

Boethius 1500



**7.30 pm – 9.00 pm on Monday evenings 14 October to 18 November
in the Undercroft (entrance via College Green)**

As a scholar Boethius (c. 480–524) had translated Aristotle, and composed erudite treatises on logic, mathematics, music and Christian theology. As a statesman, he achieved high office and public honours. But then, in his early 40's, his fortune turned and he found himself imprisoned, soon to be executed for treason on the testimony of political rivals.

His literary masterpiece *The Consolation of Philosophy* written during this final year of his life, 1500 years ago, was his vindication, self-consolation and legacy. It became one of the most widely read books of the middle ages; its English translators famously including Alfred the Great, Geoffrey Chaucer and Elizabeth I.

In alternating prose and poetry the *Consolation* presents a dialogue between Boethius the prisoner and the figure of Philosophy as she guides him from despondency and self-pity towards a renewed understanding of fortune, fate, happiness, free will and God's good government of the world.

The extremity of Boethius' circumstance put him in a privileged position to ask some tough questions about the place of misfortune and injustice in a world governed by a good God. His Philosophy's reconciled God's-eye vision of the world where, despite appearances, whatever is good, virtue and happiness are one and the same, and it is love that makes the world go round, proved convincing to a great many readers, though others have found it to fall short. Some thought it over-reliant on the pagan past. Others have suspected Boethius of playfully probing the limits of the consolation mere Philosophy could provide.

This reading group offers a chance to explore for ourselves this undisputed classic, and whatever questions and reactions it raises. Boethius' *The Consolation of Philosophy* is divided into five Books, which we shall read and discuss over five sessions:

Monday 14 October – Book 1
Monday 21 October – Book 2
Monday 28 October – Book 3

Monday 11 November – Book 4
Monday 18 November – Book 5
(*n.b. no meeting on Monday 4 November*)

Please reserve your place via the form on the cathedral website:

<https://www.worcestercathedral.org.uk/boethius>

or for any further information, please contact Robert Beattie:

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