



The Holy Family of Bordeaux in Britain and Ireland

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

March 2016

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Cluster group at Aberdare, 19 March 2016

EDITORIAL

During the past two weeks we have been following Christ in his Way of the Cross and rejoicing in his Resurrection. We have also been carrying our own personal crosses in our hearts, and sharing in the agony of those, too many, people who were mourning the death of loved ones taken from them in tragic accidents or the awful terrorist attacks in Brussels, Iraq, Lahore, Istanbul...

What does the exultant cry: "Christ is risen!", mean to those who are bereft through such atrocities? How can they reply, "He is risen indeed!"?

Reactions to violence deliberately inflicted can vary from shock, bewilderment, heartbreak, anger, a desire for vengeance, or a refusal to be intimidated or to hate, expressed in the messages written in a public square in Brussels - "Love not war", "We are one". This is what Pope Francis continues to proclaim. In his East message, while condemning the evil of the atrocities in the strongest terms and deeply empathising with the victims, he says: "With the weapons of love, God has defeated selfishness and death. His son Jesus is the door of mercy wide open to all."

On the cross, Christ said: "Father, forgive them; they know not what they are doing."

What happens when suicide bombers and their victims are simultaneously hurled into eternal life? Perhaps they are, together, enfolded in Divine Light and Love and see, with blinding clarity, the utter destructiveness and futility of what has been done. Will the victims say, "Father, forgive them; they did not know what they were doing"? And will the bombers say: "Father, forgive us; we did not know what we were doing"?



Message from Sr. Gemma (Unit Leader)

THE JOY OF THE RESURRECTION

Reading the accounts of Jesus' appearances to his disciples after his resurrection, two major themes appear – transformation and exodus.

First, Jesus' followers were transformed by their encounters with the Risen Christ. Once fearful, they become courageous; once uncertain, they become confident; once downhearted, they become filled with joy; once doubting they are filled with faith that Jesus indeed is the Lord and that by his resurrection he ushers in a new era in which death has not the last word. In their encounters with the risen Lord, they became convinced that he is indeed the One sent by God to save and draw all people into the one Family of God.



This transforming power of the resurrection is available to us today when we open ourselves up to the fruits of the resurrection.

"The proof that God raised Jesus from the dead is not the empty tomb, but the full hearts of his transformed disciples. The crowning evidence that he lives is not a vacant grave, but a spirit-filled fellowship; not a rolled away stone, but a carried-away Church....." (Clarence Jordan: www.patheos.com)



Pope Francis reminds us in *Evangelii Gaudium* that Christ's resurrection is not an event of the past; something that happened to Jesus 2000 years ago. Rather it is a vital power, an irresistible force permeating the world. He reminds us that there are signs of resurrection everywhere transforming situations of injustice, evil, indifference and cruelty. He says: *"Where all seems to be dead, signs of the resurrection suddenly spring up. However dark things are, goodness always re-emerges and spreads"*. (EG 276). And we, missionary disciples, are instruments of that transformation.

Exodus, sending forth to spread the Good News is the second theme permeating these readings. Jesus gives his disciples their mission - to go out, to leave their comfort zones and to become witnesses to the power of the resurrection. To Mary Magdalene and the women he says: "Go, tell the disciples and Peter" (Mark 16: 1-8); to the gathered disciples: "As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you" (John 20: 19-25); to Peter: "Feed my lambs... feed my sheep" (John 21: 1-25). He sends them out but also promises that he will never abandon them: "Go, make disciples of all nations and behold I am with you always, even until the end of time" (Matthew 28).

This is the mission that we receive too. The Risen Christ is among us empowering us to be instruments of resurrection and new life wherever we are:

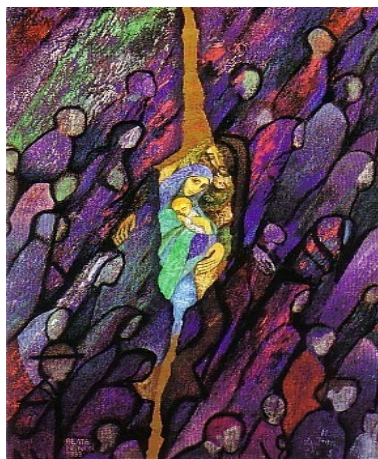
*"He penetrates the entire cosmos,
pervades the whole world,
and makes his presence felt in every human being.
Wherever an authentically human life is growing in the world,
wherever justice is triumphing over the instincts of domination,
wherever grace is winning out over the power of sin,
wherever human beings are creating more
fraternal mediations in the social life together,
wherever love is getting the better of selfish interests,
and wherever hope is resisting the lure of cynicism or despair,
there the process of resurrection
is being turned into a reality". (Leonardo Boff Archives. Inwardoutward.org)*



Pope Francis says: "We are men and women of resurrection, and not of death. We are people of hope. Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of the basis of our hope! Let us not deprive the world of the joyful message of the resurrection!" (*Ecumenical Celebration in the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre. Jerusalem, 25 May 2014*).

QUASIMODO SUNDAY and the HOLY FAMILY

As we work our way through our Founder's writings, it is intriguing to see how often he refers to Quasimodo Sunday as the "principal feast of



the Association" or "the patronal feast of the Association". Why was this Sunday so special that it was our "principal" feast? How could it be our "patronal" feast? Why was the gospel of that particular Sunday so special that it was even represented on our coat-of-arms by the olive branches signifying the "Peace be with you"? And why, more than any other Sunday or solemn feast of the year, was *Quasimodo* Sunday followed by forty days of prayer to the Holy Family?

We find the answer in the first issue of the *Annals of the Holy Family* published in 1831. There, in the section on indulgences, we find that one of the days on which a plenary indulgence was granted to the Association of the Holy Family was "**The Feast of the Most Holy Family (Quasimodo Sunday)**".

In the time of our Flounder, there was no feast of the Holy Family in the general church calendar. This is not really surprising since devotion to the Holy Family began only in the seventeenth century. The feast was celebrated in various dioceses on a Sunday in Eastertide, the last Sunday in May or the third Sunday in November. Bordeaux, which had been consecrated to the Holy Family as early as 1675, celebrated it on the Second Sunday of Easter, known as *Quasimodo* Sunday.

From homily notes which he wrote for that feast, we see that Fr. Noailles read the gospel of the day (Jn. 20, 19-31) in the light of the feast and saw in it the story of the foundation of the *Holy Family* as well as its apostolic mission. He made the comparison between the apparition of Jesus to the frightened apostles hidden in a room and the miraculous benediction when Jesus appeared in a monstrance to a small number of poor and vulnerable women hidden in a humble dwelling during the first years of the foundation of the *Holy Family*. Jesus blessed the two groups. Both were reassured by the

apparitions, and given confidence by the peace they received.

Fr. Noailles also saw the mission of the *Holy Family* mirrored in the mission of Jesus and the apostles, "As the Father sent me, so I also send you". (And Fr. Noailles added, "Go, teach all nations.") He reflected that as Jesus was sent, not just for the salvation of a few souls but for all, so too, the members of the *Holy Family* are sent, not for one particular apostolate but for a variety, and not for any one class of society but for all.

The Feast of the Holy Family continued to be celebrated on various dates as a local feast until 1921 when Pope Benedict XV extended the feast to the whole church to be celebrated on the Sunday within the octave of the Epiphany. Then, in 1969, the new Roman calendar fixed the Feast of the Holy Family the Sunday within the octave of Christmas (or 30 December) with new texts both for the Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Hours. This is still the position at the present time.

When the feast was first moved the Directress General, Mother Mary Raphael Tignet, decided that we would continue to celebrate Quasimodo Sunday as a reminder of our mission. She omitted to mention in her circular that our Founder also used the gospel to remind us of our foundation.

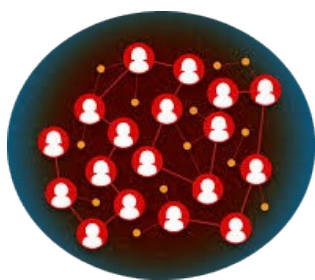
The gospel for the second Sunday of Easter is still the same as it was in our Founder's lifetime - Jn. 20, 19-31. One of the two possible Entrance Antiphons is still the one whose first word - Quasimodo - gives the Sunday its name. (Sundays used to get their names from the first word of the Entrance Antiphons in Latin. We still have *Gaudete* and *Laetare* Sundays in Advent and Lent.



So, let us remember why the Second Sunday of Easter is given to us as one of our special Holy Family feasts in our Constitutions and thank God for our foundation and our common universal mission.

Áine Hayde

CLUSTERING IN BRITAIN and IRELAND



Why are we clustering? While it is not something new in the Unit, we might say clustering has recently become almost part of our structure. In her letter dated 15 January 2016, Gemma reminded us of our Unit Chapter pledge in 2014 to “deepen our sense of responsibility for the life and mission of the Institute... assuming co-responsibility for the mission of God”. The Extended Leadership Team meeting in Crewe, in November 2015, took this pledge to a practical level. Dates were set for cluster meetings, grouping communities in the different areas of the Unit – three in Britain and one in Ireland – where Teams of Participation, communities and individual sisters can share, reflect, offer and receive support in their various ministries and activities.

The first Cluster Meetings of 2016 took place on 14 and 19 March. We have reports from:

Aberdare Gardens

The communities here in the South enjoyed a pleasant and fruitful time together on Saturday 19 March in Aberdare Gardens. Our sisters from Woodford were delayed because of a serious accident on the way. We waited anxiously for their arrival, but glad to know that they were safe and praying for those who were injured in the accident. They arrived in time for lunch – a delicious chicken casserole prepared by Lucilla.

We began our meeting with a prayer to the Divine Spirit who is present around us and within us, holding us and transforming us.

She is Mother of all heavens, Weaver of Galaxies and universes,
She is Birth Mother of every star, of each planet, of everything
She is Life Bringer
Thought Maker
Song Weaver,
Receiver of all our dreams.
She is present all around us.



We continued our meeting with a prayerful reading of the part of Ana Maria’s letter that spoke to us of our living of community.

We asked ourselves: How strong is our desire for community? Is it strong enough to overcome the difficulties that we face in our interactions with each other? In this year of mercy, we reflected on the doors that we need to open in order to welcome one another as sisters and practice “the joyful giving of ourselves, unconditional acceptance, attentiveness, dialogue and forgiveness” that contribute to the building up of genuine relationships every day. (P.5)

As a sign of our commitment to open the door of our hearts to one another, each one stood up and pronounced “Yes”. The meeting continued with a presentation by Maria on the importance of safeguarding in order to live and carry out God’s mission with integrity and live in real communion with one another and with those we serve. Maria stressed the importance of accountability, not only as a safeguard for ourselves and for those to whom we minister, but also as a value which builds up communion among us. This echoes the challenge in Ana Maria’s letter: “Are our agendas filled with “my”: “my time, my space, my mission, my apostolate, my....”, to the exclusion of the members of our community with whom we remain at a distance? (P.4).

In the afternoon, Marie, in the name of the State of Exodus Team updated us on where we are in relation to our priority to “search for ways to use our resources of personnel, houses, finance and skills to take action on behalf of those who are displaced”. Lil’s well prepared PowerPoint presentation on the situation of refugees in Ireland gave us important information on the situation in Ireland.

We remain committed to responding to this call which continues to challenge us.

Clane

We gather, conscious that the Spirit of wisdom moves in each of us as she has moved in all people since the beginning of time.
May we be wise in our sharing, ready to listen, open to what is new.



This was the prayer of twenty sisters, representing all the communities in Ireland, who gathered in Clane for what proved to be a very reflective, mutually beneficial day, and one that was also enjoyable and relaxing.

Lectio Divina on Community Life

Then followed a *Lectio Divina* style reading and reflection on Community Life, as presented by Ana Maria in her letter for this Holy Year of Mercy. We listened in attentive silence as her words were projected by PowerPoint slides and read slowly. During a second presentation, words and ideas that resonated particularly with some were repeated. Then, we were invited to put out thoughts, views, feelings... for consideration, allowing them to settle in minds and hearts before commenting.

Some points raised:

- The invitation to “*begin by realising the great desire we all have to live in community*” (p. 4, last para.). Do we really have this great desire or would we prefer, as some religious now do, to live alone and come together at set times?
- Accountability, but with respect for privacy and confidentiality...
- The *Holy Family* did not invent, nor have we a monopoly on, communion. So, in what ways is it special for us?
- To what extent do we take the trouble to “truly know” one another, to be sensitive to the burdens others may be carrying?
- Do we, can we practise real attentive listening with the heart.

This exercise set the tone for the rest of the day and enriched the ideas that surfaced in the presentations made by members of the Exodus and Safeguarding Teams.

Exodus

While some sisters in Ireland do have contact with asylum seekers and refugees, and communities have “pledged a bed”, offering to take refugees into their houses, they are hampered by the slow progress and seeming lack of will of the government which is now only a caretaker. In the meantime, however, an excellent task of researching and contacting all the agencies and organisations that work with displaced people has been done by the Exodus team in Ireland. An invaluable source of information and advice on collaborative action by religious is the CORI-IMU Justice Desk, directed by Sheila Curran, RSM.

Lil and Ann, members of the Exodus team in Ireland, presented Lil’s excellent PPT outlining all of this. We wait in readiness.

Safeguarding

As someone in the group said, “there is always something new to be learned about safeguarding.” Although we recently had a day on the topic in Newbridge (cf. February Newsletter) the material prepared by Maria and presented by Colette did raise further issues, such as safeguarding oneself, not only as a protective measure against accusations, but to be more effective in ministry, possibly through supervision.

Throughout the day’s reflection, the words OPENNESS, TRANSPARENCY, ACCOUNTABILITY, COLLABORATION, COMMUNION recurred spontaneously in every context, as a unifying link.

Table Communion

Eating is the oldest form of communion. So, at an appropriate time, we gathered around the common table to enjoy a light lunch prepared by the Clane community, with contributions from the other communities.

Newbridge Community ‘Cluster’

Sisters of the Newbridge community who were unable to come to Clane had their own shorter version of the programme on 23 March, again facilitated by Claire.

Participation, interest, humour and enthusiasm were huge, leaving everyone with much food for thought and prayer.



Rapt attention



Most common form of clustering in Ireland?



AFTERMATH of COP21?

On 12 December, 2015, the adoption of what is now known as the 'Paris Agreement' by the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was hailed as a historic event and greeted with euphoria by the many campaigning groups who had mobilised the public in support of it. Now, three months on, is it just business as usual by most governments? On returning home delegates and their colleagues began to realise the stark reality of what they had committed themselves to, and how unpopular the necessary changes in our whole way of life could be.

Climate activists are acutely aware of this and continue their campaigns to keep the Paris Agreement to on the agenda of all governments by organising events and rallying the public to support their efforts. People Power will be all important in overcoming resistance by vested interests.

Some sites to follow to keep abreast of what is happening and give support:

<http://350.org/> - <http://350.org/ireland>

<http://www.ecocongregation.org/> Eco Congregation general site will direct you to country sites.

<http://breakfree2016.org>

A RECENT VISITOR TO OUR GARDEN

(Clane)



In 1950 there were an estimated 36 million hedgehogs in the UK. Sadly, reports last year suggested that had dropped to just one million in 2013, a third of levels at the start of the century. It is considered to be partly due to warmer winters that have affected their hibernation patterns, waking them up at the wrong time of year, before there is enough food around. New roads and building developments constructed in their habitat may also be a factor.

There does not seem to be the same decline in Ireland. The Irish word for hedgehog is 'gráinneog', meaning ugly or horrible one. Too bad, as they are very beneficial to gardeners.

DIOCESE



Brentwood Cathedral

and

BOROUGH

London Borough of
Redbridge

WORKING TOGETHER FOR MIGRANTS

In the Summer of 2015, when I had just arrived in my new home in Woodford Green, I attended a meeting of Religious to celebrate The Year of Consecrated life. Alan Williams, the Bishop of our Diocese of Brentwood and himself a Religious, was also there. To my surprise – probably because he saw a new face – he approached me and started a long conversation. By the end of the conversation, he had invited me to join a new Team of Sisters which he was hoping to start soon after Christmas to respond to the urgent needs of migrants in the Diocese. I was very happy to accept the invitation and, in January, five of us had our first meeting as a Team with Bishop Alan.

Our main focus is to co-ordinate and network with others who work on behalf of refugees, asylum seekers and all kinds of vulnerable migrants, especially those with no other means of support. The next meeting – our third – will take place in the French Church in London (run by the Marist Fathers, the Bishop's Religious Congregation) where we will have an opportunity to meet some of the migrants who use the Parish Centre there. As part of this Diocesan project, I work as a volunteer at the Cardinal Heenan Centre in Ilford where asylum seekers and refugees, many of them homeless, come for various kinds of support and help.

The London Borough of Redbridge, in which Woodford Green is situated, has agreed to host four Syrian families in the very near future. TELCO (The East London Communities Organisation) which has a membership of 6,500 people in the Redbridge Borough is co-operating in this project. I attend TELCO meetings regularly and on 20 March took part in one of their training days on welcoming and providing a safe

environment for these families. It was a very powerful and life-giving experience. As part of our preparation to receive the families, 16 members who participated in that day formed five Research Teams so that, among other things, we would be able to answer any questions raised by the Police, Home Office or Social Services. These five Teams deal with Education, Housing, Health, General Needs and Liaising with other important people such as MPs, the Bishop and some Anglican Vicars.

I am a member of the Education Team and have the responsibility of contacting the Principals and Staff of the Redbridge Secondary Schools to inform them about the situation and to ask them to open their schools to the children of these Syrian families. I have also been asked to liaise with the Bishop and with the Vicar of the Anglican Church in Woodford Green on behalf of TELCO. I am very happy to be the link person between these groups and to see the support we are able to give one another in working towards our common aim – the welfare of migrants.



Cardinal Heenan Centre Logo

It is a great opportunity for me to get to know deeply the situation of migrants and the policies of the Government and various organisations in their regard. It is wonderful to be able to work with different Congregations of Religious and other groups and put our Provincial Chapter Recommendation into practice by taking action on behalf of people who are obliged to be on the move. It is very enriching for me also to share in the commitment and enthusiasm of Lay People, different Faith Groups, Young People and, of course, our own Bishop Alan.

Celine Nanayakkara
Woodford Green Community



TRAINING WORKSHOP in HUNGARY

From 6 - 12 March I attended the training in Hungary for Renate (Religious in Europe Networking Against trafficking and Exploitation) on Advocacy and Campaigning. The meeting was held in a Conference Centre in a place called Mariabesyno which once was a convent belonging to the Salvadorian Sisters founded in Hungary at the end of the 19th century. The house itself was occupied by the sisters up to the Communist era.



At the Communist invasion there were 50 sisters in the house. The Communists then used the convent as a prison for some 500 religious women and tried to starve them. However the local villagers managed somehow to feed the sisters and after three months they were released but turned out of the convent. Many were imprisoned and tortured. They were not allowed to wear their habits and were not allowed to meet together. However the sisters managed to keep religious life alive and indeed to take in new recruits. Religious life is alive and well today in Hungary.

Our training for Renate was given by Yvonne Van der Kar. She worked with the Conference of Religious in the Netherlands and when this job finished last year she set up her own company called "Sister Work" to continue working with religious and others on Policy education, Human trafficking, Migration and Justice.



The most important part for me was with my two other companions from the UK. We had to devise a lobbying campaign for the UK. As we are members of TRAC (Trafficking, raising awareness and campaigning) we used the time to plan our next campaign. TRAC, which comprises 17 different religious congregations, work on

The training gave us strategies for lobbying and advocacy. It was quite intensive with lots of steps that can be taken by us to be effective lobbyists. The

principle of "demand". The big issue fuelling trafficking in the world is demand. We want our campaign to work on what is known as the Nordic Model. That is to decriminalise the women in prostitution and criminalise the men who buy sex. This model originated in Sweden and has now been adopted by other Nordic countries. It has also been adopted in Northern Ireland and is about to be in Scotland. I also understand it is before the Irish Government. Our campaign will be simply to extend this model to the rest of the UK.

We presented our strategy to the whole group and they were invited to comment on this. Because the electoral system is much simpler in the UK and Ireland where we know who our MPs are and how to approach them, our lobbying tactics will begin there! We hope to extend the campaign to other groups. We are not naïve enough to think that it will be easy. There will be plenty of groups who will oppose this but we believe in the Nordic Model



and will continue to do so.

Part of the week included a day trip to Budapest and a visit to a (reformatory) facility for young girls who had been involved in crime and prostitution. The girls were mainly Roma and conditions were fairly basic. It was quite distressing so the three of us from the UK decided not to go inside and see the girls as if they were in a zoo. All in all it was a good session and we learnt out tactics for our future work.

Marie Power
St. Gabriel's Road

Reflection

Many dates stand out when we reflect on Irish history. This year we remember the hundredth anniversary of the Easter proclamation and the Rising of Irish men and women against one of the most powerful Empires in history. One of the worst disasters of the Empire period was the Great Famine of 1845, itself often described as a watershed in Irish History. An Gorta Mór saw a million people die of starvation or famine-related diseases and up to two million more being forced out of their homes and off the land onto the notorious 'coffin ships'.

Some arrived in their new homes across the sea – many others met only death along the way.

There are many reasons why it is important to remember these events. Remembering is about recognizing, embracing and confronting the past but it is not about dwelling there. Remembering should not be about self-indulgence or self-pity but rather about reflecting, understanding, empathising and, most importantly, alerting us to similar injustices in our world today in order to ensure that we do not repeat the tragedies of the past.

So as we remember the 'Great Famine' on this the hundredth anniversary of the Rising, we express our solidarity with those who are still denied 'the right to sovereignty' – as outlined in the 1916 Proclamation. We walk in solidarity especially with those denied their basic human rights in Palestine and Guatemala. We walk in solidarity with the many people forced to leave their homes and flee as refugees and we call on the economically rich countries of Europe and the US to open their hearts, their doors and their gates; to tear down the barbed wire fences, remove the walls and allow these suffering people to enter as our ancestors were allowed when they fled famine and pestilence.

Our history demands no less of us.

SOURCE: Afri (Action from Ireland)

For more about Afri, [click here...](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

April 2016						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2 World Autism Awareness Day
3 Quasimodo Formerly Feast of the Holy Family Feast of Divine Mercy	4	5	6	7 World Health Day	8	9 Foundation of the Sisters of Hope (1836)
10	11	12	13 Foundation of the Agricole Sisters (1856)	14	15	16
17 World Day of Prayer for Vocations	18	19	20	21	22 Earth Day	23 St. George's Day
24 100 th Anniversary of the 1916 Rising Ireland	25	26	27	28	29	30 Canonical Erection of the Association in Bordeaux (1831)