



Family Links

Glory to God Alone in Jesus Christ, through Mary and Saint Joseph

February 2019

Volume 5 Issue 2

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A riot of spring flowers at Dublin's Botanic Gardens

Editorial

In the run-up to the meeting in the Vatican on clergy sexual abuse the prevailing feeling, especially among survivors, was that it would simply be “more of the same” – lots of talk, and apologies but no real, concrete decisions on future action. The big question was, “Would anything change?” It seems, however, to have ended on a note of cautious optimism. The first reason for optimism is, of course, that it happened at all.

But there is good reason to believe that the presence of a dozen women, ten of whom were religious (UISG executive members) and two laywomen (under-secretaries for the Vatican's Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life), and a Mexican journalist, made a big difference at the gathering. There is a consensus that some of the most powerful voices there belonged to the women who addressed the bishops. If you are reading this online, their speeches can be read by clicking on the following links: [Nigerian Sr. Veronica Openibo](#), [Vatican Under-secretary Linda Ghisoni](#), and [Mexican journalist Valentina Alazraki](#). As well as demonstrating the inexcusable nature of the crimes committed, these women outlined the practical steps that need to be taken for real change to happen.

When we consider that only three religious women participated in the 2018 Synod of Bishops, can we hope that this is the shape of things to come, when there will be a growing presence of women, religious and lay, at Vatican meetings of bishops? This was the expressed desire of the women who spoke.



“The nun who read the riot act to Catholic bishops over clergy sex abuse”

Message from Intervocational Coordinators Team

THE CHURCH NEEDS PROPHETS

Today in the Church we are fortunate to have a Leader who has the courage to speak out with a prophetic voice in spite of opposition from several of those to whom he should be able to look for support. He is not afraid to speak with the “Boldness, enthusiasm and freedom” that he himself recommends to all of us in his recent Apostolic Exhortation, *Rejoice and Be Glad*, and to take radical action when necessary. We too are called to be prophetic, and I use the word “prophetic” in the sense that we are called to listen deeply to what God is saying to the Church and the world today and then to “speak the truth in love” in season and out of season.

We would probably all agree that the Church has changed significantly in recent years with declining numbers going to Mass and fewer religious and priests to minister to those people. But has it changed in a positive way? What about its structures, laws, belief systems, culture etc? Could it be that its declining membership and the reason it is seen as irrelevant by so many people is the fact that it has not been allowed to evolve organically over the centuries and so is out of sync with the people of today?

In 2019 we live in a world that is changing so rapidly that there are some aspects of it that we couldn't have imagined even at the end of the last century. And that is the world in which we are called to live and be prophetic. However, outdated rules and regulations, dogmatic formulas suited to ages past, unbending laws, patriarchy, hierarchy, authoritarianism, unquestioning obedience and threats of sanctions, judgement and punishment have kept the Church closed and prevented it from evolving. Pope Francis himself has said that there are ecclesiastical rules and precepts that were once effective, but now they have lost value or meaning.

The trouble is that a rigid, closed system in an evolving world will eventually decay and die. So how can we transform disintegrating structures and inject new energy into a seemingly immovable system?

Pope Francis has also said more than once that the Church should not be a museum of memories. What can we do to support him as he tries to break out of the closed system that the Church has become and move towards a new ecclesial model? Do we want a static, immutable Church or a humane and compassionate People of God? As prophets, we must be carriers of a new vision of Church.

The Church not only has a deep structural problem, but its dominant theology belongs to the 13th century. Can we dream of what St. Thomas Aquinas's theology would be like if he had all the knowledge provided by modern science, technology and Scripture Studies at his disposal? Surely that kind of dreaming and imagining is a big part of the work to be done by 21st century prophets. We may not be competent to undertake such work ourselves but we can support those who do and who very often, like Pope Francis, suffer rejection in a Church to which they are trying to be loyal in their efforts to keep it alive, credible and relevant.

Perhaps we grew up with the idea that faith meant giving assent to a series of unchanging beliefs we knew of as “the deposit of faith”. This deposit of faith, we were told, contained the full truth and was possessed only by the Catholic Church. But Pope Francis has said that “The view of the Church's teaching as a monolith to defend without nuance or different understandings is wrong”. Our faith is



Sr. Áine Hayde

something for which we must take personal responsibility. It should be something alive, evolving and deep within us, something of which we are convinced. This calls us to grow from the faith we had in childhood to a mature faith in the light of our experience of life and new information or revelations of God which come to us from various sources. If we take dogma, doctrine and Scripture literally, we have a lot of discerning and unlearning to do before we can have a prophetic voice.

Our faith will remain very superficial if the only reason we believe is “because the Church says so”. It is important to know “what I say”, “what **we** say”, what the *sensus fidelium*, says. The *sensus fidelium* is the sense of the faithful which those responsible for formulating Church teaching are supposed to take into consideration. In theory, Church teaching is not something which trickles down from on high but takes account of the reflections of all the members of the Church. Pope Francis himself tells us that “We should not even think that ‘thinking with the Church’ means only thinking with the hierarchy of the Church... The bishops, particularly, must be able to support the movements of God among their people with patience, so that no one is left behind.

But they must also be able to accompany the flock that has a flair for finding new paths”. As prophets and as *creatively* faithful members of the Church, let us go and look for those new paths and then have the courage to walk on them.

Let us tell people openly that something better is possible – that we are all the Church, and that together we can work to bring about a different model built on love and compassion rather than on rules and regulations. Let us have the courage to speak about a new vision of Church. Very often we will find that people are thinking deeply but are hesitant to speak out because they think they are alone, even that they are losing the faith. So, let us encourage one another, listen to the Spirit and discern together.

Perhaps a useful prayer for us, at this critical stage in the evolution of the Church, could be one of Tess Ward’s – author of *The Celtic Wheel of the Year* – “Create in me a prophetic eye that I might see the new thing that you are doing this day and have vision for tomorrow”.

Áine Hayde, (Team member)

Engaging our Diversity through Interculturality

Seminar organised by UISG 21 January – 1 February 2019

The seminar was attended by 180 Sisters from 45 international congregations spanning the five continents. We were four Holy Family Sisters representing our native continent: Geni dos Santos Camargo (Brazil, based in Rome,) Aldegonde Mbalanda (D.R. Congo, based in Canada) Rasika Pieris (Sri Lanka), and myself.

The theme of the seminar focused on Interculturality in Religious Life Today. It was organised by the Union of International Superior Generals (UISG) and the content was delivered mainly by the Divine Word Fathers and Missionary Sisters of the Holy Spirit. The content of the first week explored terminology, culture, context and interculturality, social profiles, spirituality, theology and psychological responses.

For three days of this week the input was provided by Anthony Gittins, a Spiritian Father from Manchester, who has worked in more than thirty-five countries from Africa to the Pacific. He has written several books, the latest title being, *Living Mission Interculturally*.

The second week we explored various topics in order to live interculturality effectively. These included handling conflict, initial formation and generational differences, gender and leadership.

I found this seminar extremely enriching. It was a privilege to be able to participate. The discussion group of which I was a member consisted of eight Sisters living across five continents. There was a genuine openness to listen attentively to the experience of the other person.

I found the input, particularly in the first week, both informative and challenging. I was forced to look at the areas where I have a tendency to stereotype



L. to R. - Catherine, Rasika, Geni, Aldegonde

based on limited knowledge and understanding. I began to recognise the need to “intentionally” live interculturality. I was presented with a model of living interculturality that ensures that no one culture dominates and that no one culture experiences obliteration. In relating to a person from a different culture to mine I reflected deeply on the phrase “I may not remember what you did for me, but I will remember how you made me feel”. I was reminded that the call to live interculturality is the call to live prophetically in a world where division is common on all levels. It is vital if I am to fully live out my mission as a *Holy Family Sister*.

The seminar offered the four of us some tools to begin the reflections on intercultural living. At the end of the seminar we were asked to produce an action plan on how we plan to implement the content of the seminar within the the Institute. So, watch this space. The term, interculturality, will have many an airing in the coming months. It is worth noting that whether we live interculturality or not, we are all in ministry “to the other.”

Catherine Lavery

ADAPTING TO A NEW CULTURE

On 29 January 2019, Sharmila and I attended the **National Course for Overseas Sisters and Priests** at Domus Mariae, Chigwell London. There were 20 participants from different countries - India, Pakistan, Nigeria, Liberia - comprising 3 Sisters and 17 Priests. This course was organised by *Missio* and the Catholic Missionary Union.



Participants take a break to go sightseeing

It had various introductory modules such as:

- Team and Leadership skills,
- Pastoral approach to ministry - 'smell of the sheep',
- Safeguarding and Finances,
- Cultural context and the Church context

The main purpose of this course was to help us understand, why we are here, how to overcome cultural shock, how to find our feet here, how we can reach out to people more effectively, and what skills and methodology we need to help us to feel at home. While the course was a challenging reflection on culture and adaptation, it was mainly directed towards priests and their work within the parish. We were challenged on our ministries and were asked:

"Are we motivated, doing our ministry as duty or, are we inspired in a way that touches the hearts of people."

The course was divided into 3 main topics:

- Cultural context
- Church context
- Personal mission

This included

- Caring for yourself:
- What supports are there for the new missionary?

- How to stay healthy,
- How to spend spare time
- How to cope with loneliness and feeling homesick
- What supports are available in transition as we adjust to a new culture while being true to oneself as one discovers the best ways of working with a new people.
- Handling the tension between the culture we have known and loved and a new culture.

All of the participants belong to cultures, where Priests and Sisters are given top priority and are held in high status in society. We did things the way we wanted and which we thought was the best way of doing Christ's mission. But when we come to a new culture and a new society, we need to observe and be ready to adapt to the present context.

In our home countries, Mass can go on for 2-3 hours; the priests can give homilies for more than one hour, and people will not object. You can start this group or that group; people will always be there to obey you. There are no safeguarding rules and regulations. But here the church context is quite different. People are busy; no one has much time to listen to you. The people who come to Mass may be old and some belong to different ethnic groups. There are Catholic schools, but they lack Catholic education. Many young people do not go to church.



The three Religious Sisters

Keeping all this in mind, this course has highlighted some basic issues and given guidelines on homilies, the sacraments, safeguarding against physical, sexual and emotional abuse. It also emphasised the compassion we need towards LGBT groups who come to Mass and are part of the parish life.

As overseas missionaries, we need to know and understand the structure of the church, bearing in mind its present realities. We may come across vulnerable people, people with mental health issues. How are we going to support, welcome and value them, keeping in mind the safeguarding rules? This programme highlighted a lot of issues and gave us lots of information.

We were given some glimpse of the English culture, its history, mannerisms, communication style, phrases and underlying assumptions, food and hospitality. The course highlighted that within the English culture there is an awareness of equality whether the people are rich or poor.

This session was really useful as many of us were unaware of a lot of things, for example, calling people by their first name. In many of our cultures we refer to elders as Uncle, Aunt, Sister, Brother, Rev Father and Rev Sister, but don't address them by first names. There is also a culture difference in the way we greet each other. Keeping a distance rather than touching people we don't know. For example, a brief hand shake, no hugging or touching. Accountability transparency and group decision making were highlighted rather than working in isolation. This was seen as a challenge for some who were used to working and making decisions alone.

There are 3 ways to adapt to cultural shock, known as **REC**

Roaming

Go out, see how people do different things, how they communicate, observe the positive and negative.

Embrace the culture

Go for the things English people do: eat as they eat, do as they do, go to the pub, listen to English music, read about the culture, watch English soaps to know the reality of society here.

Contemplate

Why did I come here? Am I motivated and inspired to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ?

Adaptation is important for oneself in order to work effectively. We also need to share the condition of the people. As Jesus emptied himself, we, who are missionaries, need to empty ourselves of our old baggage and update our culture.

We are here to welcome, to reach out and to be hospitable, to value people and to protect them from harm. We need to be willing to learn new ways of doing things; we need to be humble, open to change, modest and open minded to be able to adapt to the new environment according to the time and reality. We need to appreciate what is positive in this culture and adapt accordingly.

Nasreen Nazir, Bradford Community

A REFUGEE IN MY OWN COUNTRY

After returning from Pakistan on November 7th, 2017, I spent one year on sabbatical. Beneficial as it was to me on a personal level, I do not think it prepared me for living in a multi-cultural society like Bradford. When I first heard of my appointment to Bradford community I was delighted as I knew I would meet many Pakistani people.

I have been just over one month in Bradford and am slowly getting used to the place. Settling into community is no problem but getting used to involvement in ministry is proving to be slow and, at times, frustrating. One day as I travelled from the

City Centre back home by bus, I suddenly experienced a great sense of uneasiness about so many foreigners in my country. I felt somewhat 'angry' and 'resentful'. Why should they be living here? As I stepped off the bus, a gentleman close by said to me, "Take care. The pavement just down there is very slippery". He was a Pakistani. My former feelings turned to gratitude. This recognition was a real encounter with the Lord.

On 12 February I attended a Seminar organised by the Diocese of Leeds Refugee Response on How to help Asylum seekers and Refugees in 2019. This was hosted by Catholic Care in St. William's Parish Hall,

Bradford, and attended by over 80 people. I was surprised to hear of all that is being done in Bradford and neighbouring towns to support and help those who are seeking asylum or need support as refugees. The first part of the evening was a presentation of the Community Sponsorship programme that has been set up in the country. A detailed explanation of how it works and its implementation in one or two communities was highlighted by Sean Ryan from Salford. This involves the co-operation of the whole community, regardless of creed or race, to sponsor a refugee family in their own locality.

The Government is also involved in such projects and gives some of the help required. It brings together all the members of a local community to welcome, care for and maintain a family for a period of two years. Using a PowerPoint presentation, he spoke convincingly of the success of this project in Salford, where the Bishop of Salford was at the airport, along with other members of the community, to welcome a family and take them to the fully furnished house prepared for them.

This was followed by short presentations by groups in Bradford and Keighley working with refugees: CHAS at St. Vincent's Bradford, who run a community shop, an advice service and are engaged in giving English classes (ESOL).

ABIGAIL HOUSING who provide accommodation for those people who have been refused asylum, provide bus passes, guest allowance and food, as well as providing tutoring in English.

BIASAN: Bradford Immigration and Asylum Seekers Support and Advice network: this group has been running for 20 years. They have a drop-in centre for women every Thursday where a meal is provided as

well as an opportunity to come and have a friendly chat with others, and those in need can obtain legal advice; they also have a store for clothing, household goods and foodstuff to help those in need; English classes are also given.

GOOD SHEPHERD CENTER, KEIGHLEY are a group who give support and advice to asylum seekers, run a clothing centre and furniture shop, courses on English language and British way of life sessions, as well as running a parent-Toddler group. They also organise allotments and a garden project. They have about 130-140 users of their resources per week.

It was good to hear how they are working and what they have achieved over the past years and what they hope to do in the future.

After the presentations we were invited to visit the various stalls in the hall depicting the work done by these various groups and have a friendly chat with all the participants. The sisters here in Bradford are very much involved with some of these organisations as volunteers. I have visited one or two places where the sisters work: a drop-in centre for women and another centre where women come to learn English. The helpers, teachers and volunteers, are so friendly, welcoming and supportive of these refugees and asylum seekers. I have a lot to learn from them.

Reflecting on my time here, I feel like a fish out of water, wondering how I can get involved. I really got the feeling that I am like a refugee in my own country. Things have changed so much since I left 43 years ago. I am grateful to my sisters here, Maria, Teresa and Nasreen who are so patient with me, slowly initiating me into a new life style.

Sheila Griffiths

Skelmersdale Celebration of 3 February

Instead of their usual meeting, the *Holy Family* Lay Associates of Skelmersdale celebrated the Feast of the Miraculous Benediction of 1822 on 5 February at St. Francis of Assisi Church.

The celebrant was Deacon Anthony Callaghan, son of Maureen, one of our Lay Associates, which made it even more special. We were joined by several of our parishioners.



It has become a tradition of our group to do a re-enactment of the 1822 events in the Mazarin Street chapel using the booklet prepared by Sr. Claudine Ferrier. Associates read the different testimonies from those who were there. Celebrating in this way creates an atmosphere and

a sense of presence of that time which enriches our spirituality.

I would like to quote from the Archbishop of Bordeaux, Marius Maziers: "The Church celebrates the Eucharist but it is the Eucharist that makes the Church." The miracle of 1822 reminds us of this in a tangible way.

Afterwards, we invited everyone to join us for refreshments and we shared memories of Sr. Monica as it was the 5th anniversary of her death. R.I.P.

Denis Perrin,
Holy Family Lay Associate, Skelmersdale

A New Lay Member in Woodford Green

On Monday 4th February we welcomed Barbara Leppert as our newest Lay Member of the *Holy Family*. Her Commitment took place during our celebration of the anniversary of the Miraculous Benediction at the Woodford Green Convent.

Our Lay Member Kathy Howes conducted the Commitment dialogue, and presented the emblem in her role as Member of the National Committee. Kathy runs the formation programme here at Woodford. Also present were five Apostolic Sisters, and many Lay Members, so it was a very special service.

Barbara has been a regular at our monthly meetings for the past two years, and has been an enthusiastic contributor in our spiritual renewal, being very knowledgeable and popular.

Following the Commitment, we Lay Members continued with our own meeting, and as this took place so close to the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, we commenced with three heartfelt verses of 'Immaculate Mary, so there was a lot of singing that evening!

We then joined the Sisters, where the celebrations continued with a party, so ending a very memorable evening.

Jen Holmes, Woodford Green Lay Member



Kathy Howes Barbara Leppert

My Journey to Membership of the *Holy Family* Secular Institute

Coming from Newbridge the school I attended was run by the *Holy Family* Sisters. Many years later I became a *Holy Family* Lay Associate, which gave me the opportunity to learn more about the *Holy Family* and its Founder, the Venerable Pierre Bienvenu Noailles, a French priest from Bordeaux. I found the writings and prayers of Fr. Noailles inspiring. The more I read his words and reflected on them the more I came to realise that he was a very spiritual man and a man whose writings and homilies are still very relevant for to-day.

The dedication, devotion and love that the members of the *Holy Family* Association show to their work and to each other is also inspiring be it as a Contemplative Sister, an Apostolic Sister, a Consecrated Secular, a Lay Associate member or a Priest Associate. They all seem to carry out their duties with joy and love no matter how big or small the task may be; all for the love and glory of God Alone and inspired by their Founder Pierre Bienvenu Noailles and their models Jesus, Mary and Joseph. They have been inspiration to me; so much so that I greatly wanted to belong in the full sense of the word.

On a visit to Martillac, the sacred place near Bordeaux where Fr. Noailles conceived the idea of this spiritual Family, I felt a great inner peace after praying at Fr. Noailles' tomb and asking him to help me. I felt he was directing me. I spoke to one of the Sisters and she explained to me something of what it meant to be a Consecrated Secular in the *Holy Family* Institute. Having understood this vocation more clearly then, I knew what I was to do. So, when I returned home, I made the request to become a

Consecrated Secular in the Association of the *Holy Family*. My request was granted. I then began a period of preparation for this most important next step in my life's journey. At my first meeting I was a bit apprehensive as I did not know what to expect. But I was made to feel so welcome and I soon got to know the other members. We became the best of friends. After five years I took my final vows, last year in the convent in Newbridge with a very dear friend, who also took her final vows.

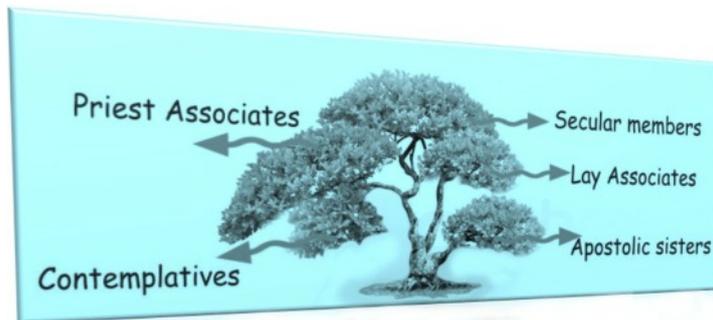
I just want to thank Sr. Margaret Bradley for her guidance and for being with us on our

journey even to this day as Accompanier. I had given my life totally and completely over to God. The Sisters were so welcoming and made the day very special for us. It was a day filled with love and joy. Like the Apostolic Sisters, and the Contemplative Sisters we Consecrated Seculars make the vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience but we do not live in community. It is a great challenge indeed. But everything is possible with God's help.

I am so privileged to be part of the *Holy Family* of Pierre Bienvenu Noailles, a man whose work is being carried on to the present day. His vision of a tree with five branches (the five vocations named above) has now grown to revive the call of *Holy Family* Youth. For me the key word is FAMILY.

As a Consecrated Secular I have the support and prayers of all the other Members of the *Holy Family* Association. We are One and we all sing from the same hymn sheet- GLORY TO GOD ALONE!

A Consecrated Secular



Féile Bríde 2019

St. Brigid is a patron saint of Ireland. Her feast is on the 1st February. The Brigidine sisters organise different programmes to celebrate the feast of St. Brigid. Last Saturday we, Pryianka, Síle and I, went to Kildare to participate in the **Annual Afri Justice and Peace Conference** at Solas Bhríde, the Brigidine Centre and Hermitage In Kildare Town.

The programme included five speakers. They were Caoimhe de Barra, Richard Moore, Michael Doorly, Meghan Carmody and Kay Mulhall. They all spoke on the day's topic, Until Love Conquers Fear, Educating the Heart, Education for Liberation, Inspiring solutions for People and Planet and welcoming the stranger.

I was inspired by all the speakers as they spoke about their own personal experiences. Among them, Richard Moore inspired me a lot. He is from county Dairy. He was blinded at the age of 10 by a rubber bullet fired by a British soldier. This incident changed Richard's life forever. He is a symbol of forgiveness. He wanted to give the message of Forgiveness. He didn't want to take revenge on the soldier who fired the bullet that blinded him. He was ready to welcome the soldier as a friend. He was able to overcome anger. His message was, "To forgive someone, we have to forgive ourselves; forgiveness helps the person who forgives".

He has proved it through his life experience and example. After being blinded Richard didn't give up hope of a bright future. He didn't ruin himself by hating the soldier. He returned to his old school and continued his education. He is a businessman and a musician now. He was able to light up



Féile Bríde 2019
Education, Action, Compassion, Hope

Saturday February 9th
Solas Bhríde Centre
Kildare Town
Registration at 9.50am

To book visit www.afri.ie or email admin@afri.ie

Caoimhe de Barra: Until Love Conquers Fear
Richard Moore: Educating the Heart
Michael Doorly: Education for Liberation
Meghan Carmody: Inspiring Solutions for People and Planet
Kay Mulhall: Welcome the Stranger
 Music by **Laoise Kelly**

 The Solas Bhríde Centre is situated on Tully Road, on the way to Brigid's Well

8 Cabra Road, Dublin 7, D07 T1W2
 Telephone: +353 1 83394204
 Email: admin@afri.ie
 Website: www.afri.ie
 Facebook: [afriireland](https://www.facebook.com/afriireland)



his life which was darkened years ago and now he himself is a light to the world. I was deeply touched by his life story and inspired to become a person who practises forgiveness and compassion as much as I can.

Secondly, I was inspired by the speech of Kay Mulhall a Brigidine Sister. She was a missionary in Mexico. Now she works with Immigrants. I was deeply touched by her experiences about immigrants. Her respect towards immigrants, compassion, awareness of each immigrant with a different culture. Her open mindedness, and her welcome spirit was able to welcome my desires to become more open minded and commit myself to the service of those who are in need.

I liked that day very much as it inspired me a lot to think deeply and beyond what I knew and imagine.

Charitha

At the beginning of the Conference, a lighted lamp was brought into the room and placed on a stand in front of us. The first speaker was Mrs. Coaimhe de Bara. She is a member of Trocaire. They stand against child labour, poverty, unjust global issues and gender inequality. She spoke about Malawi. Because of climate change the farmers of that country are facing many problems. She told us how the women were starting to take their leadership. Overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity. It is an act of justice. She invited us never to get accustomed to the injustice and inequality that exist in the world, and not to get wearied in the work of setting it right.

Then we listened to Richard Moore who spoke about Educating the heart. He spoke about his blindness, and how he is now. Happiness depends on our forgiveness. If I can be reconciled with somebody their forgiveness comes from my heart. He said his blindness had led him to explore his life.

A journalist Michal Doorly spoke about Education for liberation. He spoke about his experience in another country as a teacher. The very first thing we should do in our life is to learn how to listen. Then to be a global citizen. There is no final victory or defeat. We can all learn from one another. Wisdom is all around us. Bloom where you are planted.

Priyanka

St. Brigid's Flame

A sacred fire burned in Kildare reaching back into pre-Christian times. Scholars suggest that priestesses used to gather on the hill of Kildare to tend their ritual fires while invoking a goddess named Brigid to protect their herds and to provide a fruitful harvest.



When St. Brigid built her monastery and church in Kildare she continued the custom of keeping the fire alight. For her and her nuns the fire represented the new light of Christianity, which reached our shores early in the fifth century.

The sacred fire was re-lit in 1993 in the Market Square, Kildare, by Mary Teresa Cullen, the then leader of the Brigidine Sisters, at the opening of a justice and peace conference organised by Afri. entitled "Brigid: Prophetess, Earthwoman, Peacemaker".



Brigid's Cross crafted by

Sr. Catherine Lavery

In Memoriam



The *Holy Family* Lay Associates of Skelmersdale lost one of their members, Margaret (Rita) Corrigan on 10 January 2019. She died in hospital after a short illness at the age of 77.

Rita, as we knew her, was a valued member of our group.
How poignant it was that she made her commitment on
3 February 2000.]

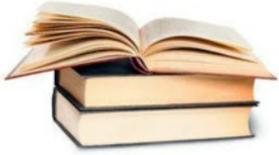
At meetings, her strong faith was to the fore in our discussions and her thoughtful contributions will be sorely missed.

Rita was a well-travelled lady, having lived in Australia and South Africa before she came to Skelmersdale. She was widowed at 38 and was a much-loved mum and grandmother. Rita had worked as a school secretary at one of our Primary schools before her retirement.

Her requiem Mass was celebrated at St. Mary Queen of Apostles Church, Skelmersdale, followed by burial at St. Richard's Church, Skelmersdale.

Our parish priest, Fr. Mike Thomson, presided at the Eucharist. In his homily he stated that Rita never shied away from giving him sound advice. That was our Rita. May she rest in peace.

Marilyn Sutemire,
Group Leader, Skelmersdale



BOOK REVIEWS

From Sand to Solid Ground by Michael Morwood

The seven page introduction to this book engages the reader immediately, for the opening sentence reads: *“We are living through the greatest shift ever in Christian thought.”* So, naturally, one wants to find out what is changing and why?

There are twelve chapters in this book. Eleven of them comprise a series of questions, the kind “that challenge, disturb and sometimes frighten Catholics of our time” (Diarmuid O’Murchu). But Morwood *“has the knack of explaining complex theological ideas in clear, readable prose”* (Joanna Manning) and so his responses to the questions posed are written in clear, easy-to-understand language and are both informative, direct and thought provoking.

Where Catholic academics are forbidden by Church authority to address publicly many of the faith issues being raised in this book, Morwood *“boldly delves into the questions with clarity, courage, hope and inspiration from his extensive experience in spirituality and adult faith formation.”*

Chapter twelve is *A Prayer for all the People*. Here the skill of the teacher is very evident. In a powerful

first page Morwood sums up the whole meaning of God’s Presence and adds,

*“We rejoice
In our conscious awareness of this Presence
And of our intimate connectedness with it.”*

He then goes on to give thanks for all those men and women throughout the centuries *“who have struggled with words and images to understand this Mystery beyond all words and images and to understand our relationship with this Mystery”*. This Prayer is five and a half pages long, each page packed with meaning. The final plea in this prayer is for our Church as an institution:

“We pray that, institutionally, our Church will die like the grain of wheat to claims of exclusivity, to elitism and to theology that protects its power and authority; that our Church might better imitate Jesus who rejected power, authority, and control in favour of being with people in their day-to-day struggles....”

This book is an excellent resource for those who are really struggling to clarify issues of faith today.

Margaret Bradley, Integrated Spirituality Team

This book is published by Crossroad Publishing Co. U.S. and is available from Amazon.

POSTSCRIPT TO THE REVIEW OF *AN ASTONISHING SECRET*

Since I wrote the review of *An Astonishing Secret* which appeared in the December issue of *Family Links*, I have become aware of a “Video Course” based on the book. It is given by the late Fr. Daniel O’Leary and consists of ten illustrated reflections which vary in length from 25 to 40 minutes. They are given in Fr. O’Leary’s usual relaxed style and are very well worth listening to and reflecting on. They make ideal community viewing and could lead to very fruitful discussions as they are very much in line with our current *Holy Family* orientations and commitment.

The course is available on astonishingsecret.org and costs £10.

Áine Hayde (Integrated Spirituality Team)

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 St. David, Patron of Wales Women's World Day of Prayer	2
3 World Wildlife Day	4	5	6 Ash Wednesday	7	8 'Roots' Retreat begins in Swords	9
10 World Hearing Day	11	12	13	14	15 UN International women's Day	16
					15 Swords Retreat ends	
17 St. Patrick's Day	18 Roots Retrea in Newbridget	19 Feast of St. Joseph	20 Newbridge Retreat ends	21 World Poetry Day Int Day for Elimination of Racial Discrimination	22 World Day for Water	23 Death of Mother Trinity Noailles
24	25 Reception of the first Lay Associates Foundation of the Secular Institute 1824	26	27	28	29	30
31						