



**ST THEOSEVIA CENTRE FOR CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY
OPEN STUDY DAYS IN HILARY TERM 2017**

*at St Theosevia House, 2 Canterbury Road, Oxford OX2 6LU
An Ecumenical Centre for Christian Spirituality in Oxford
www.theosevia.org*

Saturday 28 January 10.30 am – 4 pm

The Art and Architecture of Georgia

Illustrated talks by Dr Nicholas Gendle

Saturday 25 February 10.30 am – 4 pm

**Concepts of Purgatory: on the Purification
of the Soul in Western and Eastern Christianity**

*Metropolitan Kallistos Ware, Professor David Taylor,
Dr Brian Williams*

*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

2 Canterbury Road, Oxford OX2 6LU Tel (01865) 310 341

Director: Revd Dr Liz Carmichael, St John's College; Asst Director of Studies: Fr Tikhon Vasilyev, Wolfson College, Tikhon.vasilyev@wolfson.ox.ac.uk, 01865 310341

From the Director

Revd Dr Liz Carmichael

Tel (01865) 277351

liz.carmichael@sjc.ox.ac.uk

January 2017

Dear Friends of St Theosevia's,

Thank you for your support of last term's programme. We had a deeply absorbing day exploring different aspects of love, and richly illustrated tours with Dr Nicholas Gendle in Armenia and Worcestershire.

This term, on 28 January Dr Gendle takes us to Georgia in the Caucasus, close to Armenia but with its own distinct language and history.

Then as Lent begins, coinciding this year in east and west, we turn to the topic of Purgatory. Teaching on the purification of the soul after death, and on analogous suffering in this life, was elaborated in the mediaeval west. Thoughts will turn in 2017 to the 500th anniversary of Luther's reaction to the related development of papal indulgences. Orthodox theology prefers not to elaborate in this way, but does universally endorse prayer for the dead. Some early Syriac theologians suggest that after death believers are purified of their sins in a river of fire. More widely a tradition exists that the soul may encounter stages, 'tollhouses' where demons may accuse it of past sins, while angels and prayers assist it. Metropolitan Kallistos and David Taylor will discuss these concepts. Brian Williams looks at our selves in the light of Dante's *Purgatorio*.

All are welcome, and we look forward to welcoming you to these Study Days.

LIZ CARMICHAEL

<p>Newsletter subscriptions for 2016-17: Please send at least £3 (cheques to 'St Theosevia Trust') to Newsletter, St Theosevia House, 2 Canterbury Rd, OX2 6LU.</p>
--

- 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 10 am and at lunch-time. Lunch break is about one hour, 1-2 pm. Bring packed lunch, or you can find 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 Assistant Director of Studies if you would like to help in this way.

DETAILS OF EVENTS IN HILARY TERM

Saturday 28 January 10.30 am – 4 pm:

The Art and Architecture of Georgia

Illustrated talks by Dr Nicholas Gendle

Georgia was a small Orthodox Christian Kingdom with a unique non- Aryan language, situated in the spectacular mountainous landscape of the Caucasus. Before absorption into the Russian Empire, it was fiercely jealous of its independence (now regained) and produced a distinguished tradition of (mainly religious) art, music and architecture: a wide variety of elegant churches, often adorned with sculpture and frescoes, as well as icons and illuminated manuscripts, especially during the Middle Ages. We study these in their historical and geographical contexts; the lectures will be amply illustrated with slides.

Saturday 25 February 10.30 am – 4 pm:

Concepts of Purgatory: on the Purification of the Soul in Western and Eastern Christianity

Metropolitan Kallistos Ware, Prof. David Taylor, Dr Brian Williams

David Taylor explores ‘**The purgatorial River of Fire in Syriac theology**’, the origins and development of the belief held by some early Syriac theologians that after death believers would be purified of their sins in a river of fire. The belief appears in particular in the writings of the sixth-century Syrian Orthodox theologians Jacob of Serugh and Daniel of Salah. Turning to a much wider and longer-standing tradition, Metropolitan Kallistos addresses the ‘myth’ of the ‘**Spiritual Toll-Houses: an Orthodox Equivalent to Purgatory?**’ Orthodox pray for the departed, and believe that these prayers assist the dead. Beyond this most Orthodox do not wish to go. But there exists in the Christian East a widespread ‘myth’ concerning the spiritual toll-houses through which we pass after death. How far is this equivalent to the Western teaching about Purgatory?

We turn to Dante with Dr Brian Williams, ‘**Reordering our lives in Dante’s Purgatory**’. The souls in Dante’s Purgatorio are our souls—in process and on the way, struggling to unlearn and relearn. As we read, we become fellow pilgrims with them, confronting our own misdirected, deficient, and excessive lives. However, also like them, we progress through repentance and the slow arduous reordering of our lives, our habits, and our moral imagination, the latter of which is aided by images, models, and stories like the *Commedia* itself.

THE UNICORN GROUP

An Ecumenical group founded by Professor Nicolas Zernov in 1959

Friday 27 January “Crusades ... 1000 years of ignorance, prejudice and hatred. From Pope Urban II to ISIL”. Brian Fidler MA, LLB, FCCA Fellow of Harris Manchester College, professional businessman and amateur historian.

Friday 10 Feb “Coming to terms with the past as a Central European Jew”. Author Marcus Ferrar recounts the true story of a woman who sets out from London on a traumatic search for her Jewish past in Budapest – a story that addresses questions about personal roots, religious belief and the direction of Europe.

Friday 24 Feb “Bishop in Insurrection' or 'The Practical Prophet'?” Bishop R O Hall, Bishop of Hong Kong 1932 ~ 1966, as partly known by his son, Canon Christopher Hall! Hall emphasized the needs of ordinary people, especially victims of social upheaval, and responded to the needs of orphans and workers for housing and education. He also, in 1944, ordained the first Anglican woman priest.

Friday 10 March “Can anything good come out of Syria?” Su McClellan first visited the Middle East in 1991 and has ever since had a passion for this area. She has an academic interest in development and a background in the Church Army, and works with ‘Embrace the Middle East’, a Christian charity originally set up in 1854, to support Christian communities in the Middle East.

These meetings are open to all and are held in the House of St Gregory and St Macrina, 1 Canterbury Road, Oxford. We welcome everyone from **12.30 pm** when tea and coffee are served. Packed lunches may be brought. The talks, followed by discussion, run from **1.00 pm to 2.00 pm**. Donations to cover expenses are welcome. **Enquiries** (no booking needed) to Judith Baker 07981 345 125, jpbaker@hotmail.co.uk

MEDIEVAL ARTS GROUP

The Medieval Arts Group with Dr Nicholas Gendle, will not be meeting this term; but please note the Study Day on Georgia with Dr Gendle, 28 January. A summer tour is to be planned. Enquiries: Valerie Sansom, 0118 947 9471, Ann Weizmann 0118 948 1884

CHRISTIAN MEDITATION GROUP

This group meets every Tuesday evening at 7 pm at St Theosevia House, 2 Canterbury Rd, for one hour of reflection and silent prayer, 7 - 8 pm. All are welcome. Please contact Patricia Simon, patriciasimon@tiscali.co.uk

FELLOWSHIP OF SS ALBAN & SERGIUS (OXFORD BRANCH)

Enquiries: fr.stephen.platt@googlemail.com

OXFORD CENTRE FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH

For programme please contact info@ocsg.uk.net or call 07803 031 977