



Family Links

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Newsletter of the Holy Family of Bordeaux in Britain and Ireland

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Foreword

H*ope Is a Verb* is the title of two recent books showing how hope, far from being mere wishful thinking, can be a challenge leading to determined and purposeful action. The sub-titles are: *My Journey of Impossible Transformation* and *Six Steps to Radical Optimism when the world seems broken*. The author's account in the first book is very moving while not purporting to be spiritual. The second is giving purely practical advice. The title, however, might be a reminder that the theological virtue of hope, while being pure gift from God, does require some cooperation on our part if we are to obtain what it promises – eternal life.



Much of our hope now, particularly in Europe, is centred on there being a peaceful outcome to the war in Ukraine. Diplomacy and economic sanctions are being tried, so far to no avail. But the support and compassion of so many countries, where refugees are being welcomed and cared for by the general population, is the greatest sign of “a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead...” 1Pet. 1:3.

With the whole world, our hope has been for an end to the pandemic that has ravaged every country since 2020, constantly producing new variants and frustrating the efforts of scientists to eradicate it. We can go on hoping because we believe in the indomitable human spirit, always guided by the Holy Spirit, whether acknowledged or not.

Our PBN Family, as our Founder reminded us, is “not separated from those who live under the common law”, but we “share with them ... all the fatigue, the trials and the dangers of the journey”. Sr. Ana Maria, General Leader of the Religious Institute, reminds us that, “what is happening in the world is happening in the Institute. God is saving us now so that we may be what we are called to be. God continues to visit us, transforming us and making us mediators of hope for others”.

MESSAGE FROM ICT

We walk by Faith, not by sight

“**H**ave you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe” (Jn 28 :29). This was the answer of the Risen Lord to Thomas, the apostle, when he made his profession of faith saying “My Lord and my God” after doubting. Jesus gives a gentle rebuke to Thomas for his insistence to “see” before he could “believe”. However, it is not so much a rebuke to Thomas as an encouragement to those who would come later.

The definition of faith, according to the Letter to the Hebrews is “Faith is the assurance of the things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1). If we can perceive with our human mind and intellect what our future will be, then, we do not need faith. We long to see the light only when we walk in the dark. As Saint Cardinal Newman puts it, “Lead kindly light amidst the encircling gloom”, the believer does not demand to see the entire route map of the journey with God, but is satisfied saying “One step is enough for me”. The obedience of faith impels us move from one phase of our life to another, with absolute trust in God.

It is precisely this trust in God that made the whole people of God to obey as they took part in Salvation history. In their trials and difficulties, they were able to believe in the promises of God. Their life was a real pilgrimage of faith. Mary, our Blessed Mother is a beautiful example of faith to us, her children. Throughout her life, she walked by faith and not by sight, according to the words of St. Paul in his second Letter to the Corinthians.

Each time in her life, which was a pilgrimage of faith, Mary walked in darkness with faith as her

only light. She never ceased to believe in the fulfillment of God’s word.

For us, too, faith is an obedient response to God as God reveals God-self in our daily life. To obey God in a world set against God demands courage. Today, when we look at the situations in which we are living, we feel anxious, fearful and sad. We feel our life is burdensome with no strength to face it. We have only to believe in God who says to us “Fear not. I am with you.” God has been repeating these words, assuring us of the divine presence with us always. “Even though I walk through the dark valley, I fear no evil, for you are with me” was the experience of the Psalmist (Ps. 23:4). The presence of God is what makes us walk in faith.

As we, members of the Holy Family of Bordeaux, remember and celebrate with gratitude the bicentenary of the miraculous Eucharistic benediction, we are called to renew our faith in the presence of God. God continues to tell us “I AM WHO AM”. Our Founder says “The Divine Master miraculously blessed our Association from its birth and, by manifesting in this way the divine Presence among our Foundresses, it seemed as if he wanted to tell us that he would be with us always (Selected Texts, No. 107). Yes, God is with us always. The Risen Christ said: “Remember I am with you always to the end of the ages” (Mt. 28: 20). So, believing in the Presence of “the God with us”, the Risen Christ, we make the profession of faith with the apostle Thomas: “My Lord and my God”.

**Sr. Celine Freeda Fernando,
Holy Family Contemplative Sisters
Nagoda, Sri Lanka**

Time - A thought for Reflection

The Holy Family Association was founded 200 years ago. We took time to celebrate.

But what is 200 years when one considers that the universe exploded into being 13.7 billion years ago; that dinosaurs, after living on Earth for 165 million years, became extinct 65 million years ago.

And it's 200,000 years ago since the first communities of Homo Sapiens appeared on Earth!

Time is a fascinating subject.
As I write, time is passing or, am I passing through time?

Time is a gift to be treasured and well used.
Time is a valuable commodity. The word itself is used in so many different contexts:-

There is a time for every season under heaven.
Ecclesiastes Ch.3: 1-15

Seventy is the sum of our years or eighty for those who are strong.

Ps 90:10

Time and tide wait for none.

An old English Proverb

Do not boast about tomorrow for you do not know what a day may bring.

Proverbs 27:1

Time cannot be stopped or deflected in any way. Once lost, time can never be gained back.
Squander not!

"Make use of time, let not advantage slip."

William Shakespeare

"You may delay, but time will not."

Benjamin Franklin



“Never give up on a dream just because of the time it will take to accomplish it. The time will pass anyway.”

Earl Nightingale

The word time is on the tongue of everyone, hundreds of times a day.

How often we say, I had:

- a good time
- a bad time
- a long time
- a short time
- an exciting time
- free time?

This time

That time

Anytime

Sometime

No time

All the time

The right time

The wrong time

Breakfast time

Tea time

Lunch time

Dinner time

Supper time

Springtime

Summertime

Wintertime

Night time

Bed time

What’s the time?

Check it out and see how often you use the word.

Enjoy the rest of today

for TIME is the stuff of LIFE!

***Margaret Bradley,
Sonas Christ Community***



TRANSFORMATION

Easter has seen a transformation in the countryside as Spring blossoms in all its glory:

- from the early dark nights of winter to the gloriously long evenings watching the sunset
- from the dark silhouetted trees against the cold, bleak sky to the lush appearance of leaves and blossom in the gardens and woods
- from the bare hilly slopes where sheep braved the winter storms to the birth of baby lambs skipping and frisking on the farmlands and hills.

What a transformation! But what about our transformation?

On arriving in Wrexham just over 6 months ago, I had hoped for a new life, welcoming asylum seekers and refugees into the safety of our home. It has been a long journey and maybe now I can see some light at the end of the tunnel.

Over the past four months our contact with two Hosting Groups, Housing for Justice and Hope at Home, has been on-going. We have had training sessions with both groups and are at last hopeful that our application to host a refugee, or two, will come to fruition. Romy, in charge of Housing for Justice in Cardiff, came personally to visit us, getting the opportunity to have a look at the facilities we have to offer. We are hopeful that this group will have a support person, in the near future, in Wrexham itself. This will be a great advantage.

Another transformative incident was the storm which caused two or three of our trees to become dangerous. The tree surgeons came in to cut them down. To see one of these men scaling the heights of the trees, gradually sawing away branches as he climbed was a frightening spectacle. Finally, piece by piece, he cut the



trunk of the tree into 6ft lengths, which were then cut into smaller chunks, by his fellow workers.

One day, Maria met the Leader of a group of young Girl Guides and Scouts, as they were having their weekly meetings in the ground opposite our house. She invited them over to the house to inspect the wood, to see if they could use it for their camp fires and other activities. The following week some 10 – 14 young boys and girls arrived to carry the logs over to their camping ground. The next day I saw about ten of these smaller logs positioned around the table in

the garden.

Perfect stools!

This was a death which led to a transformative encounter. The death of the trees led to new life - an opening up to our neighbours. Other families have also been invited to avail of the opportunity to use this wood for fuel for winter and also for another man, as he works as a woodwork teacher in a school.

So now our hope is materialising! What seemed to be a 'dying process' has become a symbol of

hope. No longer can we say, 'we had hoped' but 'we live in hope'. Alleluia.

The cutting of the trees and the pruning of the bushes around the walls of the garden, have given us the opportunity to have a clearer view of what is on the outside. May the transformative process we are embarking on at our UNIT CHAPTER, give us a clearer vision of the question, 'Can we still live our purpose?'

Can we still live our purpose?'

Sheila Griffiths (Wrexham)

Some Activities in Rock Ferry over the last few weeks

Being activated into the political agenda brought on by Commandant Putin to instigate war on his neighbouring peace-loving Ukrainians, we instigated a Fund which was donated to CAFOD with contributions from our personal budgets. The fund raised £400. It was helped by donations from all members of staff, and from every department of care in the community. All gave with a willing spirit.

An added feature was a community Bingo session, launched on a birthday celebration with significant prizes for all. The entry fee was minimal, but some sisters could be seen following two cards at once, for absent friends of course! Again, a good total was raised towards helping our sisters in Poland with their sterling efforts for the refugees.

Shortly afterwards another significant birthday arrived and this time the staff excelled themselves. Again, numbers were called and it was "Eyes Down", not this time for prayer, but for a careful noting of what was called, while some waited for their significant number to be called. With plentiful attendance from staff,

some of whom had cancelled engagements to attend in off-duty time, the excitement increased.

All were happy with the results, and "consolation" prizes were shared among non-winners. All in all, over £200 was raised from these two occasions. The day was also enhanced by a delicious Filipino meal after the proceedings, plus a beautiful cake, also provided by staff.

In case you think we are in the grip of a fund-raising addiction, there has been a serious side to our work for our Ukrainian friends.

The sisters signed a petition to Prime Minister Boris Johnson and a second one to Priti Patel, Home Secretary, to request a speeding up of the process of welcoming and accommodating our Displaced Persons, i.e., our refugees. We gave reasons for prioritising their admittance to our country. The letter was also signed by all members of our Staff.

One of our local Ukrainian friends, who works as a Parish Administrator in Woodford and who

regularly brought us Holy Communion from the during the pandemic, has asked us for prayers for her husband who has returned to Ukraine as a combatant. Her mother, a doctor, has now joined her in the UK. The parishioners in Woodford are

working towards welcoming many families in the coming weeks and finding suitable accommodation for them all.

Sandra Harrington, Rock Ferry

Sr. Hilary's 101st ! No, not Dalmatians, YEARS!

The ninth of April had been on the Rock Ferry calendar and in everybody's mind for quite a while. After all it's not every day you get to celebrate a 101st birthday.

Hilary really rose to the occasion especially when she saw all the banners and balloons put up by the staff. Also there was a special cake. Fr. John Mc Manus said Mass for Hilary. They knew one another from one of her past missions. Lovely flowers adorned the chapel, given by one of our nurses now retired. In the sitting room were many cards and a flag.

After lunch the doorbell rang and in came the Mini -Vinies (younger branch of the SVP) from year 6, St. Anne's School, they arrived with Joanne their assistant teacher. Each one had a present for Hilary and sang happy birthday.

At 2pm after a short siesta, Carmel and the staff were waiting for us in the Dining Room ready to start Bingo. This was a staff fundraiser for Ukraine. Sandra had



organised one on her birthday also for Ukraine. This raised £200 for Ukraine. At 3pm we were surprised to see a Filipino meal that the staff had prepared, spring rolls, noodles, a la Filipino, all very tasty. When the birthday cake arrived Hilary dutifully blew out the candles and thought her job was done – not so: another cake appeared bearing ten candles? After some fresh air and a stroll in the garden we were back in the chapel for the birthday prayer.

This was also Grand National Saturday so we had to watch the horses running, as a sweepstake for staff and Sisters had been organised by Carmel. When the results came through we were delighted to see all our groups were represented! No. 1 the cook, no.2 our laundry lady, no. 3 Maria our matron, no 4 a tie between Sr. Teresa Quinn and one of our night carers.

There was never a day like it and I think everyone had a sound sleep that night!

Sr. Teresa Edwards

IN MEMORIAM



**Sr. Kathleen Diamond
3 March 1947 - 7 April 2022**

**Kathleen's funeral took place in the Church of the Sacred Heart,
Quex Road, Kilburn.
Sr. Carmel Bateson gave the following eulogy.**

I have known Kathleen since I was 12 years old and Kathleen was 11. At that early stage in our lives, we knew each other as pupils in the Holy Family School, Magherafelt. We were travelling companions on the same bus and we shared a great interest in Irish dancing and Céilí dancing. We also spent holidays together in the Gaeltacht area in Donegal where we made many friends, some of whom have been in contact with me in recent weeks. Our friendship continued from then throughout the years.

Kathleen was born in the big snow of 1947. Often, I would hear her speak about the story of the midwife's journey, coming to attend her birth. Kathleen was seventh in the line of nine children.

It is not possible to relate every aspect of Kathleen's life in a short Eulogy. She had many gifts and talents. So, I have chosen to have a quick look back at times and places where I have most vivid memories of her. And I will leave you with a few of our shared memories and experiences.

Kathleen lived in Derrygarve, Co Derry, on the banks of the Moyola River. As the crow flies, it is less than 2 miles from where our Irish Poet, Seamus Heaney, was

born and reared. No wonder Kathleen loved his poetry. They both had the same background and spent their childhood in the same environment and, no doubt, had many similar experiences. Both of these factors, family and rural environment, have had lasting influences on their friends, community and society. One of Kathleen's favourite poems was Seamus's *Blackberry-picking*. Kathleen recited this poem and said she had a similar experience.

Kathleen had a great love of music and always kept her favourite CDs in the car. A big favourite was Neil Diamond himself. In our early days, as young Holy Family Sisters, we began to experiment with new forms of prayer, rather than the customary Morning and Evening office. At this stage, Kathleen had no trouble finding the right song, reading or poem, appropriate to the theme.

Kathleen was always creative. Her innate creativity was greatly enhanced by her training in Food Science and Fabrics. She could furnish a house and had original ideas for matching colour, furniture and paint. She loved choosing clothes and matching up colours which suited a person so well. Kathleen excelled in cooking, not only daily meals or Christmas or Easter feasts but food for parties, Jubilee celebrations and larger functions. Nothing was any trouble to her. She also had a great love of gardening.

Kathleen moved from teaching in her earlier years to Milton Keynes where she worked as chaplain in the prison and university there, and on the Ecumenical Team. Later she was college Chaplain in Gower St London.

Kathleen, in 1998, began her chaplaincy work in the Women's Prison in Holloway in London. She gave 19 years of her life to this and showed her total dedication, understanding of human problems, loyalty, kindness and commitment to those in her care.

She loved her Ministry as Prison Chaplain and had a special gift of empathy and care for each woman. She conducted Funeral Services, when necessary, and comforted many bereaved and troubled women and their families. She accompanied women in their blessings, Joys at times of the birth of their babies... She was deeply appreciated by the Chaplaincy Staff, the prison officers and also the women, themselves.

Kathleen liked a challenge. Before Covid, her Prayer Sessions with the refugees in the Jesuit Refugee centre in London gave her this challenge. An average of 13-15 women attended the Prayer. It was always carefully prepared and language was no barrier. Kathleen conducted the session through prayer, song, music and meditation.

Our very recent experience, and probably the most treasured and clear in Kathleen's mind up to her death, was our time spent on sabbatical together in Tucson in Arizona in the desert, in The Redemptorist Retreat Centre. This was Autumn 2019. And when I say 'desert', I mean desert, snakes and all. But Kathleen had no fear of the snakes. Every day, she went off with her stick, bottle of water, knapsack, even in the hottest time of day. How I envied her climbing mountains in the heat! In the cool of the evening, I would often have found Kathleen walking quietly among the

Cacti. This was a very special time of Prayer for her. She was at home in the peace and quiet of the desert. Having no shops within 10 miles, and not wanting to drive the American vehicle, we stayed at home and spent hours of our free time in the House of Prayer, meditating silently.

When I informed our class from Arizona that Kathleen has died, the tributes to her came in fast; they were sincere and heartfelt. Our colleagues there commented on her wisdom, her smile, her adventurous spirit, her love of challenges, her inclusive conversations, her stillness in the desert, her quiet prayerful attitude, her attitude to celebration on community nights, including everyone, her welcome with cups of tea, glasses of wine, her enjoyment of swimming daily, her laughs and her fun.

I don't want to paint Kathleen a saint. Like all of us, she had her moments of sheer determination and if she didn't want to do something I suggested, she certainly would tell me. It wasn't difficult to know when she disagreed with me. She was very straightforward and totally direct in her objections. So straightforward that she left me thinking at times... No further negotiation. Kathleen was the winner.

I could continue forever about the stories and achievements of Kathleen but a eulogy must come to an end.

Kathleen, we now say farewell to you in body. We will miss you but I continue to remember that the last words you spoke to me on the telephone were, "Can you sing with me, *I am with you on the Journey and I will never leave you?*" And we did sing this together, four times.

Yes, Kathleen, I can assure you, I am with you on the journey, as are all the Holy Family sisters, your own family, your friends and colleagues who remember you from your life's contact with them.

We are with you on the journey and we will never leave you.

Forever in our hearts, until we meet again.

Slán agus Beannacht

UPCOMING EVENTS

MAY

Sunday, 1 st	International Labour Day
Friday, 6 th	St. Francis Laval (1623-1708) First Bishop of Quebec and the first bishop to celebrate a feast of the Holy Family in his diocese.
Sunday, 8 th	Feast of the good Shepherd - our Founder;s personification of Divine Providence
Tuesday, 17 th	World Telecommunications Day
Wednesday, 18 th	Blessing of the Association and the Councillors' Crosses by Pius IX (1851)
Sunday, 22 nd	International Day for Biodiversity
Saturday, 28 th	Actual date of the Foundation – Trinity Sunday 1820
Sunday, 29 th	The Ascension of the Lord