‘Profitable and spedful to use’: Medieval and Early Modern Prayer, A Postgraduate Conference
Friday 19th September 2014, Cardiff University

Generously funded by Cardiff University Graduate College, this one-day conference will address the theme of prayer in the Medieval and Early Modern periods. Given its pervasive nature as an element of Medieval and Early Modern culture, prayer is often overlooked by scholars as a discrete topic of enquiry. Prayer’s very ubiquity in the literature, historical record and material culture of the time has led, perhaps counterintuitively, to a lack of sustained critical attention, at least in some disciplines. In the context of a religiously-literate society, prayer performs many functions beyond its role in worship, with its artistic, rhetorical and performative aspects often used for propagandistic, interrogative or subversive means, among others.

The topic of prayer has of late gained momentum amongst Early Modern scholars, but in Medieval Studies it is only just beginning to emerge as a field of enquiry. This conference aims to bring together researchers in this up-and-coming area. This theme is, by its nature, interdisciplinary, encompassing literature, history and religion, and we are seeking to reflect this interdisciplinarity throughout the day’s events. By inviting speakers from these, and related, disciplines, we hope that the day will offer a broad and rich insight into Medieval and Early Modern prayer.

We are delighted to announce that Dr Alastair Bennett (Royal Holloway, University of London) will be giving a keynote lecture.

We invite papers from researchers in the fields of archaeology, architecture, art history, history, language, literature, music, philosophy, politics, religion, and other relevant disciplines to submit abstracts of 300 words. Topics can include:

- Literary prayer
- Theory of prayer
- Prayer in liturgy
- Prayer and music
- Prayer and Biblical translation
- Prayer and rhetoric
- Prayer and violence
- Language of prayer
- Prayer as protest
- Prayer manuals
- Prayer books
- Prayer and politics
- Teaching on prayer
- Private devotion
- Prayer as magic
- Physical manifestations of prayer (e.g. objects, buildings, art, etc.)
- Any other related topic

Please send abstracts for papers of 20 minutes by the 9th of July 2014 to Judith Dray and Sheri Smith at prayerconference@cardiff.ac.uk