



The Order of Dionysis & Paul

A religious order within the Holy Celtic Church, consisting of men and women, dedicated to living the contemplative life whilst dwelling in the secular world

Mission

The mission of the Order of Dionysis & Paul is to encourage and assist its members to enter the 'Presence of God' by instructing them in the spiritual disciplines of Prayer and Meditation.

The Community

The community of the Order of Dionysis & Paul consists of men and women dedicated to the work of spiritual development through the path of Contemplation. The structure of the Order, like many traditional religious orders, is based upon degrees of commitment and ability, and consists of Lay-members (Fellowship members), Novices and Professed-members. Within the Order there are currently thirty Lay-members and eighteen Professed-members.



The Rule

The Rule joins the members of the Order equally in spiritual and communal fraternity; all members, regardless of status, being subject to the same set of standards and equally bound to act in accordance with them.



The head of the Order is the Prior-General (Currently Brother Marcus), who is both the spiritual and executive head of the Order and its chapters. The general administration of the Order is overseen by a committee of senior members. Posts on the committee are held on a year by year basis. Activities and projects undertaken within the Order are divided into three principal roles: Prior, Co-ordinator, and Operator. Individual members may simultaneously act as a Co-ordinator and an Operator. For example, a member, junior or otherwise, may be requested to organise a seminar; that member then assumes the role of Co-ordinator for that undertaking; all other members involved answering to that Co-ordinator, regardless of rank or position.

Priors of individual chapters act as Co-ordinators to the Prior-General. On these terms harmony is maintained within the Order. Every member is expected to stay within the scope of their own activities, thus eliminating cross-currents in the energy of the community. It is a point of principle that in the pursuit of study all disciplines must be self-motivated as the Order functions more like a college than a nursery school. Guidance and encouragement is always available from senior members but the motivation is self-driven and must come from 'within'.

Meditation

All members of the Order are expected to practise meditation in the traditional manner, which is a discipline of controlled thinking about a specific subject; rather than in the modern sense of it being a guided fantasy. Concerning which, members are encouraged to develop two basic skills considered necessary for the successful practice of meditation - relaxation and concentration: **Relaxation**, by which it is possible to be physically and psychically still, and **Concentration**, by which it is



possible to fix the attention upon a given subject. Developing these skills is an important undertaking for all members of the Order. Yet, neither relaxation nor concentration constitutes meditation, they are simply tools to enhance and facilitate the process of mind control that is called meditation.

There are many methods of relaxation available in the public domain that may easily be utilised by the student, and they do not usually take very long to develop. Concentration, on the other hand, requires the student to be truly interested in the subject at hand; otherwise the ability to “attend” will be undermined by the distracting activities of the senses. In the quiet of the sanctuary it is accepted as axiomatic that in the discipline of meditation you cannot serve two masters, your love of the spirit must be greater than your love of the world of the senses.

Daily Offices

Organised prayer has been a central feature of the spiritual life from the earliest times, and was frequently emphasised by the early Church Fathers. So it is with the Order of Dionysis and Paul, in which regularly engaging in prayer is a fundamental part of daily life. Consequently, throughout the day specific times are set aside for prayer so that the soul may recollect itself and persevere in its main purpose – spiritual regeneration.



Holy Cross Chapel

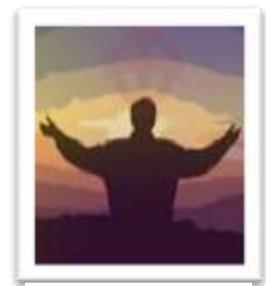
The mind is not a vacuum, and if left to its own devices it will inevitably occupy itself with thoughts, feelings and images generated by the senses; a never-ending procession of thought-forms defining and dictating mood and behaviour. It has long been known that prayer is the most effective way of harnessing these same faculties towards more positive and spiritual ends; namely the work of spiritual regeneration. To this end the Order prescribes three offices to be performed daily by individual members. The morning office, ideally performed upon rising, after ablutions, establishes a unique theme and tone for the day; the midday office, a very short office that reinforces the primary theme established in the morning office, and the

evening office, performed just before retiring, which provides an opportunity for reflection, particularly upon the theme of the day and how that theme influenced the course of the day. The evening office also provides time for members to reflect upon personal behaviour and attitudes and to consider possible modifications and responses.

The daily offices are primarily designed for individual use but may be shared and used as group devotions. They may also be modified, extended and supplemented with different prayers and readings such as the Psalms, the Proverbs or other suitable material. In addition to the daily offices there are other formalised group devotions such as the Ceremony of Spiritual Communion; Lectio Divina; and Compline, which enable members to gather together in prayer, or jointly engage in the meditative work of self-enquiry. A few words concerning these ceremonies now follows.

COMPLINE – Night Prayer

Within monastic communities Compline is traditionally the last of the prescribed offices of the day – the completion of a daily cycle of organised prayer. The full cycle being: VIGILS – the Night Office – usually at the end of the night, just before dawn: MATINS – the sunrise office: LAUDS – Morning Prayer; PRIME – the first hour (6am): TERCE – the third hour (9am): SEXT – the sixth hour (noon); NONE; the ninth hour (3pm): VESPERS – Evening Prayer or Evensong; finally, COMPLINE – the Night Prayer. Few communities observe this complete cycle now; although many do keep a modified form of it. In the Order of Dionysis and Paul, Compline serves as an evening devotion, at the heart of which rests a period of prolonged meditation and contemplation.



Morning Prayer

Ceremony of Spiritual Communion

Written in 1939 by the Reverend Dennis Green, Prior of the Order. Dennis was an early member of the World Congress of Faiths and he composed this ceremony for people of different faiths and convictions to join together in Prayer and Meditation. It is a good introduction to group devotion, especially for people encountering spiritually quickening ceremonies for the first time. It elevates the consciousness of participants and gently introduces them to the experience of the numinous.

LECTIO DIVINA – Divine Reading

Lectio Divina is one of Christianity's oldest methods of prayer. It was used in the desert communities of the Levant during the first few centuries of the Christian era, and was embodied in the work of the Pseudo-Dionysius, particularly in his book *On the Divine Names*. It was also enshrined in the Rule of St. Benedict, and became a distinctive feature of monastic life.

Designed to be used by both individuals and groups, Lectio Divina consists of the slow repetitive reading of a passage of scripture, followed by meditating upon its significance. Traditionally, the reading, termed LECTIO, is read aloud with the emphasis placed upon the act of listening; the text is repeated continually until the passage is known 'off by heart'. In a group setting one person reads whilst everyone else listens attentively, fully engaging with the reading; repeating the words softly under their breath, as it were.

After a given period of time the reading stops and a period of reflecting upon the nature and significance of the passage takes place. This pondering upon the words of the sacred text is called MEDITATIO, that is, meditation. The movement of the will in response to such reflections is known as ORATIO, and often results in the spontaneous outpouring of inspired writing or other forms of creative expression. As the ORATIO subsides, the soul often becomes very calm and experiences a state of profound peace. In attending to that 'Peace' the soul may discover that it is resting in the 'Presence of God', a term that defies further explanation. This state is known as CONTEMPLATIO – Contemplation. Lectio Divina is not a pleasure ride, quite the opposite; it is a laborious undertaking requiring the full attention of the soul and may cause a surprising amount of discomfort. It is consequently not an obligatory discipline for Order members but is undertaken voluntarily...



Carol Service

The Fellowship of Dionysis & Paul

The purpose of the Fellowship is to make available to those truly interested in the spiritual life a facility and focal point wherein they may learn the essential disciplines of this traditional and ancient path of spiritual development.

The Fellowship is open to all who, seeking more than intellectual knowledge, may wish to develop a greater understanding of this traditional path. There are no initiations, oaths or grades of advancement, simply the sharing of knowledge in fellowship and goodwill. There is no joining fee although members will be expected to share the costs of seminars and associated events; the details of which will be supplied well in advance.

TERMS OF MEMBERSHIP

It is a condition of membership that each Fellow recognises and agrees to the following:

1. To live in peace with all Fellows.
2. To respect the beliefs of all Fellows.
3. To be tolerant of the limitations and failings of all Fellows.
4. To avoid imposing personal beliefs & doctrines upon other Fellows.
5. To shun private piques and quarrels with all fellows.
6. To foster goodwill within the Fellowship.
7. Not to give any teaching or instruction in the name of or on behalf of the Fellowship.

MEETINGS

1. Fellows are free to attend lectures, seminars, discussions and workshops of the Fellowship.
2. Seek to arrive in good time for lectures, seminars, discussions and workshops.
1. Abstain from alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, medication apart, whilst
2. Attending Fellowship events.
3. Allow lecturers to speak without interruption.
4. To respect the rights of all Fellows in discussions to finish speaking without interruption.

CONSTITUTION & GOVERNMENT

1. The Fellowship of Dionysis & Paul is a non-profit making organisation whose purpose is the preservation and dissemination of the western spiritual tradition.
2. The Constitution of the Fellowship is hierarchic and not elective, its government being vested in the Order of Dionysis & Paul.
3. The decision to appoint and terminate membership rests solely with the Preceptor of the Fellowship of Dionysis & Paul.

Contact details: email: fdp@imagier.com