



# Family Links

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

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The children of Okara school use their new computers to say, "Thank You".

## Editorial

“There is nothing more powerful than an idea whose time has come.” This quote, derived from Victor Hugo, has been proven right down the ages. In recent times we have only to think of the fall of the Berlin Wall thirty years ago, the Arab Spring, the Velvet Revolution.... While the immediate results may not always have matched the initial expectations the hope that was kindled by the idea lived on and often found renewed expression in later years.

At the present time, there is Hong King but it is Climate Change and the dire spectacle of another possible mass extinction that is galvanising school children and young people globally to take part in Climate Strikes and Extinction Rebellion, two of the movements determined to keep the issue to the fore through non-violent protest. Working to halt climate change is not just an economic issue but a moral one that requires action, no matter how small, from everyone.

During the season of Advent, we remember the Incarnation, that wonderful moment when, the time having come, Jesus appeared in the world as the “image of the invisible God” to show us the way to true life. His mission goes on, constantly inspiring new ways to suit new times, just as two hundred years ago, Pierre Bienvenu Noailles was moved to found the Association of the *Holy Family* to meet the needs of the Church of his day.

As we prepare to enter our third century we are aware something new has to be born. May our waiting, in openness to the Spirit of God, be one of joyful expectation.



## Message from Intervocational Coordinators Team

### MARIAN SPIRITUALITY IN ADVENT

**W**e are told that Advent is a special time of Marian spirituality and devotion. In the Marian encyclical, *Marialis Cultus* (1974) Pope Paul VI invited the faithful to live the spirit of Advent “by thinking about the inexpressible love with which the Virgin Mary awaited her Son.” He invited the faithful to take Mary as a model as they prepare to meet the Lord who is to come.

Perhaps the question we need to ask is how we are to understand Marian spirituality in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. As children we were given the image of Mary as a role-model for all girls and women. The model presented was one of virginal obedience, passivity and modesty. To modern feminist sensitivities these virtues sound very unappealing. However, if we reflect on Luke’s account of the Annunciation, Mary comes across as anything but passive. She had the courage to question the Angel before she gave her famous ‘yes.’ She understood how difficult her situation as an unmarried mother was going to be in such a small closed community. Yet she trusted in God to work things out for her. She was a very strong young woman. Mary’s *Magnificat* is so strong in its advocacy of the poor that it is used in Liberation Theology today.

During Advent we celebrate the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. The readings for the feast (Gen. 3:9-15, 20, The Fall), and (Luke 1:26-38, The Annunciation), according to Pope Francis, are “two crucial passages in the history of the relationship between humanity and God. They lead us to the origins of good and evil.”

The Feminist Theologian, Mary Daly, argues that the story of the Fall was a male-dominated attempt to make sense of the tragedy of the human condition. The great achievement of this myth was that it created sexual oppression and bestowed inferiority upon women universally. She states that “the original

myth revealed the essential defect or ‘sin’ of patriarchal religion.” (Hannelie Wood, *Revisiting Mary Daly: Her Views on the Trinity, Mariology and the Fall as Post-Christian Myths*).

A very literal reading of the account of the Fall in the Book of Genesis led St. Paul to see Eve as the cause of all human sin and suffering. “Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor” (1 Tim. 2:14). According to D. F. Sawyer, this short passage defined the role and status of women in the Church. (*Women and Religion in the First Christian Centuries*, 1996).

As time went by the early Church Fathers began to see Mary as the new Eve. The oldest reflection on Mary in this role comes from St. Justin Martyr (120-165 A.D.), followed by St. Irenaeus (120-200), and Tertullian (160-240). In their writings, Mary was elevated above all women. According to Elizabeth Johnson, “Mary’s perfection as a woman functions paradoxically to disparage all other women.” (*Truly Our Sister: A Theology of Mary in the Community of Saints* (2003).

Mary’s place in the Church generated heated debate at the Second Vatican Council. The result was Chapter 8 of the document *Lumen Gentium*, which emphasized the unique privilege and dignity of Mary as Mother of God, and also portrays her as model of Christian discipleship and prayer. “Mary was the perfect disciple; she listened to the word of God in her heart and in her body gave life to the world” (LG23).

Despite all the negative connotations of patriarchal Mariology, the Virgin Mary has always remained central to popular devotion. It was the recitation of



the Rosary that kept the faith alive in Ireland during the Penal days. In his Apostolic Letter, *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, Pope John Paul 11 describes the Rosary as “an exquisitely contemplative prayer.” He describes Mary as: “the model of contemplation”. In fact, he says: “No one has ever devoted herself/himself to the contemplation of the face of Christ as faithfully as Mary. She lived with her eyes fixed on Christ, treasuring his every word: ‘She kept all these things, pondering them in her heart’ (Lk. 2:19).” Pope Francis describes Mary as “the Gate of Heaven,” and each Rosary we pray is a step towards the goal of our life” (Aug 15, 2019).

Our Founder too had great devotion to Mary. It was to her that he attributed the inspiration for the founding of the Association. Mother Bonnat tells us: “He loved to go and pour out his soul at the feet of Our Lady of Loreto (in Issy). It was during one of these solitary visits whilst he was renewing fervently his act of devotion to Jesus, Mary and Joseph that the Blessed Virgin filled our beloved Father’s heart with ineffable light and consolation and revealed to him the plan of the Association which he was to found one day under her special protection.”

Rose Sullivan, Team Member

## MASS for MISSIONARIES

17 November 2019

The RTE televised celebration of the Eucharist on the International Day of the Poor was prepared by Miseán Cara (Mission Friend), a faith-based development of 91 missionary organisations who work with some of the most marginalised and vulnerable communities around the world. A choir from Newbridge, of which Holy Family member, Margaret Roche is a member, provided the beautiful singing.



Srs. Cathy Gorman, Diloysia, Lil, Dammika and Margaret Roche

Introducing the celebration, the Miseán Cara acting CEO, said: *“The celebration was to mark the 15 years of Miseán Cara and reflect on the transformative nature of missionary work empowering individuals and communities to live life to the full. Pope Francis’ theme for the World Day of the Poor, The hope of the poor will not perish forever, are a reflection of the work that MC members do through their long-term commitments to lasting change and development. Missionaries bring lasting hope to communities living on the margins. They educate. They heal. They enhance people’s ability to secure food and a sustainable livelihood. They stand with people in their struggle*

*for human rights. They accompany people on journeys of real transformation.”*

The Holy Family of Bordeaux is one of the 91 members of Miseán Cara. Since joining in 2014 we have been able to secure funds for projects managed by our sisters in Lesotho and Uganda. There are three other projects underway in South Africa. For funding, Miseán Cara relies mainly on Irish Aid, the Irish government’s fund for overseas development, from whom it receives fifteen and a half million euros annually. Needless to say, they require very strict accountability for how the funds are used.

## OUTREACH

### ...from one Holy Family School to another

**W**hen the 8<sup>th</sup> class of St. Mary's Grammar School, Magherafelt, held a fundraiser in 2018 to help the mission of the *Holy Family* Sisters in Pakistan, the Sisters there had no difficulty in identifying a project. They had taken over a Diocesan school which had been closed for at least 8 years due to unfortunate circumstances. The parishioners had been requesting the Bishop to re-open the school and, eventually, the *Holy Family* took on the task.

At the time a lot of renovation was needed but, thanks to generous donors and funding agencies, the work was done and the school opened in 2013 with 20 children for Playgroup and Nursery. Now, there are over 200 students, boys and girls, up to class 8. Ninety per cent are from the Christian community and the rest are Muslim.

Sr. Teresa Perera, the school Principal, expressed her gratitude and appreciation to the students of St Mary's and reported on how their money had been spent.

*"A priority was the provision of water coolers in order to provide cold water in summer. It took quite a while to get and install them. It was necessary to lay pipelines from the well to the water tank on the roof, which took some time. The two gentlemen pictured below, **Mr Abid Saeed and Mr Michael**, installed them expertly.*



*Now, the children and staff, helpers and all who come to the school have cool, filtered water to drink. The facility is an occasion to animate the students and*

*the families on the importance of water as well as to save water. It is impossible to express our gratitude.*



*Some of the generous donation was used to complete the Computer Lab. The Lab has 12 computers and the children are able to practise on them. Right now, the Science Lab is being updated. It was all in ruins. Repairs are going on and it will soon be possible to get the necessary equipment as well as the chemicals.*





Sr. Sheila Griffiths, formerly a missionary in Pakistan, who taught in the school, and is now assigned to Bradford, visited St. Mary's to talk to the students about her experiences there,

and to pass on the thanks from Sr. Teresa and all the beneficiaries of their generosity. They were really excited and encouraged to have such firsthand knowledge of those they are helping.



Sr. Sheila with her class in Okara where the Holy Family began in Pakistan

*Thank you,*

*Hand drawn card from the Nigerian woman to those who contributed towards the cost of getting her children from Nigeria to Ireland*

*SOME TIMES WERE DEFINITELY TOUGH AND THE GOING GOT ROUGH; ESPECIALLY WITH OUR FINANCES. OUR FAMILY NEEDED HELP AND YOU NEVER FAILED US AND DEPRIVED US OF THE SUPPORT WE NEED*

*WE WILL NEVER FORGET THE GOODNESS OF YOUR HEART'S. MAY YOU ALL BE BLESSED WITH ALL THE GRACES YOU SO DESERVED.*

*THANK YOU FOR YOUR KINDNESS AND HELP WILL FOREVER BE REMEMBERED AND CHERISHED.*

*THANK YOU  
Wendle + family*



## UPCOMING EVENTS

<b>December 2019</b>						
<b>Sun</b>	<b>Mon</b>	<b>Tue</b>	<b>Wed</b>	<b>Thu</b>	<b>Fri</b>	<b>Sat</b>
1 First Sunday of Advent World AIDS Day	2 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 2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent Feast of the Immaculate Conception	9	10 Feast of Our Lady of Loreto	11	12	13	14
15 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent	16	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 4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent	23	24	25 Christmas Day	26	27	28
29 Feast of the Holy Family	30	31				