



The Holy Family of Bordeaux

in Britain and Ireland

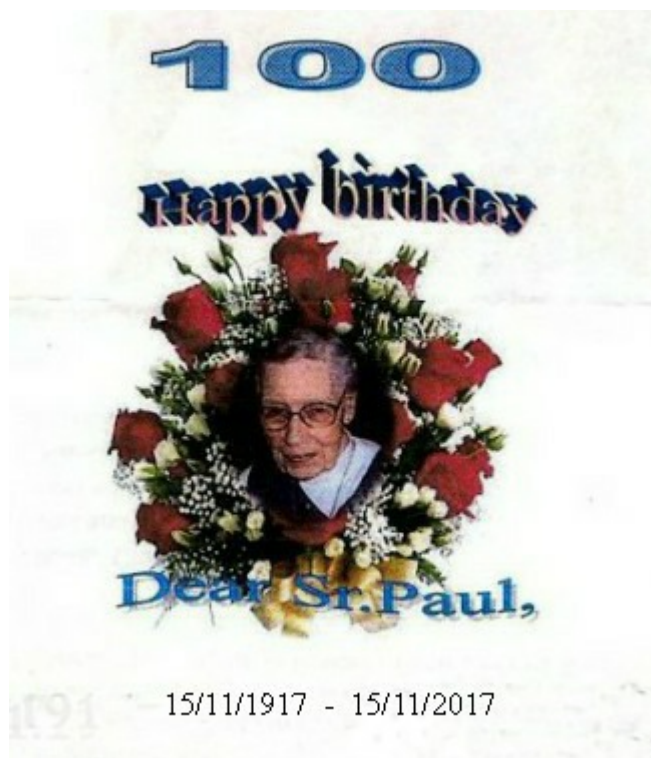
Glory to God alone in Jesus Christ through Mary and Saint Joseph

November 2017

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EDITORIAL

“What did you do, our children will ask us, when you knew?” This remark came from a nameless man at a meeting where serious environmental concerns were being deliberately ignored in favour of a project that would bring great wealth to an area. It should give us thought at this time when we have constantly before us the dire consequences of climate change. Fossil fuels and transport are the worst emitters of greenhouse gases (GHG).



We have, to some extent made the transition from the intellectual, theoretical level to that of action. We re-cycle and re-use as much as we can. We don't burn coal or turf but we do use gas. We do our best to insulate our houses and make them energy efficient, but there is only one - Bradford - where, so far as we know, solar panels have been installed. We have a policy of ethical investments but, in this era of climate change, more may be required to ensure we are not colluding with the fossil fuel industry. We try to use public transport locally but would we dare to calculate our carbon footprint considering the amount of air travel we do? As yet, there are no secondhand electric cars for sale but should that deter us from beginning to consider using them?

As *Holy Family* (the wide family) in Britain and Ireland, perhaps we could open a conversation on how we are responding to this most serious issue, share ideas, actions, and also discover what help is available. Our Founder, 200 hundred years ago, saw the pressing needs of his time and founded congregation after congregation to meet them. Tackling climate change is a most pressing need today, as it is the root cause of so many others, especially the displacement of people.

Message from Sr. Gemma (Unit Leader)

AN INCONVENIENT SEQUEL: TRUTH TO POWER

Recently I saw Al Gore's "Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power", a follow up of his first Oscar winning documentary called "An Inconvenient Truth". This first film, produced in 2006, was a presentation on the threat to our planet caused by climate change. The second documentary builds on the first making the point even more forcefully that Climate Change is very real.

Rising seas, expanding deserts, blistering heat, severe drought, raging wildfires, floods, storms, hurricanes and other extreme weather events are warning signs that our climate is changing. This year such extreme weather occurrences have been evident all over the planet - hurricanes in the Caribbean and Florida; devastating floods in India and Bangladesh. Climate Change is largely the product of human agency; it poses an existential threat to humanity and scientists warn us that we need to act now if we are to save ourselves and our planet from disaster.

In a recent communiqué published in the Journal of Bioscience, more than 15,000 scientists from 184 countries issued a stark warning: "Humanity has failed to make sufficient progress in solving the environmental challenges facing us and alarmingly most of them are getting worse. Soon it will be too late to shift course away from our failing trajectory".

Climate change deniers still exist, chief among them Donald Trump who presides over a cabinet, some of the members of which pour scorn on the whole idea of climate change. A few months ago, the picture of Donald Trump on the White House lawn,

announcing the withdrawal of the US from the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement, to the smiles and applause of a gathering of his cabinet and members of the White House staff, said it all.

Climate Change is THE issue of our time and it is probably the greatest threat and the greatest challenge for humankind in the 21st century. It is no exaggeration to say that the future of human civilization is at risk because we are destroying the very foundation for life on the planet and it is an issue that has far-reaching implications for our efforts to relieve poverty, to establish and maintain peace, and for the economy.

Al Gore said the following words after receiving the Nobel Peace Prize together with the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change: "We face a true planetary emergency. The climate crisis is not a political issue; it is a moral and spiritual challenge to all of humanity."

In his Encyclical "[Laudato Si'](#)," Pope Francis makes this very point - that climate change must be addressed as a moral issue in order to protect the Earth, "our common home". The Pope has called for immediate changes in human behaviour in order to combat global warming. He warns against climate sceptics: "*Doomsday predictions can no longer be met with irony or disdain. We may well be leaving to future generations, debris, desolation and filth. The pace of consumption, waste and environmental change has so stretched the planet's capacity that our contemporary*

lifestyle, unsustainable as it is, can only precipitate catastrophes."



But there is great reason

for hope. There is growing awareness all over the globe that our climate is changing and that it is up to us to make a determined commitment to transform our behaviour so as to be environmentally sustainable.

The answer is in our hands. We need to take up our task as global citizens knowing that what we do and how we live our lives have a profound impact on the whole. We are called to reduce our consumption and differentiate our needs from our wants and to tread lightly on Earth. We are called to engage in political action in support of change. Above all we are called to pray, think, feel and love globally.

As we move towards 2018, we have every reason to place our hope and trust in God. After all, as Sallie McFague reminds us: this beautiful Earth is God's creation. "*God loves it and because God loves it, it will survive and flourish. This is the basis of our trust and hope. To trust in God means that God can be counted on to hold one's life and all life in trust, in safekeeping. It means one can rest one's life – and the life of the whole planet – in God, knowing that this trust will somehow be honoured*". (A New Climate for Theology. Fortress Press. 2008. P.170)

THE GIFT OF YEARS

On 15 November, Sr. Paul (Mary) Gravin celebrated her 100th birthday. And, since the joy of one is the joy of all, we - her *Holy Family* sisters, her blood family to the third generation, and friends - celebrated with her.

Saturday, 8 November at 10 a.m., saw her in Tougher's in Naas surrounded by almost 80 well-wishers for what was truly an *agape*, a love feast in thanksgiving for



God's boundless love for Sr. Paul. Though physically bowed under the weight of her years, she was unbowed in spirit greeting all with her loving and



lovely smile. Her brother Patrick, also a religious with the Christian Brothers, and with the sum of 96 years, was the chief guest.

The Eucharist, at which several priest friends, concelebrated, was presided over by Bishop Denis Nulty of the Kildare and Leighlin diocese. Bishop Denis is no stranger to the Newbridge community and would not have missed the occasion such is his appreciation of the life vibrating within the convent walls. Love, communion and blessing were themes that ran through the different parts of the Mass. The bishop's



homily was light-hearted in keeping with the prevailing atmosphere of simple joy. Before the final blessing, Sr. Frances read a message from the General Leadership Team (see page 5).

Communion continued with food and companionship at the excellent festive meal, at the end of which the birthday cake was cut. Before that, however, Sr. Esther took the guests through a well-researched account of Mary Gravin's Birth Family Story and Sr. Paul Gravin's *Holy Family* Story. To read a version of this on our website, follow the [link...](#) Another link worth visiting displays some of [Sr. Paul's paintings](#), a talent she developed in her later years in Newbridge.





Several were sold at exhibitions and the proceeds went to the *Holy Family* Pakistan missions.



Not surprisingly, energies began to flag after the meal but they revived miraculously at the sound of music. Sr. Annie had brought her accordion and soon had everyone, including Sr. Paul and Bro Patrick in their wheelchairs, singing along.



There is a time for everything under the sun so, when 4 p.m. came, it was time to leave that place and Sr. Paul, who had remained serene and smiling throughout.

The actual day of her birth is 15 November and it remained for her to have a quiet celebration in the intimacy of her community.

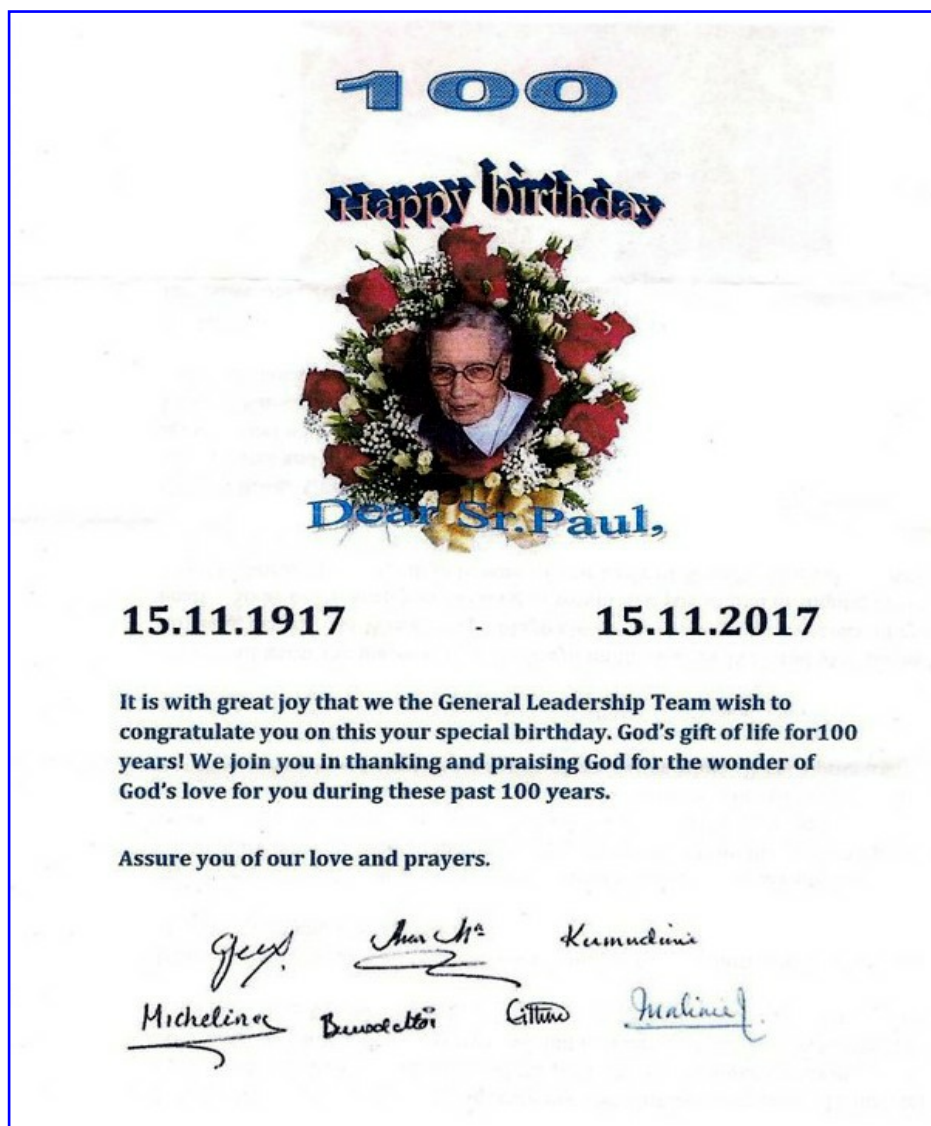


Holy Family Secondary School choir with Sr. Paul



Community friend, Ann Morris, congratulates Sr. Paul

Not surprisingly, news had filtered out to the students of *Holy Family* Secondary School. The school choir, whose members had on other occasions come to entertain the sisters, asked to come and sing for Sr. Paul.



A WORD FROM SR. PAUL

I would like to thank you all for making my 100th birthday so special. Thank you, Sisters Catherine and Eileen, for all the planning and thoughtfulness in arranging the Mass and the lovely meal and making my family and friends so welcome and at home, both in Toughers on the 11th and here today, the 15th. Birthdays provide us with opportunities to reflect on the journey and the people, too many to name, who shared it.

A special word of gratitude to my present community who are such an important supportive part of my life and who put up with me as the body slows down. Thank you for your love, your companionship and patience. Though the body weakens, the spirit and mind are alive and well and most appreciative of your friendship.

To the staff of the care unit, thank you for your care, your encouragement and attentiveness at all times.

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS FROM Árus and Uachtarán

Like all Irish centenarians, Sr. Paul got a letter of congratulation from President Michael D. Higgins and a substantial cheque.

Recalling all the changes she must have experienced in her long life, he concluded:

“May you be surrounded today by the warmth of happy memories and secure in the knowledge that you continue to make this world a better place for all who love you. I am delighted to send my warmest personal congratulations and sincere good wishes.”

BOOK REVIEW

This is the first in a series of book reviews from the Integrated Spirituality Team, offered by them in response to a request made at the meeting of teams of participation in Crewe in

THE FIRST CHRISTMAS

In spite of its title, this book can be read at any time of the year. Written by two well-known contemporary New Testament scholars, Marcus J. Borg and John Dominic Crossan, *The First Christmas* sheds new light on events with which we have all been familiar since childhood. It also gives us valuable insights into how the Gospels were composed and alerts us to the pitfalls of reading the Bible as if it were a series of books written in modern times.

The authors' concern in this work is to reflect on the *meaning* behind the infancy narratives in the contexts of the first century and our Christian understanding and commitment today. We are invited to take seriously *now* what these stories meant for people *then*.

The stories about the birth of Jesus are found in Matthew 1 and 2 and Luke 1 and 2 and they are quite different from each other. Very often, however, we gloss over these differences and run the accounts together into one story. Looking at them separately can be very enlightening – as we see early in the book.

The authors give a very clear explanation of how the truth of a story does not depend on its factuality but rather on its meaning. The notion of “parable” is used to illustrate this. If we do not go beyond factuality we risk missing a parable’s meaning and truth. Our approach also needs to be historical, “seeing ancient text in ancient context”. This way of looking at the infancy narratives is shared by the majority of mainstream scholars today. The stories are more-than-factual, more-than-literal. That is why, like

everything else in Scripture, we can reflect on them again and again and get more meaning from them. However, we are warned about allowing our reading to become too “spiritual” and otherworldly.

There is also a reflection on the birth stories as overtures to the respective Gospels. Since the gospels of Matthew and Luke are very different, so their overtures (a microcosm of the whole) must also be very different.

Our attention is drawn to the importance of context – the kingdom of Rome and the kingdom of God. We miss much of the meaning of the Christmas stories if we see them only from a Christian perspective. We need to read them in the context of Roman imperialism too. This gives them a whole new depth of meaning. It is easy for us with our twenty-first-century mindset to miss the deep significance of the allusions and references to the Old Testament, Roman imperialist theology and Greek philosophy.

Each gospel has a different genealogy and these genealogies have separate purposes. Again they are not historical. We must look on them as parables in order to seek their meaning and purpose. A parallel perusal of an imperial Roman genealogy makes for very interesting and thought-provoking reading.

Some points that we could easily miss are highlighted. Matthew’s annunciation is to Joseph in Bethlehem while Luke’s is to Mary in Nazareth. Matthew draws parallels between Jesus’s conception and that of



Moses; Luke's parallels are between Jesus and John the Baptist. According to Matthew Jesus was born in a house in Bethlehem, Mary's and Joseph's hometown. According to Luke, the birth took place in a stable in Bethlehem when they had come there from Nazareth. In neither gospel is there mention of a virgin birth. We learn about divine/virginal (and post-menopausal) conceptions in Jewish, Roman and Greek traditions. A divine conception was the ancients' "way of asserting an individual's transcendental character..."

The two evangelists use the Old Testament to highlight the uniqueness of Jesus – Matthew seeing events as fulfilling the "predictions" of the Old

Testament and Luke echoing it. For both, Jesus is the fulfillment of prophecy, but in a much deeper way than most of us have imagined.

This book is not an easy read but it is well worth the effort of taking the time to mull over it and to let its implications sink in if only to strengthen our conviction that we need to delve well below the words on the page and read them in a broad context when we reflect on Scripture. It is an invitation to unlearn, to read the infancy narratives again – as though for the first time – and to see them differently.

Áine Hayde

The First Christmas is published by Harper Collins (2007) and is available in Paperback, Hardback, Kindle and Audiobook from amazon.co.uk (It is possible to listen to an interview with the authors by clicking [here...](#) Ed.)

THE ONGOING IMPACT OF *Laudato Si'*

A "dangerous book"

Two events I attended this November gave me a rush of adrenalin. The first was the launch by *Veritas* of the book, *Laudato Si': An Irish Response*. Edited by Séan McDonagh, the book is a collection of essays on Pope Francis' encyclical by academics and commentators, many of whom – John Feehan, Donal Dorr, Brigid Reynolds, Séan Healy – are well known to us. Launching the book, Mary Robinson, former President of Ireland, paid tribute to Pope Francis, saying his encyclical captures both the cry of the poor and the cry of the earth. She highlighted how the pope tells us that the human environment and the natural environment deteriorate together; "we cannot adequately combat environmental degradation unless we attend to the causes related to human and social degradation".

In the first Chapter, Séan McDonagh compares *Laudato Si'* with three important encyclicals, *Rerum Novarum* (1893) which criticised the exploitation of workers in factories, *Pacem in Terris* (1963) which not only rejected war but provided a path towards lasting peace, and *Populorum Progressio* (1967) in which Pope Paul VI created a framework for



Mary Robinson at book launch in TCD chapel

evaluating what kind of development could be called human development. He shows how, as Mary Robinson said in her address, "*Laudato Si'* takes on an even wider perspective to embrace not just workers and the poor but all creation". He also calls for a three-year synod on ecology at local, national and international level, as a way the Church could begin educating itself about all the issues raised by climate change. He suggests the first year could be diocesan and parish based as people got to know their local environments. It would offer the

opportunity to local groups of developing their own liturgies and a spirituality to honour their relationship with God, all creatures, and the natural world.

Fr. Dermot Lane, parish priest and former president of Mater Dei Institute, is said to have started such an approach in his parish. In his essay he gives an anthropological and theological reflection on the encyclical. He turns anthropology on its head, giving what he calls the “ingredients of a chastened anthropology” where the saying “I think, therefore I am” is replaced by “we relate, therefore I am”.

In poetical and mystical language, John Feehan writes insightfully about *Creation as Incarnation*, reflecting on *Biodiversity in Laudato Si’*. He, too, sees the parish as the territorial focus to nurture and advance a new awareness of natural diversity.

In their chapter in the book, Brigid Reynolds and Séan Healy focus on justice and ecology. They believe that a basic income for everyone would lessen inequality. This is a theme they constantly return to and there is evidence that the idea is, at least, being listened to in Government circles in Ireland.

It’s not possible to refer to all the essays in this book, but let me mention one by Lorna Gold that particularly excited me. Lorna Gold is vice chair of the *Global Catholic Climate Movement* which came about to promote *Laudato Si’* across the world. In the opening paragraph of her essay, *The Disruptive Power of Laudato Si’ – A ‘Dangerous Book’*, she declares with



Mary Robinson presents a copy of *Laudato Si’* to the Pope at a meeting of the Elders

examples how “every revolution”, “each struggle against injustice” is “encapsulated in a moment that pierces a hole in the prevailing logic”. The publication of *Laudato Si’* is one such moment, “an event rather than a book”. It has thrown open the whole debate on climate

change in a way hitherto unthinkable, uniting academics, economists, politicians, the most unlikely people. It has happened because it is the right time but also because of the manner in which Pope Francis does it. He has enabled us to see the whole. He does not pretend to know it all and when he points to concrete solutions he does not dogmatise or manufacture solutions. Importantly, he stresses throughout that shifting towards an integral ecology is a collective exercise.

For anyone who wants a comprehensive approach to the Encyclical, this is the book. After reading it, it would be impossible not to be motivated to do all we can to prevent further damage to the only planet we have, and try to repair what damage has already been done and preserve it for future generations.

But it goes deeper than that. In the final chapter of *Laudato Si’* Pope Francis writes of a spiritual and cultural renewal, a change of heart and a new interiority as being essential to rebuild a loving relationship with Mother Earth and states:

“Living our vocation to be protectors of God’s handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience.” (127)

Laudato Si’: An Irish Response is published by Veritas - www.veritas.ie - publications@veritas.ie

Laudato Si’: A Springboard for ambitious Climate Action in Ireland

The second event, a seminar independently organised by Trócaire, seemed like a logical follow up to the first, with its emphasis on action. The keynote speaker was Rev. Fletcher Harper, CEO of the international interfaith environmental group, Green Faith, who spoke of the

role of faith-based organisations in raising awareness and furthering action on climate change.

He came fresh from the COP23 meeting in Bonn and spoke for an hour, if not more, on the experience. I’ll just mention briefly a few points raised by him

and the panellists, who included two of the contributors to the book just mentioned.

The time has gone when we can talk about climate change in the future. The words 'shall; and 'will' have to disappear from the discourse. The many recent natural disasters, some of which we in the west are unaware of, leave no room for scepticism.

It has become clear that we cannot rely on politicians to lead. It has to be done by us. The street marches in many cities around the world before the COP21 meeting in Paris, and the many marchers who converged on Paris in 2015, were hugely influential in getting the agreement signed. Unfortunately, not all commitments have been acted upon.

A new US study has unequivocally concluded that global warming is being driven by human activity such as the burning of fossil fuel. Divestment from fossil fuel is essential to the reduction of carbon emissions.

Renewables are available in wind, wave, and hydro power. The Fossil Fuel Divestment movement, the speaker said, took off because of students. Since the campaign was launched in 2012 more than 220 institutions, such as universities, faith organisations, local authorities, pension funds and foundations, have committed to divesting from fossil fuels.

Obviously, the transition from fossils to renewables will need to be carefully planned so that workers can be retrained for the new skills that will be required. For a just transition, the workers will have to be included in the planning.

When the Panellists spoke, the focus shifted nearer home. Ireland is lagging behind most European countries and beyond. Transport, farming and turf burning are the sticking points that will prevent the country meeting its commitments in 2020, or even in 2030. It was reiterated that the people need to raise their voices politically and hold the government to account.

The participants were given hard copies of two Trócaire publications: **Ethical Investment in an era of Climate Change: A GUIDE TO REVIEWING ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL GOVERNANCE OF CATHOLIC INVESTMENTS** and **Still Feeling the Heat: How climate change continues to drive extreme weather in the developing world.**

They can be downloaded in PDF by clicking on the links.

On the last page of the guide is a list of 59 Catholic Institutions committed to Divestment as of 4 October 2017. Three are Irish: Presentation Sisters of two Provinces and Trócaire. Two are in the UK: Catholic Action for Animals and Newton University.

Síle McGowan

This guide makes the case for all Catholic institutions with financial investments to review the relationship between their investments and climate change. It presents a step by step guide to reviewing investments, divesting from the primary cause of climate change – namely fossil fuels - and considering re-investment in climate solutions.

Introduction, p. 2

Welcome Home, Sheila!

We take this opportunity to welcome Sheila Griffiths back to the Province and her first homeland.

Like all who have lived and worked abroad for so many years, she has a second homeland, Pakistan, and many moments to treasure of her time there, something of which she shares with us in the following page.

A TIME TO COUNT MY BLESSINGS

Looking back on my life as a Missionary in Pakistan gives me the opportunity to reflect on the many graces and blessings I have received over the past 42 years and how the Lord has been working in my life, whether I recognized it or not at the moment. The following words bear out my experience:

"Blessings. What are they? All of creation is sacred because it is made by God. To bless anything of creation is to acknowledge the touch of the Creator upon that object or person. Attentiveness to the present moment is essential for a blessing to truly communicate the life and beauty of God. Blessings are not always immediately felt. Sometimes these blessings come disguised in the pain, struggle and hardship of the unwanted parts of our lives. It is only later, with hindsight, that we see what a gift those times or those events were for us." (Joyce Rupp)

In 1975 when I first arrived in this land, I was greeted by the people of Chak 6-4/L as Sr. Tofa (gift). On the first Sunday after my arrival the parish priest announced that three *Holy Family* Sisters from Rome, Sr. Marie Paule Chauvin, Sr. Mary Slaven and Sr. Pierette Demontigny, had come to visit the sisters and had brought with them a gift (TOFA in Urdu,) namely myself. So immediately I was nicknamed, Sr. Tofa. As I started my missionary venture, I was more conscious of what I had to give to the people of Pakistan. However, over the past 42 years I have come to realize that I have received more than I have given. My life has been enriched many ways.

Learning a new language and culture was not easy. I am most grateful to all who encouraged and supported me in the first five years to ground myself. Children are very easy to relate to and from them I gained courage to pick up and pronounce the strange sounding words of the Urdu language. In fact, it was by communicating with them and through them, that I overcame my shyness to speak. In the villages people mostly speak Punjabi, which I barely understood or spoke; with the help of a child as a translator, I visited the families and got to know their situation. Like Abraham, who welcomed the three guests, I too experienced hospitality and welcome from the people, and learned how to welcome others, whether the time was right or not. How often I used to get

angry when someone came to see me mid-afternoon, usually when I was resting. The three visitors disturbed Abraham but he welcomed them graciously and offered them hospitality.

The animation received from the General Leadership Team, has been a great blessing for me. Besides deepening my awareness of who I am in the Institute of the *Holy Family*, I have come to a deeper desire to share this GIFT with others. Involvement in the work of formation is certainly not an easy task but it has been a blessing for me. Having to prepare lessons for the candidates, pre-novices and temporary professed sisters has increased my knowledge of, and deepened my love for the Family, besides affording me the opportunity to share this with others. I have touched the lives of many sisters, priests and lay people, who are now living the spirituality of the *Holy Family*, some of whom have committed themselves in the Family of Pierre Bienvenu Noailles.

Over the past years, as I moved from one community to the other, I have interacted with sisters of different nationalities and personalities. This, too, has become a blessing in disguise as I reflect on it, though I must admit it was not always easy at the time. I have come to accept differentiation through the hard way. Martillac holds a special place in my heart. Over the past 5 years I have had the blessing of participating twice in the sessions where the THREE PRINCIPLES OF THE UNIVERSE was one of the topics touched on. In October, 2016, I came to understand this topic a little more clearly and on my return to Pakistan was able to share it with the Priest associates and sisters. It has also helped me to go deeper in my relationships in Community.

The Bicentenary of the foundation of our family of Pierre Bienvenu Noailles is truly a blessing. I am sure our first Mothers, who were so discouraged after the first two years, are rejoicing now as we celebrate the year of preparation, 2017, looking back and counting the blessings over the past 200 years. Today, as I look back on my missionary life, I realize I am a richer person now than when I first came here. I thank the Lord for his goodness to me and sing,



*'Oh! Give thanks to the Lord for God is good
Yes, eternal is God's love'.*

Sheila Griffiths

BREATHTAKING MOMENTS

We were asked to go to Ireland for three months to learn English. When we reached Ireland, we felt the differences between two countries. We put on our jackets! We were nervous but when we met Sr. Claire with her loving and simple welcome we were more comfortable. And when we reached the house Sr. Síle was there to welcome us warmly. She had prepared warm soup to refresh us. Both of them showed us language is not a barrier to live communion.

On our first day in Delfin, our language school, we were guided by Sr. Síle. Yes, everywhere English, only English, in accordance with the slogan, "Delfin speaks only English". But we felt great encouragement to go forward, from God. As the days passed we felt we were improving a lot. Every day Sr. Síle helped us to improve in grammar and speaking.

On the other hand, we were inspired by the culture differences and the lifestyle of the sisters. We saw all the time they balanced their lives with their work, prayer and relaxation. With all this, they were there to help and give every comfort to us. It was really impressive to live with them.

We were used to having rice every day, but here it was potatoes every day, potatoes without spice!!! It was a little tricky. Though it was tricky, they provided superb food for us. We enjoyed it a lot. They let us have Asian food also when possible.

One day, we had a chance to participate in a cluster meeting in Clane. While we were having the meeting, there was a moment to share about our vocation. We were reluctant to share our experience because of our poor English but all the sisters admired us a lot about our sharing. It was a very unique moment and

we felt all are with us to go forward.

At weekends we got the chance to go around the country. The places are very astonishing. We were stunned by the beauty of the flowers and gardens. And we got the chance, which we get in Sri Lanka very rarely. We watched several movies. We were relaxed and learned, too, from that.

With these breath-taking experiences, we would like to thank Sr. Gemma (Provincial) who gave us this opportunity, Srs. Claire and Síle who did the service of providing us with every comfort and making the environment to improve our English, Srs. Lil and Colette who gave supportive hands when needed, and also all the sisters in Newbridge and all the sisters in Ireland and Sr. Catherine who came to spend some time with us.

As we are leaving Ireland, we can say we fulfilled our target and we are taking good memories and we have memorable moments to remember and can praise God for the family spirit.

Srs. Ranjika and Anuradha
(With some interference from Sr. Síle)



We, Claire and Síle, would like to express our appreciation to Anuradha and Ranjika for the way they entered into the life of our community of two, after the initial strangeness had passed. We prayed together, worked together and, very importantly, laughed together, as they single-mindedly pursued the goal for which they had come - to improve their proficiency in English, and learned to relax at weekends

They go back to Sri Lanka with God's blessing and ours, and the good wishes of the many friends they made in their college and in the Province.

Beatitudes for Earth Sunday

by Richard S. Gilbert

Blessed are the heavens,
for they declare the power of creation.
Blessed is the earth, our beloved home,
for she is a planet of plenitude.

Blessed are the waters thereon,
for they gave rise to living things.
Blessed is the land,
for it is the source of life abundant.

Blessed is the air we breathe,
for it fires us to life and love.
Blessed are the beasts of the field,
for they are glorious to behold.

Blessed are the birds of the air,
for they carve a graceful arc in the sky.
Blessed are the mountains and the seas and the valleys,
for their variety makes rich our habitat.

Blessed are the fields of grain, the orchards of fruit,
for they give sustenance, asking nothing in return.
Blessed are the dwellers on earth,
for they cherish the privilege of living upon it.

Blessed are they who protect the earth and all her creatures,
from the plants of the field to the trees of the forest,
for their reward shall be harmony with the web of existence.
Rejoice, and be glad,
for the earth and her people are one.

Submitted by Gemma

UPCOMING EVENTS

December 2017						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 World AIDS Day	2 International Day for the Abolition of Slavery
3 1 st Sunday of Advent	4	5 International Volunteers Day	6 Foundation of Sisters of the Immaculate Conception 182	7	8 Immaculate Conception of the BVM	9
10 Our Lady of Loreto Human Rights Day	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18 Our Lady of Hope Approval of Constitutions of Holy Family Srs. 1903 & 1088 International Migrants Day	19	20 International Human Rights Day	21	22	23
24 4 th Sunday of Advent Christmas Eve	25 Christman Day	26	27	28	29	30
31 The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph						

I came across this [link](#) to a UISG meeting in Manila which dealt, among others, with the theme:
Building community in an intercultural world.
 Very interesting for us who are attempting to build intercultural communities.