

Dear Member,

Welcome to this latest edition of the Spirituality and Psychiatry Newsletter, No. 22, December 2006. In this issue we have a wide range of contributions. There are individual papers submitted by Professor Mohamed Salem (The spiritual support group), Joshua David (Healing and the healing relationship) and Dr. John Morgan et al. (Spirituality and clinical care in eating disorders). This last paper is published with a response by Professor Andrew Sims.

Dr. Sarah Egger, our Chair, reports on the lively contribution made by the SIG to the Annual Meeting of the College in Glasgow, 10th – 13th July. Once again, the meditation workshop (taken, as before, by Dr. Egger and Dr. Larry Culliford) was over-subscribed. The SIG's main session was entitled: 'United in Spirit – the place of spiritual enquiry in the clinical assessment', the speakers being Dr Larry Culliford, Revd Rob Merchant and Margaret McCathie. See Dr. Egger's report for more details.

Also in this Newsletter you will find the texts of three talks given at the SIG one-day programme on 'Sanity, Sex and the Sacred: Exploring Intersecting Realms' on November 24th. Our warm thanks go to Revd. Chris Mackenna, Revd. Dr. Thaddeus Birchard and Cherrie Coghlan for leading us, with humour, sensitivity and depth, into this challenging area of discourse.

Further, we are publishing in full in this edition an important recent report by the Mental Health Foundation on 'The impact of Spirituality on Mental Health'. The Mental Health Foundation has been proactive in the field of spirituality and this latest report, which is thoughtful and searching, affirms the value of 'positive' spirituality for mental health, while warning against the negative effects of spirituality associated with guilt, shame or powerlessness

Our next programme for SIG members is on March 9th at the College, on 'Suffering – what is the point of it all?' Further details can be found in this Newsletter. We do believe that this question, which strikes every thinking person at some time or another, and not least those experiencing breakdown, is a must for psychiatrists, and we anticipate a full house; so please book early on the application form with the next News and Notes to ensure a place.

As always, I would like to encourage you to let me have any articles you have written that you would like to see published on our Website, as Word or rtf files to sduncan@rcpsych.ac.uk and headed 'for the attention of Dr. Andrew Powell'.

With best wishes,
Andrew Powell (editor)