



## Family Links

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

May 2018

Volume 4 Issue 5

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Sr. Eileen Murphy, Bishop Nulty and friends from DP

### Editorial

In a constantly evolving world, where change and newness are the norm, we may wonder how to reconcile these two Scripture quotes:

There is nothing new under the sun. (Eccl 1:9)

See, I am making all things new. (Rev 21:5).

It may seem simplistic to say there is no real problem when we consider the Good News which all Christians have a duty to share. This Good News is "ever ancient, ever new". The Vatican II document, *Dei Verbum*, portrays revelation as an ongoing reality which is constantly being actualised and so, has to be lived and presented in the here and now.

It follows that, in our time, we have no option but to consider the use of Social Media in our ministries. Social Media will not, nor should they, replace face-to-face pastoral care but, they are here to stay and cannot be ignored.

If you are reading this online, you might like to look at this video of Pope Francis talking of the Internet

<https://thepopevideo.org/en.html>



## Leader's Message

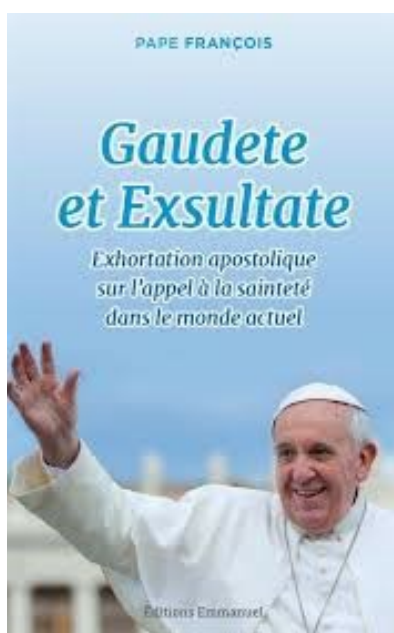
### GAUDETE ET EXSULTATE

Pope Francis' recent Apostolic Exhortation, published on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2018 has been received positively for the most part. The Exhortation is hailed as a rich reflection on the universal call to holiness – a call addressed to everyone, from our next door neighbour to the homeless person on the street.

The Exhortation has five chapters covering a wide range of themes: a reiteration of Vatican II's insistence that holiness is for all, without exception; a rich reflection on the Beatitudes, which if lived faithfully in our everyday lives are a sure path to holiness; a warning about the obstacles to holiness; the need for discernment of spirits in answering the call to holiness with special emphasis on the reality of evil in our world.

Pope Francis also expresses special concern for valuing and promoting life at all levels, from the unborn child in its mother's womb to the life of those on the margins of society – the migrant, the destitute, the abandoned and the enslaved, to the vulnerable, infirm and elderly exposed to covert euthanasia. "We cannot uphold an ideal of holiness that would ignore injustice in the world" (101)

*If I encounter a person sleeping outdoors on a cold night, I can view him or her as an annoyance, an idler, an obstacle in my path, a troubling sight, a problem for politicians to sort out, or even a piece of refuse cluttering a public space. Or I can respond with faith and charity, and see in this person a human being with a dignity identical to my own, a creature infinitely loved by the Father, an image of God, a brother or sister redeemed by Jesus Christ.* [82]



Perhaps one of the most striking aspects of the Exhortation is the prominence Francis gives to women who are examples of holiness. From the beginning we are asked to bring to mind the witness of our mothers and

grandmothers who shaped our faith. He cites women such as Josephine Bakhita (32); Theresa of Calcutta (100); Sts Scholastica and Monica (142). He makes particular mention of "the genius of women" to describe women who made a significant impact throughout history, including Hildegard of Bingen, Catherine of Siena, Teresa of Avila.... These women "produced new spiritual vigour and important reforms in the Church". But, he says we must not forget that there have been many women who are now forgotten and who have "transformed families and communities by the power of their witness" (12).



Sr. Gemma,  
Apostolic Sisters

However alongside this elevation of women, we note expressions and examples that some commentators of the exhortation say, point to a stereotypical view of woman as "other". For example, what exactly does Pope Francis mean by the "genius of women" – an expression that was also used by Pope John Paul II? And what are "feminine styles of holiness"? (12). Then, by giving the example of a woman who takes a step forward along the path of holiness by eschewing "gossip", some question Pope Francis' apparent association of women with gossip. "A woman goes shopping, she meets a neighbour and the gossiping starts..." (16). He once warned a community of contemplative nuns about the dangers of gossip saying that a gossiping nun is a terrorist. "Gossip is like a bomb. One throws it; it causes destruction and you walk away tranquilly... know that

*the best remedy against gossip is to bite your tongue". (Tina Beattie: Catholic Women gossip about Gaudete et Exultate)*

Then there is the Pope's reflection on humility and humiliation that for me is problematic. "*Humility can only take root through humiliations. Without them there is no humility or holiness... Humiliation makes you resemble Jesus*" (118). As some of us possibly know from our personal experience, humiliation is an overwhelming experience of being shamed and degraded by another and is painful and harmful to one's sense of self. Humility, on the other hand, is a joyful acknowledgement of one's place in the earth community and the acceptance of one's limitations

as part of the great web of life. Such acceptance is often accompanied by feelings of peace and surely leads to holiness.

*Notwithstanding, Gaudete et Exultate* is a challenging call to us all to undertake the journey to holiness modelling our lives on that of Jesus.

*"God impels us constantly to set out anew, to pass beyond what is familiar to the fringes and beyond. ...if we dare to go to the fringes, we will find God there... indeed Jesus is already there, in the hearts of our brothers and sisters, in their wounded flesh, in their troubles and profound desolation. God is already there."*(135)

## AT LAST...

**I**reland has moved into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We have come of age as a country and have thrown off the last shadow of the nation's conservative past. We have taken our place among the modern nations of the world; we have joined those progressive democracies where abortion is no longer something to be ashamed of, but rather can be freely talked about as something that is every woman's legal right and is part of her "medical care". In Leo Varadkar's words "We have become a more tolerant, more open, and more compassionate and caring society."

**Medical science has shown that at every stage of development, the unborn child is a unique separate living human being that needs our protection.**

killing of babies can be tolerated even championed as long as we shroud it with euphemisms and avoid calling it what it really is.

The "right to choose" is another euphemism and has been the rallying cry of the "yes" campaign. This sounds eminently reasonable. Of course, we should all be free to choose what is best for us. But the right to choose must always be tempered by its impact on the rights of others. And here the right of the unborn child to life, which has already begun is completely denied. Medical science has shown that at every stage of development, the unborn child is a unique separate living human being that needs our protection.

## But have we?

For some time now, the whole process of normalizing abortion has been relentless. The use of euphemisms cloaks the ugly reality of abortion. Abortion is called health care. This is deception, pure and simple. In fact, it is the opposite of health care. It is the intentional killing of a living individual in the uterus. It is an attack on health and life. The child in the womb is dehumanised – it is foetal matter, the product of conception, a mere bundle of cells with no rights to life. The

A society that allows abortion is denying the most basic human right – the right to life – to one group of human beings, unborn children. Both the woman with an unplanned pregnancy and her baby within the womb are of equal importance and need love and genuine support. Only a society that balances these two can be called a compassionate caring society.

Sr. Gemma Corbett

## ICON FOR THE WORLD MEETING OF FAMILIES COMES TO NEWBRIDGE

Bishop Nulty led a beautiful ceremony to welcome the Icon for the *World Meeting of Families* to St. Conleth's Parish Church Newbridge on the eve of St. Conleth's feast day. The Icon for the WMOF was in our parish from 3 - 7 May.

In his homily Bishop Nulty spoke about family and mentioned the fact that in Newbridge we are very lucky to have four religious family groups, the *Holy Family* Sisters, the Patrician Brothers, the Dominicans and the Daughters of Mary and Joseph.



Lay Associates, Sonas Chríost, with Sr. Dominica, Edel seated on right

Prayers were said and the congregation was invited to venerate the Icon. There was a beautiful atmosphere in the church helped in no small way by the Caelo Choir.

The Sonas Chríost Lay Associates attended and we all wore our *Holy Family* Lay Associate pins. We all felt uplifted by the experience and look forward to the WMOF in August and the visit of Pope Francis.

Edel Mulligan, Lay Associate (Sonas Chríost)



Sr. Eileen Murphy and Asylum Seekers from the Direct Provision Centre who attended the ceremony



Two were given the privilege of closing the door of the Icon as it was taken to the next Parish



[Link to Explanation of and Reflection on the Icon](#)

## Connecting Human Kindness with Human Crisis

The Red Cross is an International charity organisation, working in many parts of the world. The help provided includes food parcels and medical aid as well as cash grants to the most desperate people in crisis. In Yorkshire the Red Cross is working for all kinds of destitute people - asylum seekers, refugees and homeless. In Bradford we have a drop-in centre on Tuesdays where we try to connect human kindness with human crisis through the way we help and support our service users.

Each week, we deal with 40-45 people who come to us with various needs and expectations. Sometimes it is not easy to meet all their expectations but we try to do what we can to make their suffering a bit less. The services which we provide in our drop-in centre include, emergency provisions, food parcels, toiletries and bus tickets to go to see the solicitors

or to go to the Home Office for further submissions to claim asylum or residency. The majority of these people are from Iran, Syria, Afghanistan and African countries. Many of them risk their lives to come here, leaving their homeland, family, friends and even children. They live in constant fear of being deported or detained which leads to a lot of mental health issues and attempts at suicide.

We value each person who comes to our drop-in and try to help make their life a little better by listening to their stories and personal experiences. There are some service users who just come to socialise, so we provide them the space and atmosphere to sit, to drink tea or coffee and meet their friends. Whatever the cause, the Red Cross refuse to ignore people in crisis. Kindness is a simple thing but, in times of crisis, there is nothing more powerful.

### Mariam's Story

Mariam had to leave her country because of an abusive husband who used to abuse her daily. She met another man and ran away with him. She has two children from her previous husband. Marrying another man for love is not acceptable in Islamic countries. If she were caught by her previous husband or his family she could be killed. For this reason, she came to the UK with her children and the new husband and got asylum.

They were given permission to stay and to work on a temporary basis. Mariam and her husband worked hard and were well-to-do for some years and her children got a good education. When the period of time allotted them was due to expire, Mariam submitted an application to the Home Office for Indefinite leave to remain (ILR), but it was refused. She appealed in the court on humanitarian grounds but was again refused.

Now Mariam and her family are totally destitute, without accommodation or money. They are living in utter poverty, on the charity of generous people and charitable organisations. Mariam comes to the Red Cross where she is helped with food parcels, hygienic packs and food vouchers. She is also given emotional support. The money she gets from the charity is used for electricity, gas and food.

This situation has created a lot of mental health issues for her husband. He is in deep depression and this situation creates family problems and frustrations for Mary and her children. They are living all the time in fear of being caught, detained and deported by the Home Office. Mariam is more than an asylum seeker. She is a graduate, a teacher and a mother. She is a friend, or a neighbour or someone you pass on the street.

## Rock Ferry Matron begins a New Chapter in her Life

Our Matron, Mary Catherine Grogan, retired on 27 April 2027 after twelve years of dedicated service to the Sisters in Rock Ferry. It was a day both of joy and sadness for Sisters and Staff as all knew how committed she was to all.

Sisters from Bradford, Provincial House, Selby Road, Magherafelt and Wrexham joined us. At 10.30am we had prayer together with our Staff for Mary Catherine and some of her family, from both Ireland and England, who joined us. After the prayer, Sr. Carmel Morrissey presented Mary Catherine with a gift from the Sisters.



At 4pm we had Mass in our chapel for all staff, Sisters, past staff and some parishioners. Fr. Bernard, our Parish Priest, officiated. Both

chapel and corridor were full. Fr. Bernard began by welcoming all and congratulating Mary Catherine on her dedicated service to the *Holy Family* Sisters over so many years. She was also, he said, a great witness by her prayerfulness, care and compassion to all. Maria, former deputy Matron, is now our Matron so Fr. Bernard congratulated her on her new post and

hoped she would be very happy with us.

At the end of Mass Sr. Carmel Bateson spoke on behalf of Sr. Gemma and Sara Hopkins from St. John of God as neither was able to attend. After Mass all went to the dining room for a buffet tea. Mary

Catherine left at 6pm, obviously sad, but also happy that so many had shared her day. Many people who knew her called to wish her well throughout the day. She knows that, like Annie our retired deputy Matron, she is always welcome for a cuppa.

We, the Sisters, cannot finish this without a very big "thank you" to all our wonderful staff

whose hard work on the day, and for many days before, made this, not a sad, but a memorable day for Mary Catherine and all of us.

Rock Ferry Community



### Mary Catherine

Carmel proposes a Vote of Thanks on behalf of Gemma



In the unavoidable absence of Sr Gemma, it is, indeed, an honour and a privilege for me to be here in Rock Ferry to pay tribute to you on the occasion of your retirement as Matron of our Care Unit. I have known you for many years

In 2006, the *Holy Family* Sisters decided that a Care Unit was necessary in Rock Ferry to provide for our

sisters, who were growing old and requiring nursing attention. We and our Sisters have been blessed to have you as Matron.

You have eased and guided the transition into eternity for many of our sisters, attentive to their every need and ever respectful of their dignity. You have offered comfort and consolation to their families and friends and our community in the certainty that their needs, physical, emotional and spiritual were fully met.

You had a special rapport with Sr Tess, my mentor, and predecessor as Bursar, and I am well aware of

how she admired, respected and relied on you. I appreciate your perception, concern and care as her health unexpectedly and rapidly deteriorated. And, I personally witnessed your care and kindness when one of our sisters was in her last days in this life. Your gentleness was appreciated by all around at that time, family, friends and our sisters.

Thank you very much, Mary Catherine, for all you

have done for us. We shall miss you!

On behalf of all our sisters, and on my own behalf, and Sr Gemma's, I wish you a long and well-deserved retirement, good health, happiness, enjoyment and fulfilment in the years ahead.

Thank you, again, Mary Catherine, and God bless you in the future.

## Mary Catherine takes her leave

In her goodbye, Mary Catherine outlined how, when she was about to retire from nursing, she was offered the post of Matron of the *Holy Family* Care Unit in Rock Ferry, a place she did not then know existed. Over 12 years, she was instrumental in setting up the Care Unit, hoping, she said, "my leadership was challenging and rewarding for all, - always putting the needs of the Sisters first". As she described all that this involved she mentioned her courageous struggle with cancer of which we were all aware and held her in our prayer.

Mary Catherine acknowledged the part played by all the staff in making the Rock Ferry Convent Care Unit "the wonderful place it is today. She listed all the Sisters and many of the staff who had been part in the house during her time there, a list too long to include. Her special thanks were extended to Srs. Gemma, Carmel Batson and Catherine for their support. "The Holy Family will always be a part of my life," said Mary Catherine. Sarah Hopkins of the St. John of God services also came in for special mention for guidance and support.

Her concluding words: "There is never a good time to retire so I wish you all great success with your new Matron and that you will all be supportive, be a happy, caring and united team. Please remember me in your prayers as I will remember you all."

God bless you and thank you.





## More about An Tairseach

Easter Sunday, 1 April, saw all the participants back in An Tairseach, looking forward to another 6 weeks of input, reflection and action on 'the greening universe' and all that it implies.



The weather again turned pretty cold but it did not prevent us from our weekly Wednesday afternoon treks to different woodlands,

experiencing the Cosmic Eucharist with Fr. Michael Rodgers. We walked under the cathedral-canopied trees of Kilmacurra and Devil's Glen, trekked the beautiful grounds of Avondale and Mount Usher Gardens, admiring the beauty of nature showing forth the presence of the divine.

The fifteen minute ritual meditation, guided by Sr. Pauline McGrath in the Cosmic Garden each morning at 9.30 a.m., set the tone for the day.

During the inputs we were inserted more deeply into the New Universe Story through the capable hands of Bro. Mark McDonnell, a brilliant science teacher. He helped us to grow in our understanding of the relationship and deep connection between religion and science, not religion versus science, as we once understood it. His development of the Powers of the Universe as the last component of his input, over the 10 weeks of the course, brought us closely in touch with the 12 Powers as Jesus lived them and their connection with the Eucharist.

Donal Dorr deepened with us the how the 'ecological conversion' spoken of by Pope Francis in *Laudato Si*, influences the way we express our faith in God, in

Jesus, in the Holy Spirit, and in the Earth Community: a new look at the Creed.

Diarmuid O'Murchu, speaking on 'Changing World Views and its impact on Spirituality and Theology', addressed the evolutionary shift that this entails on every dimension of life and experience.

Catriona Russell gave us a very enlightening talk on Ecology, Theology and Gender centring on inequality and biodiversity loss in a changing climate.

Aspects of Celtic Spirituality given by Pat Murphy, at present working with Fr. Michael Rodgers in the Tearmann Spirituality Centre, Glendalough, augmented by the input from Una Agnew on the poetry of Patrick Kavanagh, were for me a real introduction to the faith of the Irish in the belief of God in nature and the whole realm of Celtic Spirituality. I had often heard of this being spoken of by some of our sisters but had never taken an interest to deepen my knowledge of it. It has given me a desire to know more.

Art work, Sacred Dance and Dreams also gave impetus to the Universe Story as our own stories emerged and merged with the information given.

### Session on sharing Dreams



For me, the whole course has been a revelation of God's presence in my life, inviting me to enter into

this part of my life, after leaving Pakistan. I was enabled to come in touch with this through a dream I had, which I shared with others attending a 'shared dream' session. This was an optional group who met together each Tuesday evening. As the group worked on my dream, I came to realise the wisdom of dreams. We learned the skills of entering into the world of the other through asking questions and then sharing the dream, (not interpreting it), saying, "If it were my dream'..." These sessions became very therapeutic also for those involved.

As the session came to a close, we had time to process our journey through the expertise of Joe Newman who led us for one session on Endings. She was to have given us a session at the start on Beginnings but this did not take place. Celebrations however took place throughout. The celebrations of the Spring Equinox, belated though it was, and Bealtaine helped us to touch the very depths of nature as also did the lowing of the cattle who could not get out to the fields, due to the inclement weather. The pigs delighted us with additions to the family.

## Bealtaine Celebration - The Onset of summer

The close of the course came on 11 May as we gathered for breakfast in the dining room, all packed



up and ready to leave to our various stations. Somewhat saddened by the feelings of 'loss' after sharing such a long time together and becoming a family, nevertheless I was consoled and heartened by the thought that I have much to share with all whom I shall meet on my journey forward.

Sheila Griffiths

## A New Religious Community in Portlaoise

In December, four Indian Sisters, Ursulines of Mary Immaculate, came to our parish in Portlaoise. We invited them to our house for a welcoming meal. We began with a started in our



Front row: Srs. Catherine HF, Jasmin, Sheila R. (HF), Julia  
Back row: Srs. Sybil, Anne (HF)

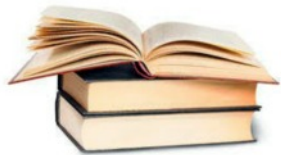
sitting room and then proceeded to the dining room for a variety of Indian food which we all enjoyed.

During a lovely, relaxed evening we got to know more about them. Their Congregation was founded in Piacenza, Italy, around 1649. Their charism is to identify with the 'Crucified' and they do that now in Ireland.

Two of the sisters are qualified nurses, one is a teacher and the other is finishing her Nursing Training in Cork. Three of them had been in the novitiate together and they talked very openly about their Congregation, life in Kerala, and Sr. Brigid, who started the foundation there. They were originally founded to educate young girls and they cherish the memory of a Sr. Celine whom they hope to see canonised soon.

We feel this is part of our call to collaborate with other Congregations and with the laity and is very much part of our *Holy Family* hospitality.

Portlaoise Community



## BOOK REVIEWS

### TOMORROW'S FAITH: A New framework of Christian belief

The sub-title of this short book tells us immediately what we may expect to find in it. We are invited to reflect on the formulations of Christian truths in the light of the evolution of scientific knowledge, Biblical studies and human consciousness. While Divine Truth is absolute and unchanging, these formulations were composed at a particular time, in a particular culture and for a particular purpose so there is a gap between them and the way we understand religious truths today.

From the point of view of clarity and simplicity of expression, the book is very easy to read. From a faith perspective, it is very challenging as it encourages us to think outside the box.

The thirty short chapters cover the central truths of our faith. Very helpfully, at the beginning of each

chapter we find two expressions of Christian belief. The first is a familiar, traditional understanding and the second, a contemporary understanding. The text that follows develops the second expression.

The book is extremely useful for both personal reflection and group work and discussion. There are guidelines at the end for using the material in groups and there is also a comprehensive list of suggestions for further reading.

As Fr. Smith himself says, "It is a matter of integrity, not of disloyalty to the Church community, to endeavour to re-express the traditional manner of stating Christian truths" at this present time when the way in which truths are stated no longer rings true with the experience of so many reflective, committed people.

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### TOMORROW'S CHRISTIAN

This slightly longer work by the same author could be regarded as a companion volume to the one reviewed above. In thirty-six brief chapters, it deals with a new framework for Christian living and describes the committed Christian of the 21<sup>st</sup> century in a challenging and thought-provoking way.

Its aim is to help Christians to bridge the gap between their experience of the contemporary

world and traditional Christian belief and practice, especially those who are struggling to bring together in a meaningful way conventional Christianity and a contemporary, nourishing understanding and expression of it.

This book is written from the same perspective and with the same clarity as *Tomorrow's Faith* and can be used in the same way.

*Áine Hayde (Integrated Spirituality Team)*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

June 2018						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 Foundation of the Contemplative Sisters (1859)	2 Final Profession of the three Foundresses 1822
3	4 The first three Foundresses made their Act of Consecration 1820	5 Ordination of Pierre Bienvenu Noailles (Eve of the Trinity 1819) World Environment Day	6 Fr. Noailles' first Mass (Trinity Sunday 1819)	7	8	9
10	11	12 Our Lady of All Graces World Day against Child Labour	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20 World Refugee Day	21	22	23
24	25	26	27 UN International Day against Victims of Torture	28	29 Feast of the brothers, Pierre Bienvenu and Amand, Noailles	30