



The Holy Family of Bordeaux

in Britain and Ireland

Glory to God alone in Jesus Christ through Mary and Saint Joseph

April 2015

Volume 1 Issue 4

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A group of Basotho, South African, Irish, English HF Sisters enjoying the wonderful meal provided after the Eucharist, speeches and entertainment came to an end.
Taken in St. Mary's Hall, Roma, with very poor lighting.

Editorial



An ancient Celtic symbol, the Triquetra, dates back to as early as 500 BC when it was used to symbolise the triple goddess (maiden-mother-crone).

Over the centuries it has become the symbol for the Holy Trinity among Christians in Ireland.

In modern times, the Triquetra has become a symbol of anything three-fold e.g. the cycle of life (life-death-rebirth), the promise of a husband to his wife (love-honour-protect), the family (father-mother-child), the passage of time (past-present-future) and many more.

Why do we remember the past? Answers to this from a variety of thinkers in various fields of thought – literary, scientific, philosophical, - are plentiful.

However, we can answer the question for ourselves. We each know there are things we love to remember and things we would rather forget. But, it is important not to repudiate anything of the past but integrate it into our lives. It is all part of our individual story and, in all past memories and events, there is an individual and collective wisdom that we would deprive ourselves of should we refuse to look back.

That is why we step aside, stop our work, and remember the past in sad solemnity or joyful celebration so that we may live the present more fruitfully and prepare a better future.

This year, 2015, has already had its share of remembering in Church, State and in the *Holy Family*. No reminder is needed about what the *Holy Family* in this Province has commemorated since the beginning of the year - longer or shorter periods of service in various places that have left a rich spiritual legacy for future generations.

We also rejoice with our sisters in Lesotho who have just celebrated the 150th anniversary of the arrival of the *Holy Family* Sisters in that country in whose ministry some sisters from our Province had a share.

Message from Sr. Gemma (Unit Leader)

JESUS IN DISGUISE



During these days as we read and pray the post resurrection stories, I am struck by the fact that a common theme in all the stories is one of lack of recognition of the risen Lord. Jesus seems to be in disguise. Mary Magdalene, the first person to meet the risen Jesus thought he was the gardener until he spoke her name (John 20, 11 – 18). The disciples out fishing on the lake didn't recognise him, even when he called and "none of the disciples dared ask who he was" (John 21: 12). And, of course, we have the beautiful story of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. At first they experienced Jesus as a stranger, just someone they met on the road, until they shared a meal with him and their eyes were opened and they recognised him in the breaking of the bread (Luke 24. 13-35).

Do we, too, find it difficult to recognise Jesus?

Jesus tells us that he is present where people meet together. He said: "Where two or three are gathered together *in my name*, there I am among them" (Matt 18:20). When we are together, "seeing and valuing one another as sisters, accepting and welcoming one another... thus strengthening the bonds among us" (Provincial Chapter 2014), then we believe he is with us.

When we come together around the Eucharistic table, we experience the life giving, nurturing presence of Jesus the Christ in the breaking of bread and the sharing of the cup.

When we reach out to those who are "obliged to be on the move – migrants, refugees, displaced, trafficked and homeless persons," (Provincial Chapter 2014), we are ministering to Jesus himself. "I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me..." Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me' (Matthew 25:35).

Membership - Responsibility - Participation

For some time now we, as an Institute, have been reflecting on what 'membership' means. As members, we assume responsibility for ourselves and the Institute. "Members have their own authority which comes from their understanding and ownership of the common mission" (Prov. Chapter 2014).

For this reason a new impetus was given to our Teams of Participation during the Provincial Chapter last year. They are the means whereby the members can become full participants in the change process.

Since then, all Teams have had meetings to assess their role and plan for action. In this issue, we are happy to publish a report from the Integrated Spirituality Team.

We invite others to follow their example so that, each month, we can learn and draw support from what others are doing.



The Closure of Draperstown

On April 27, Srs. Gemma, Carmel, Bernadette, Caitriona, Rose and Margaret were invited to join Bishop Donal Mc Keown for an evening meal at the Parochial House courtesy of the Parish Priest of Ballynascreen (Draperstown), Fr. S. Kelly. Fr. J. Downey and Martina O'Neill, the cook, were also present.

We arrived at the Parochial House around 5.30 p.m. and were given a very warm welcome and enjoyed a truly delicious meal. Bishop Mc Keown is well known for his 'down to earth' approach to life and so everyone seemed at ease from the outset and the chat throughout was lively.

Mass was concelebrated in the main Parish Church, Straw, at 7.30 p.m. Fr. O'Neill (a retired Priest living in the parish) joined the Bishop and the other two priests for this celebration. The Parish choir were in full throttle and their music and singing enhanced the Liturgy. A good number of parishioners, neighbours and friends of Rose (including Rose's family members) were present.

Bishop Mc Keown commended Rose's contribution to the life of the Parish especially in the areas of S.P.R.E.A.D, Peace and Reconciliation and Education. He went on to focus on the words of Pope Francis, namely, to give thanks for all that has been; to live the present with enthusiasm and to embrace the future (whatever that might be), with hope. His words were well chosen, homily was brief and to the point.

After Communion Gemma was asked to 'say a few words'. Being a native of Draperstown, living in Straw as a child and coming with her family to worship in this very Church each Sunday, Gemma seemed to feel at home with her own people. Gemma thanked Rose for the great *Holy Family* presence she had been over twenty three of the thirty eight years that the Sisters had been in Draperstown. She outlined the ministries that Rose had been engaged in and said that she had given of her best and with great generosity to the people of the area and further afield. On behalf of all the Sisters Gemma wished Rose every blessing and happiness for the future. She added, 'We are fortunate to have a very strong group of Holy Family Lay Associates in Draperstown. So, there will always be a Holy Family presence here. And for this we are blessed and thankful.'



Sr. Rose with officiating clergy and altar servers

Fr. Kelly then invited Rose to speak. It was an emotional moment for her. She spoke at length of her experience in the Draperstown Parish Community and of what that meant to her. She gave so many people a mention! But her overriding words were of praise and thanks for all that had been. She said she still had plenty of energy to go forward and she begged all present to 'be kind' to one another.

When the final prayer was said, the blessing given and the Priests and servers gone from the altar there

was great chat among those present - friends and family meeting and all in good spirits. At length Fr. Kelly began to switch off the lights, signalling that it was time to move off and the crowd then began to scatter, still chatting, into the cold of the night which by this time was nearing 10 p.m.

Margaret Bradley

House Mass of Thanksgiving

Draperstown, 22 April 2015

It is never easy leaving one's home, especially after 22 years. So, at the request of Sister Rose Devlin, a final Mass was celebrated in the house before she joined the community in Magherafelt. The weather was beautiful, and the house and garden looked splendid with the Cherry Blossoms to be seen from the sitting room windows.

All 31 people managed to gather round the altar in the sitting room, and Fr Seamus Kelly PP celebrated a beautiful liturgy. Sisters Catherine Moran, Eileen Fitzpatrick, Colette Keegan, Margaret Bradley, Caitriona and Bernadette joined Rose in prayer. The leaders of the SPRED group also came, our Lay Associates, and some members of Rose's family.

While the day was tinged with sadness, there was also a great air of hope and joy at what had been achieved over the years – not alone by Rose, but also by others who worked/lived in the area - Dominica Walshe, Concepta O'Neill, Norah Hayes, Josephine Quigley, Maria Ryan, Sheila Roberts and Anne Kearney.



The gathering was like that of what I would have imagined the earlier Christian community looked like. There was a great sense of love, peace, joy, deep faith, and thanksgiving. God's Presence was evident as we broke bread together and told our stories – not alone during the Mass – but afterwards when we had lunch in the Apparo Restaurant just down the street.

The response from the people is a great tribute to the presence of the Sisters in the area since 1978, and shows the fruits of being close to people and "sharing all the trials and fatigues of the journey".

Bernadette Deegan

The *Holy Family* wakes up Lesotho

It is a happy coincidence that the 150th anniversary of the arrival of the *Holy Family* Sisters in Lesotho comes during the *Year of Consecrated Life*. Pope Francis told women and men religious to “wake up the world”. It can truly be said that the *Holy Family* sisters woke up Lesotho for the occasion.

From the start of the year, they had undertaken to visit all the Catholic Missions in the country and tell the *Holy Family* story to the people at Sunday Mass. They were warmly welcomed everywhere and the people listened with great attention to their accounts of the founding of the Holy Family Association, its motivating spirit and aim. It was also an opportunity for the sisters themselves to deepen their own understanding of the rich legacy bequeathed by Pierre Bienvenu Noailles to us and to the church.



Gathering outside Roma Church for Mass on 24 April

People also spontaneously gave gifts in money and in kind, to help them celebrate the big day on 25 April.

Throughout the country the cry, “Jubileeee!”, rang out at the slightest mention of the event. It was taken up by children and adults and became a rallying cry everywhere the sisters spoke and on TV and Radio, when *Holy Family* members - Sisters and Lay Associates - were interviewed.

Renewing links, visiting old haunts

The celebration would not have been complete without the presence of former workers in the vineyard of Lesotho. Lil Meagher and I from Britain and Ireland, and Sheila Griffiths from Pakistan, had the great joy and privilege to be



With Hyacintha and some Staff outside Spes Nostra

there. Everywhere, we were greeted with cries of wild delight and ear-piercing ululations. One of our first ‘engagements’ was an interview with the Catholic Radio station, *Spes Nostra*, conducted by a vibrant, extremely competent young lady who was also broadcasting on the big day, 25 April

The ‘Britain and Ireland connection’ dates back to the early nineteen hundreds when Sr. Damase (Lucille) Gicquel from Jersey arrived. The next generation began in 1952 with Ellen Butler, still known in Lesotho as ‘Me Philipi, followed in 1957 by Síle McGowan and later by Teresa Edwards and Lil Meagher, all of whom remained for a considerable length of time. Martina Devane can also be included here.

Thereafter, those who came were short-term volunteers (not in this order): Nurses Catherine McNulty, Marie de Lourdes Phelan, Agnes Davis and Teachers Anne-Marie Glynn, Elizabeth Murphy, Frances Darragh, Sheila Griffiths, Louis Marie Scullin and Bernadette Scanlon. They made a great contribution to education and health care in the High Schools, and the then Training College run by the Holy Family sisters, to nursing in the mission hospital and the clinics, making it possible for the Basotho sisters to study and prepare to take over from them and ensure the succession in these ministries that were constantly evolving.

During the week Lil and I spent in Lesotho before the celebration Hyacintha, the Province leader, put a car and driver at our disposal so we could visit as much as possible of our old places of ministry. It was wonderful to see how they were flourishing, with increased numbers and buildings in schools and clinics, with excellent results. There was a sense that the Holy Family spirit is alive and is a motivating force for lay staff, thanks to the leadership of the sisters.

A new venture, pioneered by the Holy Family, is the care and education of children with hearing and speech disabilities. This first school, called Kananelo (Bienvenu in Sesotho), was built up gradually with the help of donations from various charities, including the Holy Family, and is now recognised by the Department of Education.

All seven Holy Family schools, 5 Secondary and two Primary, participated actively in the main Eucharistic celebration on 25 April, with Kananelo doing the Our Father in sign language.



Teacher at Kananelo signing to pupils about us

It would take much time and space to describe the the achievements of the past few decades so we will leave it for another time.

The Anniversary Commemoration Days

The whole year had a been a very busy time, the final week even more so, but calm prevailed even as the day approached and last minute preparations had to be made. It was a 2-day celebration. Friday, 24 April, was special to Roma and St. Mary's, where it had all begun. The students sang their hearts out at a special Mass of Thanksgiving at which certificates of award were given to so many - sisters, lay people - who had given long and dedicated service over the years. Joy was unconfined!



After Mass, the congregation processed to the cemetery to honour the dead who had laid the foundations for the workers of today, prominent among them is Mother Marie-Joseph Angot, leader of the group of Foundresses who arrived 150 years ago.



In the meantime, preparations were going on for the morrow's celebration - tents being erected, chairs arriving, an exhibition being set up, food being prepared to feed the multitude expected.



What happened in the next 24 hours is too rich in meaning and eventful in action to be glossed over in a few brief words. It is for another time, to be written or given anecdotally, especially to those for whom it holds vivid memories, and about whom many enquiries were made by past pupils, colleagues, friends, patients...

The Basotho people have long memories and loyal hearts.

Khotso! Pula! Nala!

Sile McGowan

From the Bann to the Boyne

(A Run to highlight the crime of Human Trafficking)

THIS YEAR IS THE 10th ANNIVERSARY OF APT (Act to Prevent Trafficking). It was established in 2005 by a group of about six religious women from almost as many different Religious Institutes, Congregations or Societies, concerned about the growing problem of human trafficking in Ireland. Pope Francis has called human trafficking 'an open wound in contemporary society'. APT is committed to healing this wound and working towards a society free from slavery, in which the inherent dignity of each individual is respected and protected. It now has over thirty members.

The purpose of APT is twofold: to raise awareness of the issue of sex trafficking and to work in collaboration with others for the prevention of the trafficking of women and children for sexual exploitation. It is a founding member of RENATE (Religious in Europe Networking Against Trafficking and Exploitation) and networks with anti-trafficking organisations around the world, both faith-based and secular.

To mark the anniversary, we would like to intensify our awareness-raising efforts among the general population and the hierarchy. We are conscious of the need for more involvement by all sections of society in tackling the problem considering the rising age among religious.

When Fr. Gerry Campbell, Parish Priest of Kilkenny, Dundalk and a native of Magherafelt, Co Derry, offered to do a diocesan run from the Bann to the Boyne on 26, 27, 28 and 29 April, we took up his offer with alacrity. A small team from APT took on the task of organising it and discovered, as usually happens in these matters, that it involved a lot more than they had anticipated. There were the matters of insurance, PSNI and Garda clearance, accompanying cars, publicity banners, sponsorship forms, starting and finishing places in each town, making sure there were photographers there, getting the media on board and arranging for them to interview APT members.

There were moments when we wondered if we had taken on too much. But, it was not the first time Fr. Gerry had undertaken such a run so he knew exactly what needed to be done and it all worked out in the end.

The project was launched in Armagh on 15 April by Archbishop Eamonn Martin. He was very encouraging and positive about the work of APT and did not want the run to be simply a once-off media gimmick but an ongoing action against human trafficking.



At the launch outside Armagh Cathedral L to R: Ann Pender IBVM, Geraldine MacCarthy SHCJ (APT President), Archbishop Martin, Fr. Gerry, Ruth Kilcullen (APT PRO), Anna Keegan (IMU Rep.), Máiréad Ni Fhearáin OSC, Joan Roddy DMJ, Síle McGowan HFB

Stages of the Run

Stage 1 - Sunday, 26 April

Newbridge to Dungannon

Stage 2 - Monday, 27 April

Dungannon to Newtownhamilton

Stage 3 - Tuesday, 28 April

Newtownhamilton - Castlebellingham

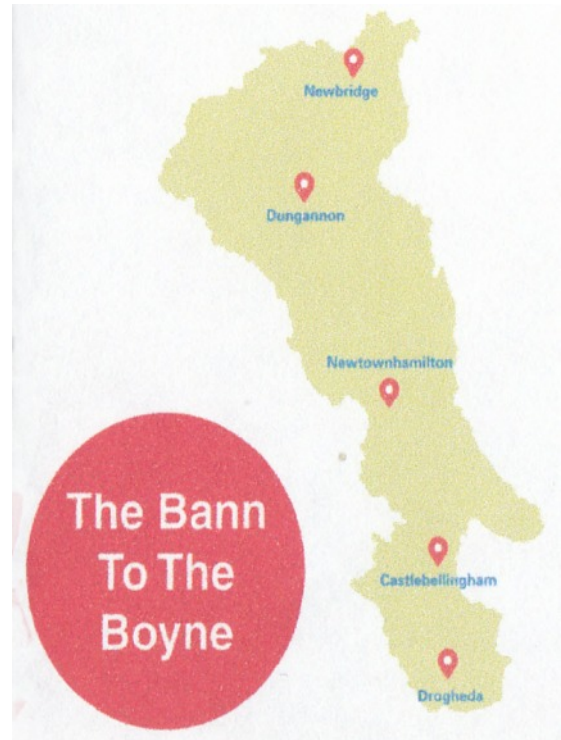
Stage 4 - Wednesday, 29 April

Castlebellingham to Drogheda

Each day's run began with a Prayer Service at the Parish Church in the town at 8.30 am to start the run at 9 am. As many of the parishioners who could were there to join in the prayer and give generously to the cause.

As he ran, Gerry was preceded by a car driven by one of his parishioners and followed by one driven by a member of APT, both cars decorated with banners and balloons.

Síle McGowan HFB drove on the final day with Mary Ryan RSM and Geraldine MacCarthy SHCJ as passengers.



Clane community car



following Fr. Gerry

We arrived in Drogheda shortly after 11 am, well before the scheduled 12 midday concluding ceremony and photos at the Cathedral. The Parish Priest was away on retreat but had given instructions that we were to be well received which, indeed, we were with applause and refreshments.



Síle McGowan

NEWS FROM OUR TEAMS

THE INTEGRATED SPIRITUALITY TEAM

The aim of this Team is to deepen our knowledge and understanding of our own Spirituality and the New Story of the Universe in order to integrate them and then to share our reflection with the wider Family.

We have met twice this year. We have read, reflected, and shared on Diarmuid O'Murchú's book, *On Being a Post-colonial Christian* (See Claire's review of this book) and *It's Time* by Michael Morwood. We are now reading and reflecting on Adrian Smith's book *Tomorrow's Faith*. To deepen our understanding of our own Spirituality, we are continuing our reflection on *The Spirit Proper to the Associates of the Holy Family*. re-reading it in the light of the New Story of the Universe and adapting it to life in the 21st century – a mammoth task.

The New Universe Story encompasses the whole of life and radically affects our concept of and our relationship with God. It leads us to re-think and re-evaluate our understanding of Church, Theology, Scripture, Spirituality, Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation.

Taking this reflection seriously, as we have all been asked to do, requires us to be in a state of exodus, and have the faith and courage to move out of our spiritual comfort zones.

If any community or group would like a reflection/discussion on this important topic and think that we could help in some way, please do not hesitate to contact us and one or two of us will come to reflect and/or pray with you.

Áine Hayde
(on behalf of the Team)



Book Review

ON BEING A *Postcolonial Christian*

Embracing an Empowering Faith

by Diarmuid O'Murchu



In his book, Diarmuid O'Murchu offers new illuminating insights into the powerful, patriarchal philosophy that has infiltrated cultures, societies and religions prior to, but including, Christianity itself. He traces this colonial imposition back to the agricultural revolution and the cultural transition that ensued.

In exploring the dysfunctional collusion between religion and what he calls “the addictive lure of patriarchal power” he concentrates on Christianity and offers an in-depth critique on how it was, and still is, in many ways, seriously compromised and subverted since becoming the official religion of the Roman Empire. He says: “After Constantine the identification of God’s will for humanity with the wishes

of the imperial force became endemic to the development of Christianity”.

The challenge O'Murchu poses for the reader is to move towards a more enlightened stance and engage more critically with the baggage we have naively assumed for too long. He suggests several ways of doing this. Some of these may disturb our cherished, safe and traditional ways of looking at Scripture and inherited Christian wisdom.

The book is not an easy read; it can be repetitive at times; he quotes extensively from various authors to support his views. The book does, however, present the reader with some very challenging questions to reflect on. It invites us to become more open to new insights and to come to what he calls, “the companionship of empowerment”, as a way of living the Gospel today.

Claire Mc Grath

The historical Jesus would probably not recognise anything they have done with him after his life, death and resurrection. As a humble craftsman, farmer, itinerant prophet, suffering servant, he would feel strange in the face of all the titles added to him, coming especially from the realm that he most criticised and condemned: that of power.

Leonardo Boff

(Quoted in ON BEING A POST COLONIAL CHRISTIAN, Chapter 8)

NEWS FROM OUR COMMUNITIES

EASTER - NEW BEGINNINGS

As our Sisters turned the key in our house in Skelmersdale, there was a feeling of loss and sadness but also of joy.

'The seed that gives us most joy and has borne great fruit for us, for the Parish and the Church, is the establishment of the Holy Family Lay Associates. Dare I say that you brothers and sisters are our legacy?'

We are not leaving a void behind us. This fact makes it easier for us, for we know that you will continue to be faithful sons and daughters of Pierre Bienvenu Noailles, the Church in Skelmersdale, taking up the challenge to preach the Gospel of love and build communion among yourselves and in the wider parish'. (Gemma's speech to our Lay Associates)



Here in Wrexham, we were delighted to welcome Gemma, Carmel Bateson and Eileen Ryan for Lunch to celebrate the Easter festivities with us. We were very pleased that Catherine Lavery was free to join us later in the afternoon..



The day was glorious and the surrounding garden was ablaze with new life. Sr. Carmel Morrissey prepared a delicious lunch which was enjoyed by all. As we celebrated together, the joy of the Resurrection was tangible in our midst.

After Mass on Easter Monday, we assembled for the cutting of the Easter cake and our visiting Sisters departed for their journey to London.

From us here in Wrexham, we wish you all the blessings and joys of this Season and the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost.

Wrexham Sisters

UPCOMING EVENTS - May 2015

May 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 St. Joseph the Worker	2
3 World Press Freedom Day	4	5	6	7 UK Election	8	9 PBN Family meeting in Milton Keynes
10	11	12	13	14 Ascension Day	15 International Day of Families	16 PBN Family meeting in Swords
17	18	19	20	21 World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development	22 Ireland Referendum on same-sex marriage	23
24 Pentecost	25	26	27	28	29 International Day of UN Peacekeepers	30
31 Blessed Trinity						