

# **Celebrating the Gifts of Creation– Seeing with New Eyes**

## **An active guided holiday retreat on Lake Como, Italy**

**11-15<sup>th</sup> September 2023**



**Church of the Ascension, Cadenabbia**



**Mary Nono**

### **Why is the Church Community hosting a retreat?**

Lake Como has always attracted visitors and the Church of the Ascension has welcomed them since the 1890s. Our 2018 retreat was attended by about 25 international guests and a number from our local community. In 2023 we wish to offer this holiday retreat, as a chance to both gather in joy, hope and gratitude for the gifts of creation in these beautiful surroundings, and to reflect on how to protect and honour God's creative work both here and elsewhere.

### **Retreat theme – what can you expect?**

In our time together - in prayer, reflection, liturgy and quiet time but also in groups, over meals, walking or sitting - we will have time to acknowledge the struggle to protect creation here on Lake Como, as well as to hear one another's stories of the land and sea in our homes, where we are planted. We will move around the lake and surrounding hills - on foot, by bus, boat and car - to see and hear about sustainable environmental practices on land and lake. We will experience places and aspects of the traditional rural life and spirituality of Lake Como, and in each place lift up the work that is tending to the care of God's creation. As we share together, we will ponder how to answer God's call to treat our planet and each other in ways that honour this gift for all to share and to be there for all generations to come. And for sure there will be fun and laughter and many opportunities to form new bonds of friendship. This is not a sedentary programme but will involve walking, occasionally on steep and/or uneven paths. This 2023 retreat was conceived and is offered up to honour God and cherish His gifts in this special place by Revd. Margaret Marquardt, our priest during the 2022 season,

### **Retreat leadership**

Mary Elizabeth Nono lives near Manchester, UK and has a Roman Catholic, creative, musical and European (Irish/Belgian/Italian) heritage. After 23 years teaching French and a life-changing experience of serious illness, God called her to 'the more', upholding, leading, inviting beyond boundaries, entrusting her to the life-giving fullness. "I came that you may have life and have it in abundance", encapsulates her personal vocation. As well as offering spiritual direction, Mary has facilitated retreats and spirituality workshops across Europe and the US: from Malta to Manresa (Barcelona), Dublin to Durham and Penmaenmawr to Boston. She is anticipating this life-giving fullness at Lake Como and helping each person find a closer relationship with God. She will be assisted by Revd Robert of the Milan and Cadenabbia Anglican Chaplaincy team, who also teaches English at Pavia University.

### **Accommodation**

Hotel Villa Mirabella is a charming lakeside hotel in a 19<sup>th</sup> century villa set in gardens with a small swimming pool. As it is too small to accommodate everyone, there is also the choice of another nearby more modest 3\* hotel and staying on a B&B basis in the homes of community members. In all cases, we cannot avoid adding a single supplement. If you have local friends or wish to make your own arrangements including transport, a day package will be available.

### What will it cost?

5-day programme, including accommodation (shared room in Villa Mirabella or single room at a more modest local hotel) excursions and meals: €950. Single supplement for Villa Mirabella E260.

For more information or bookings email Jeannie Willan ([jeanniewillan@gmail.com](mailto:jeanniewillan@gmail.com))

### Outline Programme (may change)

**Monday:** arrival, welcome gathering at church with tea. Overview, short reflection/prayer/worship followed by shared meal.

**Tuesday: Land:** Visit a local market followed by a visit to Roveglio, an organic hill farm with restored olive groves, honey and cheese production. Worship, lunch and reflection, group connecting and time to be in nature. Walk (ca. 1 hour) to exhibition of traditional handmade nativity scenes.

**Wednesday: Water:** Meditation in church followed by guest speaker on Lake Como's environmental challenges (water levels, climate change, pollution) and sustainable practices offered to address these. Boat trip to island with early Christian sites for picnic lunch, followed by reflection and discussion. Returning to land, (steep) walk up to Madonna del Soccorso (World Heritage Site and early pilgrimage destination), followed by shared meal at its trattoria.

**Thursday: Sustainable tourism and local life and economy.** Worship in church, followed by visit to Villa Carlotta (botanical garden and art villa, with talk on tourism and climate change), bus to a lakeside town for light lunch. Opportunity to explore, wander round or be still. For keen walkers, taxi after lunch to Val Sanagra for 2-3 hour hike. Taxi for others later to join at an agriturismo with trout farm for shared evening meal.

**Friday:** Closing time together in church and liturgy and lunch

### Travel

The closest airport is Milan Malpensa. The closest railway station is Como San Giovanni. Transport to and from these can be arranged for a charge. A more detailed programme and confirmation of price will be available by mid-October 2022.

### Comments from last retreat:

"I came to the retreat after a particularly busy and stressful couple of weeks. I leave comforted, energized and refreshed in body, mind and spirit, "going out in joy and led forth in peace". It was an experience of total caring."

"Wonderful experience, profound at times and really an eye opener to global Christianity and Anglicanism. Really special and extremely enjoyable. Beautiful balance of the spiritual with holiday."



**Roveglio farm**



**Hotel Villa Mirabella**