

Cell

*pray*

Chapel

*worship*

Chapter

*decide*

Cloister

*meet*

Garden

*work*

Refectory

*share*

Library

*study*

Rediscovering  
and Revealing  
God's Kingdom  
*through*

**Seven Sacred Spaces**



## KEY GOSPEL PASSAGE

The kingdom of God is not coming with things that can be observed; nor will they say “look here it is” or “there it is”. For in fact the Kingdom of God is among you.

**Luke 17. 20b-21**



## Being Sacred

The sense of a place being sacred or set apart in some way is a familiar concept in most of the world's religions. Many speak about church interiors having ‘atmosphere’ – where people detect that the natural and supernatural co-exist. In the Christian tradition, Sacred Spaces are frequently places of pilgrimage or special devotion – places ‘made dirty with prayer’.

Yet, it would be wrong to believe that God can only be encountered in religious buildings. Like Jacob, we may not realise that God is present in all kinds of places. When a Pharisee asks Jesus where, and how, he can find the kingdom of God, Jesus answers *‘the kingdom of God is not coming with things that can be observed; nor will they say “look here it is” or “there it is”’. For in fact the Kingdom of God is among you.* (Luke 17. 20b-21). Jesus saw God at the heart of daily living, and in commonplace events, such as children playing in the market place, women sweeping rooms and men sowing and reaping.

Seven Sacred Spaces is an imaginative way of helping us to realise that God is to be found in the midst of situations and encounters which are common to most of us. It is a means of helping us to recognise that our common life as Christians can be strengthened, by seeing that God is at work in all kinds of normal and routine activities and actions. I am, therefore, delighted to commend it as a means of strengthening our life in Christ for us as individuals and as Christian communities, since as a result of the ministry of Jesus we are assured that God is a God who is always in our midst.

**The Most Reverend Dr Barry Morgan**  
Archbishop of Wales

## Jesus' words challenge us

Do we recognise the Kingdom of God?

What are its signs, its qualities?

What is its relationship with church?

## A lens for living

This book invites you to take a sight test. Have you 20/20 vision for the Kingdom of God? Could your church congregation benefit from some new lenses? When you accept Jesus' invitation to come and see, how fully will you be able to discern his presence?

The Seven Sacred Spaces is an adjustable lens. Try it! Look through this lens and see if you can see more clearly, or more deeply. Of course, when we suspect our eyesight is failing, we may want to avoid the sight test, because we don't want to face the truth. But there is no need to be afraid. A new lens can reveal things previously unseen but also show clearly again things we used to be able to see. Look through the lens of Seven Sacred Spaces and see if your vision improves, and your life as a disciple of Jesus Christ takes on whole new vistas of where God is wonderfully at work in and around you.

"It's very easy sometimes to sweep what we don't want to see under the carpet." David Lloyd-Jones (Churchwarden)

In the Gospels Jesus gives us many examples of what the Kingdom of God is like, and to what we can compare it.

Luke 13. 18-21: He said therefore, "What is the kingdom of God like? And to what should I compare it? It is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in the garden; it grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air made nests in its branches." And again he said, "To what should I compare the kingdom of God? It is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened."

Praying the Lord's Prayer is the single most unifying act amongst all Christians. It follows the pattern of the great commandment in that its first petition is that God's name be made holy and its second is "your Kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven". To pray this prayer and to live by it is truly to be a disciple of Jesus Christ who taught us to pray it.



**Say this familiar prayer aloud and slowly:**

Our Father who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name,  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses  
as we forgive those who trespass  
against us.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
the power and the glory,  
for ever and ever.  
**Amen.**

Margaret Silf, in her book, *Wayfaring*, observes and writes of encountering a living demonstration of the Kingdom whilst on a train journey:

One morning, for example, I was travelling north from London on an early train. I found myself beside two young people, perhaps in their early twenties, a man and a woman; both smartly dressed, obviously representing their employer. It was impossible not to hear their conversation as we travelled north. They were architects, on their way to a meeting to plan an urban renewal project for a derelict area on Merseyside. They were eagerly discussing their ideas and poring over aerial photos of the site. What gripped me most of all was that their entire conversation revolved not around how much money could be made from such a venture, but on how they personally could best address the real needs of the people concerned. In everything they said, they were focused on the people who would be affected by their decisions. How might they keep a distance between the 'workplaces' and the residential areas of their new township? How could they ensure the safety and well-being of children playing in its streets? How could they squeeze in more parkland and open green spaces? How easy would it be for people to reach recreational facilities? What kind of landscape would greet people as they looked out of their kitchen?

Within our society today there are many who have a faith in God but who do not, for a variety of reasons, attend church. There are also many people, of faith and of no faith, who are engaged in life-giving work in our communities. When encountering people Jesus reminded his disciples that "those who are not against us are for us" (Luke 9. 50 and Mark 9. 40). He also warned that it is not those who say, "Lord, Lord", who enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but "only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven". (Matthew 7. 21)



**“Seeing what God is doing  
and joining in”**

*Archbishop Rowan Williams*

## **Application in Mission**

In our society today there are many who are not valued by the church because they are not members of it. This has many consequences; it leads us to miss the examples of Kingdom-builders in our midst, such as the young architects on the train.

This booklet seeks to help us to remedy that: to open our eyes to the wonderful things that God is doing in our communities and in our churches and other institutions. Just as, in the Old Testament, God called Cyrus his servant, and anointed him to work for good, even though he was considered an enemy of the people of Israel (Isaiah 44. 28; Isaiah 45. 1, 4), so today God has servants for his good purposes in many unexpected places and people. Seven Sacred Spaces may help us reveal and proclaim God’s Kingdom in partnership and hope, acknowledging God’s presence and power in every aspect of our lives.

## **Rooted in Ancient Truths**

Seven Sacred Spaces is not some new-fangled project. It has its roots deep within the Christian tradition.

The spaces, already present, were identified by George Lings following a sabbatical in which he visited and lived as part of various religious communities. He found that although the communities had different ways of expressing their life together, the same seven essential elements were needed for community life to thrive.

In each chapter of this book the name of the sacred space has with it an explanation which roots it in our daily living. The spaces are not just part of a building but have real insights to reveal to us about our daily living. If you wish to know more about George’s research, the booklet, *Encounters on the Edge—Seven sacred spaces* which he wrote about his experience is included in the pocket on the inside of the back cover of this book.



## George writes of the lens of Seven Sacred Spaces

"I suspect it connects with what it is to be human. We need to be alone and together, we need the balance in the `work of God` across prayer, study and physical work. We need to recharge, engage and socialize and doing that while you eat is wonderful. Could it be that the shapes and places within the monastic tradition have a vital gift to offer to us as we struggle to know what is truly human, and how best to be church?"



**Watch the DVD for an introduction  
to Seven Sacred Spaces and the  
first example of community  
renewal in St. Brides Major library**

In each of the following chapters, we look at a particular `space` in the context of:

**PERSONAL (blue)**

**CONGREGATION (red)**

**WIDER COMMUNITY (green)**

So depending on how you use this book, you can follow the colour coding to save reading it all!

There is also a section showing a little about how Jesus inhabits that space, since all we do as his disciples can only be based upon what we know of him.

This book has been developed to help congregations and parishes understand what the Seven Sacred Spaces are, and to aid you to identify your strengths or weaknesses in relation to these spaces. We think you will be surprised by how strong you are in these areas.

The book will help lead you to recognise areas where you are already working within these spaces, some you may not have thought of, and possibly some of which will send you in new directions to meet the challenges of these spaces.

You will find in your pack a DVD which is referred to throughout the book. We hope you find these clips an undemanding method of learning more about Seven Sacred Spaces, your involvement in them already and how we can all use these spaces to improve our understanding.

**We hope you enjoy your exploration of  
Seven Sacred Spaces.**

<http://www.churchinwales.org.uk/llandaff/mission/7ss>



**As Christians, our inspiration for the life we lead as a Church is from the life and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth.**

## **Jesus and the Bible Seven Sacred Spaces Revealed**

Jesus presents himself as the one who comes to fulfil the hopes of those who were awakened and nourished by the prophets. At the start of his ministry he presents himself as the servant Messiah announced by Isaiah (Isaiah 42. 1-9; 61. 1, 2) and establishes his agenda in his Kingdom manifesto presented in the synagogue of Nazareth, where he proclaims 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me.' (Luke 4. 18, 19).

In Jesus' time people were exploited by an unjust system, growing unemployment and poverty. There existed a powerful elite, unconcerned with the poverty, social tensions and conflicts of the day. There was bloody repression which killed without mercy, and collaboration with the Romans which exploited the ordinary people. In contrast there were pressure groups who identified with the aspirations of the people and the true religion, which they felt, was hidden from God's people.

### **Jesus put himself on the side of the people ...**

... Luke 7. 37-50

the **prostitutes** who are preferred to the Pharisees

... Luke 18. 9-14; 19. 1-10

the **publicans** who are raised higher than scribes

... Matthew 8. 2, 3

the **diseased**, who are greeted and healed

... Luke 13. 10-17

the **ill** who are healed on the Sabbath day

... Luke 8. 1-3; 23. 49-55

the **women** who are part of Jesus' community

... Matthew 18. 1-4; 19. 13-15

the **children** who are the example to all

... Matthew 11. 25-26

the **humble**, who grasp the nature of the Kingdom better than those who are the educated elite



... Luke 10. 33; 17. 16

the **Samaritans** who are the outcasts and presented as examples to the Jews

... <sup>1</sup>Mark 6. 34-37; <sup>2</sup>John 6. 5-11; <sup>3</sup>John 6. 9

the **hungry**<sup>1</sup> who are welcomed into the community, to feed them<sup>2</sup> and encourage them into sharing<sup>3</sup>.

... Matthew 5. 3; Luke 6. 20

the **poor** for the Kingdom is theirs.

As one who came to liberate and restore all life that was created by God in his image and likeness, and to ensure all people 'may have life, and have it abundantly' (John 10. 10) **Jesus' mission was to ...**

... Matthew 22. 34-40

**unite** the love of God to the love of neighbour

... Luke 6. 36

**reveal** the compassion of God the Father, which we are called to mirror

... Matthew 20. 24-28

**show** that power should be demonstrated through service

... John 4. 20-24

**inaugurate** a new model of worship

... Luke 22. 14-20

**provide** a new focus for the Passover

... Matthew 11. 27; John 14. 6

**place** himself as mediator between God and people.

**Above all, Jesus opens up a new vision for God's people, which will renew and inspire, so that the good news of the Kingdom is proclaimed through word and action.**

### Jesus in scripture welcomes in his time

- **Those considered immoral**  
(prostitutes and sinners)
- **The excluded who had no place in society**  
(suffering leprosy and other illnesses)
- **Those outside the faithful**  
(Samaritans and pagans)
- **The collaborators**  
(publicans and soldiers)
- **The vulnerable and those living in poverty**  
(widows and orphans)
- **Those who were considered lowly**  
(women and children)





## Cell

*pray*

A place to be alone with God.  
Sometimes a place to share with just a few people  
who can respect sharing a sacred space.

## KEY GOSPEL PASSAGE

### What is the importance of a personal prayer life?

'And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.'

**Matthew 6. 5-6**



## Cell

The importance of a personal prayer life.

In the context of religious community, 'cell' is a place of privacy and solitude. In their cells, community members wouldn't have access to computers or telephone. 'Cell' is a place for being alone with God.

Cell refers to our personal prayer life. Jesus had a personal impact on the first disciples, their hearts burned within them (Luke 24. 32). We need today to decide what can help us to have some quiet time, whether we call this prayer, meditation, reflection, contemplation or just 'a bit of peace'.

Some people would say they 'think best' when they walk. Maybe a deep understanding of 'cell' warns us that this is not sufficient on its own. Of course prayer can involve thinking, but it is also about receiving. Cell reminds us that we need to wait for the God who is in all parts of us, and not just in our thinking brains, to come to us, to reveal to us truths we could not be aware of by just 'thinking'. Some people have compared being in their cell to sunbathing, allowing ourselves to be rested, changed and restored just by 'being'.

Here are some descriptions of prayer:

*"The highest form of prayer is to know the goodness of God"*  
Julian of Norwich

*"Pure contemplation lies in receiving"*  
St John of the Cross

*"Prayer is not asking. It is a longing of the soul. It is daily admission of one's weakness. It is better in prayer to have a heart without words than words without a heart".*  
Mahatma Gandhi

*"Prayer does not change God, but it changes the one who prays"*  
Soren Kierkegaard

**Applying the Bible to Cell  
in the Seven Sacred Spaces,  
according to Jesus,  
the 'Good News'  
of the Kingdom of God is to  
be rooted in the Father  
through prayer.**

**Mark 1. 35;  
Luke 11. 1; 9. 18, 28; 22. 41**

“Sometimes we do a lot of things that involve giving of ourselves and giving out but at other times we need to take time for ourselves.”

The Reverend Edward Dowland-Owen



Watch the DVD clip on  
**Cell**

## PERSONAL

**What helps me to pray?**

**Do I make time to listen to God?**

*How much?*

*How often?*

*How do I respond to God?*

**Who do I talk to about my spiritual life?**

My Parish Priest?

A Spiritual Director?

*What is this?*

*Who do I contact to find one?*

***Choose some of the following to consider:***

Develop a prayer corner or even a prayer-room, or a prayer-shed – an area where an icon or open Bible etc can be left.

Develop a routine of walking to or sitting somewhere where there are few distractions and you feel 'at peace' and where you can pray and reflect more easily.

Use one of the many prayer web sites, for example OREMUS, pray-as-you-go, where prayer can be found or listened to.

Ask about a Spiritual Director or prayer guide. They are available in the Diocese through the Diocesan Spirituality Group.

*pray*

## CONGREGATION

**Do we help people enough with their individual prayer lives?**

*How?*

**Do we offer spiritual accompaniment / direction?**

*Quiet days / retreats*

*Open the Church and make it available for prayer*

*Reflection cards for people to take away*

*Candles to light*

**How important is a prayer space in your church?**

A place where people can find silence and reasonable privacy.

***Choose some of the following to consider:***

Having set times for a *drop-in* or *quiet time* provision. Perhaps an hour or two at the same time every week, where people can go to sit, think, pray, light a candle. Possibly with short prayers on the half-hour.

Think about a parish Retreat and appoint someone as organiser. Reflect on what might be possible - at home retreats / quiet days can be arranged for you.

## WIDER COMMUNITY

**What are the places and spaces available to people in the community?**

**How do we let local employers / office workers / passers-by know that the church is open?**

*Are they welcome?*

*How do we encourage contacts?*

**Do we know how much interest there is in quiet spaces in our local community?**

*Have we tried asking people?*

***Choose some of the following to consider:***

Events to mark previous contacts - wedding, baptism and funeral follow-up services.

Let parts of the community know that the church is praying for them. Advertise places of quiet in our churches and communities so people know about it. Places where people can be quiet for part of their break.

If your church is left open, think about it being user-friendly. Leave leaflets with prayers or Scripture passages.

Llangasty Retreat House near Brecon covers all these sacred spaces with their Crypt and Chapel; places to sit, walks close at hand. A place suitable for small groups but also available for individuals.



## **Chapel**

# *worship*

A place to pray with others.

Linked by the Holy Spirit who prays in us and through us  
to God the Father in the name of Christ the Lord.

## KEY GOSPEL PASSAGE

### How does our worship enable and inspire us as a congregation?

We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our prayers, constantly remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labour of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

**1 Thessalonians 1** (v2-3 shown)



## Chapel

The Chapel in the monastery is where the formal worship would take place. We may think we know what worship means to us. It might be useful just to stop at this point and discuss with one another what you understand by worshipping together.

Linked by the Holy Spirit who prays in us and through us giving worth to...

... God, people, places, circumstances that matter to us ... Loving God and your neighbour ...

How much does our worship do that? Patterns of worship usually include ...

...**Gathering**. This is not just a group of like-minded people but is an invitation to all sorts and conditions of people.

...**Offering**. Intercession, praise, the eucharist - offering ourselves in service.

...**Sending out**. Going out to love and serve the Lord as disciples, proclaiming the good news in thought, word and deed.

We live in a visual, discursive age; our worship needs to reflect this.

In the monastic community regular worship would be centred on the Chapel within the monastery (*Encounters on the Edge page 10-14*), but there would also be an emphasis on the worshipful offering of the whole of daily living.

Discussing how our worship feeds us spiritually and how it connects with the community around us is what will keep it alive and active.

**Applying the Bible to Chapel  
in the Seven Sacred Spaces,  
according to Jesus,  
the 'Good News'  
of the Kingdom of God is to  
free, and re-integrate into the  
community, those who are  
marginalised.  
Mark 1. 40-44; Luke 14. 15-24**

"I think I'd encourage any Christian community to look hard at your worship, allow yourselves to be invited into the mystery of God's Love, take a chance on God in that sense and just see where that worship might lead you."

The Reverend Edwin Counsell



Watch the DVD clip on  
**Chapel**

## PERSONAL

**How are you enriched by your experience of worship?**

**How connected do you feel to the gathered community of the Church?**

**What might help you to connect more deeply?**

***Choose some of the following to consider:***

Having more input so that you can say 'Amen' to the intercessions and other prayers more fully.

How can I be more fully part of the congregation and feel like we are all in it together – 'We believe in God' - does it matter if I cannot believe it all? "*Lord, I believe; help my unbelief*" (Mark 9. 24).

There may be groups where discussion can happen to deepen my understanding of the worship we share in.

Watch out for or ask for opportunities to have creative input into parts of the worship.

Consider what God might be calling you to do in the life of the church and in his name in the community.

# worship

## CONGREGATION

**How does your worship cater for the needs of all in the congregation?**

**What would need to change to attract others?**

**How accessible is our worship for those who do not normally come to church?**

What support do we offer to visitors?

***Choose some of the following to consider:***

Reflecting on the acts of worship held in church. Whom do they cater for? Whom, if anyone, do they exclude?

If we worship on behalf of others as well as for ourselves, how do we let them know that we are doing so?

If worship is offered for the communities in which we live, do we expect it to have an impact? As we are connected with the wider Church in the Anglican communion and all Christians; it may be worth considering a fuller connection with a Church elsewhere?

You may wish to explore your sacramental understanding of what is going on. What do we think about the Communion of Saints and the forgiveness of sins?

Consider how our worship refuels us to go out in the world.

## WIDER COMMUNITY

**How does worship serve the community?**

**In what ways could your worship show its relevance to the community today?**

**Are we confident in feeling we have something to offer the world today?**

***Choose some of the following to consider:***

Traditional ways in which worship is made available to the wider community: public mourning; state / civic occasions.

Reflect on the contact we have with the community through funerals, weddings and baptisms.

Explore other ways in which the Church and the community could work together to meet the spiritual needs of others. What about those who do not currently come to worship?

How do we cater for those who worship in informal ways? Is there a connection to be made with those who practise faith informally through such things as wayside shrines, prayer boards or requests – those for whom an expression of spirituality is important but who cannot connect with our regular worship?





## Chapter

# *decide*

A place of meeting and decision-making.  
Carrying our faith with us in all aspects of life.

## KEY GOSPEL PASSAGE

### How do we seek to be transformed to encounter God in our meetings?

Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white. Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him.

**Matthew 17. 1-9** (v1b-3 shown)



## Chapter

In the context of religious community life 'Chapter' is where the (usually more senior) members gather together to take counsel about the life of that community. It would be a decision of the whole chapter that allowed a new member to join.

In Church contexts, Chapter continues to be used for meetings of clergy in a deanery (a group of churches working together in the same area). The Deanery Chapter, under the leadership of the Area Dean, discusses matters of common concern, and decisions are taken by the clergy of the deanery. Chapters could be found in the form of leadership teams which included lay and ordained, paid professionals and volunteers.

In Cathedrals, the Dean meets with 'Residentiary' Canons and other senior staff as a 'Chapter'. There is usually a room specifically allocated to this, known as the Chapter Room or Chapter House.

## Interpretation

Today the word would more commonly be used in relation to reading a book and extending that as a metaphor of life, with one chapter (stage) ending and another beginning.

In the context of Seven Sacred Spaces, Chapter is a space where there can be discussion and an exchange of views. It maybe a place of disagreement, argument and debate. It is a place where shared responsibility and accountability are acknowledged and where decisions and delegation can happen.

You may wish to spend some time reflecting on the needs of others and issues around the allocation of resources, the making of rules and policies, and what values influence you.

**Applying the Bible to Chapter  
in the Seven Sacred Spaces,  
according to Jesus,  
the 'Good News'  
of the Kingdom of God is to  
unite people around him  
and among themselves  
to form community.  
Mark 1. 16-20; Luke 8. 21**

"We've listened to each other so we've ended up  
with a multi-faceted kind of response."

The Reverend Ian Hodges



Watch the DVD clip on  
**Chapter**

## PERSONAL

**When I make decisions, whom do I consult?**

**What are the considerations I include?**

**Are there wider implications of my decisions?**

***Choose some of the following to consider:***

Reflect on what the elements of Chapter are for you. It could be a family in discussion or at a table. It may be that you have membership of clubs / societies; there may be issues you need to consider, budgeting or stewardship and the like.

What elements of my life, values and beliefs link with Chapter?

What other areas are included in Chapter for me?

Is prayerful reflection always a part of my decision making?

Are there ways in which God is calling me to be more involved with elements of Chapter in the community?

Consider how your faith influences decisions inside and outside a Church context.

*decide*

## CONGREGATION

**What are the policies and values of this church?**

**Who is involved in decision-making and how are people included in discussion?**

**What are the wider implications?**

***Choose some of the following to consider:***

What are the congregational examples of Chapter: the PCC; committees responsible for: children and young people, finance, mission, giving, social, education, pastoral; Mothers Union etc?

What happens when Chapter is more informal e.g. gathering at the back of church?

There are roles of responsibility in the Parish (Parish Officers), Deanery and Diocese (Committee and Conference representatives). These can be seen as part of our discipleship and calling.

What is it like when things get difficult? Do we have ways of approaching conflict?

Reflect on the interface between Church and Community in this context. Do we recognise it? Are we called to consult with the local community in this area of Chapter?

## WIDER COMMUNITY

**What natural links do we have with the wider community?**

**What are the decision-making bodies in the community?**

Who serves on them?

**How do we inform / support / challenge local decision-making bodies?**

***Choose some of the following to consider:***

What links do we have already? Are members of our congregations already involved; do we value and affirm these links?

Think more widely about our influence and responsibility. Are there existing schemes that we could be partners in or with whom we work already, e.g. Neighbourhood Watch, Local Authority, Welsh Government, Professional Bodies, Local Press, Community Development initiatives and projects like Communities First, Samaritans and Food Banks?

Where are the gaps in provision for our local community? Can the church be of help? Whom could we involve in helping us to look at these?





## **Cloister**

*meet*

That place of encounter.  
Connecting the Church community and the world  
of which it is a part.

## KEY GOSPEL PASSAGE

### How do your beliefs affect your chance encounters?

Philip asked, 'Do you understand what you are reading?' The Ethiopian eunuch replied, 'How can I, unless someone guides me?' And he invited Philip to (get in and) sit beside him.

**Acts 8. 26-40** (v30b-31 shown)



## Cloister

Encounters with others are common features of the Christian life, whether they are in those physical spaces where the Church has the opportunity to welcome, host and engage such as a church centre, hall or community shop, or through simple acts of service where the individual or group is presented with the opportunity to meet and engage with others. Cloister is, at its basic level, that meeting space where you don't know who you will meet next. It is where you may meet friend or foe, stranger or acquaintance.

'Never give a hollow greeting of peace or turn away when someone needs your love.' (Rule of St Benedict, 4.25)

Remember Cloister can exist in connection with any of the other spaces as it is that place of chance encounter whether desired or not, which provides 'the immediate function of sheltered connection between the other spaces' e.g. the corridors of a house which link together the other rooms. Cloister is a place for mutual encounter, 'Cloister is only one of two outside places with fresh air. The hothouse of community needs such spaces.' (*Encounters on the Edge* page 19)

### A Prayer of St Benedict (480-547)

#### Gracious and holy Father, please give me:

intellect to understand you;  
reason to discern you;  
diligence to seek you;  
wisdom to find you;  
a spirit to know you;  
a heart to meditate upon you;  
ears to hear you;  
eyes to see you;  
a tongue to proclaim you;  
a way of life pleasing to you;  
patience to wait for you;  
and perseverance to look for you.

**Applying the Bible to Cloister  
in the Seven Sacred Spaces,  
according to Jesus,  
the 'Good News'  
of the Kingdom of God is to  
go out and live out  
the good news.  
Matthew 28. 18-20**

“So the hope is, in the long term, to build an orchestra for Ely and Caerau that the community can be really proud of. The orchestra will put Ely in a good light in the media because we hear so many bad stories about this area from the press. We want to show people that there is some really good stuff going on in this community.”

The Reverend Jan Gould



Watch the DVD clip on  
**Cloister**

## PERSONAL

Where do I meet people, strangers in chance encounters?

Where do I miss opportunities of chance encounters?

How do I respond to those in need?

*Choose some of the following to consider:*

What have I done today and whom have I met, and where do those encounters occur?

- School
- Work
- Recreation
- Shopping
- Travelling/ commuting
- When the front door bell rings

How have I been influenced by those encounters? What have I learnt about myself and my walk as a Christian pilgrim through these encounters? Who am I called to be in this space of Cloister, how am I called to behave?

Reflect not only on meeting people but the content of conversation – it's not an easy process for everyone. Is meeting others different in a church context or in our daily lives? Why might there be a difference?

Does my experience of Cloister link with any of the other Sacred Spaces?

*meet*

## CONGREGATION

**In what ways can we respond to encounters with our local community as the Church?**

**As a Church, how inviting are we to others?**

**How welcoming are we as a Church when we encounter each other and visitors?**

***Choose some of the following to consider:***

As congregations we are made up of individuals who meet others in different contexts, using different skills / gifts. How are we engaged with events which we do by necessity, the school gates, shopping etc?

How are we engaged with church events / schemes / Pastoral visiting teams (residential homes, hostels / night shelters for the homeless). Fetes and festival based events such as 'Christingle,' Easter Egg hunts, carol singing? Is it about organising or encountering?

What about encounter with others on issues of social justice? How does the Church work with the community? Partnership working, attending / joining local council of voluntary organizations, fundraising events; is this part of our discipleship?

How do we promote ourselves so that we encounter others more? Publicity & promotion, Facebook, Twitter, web-sites, magazine, community journal.

## WIDER COMMUNITY

**What are the issues and needs in the community?**

**What are the barriers / opportunities for hospitality and sharing?**

**Who are our partners in this work?**

***Choose some of the following to consider:***

What interests do we have within the Church community which can be a meeting point with others? There may be issues of social justice or community development where we can encounter and work in partnership with others: Food Banks, debt advice, job clubs, running a night shelter programme in conjunction with partnering churches and the community, community shop.

Community Audit: identifying stake holders, community partners. Campaigning on various issues e.g domestic violence, poverty, housing, community safety.

What about encountering others through political / civic engagement, MPs, Welsh Government, LA Councillors, Community Council, PACT meetings, hustings, Citizens UK?

Recreation: Sports, art & music, horticulture, literature, architecture, film.



An abstract painting of a garden. The composition is divided into several sections by dark, textured paths. The top-left section is a vibrant green, while the top-right section is a deep blue. The bottom-left section is a lighter green, and the bottom-right section is a yellowish-green. The brushstrokes are visible and expressive, creating a sense of movement and depth. The overall effect is a colorful, textured representation of a garden landscape.

## Garden

## *work*

A place of labour and productivity.  
It can help us seek a deeper harmony and purpose  
in our lives.

## KEY GOSPEL PASSAGE

### Does our discipleship influence our labour?

But Jesus answered them, 'My Father is still working, and I also am working.'

**John 5. 17**



## Garden

The monastery often has extensive grounds to give a space for recreation but also two different types of garden:

- A herb garden: used for cooking and medicinal purposes.
- A larger more productive plot: from the labours in this area the community is fed
- A garden at the centre of the cloister with plants and sometimes a small fountain, a place to rest and reflect, enjoy the changing seasons and the 'silence' of nature.

These can be seen in some of our Cathedrals that have monastic cloisters. You could explore on the web or in any book on ancient cathedrals and monasteries.

So the garden is a place of work and a place to rest and reflect, to be aware of the passing of time with the changing seasons and the change of light throughout the day.

For us the Garden could be:

- A place of work: with a sense of achievement, of bringing order, of working in co-operation with nature. NB the resurgence in the use of allotments.
- A place to reflect on creation and wonder at the beauty and changes in creation.
- A place to harvest fruit, vegetables and herbs for healthy living.

So the Garden promotes wholeness and reflects a healthy rhythm of work and rest.

It can help us seek a deeper harmony and purpose in our lives.

**Applying the Bible to Garden  
in the Seven Sacred Spaces,  
according to Jesus,  
the 'Good News'  
of the Kingdom of God is to  
serve others with a  
consciousness of  
mission and humility.  
Mark 1. 36-39; John 13. 14**

Nobody, no one person, is more important than anyone else."

Vernon Price, Vision Products



Watch the DVD clip on  
**Garden**

## PERSONAL

**What does the word Garden mean for you as an individual?**

**How do we view and value the products of our efforts / labours?**

**How does this sacred space invite us to widen our view of Garden?**

***Choose some of the following to consider:***

Do I ever reflect on the daily rhythm of my life?  
The mundane and the exciting!

Do I have a healthy balance of work and rest?  
What might this healthy balance look like for me?

Do I see my work for the Church as duty or joy?  
How is it connected to my sense of discipleship?

Does my work for the Church help to bring wholeness to the community?

Do I ever seek to go to a place for rest and renewal, eg Retreat, or do I get too caught up in my business?

*work*

## CONGREGATION

**If Garden is about work, what is the product of the work of our church?**

**Do we 'use' any garden space around our church or hall?**

**How does this sacred space invite us to widen our view of Garden?**

***Choose some of the following to consider:***

If we live in a rural area do we take the countryside for granted? Would it be seen by the community as a reflection of the beauty of God's creation?

Are we involved in Eco Church or 'Green issues' or do we leave that to others?

Are we aware of praying about God's work in creation in our intercessions?

Does our Church celebrate the sacrifice of energy and time that comes from volunteers?

Does our Church support a good work / life balance? Do we have Quiet Days, go on Retreat to recover a deeper harmony in our lives and renew our relationship with God and each other?

Is our work for the Church constructive? Does it benefit and sustain others or do we work just to maintain what we have?

## WIDER COMMUNITY

**What are the main areas of productivity that we would like to see the community provide?**

**What areas of Garden can we share in common with the community?**

**How does this sacred space invite us to widen our view of Garden?**

***Choose some of the following to consider:***

How can our labours benefit the local community? Do we know what might benefit the local community? How might we find out?

Do we know how to share the grounds that we may have?

Could we create a quiet garden or a productive garden? Even a planted tub can say something in a built-up community.

Are we aware of any 'Eco work' going on in our community to prevent littering and to care for our communal areas?

Do we celebrate God's ongoing work in creation through celebrations besides Harvest (invite allotment owners etc)?

Do we celebrate the produce of all our labours?





## Refectory

*share*

A place of hospitality and eating together.  
A precious space for both host and guest.

## KEY GOSPEL PASSAGE

### What does true hospitality look like?

One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house and took his place at the table. And a woman in the city, who was a sinner, having learned that he was eating in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster jar of ointment [to anoint him].

**Luke 7. 36-50** (v36-37 shown)



## Refectory

**Google definition: A room used for communal meals, especially in an educational or religious institution.**

### Interpretation

Refectory is a word that may evoke mixed memories of school dinners, factory canteens, holiday camps – having to sit uncomfortably with food and people you have not chosen, or for others, happier memories of wedding receptions, street parties and other communal celebrations.

In monastic communities the Refectory is the place of eating and providing hospitality. Eating is communal but is sometimes done in silence, but more commonly is an opportunity for meeting, conversation and building relationships.

The two main themes that Refectory covers for the Church are eating and hospitality.

### **The place of Refectory in our personal lives.**

In their personal lives people are likely to come across the Refectory

- at home, in a family meal
- at work or school in a canteen
- socially in a club or at a dinner party
- at times of celebration, Christmas, Easter or birthdays

In Church and at home Refectory can be the way in which we share hospitality with one another, not just for fundraising but for fellowship.

There are so many examples in the Bible of people eating together. For biblical characters and for us today, it is a personal, intimate, generous thing to share with others.

**Applying the Bible to Refectory  
in the Seven Sacred Spaces,  
according to Jesus,  
the 'Good News'  
of the Kingdom of God is to  
offer hospitality.  
Mark 6. 31-44; John 6. 1-14**

"I think there is something very special about sharing food around the table."

Jane Douglas, Parish Volunteer



Watch the DVD clip on  
**Refectory**

## PERSONAL

How often and in what situations do we eat with others?

If you live in a house with other people how important is it that you eat together?

If you live on your own how can you give hospitality the importance that Jesus gave it in his ministry?

*Choose some of the following to consider:*

What can I gain from eating communally?

What are the things that restrict my enjoyment of refectory?

Reflect on what hospitality and sharing mean to you. How are these concepts influenced by your faith?

What are the important things about being a host? What impact does it have on those around me?

What are the important things about being a guest? Am I better at giving than receiving? If so why?

What are the differences between eating alone and eating with others?

*share*

## CONGREGATION

**In what ways do we already share hospitality?**

**What new opportunities for Refectory can we think of?**

**How do people outside the Church view our hospitality?**

***Choose some of the following to consider:***

When does your congregation eat together? To what extent do you see the Eucharist as a communal meal? How important is eating together in your congregation?

Where do you eat together as a congregation? How could you arrange tables to facilitate greater community?

What is important in your Refectory? Is it fundraising, building relationships or something else?

In Corinth communal meals were divisive (1 Corinthians 11. 17-22). How can you avoid that happening in your congregation?

Parishes that do the Alpha course or run Messy Church have found their experience diminished without the inclusion of the meal. How could your experiences as a church be enhanced by the inclusion of food?

## WIDER COMMUNITY

**What opportunities for eating together and hospitality exist in our community?**

**In what ways can our Church support or supplement the community provision of hospitality and sharing?**

**How do the Church and the community view each other in relation to hospitality and sharing?**

***Choose some of the following to consider:***

Refectory is an obvious opportunity to serve the wider community, locally (see DVD) and worldwide, eg Christian Aid lunches etc. How much are we engaged in looking outside the Church in this respect? Where are the places of Refectory in your local community and how do we engage with them?

How can your Church offer hospitality in your community? Can we do something in partnership with the community?

How important is it to serve Fairtrade goods when offering hospitality in your community?

Why are food hygiene standards so important in this area?

What is our calling in relation to hospitality and sharing?



The background of the entire page is an abstract, textured composition. It features large, overlapping shapes in various shades of green, from bright lime to dark forest green, and deep blues, ranging from teal to navy. The textures are layered and somewhat grainy, giving it a painterly or collage-like appearance. A white rectangular box is positioned in the upper left quadrant, containing text.

## **Library**

# *study*

A place of knowledge and learning;  
accessing and sharing it with others.

## KEY GOSPEL PASSAGE

### Has studying with others helped us to grow?

Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

**Luke 24. 13-35** (v27 shown)



## Library

In religious communities the Library houses books, journals, maps and archives, which hold the memory of the community and its context and history. But it is also importantly the place of study.

Exploration of information and new thoughts which we share with others are key to this area. It is where people write, and in our own age this will include the use of computers with internet resources and digital images, as well as traditional methods of scribing using paper and pen or pencil.

George Lings reflects on knowledge that blesses others and aids prayer (*Encounters on the Edge* page 27, where Library is referred to as Scriptorium)

Remember, rarely are these spaces isolated; they are distinct but related aspects of an integrated life. Library in particular links in to other spaces very easily. Those who are of a more studious nature can sometimes be disregarded in the activism of the contemporary church. Library ensures that their contribution is also recognised and valued.

In our personal lives, there will be things we research and record:

- Recipes
- Genealogy
- Our health and exercise
- Our play lists of music or videos.
- Appreciation of art
- Newspapers

Probably we wouldn't think of this as 'Library', but such records and research are part of it.

Library can be about our gaining more knowledge but it's also about sharing knowledge and learning and making it available to others.

Applying the Bible to Library  
in the Seven Sacred Spaces,  
according to Jesus,  
the 'Good News'  
of the Kingdom of God is to  
teach with authority  
and inclusively.

Mark 1. 21, 22; Luke 8. 1-3

"Study can be about thinking and about  
looking back and reflecting."

The Reverend Canon Nigel Cahill



Watch the DVD clip on  
**Library**

## PERSONAL

What are the areas of knowledge that we access and how do we share that with others?

Does the knowledge of our faith get shared?

What personal incentive do you have for growth?

*Choose some of the following to consider:*

What do I read or look into? Do I make enough time for this? What attracts my interest? What do I want to know more about?

Think about what records and diaries you keep or research (e.g. recipes etc.) you do. How am I influenced by my interests?

Where might God be at work within these areas? Do they link with any of the other Sacred Spaces?

Does my learning help me to grow as a disciple of Jesus and do I share any of those benefits with others?

How do faith and intellect work together in my life?

*study*

## CONGREGATION

**In what ways do we explore and share knowledge as a congregation?**

**What knowledge and learning opportunities do we make available to others?**

**How seriously do we take developing ourselves as disciples?**

***Choose some of the following to consider:***

As congregations, where do you study together? Often people find that study of one subject leads to new insights in other areas too. (One woman studying Pastoral Care, intending to work with young people, found herself drawn to work instead with elderly people.)

Some find inspiration and have their eyes opened to see God at work today through study of the Old Testament and early Church.

Many have been engaged in study groups that help us grow as disciples (e.g. Alpha, Emmaus, Living Faith). How do such courses help us to grow as the body of Christ in this place? Are you engaged in such study?

## WIDER COMMUNITY

**How are information, learning and knowledge shared in the wider community?**

**What would it be like for the church to make more knowledge and learning regarding faith and spirituality available to others?**

**What does the Church have to offer the wider community in terms of knowledge and learning?**

***Choose some of the following to consider:***

What interests do we have within the Church community which can be a meeting-point with others? There may be issues of social justice or community development where we can work in partnership and gather and share information.

*Reflect on where the right point to start is ...*

Is there a fear that means people are not confident in their knowledge to come to learn and share their thoughts regarding faith and spirituality?

As well as having something to offer the wider community, we as a church also have lots to learn. How do we find out from the local community what it is that they would like the church to engage with?





**Now watch the Ely Orchestra and see how many of the Seven Sacred Spaces you can identify.**

### **Additional resources**

You will find the book and additional Seven Sacred Spaces resources together with copies of all the additional sheets enclosed with this book at:

**<http://www.churchinwales.org.uk/llandaff/mission/7ss>**

You can also submit additional materials for others to use within this web space by sending them to:

**[sevensacredspaces@churchinwales.org.uk](mailto:sevensacredspaces@churchinwales.org.uk)**

or for any additional enquiries regarding Seven Sacred Spaces please telephone the Diocesan Office **01656 868868**

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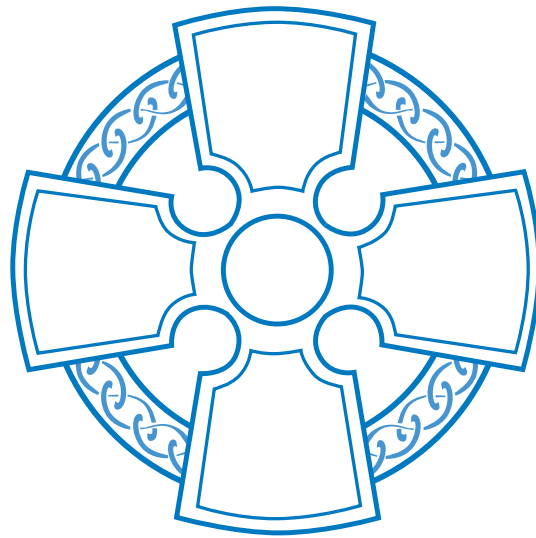
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