



# The Holy Family of Bordeaux in Britain and Ireland

Glory to God alone in Jesus Christ through Mary and Saint Joseph

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Gathering in Crewe

## EDITORIAL

A question most people, including religious, ask us when they hear we are moving to another location is, “What will you be doing?” When we arrive at our new place, we hear, “What do you do?” There is little point in telling them that being a religious is as much, or more, about ‘being’ than ‘doing’. It has always been the slow, inner movement of the Spirit that urged our Founders to do something, most often with few human resources. But, the truth is, we religious are chiefly defined by the work we do. We may also be tempted to value ourselves by what we do



During the days after Jesus’ reurrection, when the disciples were in disarray, perhaps they were asked both by those who sympathised with them and those who gloated over the apparent failure of their leader, “What are you going to do now?” They probably asked themselves the same question.

Jesus, on his visits to them over forty days, was totally unperturbed. This, even though, in human eyes, they were totally unprepared for the mission he was entrusting to them. They were simply to wait in Jerusalem, in the upper room. Then, after ten days in enclosed retreat, the first in the history of the Church, they were imbued with the power of the Spirit. Out of despair, chaos, turbulence, new life and hope were born.

During our days of reflection with the members of the General Leadership Team we referred often to the messiness of life, the chaos of the world, the despair that engulfs people. But, because we were together with a common purpose, sharing insights and experiences, we could part with a sense of hope and trust that all will be well; our universe is evolving as it should.

## Message from Sr. Gemma (Unit Leader)

### JUBILEE REST FOR THE LAND

**O**ne of the recurring themes of jubilee is that of rest – rest for humans and rest for the land.

In Genesis we read that from the very beginning, God proclaimed the need to alternate periods of work with times of rest. God set the pattern – one that we should make part of our lives, if we are to live in a balanced, healthy way. “By the seventh day, God had finished the work God had been doing and so on the seventh day God rested”. And, as we see in subsequent texts from Scripture, this pattern of resting didn’t just apply to people; it applied to animals and to the land itself.

According to Leviticus (25:4-5), the **land** “*must have a Sabbath year of complete rest..... Do not plant your fields or prune your vineyards during that year.*” This insistence on Sabbath rest for the land challenges us to a radical shift in our attitude towards land and towards planet Earth.

Rather than seeing Earth as something separate from ourselves and as a vast reservoir of resources to be plundered at will for our own benefit, we are gradually coming to know Earth as our mother, the one who has given birth to us and is continually providing us with everything we need for our survival. Over the eons, she has developed an environment in which we humans can thrive, providing us with air we can breathe, abundant food for us to eat, and clear water for us to drink. She is constantly nourishing and protecting us.

So, far from seeing ourselves as separate from our mother, we now know that we are part of her. We are earthlings. We realize that her resources are finite and that if we are to survive as a species, then we need to cultivate attitudes of reverence and care for her and it behoves us to alter our consumer lifestyles so as not to exhaust her totally. We must allow her to rest. We must, as Sallie McFague says, “look on land differently. Land is more like our ‘mother’ than our ‘property’”. She is the source of our being, the one from whom we can never be weaned, and the one that we must now care for”. (Life Abundant. p.119). “We are the Earth and we are always carrying her within us.” (Thich Nhat Hanh).



This concept of land as a sacred resource for all and not the sole property of any one person or tribe is to be found among many indigenous peoples of the world.

It is articulated in a speech supposedly given by the Squamish Chief Seattle who, in 1855, was being pressured into signing over ancestral land to the U.S. Federal Government.

*“How can you buy or sell the land? This idea is strange to us. If we do not own the freshness of the air or the sparkle of the water, how can you buy them? The earth does not belong to the humans; humans belong to the earth. All things are connected like the blood which unites one family. Whatever befalls the earth befalls the children of the earth. The humans did not weave the web of life; they are merely strands in it. Whatever they do to the web, they do to themselves. The earth is precious to God and to harm the earth is to heap contempt on its creator . . .”*



So a radical shift within ourselves is called for, a move away from thinking about Earth as if we were separate from her, to thinking as Earth realizing that we are the eyes, ears, heart and mind of Earth. Pope

Francis reminds us of our responsibility to love and care for our Mother “*who now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her. We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will. The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air, and in all forms of life.* (Laudato si: 2).

During this Jubilee, may we not close our ears to the cry of our suffering Earth and may we take up the challenge of working for the common goal of renewing Earth as a hospitable place for the flourishing of all life and a fit home for all those who will come after us.



## FLAME IN OUR HEARTS

*It is over a week ago since we set aside our daily activities and came together in three separate venues, Crewe, Rock Ferry and Newbridge, under the guidance of members of the General Leadership Team - General Leader, Ana Maria, and General Councillors, Micheline and Kumudini.*

*We all know how the Visit of Animation unfolded though there were, obviously, differences depending on the composition of each group.*



The largest group, 38 sisters representative of each community in the Unit, gathered in Crewe from the evening of 17 April to the morning of 21 April. The first evening was a time for welcoming - warmly given by Fr. Brian OMI and Sr. Catherine HFB, co-directors of the Centre - renewing old friendships and acquaintances, and familiarising ourselves with the house.

Below are simply a few brief notes on the three days of deep reflection, sharing and caring, the fruits of which have been gathered carefully to be richly harvested in future times.

### The First Day



*“We are light. We have come from the source of all light and we shine forth in different ways.*

*We are called to give the light that we are to all around us.”*

These first words of Ana Maria’s **opening address**, and the opening prayer with its emphasis on sharing light through word and ritual, kindled the first sparks of what was to enlighten hearts and minds.

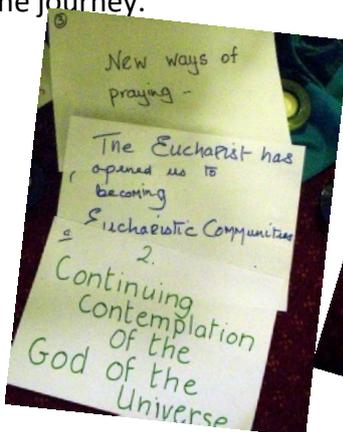
Already, the words we had repeated as a refrain: *“Breath of the One life, blow through me, flow through me, breath of life...”* were almost palpable.

In Crewe, there were 6 reflection groups, all with members drawn from different communities. Our experience of cluster meetings meant that we were completely at ease, speaking our thoughts freely and openly, aware of each one’s sincerity and discretion.

Feedback, on this first day, mainly in written form and delivered by one or more members of each group. Papers were displayed and studied to be kept as food for the rest of the journey.



The work of the first day



## The Second Day

The groups were bonding, and the work of the second day carried us a step further along the same path emphasizing communion, the interconnectedness of all life and being, our shared responsibility for all creation and the mission, our personal and community calls and desires... It was presented to the assembly, at the invitation of our facilitators, creatively in art, mime, song.



The Gospel for this day was the Emmaus story. The group preparing the Liturgy, with Fr. Brian, dramatized the event, and read it in parts linking it with the "breaking of bread" in the Eucharistic Prayer. The words, expressive of the feelings of the two disciples, "Were not our hearts burning within us...", took on added significance for us in the context of the meeting.

## The Third Day

Ana Maria's question for this day was: "What is making your hearts burn now?"

There was no doubt but that this was the case and the answers were readily forthcoming.

At the end of the final session in general assembly, Gemma expressed our heartfelt gratitude to our three facilitators for their guidance and presence over the three days.



It should be added that, not only had they guided us through a well-prepared process, but they also saw to the physical arrangements - seating and providing materials - of the meeting rooms and large conference room, leaving us totally free to absorb all that was being presented.

## A Time to Celebrate

Sharing food together is the oldest form of communion so it was appropriate that the final meal together was a festive one.

But there was another major reason to celebrate. This year Ana Maria is celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of her religious profession. We could not let this milestone in her life pass without mention as she was with us.

We carry her in our prayer in a special way in this her Golden Jubilee year.



Ana Maria  
with our  
own Golden  
Jubilarians,  
Kathleen  
and Claire



## Rock Ferry



After Crewe, the next stop was Rock Ferry. Anne Marie Glynn has this to say:

Ana Maria, Kumudini, and Micheline - as well as Áine, Margaret and Teresa from Woodford, and Jean from St. Gabriel's Road - received a warm welcome from our Sisters in Rock Ferry. Our time together, albeit brief, was prayerful and reflective on Creation and our Vowed Life for Mission and ended with the celebration of the Eucharist. It was truly a blessing to share Mission and Family time together.

We thank Ana Maria, Kumudini and Micheline for their visit.

## Newbridge



The Community gave a tumultuous welcome to our visitors from Rome, having been on the lookout for them as soon as they heard they had left Dublin.

There, too, there was depth and lively participation in the reflections.



Nor was Ana Maria's Jubilee forgotten



*A fourth important visitor in Newbridge the same day*

**D**enis Nulty, the bishop of Kildare and Leighlin, in whose Diocese Newbridge is situated, was visiting the parish on the same Sunday, 23 April. Hearing of the presence of the Holy Family visitors from Rome, he asked to come and meet them.



The bishop is a frequent visitor to the community and is reputed to have said it is the most hospitable religious house in Ireland.

## REFLECTIONS FROM THE VISIT

**D**uring the visit of Ana Maria, Kumudinie and Micheline, one of the topics we explored was **COMMUNITY**. We were asked to look at what constitutes religious community and what would our ideal community look like.

One of the groups summed up their reflections using four words:

**KNOW, NO, YES and GO.**

Living in an interconnected, interdependent world, we **KNOW** that our actions, way of being, way of living and using Earth's resources have an impact on our world. This is known as the butterfly effect which is a term used in chaos theory to describe how small changes to a seemingly unrelated thing or condition can affect large, complex systems. The term comes from the suggestion that the flapping of a butterfly's wings in South America could affect the weather in Texas, meaning that the tiniest influence on one part of a system can have a huge effect on another part.

So our actions, no matter how small and localized they are, have an **IMPACT** around the globe. And these actions, behaviours, when they are centred on ourselves and our own selfish concerns can give rise to poverty, world hunger, displacement of peoples, climate change... It is a sobering thought and one that places great responsibility on us.

Therefore, we say **NO** to individualism, selfishness, greed, consumerism, relationships that exclude others, seeking status and power over others... and much more.

We say **YES** to true community. As people made in the image of the God of relationships, we know we are created for relatedness. Without true relationships, we wither and die. We can forget that the gift of community has already been given to us by God and all we need to do is to relax into our created condition and receive the gift with open hands.

In order to receive the gift, we need to say **YES** to contemplation. Community begins, not externally, but in the recesses of the human heart. Long before community can be manifest in outward relationships, it must be present in the individual as "a capacity for connectedness"—a capacity to resist the forces of

disconnection with which our culture and our psyches are riddled, forces with names like narcissism, egotism, jealousy, competition, empire-building, nationalism....

We cultivate a capacity for connectedness through contemplation and it is in contemplation that we are enabled to "free ourselves by **widening our circle of compassion** to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature and its beauty." (**Albert Einstein**). **So, our community widens to embrace all - even those I consider my "enemy"**. A lovely quote from Parker Palmer makes the point that a community is not necessarily made up of people we like and people that we can get along with, but it is made up of the people we **choose to love**. *"Community is that place where the person you least want to live with always lives. And when that person moves away, someone else arises immediately to take his or her place"*

So in our community we say **YES** to a life of:

Contemplation

Discernment

Openness to the sacred

Transparent relationships

Constant communication

Collaboration

Generosity in giving

Gratitude in receiving

Fullness of life

God alone

All that is... and much more

And finally, a true community sends us out and we say to one another **GO**.

Go where?

We go to where Jesus is to be found – not in the palaces of the rich but in the world of the poor and

the suffering, to suffering Earth, to the world of the displaced, the despised, the rejected....

We go with hope and trust in the future, knowing that we are not alone. *“Behold I am with you always, even until the end of time”*. In our journeying together, we also have the wonderful gift of one another.

Gemma Corbett



### My Closed Door

My door is closed,  
I am protecting what is mine  
I am protecting me.  
Even with God I am protected,  
“So far, God, but no further”.

All within is clean, tidy, under control.  
My door protects me and what is mine.  
My work,  
My time,  
My possessions,  
My ideas.

Don't ask me to open up.  
Don't ask too much of me.  
Please do not disturb

### Holy Family Community

Our door is open.  
We are women in love  
With God, with the world,  
With life,  
We have found “the Treasure”.

Our windows, our doors are open.  
The wind of the Spirit blows freely  
through our house.  
It is not always neat, tidy.  
Life can be messy,  
disturbing.

But, we are free.  
Free to live.  
We are alive.

## A SUMMARY IN SONG

### GOD'S CALL

(Tune: The Gypsy Rover)

God's call to me is deep inside,  
Filling me with passion for god's mission,  
Helping the weak, poor and marginalised,  
Is where God now is leading.

#### Chorus

God asks something of all God's friends  
Help me now in the giving.  
All my life , a response to you,  
An answer to your calling.

God's biggest dream is to spread God's love,  
So all will know they are equal,  
Leaders and members working as one  
In deep communion with each other.

Nature is groaning to be freed right now  
From pollution, destruction, and greed.  
Come on, pull together and set God's Earth free.  
We're all in this together.

Yes, God alone still inspires today.  
Praise, adore, be led by the Spirit.  
No weakness or fear will hold us back.  
God's love, people's needs will lead us.

Lil Meagher

## Rock Ferry - Deputy Matron Annie Paul retires

Carmel welcomed Annie, Annie's sister Rita and many of our staff as we collected in our chapel for a prayer service. She also gave apologies from Srs Catherine Lavery and Kathleen Flanagan who were unable to attend. At the end of our prayer service Mary Catherine, our Matron, spoke of Annie's time as Deputy Matron in the Convent.

"When Annie gave her written notice three months ago it seemed a long way off. I'm sad to say it has come around a lot quicker than I had hoped. Annie started working in the Convent one month before Mary Catherine in June 2006. In her role as a Registered nurse and Deputy Matron, Annie has always been someone whom the *Holy Family* Sisters, staff and I could rely on for her dedication, commitment and support. She has been a calm role model to our staff, and it has been an honour to work with her.

On behalf of the Sisters; Staff and myself, both professionally and personally, congratulations Annie on a wonderful and long career in nursing. We are all glad to have been a part of it, and we wish you all the best in your retirement; may it be long, healthy and happy. We all hope you will be able to achieve all you want to do, and the hobbies you never had the time to fully take part in (and I suspect Rita has plenty of those lined up for you both).

Though professionally we are saying goodbye to Annie, it is impossible to measure what Annie has achieved during her years as a nurse, and it is just as impossible to measure what Annie has meant to us all. But I am positive that we will all have many fond memories of her and have been taught valuable lessons by her which we will retain.

To Maria, her successor - You have been given the best example to follow in your role as Deputy Matron, though in equal measure you have also been given a high standard to follow!

According to tradition at this point the retiree is presented with a retiring gift – (usually a clock or watch) to say thank you. However when Annie retires, she will no longer need to be up early for work. So such a gift would not be appropriate. Our gift is something we all hope you treasure and enjoy, as you remember your time here at Holy Family Convent Care Unit. You will always be welcome here, so I hope you don't forget our shared tea bag and coffee!



Annie, good luck and all the best; we wish you well and thank you for the ten years and ten months of devoted service. You deserve the best; may you find it.

I would like to finish with an Irish Retirement Blessing

May you always have work for your hands to do  
 May your pockets hold always a coin or two  
 May the sun shine bright on your window pane  
 May the rainbow be certain to follow each rain  
 May the hand of a friend always be near you  
 And may God fill your heart with gladness to cheer you

Our celebration continued with tea, drinks and cake in the dining room.

Sr. Joan

## UPCOMING EVENTS

May 2017						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3 World Press Freedom Day	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15 International Day of Families	16	17	18 Blessing of the Association and the Councillors' Crosses by Pius IX (1851)	19	20
21 World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development	22	23	24	25 Ascension Day Scotland	26	27
28 Ascension Ireland England Wales World Communica- tions Day	29	30	31			