



River Liffey, Newbridge, photo courtesy of Claire McGrath

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Rivers have variously been called the arteries of our planet, the lifeblood of our Mother Earth. They awe and fascinate us, whether they meander gently through countryside and towns or thunder madly over rocks and waterfalls, or whether they are beginning as a tiny, trickling mountain stream. It is probably true to say that people from all walks of life find inspiration and a sense of peace alongside rivers. Many of us have a unique relationship with a particular river.

Rivers have inspired artists, writers, photographers, and especially poets who see them as a key metaphor for the human experience. Think of Tennyson's, *The Brook*. In the Bible, rivers and water are part of key moments in the history of the people of God who, as the Loving Shepherd, leads us "near restful waters, to revive our drooping spirits". They also occur in the spiritual life and rituals of other religions. Many, notably the Ganges, are held sacred.

Today, it is sad to see how so many of our rivers have lost their translucency and become murky because of pollution. If we are serious about reversing this, we know it can only be achieved through a fresh global relationship with the created world, with nature, with the environment. In *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis re-echoes the challenge of the Earth Charter: "As never before in history, common destiny beckons us to seek a new beginning.... Let ours be the time remembered for the awakening of a new reverence for life, the firm resolve to achieve sustainability, the quickening of the struggle for justice and peace, and

From the Inter-Vocational Team

THE VOCATION OF A HOLY FAMILY PRIEST ASSOCIATE

A long time ago when I was seventeen years old, I was at a camp organised by the Eucharistic Youth Movement. A companion to whom I had spoken about my desire to be a missionary in Africa said to me, "The best way to see things clearly is to personalise your faith". The result was that instead of becoming a White Father, I became a diocesan priest in Gironde. And I am certain that the good advice I received guided me during my teenage years and young adulthood. Then I met a *Holy Family* Apostolic Sister who told me about the Priest Associates – one of the five Vocations that constitute the Family of Pierre Bienvenu Noailles.

My first memories of the Christian life go back to the days of my childhood and youth – being introduced to prayer in my family, Sunday Mass and the priests encouraging us to become involved in the life of the parish.

Then during my seminary training I made three big discoveries: The word of God, the teachings of Vatican II and the richness of the spiritual trends down through the centuries. I am grateful that these three focal points moulded me into the priest that I am today and continue to inspire me. I also believe that this way of seeing Church as being composed of a diversity of baptismal Vocations prepared me for saying "Yes" to becoming a Priest Associate. Throughout the assignments that I received from successive bishops I have almost always been able to work with young people, adults, religious sisters and priests. We shared the deep conviction that the Church, in the renewed vision of Vatican II, had to be a people, a family within which each one shared with the others the treasures

she/he received from the Holy Spirit for the good of all. I am amazed at how much I have received and have been able to share during my priestly life.



I have always loved reading the bible thanks to a pocket bible that was given to me on the occasion of my profession of faith at the age of twelve. I loved the Gospel sharings that we had with both young people and adults. At the moment, the practice of *lectio divina* is a great support for my spirituality. I have also discovered the importance of preaching in the ministry of a priest working in a parish. I humbly confess that, until recently, I found the art of homily giving very difficult. Thank God, the Holy Spirit finally took pity on me and gave me a greater charism in that area. During my formation as a Priest Associate I discovered what an essential place the word of God had for our Founder as nourishment for his spiritual life.

Thanks to my grandmother and a visit to Lisieux when I was ten I discovered Carmelite spirituality through St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus. During my seminary training I was able to deepen my understanding of various spiritual families. Before meeting the *Holy Family*, I was happy to receive nourishment from Carmelite spirituality and from the works of St. Francis de Sales. At the same time, I deepened my understanding of the importance of meeting the Lord with the whole of my personality as a human being in

tune with the realism and simplicity of the gospel.

When the Sister who became my accompanier suggested that I read the report of the meeting of the Priest Associates in Kandy (Sri Lanka) in 2004, I realised that I was called to this vocation. In the light of this, I re-read my life as a Christian and as a priest. The Lord had been preparing me for this for a long time by giving me the desire to live my ministry as a diocesan priest in a spiritual family. When I read the life of Pierre Bienvenu, I discovered the place of the word of God, the harmony of the various Vocations and the need to live the evangelical life with a family spirit. I was so happy to find confirmation of what I was trying to live in my daily pastoral life: promoting the desire to make the Church a huge Family gathered together in God like the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

During my formation I discovered other aspects of *Holy Family* spirituality – the spirit of God Alone, attentiveness to the signs of the times – something else we got from Vatican II – in order to respond to present-day needs and the international dimension of our Charism which enables me to live in deep and rich

communion with the five Vocations. As a diocesan priest, of course, I am linked to my bishop and the priests of my diocese. But I have a very strong fraternal bond with the international group of Priest Associates and I thank God for that. I had the joy of making my commitment in Martillac in October 2007 during the meeting of Priest Associates. Fr. Bernard from Lesotho made his commitment at the same time.

In this year of the Bicentenary of the foundation of our Family, I am happy to share the journey that led me to make this commitment and to be happy living my vocation in the Holy Family of Bordeaux. I would like to thank especially the Apostolic Sisters because it is usually they who awaken the Priest Associate Vocation around the world. Some years ago, a French bishop said quite rightly, “To call is to liberate”. Blessed be the Lord who has called us all to be part of the beautiful Family of the Children of God.

***Jean-Louis Despeaux,
Holy Family Priest Associate
of the Diocese of Bordeaux***

God's Love

God's love is with us in these trying times.
The Lord did not promise us a life without suffering.
The Lord said whoever wants to be my disciple
must deny themselves and take up
their cross and follow me (MK 8:34-5).
It does not mean that suffering is inevitable.
God in his love will help us when we call for help.
During this time of Covid-19 and all the restrictions
let us take the time to pray and unite our hearts in prayer.
Let us trust in the wisdom of the Lord
for 'God is love and whoever lives in Love lives in God'.
(1 John-4:16)

GOD IS WITH US.

A Consecrated Secular

THE SIMPLE JOYS OF LIFE

The kindom of God is like a mustard seed... it grew and became a tree... and the birds of the air made nests in it."

Recently I took a walk to the nearby Post Office as I had to post an urgent letter. From there I walked up the hill and turned into Saffron Drive. As I walked on around the first bend, I heard a chorus of bird song. I was close to a tree full of leaves but could not see any birds there. Just behind it, I saw another tree almost bare of

leaves in this autumn season. It was from this tree that the song emanated.

I stood in awe at the sight of so many birds perched in groups of twos, threes and fours, on the branches. No doubt our winter visitors from the cold areas of Iceland, Siberia or Scandinavia, had arrived to avail of the hospitable climate of West Yorkshire.



Sheila Griffiths

Keeping Going and On Track in a Pandemic

We have enjoyed receiving our Family Links over the past eight months. So much has been shared, so many words of kindness and encouragement, poems, stories and a real sense of connectedness of *Holy Family* everywhere. It has certainly been keeping us in touch, especially when we have been unable to meet physically, which has been particularly hard. We know that all groups are different. In our Wrexham Group, we are spread out over four Parishes, with up to ten miles separating some of us, so keeping in touch has often been a challenge.

Not everyone has access to emails and even those of us who do are not always comfortable with the technology. It was good to be able to send on Links to members of the group who are online and to exercise one's writing skills to those who were not.

It's still lovely to receive real letters and cards courtesy of Royal Mail.

We have all been able to relate to an awareness of our wonderful natural world through the views from our windows with gardens coming into bloom and changing through the seasons and we have felt in tune with Pope Francis' *Laudato Si*.

We have been challenged when friends, family or acquaintances have become ill and when care home and home visits have been restricted. Then, when people have sadly passed away, funeral services have had to be different but with a prayerful dignity in keeping with this difficult time.

These are God's times that we are living in and we know that God is living them with us, without a doubt. We may not always like them but they are Gift. It is easy to believe that we have lost control of our lives, but it is a timely reminder that while we may not be in control, we can be assured that in God alone we must rest and trust.

We may wonder what our Founder would be saying to us. In our Spiritual Guide (the little Red Book) paragraph 54, we read "Nothing happens without God's permission.... God has his own purpose in allowing trials which we may not always understand but which are always full of compassion for His children."

On page 7 of *Meeting Point 6*, we find the words of the poet Florentino Ulibarri, appropriate in our bicentenary and, hopefully, in a pandemic.

This is the time for new life!

It is time to awake from sleep
and come out on the balcony of life,
It is time to look at the corners and the horizon....
To look at infinity even if it makes you dizzy,
It is time to announce, sing and proclaim:

This is the time for new life!

It is time to break away from stereotypes,
to listen to the words of silence,
close the eyes to better see,
taste the Silent Presence,

This is the time for new life!

Lay Members, Wrexham

**10 BEAUTIFUL LINES, written by HENRY MUSIALELA NASILELE
READ and TRY to UNDERSTAND the DEEPER MEANING of THEM**

- 1) PRAYER is not a "spare wheel" that YOU PULL OUT when IN trouble, but it is a "STEERING WHEEL" that DIRECT the RIGHT PATH THROUGHOUT LIFE.
- 2) Why is a CAR'S WINDSHIELD so LARGE & the REAR VIEW MIRROR so small? BECAUSE our PAST is NOT as IMPORTANT as OUR FUTURE. So, LOOK AHEAD and MOVE ON.
- 3) FRIENDSHIP is like a BOOK. It takes a FEW SECONDS to BURN, but it TAKES YEARS to WRITE.
- 4). All THINGS in LIFE are TEMPORARY. If they are GOING WELL, ENJOY them, they WILL NOT LAST FOREVER. If they are going wrong, don't WORRY, THEY CAN'T LAST LONG EITHER.
- 5) Old FRIENDS are GOLD! NEW friends are DIAMONDS! If you GET a DIAMOND, DON'T FORGET the GOLD! To HOLD a DIAMOND, you ALWAYS NEED a BASE of GOLD!
- 6) Often when WE LOSE HOPE and THINK this is the END, GOD SMILES from ABOVE and SAYS, "RELAX, SWEETHEART; it's JUST a BEND, NOT THE END!"
- 7) When GOD SOLVES your PROBLEMS, you HAVE FAITH in HIS ABILITIES; when GOD DOESN'T SOLVE YOUR PROBLEMS, HE has FAITH in YOUR ABILITIES.
- 8) A BLIND PERSON asked GOD: "CAN THERE be ANYTHING WORSE THAN LOSING EYE SIGHT?" HE REPLIED: "YES, LOSING YOUR VISION!"
- 9) When YOU PRAY for OTHERS, GOD LISTENS to YOU and BLESSES THEM, and SOMETIMES, when you are SAFE and HAPPY, REMEMBER that SOMEONE has PRAYED for YOU.
- 10) WORRYING does NOT TAKE AWAY TOMORROW'S TROUBLES; IT TAKES AWAY today's PEACE.

***Submitted by Edel Mulligan
Lay Member, Newbridge***

The author is a Zambian citizen and an Electrical Engineer by profession.
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POEM

*When you get to the end of your tether,
And your energy seems all gone,
When you're weary and wondering whether
It's worthwhile struggling on.
When the fire has gone out of your spirit,
And your world has fallen apart,
Let go and let God do the fighting
Be still in your head and your heart.*

*When the music goes out of the morning,
And you cannot keep pace with the drum,
When the flowers in the garden stop smiling,
And the birds do not sing when you come,
When the sun never peeps through the window,
And you look for the rainbow in vain,
Ask someone to help you and heal you,
Let Him bear the brunt, take the strain.*

*When you get to the end of your courage,
And there's nothing much more you can do,
Try folding your hands for a moment
And letting God's wisdom come through.
Life cannot be altered by worry,
So stop trying to push it your way,
Just let the Good Lord take over
Be still for a minute and pray.*

Submitted by Rock Ferry Lay Member, Margaret Murray,
hoping we may find it helpful as she does at this time.

A version can be found [here](#).

STOP THE TRADE DEAL

Members of the Global Justice Now (GJN) Bradford, met in front of City Hall at the Mirror Pool, on October 22nd for a photo shoot, as part of the GJN national protest taking place throughout the UK up to 24th October. This was to protest against the Trade Deal currently planned with the US. Many people are realising the dangers posed by this deal, as it will weaken the standards that protect the things we value, erode the services that take care of us and damage the climate. All this to entrench power.

At 12 noon, 10 members gathered in spite of the light drizzle falling. We had decided to dress in Halloween costumes or any other suitable ones, to draw attention. However, due to COVID 19 restrictions, not many stopped to find out what we were doing. The banner however spoke for itself.

Most of our campaigners had chosen a witch's outfit. Trump was very noticeable, portrayed



by Heather Grinter. I, too, was present in my witch's outfit along with my own banner, 'Bewitched / B-Trade (Betrayed)'.

By 12.20pm the photo shoot was over but hopefully its effect will be promoted in various outlets. Copies of the photos, along with a press release and a letter signed by about 50 campaigners, were immediately sent to BBC Radio, Radio Leeds, the Yorkshire Post, Huddersfield Examiner and Telegraph and Argus.

Sheila Griffiths (Bradford community)

Celebrating with Sr. Mary Critchley on her 90th Birthday

Today, the 17th October, in Rock Ferry we celebrated Mary's ninetieth Birthday. Our celebration began with a prayer service, which included two of Mary's favourite hymns "Gentle Woman" and "Where two or three are gathered" (Liam Lawton).

Mary was delighted to receive phone calls from her sister Sheila, and beautiful bouquets of flowers and a cake from her nieces. They, of course, could not visit due to present circumstances.

The dining room and sitting room were decorated by Jackie and staff with banners, balloons, flowers and cards.



At 3pm tea time, after "Happy Birthday" and the cutting of the cake, Mary recited her party



piece as a thank you! It was "The Battle of Hastings" by Marriott Edgar. It was often recited by the comedian, Stanley Holloway, in the real Yorkshire accent. Mary gave a great performance and remembered to drop her "h"s! After tea we were invited to the sitting room for a sing-

along with John Sweeney on DVD. As the words of the songs were on the screen, we could all join in the singing: "South of the Border", "It's a long way to Tipperary" and of course, "Pack up your troubles in your old kit bag and smile...". The Sisters would



like to thank Maria and all the staff for making this a very special and joyful day for Mary and all the Sisters.

At the end of the evening meal, Mary thanked everyone for making her Birthday a very happy day.

Sr. Teresa Edwards, Rock Ferry

IN MEMORIAM

Sr Columba Lambe



On October 4th we welcomed Sr. Columba's remains back to the Convent. Mass was then celebrated by Fr. Bernard. On Monday 5th we processed to the Church for Columba's final journey. The funeral on this occasion was very different as Columba's dearly loved relatives from Ireland and England, or our own Sisters, were unable to join us due to Covid-9 restrictions. Many of you will already have experienced this as you grieved the loss of a loved one.

However, it was touching to see our loyal and caring Matron Maria and staff who took their places in the front benches of St. Anne's Church where her family would have normally sat. Also present were people from the Legion of Mary who knew the history of her brother Alfie. The beautiful wreaths of flowers from her family were given prominence and reminded us all how close her family was to her.

Fr. Bernard started his eulogy quoting the words of Psalm 102, "For you my soul is thirsting O Lord my God" and how appropriate

these words were. He first met Columba in Stalybridge Church kneeling in prayer at Adoration. He spoke of a woman of deep prayer who came from a family of prayer. He also mentioned Alfie, her brother who was a great Legion of Mary envoy in South America. Fr. Bernard also commented on how sad it was for the Community who buried three Sisters this year; three very different Sisters, but all women of prayer and Community living.

Columba was laid to rest in Plymyard Cemetery where Mary Catherine, our past Matron, Nora, her sister, and Annie, our past deputy matron, joined us during a "tropical storm." "Blessed indeed is the corpse the rain falls on"!

We express our gratitude to all our Sisters for their sympathy and prayerful assurance at this time.

**May Columba now be happy with the Lord
whom she loved so well.**

Rock Ferry Community

Sr Margaret Doherty



Sr Margaret Doherty died on 6th September. She had suffered declining health in recent months, yet was able to celebrate her 92nd birthday with some of her family and her Community on 16th August.

Margaret was well known and loved as a Rock Ferry girl. She devoted her long life to education and was well regarded, not only in the Shrewsbury diocese, but elsewhere too. Messages of sympathy were received from Bishop Mark Davies, Canon Michael Gannon and Fr. Philip Atkinson, her past pupil and now P.P. in St. Peter's, Stalybridge, *Holy Family* Sisters, past pupils and many parishioners.

Margaret's remains returned to our Convent for 4pm Mass on 20th September. Fr. Bernard Forshaw P.P. said the Mass. Some family members were present as well as our staff and Community. Fr. Bernard spoke on her ministry

within and outside the diocese, her total commitment as a Holy Family Sister, and her dedication to whatever mission she was entrusted with, at leadership level or otherwise.

Her funeral Mass took place, at St. Anne's at 12 noon on 21st September, following strict "Covid" regulations. Unfortunately her two sisters, Kathleen and Ann who live in Canada, were unable to be present. Sr. Margaret was pre-deceased by her brother Michael who died in February 2020.

Her nephew Anthony who is training for the Diaconate gave a fitting tribute at her funeral.

Margaret may you now rest in peace.

Rock Ferry Community

Sr Elizabeth Murphy



While we grieve the loss of Elizabeth, we are also invited to revisit a story which takes us back a number of years. Born in Courtown Harbour, Gorey, Co. Wexford, she had four brothers and one sister. She received her primary education at the local national school and her secondary education at Loreto Convent. Her favourite subjects were English and history. Following in the footsteps of her aunt, Sr. Kevin, she joined the *Holy Family* at Rock Ferry, Birkenhead.

Having completed her novitiate, she studied for two years in Carysfort Teacher Training College, Dublin where she qualified as a Primary School teacher. In September 1947 she joined the staff at St. Conleth's primary school, Newbridge, where she was to spend most of her teaching life. Having taught for a number of years, she was entitled to a career break in 1970. However, instead of availing of a break, Elizabeth chose to help out in one of our *Holy Family* schools in Lesotho, Southern Africa. She was one of a group of three who took the place of three Basotho Sisters, thus allowing them to pursue further studies. Elizabeth returned to Newbridge in 1973 and resumed her work there until she finally retired in 1979.

During the next three years Elizabeth was involved in pastoral ministry on the Curragh,

followed by further involvement in parish work in Dublin and returning to Newbridge as Community Leader until 1987. Her final years in active ministry were devoted to pastoral work and ministry in Moneenroe, Co. Kilkenny. She returned once again to Newbridge in 1995.

Since her death, tributes to her have been pouring in from various sources – mainly, of course from past pupils and parents. We have made many journeys down 'bóithrín na smaointe', mainly via website, letters and conversations. While her work in the classroom entailed a strong commitment, Elizabeth also endeared herself in a very human way to the pupils she taught and the people she met. The many messages of condolence by those whom she taught bear witness to this: her gentleness, compassion, patience and kindness in particular were highlighted.

Elizabeth is survived by her sister, Angela and her brother, Noel. We believe that those who have gone before us continue to journey with us and surround us with prayer.

Ar dheis láimh Dé go raibh a hanam uasal!

**Sr. Catherine Moran,
Newbridge Community**

UPCOMING EVENTS

November

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Sunday, 1st | All Saints Day |
| Monday, 2 nd | All Souls Day |
| Tuesday, 10 th | World Science Day for Peace and Development |
| Monday, 16 th | International Day for Tolerance |
| Thursday, 19 th | World Day of remembrance for Road Traffic Victims |
| Tuesday, 24 th | Feast of St Théophane Vénard (Prayer Associate of the <i>Holy Family</i>) |
| Wednesday, 25 th | International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women |