



# The Holy Family of Bordeaux

in Britain and Ireland

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

September 2017

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Lay Associates AGM, Ireland, Sept. 2017 - Incoming Committee Members: L. to R. Rose Sullivan, Irene Kavanagh, Brigid Larkin, Maria McLernon, Esther Keogh (Outgoing President), Damian Doyle with Srs. Gemma Corbett (Prov. Leader), Lil Meagher (National Leader)

## EDITORIAL

The World Day of Prayer for Creation, on 1 September, was instituted by Pope Francis in 2015, the year *Laudato si* was published. The Orthodox Church has commemorated it since 1989 and this year Pope Francis and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew issued a joint message for the day, inviting all people of good will to pray and reflect on how to live simply and sustainably.



The day marks the beginning of Creation Time which ends on 4 October, the feast of St. Francis. It is a time to reflect prayerfully on the state of our world, contemplate its beauty, and become more aware of the ecological crises that threaten it and its inhabitants. Pope and Patriarch call on those in positions of responsibility in all spheres to "respond to the plea of millions and support the consensus of the world for the healing of our wounded creation".

In the past months it was forcefully brought home to us how the effects of recurring natural disasters, particularly hurricanes, have been exacerbated by climate change. The US will rebuild what has been devastated but people in areas that do not have the resources to rebuild, and where land is no longer able to sustain life because of drought and deforestation, have no alternative but to move to other lands. Global warming is both a cause and an effect of the displacement and impoverishment of people.

As Pope Francis says: "...there can be no sincere and enduring resolution to the challenge of the ecological crisis and climate change unless the response is concerted and collective, unless the responsibility is shared and accountable, unless we give priority to solidarity and service".

## Message from Sr. Gemma (Unit Leader)

### THE TIME HAS COME

It is strange how, as we grow older, time seems to speed up. The days, the months, the years fly by, leaving us perhaps with feelings of regret that we may not have achieved all that we wanted to achieve and that perhaps we have not used our time as profitably as we could. Paul told the Ephesians: "Look carefully how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time" (Eph 5: 15-16).

May we continue our journey in the footsteps of Jesus, as wise people, seizing those moments, those opportunities that time gives us to do our part in working towards the fulfillment of God's plan for God's people. Those moments – kairos moments – are presented to us every day. "The Lord says: In the appointed time, I have listened to you and in a day of salvation I have helped you. Behold now in the appointed time, behold now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:2).

The ancient Greeks had two words for time: *chronos* and *kairos*. *Chronos* refers to clock time - time that can be measured in seconds, minutes, hours. Words such as *chronological* and *anachronism* have their roots in *chronos*. *Chronos* is sequential and quantitative.

*Kairos*, on the other hand is qualitative. *Kairos* refers to a special moment, to the *right* moment, the opportune moment, the perfect moment, the moment when the Holy Spirit is moving and acting and calling us also to act. "It is a charged, significant moment during

which the Spirit is prepared to deliver the power of God in order to bring dynamic transformation to a person or situation." (Kairos Moments: Philip Noordmans.,2017)

In 1986, a group of South African theologians produced a document entitled "The Kairos Document" challenging the Apartheid government in South Africa and calling for change. It began: "*The time has come. The moment of truth has arrived. This is the KAIROS, the moment of grace and opportunity, the favourable time in which God issues a challenge to decisive action.*" The Document is pervaded with a strong sense that the time was ripe for change and that unless the opportunity was seized, the loss would be immeasurable, not only for South Africa but for the whole Church. The fate of South Africa balanced on a knife's edge, and action was needed to change the path of history. And as we know change did come. Apartheid was dismantled and democracy was born.

But *Kairos* need not be as dramatic as that. It can be a small moment in the life of an individual or a group – a moment that leads to a shift in mentality or a change of direction that brings new life and energy. We all have *kairos* moments in our own lives.

There are numerous *Kairos* times in the New Testament when God erupted into our world in new and powerful ways. The most obvious

one is of course, the birth of Jesus:

"And while they were there, the **time came** for her baby to be born" (Luke 2:6). Later when Jesus inaugurated his ministry, he proclaimed: "**The time has come; the kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!**" (Mark 1:15). Jesus was alerting people to the Spirit's presence in a new and powerful way and the Spirit's call to action for change.

We, in the *Holy Family* have had and still have our *Kairos* moments. Was not our last General Chapter such a moment, when we committed ourselves to listen deeply to the reality of our world; to allow that reality to speak to us and so let ourselves be challenged to live in a "state of exodus" in solidarity with all those who are obliged to be "on the move" ? And could this time of preparation for the celebration of 200 years of service to the world in the *Holy Family* be a *kairos* moment?

The challenge for us is to stay alert so as to be tuned in to those moments when the Spirit is hovering near, urging us to speak and act in obedience and faith to God's invitation to "act justly, love tenderly and walk humbly with our God (Micah 6:8).



## Now is the time

Now is the time

Now is the time to know

That all that you do is sacred.

Now, why not consider

A lasting truce with yourself and God?

Now is the time to understand

That all your ideas of right and wrong

Were just a child's training wheels

To be laid aside

When you can finally live

with veracity and love.

Now is the time for the world to know

That every thought and action is sacred.

That this is the time

For you to compute the impossibility

That there is anything

But Grace.

Now is the season to know

That everything you do

Is Sacred.

(Persian lyric poet Hafiz)





## ON HOLY GROUND



I was one of the privileged sisters who responded to an invitation to attend a Renewal session in Martillac in May. Seventeen participants were still in Formation and 5 renewed vows in Martillac. Some would make final vows on returning to their native country. We were encouraged to come (even though not in the formation category!) by the words of Pope Francis:

*“By changing our way of looking at the world, we can look with gratitude at the road already covered, to begin to listen to what the Spirit is asking of us today, asking ourselves if Jesus is really our first and only love, so that we may embrace the future with hope”.*

Along with Jean and Chandani, I attended all the sessions provided by Mary and her Team of able helpers: Genevieve, Adela and Jeevan. Also we had talented help from Margaret Bradley who assisted all of us with her art and handicrafts to appreciate and deepen our understanding of the lectures given.

To see our Indian sisters do their traditional liturgical dance was really beautiful, and to hear our African sisters from the Congo, Cameroon, Rwanda, Lesotho and South Africa sing and play their drums was truly awe-inspiring. Every day we had Mass which was usually accompanied by beautiful singing from our Contemplative sisters. I was truly amazed at the purity of tone and rhythm which was flawless. Another ceremony saw the local Cardinal officiate.

In this multi-cultural setting, one came to appreciate the original *Dream of the Founder* who was inspired to begin the *Holy Family* Association. The image of

the tree with birds of every colour, of every country each one with its own song, but singing as one voice, came to mind, while the presence of the beautiful countryside, the avenue he built with us in mind was being re-told to a new group of sisters today in Martillac.

Our contemporary lectures covered a whole range of topics which would be useful for all and merited revisiting by those of a different vintage, including work on Discernment, the Principles of the Universe, Exodus, Consecration for Mission and the Interior Life to name a few. Each lecture was followed by reflection and a quality sharing in the various language groups. Many reflected on their particular journey, sharing their difficulties in their work sphere and in their country where, due to politics, freedom of religion was not present, and where persecution in covert and overt forms was practised. Isolation of some young sisters, was mentioned seeing as one sister only was in formation.



During our time we visited Bordeaux, “walking in the footsteps of the Founder”; our booklet was a great help to us. For many this was their first experience of the places and churches associated with our Founder’s life. We had Mass from a very young French priest in St. Eulalie. Reminiscent of the Founder? We also went to Lourdes with a very early start in the morning. Everyone was delighted to visit the grotto, and the Basilica above, where there was again a multi-cultural celebration of Mass. Some first-timers went to the houses where Bernadette had lived, and witnessed first-hand her poverty.

After numerous blessings, a weary party departed Lourdes arriving back home late but very happy.

The Mass on Pentecost Sunday was awe-inspiring. The “list” of different nations who heard the first sermon by St. Peter was replaced by a similar list of nationalities present in the Congregation, each one answering in her native tongue. Eighteen nationalities responded. Also, the singing of the *Veni Creator* was very nostalgic.

There is a wide outreach, of course, in Martillac to the many participants who come for direction and guidance in their journey, and many groups from the local parishes and diocese. We owe a lot to the Sisters who manage the premises so well. Visits to the Island were many, and we enjoyed our pilgrimages there immensely, remembering all in our communities before the Founder’s statue and in the Chapel to Our Lady of all Graces.



A family spirit prevailed and what impressed us most were the high tributes paid to our missionary sisters in the past who had helped and taught abroad in the various places. What a legacy they had left in these young women so willing to dedicate their lives to the same one who had inspired them to act.

There was a cultural presentation of each one’s situation in her respective country.



This was documented, and apparently well presented! Another similar event but very different in content was our evening of cultural entertainment! A Pakistani sister performed her cultural dance for the second time on the Island the next day.

One of the highlights was a rare visit to our Contemplative community. We were well received. Srs. Melanie and Bernadette introduced all of the Community, and the participants did likewise. Sr. Teresa McElhone was in good form and chatted to all of us from our Province. They now have six sisters from abroad, from Africa and Sri-Lanka. Some

sisters are in formation.



The whole group was totally diverse but rich in their cultural heritage; there was a strong sense of “belonging” to

*Holy Family*, and a wish to deepen their values within the context of their commitment. There was much mutual enrichment in this place of internationality. It was interesting to observe how many future vocations are from the southern hemisphere whereas so few from Europe.

Sandra Harrington, Woodford



**W**ell! Here I am at Stanstead airport, all neatly packed and ready to fly to Martillac. I've been looking forward to my journey for ages. My owner has left me, carefully labelled, in the hands of a receptionist at the check-in desk, and now I'm going pell-mell down the chute to the aircraft. Somehow I seem to have become separated from my luggage companion—we travelled together from Aberdare, you know. Never mind, we'll soon meet up in Bordeaux.

Now we're travelling over the Channel towards France - not much of a view from the hold - can spot the Eiffel Tower and the River Seine — soon be at Bordeaux. Looks like mountains in the distance - but no sight or sound of landing gear! That's odd - looks like we're over the Pyrenees. Why? And those mountains in the distance look like the Alps!

Oh boy, we're landing at Ciampino Airport – lots of strangers speaking a foreign language. Is it Rome? Everyone seems so excited about me, but there's no sign of my owner and where's my luggage label gone to? Good job I'm made of stern stuff – you

have to be in my job! - I travel quite a bit you know, but usually end up at my destination.

Lying in state for 3 days now – apparently a national holiday in some countries but very trying for me. I know I wanted to see Pope Francis but not this way! What about all the essential goods I'm carrying – for daily life - how's my owner coping without me?

They say she's resilient, but there's a limit. Will we ever meet again?



Hey there's someone coming to inspect me. They're putting me back on the aircraft - I hope it's the right one this time. Alps again - now the Pyrenees. Well! Would you know, we are landing in BORDEAUX. Glory be to God Alone!

They have to sign lots of forms about me - talk about being displaced.

Now on a luggage carrier to "La Solitude", Martillac. I'm welcomed by an ecstatic owner and excited sisters, all admiring my shiny top and wondering where I've been. What a story I could tell them!

Next time I think I'll travel business class!

Sandra Harrington, Woodford



## ASYLUM SEEKERS IN IRELAND

### The present situation

Asylum seekers in Ireland are accommodated by the State in residential institutions under a system known as Direct Provision. Direct Provision is intended to provide for the welfare of asylum seekers and their families as they await decisions on their asylum application. It 'directly provides' essential services, medical care, accommodation and board with three meals a day.

The Direct Provision system is overseen by the Reception and Integration Agency (RIA), a body of the Department of Justice. However, the majority of the 35 centres around the country are privately owned and operated, and the standards of accommodation and living conditions vary widely.

When the Direct Provision system was established in 2000, it was described as an 'interim' solution to the high numbers of asylum seekers entering the State in search of protection. But due to an unwieldy system, the majority of asylum seekers spend over 4 years in Direct Provision waiting for

their application to be processed and many wait even as long as 10 years.

During this time, they live in a state of enforced idleness; they cannot work, (but this is set to change), and in most centres, they cannot cook for themselves but are forced to eat in a canteen which only operates at certain times of the day. Hundreds of children have been born into Direct Provision and do not know any other life but institutionalised living.



In some cases, the lives of residents are governed by unnecessarily restrictive rules which can feel to residents like living in an 'open prison'. Lack of privacy is a significant issue. Single residents share a room with several other adults, and in many centres, parents live in one room with their children. Facilities such as bathrooms are often shared.

### The right to work

Ireland is one of only two EU member states to ban asylum seekers from working, the other country being Lithuania. (As a general rule, the UK, soon to leave the EU, does not allow asylum seekers to work. But they can apply for permission to fill a shortage vacancy if they have been waiting for over 12 months for an initial decision on their asylum claim.) In Malta and Bulgaria, asylum seekers may work a year after their application has been lodged; in Poland, the Netherlands, Italy and Belgium this wait is six months. In Austria, they must

wait three months and in Sweden people can work the day after their application is lodged.

In May this year, the Irish Supreme Court ruled unanimously in a case taken by a Burmese man, who had spent eight years in direct provision, that the laws preventing him working in Ireland before his status was decided were unconstitutional. The government now has until November to come up with a response to implement the Court ruling.



## Accompanying residents of Eyre Powell Hotel Direct Provision Centre in Newbridge

In October 2016, a group from Newbridge Parish Community, led by *Holy Family* Sister Eileen Murphy, began linking with Asylum seekers who live in the Eyre Powell Hotel, a Direct Provision Centre, in Newbridge. Over 70 people, including about 10 children, are accommodated there.

They come from 15 countries on 4 continents, and widely different worlds, bringing with them their own

- History
- Language
- Cultures
- Customs

They come from a variety of educational backgrounds and life experiences. Among them, there are

- Painters
- Nurses
- Photographers
- Bakers
- Electricians
- Teachers
- Students

One can only imagine the rich contribution they could make to Irish society.

Adults in DP receive a weekly cash allowance of €21.60. They are not allowed to work - as already stated - or go to higher education.

They are provided with three meals a day but are not allowed to cook their own meals, though changes in this regard are being introduced in some centres.

They share a room and keep all their belongings in one cupboard.

They don't know whether they will be there months or years.

### Connecting with the Parish Community

It began in October 2016 when residents were invited to a coffee morning in the Parish Centre. Since then, on the first Friday of every month a group of parishioners and asylum seekers meet for coffee and a chat in the Parish Centre.



Easter Coffee morning, Row 2 from left Srs. Joan Roddy DMJ, Esther Delaney, and Eileen Murphy, Row 1, 1<sup>st</sup> from R

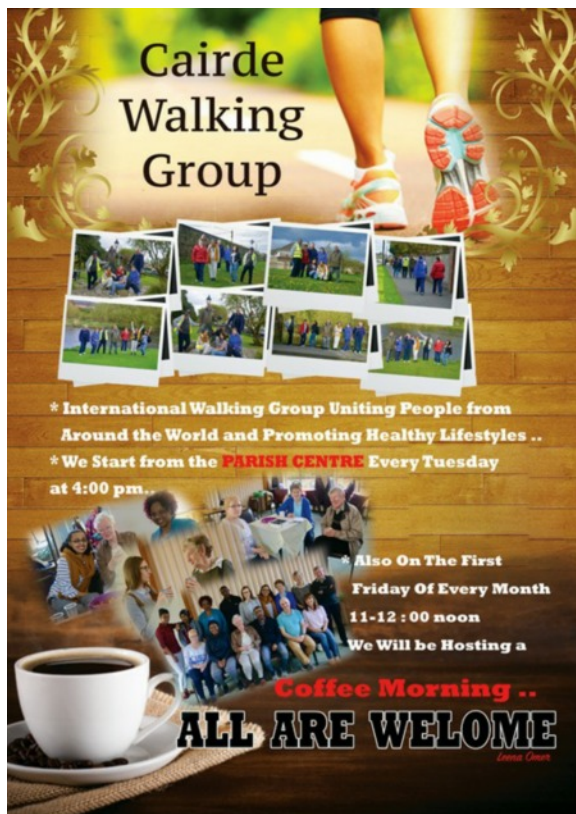
Eyre Powell residents were also invited to join our Parish Community for different events during the year.

**They include:**



**A Parish Social**





A  
Walking  
Group  
was  
set  
up



There were visits to the cinema, a day trip to Glendalough.

A really big event was the Kildare and Leighlin Diocesan Family Picnic Day.



On the last Sunday of August, well over 4,000 people from all over the diocese gathered at Punchestown Racecourse for the first ever Diocesan Family Picnic Day, as a preparation for next year's World Meeting of Families.

Families were asked to bring along their own picnic with a bit of extra food for a sharing table for those who maybe don't have enough to eat.

A special invitation was issued to the families living in the two direct provision centres in the diocese, in Newbridge and Portlaoise, and also the refugee centre in Monasterevin. Bishop Nulty said that the diocese would be putting together special baskets for these families.

If you would like more information about the event, click [here](#).



Eileen Murphy, Sonas Chríost

## Rock Ferry remembers A Bicentennial Meeting

*After one of their monthly meetings, and with thoughts of the bicentenary very much in mind, our Lay Associates suggested that they and the sisters get together as one family and share our past history as Holy Family. This was a time also to give thanks for our past and look forward with hope to the future.*

### We remember

The Holy Family Convent in Rock Ferry is a modern building with facilities for elderly sisters and a beautiful modern chapel. It stands on the site of the old convent which housed the novitiate for many years. It was in the community room of this modern building that a group of lay associates joined the resident sisters for a trip down memory lane on a bright Saturday afternoon in July.

To jog all our memories there were photographs: school photographs from the Woodlands spanning 15 years beginning in 1955, black and white photos of processions and first communions, albums of trips made by lay associates to other convents, photos from South Africa, more recent coloured photographs taken in the present convent. I think the plan had been to start with a prayer. However, the photos sparked conversations in an instant and the family chatter started without any official opening.

The room was buzzing with conversation as sisters from the past were identified and stories told.

There was much laughter and conversations starting with "Do you remember when...?"

The photographs reminded us of the way the sisters' habit changed over the years and, in conversation, the habit worn by those who travelled overseas. Journeys to Sri Lanka (Ceylon) by boat in the 1950's, to the Philippines. We travelled the world in those few hours.



Finally, it was time for tea; we were dry from all the talking. At this point we did

pause for prayer, to thank God for being family together, for the joy and laughter.

For us, as lay associates, it was a wonderful reminder of the strength, courage and faithfulness of these women who dedicated themselves to bringing the Good News, and being good news, to people in need. This was an afternoon that everybody thoroughly enjoyed. We will do it again.

Maureen Bowsley, Lay Associate, Rock Ferry



## Outing to Llandudno

### Rock Ferry Community

On 28 June, we set out for Llandudno by coach at 10.30 am. This was a very special day as many were hoping for a blow of sea air. Spirits were high although the day was dull and showery. When we arrived, we went to the restaurant for lunch where all relaxed and enjoyed their meal.



Our next destination was the shops. Covered with shower macs we set out, as usual, to get some souvenirs of our trip. To our surprise, a few were eager through wind and rain to be wheeled for a blow to the sea front.

After a very happy day we returned to the coach for our homeward journey. Before this trip we were conscious that Sr. Ita was not well so Mary Catherine and some of our carers did not come.



Once again, we thank our staff for their meticulous arrangements beforehand without which our day would not be so relaxed and happy. We also thank our coach driver for his very gentle care and attention to detail. We will now be waiting for our next surprise. Our prayers for fine weather may not have been answered but we still had a wonderful and enjoyable day.



Teresa Edwards, Bradford, on a walkabout with some Muslim women learners



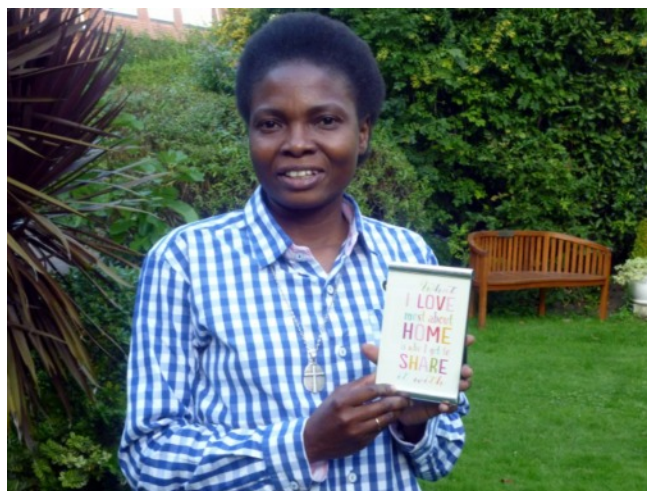


## MY LONDON EXPERIENCE

I arrived in London in October 2016. Although my English is still limited, I would like to express my thoughts and feelings about my time in London. I want also to express my gratitude for all the Sisters have done for me. My experiences have enriched my life as a sister of the *Holy Family*.

At the beginning I was very embarrassed because everything (country, people, transportation, weather and habit) was new and different from mine. But slowly this fear disappeared due to the warm welcome that I received in Aberdare Gardens community and at St Georges International School. I have received welcoming cards from some communities; this encouraged me to get over my worry.

I felt at home because I met here the spirit of the *Holy Family*, the same spirit that is common to us all. I experienced our being family, our diversity in the community. Meeting the sisters during different encounters, their carefulness, attitude of inclusivity, and their presence made me feel a member of this big family of PBN. Despite the diminishing number and advancing age of the sisters in this unit, I found life everywhere, and I discovered that every member bears within her a light which is rooted in our



spirituality in the light of the emerging world view.

This encouraged me to discover the value inside me and to trust myself, to become more confident. I have lived the gift of being a family with different cultures, thoughts and ages. Extended leadership, equality and respect for each, living without discrimination, impressed me. These attitudes helped me to respect everyone in her uniqueness and let go of cultural conflict, fear of taking risks and failure. They also stirred within me a deeper responsibility in the formation of new members.

Sr. Dolcita Kalema, DR Congo

## UPCOMING EVENTS

October 2017						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4 St. Francis of Assisi Creation Time ends	5	6	7 Cluster Meeting Leeds&Brad-ford Aberdare Gdns Clane
8	9 Cluster Meeting Rock Ferry & Wrexham	10 World Mental Health Day	11	12	13	14
15	16 World Food Day	17	18 EU Anti-Human Trafficking Day	19	20	21
22	23	24 United Nations Day	25	26	27 Birthday of P.B. Noailles 1793	28
29 International Internet Day	30	31				