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FOREWORD

"In my beginning is my end." This is the first line of *East Coker*, the second section of T.S. Eliot's great poem, *The Four Quartets*. He visited East Coker, the place of his distant ancestors, with the intention, perhaps, of filling in gaps and finding completeness to his life. He ends the poem with the words, "In my end is my beginning".

Is he reminding us that our lives are a succession of beginnings and endings where every beginning has an ending and every ending has a new beginning? Endings can be successful leading on to better things, or they can lead to nothing, obliging us to start again.

At the beginning of this Advent and the ending of the year 2020 which has been so harrowing globally, what is our state of mind? The theme of most of the homilies preached at Masses on this first Sunday of Advent have dwelt on the importance of Hope. Wherein lies our hope? There is promise of a vaccine to stop the spread of the disease and prevent further loss of life. But that will not cure the heartache of those who have been bereft, of those whose livelihoods have been lost, or those whose mental health has deteriorated.

Ultimately our hope can only be that the Spirit of God, moving over the earth, will enable the many voices calling for a new approach to the problems of inequality, poverty, environmental destruction, racism... to be heard and acted upon so that we can "build back better".

From the Intervocational Coordinators Team

OUR ONGOING BICENTENARY

As we celebrate the bicentenary of the foundation of our Family, it might be good to reflect on the fact that the founding event was actually spread over many years as Fr. Noailles responded to the varied needs of his time. As he reflected on the difficulties in the society and Church of 19th century Bordeaux, he set up several congregations of religious and groups of lay people as constituent parts of the Association he had been inspired to found in 1818 while he was still a student in the Seminary of Saint-Sulpice in Issy.

In her memoirs, Pauline Machet mentions that Fr. Noailles spent forty-one years founding the Association. Although we normally regard Trinity Sunday as our Foundation Day, our Founder always gives the foundation date of the Association as 8 January 1820, the date on which Zoé de Raquine spoke to him about her desire to become a religious. In fact, the seeds of the Association were sown in November 1819 when he began an Association of Catechists in the parish of Saint Eulalie and placed the members under the patronage of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. Then the three members of the first community began life together on 28 May (Trinity Sunday), 1820 and the final congregation, the Solitary Sisters, came into being on 1 June 1859.

Between 1820 and 1859, Fr. Noailles founded seven congregations of sisters, two congregations of priests, what would now be called a secular institute, and various groupings of active and simple lay members. He also had plans to found a congregation of brothers but, although he got as far as deciding where the novitiate house would be, nothing came of it.

The first community (1820), known as the **Community of Loreto**, had a variety of

apostolic aims. The members were to look after young girls “in danger of being lost in the world,” set up workshops in order to train young women according to the state in life they were destined for, and teach children catechism, reading, writing and arithmetic. Two types of school were envisaged: small schools where poor children would be taught catechism and reading, and fee-paying boarding and day schools where the pupils would be taught the normal school subjects. The young women who belonged to the **Association of Catechists** were invited to collaborate. Many of these became “active lay members” and were solemnly received into the Association.

As well as active associates, there were “simple members” in the Association. These were a direct result of the Miraculous Benediction in 1822. Many people who heard about this event wanted to unite themselves to the Association by prayer. These were enrolled as “simple lay members” whose only obligation was to pray each day for all the members of the *Holy Family* and their benefactors. As well as adults, children were enrolled and were known as “Children of the *Holy Family*.”

Towards the end 1822, the **Congregation of the Poor Priests** was founded. Their principal work was giving parish missions. It was a source of great disappointment to Fr. Noailles that, without warning and in his absence, this group defected in December 1826.

Between 1822 and 1823, a second community of religious was set up, and several groups of active lay members were formed in Bordeaux.

In 1824, the name of the **Sisters of Loreto** was changed to the **Daughters of St. Joseph**. They

were to continue the work already being done and also to set up establishments for girls who were orphaned or abandoned. At the same time, The **Ladies of Loreto** were founded for the education of young upper-class girls in boarding and day schools.

On 25 March 1824, the first solemn reception of lay members took place. That year also, a group of women who, for whatever reason, could not become part of a community, committed themselves to live a form of consecrated life in the world. These were known by various names, and formed what would evolve into the *Holy Family Secular Institute*.

The **Sisters of the Immaculate Conception** were founded in 1829. The aim of this congregation was the education of poorer girls

Since 1830, Archbishop de Cheverus of Bordeaux had been asking Fr. Noailles for some sisters to nurse the upper-class people in their homes. In April 1836, he responded by founding the Sisters of Hope.

Twenty years were to pass before Fr. Noailles made another foundation when, in 1856, he established the **Agricole Sisters**. They were to support and educate families who lived in the country. The means to be used were farm-schools for both girls and boys, orphanages and any other works which would help the situation of country folk.

The Agricole Sisters were followed a year later by the **Sisters of St. Martha** whose aim was to look after clergy in presbyteries, bishops' palaces, seminaries and colleges. They ran boarding houses for clergy who had to spend some time in the city. They also looked after the domestic work in some communities of sisters, and helped in the boarding schools. Another of their duties was the training of girls who were destined to do domestic work in family homes.

The last foundation, the **Solitary Sisters**, was made in 1859. These sisters lived a monastic life-style and were considered to be the contemplative part of the Association.

Although the structure of the Association has changed over the years, all the ministries envisaged by Fr. Noailles are being carried out by members somewhere in the world. And, true to our Founder's vision and spirit, new responses to new needs are evolving all the time. So, we can look forward to celebrating the bicentenary of the completion of the foundation of our Family in 2059. For many of us, this celebration will be in heaven in the company of our Founder and Foundresses who enriched our lives here on earth in such a profound way.

Aine Hayde
(Intervocal Coordinators' Team)



Creation Day at *Holy Family Clane*

This year has been so challenging for everyone with the Covid 19 pandemic crisis changing our lives in huge ways. It is very difficult to get away from restrictions, limitations and negativity but, on a lovely late September afternoon, a group gathered at Holy Family Convent Clane to forget about Covid 19 and paint stones!



Yes, we painted stones.

This was part of our Creation day event and the brainchild of Sheila Briody, who is a member of Clane's Centering Prayer Group. Sheila encouraged us to paint stones for the newly formed Labyrinth at Clane Church.

We gathered in the convent garden, all seated at socially distanced tables, and for a few hours our focus was on painting our individual stones.

I am not a painter but we did have Fiona Marron, a local professional artist on hand if we needed advice but the real beauty of this event was that we all relaxed and painted with energy and enthusiasm, even if we did not really know 'how' to paint. It was a joyous time with chat and laughter among the gathered group and Srs Ann, Bernadette and Lil led the beautiful prayer that opened and closed our event.



The Clane Centering Prayer Group

was formed in September 2019 by John Farrelly and, up until March 2020 we gathered each Saturday morning in the Parish Centre to share in 20 minutes of silent prayer and lots of wonderful conversation.

While restrictions have prevented us from meeting in person we gather via the magic of Zoom and have met every week for blessed virtual prayer. We hope to paint many more stones for use at the labyrinth in the coming months. Each stone is individual and many have a single word, such as, **LOVE, PEACE, JOY**, painted in beautiful colours.



There is also a wonderful 'Silence@Six' zoom group who gather for prayer and contemplation every single evening at 6pm Irish time with participants joining from Ireland, the UK, the USA and Europe.



Terri Coonan, Lay Member, Clane



Prayer for putting on a facemask

Creator,

as I prepare to go into the world,
help me to see the sacrament
in the wearing of this cloth -
let it be "an outward sign
of an inward grace" -
a tangible and visible way
of living love for my neighbours,
as I love myself.

Christ,

since my lips will be covered,
uncover my heart,
that people would see my smile
in the crinkles around my eyes.
Since my voice may be muffled,
help me to speak clearly,
not only with my words,
but with my actions.

Holy Spirit,

as the ~~elast~~ic touches my ears,
remind me to listen carefully -
and full of care -
to all those I meet.

May this simple piece of cloth
be shield and banner,
and each breath that it holds,
be filled with your love.

In your Name
and in that love,
I pray.

May it be so.

May it be so.



At any given moment, there are countless numbers of people across the globe engaged in some form of prayer. While we may pray in different languages, we pray for very similar reasons.

"Prayer is how we communicate with the cosmos; it is the means through which we make ourselves known and heard in the vastness of space. And it's how we receive guidance in return. Prayer is our channel of communication, the direct line between the soul and the Divine."

—Caroline Myss

Prayer can provide the nourishment we desperately need, and it's an amazing remedy for those anxious, unsettled feelings we're all facing right now.

From Edel Mulligan, Lay Member

[Source](#)

Jubilee Celebrations in Rock Ferry

On Friday 30th October, Rock Ferry Community celebrated the 70th Jubilee of Sr. Hilda McGrane and the 60th Jubilee of Sr. Kathleen O' Reilly (aka Catherine). Hilda's was actually February 2nd and Kathleen's was March 2nd but due to illness and then lockdown, it was postponed in the hope that family, friends and Sisters could join us. Unfortunately due to the Pandemic restrictions this was not possible.



However, everyone here rose to the occasion starting with staff who decorated with banners, balloons and cards. Fr. Bernard from St. Anne's came to celebrate Mass which was very much appreciated. Two beautiful bouquets of flowers had arrived early in the week from Maria, a lovely friend to all who, prior to lockdown, used to come several times a week to answer the door and the phone.

In the dining room two photos of Hilda and Kathleen had been framed. We told them: "You've been framed!" Then, during our lovely

midday meal, a very large parcel arrived for Kathleen. We were all intrigued as to what it could be. Those who know Sr. Carmel know she loves doing jigsaws! And those who know Kathleen know she is crazy about cats and dogs!! So the parcel was a framed picture of Carmel's jigsaw which included a mother cat and seven kittens of every size and colour. Kathleen was delighted with this and now it is hanging in her room.

After lunch the staff organised a singalong and dancing for the "young ones". It was a very happy day for our two Jubilarians but also for all of us.

Kathleen and Hilda would like to thank all the Sisters who sent gifts, cards and Masses, Maria, our Matron, and all our staff for their cards, gifts and planning to make this a very happy and memorable day.

Sr. Teresa



“BEGIN”

by Brendan Kennelly

Begin again to the summoning birds
to the sight of the light at the window,
begin to the roar of morning traffic
all along Pembroke Road.

Every beginning is a promise
born in light and dying in dark
determination and exaltation of springtime
flowering the way to work.

Begin to the pageant of queuing girls
the arrogant loneliness of swans in the canal
bridges linking the past and future
old friends passing though with us still.

Begin to the loneliness that cannot end
since it perhaps is what makes us begin,
begin to wonder at unknown faces
at crying birds in the sudden rain
at branches stark in the willing sunlight
at seagulls foraging for bread
at couples sharing a sunny secret
alone together while making good.

Though we live in a world that dreams of
ending
that always seems about to give in
something that will not acknowledge
conclusion

UPCOMING EVENTS

	Important Dates - December
Tuesday, 1 st	World Aids Day
Saturday, 5 th	International Volunteering Day
Thursday, 10 th	Our Lady of Loreto
Friday, 18 th	Our Lady of Hope - Approval of the Constitutions 1903 & 1988 Unit Zoom meeting for Annual Renewal of Vows
Sunday, 20 th	International Human Rights Day
Friday, 25 th	Christmas Day
Sunday, 27 th	The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph