

# Restoration Ministries



*'How can we in this new day, this new context that we have been given in Ireland, deal with commemoration in a way that no longer polarizes us but enables us to walk through history together?'*

*Our interpretation of history is not so much influenced by past facts but by present needs.*



St. Julian of Norwich

*All will be well,  
and all will be well,  
and thou shalt see it  
thyself that all  
manner of things  
will be well.*

*Dear Friends,*

During Lent Restoration Ministries hosted two evenings where, through our guest speakers, people from right across our increasingly diverse community were encouraged to break new ground in their thinking and in their awareness. On February 28<sup>th</sup> Johnston McMaster of the Irish School of Ecumenics presented the challenge of ethical remembering and posed the question, 'How can we in this new day, this new context that we have been given in Ireland, deal with commemoration in a way that no longer polarizes us but enables us to walk through history together?' With a superb grasp of the intricacies of the last one hundred years of Irish history, in particular the Ulster Covenant of 1912, the Easter Rising of 1916 and the Battle of the Somme (also 1916), the centenary commemorations of all of which will soon be upon us, the call, not only to those of us gathered in our conference room that evening, but to everyone on this island is to be history makers, not to remain as those who are bound by inherited precedents or the weight of dead generations. Johnston also encouraged us to search for the lost voices, those, either from our recent conflict or from our more ancient past, whose stories have not yet been heard. In any journeying towards a fresh insight, a heightened awareness of the complexities of seeking to understand any period of our history, and some of the unlearning we need to undertake, these may provide us with a counter story to the dominant discourse of the time.

Conscious of the fact that our interpretation of history is not so much influenced by past facts but by present needs, our next evening together, on March 6<sup>th</sup>, took us along a road that, if we so desired, might help us address some of those needs. Kim Lindsey, one of our 'friends' of Restoration Ministries shared with us her own particular journey into mysticism, focussing on three of the classical 'greats' – Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross and Julian of Norwich. The essence of the mystic way is a progression in holiness, a moving towards God, a coming to know and to love God in a deeper and deeper way. For this to happen, we need to come to know ourselves in our own weakness before God. This, in turn, leads to a deep humility and a submission to the will of God; that is, we come to want more and more what God wants in us. Often in our spiritual journey we yearn for more 'experience', more sensing of his presence. But if we stay with the experience, we can lose the transforming power that God wants to give us. The call is to go deeper. The best of experience is seen in the fruit, rather than simply talking about the experience we may have had. The love and the work that flow from the experience are what is important. Perhaps beyond everything else, mysticism is about unity – unity on a divine level and on a human level. The latter flows naturally from union with Christ.

I find that last thought extremely challenging, for myself, for Restoration Ministries and for the church as a whole, especially for the church in Ireland. Paul writes in

his letter to the Colossians, “Christ is the head of the church, which is his body. He is the first of all who will rise from the dead, so he is first in everything. For God in all his fullness was pleased to live in Christ, and by him God reconciled everything to himself. He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of his blood on the cross.” As we move through the last days of Lent, and, so far as we are able, walk with Jesus through Holy Week, as we risk moving to a deeper heart understanding of Good Friday and the passion that motivated him, may some of the ‘lost voices’ of our faith awaken us to a renewed passion for unity and for peace, and may Easter Sunday find us willing to break new ground, to be history makers – those who tell ‘his story’ by our lives.

For all of us, friends of this ministry around the world, whatever our situation, may the confidence of Julian of Norwich be ours also: “All will be well, and all will be well, and thou shalt see it thyself that all manner of things will be well.” Peace be with you all.

*Ruth*



## LENTEN DAY OF REFLECTION

**DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

## MONTHLY MEETING

**It Is The Lord**

**Saturday 15 March**  
2.00 pm - 6.00 pm

**Monday 31 March 8.00 pm**  
Restoration House

**Restoration House**

**The Way of the Pilgrim**

As faith communities we have different ways of presenting the Easter story. During the Easter celebrations why not visit someone else's church to witness and experience the telling and re-enactment of the story.

Facilitator: Rev Ruth Patterson

# CONTACT US

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