



Profile: Alastair Emblem

Alastair Emblem has been involved with the Alton day of Renewal since 2007, when he was invited to give a talk on Healing. He began to attend more regularly, and started leading the praise and worship as well as revamping the publicity and creating the website. He joined the Core Group in 2014 and in early 2018 he took over the role of Core Group Leader from Deacon John Foley.

Alastair first came into contact with Catholic Charismatic Renewal in 1983, with encouragement from his late brother Richard (a regular at ADoRE in the 1980s). Alastair and his wife Jenny started attending the charismatic prayer group in Godalming, which was the continuation of a group formed in 1970 by charismatic pioneers Bob Balkam, Mary Tanner and Lady Bronwen Astor. (Bob and Mary were also involved in the early days of ADoRE).

In 1984 Alastair and Jenny moved to the parish of St Joan of Arc in Farnham and joined a prayer group which had been founded in 1980 by Fr Michael Albon. In 1992 Alastair took on leadership of the group, which then ran the first "Life in the Spirit" seminars in Farnham. Speakers included many leading names in Renewal at the time, including Charles Whitehead, John Vaughan-Neil, Fr Mike Gwinnell, Fr Pat Olivier, Fr Michael Benjamin, Fr Brian O'Sullivan, Francis Holford and Richard Hobbs (from ADoRE). Elise Hobbs helped with the music. One participant who was deeply moved by the Holy Spirit was John Edwards, later to be ordained Deacon and to take on leadership of ADoRE.

Over the following years the St Joan's prayer group went on to run many Life in the Spirit seminars, Alpha Courses, CaFE courses, healing ministry training, Taize evenings, holy hours, and ecumenical services; as well as parish missions in 1996 and 2013. Since 2012 the group has been known as the "Life in the Spirit Prayer Group" and has been running monthly healing or renewal evenings attracting 30-40 attendees. The weekly prayer meeting usually has 14-18 regulars.

Alongside these activities, Alastair is a Eucharistic Minister and Worship Leader and is a member of the Parish Co-ordination Team responsible for Prayer, Adult Formation and Evangelisation. He and Jenny also serve on the Prayer Ministry Teams at Southampton Celebrate Conference, Wintershall's Life of Christ, and Cor et Lumen Christi's Catholic Miracle Rally.

In his working life, Alastair was in marketing management and consultancy with a variety of companies for 24 years; he then retrained and worked as a Financial Adviser for 10 years before moving into the charity sector in 2004, where he has specialised in legacy marketing and fundraising. From 2014 he has worked with Catholic charity Apostleship of the Sea, as well as chairing "Your Catholic Legacy", a Consortium of 27 Catholic charities working together to encourage people to leave gifts in their Wills to Catholic causes. He retired in December 2018 and is now focussing on Church work and the family – including six young grandchildren.