



English Friends of the Foyers



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newsletter

Foyer Retreat at Sion Community, Brentwood, next February!

A Foyer de Charité Retreat will be held in Brentwood, at the Sion Community, from the evening of February 27th, to lunchtime on March 5th, 2011. The theme is “God’s Plan for the Fullness of Time,” and the preacher will be Mgr. Keith Barltrop, with help from members of the Foyer de Charité in Tressaint, Brittany.

Foyer retreats are held mainly in silence, with three talks a day, and offer a holistic way of deepening our faith in the Church’s teaching and our life in Christ. The Foyers are communities of consecrated lay people living with a priest in order to help others grow closer to Christ and live the Catholic faith more fully. There is a suggested donation of £220 for the retreat, but retreatants are only asked to pay what they can afford.



Sion Community House, Brentwood

For further information or to book a place, contact Mgr. Barltrop: 020 7229 0487; St. Mary of the Angels, Moorhouse Road, Bayswater, London W2 5DJ; keithbarltrop@rcdow.org.uk.

Tressaint October Retreat news from Fr David and Fr Tom



Fr David speaking to the retreatants at Tressaint

There was also another retreat for English-speakers at Tressaint recently, from 24-30 October 2010, this time led by Fr David Hartley and Fr Tom Dubois. Fr David reports that:

“Fr Tom Dubois and I had the great joy of preaching another retreat recently at the Foyer de Charité at Tressaint, Brittany. We travelled in different ways, with the majority flying from Southampton on a magnificent day, giving us clear views of the Isle of Wight and the French coast including Mont S. Michel. As usual there was a great deal of hard work in preparing for the retreat by

Monique Poitrat and other members of the community. The particular theme this year was “O worship the Lord in the beauty of Holiness” but as usual we tried to review all the key areas of our Catholic Faith. The talks were quite lengthy, but there was plenty of time for making the most of the silence and enjoying times of worship with the community.

“In every season there are different aspects of the natural world to take pleasure in, and I particularly enjoyed the wild cyclamen with their many different patterned leaves and delicate flowers opening. The Foyer at Tressaint is in the midst of some new building work, which will give more room for the young children who often accompany parents on retreat. Although there is no retreat in English planned for next year at Tressaint you can of course join in any of the French retreats—see www.tressaint.com—or you might consider staying for a holiday at Maison St Francois at Dinard on the coast. We are also very grateful for the support promised for our retreat next Feb/March.

“The retreat came towards its end with a grand talking supper on the Friday evening when many people had a chance to speak about their life and mission. It was very impressive to hear about some of the apostolates other retreatants were involved with, including work in the prisons. We can all say a big thank you to each other and to the Lord for such a special week together.”

Please remember that it would be a great help if more Foyer Friends were able to receive this Newsletter by email. If you can do that please contact Donal at: foyers@theotokos.org.uk with your details. Thanks!

Article in 'Alouette,' on Life and Legacy of Père Finet

If we concentrate too much on Marthe Robin and neglect the part played by Fr Georges Finet in the Establishment of the Foyers of Charity, we are liable to get the movement out of focus. The whole story is one of unique collaboration between a handicapped mystic and an energetic priest, under the direction of our Maker. As He said to Marthe before they ever met: "The priest can do nothing without you, nor you without him." It is this collaboration between an ordained priest and a simple lay woman that makes the whole thing so remarkable and important.

The April 2010 number of the Foyer Magazine 'Alouette' was largely devoted to an in-depth study of Fr Finet, since this was the twentieth anniversary of his death on Holy Saturday 1990. Père Bernard Michon, the present senior priest at Chateauneuf-de-Galaure, the headquarter Foyer founded in 1936 by Fr Finet, says in the Introduction that the significance of Holy Saturday is that it was the day Our Lord spent in the tomb visiting the souls of the departed, before emerging to his Risen Life on Easter Sunday morning. No biography of Fr Finet has yet been published.

Fr Michon sees the secret of his work due to three factors: firstly, the many hours each week that he spent with Marthe, so that they achieved a union of souls; secondly, his docility to the Blessed Virgin: he was ever a child in relation to the Mother of God; thirdly, both turned more and more towards Jesus their Saviour and Redeemer, whom they came increasingly to love for the sake of souls.

The chief recollector of Fr Finet and Marthe in this 'Alouette' is Mgr Marchand who became Bishop of Valence two years before her death in 1981. Now living in retirement, he is in a unique position to recall them both, and it was he who introduced Marthe's cause for beatification in his diocese five years after her death. He focuses on three occasions in Fr Finet's life, namely the famous first meeting with Marthe in 1936, his own first meeting with both in 1979, and thirdly the meeting of Fr Finet with John Paul II in 1986.

Much has been written about the first occasion. Mgr Marchand notes how here was a priest who had studied at Rome, was already a brilliant lecturer, who had recently been appointed assistant-director of education for the archdioceses of Lyon, coming to meet a paraplegic farmer's daughter who completely captivated him with her talk about the Blessed Virgin and Jesus's plan for a new movement in the Church. He says how this reveals the spiritual quality of Fr Finet. In one way for him to follow Marthe's suggestion was utter madness, yet he had the capacity to recognise in Marthe's invitation the will of God for him. *To be continued ...*

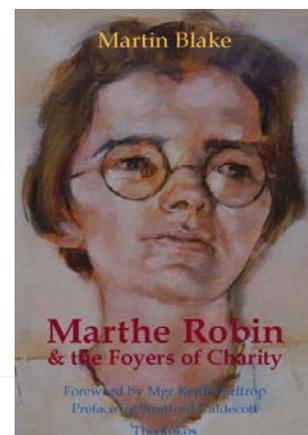
The Foyer de Charité retreat preached last April by Mgr. Keith Barltrop at the Ark of the Covenant community, Coventry, went well with 5 members of the Foyer communities from Tressaint, Courset, and Nice in France helping out. There were about 12 retreatants, and all were very appreciative of the whole experience, enjoying in particular the cooking by a chef from Tressaint. A video on Marthe and the Foyers was shown at the end, and a lot of interest was expressed in the Foyers. So overall, a very successful retreat!

Marthe Robin and the Foyers of Charity Book still available!

Martin's book, *Marthe Robin and the Foyers of Charity* is still available for order. It includes details of the early life and mission of Marthe Robin, and how she gradually became paralysed and was confined to bed. The book also has details of how she received the stigmata in 1930 and began to live Christ's passion every week, as well as details about her meeting with Fr Georges Finet and how they founded the First Foyer in 1936.

To order a copy of *Marthe Robin and the Foyers of Charity* please visit: www.theotokos.org.uk/pages/books/marthebook/marthebook.html or your local bookseller.

It costs £7.95 / \$11.95 / 8.95 euros, (approx. £10 incl. p & p if ordered on-line) ISBN 9780955074622



It would also make an excellent Christmas present for someone special!

With prayers and every best wish, Martin and Donal

p.s. For more details about the Foyers please visit:

www.foyers.org.uk