

Contemplative

Outreach

Ireland

Silence Solitude Simplicity Service



Summer Newsletter 2012

Volume 1 Issue 3

www.coi.ie

contemplativeoutreachireland@gmail.com

A Message from the Co-ordinator

Anne McClean



Dear Centering Prayer Friends,

Welcome to a *late* summer edition of Contemplative Outreach Ireland Newsletter.

In the very early part of my spiritual journey I remember once saying that I felt God was besotted with me, a sense of the presence of God ever with me day after day. I later came to realise that I was being spiritually consoled at the time...God had spent so many years trying to get me, he wasn't going to let go of me easily...or perhaps more rightly...give me yet another excuse to let go of him. So I basked in the 'feelings' of that *something new*, something I had never experienced before and probably foolishly thinking at the time it would never go away.

Since those early years I have learned much about the merry-go-round of consolation as well as desolation, and from many life experiences along the way, about faith and trust. The process of coming to an understanding of that faith and trust has not been easy. Neither has the process of shedding the attachment to those early day feelings. Basically it has been down to work, but as Fr. Thomas Keating says..."the work is no work, it's the work of turning up" at my twice daily centering prayer times and consequently nurturing my personal relationship with God, just like one does with any other close relationship and out of that has come a growing trust and faith in this God of ours. On this same subject Fr. Thomas says yet again..."*Christian faith is a leap into the unknown. Experience confirms the wisdom of every act of trust. The alternation of the darkness of faith leading to understanding, and understanding illuminating the darkness of faith is the normal way that leads to the growth of faith. Like everyone else, God wants to be accepted as he is – and he happens to be infinite, incomprehensible, inexpressible. We have to accept him, then, in the darkness of faith. It is only when we can accept God as he is that we can give up the desire for spiritual experiences that we can feel. Faith is mature when we are at ease without particular experiences of God, when his presence is obvious without our having to reflect on it. One who has this faith simply opens his eyes and, wherever he looks, finds God.*" Mother Theresa has said that the fruit of prayer is a deepening of faith. The fruit of faith is love and the fruit of love is service. But to be able to pray we need silence, silence of the heart and if we don't have that silence, we don't know how to pray.

Almost nine years ago I began this spiritual journey and I entered the desert of that silence. Through many of those years it was often a frightening silence, when I had to face the dark side of myself, a journey of self discovery, out of which has come a welcoming openness to God, to my deepest self, to beauty and truth, to freedom and to the word of Scripture which has revealed God to me in a very special way. The past two years of training as a spiritual director in Manresa has opened me even further to a love of scripture that sustains me daily. I never imagined nine years ago that I would be doing and serving in so many of the ways that have unfolded, particularly in my ministry with Contemplative Outreach Ireland. It has been a real privilege and honour to have served on the core team and particularly to have been in the position of co-ordinator, where I have had the honour of corresponding with hundreds of you, who similarly are on or have commenced your spiritual journey through encountering the practice of centering prayer and who over the years have trusted me with your struggles as well as your many joys.

As October approaches and my three-year term as co-ordinator comes to an end, I want to express my gratitude to each and everyone of you for your support, co-operation and collaboration along the way. Whether you helped with servant-leadership, facilitation, promotion, training, advertising, helping with retreats, attending retreats or generally serving in any small way, I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart.

I will forever be grateful and hold in love, my core team colleagues. They have been my greatest teachers, most times they themselves unaware, that through their words or actions, God was using them as an instrument of change for me in my journey.

And so God's love affair with me continues, as I also continue to desire to live by the contemplative outreach desert attitudes, of silence, solitude, simplicity and service. I don't claim to have mastered any of them through a mere nine - year journey, but through God's grace, I hope that I am beginning to let them, master me. I pray that in doing so, I will be ever more open to God's presence and action within me...as my spiritual journey continues.

In silent prayer,

Anne



Fr. Carl Arico

Vice President of Contemplative Outreach International Fr. Carl Arico comes to Ireland from 7th to 21st October at the invitation of Contemplative Outreach Ireland. During his visit he will travel to various parts of the country both North and South and will speak in various Parishes and Institutions. We are honoured to have Fr. Carl with us and to have him share with us many years of wisdom working and travelling with Fr. Thomas Keating.

For full details see our website: www.coi.ie All queries can be emailed to: contemplativeoutreachireland@gmail.com



Fr. Carl Writes...

My Dear Centering Prayer Friends in Ireland,

As a founding member of Contemplative Outreach in 1984, I have been overwhelmed with the growth of the contemplative prayer movement, not only in Ireland, but throughout the world...in fact over 40 countries at this point in time. I have often said 'it is a miracle of God's grace and the power of prayer.'

I fell in love with Ireland back in 1979 when I toured your country with a small group of friends led by a good priest friend of mine, Finbarr. In fact, we joked at the end, that I had taken so many notes and jotted down so many stories, that when we had our reunion of the group two months later, he was surprised at all the information I had picked up. Little did I think I would be returning to spread the message of Fr. Thomas Keating and Contemplative Outreach and indeed, follow in the footsteps, of your dearest beloved friend Pat Johnson from St. Benedict's Monastery in Snowmass, Colorado, who has been visiting with you annually and serving you in retreats now for some years.

As the time of my visit draws closer, I am looking forward to spending time in Dublin, Belfast, Limerick and Wexford and sharing the richness of themes with you, such as, Centering Prayer, the Forgiveness Prayer and Lectio Divina. I especially look forward to meeting many of you on the Day of Enrichment as well as after the other events, when we can chat over a cup of tea...I know you are very fond of your tea in Ireland! I especially look forward to meeting the Contemplative Outreach Ireland team who extended this invitation to me to visit your country again and meet the various centering prayer groups that have grown since my visit of 1979.

In the meantime I will be praying for the success of this trip and that God's grace will overflow into each of our hearts opening our lives even more to the transforming love of God.

Blessings,

Carl

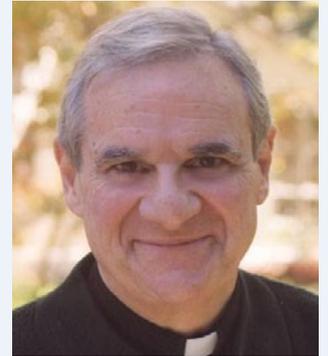


Contemplative Outreach Ireland

Silence - Solitude - Simplicity - Service

“A Taste of Silence”

Fr. Carl Arico



Fr. Carl Arico, Vice-President of Contemplative Outreach International, will speak on the themes of Lectio Divina and Centering Prayer

***Prayer beyond words, beyond thoughts, beyond feelings...
A Taste of Silence!***

Dublin Local Events in October

Centering Prayer **Tues 9th** 7.30pm *Marino Institute of Education, Griffith Ave*

Talk at Eucharist **Sun 14th** 11.00am *Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin*

Lectio Divina **Mon 15th** 7.30pm *Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin*

MORE INFORMATION

General Information

w: www.coi.ie

E: contemplativeoutreachireland@gmail.com

Marino Institute talk

Sr. Freda Kenny, Contemplative Outreach Dublin m: **087 127 2957**

E: freda.kenny@mie.ie

Fr. Denis Robinson: Marino Institute of Education

E: denis.robinson@mie.ie

Christchurch talks

Siobhan Semple, Contemplative Outreach Dublin m: **086 377 8085**

E: siobhansemple@yahoo.co.uk

Rev Garth Bunting, Christ Church Cathedral

E: garth.bunting@ccdub.ie

Making Time for Prayer and Reflection

Sitting in a beautiful valley 9,000 feet above sea level surrounded by the snow-capped mountains of Colorado, is St. Benedict's Monastery, Snowmass.

Living in the monastery deep in the valley is a community of Trappist monks, who from early morning until late at night pray together, farm their land and welcome people from all parts of the world to spend time with them, either on retreat or just to experience silence, solitude and the simplicity of their way of life.

At one side of this beautiful valley the monks have built a meditation and retreat centre as well as several hermitages. Throughout the year, the community, together with lay members of Contemplative Outreach Colorado host retreats of varying lengths and intensity.

This is where I had the wonderful privilege to spend 10 days participating in a Post-intensive Centering Prayer retreat. Having handed my life over to God three weeks earlier and then experiencing every possible insecurity, I knew I needed to spend time away from all that I was involved in.

A close friend of mine Maeve and myself, leaving husbands and families behind, flew out to Colorado on Sunday the 8th of April, a really significant day for me, as it was Easter Sunday and the 3rd Anniversary of my father's death.

From the moment I arrived at St. Benedict's Monastery I felt totally drawn to this sacred place. Having settled into our hermitage, we met with our fellow retreatants and facilitators, Pat, Mary Ann and Charlie. Following orientation we began our retreat, entering into Grand Silence and ten days of prayer.

Our schedule involved Centering Prayer sits as dawn was breaking, and again at mid-morning and afternoon. At these times I could really feel the strength of God's presence in our collective silence. We participated in the Monastery experience of early morning Mass and Lauds as well as evening Vespers, joining in with the monks as they sang the Easter Halleluiahs, bringing home the real meaning of the Risen Christ.

As the days went by I enjoyed the beautiful walks in the sunshine as it melted the snow of the previous night. At night Maeve and I would regularly sit outside our Hermitage watching the snow falling and listening to the howls of the Coyotes in the surrounding mountains. Our wonderful facilitators looked after us tirelessly throughout the ten days, leading the Centering Prayer sits, providing beautifully prepared meals, and being there at anytime with a listening ear.

All of this along with the unexpected privilege of meeting with Fr. Thomas Keating and listening to his unique words of wisdom, brought me into a space, where I found myself in prayer with the Divine, in a way that I had never experienced before...not delving into the past, not trying to seek out the future...just being there... 'Resting in God'.

Eileen Foley

O Lord my God,

Teach my heart where and how to seek you, where and how to find you.

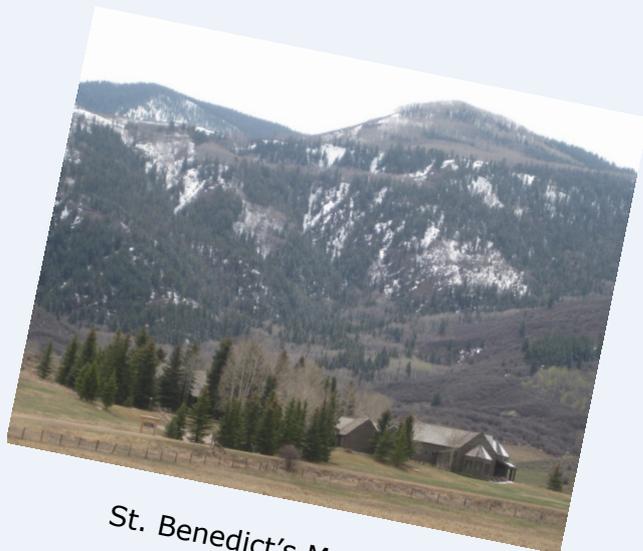
O Lord, you are my God and you are my Lord, and I have never seen you. You have made me and re-made me, and you have bestowed on me all the good things I possess, and still I do not know you...

Teach me to seek you, and as I seek you show yourself to me, for I cannot seek you unless you teach me how, nor will I ever find you unless you show yourself to me.

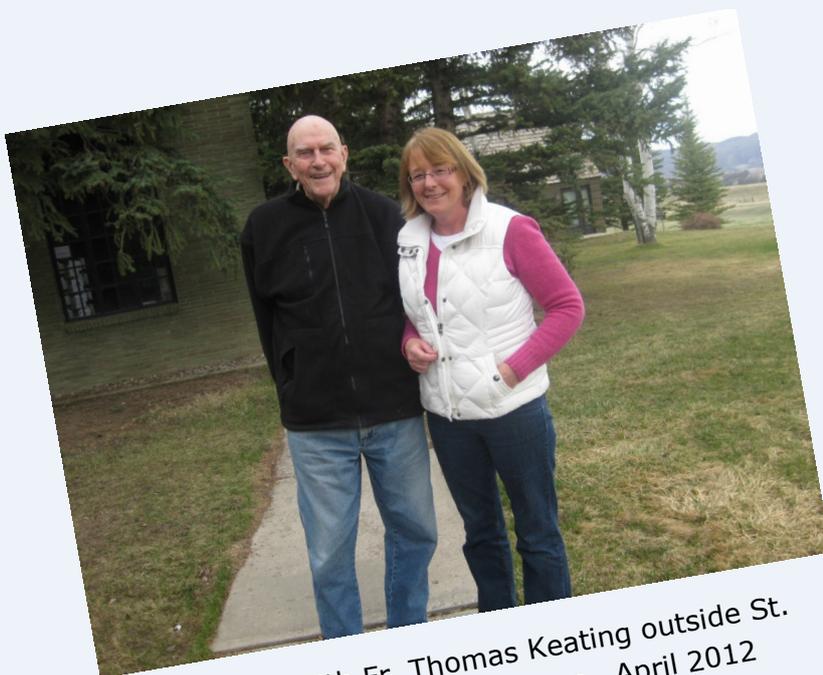
Let me seek you by desiring you, let me desire you by seeking you.

Let me find you by loving you, let me love you when I find you.

(St. Anselm of Canterbury)



St. Benedict's Monastery
SNOWMASS



Eileen Foley with Fr. Thomas Keating outside St. Benedict's Monastery, Snowmass. April 2012

'That is why I am going
to lure her and lead her
out into the wilderness
and speak to her heart'
Hosea 2:14-16

St. Benedict's Monastery, Snowmass, Colorado

For Annual Retreats Schedule visit:

www.contemplativeoutreach.org

Contemplative Outreach of Waterford



Group L to R: Br Frank, John, Anne, Buddy, Margaret, Lesley, Grace, Sr. Dolores, Pat, Anna, Sr. Christina, Noel, Fr. Gerry. Kneeling in front: Jim and Dermot

On 28th July this year some members of Contemplative Outreach of Waterford paid an inaugural visit to St. Aidan's Monastery, Ferns. The group were given a warm Ferns welcome by Sisters Marie Dolores and Christina. The group were first shown around the cluster of Hermitages which is the accommodation for the Centering Prayer retreats that take place at the Monastery. This was followed afterwards by a sharing on Centering Prayer, before retiring to pray together in the Monastery Chapel. Before departing the group enjoyed tea and scones which set them up nicely for their return journey to Waterford.

The continuing growth and development of Centering Prayer groups in Ireland creates wonderful possibilities of meeting and visiting each other for fellowship and prayer together, similar to this day of sharing.

Contemplative Outreach of Waterford is based at the Cathedral of the Most Holy Trinity in Waterford. The group pray together on Wednesdays at 6pm. If you are interested in finding out more about our group feel free to contact me on either [087 2386237](tel:0872386237) or email lesleywaterford@gmail.com Alternatively, just turn up on any Wednesday evening and we will be delighted to have you join with us in silent prayer.

In peace,

Lesley Kavanagh

Widening the Circle!

Having worked in nursing management for over 15 years, I have read many books and attended many courses on management...from 'don't take the monkey from someone else' to developing 'time matrix's in managing ones time efficiently.' After all of that wisdom and advice, I still had to learn the hard way...make my own mistakes, move on and learn from them, follow my gut and most importantly...hold on to my vision. From all the books I have read, there was one that I found very helpful. It was called '*The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*' by Stephen Covey. His material was different from the others because it had a hugely spiritual dimension to it. Though the subject of management versus leadership was prominent in the book, he later went on to write a sequel called *The 8th Habit: From Effectiveness to Greatness* and it was in this book that his primary focus and vision was on leadership rather than management but integrated again with spirituality.

There is a significant difference between management in the nursing world and that of an organisation like COI, one totally prayer centered and the other perhaps more outcome centered. In COI we have always kept prayer at the heart and soul of our group, our primary focus on the guardianship of the integrity of the Centering Prayer method as taught by Fr. Thomas, in our retreats as well as our presentations.

In July 2011 our spiritual mentor Pat Johnson, from St. Benedict's Monastery in Snowmass, in her supervisory meeting with the core group talked about developing structures around COI in order to reach out further on a national level. Initially, this sounded quite daunting to us and on Pat's advice we were to take it to prayer and enter a period of discernment around it. This we have done now for almost a year, and in the process, the team itself has grown in closeness, trust, respect, wisdom and compassion. We have come to an understanding also that for every organism to remain healthy, it must embrace change as well as an understanding of the importance of sound solid leadership.

To that end, when the core group meets again in September following our August recess, and in the months ahead, we will begin the process of developing further the leadership and servitude elements of COI. This will entail creating a Vision and Mission Statement as well as a framework to support both. It will also mean setting up a Board of Trustees, electing officers of President, Secretary, Treasurer and a new co-ordinator.

Throughout this process we will be taking advice and support from our spiritual mentor, collaborating and working in partnership with co-ordinators and leaders throughout Ireland, ensuring fair representation from as many centering prayer groups as possible, and all of this, always underpinned by prayer.

One of the key points made by Covey in the area of leadership is the difference between management and leadership. Management he says is of things, leadership is of people. Finding ones voice as a leader is crucial as well as enabling others to find theirs. Having a vision that includes; being creative, having idealistic dreaming, thinking strategically and reflecting are vital. For Covey, vision is seeing with the mind's eye what is possible in people, in projects and in causes...a reminder to us of one of the vision and theological principles of Contemplative Outreach...'following the teachings of Jesus, we exercise leadership through an attitude of humility, listening and service.'

We ask that you hold the core team in prayer in the months ahead, as we continue to open ourselves in this prayerful process to become instruments of the Holy Spirit.

Anne

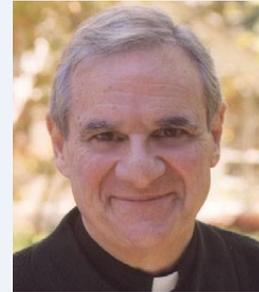


Contemplative Outreach Ireland

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“A Taste of Silence”

Fr. Carl Arico



Fr. Carl Arico, Vice-President of Contemplative Outreach International, will speak on the themes of Forgiveness and Centering Prayer...

Prayer beyond words, beyond thoughts, beyond feelings...

Wexford Local Events in October

<i>Centering Prayer</i>	Mon	<i>7.30pm</i>	<i>Clonard Parish Church Wexford</i>
<i>Forgiveness Prayer</i>	Wed 10th	<i>7.30pm</i>	<i>Ferns Parish Church</i>
<i>Day of Enrichment</i>	Thur 18th	<i>9.15am/ 5.30pm</i>	<i>Ballyvaloo Retreat & Conference Centre</i>

MORE INFORMATION

General Information:

w: www.coi.ie

E: contemplativeoutreachireland@gmail.com

Clonard Church: Sr. Mary Rowsome, Contemplative Outreach Wexford P: **087 2432947**

E: maryrowsome@eircom.net

Ferns Church: Fr. Tom Dalton, Contemplative Outreach Ireland P: **053 9425241**

E: tomadalton@gmail.com

Sr. Marie Dolores O'Brien, St. Aidan's Monastery P: **053 9366634**

E: srdolo@yahoo.com

Ballyvaloo Retreat Centre: E: ballyvaloo retreatcentre1@eircom.net P: **053 9137160**

The Gift of God's Life growing in us

Dear Centering Prayer Practitioners,

I am honoured and grateful to have been invited to write a section for the Newsletter. Now the challenge is what to write about!

For a few months I have been sitting with this wonderful quotation from Basil Pennington's book on Centering Prayer. "By grace we are Christ. Our relationship with God is that of Christ to the Father in the Holy Spirit." At first this seems so obvious. We have been saying it all our lives in different ways. However, it is the succinct way that it is written that stopped me in my tracks. "By grace we are Christ." Centering Prayer has been a means for me of realizing this and I still have a long way to go in the full realization of it. That as I sit, and at times the sitting is quite painful, by grace I am before God as Christ is in his relationship with God. This is alluded to in the Introduction to Centering Prayer. The fourth talk "Deepening Our Relationship with God" mentions our basic core of goodness. "Our fundamental goodness is an element of Christianity. Acceptance of this core of goodness is essential to spiritual growth. Our core is our true self and is our potential in Christ". This transformation in Christ is a process that is happening slowly, facilitated by our consent to God's presence and action in our lives. The action of the Spirit is slow and gentle as it heals us from the inside out. "The purpose of Centering Prayer is not to experience peace but to evacuate the unconscious obstacles to a permanent abiding state of union with God." From this abiding state, "by grace we are Christ." At Eucharist in the preparation of the gifts, the priest says, "by the mystery of this water and wine, may we come to share in the divinity of Christ, who humbled himself to share in our humanity." This is another great reminder of how closely our lives are intertwined with Christ. Our Centering Prayer practice deepens this mystery within us as we consent to God's presence and action, twice a day.

The upcoming visit of Fr. Carl Arico to Ireland, October 7th – 21st is a golden opportunity for us to deepen our awareness of this relationship with Christ. Let's give Fr. Carl a genuine Irish welcome. He has been described as a contemplative comedian, he is funny and profound at the same time. Let's also support in every way possible Contemplative Outreach Ireland, in getting the word out and the crowds in! I am looking forward to being with you all at that time.

In Christ's love,

Fionnuala Quinn O.P.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Advanced Centering Prayer Retreat

St. Aidan's Monastery

Ferns

Co Wexford Ireland

November 3rd to 10th

Facilitators: Eileen Foley COI

Sr. Geraldine Collins CO - Wicklow

Cost: €450 A deposit of €100 is required to secure a place. Cost includes accommodation in a Hermitage or the Retreat House and all meals.

Email: contemplativeoutreachireland@gmail.com

(An established practice of Centering Prayer is required)

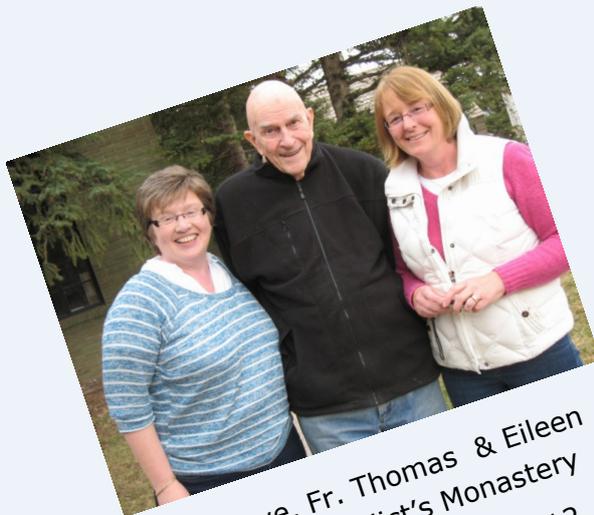
ADVENT WEEKEND CENTERING PRAYER RETREAT

Nov 30th-Dec 2nd
St. Aidan's Monastery
Ferns
Co Wexford Ireland

Facilitated by COI core
team

Cost: €140 Residential
€70 Non Residential

Deposit: €50
Early booking advisable



Maeve, Fr. Thomas & Eileen
St. Benedict's Monastery
April 2012

A thought!

Have you ever wondered why it is, when someone you care about or are very close to, who is far away by distance or indeed a loved one who passes to the next life, seem to feel closer to you simply by their absence?

Recommended Reading

Name	Author	Publisher	ISBN	Price (approx)
When You Pray	Finbarr Lynch SJ	Messenger Publications	978-1-872245-86-7	€7.50
Just as You Are	Paul Coutinho SJ	Loyola Press	13: 978-0-8294-2721-9	€14.99
Manifesting God	Fr. Thomas Keating	Lantern Books	1-59056-085-X	€16.90

New Centering Prayer Groups formed in 2012

Wexford

Contact: Sr. Mary Rowsome
Email: maryrowsome@eircom.net

Limerick

Contact: Sr. Catherine Ryan or Sr. Rose Murphy
Email: cthrn.ryan@gmail.com
rosebudmurphy@hotmail.com

Dublin Northside

Contact: Rev Garth Bunting
Email: Garth.bunting@cccdub.ie

Antrim Northern Ireland

Contact: Rev Alan Lorimer
Email: alan.lorimer@btinternet.com

Down Northern Ireland

Contact: Kevin Cassidy
Email: cassidys9@hotmail.com

If you would like to know more about starting a Centering Prayer group in your Parish or community then please feel free to get in touch with us and we can organise for a facilitator near you to present an Introductory Workshop into the method of Centering Prayer as well as providing on-going support to the group when established.

Contact: contemplativeoutreachireland@gmail.com



Leisure is not only the privilege of those who have time...because most of us don't have time. Leisure is the virtue of those who take time!

David Steindt-Rast



St. Aidan's Monastery

Ferns Co Wexford Ireland

A place of quiet and solitude for personal retreats in hermitage accommodation.

Email: staidansferns@eircom.net

Tel: +353 53 9366634

If you have enjoyed this newsletter please feel free to give feedback through email as well as to share it with others who may benefit from its content.

**Watch out in the months ahead for COI 2013
Calendar of Retreats & Workshops.**

Visit: www.coi.ie

Email: contemplativeoutreachireland@gmail.com