



The Holy Family of Bordeaux in Britain and Ireland

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

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Newbridge Community knitters with friend and mentor,
Annie Morris, back row, 1st from right

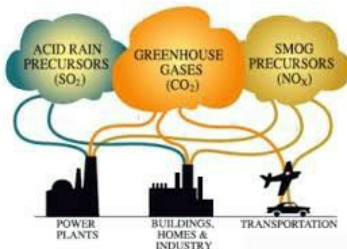
EDITORIAL

Politicians have a habit of conjugating their verbs in the future, a political analyst once said. To realise how true it is we have only to look at the housing crisis in our countries on both sides of the Irish sea. As the number of homeless people grows our governments tell us what they are planning to do and when, in the future, we may see improvements.

A somewhat similar scenario can be detected where environmental issues are concerned. It was a euphoric moment when the Paris climate agreement (COP21) was ratified on 5 October 2015. That national leaders finally produced a concrete, binding agreement was due, as much to their efforts, as to those of the NGOs, voluntary groups and movements whose members brought great pressure to bear on their governments and mobilised the general population to do the same.

Since then, however, the US has withdrawn from the agreement and other countries are trying to renege, to some degree, on what they undertook or deferred the deadline for implementation. That is why the grassroots organisations are gearing up in preparation for the next UN Climate Change Conference (COP23) to be held in Bonn from 6 - 17 November this year, when the committed nations meet "to advance the aims and ambitions of the Paris agreement and achieve progress on its implementation guidelines".

It is becoming increasingly clear that change will only come about when committed people organise to demand it with sufficient energy and determination. One of the fastest growing movements for climate change is that of [fossil fuel divestment](#). It is heartening to see how some Institutions in the [Catholic Church](#) have embraced it. Could the *Holy Family*, the large Family of Pierre Bienvenu Noailles be part of this movement?



Message from Sr. Gemma (Unit Leader)

WE ARE THE STORYTELLERS

We are coming to the end of this first year of preparation for the 200th anniversary of our foundation. During this year we looked back on our story as *Holy Family*, and we remembered and gave thanks for all the blessings we have received during this time

Our *Holy Family* story, like all stories, originated 13.7 billion years ago in the original flaring forth that was the beginning of all that is. In a single moment, all the energy that would ever exist in the entire course of time erupted as a single quantum – a singular gift – LIFE. In the future, stars would blaze forth, flowers and plants would flourish, animals would come into being, humans with the capacity to reflect, to create, to love would be born – all powered by the one creative energy that burst forth at the dawn of time. All life is connected to that first powerful creative moment. *“God saw everything that God made and it was very good”*.

Our stories, as individuals, families and nations are embedded in that Great Story of the universe. It is the wonderful story of God’s love and God’s delight in creation and we, as the universe become conscious of itself, are the ones who are now telling it. All over the globe, on the Internet, in schools, colleges, in retreat and conference centres, the great story is being told, and we are drawn to marvel and reflect on how it impacts on us and changes our relationship to Earth, to one another, to ourselves and to God. The New Story has brought about a radical shift in our worldview and consequently in our actions and behaviour. The New Story has helped us realize that we are all connected and we are all responsible for one an-

other and for our common home – Earth.

Our times require new storytellers. Good

storytellers *“have the power to shape our reality, to alter our perceptions, to create new worlds of experience. Storytelling is, in fact, a god-like power, one that can affect and change consciousness... If, as St. John says, in the Beginning was the Word, then the Story followed directly after, unfolding the universe from the imagination of God. In emulation of the divine, we have sought to duplicate that moment of creation by being storytellers, too.”* (David Spangler - Context Institute 1997)

Spangler goes on to say that storytellers are not mere purveyors of facts and information. Rather good storytellers connect with the emotions of their listeners; they fire the imagination and inspire creative involvement. They encourage participation in the storytelling so that the listeners identify with the story and allow the story to transform them from within. Then, they in turn feel the impulse to tell the story and present a vision of a changed, hope-filled future. We ask ourselves: in telling the story of Jesus, of our Family, are we able to fire the imagination of our listeners? Does our storytelling invite creative participation and inspire wholehearted commitment?

The awakening of such creative participation and commitment everywhere in our world gives us great hope for the future. We know that the New Story of the Universe requires our active participation; it demands that we take up our role as co-creators, contributing to the emergence of greater life, wholeness and abundance in our world. It



requires us to be responsible for working with others to resolve the great problems facing humanity today.

Climate change, for example, is recognized as one of the biggest threats to the future of life on Earth. At the Paris climate conference in December 2015, 195 countries adopted the first-ever universal, [legally binding global climate deal](#). The agreement sets out a global action plan to put the world on track to avoid dangerous climate change by limiting global warming to well below 2°C.

So, we are beginning to take on board our respon-

sibility as storytellers and planetary citizens. The little pale blue dot filmed by the space probe Cassini is our home, the only home we have, vulnerable in the vast blackness of space. It is our privilege and duty to love her and care for her; our destiny is intimately bound up with hers.

The 200th anniversary of our Foundation is an opportunity to see our *Holy Family* Story as part of the Great Story, to take up the challenge of telling our *Holy Family* story in new, exciting and creative ways that invite participation and inspire commitment to live God's dream which was also our Founder's – to draw all people into the one Family of God.

THE PALE BLUE DOT

"Look again at that dot. That's here. That's home. That's us. On it everyone you love, everyone you know, everyone you ever heard of, every human being who ever was, lived out their lives. The aggregate of our joy and suffering, thousands of confident religions, ideologies, and economic doctrines, every hunter and forager, every hero and coward, every creator and destroyer of civilization, every king and peasant, every young couple in love, every mother and father, hopeful child, inventor and explorer, every teacher of morals, every corrupt politician, every "superstar," every "supreme leader," every saint and sinner in the history of our species lived there—on a mote of dust suspended in a sunbeam.

The Earth is a very small stage in a vast cosmic arena. Think of the endless cruelties visited by the inhabitants of one corner of this pixel on the scarcely distinguishable inhabitants of some other corner, how frequent their misunderstandings, how eager they are to kill one another, how fervent their hatreds. Think of the rivers of blood spilled by all those generals and emperors so that,

in glory and triumph, they could become the momentary masters of a fraction of a dot. Our posturing, our imagined self-importance, and the delusion that we have some privileged position in the Universe, are challenged by this point of pale light. Our planet is a lonely speck in the great enveloping cosmic dark. In our obscurity, in all this vastness, there is no hint that help will come from elsewhere to save us from ourselves.

The Earth is the only world known so far to harbour life. There is nowhere else, at least in the near future, to which our species could migrate. Visit, yes. Settle, not yet. Like it or not, for the moment the Earth is where we make our stand.

It has been said that astronomy is a humbling and character-building experience. There is perhaps no better demonstration of the folly of

human conceits than this distant image of our tiny world. To me, it underscores our responsibility to deal more kindly with one another, and to preserve and cherish the pale blue dot, the only home we've ever known." *Carl Sagan, Pale Blue Dot: A Vision of the Human Future in Space*



The pale blue dot that is planet Earth filmed from Cassini 800 million miles away

The Story Tellers

We are the chosen.
We are the ones who are called to remember the ancestors.
To put flesh on their bones and make them live again,
to tell the family story
and to feel that somehow those who have gone before us know and approve.

Remembering and telling the story
is not a cold gathering of facts
but, instead, it is breathing life into all who have gone before.
We are the story tellers of the tribe.
We have been called, as it were by our genes.

Those who have gone before cry out to us:
"Tell our story!"
So, we do.
In finding them, we somehow find ourselves.

How many times have we told the ancestors
We have a wonderful family
And a wonderful story to tell.
It goes beyond just documenting facts.

It goes to who we are and why do we do the things we do
It goes to pride in what our ancestors were able to accomplish.
How they contributed to what we are today.

It goes to
respecting their hardships and losses,
their never giving in or giving up,
their resoluteness to go on
and build a life for the Family.

It goes to deep pride that they fought to make and keep us together as Family
It goes to a deep and immense understanding that they were doing it for us
That we might be born who we are.
That we might remember them.
So we do.
With love and caring and scribing each fact of their existence,
because we are them and they are us.

And so It is up to us to answer the call
and take our place
in the long line of family storytellers.
That, is why we remember our family
and that is what calls us all - young and old
to step up and tell the story.

Tom Dunn (adapted)

(submitted by Gemma)



Ven. Pierre Bienvenu Noailles who began
the *Holy Family* story

CHILD SAFEGUARDING IN THE DIGITAL MEDIA AGE

Practice and challenges for Faith Groups in Ireland

A conference and training event on the above topic, organised by the National Bureau for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church (NBSCCC), was held in Maynooth (Ireland) on 12 October. Four *Holy Family* sisters, including Colette, a member of the HF safeguarding team, were present.

The aim of the conference, as described by the organisers, was:

“to provide participants with a greater understanding of good practice in managing the child safeguarding risks emerging from the ever-changing world of digital media in Irish society, with particular reference to faith groups”.

Eight speakers with wide-ranging experience and expertise on all aspects of social media helped the participants to address three questions:

- *What are the risks of digital media?
- *Why are they risks?
- *How can the risks be managed?



Most of us are familiar with the more common social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, Instagram..., but the actual number exposed by the first speaker was mind boggling.

The discovery by many that they were not particularly familiar with those most commonly used by children and young people (CYP) was a wake-up call.

It was a disturbing one also, as examples were given of ways and means used by online predators to entrap CYP and **Keep Parents Clueless**. **KPC** is one of the coded acronyms used in online exchanges.

The training was particularly geared to all those who work in the field of safeguarding and child protection, designated liaison persons, Church/Faith personnel and those involved in youth ministry. But it was emphasised that parents and those close to CYP need to spend time with them to be able to know and supervise what they are doing online.

Largest Knitted Blanket Record Breaking Attempt Newbridge Community's most recent Knitting Project

If you look back at the 2016 June issue of our Newsletter, page 7, you will find an article by Annie Morris on Yarn Bombing. Annie, together with her two dogs, Honey and Penny is a frequent visitor to the *Holy Family* community in Newbridge. The sisters first came to the attention of Annie when she went into a charity shop in the town and found 25 beautifully crocheted hats. On enquiring, she was told they had been made by Sr. Columba, a 90 year-old member of the *Holy Family*. She visited the convent, met Columba and the other sisters, and the knitting projects began.

The sisters brought their contribution to the Yarn Bomb which was part of the Newbridge fest last year. "It was a really moving experience and a heart-warming tale of a Community coming together to create something beautiful", as one member of the community put it. The fest was a great success and attracted the attention of celebrities like Christ Moore (a Newbridge native) and former Taoiseach Enda Kenny.

World Record Knitting Competition

The present knitting project is their participation in the Red Cross *No-Borders Blanket* record breaking competition for the largest knitted blanket in the world. The current Guinness World Record is held by the Nelson Mandela Foundation for a blanket that measures 1,378.23m squared, or 14,835.68 ft squared. The record was achieved on 9 July 2016. The blanket was disassembled afterwards into smaller blankets which were given to the poor.

Valery Larkin, from Inagh, Co. Clare came up with the idea of trying to break the world record and, at the same time, help needy people in communities around Ireland. For more details, visit the Red Cross blog by clicking on the link above and visiting Valerie's Facebook page [here](#).

Even if we cannot help by knitting we can accompany our sisters with our prayer as they dedicate themselves to this endeavour.



UPCOMING EVENTS

November 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Feast of All Saints	2 Commemoration of the Faithful departed	3	4
5	6 Feast of all the Saints of Ireland	7	8	9	10 World Science Day for Peace and Development	11
12	13	14	15	16 International Day for Tolerance	17	18
19 World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims	20	21	22	23	24 Feast of St. Theophane Venard (Prayer associate of the <i>Holy Family</i>)	25 International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women
26 Feast of Christ the King	27	28	29	30		