



Family Links

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

November 2018

Volume 4 Issue 9

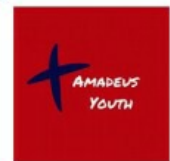
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Amadeus Youth

Some of the leaders got the opportunity to wish Sr Paul a very happy 101st Birthday! What an incredible woman who always keeps the youth in our Parish in her prayers.



Editorial

As always, during the month November, we remembered in prayer and ritual our dear departed family members and friends. This year, there was an added poignancy to all our commemorations as we recalled the 100th anniversary of the end of the First World War. The utter folly and futility of war was starkly presented to us in many ways so that we almost lived – re-lived for some - the terrible horrors of the Great War.



Close up of Haunting Soldier

That things fell apart again in another World War might have made us despair of humanity but, this time, the collapse of the old order opened the way to new possibilities. Thanks to the vision of a few great European statesmen the Common Market was formed. It developed into the European Economic Community (EEC) and, eventually, the European Union (EU). There is a great need today for visionaries to preserve the ideals of the first founders.

Their primary aim was to ensure that there would be no more war. That is why the idea of creating a European Army, which has recently been mooted, is totally anomalous. It should be evident from all the bloody conflicts that have taken place, are taking place, since the two World Wars that violence under any form is never the way to resolve conflict. Conflict resolution is a skill much in use today. Many books have been written about it and courses offered. Perhaps such a course should be mandatory for those in leadership roles in any sphere of public life.

A particularly admirable example of resolving differences is the way the LCWR in the USA dealt with the Vatican's CDF when called to account by that body. The process and the spiritual journey they followed has been beautifully set out in the book, *However Long the Night*. It should be required reading for faith-based groups and Church authorities.

Leader's Message

FOR ALL THAT HAS BEEN THANK YOU! FOR ALL THAT IS TO COME YES!



Sr. Gemma
Apostolic Sisters

As we move towards year-end, it is fitting that we look back with gratitude on our experiences of God's mercy to us as individuals and as a unit. These experiences of God's mercy make it possible for us to look forward to the future with great hope and confidence trusting that the One who has accompanied us "all the way to this place" will remain with us. *"The Lord goes before you and will be with you; God will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged"*. (Deut: 31:8).

We have much to be thankful for: our life-giving charism which has sustained us and which continues to be generative in a world that longs for unity and peace; the example of all those who have gone before us, sisters and brothers who spent themselves in loving service to Jesus Christ and his Gospel; the openness with which we have embraced change and responded creatively to the new calls coming from a rapidly changing world, especially the calls from those who are displaced and those fleeing from war-torn countries.



We thank God for the commitment of all our members to explore more deeply the richness of our charism with the help of the international teams of participation and we look forward to a future full of hope. *"I know the plans I have for you; plans of peace and not disaster; plans for a future full of hope"*. (Jeremiah 28:11).

Pope Francis in his letter announcing the year of Consecrated Life speaks powerfully of the need for hope in a world where problems seem insurmountable and beyond our capacity to resolve -

climate change, destruction of the environment, poverty and inequality, war and religious conflicts, food and water in security... the list is endless.

The Pope acknowledges also the difficulties facing religious life today but he says: *"It is precisely amid these uncertainties, which we share with so many of our contemporaries, that we are called to practise the virtue of hope, the fruit of our faith in the Lord of history, who continues to tell us: 'Be not afraid... for I am with you' (Jer. 1:8).* He reminds us that our hope is not based on numbers or our accomplish-

ments but on the One *"in whom we have put our trust (2 Tim 1:2) and for whom nothing is impossible (Luke 1:37).*

He continues *"This is the hope which does not disappoint; it is the hope which enables consecrated life to keep writing its great history well into the future. It is to that future that we must always look, conscious*

that the Holy Spirit spurs us on so that God can still do great things with us".

He exhorts us: *"So do not yield to the temptation to see things in terms of numbers and efficiency, and even less to trust in your own strength... I urge you not to join the ranks of the prophets of doom who proclaim the end or the meaningless of the consecrated life in the Church today."* Rather we must be constantly watchful and alert and go forward with great trust in God

With Mary during the Advent season, we await the birth of Jesus in joyful hope. Hope is a recurring theme in the Christmas story. It is the hope for

salvation that depends on a young woman's "yes" to God. It is the hope for salvation that doesn't rely on powerful kings and armies but on a little helpless baby in a straw-filled cradle. It is the hope that inspires a young mother to utter what has been called the most revolutionary Advent hymn ever sung. *"This is not the gentle Mary whom we sometimes see in paintings; this is the passionate, surrendered, proud, enthusiastic Mary who speaks. This song is a hard-hitting strong, inexorable song about collapsing thrones and humbled lords of this world, about the power of God and the powerlessness of humankind"* (Bonhoeffer *"The Mystery of Holy Night"*). It is a song that gives hope to all who struggle, to those who have been oppressed; to the abused and abandoned and to the asylum seekers facing an uncertain future at the hands of inhospitable governments.

Clarissa Pinkola Estes, author, Jungian analyst and poet, tells us that we must never lose heart in the face of difficulties and she adds:

"There can be no despair when you remember why you are here on Earth, who you serve, and who sent you here. The good words we say and the good deeds we do are not ours. They are the words and deeds of the One who brought us here."

As the New Year approaches may we be filled with great hope enabling us to see the presence of God even when God may seem absent. May we, like Mary, confidently say our "yes" to God even at those times when it seems that God is asking the impossible of us. May we continue to dream our Founder's dream of a "new society" and work towards the realization of that dream.

DREAM ME GOD

*It's not you who should solve my problems, God,
but I yours, God of the asylum-seekers.*

*It's not you who should feed the hungry,
but I who should protect your children from the terror of wars and armies.*

*It's not you who should make room for the refugees,
but I who should receive you, hardly hidden God of the desolate.*

*You dreamed me, God, practising walking upright and learning to kneel down
more beautiful than I am now, happier than I dare to be, freer than our country allows.*

*Don't stop dreaming me, God. I don't want to stop remembering that I am your tree,
planted by the streams of living water. (Dorothee Soelle)*

As Gemma comes to the end of her term as Leader of the Apostolic Sisters, we extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to her for her monthly contributions to our Newsletter. Ed.

Newbridge Parish supports Asylum Seekers

Over the past two years we have got to know many of the Asylum seekers who live in Direct Provision in Newbridge. Seventy people, including children, from many different countries live there. Some have now received refugee status but, with the shortage of houses, they are unable to find suitable accommodation and have no choice but to stay in Direct Provision.



The residents are gradually becoming involved in activities in the local community and getting to know the people. They have been invited to a number of Diocesan and Parish events, outings, coffee mornings, and afternoon tea in the Convent.

At our last Afternoon Tea in the Convent we got to know two asylum seekers from Malawi. It was

Sr. Eileen Murphy, Newbridge Parish Sister



Sisters pose with their two friends from Malawi

interesting listening to them and getting to know their country and culture. We talked about our new foundation in Malawi and shared our similarities and differences. Now we will follow news of the new foundation with great interest.



Another of many meetings over a cuppa

News from Magherafelt

A new Lay Member

On 20 November we had the joy of welcoming Winnie Wall's into the Holy Family Association as a Lay Member. Winnie has been coming to our meetings throughout the last year and is a great advocate of Holy Family Spirituality. She is an enthusiastic worker for the poor and the kind of person that gets things done.

Her commitment was made in the Convent House in the context of a Mass for present and deceased members. There were four Lay Members present, as well as Claire Smith, Caitriona and myself. When Winnie pronounced her commitment in the presence of us all, we also renewed renewed our commitment using the revised version of the formula (2006). It was a very moving occasion.

Monsignor O'Byrne reminded us of our responsibilities as full Members of the Association. The Liturgy was lively and James Kilbane helped us

with the singing!! We had a celebratory cuppa after thanksgiving.

Support for Holy Family ministry in Sri Lanka

On the 24th, we ran a Coffee Morning and Raffle to support Holy Family Sisters working with displaced Young People and Orphans in Sri Lanka. It was a joint effort and people had the opportunity to meet, socialise and enjoy themselves. Bakers and helpers were plentiful. We had twelve students from St. Pius X College who also volunteered to help. There was a great atmosphere and good craic. The total raised amounted to £1,400.

We know for sure that our effort can and will make a difference and we are most grateful to all those who contributed to the success of this 'Morning' in any way.

*Margaret Bradley,
on behalf of all Holy Family Members, Magherafelt*

The Haunting Statue

Before November this year, very few people in Ireland had heard of the Haunting Soldier sculpture. It is made from scraps of metal, including horse shoes, spanners, car jacks and brake discs. It was created by artist and blacksmith, Martin Galbavy of Dorset and constructed by Chris Hannam of Dorset Forge and Fabrication.

The six-metre high statue is designed to evoke the fragility and suffering of those who survived the war and returned home to an uncertain and difficult future. It was brought to Ireland by Sabina Purcell, a Dublin-based solicitor who discovered a family connection to those who served in the Great War.

The ghostly figure was on show near the pond in St Stephen's Green until November 26. During that time there was a constant stream of visitors to the Green, many of them awestruck, all admiring, photographing, reminiscing but, shamefully, one night a person or persons daubed it with red paint. Who knows if this was an act of mindless vandalism or that of someone who had suffered too much?

However, the damage was not irreparable and the statue, in its original state, was solemnly dismantled and removed in a moving ceremony on 26 November.



Committee Meeting - Lay Associates Ireland

The Lay Associates Committee met on Saturday, 24 November, and we would like to share a few items with you.

Sr Lil Meagher, Irene Kavanagh, and Damian Doyle have recently stepped down from the National Committee. We thank them for their dedication and service.

The National Committee members now are:

Rose Sullivan (President)
Geraldine Tougher (Secretary)
Brigid Larkin (Treasurer)
Maria McLernon
Sr Bernadette Deegan (National Leader)



Seated: Rose Sullivan, Geraldine Togher
Back: L to R. Brigid Larkin, Marie McLernon, Christine Hegarty, Sr. Bernadette

It has been a joy to learn that Winefride Walls from the Magherafelt group has made her commitment to the Lay Associates. We congratulate her and wish her well.

We had a very full agenda and looked at the feedback from the groups on the Statutes which will now be forwarded to Pedro, our European Leader.

We also spoke about the Bicentenary celebrations and what we might do together as the Family of Pierre Bienvenu Noailles, under the headings of "SPEAK, WRITE, ACT" from the Bicentenary Team letter of October 2018.

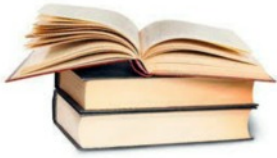
One suggestion was that the Lay Associates might join with the Sisters for Adoration once a month. This would be in addition to their regular monthly meeting. We think this could be an ideal way of preparing for the Bicentenary in view of the blessing of the Miraculous Benediction at the beginning of our Association.

Provisional dates for your diary

Annual pilgrimage to Knock: Saturday, 15 June 2019
AGM in Newbridge: Saturday, 21 September 2019.

Our next National Committee Meeting will take place in March 2019. We would welcome any feedback about your group or any suggestions. Also, please think about writing an article for Family Links, or including something that you think might be of interest to us all.

Rose Sullivan and Bernadette Deegan



BOOK REVIEWS

The Gift of Years

This book, written by Joan Chittister and published by Darton, Longman and Todd inspires the reader with hope. The very cover and design of the book speak of life, vibrancy and newness. It provides us with a series of short reflections on life after sixty-five. Each reflection is followed by a very brief few lines indicating the burden and the blessing of the challenges in question. Chittister assures us that “this period is not about diminishment”. This period of life has its own purpose.

This book looks at the many dimensions of the aging process. It examines the difference between being and doing and argues that both are important dimensions of life. “It is a panoply of life issues that emerge with age to bring us to the fullness of life, to make us new again.”

The fact that these inspirational reflections are short-five or six pages at most- means that the reader can take up the book and concentrate on one topic at a time. The book is not meant to be read straight through. It is too full of wisdom; too insightful to be skimmed over. One needs to take time to savour the depth that is there for the taking.

And one doesn't have to read the topics in order. One can pick up the book and choose any one of the forty two topics for reflection. While not neglecting to draw attention to the reality of aging Chittister's emphasis is always on the positive. This book is truly a wonderful celebration of the blessings of growing older. Our later years are indeed gift, not burden. Helen Prejean says, this book “brims with insight, pluck, verve and courage....It shows us both the joys and the challenges of growing older, and encourages us to discover the deep spiritual meaning that can come with older age.”

There is an indirect link here with the ‘New Story’ of the universe in that facing change and challenge are surely all part of integration and adaptation to newness of life and thought as we age and mature. Change/ evolution is at the heart of the story of the universe; its expansion and revelations are on-going. Change is a constant within the universe, within the whole of creation and within every living being. We humans are all part of the change. *The Gift of Years* is a valuable, interesting read and is readily available from Amazon.

Margaret Bradley (Integrated Spirituality Team)

¹ *The Gift of Years*, 2011. p 17

² *The Gift of Years*, 2011. Introduction, p xv

UPCOMING EVENTS

December 2018						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 Installation of new Leadership Team for Vritain and Ireland World AIDS Day
2 1 st Sunday of Advent International Day for the abolition of Slavery	3	4	5 International Volunteers Day	6 Foundation of the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception 1829	7	8 Feast of the Immaculate Conception
9	10 Feast of Our Lady of Loreto	11	12	13	14	15
16 2 nd Sunday of Advent	17	18 Our Lady of Hope Approbation of Constitutions of HF Sisters 1903 and International Migrants Day	19	20 International Human Rights Day	21	22
23 3 rd Sunday of Advent	24	25 ChristmasDay	26	27	28	29
30 Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph	31					