

The Promise of Life

LIFE IS A MIGHTY GIFT. It is the Gift of GOD to you. As you share in its Mystery of Life in the Universe, from flower to star, so you may learn much from Nature and the Seasons. You may learn that there are in every Soul, in every age of its growth, in every cycle of its processional, the four Seasons; [indeed] in every life there are the four Seasons – the Winter, the Spring, the Summer and the Autumn ... We cannot grow without activity. But the activity manifest in the growth of the body is within; and it is invisible. We make manifest in the objective realm, the realm of outer action; but the outer action is dependent upon the inner action. Fulness of manifestation is the resultant of invisible processes.

Thus is it within our Being. It is a great Gift, the Gift of the sublime Mystery hidden in our FATHER-MOTHER, of Life; of a Life that is so full of promise, that it can grow through great Ages, attain Divinity, become Angelic, Son of the Gods, and a Son of GOD.

You may distinguish the seasons in your own life. In your own Spiritual Realm, the Winter is the time of your in-gathering. You are then making good use of the lessons you have learned, the truths you have received, the Wine of GOD of which you have drunk, and the bread, or Living Substance, you have partaken of. It is the time of transmutory processes when you are building up and preparing for manifestation.

The promise of Life in Winter is great; try to realise this Divine fact ... And it is full of hope, Divine hope, for all Souls ... Today the motion of Spring is heard by the Seer and the Prophet. And you may hear the voice of Spring calling you, like the voice of a visitant from the Ætherial Realms and Angelic Heavens to



Spiritual Reflections

The Order of the Cross

**February
March
2019**

awaken you from all spiritual sleep, and to arise and come forth to witness the coming of your King expressed in the wealth of His behests through tree and flower. Walking through the avenues of trees and bushes you may hear the voices, even if your hearing inwardly be faint: you may hear the motion of the ministrants as they serve the Divine Purpose in preparing for the glorious manifestation of the Sacred Mystery of Life through the trees and the plants, in foliage, bloom and fruit.

Herald X, pp70-76

Thoughts on the Teachings John Pignéguy

OF ALL THE FOUR seasons in their year-round progression, Spring is surely the most magical. Following on from Winter, when we may think that nothing much is happening and the days can seem long (especially with the dark evenings), just the thought of Spring can lift the spirits. Our founder alludes to this point-of-view in the quotation: “The promise of Life in Winter is great; “and that is no vain promise when we think about it, because it clearly indicates that this is a time of preparation for what is to come. The trees and plants all seem to be inactive to the human eye, and the flowers seem mostly to have completely vanished. All of which outer signs are completely misleading if taken at face value, for Nature’s secret is one that does not show itself to us on the outer. The cycle of life is a journey, and one that relates directly to the spiritual life and journey of each one of us.

Every journey requires preparation if any sort of successful outcome is to be achieved, and preparation itself always starts on the inner, with time being given to all the various aspects of what is being considered. In the natural world, all the energies are being focussed on what is to come. Similarly, the same process is undertaken in relation to our spiritual activities.

In the quotation, our founder eloquently alludes to this – “In your own Spiritual Realm, the Winter is the time of your in-gathering ... when you are building up and preparing for manifestation ...” Here the link with the preparations in the natural world for the new life that is about to burst forth is made crystal-clear. We may well feel in all of this that our own participation and contribution are woefully inadequate but, as always, our founder is full of understanding “... you may hear the voice of Spring calling you ... to awaken you from all spiritual sleep ... even if your hearing inwardly be faint.”

Thus, with these encouraging words to inspire and guide us, may we all quietly seek (each in our own way) to “serve the Divine Purpose.”

The Order

Bridget Wilhelmina Lytton-Minor

IN THE EARLY DAYS of the fellowship, 1903 our founder was guided to name the brotherhood 'The Order of the Cross'. Two very devoted Members resigned because they objected to the word 'Cross'. The Teachings have brought the deep interpretation, meanings and aspects to our attention, and also the News Letter. So we are aware of the importance of the cross in our lives.

However, we often refer to 'The Order' and it represents much more - it stands for 'The Order of the Cross'. The Order title fascinates me because order in our life and orderliness is a measure of how well the Cross is radiating its poise and balance and how well we feel.

The word Order has many meanings. There are 52 variations found in Chambers Dictionary. It is special to discover its place in the fellowship, and very special to belong to the 'Order'. It is beautiful to share with you the extract below which comes from *365 Blessings by Pierre Pradervand*.

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The Invisible Divine Order Behind Everything

In her book *The Healing Secrets of the Ages*, Catherine Ponder writes. "bless the world around you unselfishly with the divine order. As you do so, you release the power of order into the atmosphere to do its perfect work. Look for, expect and give thanks for divine order, often. By doing so, you release one of your most important mind powers to work for you and through you to bless yourself and mankind." So today our blessing will be for the invisible divine order behind everything, despite the aggressive material claims of the disharmony on the human plane.

I bless the amazing divine order in nature, from the tiniest molecule to the rolling of the galaxies in our stupendous universe. I bless the divine order in my life and that of my neighbor, even when to the human sense of things this order is all but apparent.

I bless the exquisite, stunning order that runs the over 37 trillion cells that make up my body and the hundreds of millions of chemical reactions occurring every second.

I bless the divine order in the universe that is constantly arranging innumerable possibilities for me and all to progress in life if only we will listen to its quiet whispers.

I bless the same divine order which forms the foundation of my spiritual GPS - God Positioning System - that gently corrects me when I stray out of ignorance and willfulness.

And finally, I bless the divine order that is leading the whole of humanity through the many upheavals present and probably to come to the win-win paradigm, which will finally give birth to that world which works for all, which is our divine destiny.

Southern, South Eastern and Western Area Gathering Charney Manor, October 2018 Nicky Derby

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MEMBERS from the West country, the South coast, the South East, the Midlands and Scotland came together for a wonderful time of sharing at Charney Manor, a beautiful 13th Century Quaker retreat set in the Oxfordshire Countryside. We were blessed with glorious weather.

Nicky Derby welcomed us all, reminding us of the wonderful theme, *The Highway to Zion*.

That evening Margaret Jack led us in a beautiful and joyful Opening Service

On Saturday morning we came together in the upstairs Sanctuary for a wonderful Retreat led by Sarah Palmer.

Following lunch in the lovely old dining room a number of people went for a walk in the beautiful sunshine while others talked in the gardens.

After a little refreshment we turned to the Studies reading from *Isaiah*, *The City of the Sun* and *The Voice of Adonai* led by Rose Heathcote, Richard Palmer and Margery Van Zyl.

After supper we gathered in the Solar, a beautiful ancient beamed room where Andrew Wilson gave an inspirational talk on *The Divine in Nature*.

On Sunday Jackie Baillie led a beautiful Service.

This was followed by dance on the lawn led by Sara Wilson.

Following lunch a number of people walked to the 11th Century Fort. After tea we continued with the Studies.

An evening of sharing was led by Stephen Jack with music, poems, stories and even a live Saxophone.

On Monday morning our final time before the Altar Pamela Jenkins led us in a powerful Valedictory Service.

A thank you to everyone who contributed to a lovely Gathering.

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New Life
John Pignéguy

*Spring, the sweet spring, is the year's pleasant king;
Then blossoms each thing,*

Thomas Nashe 1567-1601

L'IFE' IS A TOPIC of everlasting fascination. It ranges from the quietly personal through to the majesty of Nature and beyond. The anticipation of Spring brings with it a sense of uplift and a smile, and this annual return, with its joyful freshness, is something that is celebrated by everybody. The possibilities of this new life appear to be almost endless and seem to transpose effortlessly into all aspects of existence. This is scarcely surprising, given all the links that there are between ourselves and that which we experience all around us. Seeing ourselves as very much part of the cycle of renewal that we witness each year is

something that reaches back into antiquity, and so it should not surprise us that the notion of re-birth, of a sense of continuity, should be such a central part in the minds of philosophers and searching souls down the ages. Many artists, writers and musicians have also felt this certainty about the cycle of life and its spiritual aspects in the life of the individual – the creative mind is often the most receptive to such thought-processes and the seeking-out of these inner truths.

Established religions may find these concepts to be troubling – they challenge the power and authority that they perceive to belong to them alone. And while there has never been a ‘Papal Encyclical’ against the notion of reincarnation, reincarnation concepts pervaded early Christianity. But at the Council of Jerusalem in AD 553, the Christian Emperor Justinian formally rejected reincarnation, and his Council of Constantinople stated:

Whosoever shall support the mythical doctrine of the pre-existence of the soul and the consequent wonderful opinion of its return, let him be anathema.

In many other respects, the journey of the soul through many lives is increasingly being seen as the norm, with some fascinating thoughts being expressed on this vital subject. For instance, in a remarkable letter from the artist and poet William Blake (1757-1827) to his great friend, the sculptor John Flaxman, Blake wrote as follows:

In my brain are studies and chambers filled with books and pictures of old, which I wrote and painted in ages of eternity before my mortal life; and those works are the delight and study of archangels You, O dear Flaxman, are a sublime archangel, my friend and companion from eternity ...

(How many passers-by, walking down London’s South Molton Street, in the fashionable shopping area of Bond Street, notice on the right Blake’s home at No.17 where he lived and worked all his life?)

Such visionary thoughts and experiences are increasingly being seen as aspects of the reality of the spiritual journey of each

individual soul, and it is heartening to think that this on-going process brings with it a greater realisation, a greater understanding of the 'continuity of life' that is such an integral part of each and every one of us.

Let us leave the last word to the composer Gustav Mahler who, in 1895, had this to say:

We all return; it is this certainty that gives meaning to life, and it does not make the slightest difference whether or not in a later incarnation we remember the former life. What counts is not the individual and his comfort, but the great aspiration to the perfect and the pure which goes on in each incarnation.

With acknowledgement of extracts from *Reincarnation in World Thought* (Joseph Head and S.L. Cranston) and *The Elements of Reincarnation* (A.T. Mann).

Glenthorne Open Gathering 23rd-26th November 2018

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Evening Meditation Friday 23rd, Jacqueline Baillie

THE THEME for the evening Meditation on Friday was *The Lost Coin*.

The first reading was taken from *The Master* where our founder spoke about the Angelic Kingdom being a “glorious reality”.

Souls who have entered upon the Life of the Kingdom, are in these days receiving much communication from it. Although the message of true Christianity was betrayed, Souls who followed the life of the Kingdom, were always seeking for the ‘Pearl of great price’ or ‘a valuable coin’.

The parable and the notes for The Logia entitled *The woman who found the lost coin* were shared and then the Meditation continued with some extracts from an unfoldment with the same title from *Great Recoveries*.

The Human Soul has inherently within it the Kingdom of the Heavens ... Where there is a Divine consciousness within the Soul, there is a oneness, perfect oneness with HIM. HE is thus potentially present in everyone, but very specially, because of the attainment of so much of this consciousness is HE present unto the whole of the House of Israel.

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The parable was given “to the Children of the Kingdom who had once known the Inheritance of the Kingdom of GOD.” Although they were old Souls the memory of the presence of GOD had almost been lost to them. Thus the finding of the ‘lost coin’ represents a Soul who had been in Christhood, returning again to that state.

In the final part of the unfoldment the question is asked “What seek ye?” Is it Salvation, and what is Salvation?

It is the re-discovery of HIS Kingdom within us, HIS own likeness within us, the motion of HIS Holy One within us, the Glory of HIS Presence around us, the Cloud of HIS Radiance overshadowing us.

Morning Meditation **Saturday 24th, Lisa Mary Mountain**

MY MEDITATION on the Saturday morning was chosen specially for anyone new to the Teachings and that was a good thing, because the senior Quaker representative resident that weekend attended it. The passage covered Love, Light and Life which, among the attributes, are personified as John, James, and Peter (cf *Life's Mysteries Unveiled*, pp71-75). In the Teachings these form a divine trinity.

Love is the magnetic pole of the Being, corresponding in the individual to the true magnetic pole of the earth, by which the Soul is influenced, attracted, held and impelled in its motions. Love is the first principle that begets Love and the life of Love begets Light – the Great Understanding that leads the Soul to the heights of Divine manifestation in the Life of Divine Christhood.

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I then spoke of the Cross of the Elohim with its sevenfold rays and the three steps that echo the three degrees of Christhood leading to the marvellous degrees of comprehension in a life in which ultimately Adonai can be manifested. The meditation closed with a reading aloud of the words of Hymn No 58 with words by Vera Rose Donovan: *O Cross of GOD Within Us* the words of which, having long unpunctuated lines among them, come forth so much more powerfully when read rather than sung.

Although there was ample free time, the spiritual programme was rich, as there was a study and two sharings over the weekend. The study was on *The Stilling of the Storm* with passages from *The Logia*, pp126-9 and *On the Sea of Galilee* in *The Master* pp239-271. When stormy conditions send us into a state of disconnectedness from the Heavens the Christ in us slumbers for a while and we lose our ability to see the bigger picture.

The first of the sharings was of *The Infinite and the Finite* from *Divine Renaissance II* – an apparently simple passage, with no difficult theological terminology, yet very profound and it led to a lot of shared insights.

The second sharing was *The Significance of the Touch of GOD* from *Herald XXXIV* pp42-56. Although nearly two hours were allocated to these two sharings, people seemed sad to break off for supper after both of them. Both the latter unveilings will be in the new book of readings specifically assembled for those new to the Teachings, but they had plenty of depth in them for Members too.

Worship Service **Sunday 25th, Michael Horsley**

THE WEATHER was perfect as we gathered at the Glenthorne Quaker Centre, just ten minutes' walk from the centre of Grasmere. Situated in beautiful grounds looking up to the Lakeland hills, one could not imagine a more beautiful centre for a weekend of fellowship. The house is well planned and comfortable, with excellent accommodation facilities, good vegan food, and wonderfully helpful staff. Our organisers had chosen very well, providing us with an enticing programme of services, studies and recreation. There were plenty of opportunities in our free time to explore the local walks and wildlife, including the local red squirrels.

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My Sunday morning service began with readings from Noah in *The Ark upon the Great Deep* from *Life's Mysteries Unveiled* pages 415-419. In the story our founder explains the significance of the building of the Ark that represents the Sanctuary of the Soul within which the Divine Principle is embodied in all Being and is therefore present within the constitution of Man. For Noah's Ark is the story of the spiritual evolution of Man from lowly childhood into high degrees of consciousness as he travels across the Great Deep and ultimately realises the Great Mystery of Life on the Divine Heights when his Ark comes to rest on Mount Ararat or the summit of that estate known as a Son of GOD. I followed this in the second part of the service with some of the latter sections from *Divine Renaissance II* on *The Sea of Divine Ætheria* on page 36, *Man's attributes in their Dual Ministries* on page 39, and *The Divine Revealed Through Perfect Art and Music* on page 40. Our founder tells us above all to "know thyself" – a phrase so often

repeated by the great philosophers and which is surely demanded of each of us and every day as we undertake this great journey. The service ended with Hymn 136: “Lord of beauty, Thine the splendour shewn in earth and sky and sea”. How could we not join in such song among the lovely surroundings of that Lakeland countryside without being aware of His beauty on this earth of ours!

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Friends gathered at Glenthorne
Photos by Michael Horsley

A Word Picture from Swanage

2 November 2018

Elizabeth Reay

MY BEDROOM FACES THE SEA.

The Sun catches the large rock to the left, locally known as “OLD HARRY”. This rock is formed of Chalk and Limestone, and echoes the promontory much further across on the Isle of Wight, which shows the same white cliff.

A delicate tree to the left sparkles gold in the afternoon sunlight.

An hour later there is a rosy glow on the horizon and a late beam of sunlight lights up a little white boat on the sea.

The sea changes to a beautiful pale azure near the shore shading to a deeper blue as it moves across to the Isle of Wight.

I am awestruck by this ‘unexpected’ beauty and now the white cliff on Wight is gleaming a fiery red as the Sun deepens.

Bushes and small trees below are accentuated as they in their dark green are silhouetted against the pale azure water. | |

A single seagull, dark against the rosy sky flies across.

The Isle of Wight looks magical in this light, like a long amethyst stone interrupting the space between the azure sea and the rosy sky.

As the light fades little boats begin to darkly appear near to the island.

Light painted this view, I am sure people would say that my colours were imagined, exaggerated, but as I have forgotten my camera, you must simply take my word for it!

After sunset the sea turns light grey and the rock to my left looks darker and the white base appears like a petticoat covered with dark grey foliage. Now the white rock of Wight stands out forcibly against the ever-greying darkening sea.

The sky around Wight is now a very pale grey-blue with the slightest vestiges of rose clinging to the upper regions of the atmosphere.

The whole scene is very beautiful but with different tones. What a gift for my first afternoon in Swanage.

Spiritual Linking **Christopher Nye**

THE READING FOR FEBRUARY IS

“The Theosophia or the Divine Love and Wisdom “
Life’s Mysteries Unveiled pages 423-436
It will take place on Sunday 17th

“The Wisdom of God is the accompaniment of the Love of
God in manifestation.”

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THE STUDY FOR MARCH IS

“The Mystery of Lent “
Herald 17 pages 79-83
It will take place on Sunday 17th

*“And the Soul’s Fasting, is the sacrificial giving of itself in most blessed
Service for the FATHER-MOTHER”*

The two Readings are 08h00 UTC (=GMT) that is 8am GMT in the UK, 4pm in Western Australia, 7pm in Eastern Australia and 9pm in New Zealand; the second is **16h00 UTC (=GMT)** that is 4pm in the UK, 8am PST, 11am EST in North America.

Communal Sharing: Services and Studies by Phone

THE COMMUNAL SHARING CIRCLE is international and open to all. All you need to join us is a phone! Three regional calls are scheduled to serve our global community:

- I: North America, Australia and New Zealand – 00:00 UTC
- II: Europe, Australia and New Zealand – 08:00 UTC
- III: North America and Europe – 16:00 UTC

Local times and dial-in numbers are listed on pages 14 and 15.

We welcome you to participate as a reader or a listener. Readings taken from the books are referenced on the schedule below; others require service documents, which may be requested by contacting the Communal Sharing Coordinator (page 14).

Feel free to join us as frequently or infrequently as you like. When possible, please dial in a few minutes before the hour.

FELLOWSHIP CALLS on 2nd Saturdays – February 9, March 9, April 13 – help us get to know each other better and consider ways to improve our Sunday calls. Calls are scheduled year-round at 8 am Pacific time, 11 am Eastern, 4 pm for friends in the UK.

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SCHEDULE

FEBRUARY

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|----|----------|--|
| 3 | I & III | Worship Service – Ministrant: Patrick Barnes <i>The Great Silence</i> [document] |
| 10 | III | Ongoing Study taken from <i>Divine Renaissance II</i> Ministrant: Esther Gowan |
| 17 | II & III | Spiritual Linking – Ministrant: Christopher Nye <i>LMU</i> , p. 423 – <i>Theosophia or Divine Love & Wisdom</i> |
| 24 | III | Communal Sharing – Ministrant: Sarah Palmer <i>Ancient Israel</i> [document] |

MARCH

- 3 I & III Worship Service – Ministrant: Jean Laverack
The Prophecy of Joel [document]
- 10 III Ongoing Study taken from *Divine Renaissance II*
Ministrant: Michael Arcese
- 17 II & III Spiritual Linking – Ministrant: Christopher Nye
Herald 17, p. 79-83 – *The Mystery of Lent*
- 24 III Communal Sharing – Ministrant: Lindajean Stewart
Herald 19, p.43-58 – *The Mystery of the Cross*

APRIL

- 7 I & III Worship Service – Ministrant: Patricia Sherwood
The Glory of Corpus Christi [document]
- 14 III Ongoing Study taken from *Divine Renaissance II*
Ministrant: Jan Holmes
- 21 II & III Spiritual Linking – Ministrant: Christopher Nye
Herald 16, p.140-148 – *The Day of the Cross*
- 28 III Communal Sharing – Ministrant: Elsie Danielsson
Life Immortal [document]

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FOR MORE INFORMATION and to receive service documents by mail or email, please contact the Communal Sharing Coordinator:
Esther Gowan • esthergowan@earthlink.net • (1) 805-542-9133

LOCAL TIMES – Communal Sharing calls are scheduled year-round on Universal Time (UTC = GMT). To find your local call-in time, refer to schedule A or B according to whether your area is currently observing Standard or Daylight Saving Time. We will move from schedule B to A on March 10 in North America; on March 31 in Europe; and on April 7 in Australia and New Zealand.

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|---|--|
| <p>A – Daylight Saving Time in Northern Hemisphere; Standard Time in Southern Hemisphere</p> <p>I A: 00:00 UTC 5 pm PDT (Sat. eve.) 8 pm EDT (Sat. eve.) 8 am AWST 10 am AEST 12 pm NZST</p> <p>II A: 08:00 UTC 9 am BST (U.K.) 4 pm AWST 6 pm AEST 8 pm NZST (1 am PDT) (USA)</p> <p>III A: 16:00 UTC 9 am PDT 12 pm EDT 5 pm BST (U.K.) (12 am next day AWST) (4 am next day NZST)</p> | <p>B – Standard Time in Northern Hemisphere; Daylight Saving Time in Southern Hemisphere;</p> <p>I B: 00:00 UTC 4 pm PST (Sat. eve.) 7 pm EST (Sat. eve.) 8 am AWST 11 am AEDT 1 pm NZDT</p> <p>II B: 08:00 UTC 8 am GMT (U.K.) 4 pm AWST 7 pm AEDT 9 pm NZDT (12 am PST) (USA)</p> <p>III B: 16:00 UTC 8 am PST 11 am EST 4 pm GMT (U.K.) (12 am next day AWST) (5 am next day NZDT)</p> |
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| INTERNATIONAL PHONE NUMBERS FOR COMMUNAL SHARING CALLS | |
|---|-------------------|
| COUNTRY | PHONE NUMBER |
| Australia | (0) 2 8355 1039 |
| Canada | (1) 647-497-9379 |
| France | (0) 1 70 95 05 85 |
| Ireland | (0) 19 030 050 |
| New Zealand | (0) 9 925 0481 |
| Sweden | (0) 853 527 817 |
| United Kingdom | (0) 330 221 0099 |
| United States | (1) 646-749-3117 |
| ACCESS CODE: 506-112-581 # # (same for all areas) | |

GATHERINGS AND EVENTS

Dance Week, "Seashells", Swanage
Thurs 11th – Thurs 18th April
Easter Gathering, Sarum College, Salisbury
Thurs 18th – Sun 21st April
Dance and Families Gathering,
The Ammerdown Centre, Somerset
Tues 30th July - Mon 5th Aug
S, SE and W Areas Gathering, Charney Manor, Oxfordshire
Fri 4th - Tues 8th Oct
Australia/New Zealand Gathering,
Ferguson Valley, South-West Australia
Mon 14th - Sun 20th Oct
Glenthorne Open Gathering, Grasmere, Cumbria
Thurs 28th Nov - Mon 2nd Dec

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If you are interested in joining us at any of the above gatherings please get in touch with us. Our contact details can be found on page 17.

Literature Secretaries

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CHANGES OF ADDRESS

If you have changed your address or any of your contact details, please notify Ian Heathcote at:

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This will ensure that Spiritual Reflections is sent to your new address and that all your contact details are updated on our database.

If anyone wishes to reproduce a portion of Spiritual Reflections, permission should be sought from the Editor in advance, at the above address, or:

Email: editor@orderofthecross.org

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The Order of the Cross Website

www.orderofthecross.org

Spiritual Reflections Publication Timetable

| Issues will be published in the first week of: | The two or three month period the issue will cover |
|---|---|
| February | February March |
| April | April May |
| June | June July August |
| September | September October November |
| December | December January |

**You are reminded
that the next issue of Spiritual Reflections
will be published at the beginning of April
2019**