



I have attended a Céile Dé teaching retreat and may be interested in taking things further ~ What do I do next?

Broadly speaking, there are two ways you can weave the Céile Dé tradition into your life:

1 - You can follow the teachings in whatever way appeals to you and attend future annual teaching retreats whenever you feel inclined. If this feels right to you, then ask to be put on our mailing list and you will hear of future events in your area (it will be useful to attend the same gathering every year, as the teachings are to some degree progressive and are not at the same stage in each area).

2 - You may feel called to explore the possibility of joining the community of people who are following the tradition, its teachings and practices, in a deeply committed and involved way. This community is called the Caim.

The Caim exists for those who wish, *and are also willing and able*, to engage in a spiritual life that is more than conceptual. In other words, it is for people who *do* the practices, rather than *intend* to do them, and who *apply* the teachings in everyday life, rather than merely *discuss* them. Members of the Caim meet regularly in groups who do the practices and study the teachings together, sharing their understandings and experiences and supporting each other's spiritual lives.

Real dedication to spiritual practice increases our ability to notice that life constantly offers us all the experiences and the learning opportunities we need. Only when we reflect upon what we have experienced and surrender to the realisations they seed inside can we say we are walking a committed spiritual path. Céile Dé can be translated as "one who is in a conscious working partnership with God", and the life of a caimeach (member of the Caim) is how that partnership is sustained within the vehicle of our tradition.

Many people become excited during a teaching retreat and can remain so for weeks afterwards; when they hear of a community such as the Caim, they believe they want to be a part of it; however, when they are given the opportunity, something inside them is unable to grasp it from within the context of their everyday lives. Remarkably, few will notice the gap between what they say they want and what they actualise; some people live their entire lives without noticing that they intend to begin 'tomorrow'. The force of unconsciousness in the world is just a fact of life, communities like the Caim exist for those who are ready to do the work of developing awareness.

We navigate the realities described above by welcoming interested newcomers at a gradual pace that allows both them and us to feel our way together and see how comfortably they are able to weave the culture of the Caim into their daily lives.

Generally speaking, if the Céile Dé tradition is right for you and you are right for it, we are likely to know within a year, and so this is how we always invite those who are interested to test the waters:

1 - Please take time to absorb all you have experienced and learned during the teaching retreat for **no less than one month**. (The teacher at your retreat may have suggested an actual date.)

During this time, also do the following:

- Continue to do any practices you learned during the retreat and notice whether or not you are able to create the necessary regular space to make them a part of your life. If, for instance, you know that you will not be able to practice twice-daily rùn (even to the extent you are currently able to remember how to do it), there would be no point in exploring caim membership.
- Read as much as you can about the tradition on our website - www.ceilede.co.uk
- Make a point of carefully reading the first three articles on the 'Articles' page on our website; they are called: *'The Céile Dé'*, *'A History and Vision Statement for Céile Dé Groups'*, and *'Advice at the Threshold'*. These will help you to get even more of a feel for the nature of our tradition and of how the Caim functions. If what is written there appeals to you, then you may be on the right track.
- Please also give attention to our 'FAQs' page, especially the question: *"What happens next if I want to join a Céile Dé group? What sort of commitment do you ask at the level of group membership?"* This information is taken from a document called our *'Terms of Caim Membership'*, also known as our *'Sacred Handshake'*.

2 - When you have carefully studied everything listed above and have walked with it all **for at least one month**, then you may want to take the next step in your discernment process, which will be to get in touch with us and request the Terms of Membership so that you can see what is there.

3 - To request the Terms of Membership, please email the specific address you will have been given before the end of your retreat. It's important that you include these three things in your email:

1. Which Céile Dé teaching retreat you recently attended
2. Say that you have been discerning for at least a month and feel ready to take the next step
3. Ask to be sent a copy of the 'Sacred Handshake (Terms of Caim Membership)'

If you lose the email address you were given during the retreat, you can get in touch using the contacts page on our website (including the above information).

6 - Please study what is written in the Terms of Membership very carefully, read it several times and walk with everything there **for at least one further month**.

7 - Continue to take note during this time of how well you are able to weave the teachings and the spiritual practices, such as rùn, into your daily life.

8 - If any questions arise during your study of the Sacred handshake, get in touch about them.

9 - If, after that, you still feel 'ready, willing and able', let us know. We will guide you through the next stages from that point.

GUEST MEMBERSHIP

The next stage would be to begin a period of what we call 'Guest Membership' of the Caim. Guest membership is a continuing period of discernment that lasts for a year. During this time, you will be able to test Caim life and see if it is a good fit for you and if it serves your inner growth.

Guest members are mentored by an experienced caimeach (called a foirfeach, which is Gaelic for 'elder') there is no charge for this. You would also be asked to complete a three-part online course,

called 'Forus Feasa'¹, which contains useful foundational teachings of the Céile Dé tradition. The course involves one-to-one tuition, using a combination of recorded teachings, email, and Skype; there is a small charge for the course. As well as giving a good introduction to the tradition, Forus Feasa will also provide an extra taste of the teachings, practices, and philosophy of Céile Dé, to see if they work for you and if you are able to fit them into your life.

Aside from taking the Forus Feasa course, the year-long period of guest membership will be a time when you are in every way treated as a full member of the Caim; you will be doing rùn and other practices, as well as studying the teachings, both with your group and individually between meetings, and you will be weaving those teachings and the realisations they seed into your life.

Towards the end of your guest year, your fairfeach will arrange a meeting in which you can both look back over the year and witness together how being a caimeach has worked for you and also how having you in our community has worked for us. Your fairfeach will encourage and guide you every step of the way and will also be honest with you if it appears that you haven't been able to weave the tradition into your life in the way required for it to have the desired effect. We want it to work for you, and we will do our best to support your exploration of the Caim — but continued membership after the guest year will ultimately be led by you and your circumstances.

At the end of your guest year, you and your fairfeach will come to a decision together as to whether or not you will continue in the Caim. Usually it is very clear if this is the right path for you, because the Terms of Membership won't feel restrictive to anyone for whom the tradition is a good fit; they will feel like, "this is just what I have always wanted, and needed, in my life".

¹ Forus Feasa is Old (pre 9th Cent Gaelic) for 'The Foundations of Knowledge'