

Julian Fellowship Meeting

Now In Cork!

The Julian Fellowship is an organisation which offers care, friendship, and prayer to christian lesbians through monthly meetings. Our aim firstly, is to help and encourage each other to develop and sustain ourselves bodily, emotionally, mentally and spiritually, within the framework of our sexual orientation and our relationships. It is hoped that this will serve to lessen the isolation and facilitate both personal and social integration. Secondly, the J.F. is committed to work for change within the churches and society so that the barriers of fear and ignorance may be replaced by an increasing degree of understanding and trust.

To me each human being is made up of different parts, namely the social, intellectual, spiritual, sexual and emotional. to deny or stifle any one of these facets of my life is to deny or stifle my being. It is essential that in order to function as a fully integrated human being that I become aware of who I am. When I became aware of my lesbianism and ^{knowing} ~~that~~ ^{that I} also had a spiritual dimension to my life, I then began to look around for other like minded women with whom I could communicate. This was not an easy task. It seemed to me that in the process of coming out one often denies the spiritual aspect of ones life. Maybe this is because of the church's failure to support and affirm Lesbians, and unfortunately like society in general; their readings do condemn.

And so the J.F. was born. It began in England around 1980. The Dublin J.F. started in 1987. (of whom I'm a founder member) and on Sat. Feb. 2nd 1991 Corks Munster J.F. was formed. What exactly is the J.F. and what do we do? It is better to ask and to listen to the answer in case it might appeal to you than to form incorrect notions since The words 'Christian' and 'Lesbian' both , are often met with hostility in the world.

Basically the J.f. is a group of christian women whose sexual orientation is 90% homosexual. We come together in order to support each other and provide substance for ourselves. Many of us tend to feel hidden and isolated within society and the churches, as well among family and friends. In short we feel to be emotionally and spiritually marginalized but paradoxically this gives to our lives a quality of blessing since it facilitates the growth of empathy with others in a wide variety of difficult situations. In learning to have an understanding of ourselves and compassion toward others we come to extend that quality outwards. We have found this to be an on-going process from misery and tears to love and laughter.

The Dublin J.F. began originally as a study group where we sought to nurture and shape our faith from whatever stage of development. This involved wide ranging discussion on human development, biblical material, concepts of spirituality, morality, responsibility and ethics. As time went on it became evident that we needed to bond more closely in order to provide the strong network of friendship and support that we now share in our community's monthly meetings. For example we 'Took time out' to have a day of reflection with a religious sister. At present we are organizing a similar kind of weekend, since that day was celebratory and full of sharing. And we composed and participated in our ^{own} liturgy of healing and thanksgiving. We view this as an expression of our relationship with each other one that struggles for wholeness and integrates body feelings and mind.

During the summer we hope to head for the sea or hills on occasional outings since we don't meet formally at this time. We participate in a range of activities that include going out together for meals watching videos etc.. Also we liaise with other groups such as Reach (christian group for homosexual men) and the Metropolitan Community Church for gay people, also the Gay Christian Fellowship of N.I. and the Conference of Catholic Lesbians, U.S.A. We welcome new members to our fellowship built on qualities of courage hope and faith.. Absolute confidentiality grounded on mutual respect is given and required.. To this end we are all on first name basis only. If your interested in finding out more ... our next meeting is on 2nd of march at 7.30 in the Womensplace 27a MacCurtain St. or contact us Box 1871 Churchtown Dublin 14 Tele; 961843

Margaret