



The Holy Family of Bordeaux in Britain and Ireland

Family Links

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

October 2019

Volume 5 Issue 8

In this Issue

- 1 Editorial
- 2 Intervocational Team Message
- 3 Mala's Goodbye
- 4 Commitment Ceremony
World Poverty Day
- 5 Origins of the Holy Family of Bordeaux in Skelmersdale
- 7 Rock Ferry celebrates 150 Years
- 8 Reflection in Memory of Sr. Claire Marie
- 9 Upcoming Events



EDITORIAL

During these autumn days, as we walk down tree-lined avenues or stroll in wooded parks, we can see the leaves beginning to change colour, richly carpeting the ground as they fall. Some fall when they are ready, others prematurely blown by the blustery wind.

As we become more keenly aware of these seasonal transformations in nature when the trees seem to welcome their time of change so that something new and fresh may come in spring, we can be led to ponder on the mystery of "letting go" to give space for new life.

When you are reading this, the Unit Assembly will have begun. It is a gathering in which all, whether physically present or not, are invited to a deep communion of heart and mind so that what emerges from it will help us, like nature, to find ways to survive the winter; to "let go" so as to renew and make way for the new life that will surely come if we attune ourselves to the rhythm of the Spirit beating in all that is.



Message from the Intervocational Team

ARE WE MISSING THE BIGGER PICTURE?

On May 24 2015, Pope Francis launched his encyclical *Laudato Sí*, and thereby gave the official Church both a new spirituality and a new moral teaching. For most of the two-thousand-year history of the Christian faith, moral teaching was focused on human relationships with God and other human beings. The abuse of nature was not considered as wrong-doing. Incorrect interpretations of the Genesis account of creation led to the unrestrained exploitation of nature. Human beings were seen as being conquerors of creation, having complete dominion over it and free to exploit it for their own benefit and profit.

However, Pope Francis, in agreement with modern biblical scholarship, is adamant that “This is not a correct interpretation of the Bible as understood by the Church”. (67) Not only does Pope Francis say that taking our responsibility for the earth seriously is part of our faith, he also calls us to action and tells us that we have to discover what each one of us can do about it (19). “Living our vocation to be protectors of God’s handiwork”, he says “is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience.” (217)

He also tells us very clearly that there is “an intimate relationship between the poor and the fragile planet” (16). In fact, several world organisations have told us that climate change is the major cause of migration which, as we know, is a huge problem in today’s world and which causes untold misery.

Since the encyclical was written, we have been made aware of the enormous damage being inflicted on our environment by plastic. We have been horrified by films of the mountains of plastic that have accumulated especially in the seas and oceans and by general plastic pollution that adversely affects wildlife, wildlife habitat and humans.

Then, early in May of this year, the UN issued a report on global biodiversity and warned that, because of

human pressure, a million species are in danger of extinction within the next few years. This extinction is on a scale never before experienced in the history of the planet and is a serious threat to the planet itself. It is frightening to think that life on earth has fallen by more than a half in the last forty years.

However, all is not lost – yet. Many of the worst effects of climate change and the destruction of biodiversity can be prevented by changing the way we grow food, produce energy and dispose of waste. On a global level, it is a monumental task. But we can all do something. Are we ready to take up the challenge?

Are we willing to give up some of our comforts to contribute something towards the healing of our wounded planet? Care of our common home is vitally important and, as Christians and as human beings, we must do all we can to ensure the continuation of life in as many forms as possible on the planet. However, it would be a shame if we reduced the whole wonder of the emerging story of the Universe to something we can see, touch and, to a certain extent, grasp. What a loss it would be to us – and to the Church in general – if we allowed our human coping mechanisms to pull us back into a flawed theology and an outmoded

spirituality that we have been trying to unlearn for so many years now. How sad it would be if our need for security caused us to lose the wonder and awe of the ever-evolving and ever-expanding cosmos and retreat into the false “absolute certainties” of our spiritual comfort zones which are no longer life-giving for us or for the people to whom we minister.

So, perhaps it would be good for us to take stock of where we are on the journey which we began in 2008.



Áine Hayde

As we approach the bicentenary of our foundation, let us take to heart the oft-quoted words of our Founder, “... it is very rarely that the ideas and needs of the century which is ending responds to all the ideas and needs of the one that is beginning...”.

As we approach the bi-centenary of our foundation, let us take to heart the oft-quoted words of our Founder, "... it is very rarely that the ideas and needs of the century which is ending responds to all the ideas and needs of the one that is beginning...". We are no longer at the beginning of the 21st century and it is obvious that its ideas and needs are very different from those of the last century. So, let us move

forward courageously, leave aside the responses to the calls of the past, and be creative and imaginative in identifying and meeting the real needs of the world we are living in now, needs that are much more profound than those we can see and touch and go to the very depths of the meaning of life today.

Áine Hayde (Team member)

"Now it's time to say 'goodbye' to you..."

Life is enriched by many experiences. Coming to Ireland and living with you have given a great experience to me. It enriched and empowered my self-confidence, too.

Dearest Sisters, Catherine, Councillors, Claire, Síle and all the Sisters that I have met and the Sisters who have sent their wishes to me, in this little note I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to each and everyone of you. I appreciate your lovely smiles, warm welcome heart and the great concern that I have experienced from you.

(Mala had special words of thanks for Claire and Síle which we will reserve for them alone.)

Because of this journey, I have met many people from different parts of the world. I tried to adjust my life with many cultures. I learned many things from them, too. I got to know more about Europe. Therefore, I think this was not

just learning only English. It was a big, rich experience. This helped me to open my eyes and mind to the whole world.

I love you and your beautiful country, too. I had many chances to visit the places. I will never forget your innocent, lovely sheep, green grass,

wild flowers and the natural sounds of nature. I miss those. I enjoyed this beauty. I am so satisfied with everything I got. So, I am grateful to the Sisters who offered me this precious

chance and helped me to continue this experience.

Now, with a very rich experienced, I am ready to go back but, before I leave, I would like to say, "Thank you and goodbye to you." This is a small goodbye because we are united with each other wherever we are. I will keep you in my prayers. May our Good Lord bless you always.

Mala



COMMITMENT CEREMONY

At the Annual Assembly, Sat 21 September 2019, Newbridge, Charlie Flynn and Moira Fogarty were welcomed into the Holy Family Association as fully committed Lay Members. The Ceremony of Commitment was conducted by Rose Sullivan, National President, in the New Oratory in Holy Family Girls Secondary School, Newbridge.

Fr Paul Dempsey celebrated the Eucharist on the occasion. Fr Paul informed us that the occasion was special for him also. He explained that he sponsored the altar in the Oratory to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the founding of the school.

Charlie and Moira know and were known to Fr Paul from his time in Clane Parish, his first assignment as Curate after his Ordination to the Priesthood.

Both, Moira and Charlie have been involved in Parish Ministries for many years and have gone through a basic formation program in Holy Family spirituality.



Fr. Paul, Moira and Charlie Flynn, Rose Sullivan (National President)

The Ceremony of Commitment allows the public expression and renewal of our Baptismal promises. The support and prayers of the Holy Family Community in Clane energizes us to live the Christian life according to the aim and spirit of the Holy Family.

Charlie Flynn

October 17
World Day for Overcoming Extreme Poverty



2019 : 30 th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child



ACTING TOGETHER
to empower children, their families
and communities to end poverty.

<http://overcomingpoverty.org> overcomingpoverty@atd-fourthworld.org

Participants at the annual gathering on Dublin's quays to mark the World Day for Overcoming Extreme Poverty were given cutouts of footprints.

They were asked to write their hopes and wishes for children on them and make a pathway up to the poverty stone.







Origins of the Holy Family of Bordeaux in Skelmersdale

The community of Holy family Sisters opened in September 1989; they lived in the convent at St Francis of Assisi Church, Digmoor. Sr Monica Feehan started the Holy Family Lay Associates in 1993. The first group of associates, 11 in all, made their commitments on the 3rd of October 1994. Three years later there were three more lay associates. Sr Monica was supported by Sr Dominica Fennessy and Sr Teresa Flynn RIP.

Lay Associates have continued to grow over the years and meet the first Tuesday of the month with a break in August. In December we have a

special reflection with quiet time and a meditation followed by a party, of course. In February we celebrate the Miraculous Benediction of 1822 in St Francis of Assisi church with a re-enactment of the Benediction using the testimonies of those who were there; we then have tea and cake. Throughout the rest of the year we celebrate all other Holy Family feast days and discuss a wide range of topics.

The first leader of the Holy Family lay associates was Dolores Flaherty. After some years I became the second leader. Between us, we have had the privilege of knowing 52 lay associates. Our group now has 15 lay Associates who attend regular meetings and 3 associates who are visited by other members due to illness. We have been very fortunate in Skelmersdale to have had large groups over the years. We used to joke that Sr Monica was the Lay Associate catcher just like the child catcher in the film Chitty Chitty Bang Bang; once she got you, there was no turning back.

We are a family; our group is looking forward to our Bicentennial assemblies, visits to Martillac, regional meetings and seeing family that we have met over the years and love to discuss, reminisce, tell stories in our monthly meeting, just like a family does after gatherings. We have had associates being part of the

national committee, the spirituality group, the congresses of the family in Martillac and Italy and also visiting groups in Ireland and Scotland.

When Sr Monica died in 2014 the associates were determined to carry on, as she had left us with a great legacy. She loved the founder so much and had great devotion to

the Holy Family. We had the support of Srs Eileen Ryan and Ita Walsh and realized how lucky we were to have had sisters so long in our parish but, as time moves on, change happens and, after 25 years' service, the sisters' mission ended in March 2015. It was a very emotional and sad time for all.

We have had 13 sisters on mission over the 25 years. Our heartfelt thanks go to them for their valuable contribution in Skelmersdale. There is a plaque in the Lady Chapel at St Francis of Assisi church in recognition of their mission.

The Holy Family lay associates are still strong and, like family, we pull together and look after each other. We also like to put the world to rights with our lively discussions and like the saying, "the family that pray together" stay together.

Marilyn Sutemire



Lay Members, Skelmersdale

Script on the plaque presented to the Holy Family Sisters by the Lay Associates when the convent was closed in 2015 and a list of the Sisters who ministered in Skelmersdale

In Recognition, of 25 Years of Mission and Devotion to the Parish of St.Richards, Heart Felt Thanks, to The Holy Family Sisters of Bordeaux. From, The Holy Family Lay Associates, Clergy and Parishioners, March 2015. Love, Light, and Blessings

“The one thing necessary is to do what God wants of us.”

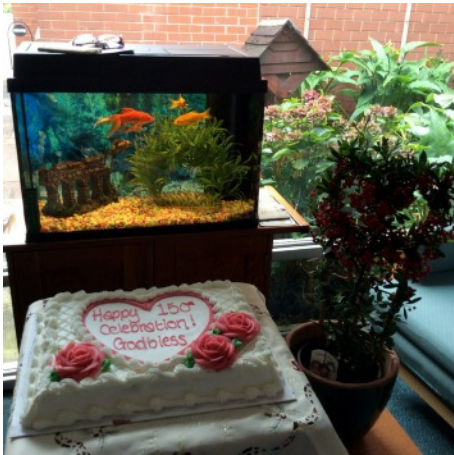
P.B.Noailles.

Community in Skelmersdale opened in September 1989

Sisters on Mission	Arrival	Departure
Josephine Kemp RIP	1989	1994
Monica Feehan RIP	1989	2014
Teresa Flynn	1989/ 2001	1998/2014
Susanna Mc Kenna RIP	1989	1992
Pascal O'Hagan RIP	1989	1991
Dominica Fennessy	1998	2002
Ellen Butler	1998	1999
Bernadette Deegan	1998	2010
Maureen Slamen	1999	2005
Margaret O'Ryan RIP	1999	2008
Ita Walsh	2003	2013
Eilecn Ryan	2007	
Pauline Byrne	2013	

Rock Ferry Convent Celebrates 150 Years

It was 150 years ago that three Holy Family Sisters: Mother St. John Day, Mother Martha Couteau and Sister Clare Hunter arrived from Leeds to set the foundation of the first convent of the Holy Family Sisters in Rock Ferry.



On the afternoon of Saturday 19th October, 2019, the Sisters in residence at Rock Ferry, along with the staff and some of the Lay Members, came together in the convent chapel for prayers in thanksgiving to

celebrate the 150 years anniversary.

One of the readings included in the chapel prayers:

“Recounting our history is essential for preserving our identity, for strengthening our unity as a family and our common sense of belonging. To tell our story is to praise God and to thank him for all our gifts.”

Pope Francis (Consecrated Life)

After the service a pyracantha plant was presented to the Sisters, on behalf of the Rock Ferry Lay Members, to mark the occasion and will be planted in the garden area where wildlife may be encouraged to feed from the berries in winter and enjoy plant foliage in summer and for all to watch and share in the growth of the plant over the coming years.



The afternoon celebrations continued in the lounge where Sisters, staff and Lay Members reminisced and reflected through the old photographs, sharing memories of their ‘early days’ in and around the convent in the fashions of the day—the times coming alive again for a short while.

Afterwards there was a welcome cuppa in the dining room and the sharing of a special 150 year celebration cake, decorated for the occasion. All too soon the afternoon came to an end with the promise that we will organise another day next year for our Holy Family Bicentenary year.

With grateful thanks to , especially the Sisters of Rock Ferry, Matron Maria and all the staff who made the occasion a very special celebration day!

Margaret Ramsey
(On behalf of Rock Ferry Lay Members)

Reflection *at Funeral Mass of Sr. Claire Marie O'Connell*

Though we need to weep your loss, Claire Marie
you dwell in that safe place in our hearts
where no storm or night o pain can reach you.

Your love was like the dawn, brightening over our lives
awakening beneath the dark a further adventure of colour.
The sound of your voice found for us a new music that brightened everything.

Though your days here in Newbridge were brief,
your spirit was alive, awake, complete.

We look towards each other no longer from the old distance of our names.
Now you dwell inside the rhythm of breath – as close to us as we are to ourselves.

Though we cannot see you with outward eyes,
we know our soul's gaze is upon your face,
smiling back at us from within everything to which we bring our best refinement.
Let us not look for you only in memory
where we would grow lonely without you.
You would want us to find you in presence, beside us when beauty brightens
when kindness glows and music echoes eternal tones.

When flowers brighten the earth, darkest winter has turned to spring.
May this dark grief flower with hope in every heart that loves you.
May you continue to inspire us to enter each day with a gracious heart
to serve the call of courage and love until we see your face again
in that land where there is no more separation,
when all tears will be wiped from our mind
and where we will never lose you again.
Ardheisláimh Dé go raibh d'anam uasal!

(Delivered by Sr. Catherine Moran)

UPCOMING EVENTS

November 2019						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 All Saints Day	2 Commemoration of all the Faithful Departed
3	4	5	6 End of Unit Assembly	7	8	9
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 Théophane Vénard (Prayer Associate of the Holy Family)	25 International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women	26	27	28	29	30