



# Family Links

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Newsletter of the Holy Family of Bordeaux in Britain and Ireland

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## Foreword

Witnesses to the Eucharistic miracle granted to the Holy Family 1822 described how “Jesus had his left hand on his heart and the other stretched out over us.” The gospel is full of references to Jesus’s hands and the power in those hands. During his last earthly meal, we recall how Jesus took bread in his sacred hands, blessed it, broke it and gave it to those present to eat, making all the loving power of his hands available to them and to us, if we will take it.

When we reach out our hands to receive the host at Mass we reaffirm our commitment to God and to all that pertains to God. We come empty-handed and open-handed, ready to receive with both hands whatever God wishes to give us.

It is worth considering that what we do with our hands is never insignificant. Hands may almost be said to speak. Do we not use them to indicate joy and sorrow, hesitation or willingness, refusal or acceptance? We can demand, summon, dismiss, threaten by a wave of the hand. Have they not also the power to excite, to soothe, to heal, to comfort, to create?

When we sing to the Lord in the words of Carey Landry, “*Lay your hands gently upon us, Let their touch render your peace*”, may we ask for our own hands some share in this blessing gift.



St Brigid of Kildare

## MESSAGE FROM ICT



### A Synodal Church

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ let us walk with Pope Francis on his journey, listening and praying with all Baptised people for a Synodal Church. The word synod derives from the ancient Greek term for coming together. It's about co-operation. So for us at Parish, Diocesan and every level we shall be searching together through prayer and discussion to know God's will and the way to achieve it. The aim of the synod is to bring a greater degree of openness, collaboration and mutual listening to the Church.

On 10th October 2021 in St Peter's Basilica at the Vatican Pope Francis celebrated a Mass to open the process. Officially then, it began in dioceses all over the world with opportunities for mutual consultation at every level and among many different organisations. Feedback from the dioceses will lead to the Assembly of the world Synod of Bishops in 2023 entitled "Synod on Synodality, Communion, Participation, Mission".

But, for the initial preparatory phase of the universal synod the fundamental questions put to us are:-

How does this "journeying-together" take place to-day on different levels (from the local to the universal one) allowing the Church to proclaim the Gospel ?

Is it taking place at all in your local Church or has our preoccupation with Covid 19 and all the restrictions attached, curtailed our efforts to engage?

What steps is the Spirit inviting us to take in order to grow as a synodal Church?

What does God want from the Church in Ireland at this time? This last question is surely the lead question for the Irish Synodal Pathway.

A synodal Church is one that listens.

Maybe we can begin to listen more, discuss further around social matters that arise in community/ workplace/ home and take a much more active part in Pope Francis' courageous effort to open up a Church that is smothered in deep fog! Let us move forward with ears and eyes wide open to see and hear the needs in our locality and respond with generosity thus transforming situations and the lives of countless people and our Earth. This is what it means to be truly missionary- LISTEN, RESPOND, TRANSFORM !

When the General Assembly meets in 2023, (and it is hoped there will be more than Bishops there) its task will be to prayerfully consider how to move forward as "a more synodal Church in the long-term". Pope Francis is calling on all Baptised Catholics from all over the world to come with him "on a journey" as a Synodal Church. He said, "may we be pilgrims in love with the Gospel and open to the surprises of the Holy Spirit. When we listen and are guided by the Holy Spirit our path will become clear". The Gospel urges the Church to return to missionary boldness. So, Church leaders need to pay much more attention to people's doubts and take them seriously. The faithful must be listened to at all levels, within Parishes and Dioceses, Episcopal and Continental Conferences. The Gospel also urges the Church to be compassionate, courageous, enthusiastic; to speak out; to be bold and listen intently to all peoples including the marginalised, the poor, refugees and the cry of Earth.

The following quote is from the Preparatory Document for the Synod. As a baptised member of a more synodal Church are you happy with it? It offers an opportunity for discussion and debate. So, let's begin!

“The Assembly and debate in each diocese will end with the sending of a Document of the respective Episcopal Conferences; the latter will write a national Document and also transmit to the Vatican the diocesan texts. With that data, the Synod’s General Secretariat will elaborate a first working Document that the Bishops’ Continental Conferences will study. Thus the process will continue with pre-synodal meetings at the Continental level, to give the broadest possible participation and the seven final Documents will serve to prepare the *Instrumentum Laboris* (Working Instrument) that will be given to the Assembly of Bishops” in October 2023.

*The Quiet Revolution of Pope Francis- A Synodal Catholic Church in Ireland?* by Gerry O’Hanlon SJ, offers a new programme of renewal for the Catholic Church in Ireland. It is an excellent read.

It addresses the challenges facing the life of the Church in a secularised culture and outlines how parishes and dioceses can implement the teaching of the Second Vatican Council and the synodal vision of Pope Francis.

For Pope Francis three characteristics of a synodal Church stand out. A synodal Church would be a more fraternal Church - a common home; a place of relationships and coexistence in diversity. A synodal Church would be able to listen and learn from other Christians and admit mistakes and a synodal Church would be prophetic. Francis is modelling a Church that stands alongside the marginalised and speaks truth to power. He invites us to walk with him.

*A Holy Family Consecrated Secular*

### Synod Prayer

We stand before you, Holy Spirit, as we gather together in  
your name.  
With you alone to guide us, make yourself at home in our  
hearts,  
Teach us the way we must go and how we are to pursue it.  
We are weak and sinful;  
Do not let us promote disorder  
Do not let ignorance lead us down the wrong path nor  
partiality influence our actions;  
Let us find in you our unity so that we may journey together  
to eternal life and  
not stray from the way of truth and what is right.  
All this we ask of you, who are at work in every place and  
time in the communion of the  
Father and the Son, forever and ever  
Amen

# The Holy Family Eucharistic Miracle in 1822 and now

Adapted from an article by Fr André Nottebaert O.M.I. for the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the miracle in 1997

**T**HE PURPOSE of the miracle was to inspire confidence in the founding charism of Fr. Noailles, a charism that was disputed by many around him. The question of the relationship between the miracle and the innovative quality of the congregation arises here. This new, active grace needed confirmation, not only because of its 'lay' character and the daring way women were called to collaborate in it.



fact, the unfathomable and absolute character of God that is stamped on the memory of the heart. When our striving towards holiness is based on the absolute, we cannot but welcome and submit ourselves to everything new that presents itself. Whoever reacts like the disciples in the boat tossed by the waves needs to see Christ appearing and saying, "*Do not be afraid. It is I*". That is the guarantee of continuing fidelity.

Fr. Noailles gave women a leading role in all pastoral initiatives and demanded of them an unusual degree of generosity through the Branch of God Alone. Christ's blessing was thus intended to link two mysteries, that of His special presence in the Eucharist to which all have access, and the practical mystery of an enterprise that was astonishing by its boundless variety and its heroic call to "the highest degree of holiness". The sisters of the Holy Family were henceforth called to be particularly courageous by their presence in all those places where women do not usually go, and to manifest a selflessness never yet experienced. The Holy Family sisters' awareness of their special call was in future, therefore, to be guided by this act of blessing. It was a confirmation and a founding event...

## The Spirit of God Alone

The Eucharistic miracle of 3 February, 1822, still speaks and does so to the same end. Christ said, *I am the One who is and there is no other*. These words reveal the extent of the demands made by the spirit of *God Alone* and, in them, we discover its theological foundation. It is, in

## A Community Grace

This grace was not given to one individual person, not even to the Venerable Pierre Bienvenu Noailles, but to the members. The latter are invited to be co-foundresses by a devotion proper only to them. For a devotion to be valid and efficacious, it must correspond to three conditions. It should lead to dedication, and a growing consecration to the Person on whom it bears. It must be central, that is, it must be a mystery that recalls the elements necessary to salvation – the Trinitarian God, the Saviour and final Beatitude. It must also be dynamic and inspired in order to guarantee the elements necessary: progress in holiness, presence and constant deep union.

## A Family Possession

The Association of the Holy Family should also consider the Eucharistic Miracle as a family possession, a heritage, so that it may lead the community to experience the mystery of the Eucharist as a special devotion. It must stimulate them liturgically. That is to say, it must be lived as a festive solemnity that gathers the whole family together to commemorate the event in the same way as the Pasch, the founding feast of the people

*memory of me*, to be applicable to the words of Jesus blessing, the liturgical feast must bring back, not only the memory of the past, but be an incentive for a revival of the interior experience of Mother Trinity, Aloysia Noailles and Milady Peychaud, as a direct testimony from Christ.

### **Eucharist in Holy Family Devotion**

Apart from the fact that it is part of the life of the church and is its summit and centre and source, the Eucharistic celebration and all related celebrations should arouse a spontaneous reflex in the members of the Holy Family and lead them to have recourse to this source of grace in all that touches their daily lives and the difficulties of their apostolate. For them, this devotion is no longer simply Christian and universal, but special and reserved. It leads to devotion to the Family.

Just as the Eucharist normally leads the Christian to a mystique of the mystical body, so the event of the apparition leads the Holy Family to consider itself as a true Association of several vocations. Unity becomes communion and draws to itself as much the

Secular Institute and the Lay Members as the Contemplative community.

### **God's Purpose in this Miracle**

The aim of this grace was to stimulate the congregation in its new grace of foundation. It enabled the Founder's charism and the foundation charism to blossom into the fruitfulness of apostolic witness. God's design was also to approve what public opinion rejected at that time. It was to pierce the overly Jansenistic religious tendency and the overly masculine culture, in order to free the priesthood of the faithful.... Today, it is principally to free the ministry of the faithful in the Church and to stress that all are called to the highest holiness (L.G. Ch 5). It is also a call to the religious life to seek contact and communion with the laity and to learn from them by accepting and promoting new forms of religious life.

Finally, this miracle was willed to draw attention to the holiness of the Founder. It was this grace that brought to fruition the succession of subsequent graces predestined for him, leading him to the image the Word had of him from all eternity.



## The Joy of Meeting after Lockdown

### Sr. Bernadette Deegan updates us from Clane

Our Centering Prayer Group in Clane had been meeting on zoom for over a year and a half. As the Summer approached last year, we got together in person for the first time when lockdown eased. Terri Coonon, our Lay Member, kindly invited us to her garden on Saturday, 26<sup>th</sup> June.

The rather dull, windy morning did not dampen our spirits. Terri and her husband, Diarmuid, had supplied an outdoor heater, blankets, cushions and refreshments. The joy of seeing

each other in person cannot be expressed in words!

Socially distanced, we meditated for our usual 20 minutes of silence, followed by the sharing of the many emotional, sad experiences as well as joys that had happened since we last met in person. It was as if our Creator God embraced us all in that time of deep sharing – a very mystical experience -with the birds singing and leaves gently rustling around us in the wind surrounded by the vibrant colours of Summer.



### “Suimhneas” - a New Venture

From our Saturday Centering Prayer Group has sprung new shoots of hope in setting up a dedicated space for Meditation in Clane open to people of faith and none. After looking at various possibilities, a space has now been allocated (part of the community centre) for various sessions on meditation.

On 22<sup>nd</sup> January a “Peace Morning” took place with 3 sessions attended by over twenty people. Weekly meditation sessions are now offered at 3 different times. There is a small team leading at present with the hope that many more will do so when available and Covid reduces. Anne Kearney and myself have been part of the planning and continue as team members. Our Lay Member, Terri Coonon, and John Farrelly spoke at all the Masses to highlight the new initiative and also on Radio. Please see leaflet below for more details.

# SUAIMHNEAS [PEACE]



Do not try to save  
the whole world  
or do anything grandiose.  
Instead, create  
a clearing  
in the dense forest  
of your life  
and wait there  
patiently,  
until the song  
that is your life  
falls into your own cupped hands  
and you recognise and greet it.  
Only then will you know  
how to give yourself to this world  
so worthy of rescue.

*Clearing, Martha Posslethwaite*

**Would you like to experience more peace in your life in 2022? Have you ever wondered whether the stillness and silence of contemplative practices like mindfulness, meditation or centering prayer might help?**

**Suaimhneas** aims to create a safe, supportive and inclusive contemplative space, where you can come to cultivate peace in your life so you can pour peace back into your piece of the world. **Suaimhneas** finds a home in the Parish Centre on Clane's Main Street, but offers you an equal welcome whether you're someone who comes from a faith tradition, whichever one, or have no religious affiliation at all.

**Suaimhneas** will offer you workshops on different contemplative practices throughout the year, as well as weekly, drop-in practice opportunities.

**Suaimhneas** invites you to a **'Morning of Peace'** on Saturday the 22nd of January between 10am and 1pm where you can hear more about what we do, learn about contemplative practice and find some peace while practicing in the company of others. Booking is required and we invite a donation of €5.00.

Drop-in practice sessions will begin in our dedicated **'Peace Room'** on Monday the 24th of January at 9am and Wednesday the 26th of January at 7am and 7.30pm and will take place at the same times each week thereafter.

For more information or to register for the **'Morning of Peace'** contact:

John Farrelly on 0872466892 / johnpfarrelly@gmail.com

1 February

Feast of St Brigid, Patron of Ireland

Muire na nGael - Mary of the Gael

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Display before the altar in St. Conleth's Church

Newbridge, Co Kildare



St Brigid's cross crafted by  
HFSS student



## UPCOMING EVENTS

<b>FEBRUARY 2022</b>	
Tuesday, 1st	Feast of St. Brigid, Patroness of Ireland
Wednesday, 2nd	Presentation of Jesus World Day for Consecrated Life
Thursday, 3rd	Bicentenary of the Miraculous Benediction (1822)
Friday, 4th	International Day of Human Fraternity
Tuesday, 8th	Death of our Founder, declared Venerable in 1988  Feast of St. Josephine Bakhita, Patroness of trafficked people, World day of prayer to raise awareness of, and to eliminate, Human Trafficking.
Friday, 11th	Funeral of Fr. Noailles
Thursday, 17th	Feast of the flight into Egypt