

# Family Links

February 2021

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*A sign of the times!  
Amadeus Youth Group  
Zoom regularly and  
enthusiastically.*



## FOREWORD

“A terrible beauty is born.” This line, repeated like a refrain in W.B. Yeats’s poem, Easter 1916, written after the ill-fated insurrection, is resonating with me in our present situation as we struggle with Covid-19? Despite the awful suffering and distress caused by the pandemic, it cannot be denied that something beautiful is happening.

From the very beginning of the crisis, even without appeals being made, offers of help came unsolicited through our letter boxes, phone calls, WhatsApp chats, and other means of communication. People found creative ways to raise funds, invented novel means of entertainment to keep people’s spirits up, not to mention the heroism of health care workers. Something beautiful was born, or perhaps it might be more accurate to say, it surfaced. It was always there but it took a pandemic to activate it.

How can we ensure it does not go under again when all this is over? Listen to the prophets. There are many prophetic voices today, coming from young and old, male and female, people of faith and none, all pointing out the catastrophic effects of climate change, the folly and waste of the arms industry and the race to produce nuclear weapons, food scarcity, loss of biodiversity, the destruction of the rain forests, racism, human trafficking...

The prophetic dimension of Religious Life is also evident, as various congregations find ways to tackle these problems. As we begin the immediate preparation for our General Chapter, we will be asking ourselves how we, *Holy Family* religious, are being called to discern what our charism has to offer in the midst of this suffering and find ways to respond. May we know how to listen to the Spirit speaking to us in many voices.



## From the Intervocational Coordinators Team

### OUR HOLY FAMILY TREE



Two hundred years ago, Pierre Bienvenu Noailles founded the *Holy Family* Association with the image of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. The Association also adopted the image of the Oak tree.

*“In my dream the Holy Family appeared to me as a gigantic tree, a kind of oak with green leafy branches. On it were flowers and fruits of all seasons, and birds of every colour and from every country. Each had its own special song but at times they all merged into one voice and, in perfect harmony, seemed to sing, ‘Glory to God, glory to God alone and all through Mary’” ....*

*Memories of Martillac - The Drem Chapter*

An Oak tree was firmly planted, which stands magnificently in the grounds of La Solitude in Martillac and has become one of the most recognisable, comforting images for the *Holy Family* Association worldwide.

Although the roots of the oak tree are firmly embedded, our *Holy Family* tree is being pruned very harshly during this pandemic.

Too many of our wonderful Sisters and Lay Members have most noticeably died recently.

We have now entered the third century of our Association under the guise of this very subtle disease and were unable to have our full celebrations for our Bicentenary year in 2020. Instead, we are being put to the test of keeping the unity of the *Holy Family* Association foundations firm, alive and healthy.

Remembering that the roots of any Family can sometimes become tangled, fragile and really unhealthy due to mistreatment, illness and isolation, it is important to keep in touch with All our members – more especially at this time - whilst we are unable to join together physically in our groups or regional meetings.

Nurturing the fellowship / friendships that we have grown over the years keeps us ‘grounded’ and keeps the ‘blossom’ in our hearts!

Those who are fortunate to have access to the technology for Skype, WhatsApp or Zoom meetings have the ‘treat’ of seeing each other and are great ways to keep the communication lines open!

Those who don’t have access to this technology can still be reached with a simple phone call, a ‘Thinking of You’ card, a letter, a Prayer or just

stopping and giving time to someone can be a reassuring comfort during the day. We can set a specific time aside and join together in daily prayers and offerings.

This is all ‘feeding and nurturing’ Our Holy Family Tree so that the roots, trunk, branches and leaves can lead to

full blossoming all year round.

The Gospel story, at the heart of *Fratelli Tutti* is the parable of ‘The Good Samaritan’ – which should move us to respond to our Members and anyone in need, whoever they are, wherever they come from – to act as good neighbours and to reach out to all those who we know are in need.



Pope Francis has deemed this year to be the 'Year of St Joseph', who is the strength at the beginning of the Holy Family and is the Patron Saint of 'Workers'. As we will be celebrating the Feast Day for St Joseph on March 19<sup>th</sup> – may we offer our prayers of gratitude and thanksgiving to All those who are working tirelessly, along with the armies of volunteers and charity workers, in the fight against Covid in all its many forms. As our founder envisaged - let us all *"merge into one voice and in perfect harmony"* of Prayer - **Thank you!**



## **Prayer Friends of the Holy Family of Bordeaux**

### **Daily Prayer**

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God our Father, we ask you to bless all the members of the Holy Family of Bordeaux – religious, secular, lay members and priests; bless too their benefactors and friends and all who support them in their various ministries.

Give peace and happiness to the living, and eternal rest to those who have died.

Bless our families, help us to love and cherish one another here on earth and be united one day in your everlasting life.

Amen.

May Jesus, Mary and Joseph guide and protect us always.

Amen.

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*Margaret Ramsey, ICT*

## Year of St Joseph March 2021

Dear Members,

What a year 2020 was most of us are glad to see the back of it we learned to live with lockdowns and social distancing. We saw parents protecting the children and unable to visit their elderly parents and the numbers of sick and dead are still on the increase. Is it any wonder we all look forward to a normal and peaceful 2021?

This year has one good thing to look forward to, one hundred and fifty years ago Pope Pius IX proclaimed St Joseph the Patron of the Universal Church. To mark the occasion of such a great anniversary Pope Francis has proclaimed 2021 the “Year of Saint Joseph”. The word “patron” comes from the Latin word pater, which means father. A title which is as important today as it was all those years ago.

Just as Joseph is patron of the universal Church, Joseph is also patron of our own parish churches, as well. Joseph provided for Mary and Jesus and provides for the Church as a whole; Joseph can be trusted to provide for all the needs of our parishes. Pope Francis describes Saint Joseph as a beloved father, a tender and loving father, an obedient father, an accepting father, a father who is creatively courageous, a working father, a father in the shadows.

**Taken from a Reflection from Fr, Gerald Wilson OAR Augustinian Priest**

Love Light and Blessings

Marilyn Sutemire, Skelmersdale *Holy Family* Lay Members

## A “BIBLICAL” MOMENT

This seems the only way to describe what we have experienced in our Unit from the end of January to early February, when eight sisters – seven in Newbridge and one in Rock Ferry – succumbed to Covid-19, leaving us all deeply saddened.

The many messages of communion in prayer, love and shared grief came quickly from all quarters, reminding us once more that what happens to one happens to all. While the remaining members of both communities are recovering well and have received the vaccine, it will take more time for them to recover from the shock and sadness of losing their sisters.

Yet, as a local newspaper in Co. Kildare wrote, “Despite their own sorrow and grief, the thoughts from the convent are still with those in the wider community”. In an interview with the newspaper, Newbridge community leader, Sr Colette, said: “Our sisters had lived their lives. We appreciate we are not the only martyrs here, as things have been so much worse for others, with families left without parents”.

She said how disappointing it was that, in spite of the great care taken by both staff and sisters, the virus had managed to infiltrate the house, causing all of the sisters and many of the staff to be infected by it, though most did not get seriously ill.

“The sisters who died,” Colette explained, “had an average age of 90 plus. All of them were already very frail and in need of nursing care. They had all lived very full lives, some in these islands and some in Africa or Asia, working in many different ministries as pastoral needs presented themselves. In spite of the quick succession of deaths and the restrictions on the numbers attending funerals, the community did manage to convey and acknowledge each sister’s uniqueness and contribution to church and society in their funeral Masses, livestreamed for the benefit of families and friends worldwide.” She also said how deeply touched the sisters were by the many messages of sympathy received from the parishioners and the wider community.

Thanks also go to the attendant doctor and all the staff in the convent for their dedication and care, as well as to the Health Service who gave their support and practical assistance at a very difficult time. Knowing they could rely on the invaluable support of the priests of the parish, and of the Dominican community in the town, was a comfort. There were always at least five priests present in the sanctuary at each Mass.

Once again, this incident has brought out the inherent goodness and generosity of people constantly on display during this pandemic, nurturing our hope for a better future,

*“May the God of hope fill (us) with all joy and peace in believing, so that (we) may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*

*(Rom. 15:13)*



*Sr. Catherine Moran, a member of Newbridge Community offers this Reflection*

Having lost seven members of our community within a fortnight as a result of the Corona virus, the following text is an effort to reflect on what sustained us as we coped individually and as a community.

We recalled how each Sister in her own unique way had been a gift to our community. Following the death of each Sister, we gathered in community to pray for her, thanking God for the gift of her life poured out in God's service.

Our difficult situation mobilised good will from many sources. While there were no normal funeral services, the Eucharist for each Sister who had died sustained us in a unique way. The liturgy for each Sister was beautiful and life-giving, recalling how each one had enriched our community in her own unique way.

The local priests of the parish, as well as priests from the Dominican community, concelebrated the Mass for each Sister. The availability of the webcam also ensured that relatives of the deceased and the *Holy Family* communities throughout the Unit and further afield also shared the liturgy with us.

Due to the Corona virus, when some members of our usual staff were unable to attend, the *Health Board* ensured that we had adequate staff to cope with any emergency that might arise. We are also indebted to many of our own *Holy Family* communities for the support they gave in our time of need.

We never felt abandoned or alone, constantly receiving assurances of prayer from so many sources, from our Bishop, local clergy, teachers and past pupils of the Holy Family Secondary school, Lay Members of the *Holy Family*, other Religious orders, and many, many friends. We owe a special debt of gratitude to our own Care Unit staff who support us and minister to us in so many lovely ways.

So, we conclude our reflection, asking God to lift us all up to new horizons of hope and possibility, reminding us that there are secret sources of courage inside every human heart. In the words of the prophet Jeremiah, God is saying to us: ***"I have plans to give you a future full of hope."*** (Jer. 29: 11-14)



### **THE NEWBRIDGE SISTERS SAY “THANK YOU”**

It is now one month since we buried Patricia, the first of our seven members of our community who died of Coronavirus.

We have been overwhelmed by the support we received both from within and outside the *Holy Family*. . In our sorrow and grieving, we got a new sense of what it means to be part of a world-like Family and knowing that you were so close to us helped us to live through what was truly a traumatic experience. A very tangible example of this family spirit was when (Sr) Lil, arrived from Clane at a time when we were all in isolation and many members of our usual staff were absent due to having contracted the virus. Her smiling face as she took our temperature each morning brightened our day and her nursing skills were invaluable. Thank you, Lil.

We would like to say a very sincere thanks to all of you, Sisters, Lay Members, Priests and Seculars, who contacted us by phone, email text messages or letter and who sent Masses and sympathy cards. It was also wonderful to know that so many of you were with us via the webcam for the funeral Masses. Weren't our priests wonderful??!

A special word of thanks to Catherine (Lavery) and Claire who were with us all the way - Claire making sure she was present at every funeral (even though we could not offer her a cup of tea). We were also very touched by the support we received from Ana Maria and the members of the General Community.

*Aine Hayde*

## Ministry in a time of Pandemic

### With the JRS supporting asylum seekers

#### Phone Support

Due to the restrictions of the Pandemic the usual JRS activities were suspended leaving our refugee friends without what was a vital support and lifeline for many. Their sense of isolation increased as did their struggle to survive, since they were no longer able to access the services that helped them meet their essential needs. Before the pandemic they would visit the Day Centre, chat with their friends, have a hot meal, and receive various forms of help. Due to the restrictions arising from the spread of COVID-19, this was no longer possible.

Creative ways were found to enable as much support as possible to continue; one of these being the formation of a group of Phone support volunteers. Faced with increased loneliness, isolation, fear, and insecurity many of the more vulnerable were needing this emotional support and friendship. With the closure of the usual activities, I became part of a team offering accompaniment through weekly phone calls. I have 10 refugees on my list.

Sometimes it is a question of a friendly chat, letting them know that they are not forgotten. On other occasions there may be concerns that need attention, shortage of food, toiletries, phone top ups, medical concerns, anxiety, fear, stress... When this arises, a report is given to one of the staff, who organises a response.

What is remarkable is that in the midst of a situation of abandonment and destitution they will always ask, "how are you", and express interest, gratitude and appreciation for the smallest help received.

#### Hosting

One of the greatest challenges faced by the asylum seekers is the lack of accommodation.

Often, they must resort to sleeping on night busses, depend on a friend who may give them a sofa for a few nights, or else find a corner somewhere on the street. The hosting scheme organised by JRS is a wonderful opportunity for some of them to receive secure, friendly accommodation in a family or with a religious congregation.

The community I live in has the privilege of hosting for nearly four years now. Normally, our guests stay for a period of 4-6 months and then move to another hosting place. We have a one-week break before the next guest arrives. Our present guest, originally from Ethiopia, has been with us for one year now. She arrived just before the pandemic was declared and lockdown became law. She will be leaving us shortly and we will welcome another one. We will miss her. Each guest makes her own unique contribution to our lives.

We learn a lot and get real insights into the experience of so many who find themselves in a foreign country, with no friends and totally destitute. We marvel at their ability to survive and often we say to ourselves that we would find it almost impossible to walk in their shoes for one day, let alone one week.

We gain so much from our daily interactions with our guests, who come from several different countries; some may have been in the country for +18years without any response or support from the government. Our experience of hosting enables us to keep in touch with the reality of people "on the move", opens us to the pain and struggle of people we wouldn't, normally, be living closely with, and it relativises our own struggles.

*Sr. Margaret Muldoon  
St. Gabriel's Road*



## Youth Ministry in Newbridge

*St. Conleth's Parish, Newbridge, has a vibrant youth group called Amadeus. Parish pastoral assistant, Charlotte Vard, who runs the group is a past pupil Holy Family Secondary School. Sr. Kate Cuskelly, who initiated the Holy Family Youth group at the school, has teamed up with her. Rather than have either of them talking to us about the group, let's read what one of the young people has to say.*

**H**i, my name is Saraïd and I am one of the many members of Amadeus, our local parish youth group.

I have been a part of Amadeus for almost 4 years now and it has truly been one of the best experiences of my life. Being part of this supportive and loving community, this family, has made me become a better person and helped me explore my faith and beliefs in ways that I never thought possible.

If someone had come up to me a few years ago and told me that I would be spending my Friday nights with other young people in the parish, learning about our religion in a fun, interesting and relatable way, I would've said that they were crazy! I would have laughed and said that, that was never going to happen. But boy, I was wrong!

I was an altar server during primary school, but by the time I was finishing up First Year, I knew that I was getting too old to be serving. I still wanted to be a part of our Church Community; I just didn't know how. I can still remember seeing posters up around my secondary school, wondering what was this group and what was so special about it? I didn't think it would suit me. Hanging out with complete strangers, talking about faith wasn't appealing at all! I decided to go just once to try it, and never ended up stopping

There was something about the initial warm welcome, the sense of belonging, of being part of something great. It was completely different to anything I could have imagined it would be.



Every night is completely different to the last! Some nights will be relaxed with meditation and guided prayer sessions. Some are crazy, with games, crafts, music and drama. Others are interesting with guest speakers and workshops, and debates surrounding topics that are relevant to us as young people questioning and craving more knowledge about our faith and religion. And sometimes it is a mix of everything! No two nights are ever the same.

Amadeus have a bigger role than just helping young people explore and understand our Catholic faith, however. We don't just spend our time in the Parish Centre on Friday nights. I think that Amadeus members have a key role in our parish community. Often just being there, present in the church, welcoming parishioners, handing out books and leaflets, and helping during the mass is important, showing that we are as much a part of this parish community as anyone else.

I feel that the most important thing we can do as young people in the church is be present and



seen, proving to others, both the younger generations looking up at us and realising that they have a place in the church, and the older generations knowing that their church is continuing to grow through the future generations.

We also play a part in helping Communion and Confirmation children understand and relate to the big steps they are about to take in their faith journey. We hold retreats for them and prove to them that our religion isn't something they think about once or twice and then walk away from. We show them that religion can have a central place in their lives, and faith isn't exclusive to their Grannies and Grandads!

But it is not all hard work! I have been lucky enough to represent Amadeus on day trips to Knock and Carlow Cathedral, as well as taking part in Parish Race days and fun dramas at Christmas and Easter. It is an honour to be able to represent not only Amadeus, but all of Newbridge Parish whenever we go away.

Amadeus has also been instrumental in helping me to complete my Pope John Paul II Award (JP2) this year. This is an award given to young people in recognition of their involvement in their local and parish community. It allows us to develop our social awareness and allows us to reflect on our level of involvement within our parish. While many young people complete this award within our parish without being a member of Amadeus, I have certainly found that it has helped, encouraged and supported me.

I have made friends with people I would never have even talked to if I wasn't in Amadeus. People from different years, different schools, different backgrounds and different ages come together in Amadeus to create a social network unlike anything I have been part of before! You are instantly accepted into the group, and never made feel awkward or alone.

I know that when I went that first night, I knew one, maybe two people, and was not looking forward to walking into a crowd of strangers. But I didn't even get the chance to feel left out or sad. I was called over to a group of girls that I had never met before and made feel welcome and wanted! These girls were there for me and they didn't even know who I was. Now, these girls are some of my best friends, and I have tried to be like them whenever someone new joins us, looking lost and alone.

I think that that is what Amadeus is all about: accepting and supporting everybody. Amadeus feels like a safe place to all its members. There is nothing that we can't face as a group, nothing we can't overcome. Stepping into Amadeus is stepping into a world where you are supported, accepted and appreciated.

During the recent pandemic and lockdown, Amadeus has been a constant support for every single member. We weren't meeting up once a week as we had been previously, but that didn't mean we had stopped all together. Leaders were just a click away, either through Email, Facebook or Instagram, and wouldn't hesitate to help us if we had a problem.

After a few weeks, we joined the thousands of other organisations on Zoom, video calling from each of our own little bubbles. Though it will never replace our meetings in the Parish Centre, it was great to see everyone again. It is crazy how much fun we could have on the calls. Games were played, prizes won, and many laughs were had! It was a different kind of meeting, and I am grateful for Amadeus during these uncertain times.

But it is not always easy to be part of a group like Amadeus. I know that I make it seem like it is all sunshine and daisies, and to some extent it is. Amadeus is amazing and I would never lie about what a difference it has made to me and to so many others who have joined. But sometimes it is hard to be part of a group that often gets looked down upon by our peers. I have had plenty of people come up to me and ask me “why are you part of that cult?” or “why would you want to be part of something like that at all?”

Let’s face it, to most young people, religion isn’t ‘cool’ and expressing your faith and being proud of it certainly isn’t. But that shouldn’t stop you from wanting to learn more, from wanting to be part of something bigger. Everyone believes in

something, and you shouldn’t be shunned or feel bad for wanting to project those beliefs into your everyday life. Religion doesn’t have to be going to mass every Sunday, saying the same prayers repeatedly (though both of those are very important). Sometimes just being able to sit down and discuss what it means to be a Catholic young person is enough. Having the confidence to stand up and not be afraid to tell others that you believe in your religion. Being able to wear that bright red hoodie with pride.

Amadeus means ‘loved by God’. Something that all of us should remember. We should not be afraid of showing that we are loved by God and we love Him.

*Sarad Hartne*



With Sr. Kate (far left), Amadeus recipients of the John Paul II Award, 2020, outside the Parish Church in which they had received their medals.

They are currently in a Parish Lenten programme called BEGINAGAIN 2021



## ***Newbridge Parish - Share Food “People helping people”***

The Share Food Project (Newbridge Parish Food Bank) began in our Parish in February 2014.

Seven years later the project still continues, under the leadership of Sr. Eileen Murphy.

Over one hundred food parcels are distributed weekly to those in need.



February 2020

Volunteers packing food parcels

May 2020

Share Food Volunteers wear facemasks and keep 2 metres apart.



September 2020

**Our new tent during Lockdown**

Every Monday, *Share Food* volunteers set up their tent and wear facemasks, as they prepare to distribute food safely to those who come to collect food parcels.



## Keep your light burning



During the pandemic we all wondered and would have perhaps asked 'where do the homeless people go during lockdown? As the virus

increased and spread, the day care centres in London couldn't have a crowd of homeless people under one shelter. As the homeless people living on the streets are more vulnerable to Covid-19, a group of charity organisations in London including The Passage helped to move them to hotels and hostels.

Just as the pandemic brought many changes in the life style of people, like working from home, watching Mass on webcam, isolation for doctors and nurses from their family members, The Passage, a day care centre for homeless people, too changed its way of service, of providing food for the clients. As a volunteer under the age of 60, I was invited to help them during the lock down in London. The community took the risk to send me out for this ministry.

The first step required was to read the guidelines to follow in order to be safe for myself and others and sign up via online for each shift. Each shift comprised of 12 volunteers and each one was given a separate table to pack things like cold breakfast, lunch, and someone put all together into

paper bags with some fruit, crisps, water, a soft drink, all that was needed for a day.



We helped the chef to pack hot meals with much care given to allergens and the number of vegans on the list. Once everything was packed and ready, the volunteer drivers took it to the hotels and hostels and delivered the food to the homeless people.

Even though we volunteers worked separately we had a team spirit. Since some new people joined the group, I come know them. I was happy to pack food for the homeless people. Even though I wouldn't meet them I packed the food with love and care. It was also an answer for the question in my heart - what am I doing for the homeless people during the pandemic?

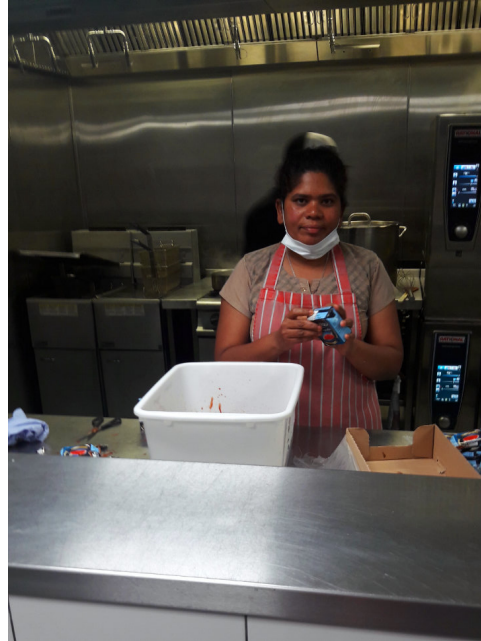
I was happy when a homeless person recognised me on Victoria street even though I was wearing a mask and asked me, "Is the Passage working?" He wanted some toiletries. He said that he was accommodated far from Victoria so he gets his ready-made food from other Charities. He can't cook and he walked to places where the Charities or group of people provide hot meals in common twice a week.

During this Covid-19 pandemic we have had many anxious moments wondering what was going to happen next in the world. For homeless people, their life itself is uncertain. What is going to happen next? Where do I go next?

The divine light is twinkling in every human heart. How much it eagerly burns; the wind of challenges and stresses try to blow out the light in our hearts. Jesus says, “I will not leave you orphans, So, God is ever present in our hearts. Let us feel God’s presence in ourselves and keep divine light in every human heart.

I conclude with the words of Francis of Assisi:  
Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is discord, union; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light, and where there is sadness, joy.”

*Sharmila Mennesa*  
*St. Gabriel’s Road Community*





## IN MEMORIAM

### Farewell to Sr. Dympna McCluskey by Sr. Colette Keegan



Good morning and welcome to St. Conleth's Parish Church, Newbridge, where we gather for the funeral Mass of Sr. Dympna McCluskey. This is the 5th times in 10 days that we gather to pray and give thanks for the life of one of our community. Each one of these Sisters was unique in so many ways - temperament, character, gifts and talents and their contribution to the life of the *Holy Family*, our mission in the Church and the wider society was special to each one.

Today we celebrate Dympna and her life.

We are happy that some of Sr. Dympna's nieces and nephew are with us as we give thanks for her life. I would like to extend a warm welcome to all who are joining us via livestream, in particular her brothers Paschal and Dermot, who live in America, her nieces, nephews, extended family, friends and parishioners from her home parish of Dungiven, Co. Derry.

I also welcome all the Sisters, all members of the *Holy Family* who cannot be with us but who are joining us from Convents and homes in Ireland, England, Scotland, Wales, and South Africa, where Dympna lived and worked for 35 years and from our Generalate in Rome.

Dympna died in the early hours of Tuesday morning, the feast of the Presentation of the Lord, the day that Joseph and Mary brought their baby Jesus to the Temple to present him to God. Surely, this was an appropriate day for Dympna to leave us, I feel sure that Joseph and Mary were there to meet her and present her to the God whom she loved and served so well all her life.

Dympna, may you rest in peace.

**SOME MEMORIES OF SR. HILDA McGRANE**  
**1931 - 2021**  
 by Sr. Teresa Edwards



I first got to know Hilda in the Waterford Road Community in the 1990s. She was a gracious lady who was always full of fun. She was a very caring person also and was dearly loved by the poor people of New Brighton and Birkenhead where she worked in the Charity Shops.

She would listen to their stories and empathise with them. This made her understandably impatient with any of us if we complained about the slightest thing! She'd say, "You don't know how the other half live", and she was right!

When I was working at the Park Family Centre in the town, she was very encouraging and supportive especially when I had to prepare for our first OFSTED. When we got a good result, she was so happy and really rejoiced with us.

Another thing which I really appreciated was the great friendship she struck up with my Mum who, at that time, was in the Care Home in Waterford Road, Oxton, along the road from our Convent. Hilda would take Holy Communion to Mum a couple of times during the week and they would reminisce together about their school days in the Mournes. Mum went to Brackney West School (for 2 years) and Hilda to St. Louis Convent school in Kilkeel.

After Hilda left Waterford Road she went to Wrexham where Catherine and herself were always very welcoming if ever I needed to go for a rest. I've many happy memories of the sing songs and fun we had together there!

When my Mum died in 2003 Hilda sang the psalm at her Funeral Mass. People were very moved at her beautiful singing voice.

Recently, when I moved to Rock Ferry, Hilda was there. Sadly, her hearing had deteriorated and she never heard a word I said but whenever we met face to face indoors or in the garden, she would always give a lovely warm smile. My last memory of her smile was on my 80<sup>th</sup> birthday when she sang a Happy Birthday solo!

Till we meet again, dear Hilda, be happy with your God.

## In Memory of Sr Maria Ryan 1028 - 2021

by Sr. Claire Mc Grath



We gather once again to celebrate a life, the richness of a life well lived - the life of Sr Maria Ryan.

We offer our condolences to Sr. Maria's family, her nephews and nieces, and we are happy today that Maria's nephew, Fr. Tom, is with us to preside at his aunt's Mass.

We thank all who are united with us offering support with messages and prayer. We know that so many are joining us today via livestreaming; that is a huge consolation. We welcome you and thank you for your continued support - *Holy Family* Sisters, Lay members and friends. And, of course, we thank our ever-faithful concelebrants.

The gift that we have received as *Holy Family* Sisters, and try to live, is the gift of Communion, that is, living in union with God, with one another, with all those we meet, with all creation - in other words, the gift of right relationships.

And Maria embodied this gift in a special way; She really had a gift for friendship; her warmth and gentleness enabled us to be present to people, to gather people together.

One of our Sisters who was her companion in community and a colleague in school for over 20 years said of her "She was loving and caring and everyone, staff, parents and children, all loved her.

Yes, the work, the ministry was important but it was the love, respect and care for others that she lived through this ministry that mattered more.

Even in these last few months when she did not speak her eyes still held the warmth and the gentleness that said more than words.

Maria, may you now rest in the friendship of God and with all those you love

Maria R.I.P

## Remembering Sr. Marie-Thérèse Mallon

1928 - 2021

by Sr. Colette Keegan



Good morning and thank you for joining us via live streaming in St. Conleth's Church, Newbridge, for the funeral Mass of Sr. Marie Therese Mallon. Your participation with us in our liturgies for our recently deceased Sisters has been a huge comfort, strength and support to us all.

Today, I would like to welcome especially the nieces, nephews, grandnieces, grandnephews and friends of Sr. Marie Therese. They join us from Newry and surrounding area and I know that her grandnephew, Fr. David Rocks, a Dominican priest joins us from Oxford.

Welcome again to all *Holy Family* members, linking in from many parts of the world.

Marie Therese died at noon on Monday, Feb.8<sup>th</sup>, the anniversary of our Founder's death and also the 74th anniversary of her religious profession and days after her friend and companion, Sr. Maureen Delaney.

Marie Therese, the star of the County Down was a warm, gifted, funny and mischievous person and loyal to a T. She was a brilliant Infant Teacher and the fact that she was a gifted musician with a good singing voice was an added bonus when teaching very young children. In community, her creativity extended to a diverse wardrobe in the days when we all wore a religious dress.

This she used to amuse, perplex, and bewilder many sisters up and down the Province. She would knock at the Convent door, dressed in various guises, and ask to speak to Rev. Mother. At times she was homeless, or hungry and once she was interviewed because she wanted to be a nun.

There was no malice in Marie Therese, just sheer fun when nuns were supposed to be prim and proper. This is the Marie Therese we want to remember and celebrate today so, we have a happy liturgy.

Our main celebrant today is Fr. Ruairi assisted by Fathers Joe, Eugene, Paul OP and the Prior from the Dominican College, John Harris. Our cantor is Margaret Roche

## A Reflection on Auntie B (Sr Thérèse Mallon)

by her grand nephew, David Rocks OP

Therese loved to send letters and cards. In one of the last letters she wrote to me, she included a little clipping which read: “If there’s no chocolate in Heaven, I’m not going.” It captured her sense of fun and playful, mildly rebellious spirit. Therese was firstly for me my beloved “Auntie B”. Each summer she would come for a month to her home in St Clare’s Avenue, “Number Eleven” as she called it. Throughout the year, “Auntie B’s key” had its place in the hallway, a reminder that the summer holidays would come and so would Auntie B, with lots of curious gifts, trips out, ice-cream. She wrote every week and rang every Saturday.

But when I would address the envelope “Sr Marie Therese Mallon”, I became increasingly aware that her religious life was her love and devotion, and it made her who she was. Many years ago, Auntie B explained to me the symbolism of the shamrock for the Holy Family congregation. Mother Bonnat had suggested it to Fr Noailles for part of the crest, to symbolise the unity of the four parts of the Association of the *Holy Family* – three leaves and a stem that holds them all together.

I’ve picked four photos of Therese, from four stages in her life, that for me bring unity to the life, contribution, struggles, and courage that formed Auntie B as Sr Marie Therese, and a dedicated member of the *Holy Family* Sisters. The first is of a young Sr Therese, veiled in black, outside the door of “Number Eleven”. Her mother, some of her sisters, and family



friends are gathered around her. It must have been, in those days, a very rare visit home. The faces

are so full of hope and radiate with joy. Before I entered religious life, Therese told me that before she entered the convent in Magherafelt, she overheard her mother say that if things didn’t work in the convent for Bridget, she could always come home. That loving reassurance meant a great deal to her. Indeed, it was Therese’s reassurance to me all those years later when I left home to begin my religious life.



The second lived in the front bedroom in Number Eleven, next to a large portrait of St Therese of Lisieux. It was of a middle aged Sr Therese, in a modified habit, in the throes of her ministry as a *Holy Family* Sister. The familiar smile showed a woman truly enlivened by her mission and religious life, someone unencumbered, a free spirit.

During her years in England she taught and got involved with many different things and people. She developed great friendships with many OMI priests, and indeed tormented them. Some of those who spring to mind are Brian De Burca, Tom Devereux, and the late Colm Connolly.

When I was nine, I visited her with my Dad at 16 Ings Road. Sr Theresa Quinn was community leader at that time, and a great friend of our family. It was lovely for me, as a small boy, to get an insight into her religious life. Reforms that followed the Second Vatican Council had opened a new world to Therese. But she never reverted to her baptismal name as did others, as she once told me she was lucky to have been given Therese as her patron when she entered.

The third picture is on the day of my final profession, or solemn profession, as a

Dominican in 2006. Auntie B is at the centre of a family photo, beaming with smiles. It was on that day, we had begun to notice that she could be a little confused or prone to overexcitement. A few days later, she returned to her mission in Leeds, but Selby Road this time; and I moved to England, studying in Oxford.

The closure of Ings Road was painful for her, and she 'gave up' some of the things she was doing. For the first time in many years, she was not collaborating with the OMI fathers, and this was a loss for her. She still called me each week, and I visited her in Selby Road. She began to speak about a desire to receive a new 'mission', closer to home.

Sr Marie Power was on the leadership team at the time, and I remember having a word with her. Therese returned to Magharafelt, where it had all started. But it wasn't the same. Her mental capacity had begun to deteriorate, and the sprightly little nun became preoccupied. Quite soon she moved to Newbridge, where the community leader was Sr Catherine Moran, a dear friend to Therese. Gradually, Therese fell silent. The final picture is the most recent I have of her. It's one

of Sr Catherine and Therese with flowers I sent for her feast day back in October. Therese is sleeping, peaceful and unaware.

These final years have been hard for her, seemingly locked in her body. But the picture for me speaks of a woman reassured by God's love, the love of her family, and the *Holy Family* Sisters. This fourth picture is like the stem of the shamrock in the Holy Family Crest, which unites the different aspects of the life of Auntie B, Sr Marie Therese.

The beaming young woman, behabited outside number eleven, became this placid old sister, silently awaiting her call before the Lord. Like St Therese, her vocation became love, and to borrow the words of Mother Bonnat, Therese's life is for me "a constant reminder of what we

owe to God almighty and to the adorable, holy and lovable persons of Jesus, Mary and Joseph."



Sleep in peace, Thérèse.  
I hope there's chocolate in  
Heaven.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### MARCH 2021

Monday, 1 <sup>st</sup>	St. David, Patron of Wales
Wednesday, 3 <sup>rd</sup>	World Life Day, World Hearing Day
Friday, 5 <sup>th</sup>	Women's World Day of Prayer
Monday, 8 <sup>th</sup>	International Women's Day
Wednesday, 17 <sup>th</sup>	St. Patrick, Patron of Ireland
Friday, 19 <sup>th</sup>	St. Joseph
Sunday, 21 <sup>st</sup>	World Day for the Elimination of Discrimination
Monday, 22 <sup>nd</sup>	World Day for Water
Tuesday, 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Death of Mother Trinity Noailles
Thursday, 25 <sup>th</sup>	The Annunciation of Our Lord Reception of the first Lay Associates of the Secular Institute, 1824
Sunday, 28 <sup>th</sup>	Palm Sunday

## Endnote

**You might have noticed the logo on the title page caption. There is an explanation on the *Holy Family* general [webpage](#), copied below:**

The idea of changing the logo for our Information Communication Service began during our last Information Communication meeting, held in May 2018 in Rome.

A logo has to make an impression; it should be deceptively simple, and instantly recognizable. Therefore, we decided to take our inspiration from the Holy Family crest, which is already well known and widely used.

### Explanation of the logo

In the centre, as in the original, three leaves of *the shamrock* symbolize the Holy Family: Jesus (blue), Mary (silver/white), and Joseph (sable) with a purple stem. *The shield* is formed from the God Alone Cross on the left, representing our spirituality, and on the right, *a branch with five leaves* symbolizing our five vocations. At the bottom, is our *motto* "Gloire à Dieu Seul" The treble clef intertwined with the cross signifies that 'each has its own song but all merge into one voice' to sing in perfect harmony, "Glory to God, Glory to God Alone".