



Holy Family of Bordeaux Britain and Ireland Newsletter February 2024



*“ It is important
that each person be
himself; that he
remain what God
has made him to be, in order to achieve
the goal that the divine Creator
set for him ... »*

P. P. O'Rourke

The Newbridge parish food bank, Share Food, is marking its tenth anniversary this month.

At a commemorative Mass in Cill Mhuire celebrated by Fr. Ruairí Ó Dómhnaill PP, special prayers were said for all donors, recipients, and volunteers of Share Food.

It was set up in at the start of Lent in 2014 when it was perceived that many people were living below the poverty line because of an economic recession. Within a few weeks after it began, Share Food was helping about 80 families and individuals each week. Currently about 120 people receive a weekly food parcel.

Share Food activities are co-ordinated by Sr. Eileen Murphy, Máiréad Ryan and Gaye White.



**Group of current and former
volunteers with Fr. Ruairí Ó
Dómhnaill PP after a Mass in Cill
Mhuire celebrating the 10th
anniversary of Newbridge Parish
Share Food.**

The Beauty of the Prayer Gift.

Recently, I participated in a reflection day in our Convent in Newbridge on the theme ' Aging Gracefully' presented by Maria Garvey.

Maria offered us many positive ideas over the day, but it was the subject of what GIFTS we have to share with our world at this time in our lives that seems to have grabbed my attention most.

While in no way minimising the challenges of advancing years, Maria focused us in on some of the needs of our world to which she suggests we are particularly well positioned to respond no matter what age we are or how frail

we may feel. She named those needs in terms of Presence, Rest and Prayer.

The suggestion of how we can offer the gift of our Prayers to our world resonates strongly with me. As a member of the Chaplaincy Team in Holy Family School here beside us I have so many opportunities to offer the support of our prayers to pupils, staff, their families and indeed the wider community. There are many requests for the Sisters' prayers and even in the most seemingly hopeless situations this support and expression of care is valued greatly. One teenage girl expressed her gratitude for our prayers, when having shared a very distressing family situation with me she said, "I feel safer now because I know you and the other Sisters are praying for me and my family".

The young girls response and Maria's insights remind me of the following reflection I came across some years ago in a book by John O'Donohue , *Eternal Echoes*



"It is a wonderful gift when a person prays for you. One of the greatest shelters in your life is the circle of invisible prayer that is gathered around you by your friends here and in the unseen world. When you are going through difficult times or marooned on some lonesome edge in your life it is often the prayers of your friends that bring you through. When your soul turns into a wilderness, it is the prayers of others that bring you back to the hearth of warmth. I know people who have been very ill, forsaken and damaged; the holy travellers that we call

prayers have reached out to them and returned them to healing. The prayer of healing has wisdom discernment and power, it is unknown what prayer can actually achieve. When you meet someone at the level of prayer you meet them on the ground of eternity. This is the heart of all kinship and affinity. When you journey in there to meet someone, a great intimacy can awaken between you.

It is said that if you pray beside a flower it grows faster, when you bring the presence of prayer to the things you do, you do them more beautifully".

Let us intentionally give and receive the Prayer Gift as we grow old gracefully.

Kate Cuskelly, Sonas Christ Community

Praying for prisoners of conscience.

"I was in prison and you visited me" Matthew 25:36

Inspired by pictures of the beautiful blankets and hats made by the Newbridge groups and the Easter chicks made in Magherafelt the group in Rock Ferry asked what are we doing? As there are no great knitters amongst us and many people no longer find themselves capable of giving physical help it was decided that we would adopt particular prisoners of conscience. We got names of prisoners from ACAT (UK) (Action by Christians Against Torture)

. "Whoever tortures a human being, Whoever abuses a human being, Whoever outrages a human being, Abuses God's image, And the church takes as its own That cross, that martyrdom."

Archbishop Romero of El Salvador.



Holy Family of Bordeaux Britain and Ireland Newsletter February 2024

We had been writing Christmas Cards in the Parish to prisoners of conscience for many years. So, we saw this as an extension of our prayer and commitment.

We have made a commitment to pray for the prisoners that we have picked and to write a card every month or six weeks to them.

Rock Ferry Group.

Eithne Hughes prepared a meditation praying the first Sorrowful Mystery, 'The Agony in the Garden.' This is an extract from that presentation.



"I have chosen to share with you about the

Congo –

the DRC. Why? Because I think it is one of the most neglected and unreported stories of international greed and injustice of our day – and of hundreds of days – even years – in the past. And also because there are more than 60 Holy Family Sisters and 280 Lay Associates, men women and young people, in that country, some of whom are my friends. They have many sorrowful mysteries in their lives."

She concluded with this: Pope Francis – Homily in Kinshasa, D R Congo, Feb 2023

"Brothers, sisters, when guilt and sadness overwhelm us,

when things do not go well, we know where to look:

to the wounds of Jesus,

who is ever ready to forgive us with his infinite, wounded love. He knows your wounds; he knows the wounds of your country, your people, your land!

They are wounds that ache, continually infected by hatred and violence,

while the medicine of justice and the balm of hope never seem to arrive.

My brother, my sister, Jesus suffers with you.

He sees the wounds you carry within, and he desires to console and heal you; he offers you his wounded heart.

Brothers and sisters, with Jesus, evil never wins, evil never has the last word.

"For he is our peace"

We are called to make our own the Lord's unexpected and prophetic message of peace and proclaim it before the world."

If anyone would like the full meditation let me know and I will send it to you.

We need to make our Charism known so:

Just an idea.

At our monthly meeting in Sonas Christ on the 1st of February a suggestion was made by one of our members. It was a special day for us all as it was the anniversary of the death of St. Brigid 1500 years ago.

Many events were taking place all over Kildare to celebrate Féile Bríde 2024. The suggestion was to make us more identifiable in the community especially at Mass.

The very practical idea was that we all wear a red scarf just as Jesus wore a red sash at the special blessing we were given at our beginnings (-the Miraculous Benediction) and before Mass one of our members could identify the group and say where our meetings take place etc. The congregation could then see us in a more visible way and maybe in time we could gain more members.

I've spoken to Maureen Bowsley our President about the idea and she gave me the go ahead as she said herself "We are not changing anything, just making ourselves more identifiable." What do you think of the idea? Could this be of use in your group?

Edel Mulligan. (Sonas Christ Leader)

Dates for your Diary:

Lay Members Retreat 14th March on Zoom

2:00 -3:00 Presentation

3:00 -4:00 Contemplation and Break

4:00 -5:00 Sharing

**IMPORTANT PRAYER DAYS
MARCH 2024**

MARCH 1st -31st Sister Ana Maria's Visit to Jaffna

MARCH 1st World Day of Prayer

MARCH 4th Meeting of International Prevention of Abuse Team Online.

MARCH 10th Mothering Sunday

MARCH 11th Meeting on Zoom 5 Communities Hosting Refugees and Asylum Seekers.

MARCH 17th St. Patrick's Day

MARCH 18th Audit begins in UK

MARCH 23rd Death of Mother Trinity Noailles.

MARCH 25th Jubilees in the PBN Family.

MARCH 25th Reception of 1ST Lay Members of the Secular Institute 1824.

MARCH 25th Audit begins in Ireland

MARCH 31st EASTER SUNDAY!

This is YOUR newsletter send news photos, thoughts to mobow2021@outlook.com