



Family Links

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Newsletter of the Holy Family of Bordeaux in Britain and Ireland

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Inside

*

Message from the ICT

*

Holy Family Youth in solidarity
with Ukraine

*

Newbridge welcomes Ukrainian
refugees

*

International Women's Day in
Darndale Parish

*

How we celebrated our 1st
St. Patrick's Day

*

The Liberation of a People

*

Sarah and Hagar

*

We all get our wings clipped

*

A Voice for the Voiceless

*

Let the Oppressed Go Free

*

Upcoming Events



Sculpture "Let the Oppressed Go Free" before the altar in pro-Cathedral Dublin

(see p. 13)

Foreword

After the two-year ban on parades and large gatherings, St. Patrick's Day was celebrated this year with more joy than ever by Church and State. It was heart lifting to see the crowds of Irish people, and those of other nationalities who have made Ireland their home, thronging the streets, enthusiastically wearing the green. It was only right it should be so.

However, the troubled times we are living in were not forgotten in the celebration of the Eucharist in parish churches where fervent prayer was offered for an end to the war in Ukraine and the resultant plight of refugees, among other ills. Particularly striking was the [homily](#) of Dermot Farrell, Archbishop of Dublin. He drew a parallel between Patrick's life and times and ours today. Reminding us that, as a child, Patrick was cruelly torn from his family and homeland and brought as a slave to Ireland, he drew attention to the present day horror of global human trafficking, the modern term for slavery, and one that is exacerbated in times of crisis, such as war, when people are displaced.

He made this appeal: "As our world reels from the violence and destruction so cynically unleashed upon Ukraine, let us be inspired by the living faith of Patrick. May the openness of his heart drive from us all indifference and self-interest. His world was harsh; so, is ours? We are shocked as its harshness, horror, and profound unfairness are revealed anew. What we considered banished to the past, is being revealed not only at the edge of Europe, but in our midst, in apartments, not only in our cities but the small towns of this land.

May Patrick who heard the cry of the Irish (Confession #23) inspire us to hear the cry of the little ones – be they far away, or in a room down the street...."

MESSAGE FROM IVT

Holy Family Youth in Newbridge

Imagine most of us remember where we were on March 12th 2020, the day the first Covid lockdown was announced here in Ireland. News that schools were to close was greeted with the usual good-humoured excitement by pupils, staff and even the school Chaplain! A few days or even a week or two out of school didn't seem like a bad offer at the time.

However, little did any of us think that two years later we are only beginning to emerge from this world-wide pandemic which caused so much disruption, pain and death for so many people. Our expected "few days" off school turned into a whole new life experience. We were "cocooning", social distancing, sanitizing, home schooling, zooming, and being told when to mute and unmute!

Most of the activities of Holy Family Youth are school based, so with school being closed for long periods and with me being part of that noble group of "COCOONERS" it wasn't easy to keep regular contact. However, we faced the challenge and with the support of our school Chaplaincy Team and our Parish Youth Worker, Charlotte Vard, we have managed to keep Youth Ministry alive and this is in no small way due to the blessing of technology and our introduction to Zoom.

Holy Family Secondary School has a very strong sense of belonging to and insertion into the local community. A spirit of awareness of local needs is fostered and students are encouraged and facilitated in raising funds for many Charitable causes. The HFY group initiated and coordinated a very successful Toy appeal at Christmas to support women and children experiencing the pain and trauma of having to leave their homes due to physical violence and or sexual abuse. Staff of Teach Tearmainn, a refuge for such families in Kildare town, were delighted and



most appreciative to receive the huge delivery of new toys collected in our school, together with a cheque for over €900 from an in-school fund raising event.

Each year during Lent the students focus on supporting some local charity. This year our focus is on a local project which supports homeless people in Newbridge. The "DINING ROOM", as it is called, was set up a few years ago by local people concerned about the plight of people "sleeping rough" in our town. Since then, this charity has broadened its outreach to include families and individuals who may not be sleeping on the street but who are in Hostels, B&Bs or in very low-quality rented accommodation. The "DINING ROOM" also supports families suffering the effects of poverty and lack of nutritious food in their own homes.

Recently, we invited one of its organisers to come to the school to speak to the HFY group about how they might help support this project. The speaker outlined to the girls some of the heart wrenching truths about homelessness and the extent of poverty and need in our own local area. As a result of this talk the HFY girls have visited every class in the school motivating the students to support their appeal and outlining some of the practical food and toiletry items which they can bring into school to share with the less well off.

It is indeed very heartening to witness these girls speak to their peers and to school staff about how even their smallest gesture of sharing can make a difference in someone else's life. Our school motto "TO BE FAMILY AND TO BUILD FAMILY", which is inspired by our founder Pierre Bienvenu Noailles, serves as a strong motivating factor in encouraging a generous response.

In addition to their involvement in HFY many of the girls are involved in the local parish youth group, Amadeus, and in the Pope John Paul II awards. Recently, our Parish youth worker, Charlotte, organized a series of online talks and videos called “Exploring our Faith” inviting young people from our own parish and our neighbouring parish, Naas, to come together via ZOOM to reflect on the lives and faith stories of some inspirational young people.

This series proved very popular and worthwhile. We reflected on the life of Carlo Acutis, a teenager born in England in 1991 to Italian parents. Carlo died at the age of 15 from cancer but his short life bore witness to a very strong personal faith in Jesus, lived out in very ordinary ways. His particular interest lay in exploring how the social media forum could be a valuable tool for evangelization, especially among young people.

Sr. Clare Crockett from Derry is another inspirational person for young people. Her story of coming to realise the gift of Faith is one that resonated with the youth. As a teenager she signed up to go on a Pilgrimage thinking it would be a holiday with lots of time for partying. In fact it turned out to be a life changing event for her. She joined a Religious Order and although tragically she died in an earthquake in Ecuador at only 32 years, her short life and deep faith had a profound effect on all whom she encountered.

Elma Walsh, mother of Donal (the Kerry teenager who came to prominence in 2013 through his interview on Irish television just months before his death from cancer) shared the very powerful story of his devotion to the Eucharist and a very strong message on the value of life. He urged young people to live their lives to the full cherishing every

moment. At a time when suicide rates in Ireland are very high, particularly among young men, his message is very clear: suicide is a permanent response to a temporary problem with devastating consequences for family and friends. He urged young people to always seek out someone to talk to if they feel worried or stressed.

In the course of this series “Exploring Faith”, our young people got the opportunity to talk to Ireland’s youngest priest, David Vard, and Ireland’s youngest Bishop, Paul Dempsey. Both these men have very strong connections to our parish. David is a native of Newbridge and Paul was Parish Priest here prior to his appointment to the Diocese of Achonry two years ago. There were very interesting exchanges as the young people found out more about the joys and challenges involved in being in ministry in the Church today.

Bishop Paul introduced the topic of the upcoming Synod and posed a question to the young people “If you had five minutes to spend with Pope Francis what would you like to say to him”.

There were some very interesting replies, varying from deep thoughts like the problem of evil in our world, climate change, homelessness and poverty, the role of women in the Church. There were some lighter questions too, like, what is a typical day in the life of the Pope. But perhaps the comment that brought a smile to all our faces came from one of the girls who said “If I got to meet Pope Francis, I would simply give him a big hug and say thanks for all you are doing in our world “. I think Pope Francis would be delighted with that reply. What do you think?

*Kate Cuskelly, Sonas Christi
HFSS Chaplaincy Team*



Newbridge Youth

ready to walk for Ukraine

Sr. Kate is on far left.

Newbridge youth in solidarity with Eukraine

Newbridge Parish Youth Minister, Charlotte Vard writes:

To show our support for the people of Ukraine the Amadeus youth, John Paul II and Papal Cross participants of Newbridge Parish had pledged to do a 5km walk in solidarity with the people of Ukraine.

All parishioners were invited to join us - the walk took place on Saturday, 19th of March. They met at the Parish Centre at 4.30pm and walked the Lidl Distribution Centre loop.

After the walk the Amadeus Group, Pope John Paul II & Papal Cross participants furthered their learning and awareness of the devastating situation, by taking part in a social justice workshop focusing on the struggles and sacrifices made by those who now find themselves in a refugee status. This was led by Jenny Gannon.

In addition to the workshops the Papal Cross participants along with their leaders pledged to complete a Stay Awake for the duration of the night, with prayers, reflections, further refugee awareness, and team bonding- a simple act of solidarity. Ending at 8:30am Mass in the Parish Church.

We as a parish have set up a direct parish donation, where all proceeds will go to the Irish Red Cross for the Ukraine appeal.

For more information: www.newbridgeparish.ie



Walkers display Ukrainian flag



Night vigil. Sr. Kate seated centre left



Amadeus Youth and HF Youth for Ukraine

Charlotte sitting back row, 3rd from R.

The young people raised €2,275 from their Walk and STAY AWAKE event.

This money will be channelled through the Irish Red Cross.

Newbridge welcomes Ukrainian Refugees



Srs. Eileen Murphy and Lil Meagher organised this coffee morning which was attended by fourteen Ukrainians. Two had already been resident in Newbridge for some time. The other twelve were newly arrived refugees, all women. Present also were two babies a few months old, and a brother and sister, 7 and 3 years old respectively. The latter were initially very quiet and shy but, by the end of the morning, they were full of fun and had no problem helping themselves to the goodies available. It was a great chance for the 14 adults to meet and chat. There was a lot of emotion. The parish priest and a Polish priest also joined them. It was a beautiful gathering.

Eileen and Lil will continue to organise coffee mornings every Wednesday.



Three people from **NEWBRIDGE FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE** were also present. They are eager to offer assistance on many levels.

1. Play Therapy for 6 – 12 year old children
2. Pre-school places for 2 ½ - 5 year olds
3. Counselling for adults
4. Family support Group

They are now going to add English language groups.

Eileen has since received an email from an organisation 'ACCORD'. They are aware that people helping Ukrainian Refugees may also need support as they listen to the trauma suffered by these people. This is also open to Host Families.

**A Webinar is being organised for Wednesday 6th. April 8-9:30pm (Opens at 7:45)
Booking deadline: Thursday 31st. March 5pm at bhorgan@accord.ie or 01 505 3112
If interested give: Name, Phone No. email address
Zoom link will be sent on the day.**

International Women's Day in Darndale Parish

Sr Lumi, a Franciscan Missionary of Mary, and currently working in Darndale, invited our community from Griffith Downs to their Eucharistic celebration, for International Women's Day, on Sunday 5th March.

The morning began with the celebration of a creative and meaningful Eucharist, presided over by Fr Michael and Fr Edwardo. The liturgy was obviously very well prepared and included song, dance and prayers from various countries. The focus was very much on women; the homily was given by a Sister. Ten different nationalities were present along with parishioners, many of the visitors dressed in their national costume

At the end of Mass Fr Michael extended words of thanksgiving to many women who had helped in the parish over the years. He gave special mention to The Holy Family Sisters, saying they were still remembered by the people as the Sisters who not only worked in the Parish but, were "with us".

After the Eucharist, we were invited out to the garden for some International entertainment of music, song and dance. Roses were presented to many women who dedicated their time helping in the local community. This was followed by a delicious buffet meal, having a variety of food from different countries. Fortunately, the weather was fine for an outside garden event, cold but sunny.

Mangala and Shanthini really enjoyed the experience meeting many new people.



How we celebrated our 1st St. Patrick's Day

It was a privilege for us, as Sri Lankans, to celebrate what is, for our Irish sisters and brothers, a special day - the feast of their Patron Saint, Patrick. Claire and Carmel explained to us that St. Patrick's Day is a celebration of everything Irish - its culture, its people and its openness to the world. Before we came to Ireland, we didn't know much about Irish culture but now we know about the shamrock, the harp, Irish music and dance.

One of the special events for us was joining the crowd in Dublin for the big parade. To see the numbers from different cultures was wonderful. The people were all having fun and enjoying the day. Many dressed in green were full of joy and hope. At the Parade we experienced unity, creativity and energy of both young and old, representing different cultures.

There were colourful floats and bands from several different countries. Many wore shamrock which reminded us of the official emblem of the Holy Family.

We were happy to join in the celebrations on St. Patrick's Day because, for us, it was a rich and unique experience. We will never forget it.

Mangala and Shanthini - Griffith Downs

Mangala and Shanthini
have now been joined by Dilhani,
also from Sri Lanka,
who, like them, has come to improve
her knowledge of English.



The Liberation of a People

Exodus 3, 7-13

Yahweh said,
 “I have seen the humiliation of my people in Egypt and I hear their cry when they are cruelly treated by their task-masters. I know their suffering. I have come down to free them from the power of the Egyptians and to bring them up from that land to a beautiful spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey. Go now! I am sending you to Pharaoh, to bring my people, the sons and daughters of Israel, out of Egypt.”

Moses said to God,
 “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the people of Israel out of Egypt?”

God replied,
 “I will be with you and this will be the sign that I have sent you. When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain”

Reflection

When I was in the Novitiate I was introduced to the Book of Exodus, telling the story of the deliverance of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, and a key part in the history of salvation. The Exodus is the heart of the Old Testament and what gives it significance is that it shows us a God who liberates people.

I spent some years in Brazil and within that situation I developed a deeper understanding of this text in Exodus. As I became more immersed in the struggles and sufferings of the people of Bahia, God’s words to Moses served as a great incentive to be part of this liberating endeavour to which God was calling the exploited poor of Brazil.

Today upon reading and praying this text different aspects and insights present themselves.

God sees the suffering, violence, war and destruction today and calls us to respond.
 “I have seen the suffering of my people. I have come down to deliver them....”

God needs us to co-operate in this saving liberation just as he called Moses to go to Pharaoh.

“I am sending you to Pharaoh, to bring my people, the sons of Israel out of Egypt.”

Moses found various excuses not to collaborate with God in this demanding mission.
 “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh?” and “what if the people will not believe me”, and further, “I don’t know how to speak”.

Even when we continue to doubt God’s Presence as Moses did, God reassures us:
 “I will be with you”.

Where in my own personal life is God wanting to deliver me from slavery, misery?

What is my Egypt today?

Jesus is the New Moses who, through His death and resurrection, comes to free us and all of creation from slavery and death so as to live the full life intended for all God's creation.

The crossing of the Red Sea is a foreshadowing of the Liberation won for us through the life, Passion, death and Resurrection of Jesus.

The following poem was written by Thich Nhat Hahn after he heard of the bombing of Ben Tre during the Vietnam War, and the comment made by an American military man who said, "We had to destroy the town in order to save it."

For Warmth

by Thich Nhat Hanh

I hold my face in my two hands.
No, I am not crying.
I hold my face in my two hands
to keep the loneliness warm—
two hands protecting,
two hands nourishing,
two hands preventing
my soul from leaving me
in anger.

Sr. Anne Kearney, Clane Community

Sarah and Hagar

Now Sarah followed Abram, so faithful was she,
But stayed hurt and sore cause she had no family.
An heir they must have, O God, what can I do?
Take Hagar as your wife, she'll give a child to you.

Hagar carried Abram's child with great pride
and the barren Sarah, she began to deride.
Hurt, bruised and angry, Sarah could take no more
and complained to Abram about her place in the home.

Now, poor old Abram tries to settle the score;
consoles his wife Sarah, who now treats Hagar with scorn.
Look, here are two women who are hurting inside;
the one quite barren, the other with child.

Hagar, pregnant, rejected, despised and alone,
takes off to the wilderness, with no husband, no home.
But God kept hovering over these women He loved;
And first spoke to Hagar through an Angel from above.

Hagar, big with baby, now swelled with pride,
As 'El Roi', her God, sees her deep inside.
She listens to the request to return as a slave
And await the birth of her son, Ishmael.

Now, God still hovers and God still speaks
And he sees Sarah too and her deep needs.
So, creation continues and to Sarah's delight,
Isaac her son, puts an end to her plight.

For me, for you, for all of us here,
God dreams; hovers; listens; just lend your heart's ears.
Oh, God ever present, Oh, God ever dear,
in stillness, I see now, that you see me. You are near.

This poem, composed by Sr. Lil Meagher, was inspired by a homily based on the story of Hagar and Sara given by Fr. Willie Purcell, HF Priest member, during a three-day Lenten reflection he gave to the Newbridge Community.

We All Get Our Wings Clipped

“Tending the garden, pruning and clipping the bushes made me reflect that from time to time we all get our wings clipped. A verse from St. John using Jesus’ words notes that ‘every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit’. It can be painful and not always easy to accept limitations imposed on us as with the lockdown procedures.” (Edward Walsh - Spirituality Jan. Feb. 2022)



may take a long time and a lot of courage, kindness and gentleness from others.

I have reflected on this article in Spirituality with the closure of our houses, the change for our Sisters moving to new communities, the death of so many of our Sisters worldwide during the pandemic and for many of us our change in life style as we get older. I feel at times angry and annoyed when I’m told to slow down, get help, you don’t need to worry.

Yes, my wings are being clipped and it hurts. What about the Sisters who have difficulty moving, are in pain and in wheelchairs. A sense of loss and lack of freedom must be both frustrating and difficult. Accepting the reality,

Nature is one great healer that we are all very thankful for and see as we walk around our garden. During one very stormy day in 2020 our apple tree that gave us so much fruit over the years was now battered and broken and what could we do. But no, it was not dead. Cathy, our housekeeper, and our two gardeners gently and tenderly bandaged it and once more it was standing with the support of strong props. We watched as its little buds appeared the following year and what a joy when we saw apples once again.

Like the apple tree we too are beginning anew and as Ana Maria tells us in her circular,

“We need to remember our roots, and that will make us grow. It is from that memory we get the courage to take the sap to grow, and it is only then we will bud.”

*Sr. Joan Farrell,
Rock Ferry Community*

To be a Voice for the Voiceless

Since coming back to England after 22 years in Lesotho (one of the poorest countries in the world) where I’d seen how the other half lives, I decided to join the Province “Justice Peace and Integrity of Creation” Team. I learnt a lot from this group. When I was sent to Bradford which is 90% Asian plus 120 other nationalities, I joined the parish “Justice and Peace” Team and later the Anglican “Green Group.” When these folded, I joined “Global Justice Now Bradford” and the “Congo Campaign” Group and took part in many Demos in the city. I also helped in Primary School with reading, and ESOL classes for foreign students in Bradford College.

Since coming to Rock Ferry 2 years ago, everything stopped due to the pandemic lockdown. It was then I felt passionately moved to continue to raise awareness and give a voice to the voiceless by sharing many current issues and asking sisters, lay members, friends and some parishioners to join me in signing petitions online. It’s called “People Power.” I also joined the new Climate Action Group online in the Unit.

Some of the current issues and Action Groups are:

Climate Change - need for divestment from fossil fuels and investment in renewables, Cop26

Care for the earth and all its creatures - Friends of the Earth, Fauna and Flora

Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament” (CND)

Campaign against the Arms Trade (CAAT) “People and Planet”

Basic Human Rights - Freedom from Torture, CAFOD, Palestine Solidarity Campaign to end Apartheid, AVAAZ, 350 Degrees.

I also often sign petitions, share them and write to my local MP - Mick Whitley for Birkenhead.

*Sr. Teresa Edwards,
Rock Ferry Community*

**Sr. Rita Mc Cabe's personal memories
as related on the occasion of her Platinum Jubilee**

When I was in Rock Ferry helping the Bursar, I was asked would I go to Ireland as Postulant Mistress and the Novices would follow. It was a gracious time.

After some time I was sent to Mount St. Mary's the "BIG school. I stayed there for 6 years. Then down to Provincial House. It was a precious time. I heard the Irish Centre wanted someone like me. I went. It was good but very demanding. A note came from Provincial House to say there was a course for Sisters of my age. It was excellent. From there I was sent to Scotland. With another Sister I did Parish Visiting. I loved Scotland. Some Scots still write to me.

Next back to Rock Ferry as Parish Visitor. I went around on my bike.

I had a wonderful day on my Platinum Jubilee. A big thanks to the Community Sisters, Nurses, Carers and Cooks. We had a lovely Mass and a wonderful lunch. Thanks to all who wrote to me.

It is truly great to have my sister, Sr. Margaret here in Rock Ferry, the youngest of the family. I am over 92 and still able to enjoy life TG. Thanks to you all,

Love,

Sr. Rita

Let the Oppressed Go Free

Raising Awareness of Human Trafficking through Public Art

“I am honoured that Archbishop Farrell is welcoming the model of ‘Let the Oppressed Go Free’ to Dublin on St. Patrick’s Day. I believe there is a powerful connection between St. Patrick and St. Bakhita.

Together, they can inspire us to take up the cause of those who, like them, are victims of human trafficking. I encourage people to really study all the different poor souls that are represented in this piece. I learned a lot myself creating the work.

The dream for me is that the full-size bronze of this sculpture will find a home in Dublin. I look forward to connecting with people who share this dream during my visit and in the future.”

Timothy Schmalz



*Sculpture by Timothy Schmalz in the
Dublin’s pro-Cathedral.*

Who is Timothy Schmalz?

He is a Canadian sculptor whose bronze sculpture, “Angels Unawares” was installed in St. Peter’s Square in the Vatican in 2019.

The six-metre-long sculpture depicts a group of migrants and refugees on a boat from diverse culture and historical moments. The title is a reference to Hebrews 13:2 which says “Remember always to welcome strangers, for by doing this, some people have entertained angels without knowing it.”

He is also well-known through his piece ‘Homeless Jesus’ which has been reproduced in many cities around the world, including Dublin where it is on a bench in Christ Church Cathedral.

“Let the Oppressed Go Free” is a companion piece to “Angels Unawares” and features St. Bakhita releasing a host of human trafficking victims from the “underground”, thus letting them be seen and to be free.

Cardinal Michael Czerny, who was key to the commissioning of these pieces, has stated that -

**“If you do not take care of the people
in the first sculpture
(i.e. the migrants/refugees)
they will end up in the other
sculpture (as trafficking victims).”**

UPCOMING EVENTS

APRIL

Sunday, 3rd	World Autism Day
Thursday, 7th	World Health Day
Saturday, 9th	Foundation of the Hope Sisters 1836
Wednesday, 13th	Foundation of the Agricole Sisters 1856
Friday, 22nd	Earth Day
Saturday, 23rd	St. George, Patron of England
Saturday, 30th	Canonical Erection of the Association 1831