, Present Crisis

Esther de Waal, well-known writer on spirituality, speaks on ‘St Benedict, patron saint of the environment’, exploring the monastic ecological vision. Stability is an underlying principle in the Benedictine Rule. It translates into relatedness to the land, seen vividly in the life and work of the C12th Cistercians and illustrated today in modern environmentally friendly developments in Benedictine monasteries worldwide. **Dimitri Comomos**, Byzantine musicologist and liturgist, speaks on Eucharistic sharing and worship as central features of an Orthodox perspective on the environment. In the form of bread and wine, material from creation moulded into new form by human hands, is offered to God with the words ‘Thine own of thine own we offer unto Thee’. This acknowledges that all of creation is God’s and that we are returning to God that which is his. When we partake of the Body and Blood of Christ, God meets us in the very substance of our affiliation with the creation and truly enters into the very being of our biological existence. **Martin Hodson**, plant scientist and environmental biologist, speaks on the challenge of “Responding to the global environmental crisis”. The environmental crisis has been described in terms of “planetary boundaries”, biophysical thresholds that if crossed could have disastrous consequences for humanity. We already appear to have crossed three of these boundaries for climate change, biodiversity loss and anthropogenic changes to the nitrogen cycle. We will explore these issues and what can be done about them at individual, community, national and international levels, and what the Christian response might be to this crisis. Martin’s recent books are “Cherishing the Earth” (with Margot Hodson, 2008) and “Functional Biology of Plants” (with John Bryant, 2012).

Saturday 15 March, 10.30 am – 4 pm

Romanesque architecture in Normandy: Cathedrals, Abbeys, Churches and Castles

Illustrated talks by **Dr Nicholas Gendle**. Many British people are familiar with the Norman church architecture in our own country, but perhaps its immediate source, the homeland of the Norman conquerors, is less familiar. This Study day addresses the splendid architectural heritage of Romanesque Normandy itself – cathedrals, abbeys, parish churches and castles, some with noteworthy sculptural embellishments.

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THE UNICORN GROUP

An ecumenical discussion group founded by Dr Nicholas Zernov in 1959

The meetings, open to all, are held on Friday lunchtimes at the **House of St Gregory & St Macrina, 1 Canterbury Road**. Coffee is served from 12.30pm, packed lunches may be brought. The talks, followed by discussion, run from 1 - 2pm. Donations are invited to cover costs. Enquiries: Judith Baker 07981345125, Ann Stedman 01865 559179

Friday 31 January Major Liz Snelson Rtd QARANC will stretch our horizons as she describes her "Personal Account of six months serving as a nurse in Iraq"

Friday 14 February John Dunston retired Headmaster of Leighton Park Quaker School in Reading, choirmaster of "Oxfordshir" choir, writer and arranger of music and raconteur, speaks on the subject "Footsteps of Nathan – The Myth of The Other"

Friday 28 February Mirabai Swingler 'What the monks and mystics can teach us about mental health'. Mirabai is a Mental Health chaplain, psychotherapist, spiritual director/ counsellor, ordained interfaith minister, Spiritual Crisis Network member and activist.

Friday 14 March Jim Turner, Kidlington Team Ministry. Jim is an Industrial Chaplain and has chosen to speak about his personal journey "How I came back to the Church"

MEDIEVAL ARTS GROUP

The **Medieval Arts Group** with Dr Nicholas Gendle will focus this term on Early Renaissance Art and Architecture in Florence, on Tuesdays at 2pm at the House of St Gregory & St Macrina, 1 Canterbury Road, beginning on 14 January.

The **Byzantine Studies Class** will not be meeting this term.

Enquiries: Valerie Sansom, 01189 479 471, Ann Weitzmann 01189 481 884

FELLOWSHIP OF SS ALBAN & SERGIUS (OXFORD BRANCH)

Enquiries: fr.stephen.platt@googlemail.com