



Family Links

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

June 2018

Volume 4 Issue 6

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Holy Family Pilgrims to Martillac from Britain and Ireland, June 2018

Editorial

What a great conversation starter the weather is! It is the first topic we discuss with a friend or a stranger and, with very little effort, we can have a conversation going. The weather is something we have in common right from the start. It is especially so in times of unusual conditions, like the present heatwave we are experiencing in our islands.

Thomas Merton, in his writings on nature, (When the Trees Say Nothing, Kathleen Deignam, ed.) speculates that maybe our perfunctory observations about what kind of day it is are not idle. He writes:

"Perhaps we have a deep and legitimate need to know in our entire being what the day is like, to see it and feel it, to know how the sky is grey, paler in the south, with patches of blue in the southwest, with snow on the ground, the thermometer at 18, and cold wind making your ears ache. I have a real need to know these things because I myself am part of the weather and part of the climate and part of the place, and a day in which I have not shared truly in all this is no day at all. It is certainly part of my life of prayer."

In a very practical way, the weather becomes part of our prayer life. While it's wonderful to have bright sunny days with no threat of rain or wind storms, that joy is not unalloyed. We are reminded how much we are a part of the climate and the weather and the place when water restrictions are imposed, plants die, animals suffer and gorse fires blaze.



Leader's Message

LEADERSHIP FOR CHANGE

These past few months we have been engaging in the consultation process that will lead to the naming of the team that will guide the unit for the next three years.

Since the last General Chapter, we have come a long way in our understanding and experience of leadership. No longer do we “pedestalize” our leaders. No longer do we ascribe to the named leader sole responsibility for the life and mission of the unit. We have banished the “them and us” mentality. We have taken back our projections (if they ever existed!) of strong, all wise, all powerful figures at the top who will tell us what to do and how to do it and if anything goes wrong it is their fault!

We now realise that this deeply patriarchal, hierarchical model of leadership has not served us well. On the contrary, in the past it helped create dependency and lack of engagement on our part and diminished our capacity to assume responsibility for the whole. It prevented us from taking up our role as fully responsible members committed to doing our part to promote the life and mission of the Institute. We now know and accept that if our tree is to grow and bear fruit, we must assume our role as gardeners; we must exercise leadership.



We are all leaders. We have all experienced the exercise of leadership in the way we live our lives and carry out our ministries. We are all challenged to develop within ourselves a leadership mindset which requires that we foster within ourselves a sense of responsibility for the unit; a living of accountability to one another and a commitment to living authentically our vowed life and God's mission in the *Holy Family*. True leadership, in fact, is more a mindset than a position or a role and this kind of leadership is open to everyone.

History has shown us that great changes have occurred through the actions of ordinary people taking

personal responsibility to participate in the process of the great transformation necessary for a just and sustainable future for all people of the Earth.



Sr. Gemma,
Apostolic Sisters

The end of apartheid in South Africa, the establishment of civil rights in the United States, the dismantling of the Berlin wall, the collapse of the Soviet Empire, the marches for life initiated by the young people in America in the aftermath of school shootings, all demonstrate the power of ordinary people to bring about the change that legislators were powerless to enact.

So true leadership is to live and act with integrity. It has nothing to do with power, position or office. It has to do with service, with taking responsibility for one another, with accountability to one another and a shared commitment to the life and mission of the Institute.

This is the kind of leadership that Jesus modelled for us. *“When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments, he went back to the table. ‘Do you understand what I have done to you? You call me Master and Lord and rightly, so I am. If I, then, the Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you must wash each others’ feet”* (John 13: 12-14).

Macrina Wiederkehr has written a beautiful meditation on the washing of the feet entitled “God in an Apron”. At the end of the meditation she imagines Jesus saying to us:

*“Let your tenderness encircle everyone you meet
Wash their feet, not because you have to but because you want to...
As I have done, so you must do...
What you do for them, you do for me.”*

Macrina Wiederkehr: “Seasons of Your Heart”. Harper 1991



REFUGEES GET THE KEY TO THEIR OWN DOOR

After spending 11 years in a Direct Provision centre, a refugee family finally get the keys to their own apartment.

The family have been known to the *Holy Family* Sisters for the past 9 years. We visited them on a regular basis at the Direct Provision (DP) centre. We spoke on quite a few occasions with the Ministry for Justice on their behalf. Two members of the family moved into their new home in April and in May the third person joined them.

They are so happy to have this freedom and at the moment are taking part in programs on the job-seekers scheme to get work. Their son is now in third level education and is very well integrated into Irish society. What a great pleasure it is for him to be able to invite his friends back to his house.



Spirasi is a humanitarian, intercultural non-governmental organisation that offers help to Asylum Seekers, Refugees and other disadvantaged migrant groups. It is the only centre in Ireland that offers therapeutic support to victims of torture. The aim of torture is not to kill but to destroy the spirit, to humiliate, weaken and obliterate the personality. This broken person is then used to control society by instilling fear and dread. We have all seen pictures of migrants who have been subjected to such treatment, fleeing their countries to live a better life. The Direct Provision centres in Ireland are home to these people who still suffer from the terrific memories of what they have been through.

Spirasi offers support through various groups:

- Play therapy for children.
- Family therapy
- Art therapy (Starting soon)
- Group Therapy

Clients can avail of various other groups while waiting to start individual therapy, such as:

- a. Resiliency Group (English speaking) offers coping skills for stress, without engaging in in-depth trauma therapy

- b. Relaxation Group (non English speaking) aims to reduce the pain of isolation because of language barrier, through meeting with peers, learning techniques to help reduce stress levels at the level of the body.

A new group 'Chair Yoga' will start soon

The four groups above have been funded with help from the *Holy Family* for which Spirasi are extremely grateful.

Each new client is assessed by the Medical and Psychosocial teams. The Psychosocial team informs clients on their rights, resources within the community, the asylum process, and helps the with letter writing.

Other groups which meet regularly are:

English speaking classes, Knitting classes, IT skills.

The team at Spirasi hold regular meetings to update themselves on how to continue caring for victims of torture. There are also regular training days for therapists. There is great compassion shown to all who come to Spirasi. Clients constantly say how being really listened to gives them dignity and great hope for the future.

Lil Meagher, Clane

Refugee Week in Bradford

18 – 24 June, 2018

Bradford is the home of many refugees and asylum seekers of different cultures, nations and faiths. Refugee week is a national festival of cultural activities to recognise and acknowledge the contribution they make to society. The theme of the week was, “My Dream”, a dream expressed in dance, drama, poetry and song by children from different schools in Bradford. These schools received the “School of Sanctuary” award to honour their commitment to welcoming and offering hospitality to refugees and asylum seekers.



Sharmila

The Bradford *Holy Family* community, along with Sharmila their guest for a few weeks, attended most of the events. They share some of the highlights with us.

Home is Home – the Dream and Nightmare.

In Bradford we have a lot of families who had to flee from the D. R. Congo. Through our various involvements we have got to know some of them very well. One young woman who was forced to flee along with her mother, father and some of her siblings when she was five years of age is now a Congolese–British activist. She went home to the Congo after 15 years to highlight the current situation there. She made a video of her visit and the words she repeated many times during the evening were “Just to be Home” This family would like us all to be aware of the 6 million Congolese who were murdered in the past ten years because of the country’s mineral wealth.

Walk for Justice – Sharing the Journey.



Nasreen, Sharmila and Maria joined various voluntary organisation in Bradford gathered on the steps of the City Hall on Wednesday, 20 June, for the annual Walk for Justice during refugee week. The Lord Mayor of Bradford spoke to us about the important work of so many volunteers who support refugees and Asylum Seekers. Our first stop was at Bradford Cathedral where a member of the cathedral staff acknowledged the importance of this Walk for Justice. Forty five minutes later we stopped outside Phoenix House a place where many of the asylum claims are heard, and often refused. At Thornbury Methodist Church we remembered the pain of many and the support they get from volunteers. The final destination was Kirkstall Abbey where we were joined by many members from other projects who support refugees and asylum seekers. At the end of our walk, we reflected on what we had heard on the journey, what moved us and what gave us hope. Along the 10-mile walk we shared stories, food and made new friends.



“Share the Journey”

A global campaign for people on the move organised by Cafod, inviting Primary School children around the country to walk 24,900 miles - the distance around the whole world - to show “we care about the millions of people forced to flee their homes”.

Each day during refugee week we walked with children from St Matthew's school around the school field as a gesture of solidarity, doing a total of 300 miles. As we walked, we prayed, sang, danced and kept repeating the word "Welcome" and we shared the sign of peace. We recalled that "every minute, 20 people around the world are forced to flee" and we mentioned some of the countries from which people flee. We sent love and warm wishes to all the refugee children of the world remembering that more than half of the world's refugees are children.

As we journeyed through the days of refugee week we remembered in a special way the suffering of the families and children from Mexico as we watched the pictures of the children in cages desperately crying as they were being taken away from their parents.

Story telling

We listened to nine different stories based on the theme of dreams. All of these were personal moving testaments of people's real-life experience and their dream for the future. The poem below is a sample of the stories told.

Red Cross and other parties:

At the Red Cross we finished the morning's work with a celebration, lots of spicy food of different countries followed by a game of Bingo where all received a gift to celebrate Eid and the end of the month of fasting for Ramadan.

At the Asylum Seeker's Women's Club over a hundred women and their families who gather each week, also celebrated an EID party and there were also parties for those studying English. Most of the food for these celebrations was donated.

City of Dreams

The title "Bradford City of Dreams" at the poetry exhibition, was very moving. This event highlighted the dreams of Hope for a better life for themselves and their families and freedom from trafficking and oppression. One of the displays had pictures of children from Syria with the words "never again did they want to hear the sounds of bombs and shells". The sadness and fear on the faces of the children said it all.

Another very moving section was the symbol of the key. This was a huge key that hung from the ceiling. The display boards below showed art work made from rusty keys; this represented the key of their home in faraway countries. For many asylum seekers the door key of the home they were fleeing is all that they now possess.

Conclusion

Refugee week ended with a party and celebration in the centre of Bradford honouring the Caribbean people who came on the Windrush 70 years ago. There was plenty of food, music and dance. It was a real celebration of culture and friendship.

Only in My Dreams

I look at the rubble in the street,
The ashes of dust from the broken concrete
Where beautiful houses once stood, taken from us like the youth of our childhood.
The land I walk upon is hungry for love,
It is crying out to stop the destruction that falls from above
Thirsty for peace yet helpless to cure this disease that's spreading, this ongoing war.
I yearn to live free yet I am trapped in a society that wants to suppress me
I am a Syrian girl who has been granted this blessing to dream.
To close my eyes, and fantasise of lands unseen,
to live without fear and the dropping of shells that ring in my ear.
I dream of a future that I crave for me,
I want to be that somebody you remember who stopped all wars
and allowed everyone to live peacefully, so we don't have to hide or flee for our safety.
I live to dream for my dreams capture beauty that my eyes cannot see,
a paradise when I close my eyes that I will never see in reality
Let me dream forever.

Written by Sharena Lee Satti

The Grandeur of God

I am reminded of the musical, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat*, and the song, *Fifty Shades of Green*, as I look in awe at the magnificent colors of the many elegant trees, with their new born tender soft leaves.

Bushes, hedges with varying jigsaw shapes, spheres, prisms and diamonds all glow in the sun.

At their base, the fields of green carpets spread out their rich luscious grass. Their spectacular green shades intermingle with tasseled deep yellow dandelions, flag shaped cowslips and royal blue bluebells.

The white lacy tall cow parsley resembles interwoven spider's webs.

The cherry blossom trees with their pale ink delicate confetti like flowers shower me as I pass.

Hues and tints of emerald, turquoise, apple green, jade and teal intermingle in this glorious countryside.

Numerous scents from wild flowers perfume the air, laden with the twitters, chirps and songs of the dawn chorus.

The words of the song, *What a Beautiful World*, echo in my brain as I stare mesmerized and transfixed.

I raise my eyes to the rippling sky, gilded by the rays of the stunning sun and I whisper: "Go raibh math agar a Thiarna."

Evelyn Nolan Dowling, Lay Associate,
St. Conleth's Group.

OUR PILGRIMAGE TO KNOCK

For many years now we, the Lay members, Sisters, consecrated Seculars and Priest Associates of the *Holy Family* of Bordeaux have made an annual pilgrimage to Knock to celebrate the feast of Our Lady of all Graces. It is always a beautiful day as we remember and celebrate the

great devotion that our Founder had to Mary. We try as far as possible to have our pilgrimage on the Saturday nearest 12 June, the actual day of the feast. This year, however, is a very special year for our Family and for all the families of Ireland as the country has been chosen by Pope Francis to host the



World Meeting of Families.

In order to prepare for this once-in-a-lifetime event, we decided to join our Family with the diocesan family of Kildare and Leighlin in their pilgrimage to Knock on 3 June. In the words of our Statutes it was an

opportunity for us to "give concrete expression to our belonging to the Church" (Art. 26). In his homily Bishop Nulty, who celebrated the Mass, said that "A family gives us recognition, an identity; family and diocese roots us; we belong somewhere; we belong to someone. We are truly one family in faith."

When we arrived in Knock it was a beautiful sunny day. We had plenty time to go around at our ease and look at everything as the ceremonies only began at 2.30 p.m. in the basilica. As *Holy Family* members we sat together in one section of the basilica for the Anointing of the Sick and the Mass. One whole row of seats was taken up by Sr. Kate's Youth Group with their very striking red tee shirts. We were very impressed. During his introductory words Bishop Nulty named many of the fifty-six parishes of the diocese and we were delighted when he specifically mentioned the *Holy Family* and the fact that we had given up our own special day in order to be with the diocese.

It was a perfect day for a Corpus Christi procession through the village of Knock with the words of Pope Francis, quoted by Bishop Nulty, echoing in our heads, "As we process with the Blessed Sacrament, let us never be blind to the reality of life we meet on our way. In each person we meet Christ. The person standing outside the pub door, not sure which way to avert their eyes, we are meeting Christ. The homeless



person who struggles to stand up straight, we are meeting Christ."

For those of us who took part in the pilgrimage to Knock on that day, it was a very special day which will remain long in our memory.

Rose Sullivan, Lay Associate (St. Conleth's Newbridge)

PILGRIMAGE/HOLIDAY IN MARTILLAC

On 19 June a group of thirty-six *Holy Family* Lay Members, Sisters and friends from Britain and Ireland arrived in Martillac to begin a week during which they would deepen their knowledge and appreciation of Fr. Noailles and his foundation in an atmosphere of rest and relaxation.

We began our time together with a two-hour "Martillac Walk" starting at the cemetery and ending in the chapel of the Contemplative Sisters named "The Chapel of the Good Shepherd" by our Founder. During this walk we received a comprehensive overview of the history and development of *La Solitude* intermingled with the main points of *Holy Family* spirituality. The afternoon and evening were free so that people could pray, reflect and relax in whatever way suited each one. And that was the pattern of most of our days during the week.

We spent a morning on the Island making the Pilgrimage of the Holy Family using the up-dated version prepared by the Intervocational Spirituality Team of Britain and Ireland which was published in 2012. The whole group prayed the preparatory station

together. We then broke into small groups, each group reflecting and sharing on two stations. We all met again at the Grotto of Our Lady of All Graces for the final station.



At Verdelaix

Another morning was spent watching and reflecting on power-point presentations of our Founder's dream, his life, his devotion to Our Lady and his student days in Paris. During our final morning in *La Solitude* we visited Our Lady of the Woods and our Founder's Fountain.

We had two day-long outings during which we broadened and deepened our knowledge of Fr. Noailles and his times. On the first of these we travelled to Verdélais, the 12th century Marian shrine of the Bordeaux diocese which our Founder loved to visit. It was in Verdélais that the idea of the Poor Priests developed when Bienvenu Amand and their friend Charriez made a retreat there to reflect on their future together. Some years later, the Priests of the *Holy Family* also made a retreat there. We visited the Basilica and the Way o the Cross and had a very informative guided tour of the museum. We also had some free time for relaxation during which we wandered around this typical French village which is surrounded by acre upon acre of magnificent vineyards.

Our second outing was to Bordeaux. The morning was free so that each one could pursue her/his own interests. Some went (window) shopping, others toured Bordeaux on the City Tour Bus while several strolled around admiring the beautiful buildings and riverside. At 2 p. m. we met at the cathedral and spent the afternoon walking in our Founder's footsteps.

We were also very fortunate to be in Martillac for the feast of our Founder which is celebrated there on the Sunday before 29 June so that the parishioners can be involved. At lunchtime we joined the two Martillac communities and some parishioners for a celebratory lunch in the grounds where we enjoyed meeting old friends and making new ones.

That evening we had a very happy event when Gordon Connolly (Scotland) made his commitment as a Lay Member of the *Holy Family*. The commitment took place in the Chapel of the Good Shepherd during Evening Prayer in honour of the Ven. Pierre Bienvenu Noailles and in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament exposed in the Miraculous Monstrance.



Our stay in Martillac concluded with a social where many hidden talents in the fields of singing and dancing came to the fore.

The whole of our pilgrimage/holiday was blessed with glorious weather which enabled us to enjoy all the beauties of the place that was so dear to our Founder, our first members and so many generations of the Family of Pierre Bienvenu Noailles.

Áine Hayde

Goodbye to the 'Mother of the Parish'

In recent Family Links, I reported on the birthday celebrations of the Wetherby groups, and probably on that of the British and Ireland Unit's oldest Lay Associate, namely Lily Stappard, on her 99th and 100th birthdays. Everyone always received a warm welcome when visiting her. Following a fall at home Lily spent two months in Harrowgate Hospital and a nursing home in Leeds where she died on 8 April 2018, just two months before her 102nd birthday.

Lily was born on 9 June 1916 In Leeds and, at the age of 14 was employed by the GPO as a telephonist. She married her husband, Gerry, in 1941 and they had three sons and a daughter. Lily and Gerry made their *Holy Family* commitment in 1983. Gerry passed away in 2002.

They were very family orientated, travelling to Bideford in North Devon, Aylesbury and Somerset to celebrate family birthdays. Lily's last trip was when she was 92. They liked going for walks on the North



Yorkshire Moors and attending the annual diocesan pilgrimage to Osmotherly and Mount Grace Priory, each August. Lily was a talented pianist and artist, painting her own Christmas and Easter cards for family and friends right up to last Christmas.

In 2012, at the age of 96, she fractured her hip. The surgeons at Harrowgate Hospital were astonished to find no medical records as it was her first time ever in hospital. The Consulting Physician was equally astonished to find that she was prescribing the first medication ever for her.

As our oldest parishioner, Lily was often referred to by the parish priest as "the mother of the parish".

May she rest in peace.

Alan Dinsdale, Wetherby Lay Associates



Newbridge Parish Amadeus Youth Group join the Holy Family community in a celebration of the Eucharist on 29 June

HOMELESSNESS IN IRELAND

This situation continues to be a huge problem, both for the thousands who have to live in hotels and for 'rough sleepers'. There are many organisations which help in various ways. DePaul is one of them, a charity helping people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. It shares close links with the Society of St. Vincent de Paul as one of its founding partners but is a separate charity addressing homelessness. I would like to show a little of what DePaul is doing to help people caught in the spiral of homelessness, deprived of all control of their lives, when every door is closed to them.

DePaul's community befriending program helps young men who are being cared for by DePaul to move out of the services into supported accommodation. The 'befrienders' visit regularly to make sure the men can cope with household chores, such as cooking and cleaning. They also help to minimise the risk of isolation and returning to homelessness by encouraging social activities and providing a contact point back at DePaul centres. Women who come out of prison are accommodated in another centre and are given help and guidance to start a new life.

The centre also offers a home to elderly men. They each have their own room, are provided with 3 meals a day and take part in monthly group activities – boat

trips, day trips, visiting local amenities and taking part in quiz and snooker.

Befriending volunteers also meet up with one of the men each week and take them out for coffee and a scone. The man I have been accompanying these last



few weeks wanted to have a photo taken. I asked if I could publish it and he was happy for me to do so. Permission was also granted by the coordinator of the befrienders.

One Wednesday as I was out with this man, he said, "You give me dignity by walking down the street with me; I feel respected."

Lil Meagher, Clane

Good News for Asylum Seekers in Ireland

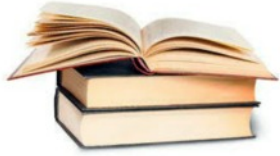
The ban on Asylum Seekers being allowed to work in Ireland was ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Court in May 2017. But such were the conditions imposed that it was almost impossible for anyone to avail of it.

On 27 June this year, however, the government lifted the restrictions placed on asylum seekers working, including the abolishment of a €1,000 payment for an employment permit. They will now have access to the labour market nine months from the date when their protection application was lodged.

Eligible applicants may apply to the Minister for Justice and Equality for a labour market

permission, which covers both employment and self-employment. The Labour Market Access Unit (LMAU) of the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS), on behalf of the Minister, will process applications.

The permission will be granted to eligible applicants for six months and will be renewable until there is a final decision on their protection application. Eligible applicants will have access to all sectors of employment, with the exception of the Civil and Public Service, An Garda Síochána, and the Irish Defence Forces as these are deemed to be permanent services.



BOOK REVIEWS

IS JESUS GOD?

Even though the author deliberately chose the title for this very interesting and very readable little book, it could be argued that it would have been more suitable, and certainly less controversial, to call it by its subtitle *Finding our Faith*. Dealing with a wide range of topics, Morwood examines some basic Christian faith questions in the light of contemporary knowledge and information.

From the beginning of the book, we are invited to explore aspects of our faith that we have always taken for granted and to articulate for ourselves what we really believe in and why. This will lead us into a deeper faith as we take personal responsibility for our beliefs.

Christian faith begins as a *taught* faith received from significant other people. From a young age, we were provided with a way of understanding a wide range of topics. How do we connect and integrate what we received and accepted with contemporary knowledge about the universe and the development of life on earth?

As we all know, anything that is not growing and evolving is dying. In this context, what is happening with regard to our faith? When we allow long-held, unquestioned images and ideas to be disturbed, we allow ourselves to embark on a path of conversion. Liturgy and ministry will take on a new meaning for us and our spirituality will be transformed by new life and enthusiasm.

We are invited to reflect on the teachings of Jesus in a non-selective way and translate them into good news for *today*. Examining the basic insights of Jesus within the framework of our 21st century worldview rather than the conventional framework of salvation/redemption requires a massive shift in our way of thinking. Jesus will always be for us Christians the one who uniquely reveals what God is like, so how do we articulate the statement that “Jesus is true God and true man” in a way that does not depend on the dualistic thinking and the religious and secular imagination and knowledge of centuries past?

Basic faith questions require answers today that are of necessity very different from the answers given in the fourth and fifth centuries, for example. This book will challenge us to come to personal decisions about what we need to unlearn, what we need to retain and what we need to relearn. It will lead us to reflect on how to express our faith today in a way that is meaningful for ourselves as well as for our contemporaries. It will help us to play our part in closing the ever-widening gap between contemporary culture and the Magisterium as responsible thinking members of the Church.

Each chapter is followed by a very useful series of discussion points which makes the book a very suitable tool for reflection in a group.

Áine Hayde

This book is by Michael Morwood and is published by The Crossroads Publishing Company (2001). It is available in Paperback from amazon.co.uk.

UPCOMING EVENTS

July 2018						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11 World Population Day	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22 Death of Amand Noailles the Little Father	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30 World Day against Trafficking in Persons	31				

August 2018						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Transfer of Founder's body from 1 st tomb to present one (18 61)	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12 International Youth Day	13	14	15	16	17	18
19 Commitment of first 7 members in the vocation of God Alone (1827)	20	21 World Meeting of Families begins	22	23	24	25
26 World Meeting of Families concludes	27	28	29	30	31	