



## An Introduction to St. Bede's Pastoral Centre, York

St Bede's Pastoral Centre is a place of warm welcome and belonging for all - serving the city of York and beyond.

Offering a wide range of courses and retreats – available at the Centre or online – designed to support spiritual development and greater wholeness and fullness of life. Current range of activities for 2023 includes:

- ❖ Personal and Spiritual Development (PSD) Course
- ❖ Training in Spiritual Conversation Skills
- ❖ Guided Prayer
- ❖ Guided Retreats
- ❖ Themed Talks, Workshops & Reflection Days
- ❖ Wellbeing Sessions & Workshops
- ❖ Social Gatherings
- ❖ Drop-In Groups

During the lockdowns, the team developed extensive experience and expertise in online working. This has had the benefit of enabling much wider participation in the Centre programme.

After a process of discernment, the St Bede's team decided to pause offering Spiritual Accompaniment training at the present time to allow room for further development to re-vision the training to better serve current and future needs. The aim will be to resume this in the near future.

The Centre team comprises the Director, Centre Manager, two job share receptionist/Administrative Assistants and two members of staff who cover the evening/weekend reception staff. In addition to the Director, the programme team consists of a Lead Trainer and Spirituality Worker who assist in the delivery of the Centre's courses and training. The team are supplemented by guest speakers and tutors from a range of backgrounds and experiences.

### History



St. Bede's Pastoral Centre was established in the late 1980s by a small community of Benedictines from Ampleforth Abbey, who ran the Centre until the mid '90s. Since then the community of the Congregation of Jesus (CJ Community) has been responsible for the Centre, supported and encouraged by the Friends of St Bede's.

Over the years the Centre has grown and evolved, as has the focus of its work. In the early years, the Benedictines created the garden, founded a Justice & Peace Group, developed a number of ecumenical initiatives and established a culture of welcome and hospitality. Since then, key figures have overseen a number of new chapters in the life of the Centre—Sr. Mary Ann Flood cj, Sr Patricia Lane IBVM, Fr. Bill

Broderick sj and Sr. Cecilia Goodman cj. Following the death of Sr Cecilia, the Centre appointed its first lay Director, Julia MacDonald, in September 2017.

Over the last five years the Centre has continued to foster a culture of warm welcome, community, hospitality and ecumenical collaboration, alongside establishing itself as a recognised regional centre for spiritual formation and training in the Ignatian spiritual tradition. It has continued to expand its vision to continue to be responsive to the pressing needs of our time.



Over the years the Centre has developed a strong network of contacts, which has also enabled the development of regular events, seminars and workshops on a broad range of themes related to personal and spiritual development. Alongside its own programme, the Centre also hosts individuals and groups who are working in areas harmonious with the vision and objectives of the Centre.

### **The Spirituality of St Ignatius & Mary Ward**

Ignatian spirituality is rooted in finding and responding to the dynamic presence of the Divine in all things. A spirituality which helps us to discern how to align most deeply with the Source of life and find freedom to fully express our Truest Self in the world.

Ignatian spirituality weaves together the practice of contemplation and engaged action in the world.

Here at St Bede's we always seek to explore how Ignatian Spirituality, rooted in the wisdom of the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius, can be creatively lived and shared in response to the particular and pressing needs of our times – just as Mary Ward did in hers. We have in the last two years begun to build a dedicated Spirituality Team to grow and foster this work further.

### **Our Ethos & Vision**

St Bede's Pastoral Centre seeks to be a place of warm welcome and belonging.

In all we do, our desire is to offer opportunities to explore, expand and deepen relationships with our own selves, with others, with the Earth and with the great Mystery we name God – in order to awaken and foster a dynamic connection to the Source of all life and potential.

Honouring the uniqueness of each person and rooted in the Christian Ignatian & Wisdom traditions, we seek to meet, nurture and accompany all those we welcome wherever they are on their journey into greater wholeness and fullness of life.

Our deepest hope is for each person to receive the gift of freedom...

... to flourish

... to joyfully give and receive love in the world

... to embody the generous, creative, generative energy of the one Spirit at the heart of all life.

The Centre is part of the wider CJ Community complex on Blossom Street which comprises the Bar Convent, the CJ Community accommodation and St. Joseph's where there is care and support for older CJ members. The Bar Convent itself also offers hospitality and welcome to the wider community through events and services that include a guesthouse, café, conference facilities and historical exhibition.

St Bede's Pastoral Centre comprises an office/reception area, a selection of conference and meeting rooms, a coffee lounge, two kitchens, a chapel and courtyard garden. Although located at the heart of a bustling city it provides a place of calm and safe haven to those who seek it. Its facilities have been refurbished and enhanced in recent years and there are current plans to improve the basement area to provide better facilities for creative activities and additional counselling space in the summer of 2023.