

Soul Marks



Growing Shoots.

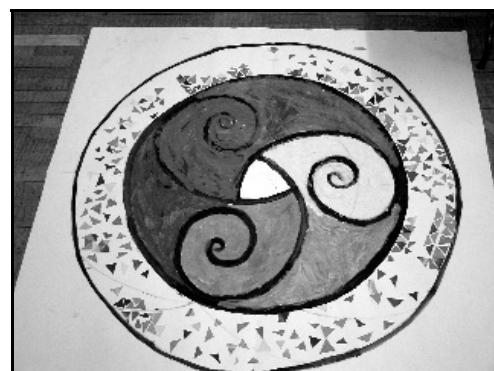
Summer is heading off and we are approaching a new term here at Soul Marks. Carol went off in the red van to the very north of Scotland for a much-needed holiday after May/June saw her travelling to Iona, Durham, Cardiff and Glasgow more times than she can remember!

New shoots were growing in the spring: Blair Estate, in Ayrshire was the setting in May for an Art and Prayer workshop, 'Walking Together', in May and we have already set a date to repeat the experience in December for Advent.

The six-month project at Toryglen Parish Church of transforming their church space through the church seasons came to an end at Pentecost with a regular group of all ages excited and committed to continuing the work into the coming year.

In May a challenging and rewarding week on Iona saw Carol working with the Deaf Ecumenical Group UK exploring art in prayer and worship through image, touch and landscape. Cyril Axelrod, the world's only deaf blind priest, was part of the group and his presence stimulated Carol's work in using the senses in new ways. He has written about his experience of the week for us.

In June Carol met and was welcomed by the congregation of Cranhill Parish Church, Glasgow, the third parish to work in partnership with the Priority Area Commission of the Church of Scotland. The minister, Muriel Pearson, commented the next day that folk had been really enthused as Carol worked with three of the boys from the church to paint a symbol of the Trinity as a colour wheel during the sermon. The rest of the congregation were invited to add paper triangles of colour to represent their prayers for themselves and the world. The very colourful image is now hanging in the entrance to the community centre below the church where anyone is invited to add their own colour and prayer. Carol begins to work regularly at Cranhill in the Autumn through to next Easter.



Detail from the Trinity painting:
Cranhill Parish Church

We are very pleased to have Anne Wilson joining us as a sessional worker. Anne took up the ongoing work transforming a Quiet Space with the children of Forthview Primary School. Anne studied at Edinburgh College of Art with Carol, and in Macon, France. She has taught in Community Education and at Leith School of Art, and along with her husband and three children is a member of St. James', Leith where she contributes particularly to the worship and visual life of the church. We look forward to continuing to work with Anne.

Another addition to our staff is Celia Stone, who will be working 8 hours each week, to give much-needed help with administration. But, as we welcome Celia, we are so grateful to Verena Walford who has faithfully sat amongst the disorder of the artist's desk each week since September setting up and organising computer systems to enable Soul Marks to run more smoothly. Many thanks from us all Verena.

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Introducing Celia

I first met Carol when we were both on the planning team for the Retreat with Jean Vanier in Dundee in 1997. I remember being handed a piece of orange cloth and asked to spend some time weaving it into a tapestry! At that time I was working as the Office Manager for L'Arche in Edinburgh. My connection with Faith & Light and then L'Arche came through my sister Sally, who had Downs Syndrome. She and I had lived together since our parents died in the early 1960s. I was a teacher before I took early retirement in 1989 when, through my connections with Faith & Light, I was invited to set up



and lead a small community home for adults with learning disabilities, in a former convent in Lochgelly, Fife. In 1995 I was asked to run the L'Arche office in Edinburgh. I was there until Nov. 2000 by which time Sally's health was beginning to fail and I was needed more at home to care for her. When she died in Nov. 2003, (at the age of 64!), it left a massive hole in my life and for the next 2 years I did very little. The request for me to take on the Soul Marks admin has given me a fillip and I will do my best to keep things working, i Macs permitting!!
Celia



Spiritual Art

One week of spending time on an isle called Iona gave me an uniquely astounding experience when Carol Marples led an inspiring lecture on Spiritual Art to a small group of deaf priests from different faiths.

Being a deaf blind priest, I faced the great challenge of discovering a way of touching and feeling God in the form of spiritual art. Carol demonstrated to me the way of painting or moulding an object as a reflection on my personal relationship with God through the art.

When Carol explained from the slides on the screen how the different shapes of the sand and water symbolised our changing lives and spirituality, she tried hard to think of a different way for me because I could not see or hear anything. In the new discovery, she presented me with a plastic box with the sand and water inside. Each participant then changed the shape of the sand and water to describe for me each picture.

It was at that exact moment that God touched my soul as I began to understand perfectly what Carol had explained to the deaf group.

I painted a large picture with different watercolours by using my index finger. The colours were spread all over all the white paper; it represented an explosion of my inner soul in God's presence. In this way I saw how God painted my soul!

Fr. Cyril

For those interested to learn more about Fr. Cyril's life, his book

AND THE JOURNEY BEGINS by Cyril Axelrod was published in paperback May 2005 by Forest Books (www.forestbooks.com)

DIARY

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| 12-15/09/06 | Welsh Ecumenical Conference . |
| 03/10/06 | DeafBlind Scotland week |
| ?/10/06 | Cranhill Harvest planning eve. |
| 28/10/06 | Cranhill Harvest Workshop |
| 29/10/06 | Cranhill Harvest Service |
| ?/10/06 | Harvest planning and workshop Ruchazie Parish church, Glasgow |
| 26/11/06 | The Sick Children's Hospital Memorial Service. Edinburgh |
| 02/12/06 | Art and Prayer Day. Leith School of Art – Advent |
| 04/12/06 | Art and Prayer Day. Lochiehead – Advent |
| /12/06 | Cranhill Advent Planning evening |
| 09/12/06 | Cranhill Advent Workshop day |
| 10/12/06 | Cranhill Advent Church Service |
| 11/12/06 | Art & Prayer Day – Blair House |
| ?/12/06 | Advent planning and workshop Ruchazie Parish church, Glasgow |
| | Lent planning and workshop Cranhill and Ruchazie Parish churches, Glasgow |
| 1-4/03/07 | Jean Vanier Retreat, Gillis Centre Edinburgh |
| 10/03/07 | Lent Art and Prayer. Leith school of Art Easter planning and workshop Cranhill and Ruchazie Parish churches, Glasgow |

NB ? = awaiting confirmation of date