

Content of the Conference – an overview

Many who are our guides on the spiritual journey, who chart the way through silence and retreat towards the mystery of God, have shown an immense capacity for courage. They have so often been those who have revolutionized the church, challenged injustice, given faith fresh meaning, and dared to cross boundaries in the search for a new way of being. Their vision has offered hope and wisdom across the divided landscapes of our world.

Think of the courage shown by some of those who have inspired us... Dorothy Day, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Teresa of Avila, Thomas Merton, Julian of Norwich, John Wesley, Hildegard of Bingen, Meister Eckhart. We can go on adding to the list!

Our 2022 Retreat Conference invites us to discover what it might mean to live with their courage in our own context. How might our experience of prayer and retreat lead us across the divisions that mark churches and society? In what ways will our encounter with God lead to renewed reconciliation amidst the pain of our own lives and those around us? Where will we find the courage to light a candle of hope in the darkness? Join us as we explore together!

The Conference will offer us:

1. An **introduction to the theme of our conference** by Patron of the Retreat Association, Graham Sparkes
2. **Main speakers** who will take up our theme and develop it in different ways. Jane Shaw, Professor of the History of Religion at Oxford University, will explore how courage is reflected in the lives of the Mystics. Pádraig Ó Tuama, poet and theologian, will explore the theme of reconciliation and the Bible. Ched Myers is an activist theologian who will explore the political and social implications of the Gospel writings
3. **Workshops** that broaden our engagement with the theme
4. Times for **worship, prayer and reflection**, both in small groups that enable us to listen to the voice of God in each other and in the spaces between, and as one community led an experienced liturgist and musician
5. **Space for poetry and creativity**, including poetry with Rachel Mann and Pádraig Ó Tuama and creativity with liturgist Jo Love and artist Carol Marples.

The Retreat Association Conference brings together in one experience those interested and involved in retreats and spirituality. It is fully ecumenical, and open to all who are engaged in the spiritual journey. Come and join us!

The Retreat Association

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Online Conference
27–29 June 2022

Living with Courage: Clasping hands across a divided landscape

Draft Programme

ALL ASPECTS OF THE PROGRAMME TAKE PLACE ONLINE

Monday 27 June

10.00	Welcome
10.15-10.30	Gathering worship
10.30-11.45	Introducing the conference theme – Graham Sparkes
11.45-12.15	Coffee break
12.15-12.45	Listening groups
12.45-14.30	Lunch break
14.30-15.45	Workshops
15.45-16.15	Tea break
16.15-17.30	Courage through the life of the Mystics – Jane Shaw
17.30-20.00	Supper break
20.00-21.00	Poetry with Rachel Mann
21.00-21.30	Evening break
21.30-21.45	Night prayers

Tuesday 28 June

8.00-8.30	Morning worship options
8.30-9.30	Breakfast break
9.30-9.45	Collective worship
9.45-11.00	Courage comes from the heart – Pádraig Ó Tuama
11.00-11.30	Coffee break
11.30-12.00	Listening groups
12.00-14.00	Lunch break

Tuesday 28 June continued

14.00-15.15	Workshops
15.15-16.15	Tea break
16.15-17.30	The Gospel Writings – Ched Myers
17.30-20.00	Supper break
20.00-21.00	‘Do you Believe in God?’ Poetry with Pádraig Ó Tuama
21.00-21.30	Evening break
21.30-21.45	Night prayers

Wednesday 29 June morning

8.00-8.30	Morning worship options
8.30-9.30	Breakfast break
9.30-9.45	Collective worship
9.15-11.00	Pádraig Ó Tuama & Rachel Mann in conversation
11.00-11.30	Coffee break
11.30-12.45	Closing worship