

The Holy Family of Bordeaux

in Britain and Ireland

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

March 2015 Volume 1 Issue 3

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Srs. Eileen Ryan, Bernadette Deegan, Pauline Byrne and friend displaying plaque commemorating the presence of the Holy Family Sisters presence in Skelmersdale Parish

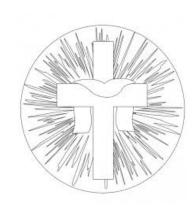
Editorial

The author Viktor Frankl wrote in Man's Search for Meaning, "In some ways suffering ceases to be suffering at the moment it finds a meaning, such as the meaning of a sacrifice." In Holy Week, we are invited to confront Jesus' suffering, death and resurrection. Even though he said no one took his life away, but that he gave it willingly as a sacrifice, he still suffered terribly.

Suffering calls us to compassion, to suffer with. It is only when we are personally and immediately touched by suffering that we can really enter into the mystery of redemptive suffering. Sharing the pain of another human being, or other suffering and persecuted people, makes our participation in the Holy Week services more authentic.

We all know, personally, people who are suffering in all kinds of ways and with whose suffering we spontaneously empathise. In the last week we were all especially present to the victims of the Germanwings plane crash. This year, too, perhaps we feel called to be particularly close to the suffering Church in Syria, Iran, and especially Pakistan. From our sisters there we have had first hand information of what it is for Christians to live under constant threat of violence, and even death, because of their faith.

But they, like us, know that suffering is never the end of the story. Only through suffering will we fully understand the power of the Paschal Mystery.



Message from Sr. Gemma (Unit Leader)

DYING AND RISING

Dying and rising are happening all around us at this time of the year. Winter's barren landscape is being transformed as nature wakes up to new life.



During these days we contemplate the deeper meaning of dying and rising. We recall in wonder the 13.7 billion years of dying and rising entailed in the process of evolution and the daily dying of our sun which burns up and transforms four million tons of itself into light and heat, without which there would be no life on Earth. Dying and rising are built into the very fabric of the universe. Dying is necessary for rising.

We are part of that natural rhythm of dying and rising and so was Jesus. Jesus did not exempt himself from the law of nature that we are all subject to – suffering and death. On the contrary as Paul tells us "he emptied himself and became like us" (Phil. 2) even to the point of dying an ignominious death on the cross.

But Paul continues: "Christ has been raised to life... and we too will be raised to life because of Christ" (1 Cor. 15: 20-22). This is the message of hope for us. Death has not the last word; life will always win through.

Joan Chittister says: "Resurrection goes on and on forever. Every time Jesus rises in our hearts in new ways, the Resurrection happens again. Every time we see Jesus where we did not recognize him before — in the faces of the poor, in the love of the unloved..., Jesus rises anew. The real proof of the Resurrection lies not in the transformation of Jesus alone but in the transformation awaiting us who accept it." (Joan Chittister: Stations of the Cross eBook,

Benedict, a Rwandan man living alone in a hovel, was discovered by the HF sisters, his feet infected by jiggers or chigoe fleas. They took him to the Health Centre and literally and figuratively set him on his feet again.

Foot-washing: Grime

Grime from rough-hewn, dusty paths settles relentlessly between the toes of calloused, sandalled feet, grown sticky with the sweat of effort of scrambling up a bank, slithering round puddles or hastening on the way, close-knit friends, to meet.

Grubby, gritted, the feet of the baffled twelve, before whom Jesus substitutes his garments for a towel, takes a bowl: and then –

- and then,
the Creator of the Cosmos
falls upon his knees,
casts away the last vestiges of power
and washes every fetid toenail,
hardpad heel and ankle raw,
with a tenderness, surpassing any servant's,
as the 'punishment of slaves' lurks outside the door.

Trevor Thorn (The Cross and the Cosmos Blog)

Goodbye to Skelmersdale

n 24th February - in the darkness of a wet and cold evening - about 150 people gathered to celebrate the work of the Holy Family Sisters in Skelmersdale over the last 25 years.

Considering the lack of public transport in the town, the crowd was a testament to the great esteem in which the Sisters are held. It was also an occasion to mourn the closure of our community in Skelmersdale, so, a great mixture of feelings was floating around. However, generally the atmosphere was one of appreciation at what had been achieved and, as always, the delight of people in meeting each other.



R to L: Srs. Catherine Lavery (Area Councillor), Pauline Byrne (community member), have a cup of tea with former curate. Fr. John Causey



Youth and Age were there

A few areas of note have been the formation of so many Lay Associates, catechists, guides for weeks of prayer, and parents to help with the sacramental programmes as well as the RCIA group leaders who have helped about 8 adults each year to learn about the Catholic faith. Over the years there has been much outreach to the bereaved, work with the SVP and the regular food distribution, support for the Crisis Centre for young teenagers and the Refuge for battered women and children.

The Sisters were also part of the school governing boards - of seven schools at one point. They had close links with the ecumenical events in the town.

Thanks to all the sisters who were associated with Skelmersdale over the last 25 years, there is a rich legacy left behind. We thank God for their lives and service to God's people.

(Gemma has named them all in her address, so we will not repeat the names here. Ed)

As was befitting the occasion, Bishop Tom Williams from the Archdiocese of Liverpool came to celebrate the Eucharist and was joined by the Vicar for Religious, Fr Godrick, (a Benedictine from Ormskirk), Fr Michael O'Neill (Mill Hill priests), Fr Tom Naylor, Fr Mike Thompson (Pastoral Co-ordinator), Fr John Causey, and other priests who had served in the parish. The two deacons, Anthony Callaghan and Des Alsgar, also helped and there were some



Inside the Church



From left: Srs. Catherine Lavery, Bernadette Deegan, May and Bert Mayfield , Sr. Kathleen flanagan

wonderful altar servers. Our Lay Associates and others from across the town provided beautiful music for the liturgy. The Sisters were presented with a plaque which will be mounted in St Francis Church.

In order to get to the Church, Fr Tom Naylor had walked 10 miles, as the priest who was to collect him forgot to do so! Such was the determination of people like him to get there.

Sister Kathleen from Rock Ferry joined Srs. Teresa, Gemma, Catherine, Eileen, Pauline and I. Sr. Ita was unable to come and people were disappointed. Mai and Bert Suffield also represented the lay associates 'from across the water' as they say in Liverpool. Sr. Gemma gave a beautiful reflection, and promised

the people that the Holy Family would always be there for them, and the links would continue through the lay associates, and the friendships formed over the years.

After the very powerful liturgy, the Eucharistic meal continued in a more temporal way as we filed in through one door of the sacristy, feasted our eyes on the banquet there, chose what we wanted to eat, and went out through another door back into the church to share our food and our stories.





Continuing on our pilgrim journey into the unknown we can only trust in God's providence and guidance to "scatter the seeds of good works" as we do so.

Bernadette Deegan

Gemma's speech at the closing of Skelmersdale

e have gathered here together this evening to say goodbye. I read somewhere that "to say goodbye is to die a little". I think that is very true. Occasions such as this arouse in us deep feelings of loss and sadness. We feel as though a part of us has died. And they are feelings that we very often want to run away from. It can seem too difficult to face the pain of separation — a pain that puts us in touch with other partings we have experienced in the past and also of future losses that will inevitably form the pattern of our lives in the future.

The decision to leave Skelmersdale has been a difficult one for us. We have spent 25 years living and working among you. Our Founder Pierre Bienvenu Noailles wanted the members of the Family he founded to be close to the people. He said to the first members: "Remember that you have not separated yourselves from those who live under the common law; rather you journey with them sharing with them all the fatigues, trails and dangers of the journey". And that has been the case with the Sisters who have lived here during these 25 years. You, the parishioners have welcomed them and made them very much part of your community. The sisters over the years have shared their lives with you and have forged friendships that have been supportive and enduring. Yes the decision has not been easy. We are sad. And yet, in the end, we felt like this was the most faithful choice we could have made, which makes today particularly bittersweet.

As we take our leave, we cannot help but ask ourselves many searching questions: Could we have done more? In making this decision to leave, are we letting the people of the parish down? And what about the sisters who went before us and who have spent so many years here? Are we letting them down? If they could speak to us now would they look at us today and think: "You didn't do enough. You didn't honour our legacy."?

There's a tendency to beat ourselves up about that. To wonder what we could have done better. And of course there are many things we could have done better. There is no doubt about that. But to spend time on this question is, perhaps a bit self-indulgent. It is placing the emphasis on ourselves rather than on God's faithfulness to all of us during these 25 years. I believe that God has worked through us despite our weaknesses, our sinfulness, and our lack of fidelity. God has shown God's power through our very weakness. I believe that many seeds have been sown here in Skelmersdale by the many sisters who have passed through here. There have been 13 in all. Five have been called to the Lord. Let's take a moment to remember them, name them and thank God for their lives and service to God's people

Monica Feehan, Josephine Kemp Susanna McKenna

Paschal OHagan, Margaret O'Ryan

Other Sisters who carried out ministry here are Teresa Flynn, Dominica Fennessy, Ellen Butler, Bernadette Deegan, Maureen Slamen, Ita Walsh, Eileen Ryan and Pauline Byrne.

Yes many seeds have been sown.

The seed that gives us most joy and has borne great fruit for us, for the parish and the Church is the establishment of the Holy Family Lay Associates. During our time here the numbers in our Family have increased. You, dear Lay Associates of the Holy Family are equal members of the Family founded by Pierre Bienvenu Noailles. We all share the same spirit and are entrusted with the same mission to make God known and loved. Dare I say that you, dear brothers and sisters, are our legacy? We are not leaving a void behind us. This fact makes our going easier for us for we know that you will continue to be faithful sons and daughters of Pierre Bienvenu Noailles and the Church in Skelmersdale, taking up the challenge to preach the Gospel of love and build communion among yourselves and in the wider parish. And I promise you now that we will always be here for you. We, the other members of the Family; we, the Sisters, will always be here for you.

And so we go - but not with empty hands. We go with the 25 year experience of true community. We have learnt so much from you – your welcome to us and acceptance of us. We have been part of you for all these years and we have been greatly enriched by that. We shall never forget all that you have given us in love and friendship. We pray that God will continue to guide you, accompany you and strengthen you to be salt of the earth and light for the world.

Thank you for being here tonight and God bless each and every one.



FLAME 2 YOUTH CONGRESS AT WEMBLEY STADIUM

Saturday 7 March 2015

Margaret, one of the young girls from Clapham who had participated in the "Life Choices" weekends, invited me to join her and 8,000 other young people at Wembley Stadium Arena for the FLAME 2 Conference on Saturday 7 March 2015. This was organised by the Catholic Youth Ministry Federation of England and Wales (CYMFED).



It was a great privilege for me to take part in this gathering to hear about the young people's faith journeys and to experience how the Holy Spirit works in them and how God is truly a God of surprises.

The day began with prayer and the theme was JOY and MERCY. Light, dance, reflection and music were used and this was very moving.

Fr. Dermott Donnelly, Director of Youth Services in Hexham and Newcastle Diocese and Chair of the FLAME Congress Core Group then welcomed everyone to this amazing event.

(Re Fr. Dermott Donnelly, see Twitter: @TweeterPriest)

A message was then read out from Pope Francis to all the youth who were gathered there, sending his blessing to all on such a wonderful day. He

invited them to experience God's mercy and love for themselves and then urged them to go out with all the vibrancy of their youth to spread this Flame to the challenging world of today.

The Guest Speaker was **Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle** (pictured right) - a vibrant speaker from the Philippines who invited the young people to meet the loving and merciful Jesus in the Gospel and then, through the power of the Holy Spirit **to go out and spread the Joy of the Gospel.** At that stage he invited everyone in the vast Arena to take their mobiles out of their pockets and send a message THERE AND THEN telling their parents, friends and loved ones: **"GOD IS MERCIFUL AND HE LOVES YOU".**



During the lunch break there were some creative ice-breaker activities for young people to meet others and share their faith story with them.

Other speakers were Baroness Sheila Hollins, David Wells, Fr. Timothy Radcliffe, Matt Redman – musician, Alfie Joey and Gilly Hope from BBC Newcastle Breakfast Show.

Finally Cardinal **Vincent Nichols**, who gave the homily, led the young people into a time of deep silence during Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. This was very powerful. There were also 17 Diocesan Bishops and the Heads of 3 Religious Congregations present.

As a Holy Family Sister I felt quite challenged by the simplicity, honesty and generosity of their readiness to spread God's mercy and love in their own youthful way and I sincerely ask God's blessing on them.

Sr. Celine Nanayakkara (Bradford)

"To sing is to pray twice"

he above quotation is attributed to St Augustine of Hippo. If we believe in the truth of this statement then there is at least one large group of people here in Newbridge who do a lot of praying, namely the members of our Gospel Choir!

This choir was born out of a chance conversation between Sr. Catherine Moran, one of her past pupils, Rosaleen Barry, and myself.

Rosaleen, is a member of a Gospel Choir in Dublin and when she came back to live in Newbridge a few years ago she was eager to set up a similar choir in her own home town.

In October 2011 we put an advertisement in our parish newsletter inviting interested people to come to a meeting in our convent to discuss the possibility of setting up a Gospel Choir.

From the outset, there was great interest in the idea and, week by week, our numbers grew. In February 2012, we were very fortunate in procuring the services of a young local woman, Lisa Nagle, as our Musical Director. With Lisa at the helm the choir has grown from strength to strength. We now have a membership of up to 70 and to accommodate this number we have had to move our weekly practices from the Convent Chapel to the Assembly Hall in Holy Family School.

While the main focus of the Choir is singing at Mass on the last Sunday of every month, we have also represented our parish at many charity events and corporate functions. In October last, we sang in the Helix in



Preliminary Workshop

Can you pick out Annie and Kate as the choir waits its turn to sing at the Helix?

Dublin as guests of the North Dublin Gospel Choir. On that occasion, a charity concert called "LIFTED VOICES", we shared the stage with, Niamh Kavanagh who, you might remember, was Eurovision winner in 1993.

Fund raising for needy causes is very much part of our aim and we are very proud of the fact that to date we have raised funds for St Vincent de Paul Society, Lions Club, Samaritans, Michael Garry House, for Homeless People, our local Hospice and also for Cancer Support Groups and groups supporting families bereaved through Suicide.

No matter where the venue is or for what cause we are singing, our Director Lisa constantly reminds us that our emphasis is always on spreading the Good News of Jesus through songs that are uplifting and inspirational. There is a lovely family spirit among our members and, although we may struggle to learn our words, our Monday night practices are most enjoyable and full of positive energy.

Since its beginning, Newbridge Gospel Choir has strong ties with our Convent. Sr. Rose Anne Power is one of its Founding members. No sooner had Sr. Annie Tunstan joined the community than she, too, was adding her voice to the harmony. Annie now has a central role in downloading music and producing CDs to help us learn our words between practices.

Occasionally, we take a break from learning our Soprano and Alto lines and enjoy a welcome cuppa in the Convent. Choir members were very happy to sing for the Sisters at Christmas and also love to know that the Sisters enjoy seeing us sing in Church via the Web Cam. All this support and interest helps maintain the family spirit and

encourages the sense of spreading the Gospel message with joy.



May we continue to enjoy these gifts of music and song and share them generously with others, always remembering that:



Newbridge Gospel choir sang their hearts out for the St. Patrick's Day festival at the Abbey Shopping Centre, Clane. Inside, the shoppers swayed in tune to the music as they picked their purchases.

As they came out they stopped for a while to enjoy and make donations. There were lollies for the children, too.



"All God's critters have a place in the choir. Some sing low and some sing higher. Some sing out loud on the telephone wire. And some just clap their hands, their paws, or anything they've got."



Child Safeguarding Conference



The first National Safeguarding Conference hosted by the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland took place in Athlone from 27 – 28 February 2015.

There were over 200 hundred participants, including four Holy Family Sisters: Colette Keegan, Sheila Roberts, Pauline Byrne, and Maria Crowley.

Archbishop Eamon Martin of Armagh said in his opening address, "Our discussions this weekend should be rooted in a promise that we are now doing everything possible to ensure that the terrible things which happened in the past shall not happen again". He urged us not to forget the trauma of abuse, stating that sexual abuse destroys lives and breaks trust, things which for many can never be repaired.

Archbishop Martin encouraged the "One Church" approach as he commented on the Safeguarding Procedures and Standards adopted by 26 Dioceses and over 160 religious congregations and missionary societies. All share the review process and auditing, all working together with one aim and shared responsibility to protect children and vulnerable adults.

In referring to our duty of care towards survivors of abuse he quoted Pope Francis who describes outreach to those who have suffered abuse and their families as "an expression of the compassion of Jesus". We are encouraged by the Pope to meet with victims and their loved ones, to listen to those who have suffered greatly and to ask forgiveness. He concluded his opening remarks by encouraging us to rebuild trust between priests, bishops, religious and the faithful. This can only be done in a climate of openness, repentance and compassion. We must all commit to the best professional safeguarding practices.

Msgr. Stephen J. Rossetti, priest of the US Diocese of Syracuse, was the guest speaker on Saturday morning. He

spoke about safeguarding in the church today. He put children at the centre won't go wrong. He placed before us by Pope to victims of abuse. He zero tolerance approach to

Marie Collins and Msgr. us of the pontifical protection of minors. They commission and the tasks commission acts as an



as one of the key ministries suggested that if we always of our conversations we reminded us of the challenge Francis by asking us to listen spoke strongly on taking a abuse.

John Oliver both reminded commission for the outlined the make-up of the of the working groups. This advisory body to Pope

Francis re safeguarding issues. Pope Francis has made it very clear that the church must hold the protection of minors as a high priority. Reference was also made to the work of St. John Paul II following his visit to Ireland in 2011 and of Pope Benedict's efforts in this regard.

Members of the National Board spoke about the revision of the Standards and the consultation process they carried out. This included consultation with young people. Two of these young people were present at the conference and they both spoke eloquently about their experience during the consultation process on the standards. They suggested many changes especially in terms of language, jargon, and suggested an element of fun be introduced. They

highlighted the importance of making sure that all children felt safe in our churches. They were positive and enthusiastic about the process and made very valid contributions towards the wording and content of the new standards. The Nation Board will listen to their comments and take them into account.

It is hoped that the work of revising the standards, which now include care for those who have been abused and those against whom allegations have been made, will be completed in the summer. The plan is that they will be ready for launching in September.

The different workshops on Saturday afternoon gave the participants time to clarify and explore many issues through greater interaction with the speakers. The feedback covered the following points:

- Caring for survivors of abuse and mandatory reporting was highlighted.
- The question was asked "where in the gospel does Jesus preach zero tolerance"? The reply was, "Where in the Gospel is there abuse of children"?
- Seeking the views of young people and how to include them in our church settings.
 Seek ways to be invited into their space.
- The review process in the various dioceses and religious orders was seen to be a positive experience; we were encouraged to share resources and good practice.
- Have to avoid a culture of paranoia but we do need a culture of vigilance.
- Keep accurate records signed and dated.

The conference concluded with an open forum where further questions were shared and clarified. Then there was a special thanks to all the speakers and the members of the National Board. Teresa Devlin and her staff were highly praised for the all the work that went into organising such an informative and inspiring conference.

We were left with the challenge to continue to work as one Church as we strive to make safeguarding a way of life in our living and our ministries.

Sr. Maria Crowley



The United Nations' (UN) Universal Children's Day, which was established in 1954, is celebrated on **November 20** each year to promote international togetherness and awareness among children worldwide.

UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund, promotes and coordinates this special day, which also works towards improving children's welfare.

Renewal Session, Martillac

16 February - 18 March 2015

Theme: "To be present to His presence as in Nazareth"

In presenting the session the Ongoing Formation Team at La Solitude suggested the participants "come ready to live the same experience as our Founder who said, 'The Solitude restores me to God, to other people and to myself'. They said the meeting "is a time to drink at our own spring and to experience our communion with the whole Cosmos. It is a time to deepen our spirituality, a time to celebrate and to give thanks."

For a number of years now, Sr. Margaret Bradley has been part of the Team, conducting Art Workshops to enable the participants to give creative expression to what they were experiencing.



Back from the recent one she writes:

The Renewal Session in Martillac has just been successfully completed. There were twenty-two Sisters on the Course: two from India, two from Lesotho, one from Jaffna, four from Colombo, one from Pakistan, nine Spanish-speaking Sisters and three Contemplatives. One of these had come from Argentina and the other two were already in Martillac preparing for final profession which is due to take place at the end of August in our Contemplative Community Nagoda, Sri-Lanka.



The Programme for the Session, "Present to His presence as in Nazareth", was very full with a fresh topic for study and reflection each day. Workshops were also provided. These were an integral part of the Programme. The workshops were arranged for three groups - two groups of English-speaking Sisters and one group of Spanish. Marian from the General Council, who was one of the Spanish participants, was also the interpreter for the Spanish group. There were no French participants this time. Each Group had six workshops. So, eighteen workshops were provided in total.

Charts from the theme of the day were also provided daily and displayed in the foyer to aid reflection. The Sisters seemed to appreciate everything and entered into the Programme with great openness and generosity.

Added to all of this was a day trip to Bordeaux to visit key places linked with our Founder, a free day to visit the Hermitage, and a day pilgrimage to Lourdes.

Of course there had to be a celebration before the departure and that was great craic. Some of the items on offer were hilarious and a cause of great laughter- a most enjoyable evening.

The scattering was fast and varied. But the effort to come, meet up with other Sisters, hear their stories and share with them on many levels was truly rewarding.

Sr. Margaret Bradley

Lay Associate News

Extracts from National Committee Newsletter (Ireland)

The committee met in Holy Family Convent, Newbridge, on 14 March.

Members present at the meeting were: Esther Keogh (National President), Sr. Lil (National Leader), Brigid Larkin (Treasurer) and Ann Duggan (Secretary)

Remembrance was made with sadness of Michael Dempsey (Portlaoise), a very valued member recently deceased, and condolences offered again to his wife, Marie, and family. Michael had served as secretary to the Committee. Nicholas Keary, also from Portlaoise, has accepted to serve on the committee.

Activities planned for this year

Retreat Day

On 2 May there will be a day's retreat at St. Mary's Cathedral, Kilkenny, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. It will be facilitated by Priest Associate, Fr. Willie Purcell, and is open to all Lay Associates and friends.

•Leadership for Mission Workshop

All members of the Family are invited by the Province Leader, Sr. Gemma, to this very special day in Swords on 16 May.

•Knock Pilgrimage

This annual event will take place on 23 May.

Fr. Willie Purcell will be the chief celebrant of the Mass in the Apparition Chapel at 12.30 p.m.

• Holy Family Annual Assembly

Theme: "Go forward, scatter on all sides the seeds of good work." P. B. Noailles.

The date is 12 September and the venue Emmaus, Swords, as always.

Fr. Brian Kavanagh will give an input and preside at the Eucharist.

Biennial Assembly

This event by the Lay Associates of Britain will be held at Hope University, Liverpool, on 20 June.

Three delegates from Ireland will attend: Sr. Lil, Fr. Willie, and President Esther.

UPCOMING EVENTS - April 2015

April 2015						
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
		1	2	3	4	5 Easter Sunday
	7 World Health Day	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15 Earth Day	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	Feast of St. George	24	25 *Lesotho celebrates 150 years of HF presence	26 **Charity run
27 by Fr Gerry Campbell	in support of	29 APT (Act to Prevent Trafficking)	30			

^{*}Srs. Lil Meagher, Síle McGowan and Sheila Griffiths, who worked in Lesotho, will be going to the celebration.

Thank you!

Sr. Lucilla and her family wish to thank the many sisters in the Province who have sent Mass cards and messages of sympathy on the death of her father.

Your kind concern and prayerful support were very much appreciated.

Sr. Pauline Hearney sincerely thanks all who supported her and family by their prayer and messages of condolence on the death of her brother, Alan.

R.I.P.

^{**}Fr. Gerry is a priest of the Armagh Diocese and Trocaire representative for his parish. He does marathons and charity runs to support various causes. He has offered to do a 4-day run from Newbridge (NI) - Dungannon - Armagh - Newtownhamilton - Dundalk - Drogheda to raise awareness of the work of APT. He will start each day from the local church after a brief prayer service. There will be a car driving before and behind him as he runs. Volunteers from APT will be available. Sr. Síle will do the stage from Dundalk to Drogheda.