



Family Links

Glory to God Alone in Jesus Christ, through Mary and Saint Joseph

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The prestigious Newbridge Gospel Choir, of which Sr. Annie Tunston has been a member for the past six years, has honoured her with awards for attendance and for her commitment, loyalty and support. Congratulations, Annie!

Editorial

“Our politicians are behaving like children.” This statement, ironically, came from a 15-year-old Swedish schoolgirl, **Greta Thunberg**. Greta has given up on world Leaders and their talk about tackling the climate crisis. She is pinning her hopes on the youth and ordinary citizens of the world to take up the challenge. One tactic she has adopted, and called on other students to do likewise, is to **miss school on Fridays** and sit outside the Swedish parliament to demand that politicians do more. There are signs that the action is becoming global.



Thousands of Australian schoolchildren have already been on strike from school in spite of warnings from the government. In Ireland, demonstrations in front of Leinster House have been held over the past number of weeks. Signs on banners made by school children urge the Government to take action.

On 25 January, a group of secondary school students (with teachers) from across Dublin gathered in front of the Dáil to call on the Government “to up its game in tackling climate change”. The lunchtime rally was one of many held around the world inspired by Greta



Citizen groups are also taking action. In 2015, a court in The Hague ordered the Dutch government to cut its emissions by at least 25% within five years, after a group, Urgenda, brought a case against it. In Ireland the High Court is currently considering a landmark climate case brought by **Friends of the Irish Environment** (FiE). The group is seeking an order to quash the National Mitigation Plan, arguing that it is not designed to achieve substantial emissions reductions and is thus a clear breach of constitutional and human rights.

Today, who one can doubt that climate change is the greatest challenge of our generation? But, to what extent are we really committed to doing our part to mitigate and prevent it?

Message from Inter - Vocational Team Member

Poetry as prayer

We all claim to love it. At the mention of Poetry, the favourite poems we learned at school come rushing back: The Snare, White Fields and Danny, by James Stephens, Trees by Joyce Kilmer, The Presence of God, by Joseph Mary Plunkett, Sycamore Tree, by John D. Sheridan, A Cradle Song,, by Padraic Colum, When You are Old by William Butler Yeats, My Land, by Thomas Davis and so many more. We have lined-up and sought out our favourite Poets - Burns, Byron, Wordsworth, Keats, Hopkins, Heaney, Oliver, Kavanagh - all for a purpose, all for different reasons. The gift they have appeals. Their poems carry depth of meaning. They leave us pondering and we want more. But what is Poetry and what makes it so attractive to so many.

According to Wordsworth (1770-1850) "Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings. It takes its origins from emotion recollected in tranquillity." Poetry is about staying with reality, observing, pondering reality and working to find language to give expression to that reality, expression that will convey meaning. It says different things to different people. It speaks in many tongues.

The source of poetry is our deepest inner selves. It is 'soul-work'. It is about sharing what is of depth within us with others. It is an art form and like all art forms it requires skill, conviction, determination and an element of risk. Poetry invites us to enter into the silence and solitude of its hermitage where the total attention it calls forth enables us to turn from our usual self-centredness and come to a moment of selflessness that is the space of 'epiphany'- to use James Joyce's expression- an epiphany that can illumine our darkness, touch on the Divine and give us a whole new understanding of ourselves.

Poetry is beautiful. We read it because as Samuel Tylor Coleridge observed, "it is the best words in the best order". We read it because it is pleasurable, a

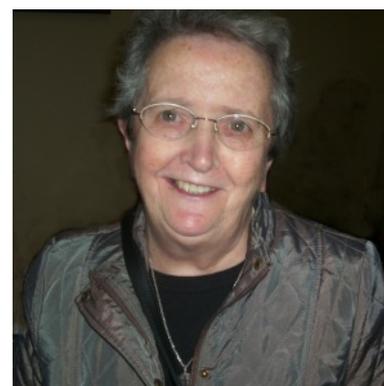
pleasure derived from rhythm, repetition, rhyme, from imagery, thought and emotion. It awakens us to the beauty of the natural world around us - God's gift to us.

Poets are explorers. They are those who venture in a state of inspiration into regions of consciousness which in most of us remain dark and unexplored. They help us to appreciate that everything that is, is holy. They encourage us to look into our inner and outer world and to enjoy these more abundantly.

In the silence and solitude of the poem, as we read and reflect on the words within the hermitage, the mystic Simone Weil says, 'we become God's prey'. God captures us by God's beauty, for God is the source of all beauty. Like the mystical prayer of the saints, poetry plunges us into the spiritual depths where there can be real encounter with the Divine.

In his book, *An Astonishing Secret*, Daniel O'Leary claims that, "beautiful words transform the soul; they warm the heart; they set the imagination on fire" and that, "we live and move and have our being when we carry beautiful words inside us." He goes on to point out that poets of nature such as William Wordsworth and Gerard Manley Hopkins know that the hidden beauty they sense must first be experienced in their own hearts before they attempt to shape and open it up for others.

Nor is the revelation of God always in things bright and beautiful. T.S. Eliot finds in an urban wilderness the Presence of 'an infinitely gentle, infinitely suffering thing', while Mary Oliver finds heaven in 'a few weeds in a vacant lot' and Patrick Kavanagh sees



Sr. Margaret Bradley



'that beautiful, beautiful, beautiful God taking fleshy shape and breathing his love by a cutaway bog'.

I believe all Poetry is powerful. It has the power to inspire, impact and impress. It is a prayer.

Daniel O'Leary reminds us that "Revelation is about how to see everything in a delightfully new way, using the most divine gift of God's imagination now incarnate in all of us". And, according to Victorian Poet Christina Rossetti, it is grace that teaches our hearts to see and to recognise. She says:

*Lord, purge our eyes to see
Within the seed a tree,
Within the glowing egg a bird,
Within the shroud a butterfly.
Till taught by such, we see
Beyond all creatures Thee.*

Indeed, God comes to us disguised as ordinary, as pain, as 'what happens'. In his Encyclical Letter,

Laudato Si, Pope Francis reminds us that "when we see God reflected in all that exists, our hearts are moved to praise the Lord for all his creatures and to worship him in union with them". Poetry can be a powerful tool through which to achieve such a goal.

Through poetry T. S. Eliot turned from agnosticism to belief in God, Francis Thompson from the degradation of alcohol and opium to re-embracing his faith. Gerard Manley Hopkins was converted to Catholicism; Jessica Powers entered the cloistered life; Siegfried Sassoon converted to Catholicism at the end of his life and the mystic, Simone Weil, felt she was possessed by Christ. So, why not allow poetry help us reflect on our lives and draw us closer to God?

How does poetry speak to you?

Poetry of all kinds is a language of love, and nearly always is a language of God.
'Poetry does not aim to prove, but to point beyond all objects into the silence
where nothing can be said'.

Thomas Merton

Living with Hope and Courage in a Hostile Environment

This is a real challenge to us in these dark times where we are confronted daily with the great harm we are capable of doing to each other. As we listen to the news and read the newspapers we hear and see the frequent genocide, ethnic hatred and the horrendous acts of violence committed daily in our world. We see terrorism and hatred and we know that so many countries of our world are at war. This reality calls us now more than ever to show humanity in our caring, our hospitality and generosity and be experts in compassion.



Despite the heavy hearts and the number of refusals, all found the strength and joy to take part in the various parties organised by different organisations.

The good news for them is receiving that brown envelope from the Home Office with the leave to remain. In this hostile environment most correspondence from the Home Office is a letter of refusal with no appeal! This is the story of our guest who submitted her fresh claim application to the

Home Office last September. In October she moved back into Section 4 Government accommodation which we felt was good news for her and she was back in the system. But she was given accommodation in Stockton on Tees in the north of England living in a shared room with 2 strangers and in an area where she knew nobody or the support services available to her. Sadly, in December she got the long-awaited letter with a refusal and no right to appeal! She could however apply for a Judicial Review. Our Guest has been applying for her refugee status for 9 years. When she came to us, she was homeless and destitute and now she returns to that same situation. We have been in regular contact with her and she is living on the happy memories of her time with us last Christmas. Despite all the setbacks and refusals, she still smiles and is hopeful. Her faith as a Muslim is a great support to her; she is always positive and remains hopeful. Please keep praying for our guest that she will be safe and will continue to get the support she deserves to get her through this tough stage.

The most vulnerable of our society are the victims of this hostile environment and most of these are refugees and asylum seekers. The aim is to make life so difficult for those who don't have the correct documents that they would be forced to leave Britain. This became law in the Immigration Acts of 2014 and 2016. This policy creates a culture of fear and distrust and prevents migrants from accessing vital services. There is a real contradiction between UK legal obligation to offer refuge and asylum, and the current environment aimed at forcing people to leave. The current mistrust engendered makes it hard for people to prove their genuine need. Massive delays in the asylum process have led to cases remaining unresolved for years, especially the more complex cases. Some delays are from 10-20 years. Our experience shows that the more complex cases are left in a state of limbo. The current backlog in the immigration system is 20,000.

As the celebrations for Christmas were on the way for those caught up in our consumer society, most of whom were forced to spend money they didn't have, it was this Hostile Environment that was the backdrop for many of the asylum seekers that we are in contact with. One person said "How can we celebrate when we are living in fear and without hope in this hostile place?" This is the reality for most asylum seekers.

People who come to the UK are capable and want to make a contribution to society, but with no definite future it becomes a question of survival rather than living, without being able to dream of a better future. The asylum process is a tough one. After a horrendous journey to where they thought would be their promised land, they experience nothing but one rejection after another. They are expected to live on the minimum and are not allowed to work and some

have no access to education not even basic English classes. A requirement of the asylum process is to be able to speak English and have some understanding of life in UK but they are not allowed to have any formal help. Thank God there are many voluntary organisations that support these people without any funding or resources.

As asylum seekers are not allowed to work or make any contribution to life in the UK, they cope with this situation by spending all the day in bed. What else is there for them to do? The feeling of uselessness leads to severe depression, despair and in some cases suicide.

There are many destitute Asylum seekers all around us. While we may not be able to do anything about their legal situation, we can offer them friendship and support. We can befriend them and listen to them. We can support them and somehow this offers them some form of dignity and respect in this harsh and hostile environment. We know that asylum seekers have great faith and commitment to that faith. Despite the hardships of the journey so far, they believe that their God is with them and will not let them down. We are blessed to be able to



accompany so many destitute asylum seekers. We are enriched by their deep faith, culture and their positive attitude and their desire to share the little of what they have with others.

Breakfast for the Homeless

Homelessness is a major problem in most of our cities and countries. As we know there are many efforts in place to support the homeless but we also

know it's never enough. Here in Bradford we are involved in the Curry Project all the year round where hot food is served to the homeless every Saturday night. In addition, during the winter months all the churches of different faiths in Bradford work together and open their Churches, Temples, Gurdwaras and places of worship in turn, to accommodate the homeless. Here they are served an evening meal and given a bed for the night. They can also shower and get a change of clothes and toiletries. Before leaving the following day, they are offered a healthy cooked breakfast and can take a packed lunch with them.

During Christmas week Nasreen and Maria were involved in cooking and serving breakfast. We turned up at 6.30 am and prepared breakfast and served it to the guests of that night. This was a very grounding experience and a privilege especially in the middle of such a busy commercial time when most people around us were consumed by consumerism. It put a whole new meaning to Christmas as we reached out to serving the homeless Jesus.

The hostile environment is spread beyond migrants to include those applying for benefits and facing homelessness, with people being measured according to their profitability and commercial value! Let us not be afraid to open our hearts and our homes as we remember and pray for these destitute people; we are all one family. We can be surprised and enriched by their culture as well as their great faith, hope and courage. Let us be the ones to build bridges and not walls.

*Maria Crowley,
Bradford Community*



New Year Celebrations in Milton Keynes



This New Year's Eve, members of the four denominations who form the ecumenical partnership of Christ the Cornerstone came together at the Praise and Worship service. Jacqueline Eustace and Jo Doherty (the two remaining members of the Central Milton Keynes Lay Associates) were amongst the packed congregation attending the service which began at 10.45 p.m.

The worship was led by a choir and musicians from Our Lady of Lourdes at Coffee Hall, one of the Roman Catholic cluster* parishes here in Milton Keynes. Fr. Pius Amoakpo (a 'cluster' priest) and Rev. George Mwaura (United Reform Church Minister and leader of Milton Keynes Methodist-URC United Area) led the service. At midnight the joyous congregation welcomed in 2019.

At 0.15 a.m. Fr. Pius celebrated Mass for the Solemnity of Mary Mother of God and he suggested we add three new resolutions to our New Year lists, based on the readings for the day:

- to greet each day with the words from the first reading 'May the Lord bless you and keep you, May the Lord let his face shine on you and be gracious to you, May the Lord uncover his face to you and bring you his peace'. He also encouraged us to think on these words throughout the day;

- to live as children of God, as the second reading tells us God has sent the Spirit of his son into our hearts, a Spirit that cries Abba Father and makes us his children;
- to follow the example of Mary in the Gospel and to ponder things in our hearts.

*The cluster is one of the first such in England. It comprises six churches, some with diverse, international congregations, with four priests and 2 deacons. It extends also to the University of Cranfield and Milton Keynes University Hospital which fall under the direction of Fr. Frances Higgins who leads the cluster team. Services at Our Lady of Lourdes are now held at St Paul's catholic school.

The church was built in the 1970's in one of the new estates in Milton Keynes where a small community of *Holy Family* sisters provided much needed support to the new residents. Sadly, the church did not withstand the test of time. It had to be demolished due to its corroding concrete structure which was too expensive to remedy. The priests from the cluster continue to serve the catholic community at Christ the Cornerstone where the valuable ecumenical links are maintained by Fr. Frances.

Jo Doherty and Jacqueline Eustace
Central Milton Keynes (CMK) Lay Associates

A DEACON IS ORDAINED

The Community in Woodford had the privilege of attending the recent ordination to the diaconate of Alan Mair in our parish church of St. Thomas's. Alan is the son of Jean Mair, Scottish Lay Associate and former editor of Family Links .

Our bishop, Rev. Alan Williams, presided over the ceremony which took nearly 2 hours. Attending were Alan's wife, Cathy, and his Mum and Dad, Jean and Hugh, as well as many friends including local priests, Holy Family Sisters and Lay Associates, Franciscans, future deacons, parishioners, teachers from Trinity High school - where Alan works, and a host of well-wishers and students from former years.

As members of the Music Group providing some of the background music alongside the traditional choir, we were very involved in the presentation. From the back of the church, we witnessed the galaxy of celebrants making its way to the High Altar. The opening words of G. Kendrick's hymn, *"This is our God, the Servant King, he calls us now to follow Him / To bring our lives as a daily offering, of worship to the Servant King"*, were very appropriate:



Bishop Williams with family and friends of Deacon Alan

Alan and Cathy's family did the readings from Jeremiah 1:4-9, and Ephesians 4. The cantor, another deacon, sang "On Eagles Wings" beautifully. The Gospel was from John 15, the last words of Christ speaking to his mother.



l-r: Ann Connolly, Srs. Celine, Bishop Williams, Jean Mair, Sr. Áine, Hugh Mair

Bishop Alan then intoned the rite of consecration when deacon Alan made his promises to the Church and to the bishop to fulfil his obligations as a pastor. The people then accepted him as their pastor. The bishop prayed to the Holy Spirit for Alan through the laying on of hands while the Litany of the Saints was intoned. The prayer of consecration continued to dedicate the life of the deacon to one of worship through prayer, care, ministry of service to the sick and poor, self-discipline and strong faith. He received the stole and dalmatic, while the Gospels were also presented to him. The Sign of Peace was the signal for his closest family relatives to step forward for their acknowledgement of their role in this event and their promise to support his vocation.

At the end of the Liturgy of the Eucharist a blessing was given by the Bishop on the marriage of Alan and Catherine to strengthen the bonds between them and for their family, Anna and Olivia. The ceremony concluded with the beautiful hymn: *Christ be our Light*.

Deacon Alan then thanked everyone who helped him in his vocation. All were invited to a Celebration Buffet held in Trinity High school, where our Bishop and Deacon Alan welcomed and thanked everyone.

Sandra Harrington, Woodford

HOPE NURSING HOME (CAMBRIDGE) BECOMES MARY WARD HOUSE

Since the sale of our nursing home in Cambridge to the Congregation of Jesus, the building has had an extensive makeover to house boarders from Mary Ward School. The boarders have been there since 2017 but it is only now, on the feast of Mary Ward, 23 January, that the official opening of Mary Ward House took place.

Carmel and Kathleen attended the evening event, led by Jane Livesey CJ, IBVM General Superior, and the chaplain, Fr Tony Rogers. A plaque was unveiled and the Director of



Boards introduced the ceremony with a quote from Pierre Bievenu Noailles about a house being 'a place of welcome' and should always have a feeling of being 'at home'. The headmistress of the school, Charlotte Avery, expressed her gratitude to the *Holy Family* Sisters, introducing the two of us. She spoke of their delight that the atmosphere of welcome, of love and care for the residents of Hope House has now been passed on to the younger generation.

There are currently 87 boarders in Mary Ward House, ranging in age from 10 to 18. The vast majority are



from China, Hong Kong and Malaysia, with others from Poland and other European countries. We were greeted by prefects and

sixth formers who took us on a tour of the house. It is very tastefully decorated - white walls, with quotes from Mary Ward and paintings of Eastern figures,



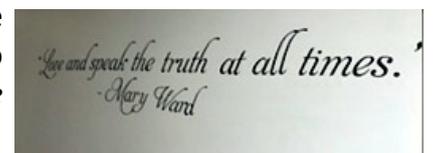
some done by the residents. We saw the younger girls in what would have been a leisure room on the first floor, busy at their desks, doing their homework. The sisters' community room on the top floor has been converted into bedrooms.

We gathered in the 'chapel', now used for prayer sessions for the residents, and for various meetings. After more talks from Jane Livesey and Charlotte, we were served with Prosecco and savouries. We had an opportunity to talk to some of the girls who are aiming high for university etc. and we met two of the matrons/healthcare providers, who were intrigued by our nursing home history.



We also spoke to Sheila Mann, a descendent of the Wetenhall family and author of the history of the house before it was bought by the *Holy Family*. We have a copy of her writings in the Archives.

Charlotte, her husband and son now live in 'our community house' which has been refurbished. She invited us to come back and speak to the girls about the *Holy Family*.



Kathleen Diamond, Aberdare

Thai Pongal in Ireland

Thai Pongal is a Hindu festival celebrated by Tamil People around the world. *Thai* is the first month of the Tamil calendar and *Pongal* is a sweet concoction of rice, moongdal, jaggery and milk. *Pongal* means "SPILLING OVER". The dish was so named because of the tradition of boiling rice in a pot until it starts overflowing. This festival marks the beginning of the Sun's journey northwards.

Thai Pongal is a thanksgiving ceremony in which the farmers give thanks to nature, the sun and animals for providing a successful harvest. The rest of the people celebrate the festival to acknowledge their gratitude to the farmers. This celebration takes place on four successive days called:

- Bogi festival
- Surya Pongal
- Mattu Pongal
- Kaanum Pongal.

On the 19th January, we had an opportunity to join a Thai Pongal celebration in the community of the Presentation Brothers at Sandycove, Dublin. It was a group of people, men, women and children, from different parts of Sri Lanka, including two Presentation Brothers and Sr. Lumi (FMM), who works in Darndale. There were also three Indian students from Madras, Mumbai and Bombay.



It was a fascinating evening during which everybody talked to one another and got to know each other and all helped in preparing the Pongal rice. Everyone found different ways and means to relate to each other regardless of their nationality, race and religion.

The ritual of cooking Pongal rice took place



out of doors. The place was decorated with beautiful Kolam (special drawings for the Pongal) on the floor. To mark the beginning of this event we were invited to light the traditional oil lamp and the men were invited to put the large pot on the fire. Then all waited until the pot started overflowing. An overflowing milk pot is a symbol of prosperity. When the pot started overflowing all clapped and celebrated it very joyfully.

Then all were invited to put a handful of rice into the pot. Some senior women in the group did it ceremoniously and were followed by all. After some time other ingredients, such as brown cane sugar, milk, roasted green gram, raisins, cashew nuts, ground nuts and pods of cardamom, were added to the pot.

While the Pongal was cooking, the





space in front of the pot was prepared for the prayer. Some food was served on a tray as a pooja, a thanksgiving offering, a lamp was lit on a cleaned coconut as a light pooja. A bell was rung in praise of the gods and a senior man in the group chanted some mantras, like prayers, inviting the group to chant after him.



After the prayers all were invited into the house and were served Pongal rice on a banana leaf. This was followed by different sweets and

savouries. Everyone enjoyed eating while listening to different Tamil songs.

Next, we had a cultural entertainment. Children, and some adults, of each family took part in this event. They came prepared with songs, dances and speeches.



We came away before they finished the celebration. it was a beautiful evening with a different experience with different people in a different country.

Charitha Thandalge
Griffith Downs

A LAY ASSOCIATE REFLECTS ON HER JOURNEY WITH THE *HOLY FAMILY*

My journey with the Sisters of the *Holy Family* of Bordeaux began over fifty years ago when, as a young girl, I watched curiously as my cousins Sr Margaret Bradley and Sr Frances Darragh prepared to enter the convent. Another cousin Sr Brigid Quigley (now deceased) was already a nun in the order and her enthusiasm for her vocation was clearly evident on her infrequent visits home on holidays.

When I became a pupil at St Mary's Grammar School in Magherafelt I was proud to tell that I had cousins who were nuns. Throughout my years as a student there, we were given many insights into the work of the order, and I have particularly fond memories of Sr Pius McElhone, Sr Immaculata O'Connor RIP, our French teacher, and Sr Scholastica. Another nun and a great friend was Sr Marie Therese McKeever, a fearless and tireless champi-

on of the poor and underprivileged.

I left Magherafelt in 1964 to go to England to train as a teacher and after a spell of teaching in Birmingham was appointed to St Mary's Primary, Magherafelt in 1971. Sr Assumpta was an exemplary and inspirational Principal as was her successor Sr Margaret Bradley.

In her quiet and determined way Sr Assumpta lived out her vows as a *Holy Family* sister. Her dedication to and faithfulness to her faith and prayer and to her students' needs were reminiscent of the virtues which are alluded to in The Memories of Martillac. Likewise, in her successor Sr Margaret we found the same dedication and industrious Christian values. It was no wonder when I was appointed Principal in Anahorish I was well prepared for the task that lay ahead. Magh-

erfelt schools were very blessed to have nuns who were dedicated to upholding the values of the Sisters of the *Holy Family* of Bordeaux.

As I read through *Memories of Martillac* I could feel a common thread of moving forward, bringing dreams to reality. St Mary's Grammar School had a very difficult struggle in its early days but with great determination, effort and the support of the people a great school is now flourishing in Magherafelt.

"Our good Father was so filled with the desire to do good, and to do it in every possible way, that he communicated his spirit of devotedness to his Daughters who, up until this present day, have been faithful in following his teaching and example." p. 28

Like the nuns in earlier days the sisters found consolation, enjoyment and even happiness in the practice of charity. Although a very ill person, Fr Noailles miraculously came at a time when the sisters needed someone determined and strong to get things moving and a gift for getting things done quickly.

His example is evident today in the great work being done by the *Holy Family* sisters at home and abroad. Sr Margaret with whom I have worked for several years certainly has the knack for getting things done. She does endless work for the Mis-

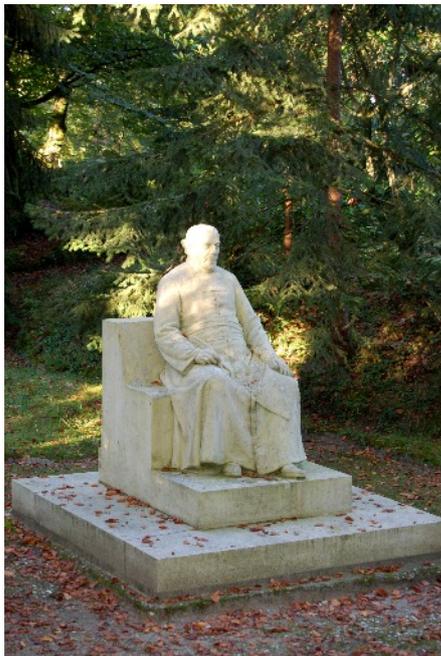
sions and people support her because of her enthusiasm and commitment. Reading the book made me reflect on aspects and interests in my own life. Father Noailles loved nature, walking alone through fields and hills, just reflecting and being inspired by the solitude and silence of the countryside, raising his soul to God. He often recommended to others this simple method of prayer which worked so well for him.

I, too, can think of no better place to reflect and pray and experience the real work of God than in the lanes and fields where I live, and working in the garden, and at the same time giving praise and thanks to God for all that God has given us.

These encounters with nature gave me opportunities to reflect and re-evaluate my own life and eventually decide that I would like to become an Associate Member of the *Holy Family*.

As the development of the *Holy Family* of Bordeaux has progressed one can feel the words of St Teresa come true, "Everything is easy for those who know how to achieve it". To succeed in something all you have to do is to want it seriously, to want it with perseverance and to want it with God's help. That's the way the Good Father wanted things.

Winifred Walls,
recently committed Lay Associate



Statue of
Pierre Bienvenu Noailles
on the Island of Our Lady of all Graces,
Martillac

MY EUCHARISTIC MINISTRY

Since coming to London in 2015 I have been involved in Eucharistic ministry. It has been a privilege to minister to the sick and housebound in their own homes, in care homes, or hospitals. Most of my visits are to elderly people who are living alone in terraced houses or flats. Some have carers who come on certain days for a number of hours per week. Others have family or friends who do the shopping for them and support them as much as they can.

It may seem a small thing but the church bulletin with the Sunday Liturgy and the parish news is always appreciated. Our parish is served by the Redemptorists and a number of the present community have been here for many years so I am regularly asked about them and can arrange for a priest to visit when requested.

Recently I was faced with a rather unexpected situation. I was visiting a 90-year-old lady who lives alone and is fairly independent. She gets around the house with the aid of a walking stick. I had phoned her before I left home and she said she was looking forward to my visit. When I rang the doorbell she called from inside that she had fallen and was on the floor and could not get up. We were talking to each other through the letter box. Unfortunately she was not able to give me a contact phone, so I was obliged to contact the emergency service, who sent along the fire brigade quite quickly. Much to everyone's relief an upstairs window was slightly open and soon one of the men had climbed in and opened the front door. Fortunately, the lady only had a wound on her



hand and did not need to go to hospital. Now she is wearing an emergency button and has a key box outside her door.

Grieving the loss of a parent is painful but when both parents die a day apart it is hard to imagine the suffering of the family. I had been taking Holy Communion to an elderly and sick Burmese couple at their home. When their condition deteriorated they were admitted to hospital and put in the same room. They died before Christmas a day apart. Two senior priests concelebrated the Mass and burial service. Neither had witnessed a couple being laid to rest in the same grave on the same day and neither had I. They were people with strong faith and I believe they were ready to return to our true home.

I thank God for the wonderful people who welcome me into their homes and who are an inspiration to me.

Brigid Davis, Clapham

IN MEMORIAM

CHRISTINE THURSTON R I P

It is with sadness that we, at Woodford, announce the death of our dear Lay Member, Christine Thurston. Christine and another one of our members, Maureen Pestel, were very good friends from their teen years. At that time, after 6pm Mass on a Sunday evening, they would both go dancing to Rock and Roll music at the "Four Bs" in London which was a Catholic dance hall. Christine was a very lively person and would also be seen riding around on her Vesper Bike!



I.-r. Christine and Maureen

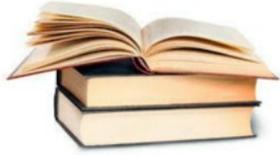
Christine met and married John Thurston and they had two sons, David and Adrian.

She had trained as a teacher and taught English locally at St. Paul's Secondary School and later at Trinity High when St. Paul's amalgamated with Holy Family Convent School. She also taught in a local private school for a while and was much appreciated by all her pupils.

Christine was a loyal and very busy member of the CWL in our local parish church, St. Thomas of Canterbury, always ready to help whatever the occasion.

Christine made her commitment as a Lay Member of the *Holy Family* on the 8th July 1985 and contributed much to our group. For a while, our monthly meetings took place at her house. Over the years she attended regularly until she became unwell and was no longer able to attend due to illness and frailty since 2013. However, members of our group kept in touch with her which she appreciated and looked forward to. May she rest in peace.

Kathy Howes
Lay Associate, Woodford



BOOK REVIEWS

SOUNDS OF THE ETERNAL

This short book is a real gem. Subtitled “A Celtic Psalter”, it presents us with a selection of simple and holistic morning and evening prayers. These prayers, while new, draw on a selection of ancient Celtic, Christian and Jewish traditions and express in beautiful language the sacredness of the human body, matter and the whole of creation. We experience matter and spirit as being inseparably interwoven with the presence of God permeating all. Every person, animal and thing is a reflection or expression of the Creator if we have eyes to see beyond the surface and take time to contemplate the deep mystery in all reality.

The seven daily prayers/readings/reflections each have a special theme and every day brings a fresh perspective on God and faith. This book is a small treasury of material for both personal and community prayer and reflection.

Sounds of the Eternal is also available as a CD and is full of calming and relaxing chants helping us to be still and discover many things as yet hidden from us.

Áine Hayde
(Integrated Spirituality Team)

This book is by J. Philip Newell and is published by The Canterbury Press (2002). It is available in hardback from amazon.co.uk

UPCOMING EVENTS

February 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 Feast of St. Brigid, Patroness of Ireland	2 World Day for Consecrated Life World wetlands Day
3 Anniversary of the Miraculous Benediction 1822	4 World Cancer Day	5	6	7	8 Death of our Founder 1861 St. Josepjne Bakhita, Patroness of trafficked people	9
10	11 Funeral of our Founder 1861 World Day of the Sick	12	13	14	15	16
17 Feast of the Flight into Egypt	18	19	20 World Day of Social Justice	21 Pope Francis meting with Bishops' Conference Presidents begins	22	23
24 Meeting with Pope and Bishops ends	25	26	27	28		