



The Holy Family of Bordeaux

in Britain and Ireland

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

December 2015

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Unit Leadership Team, appointed 5 December 2015

Editorial

The year that has gone has had its share of troubles and disasters. Violence and loss circled around the globe and touched many lives. On the eve of a new year, those who are flooded out of their homes in our islands, and elsewhere, may see little to be happy about; those who have neither home nor homeland may see even less.

Yet such is the enduring resilience of the human spirit that people do constantly hope, like the refugees who continue to risk their lives at sea to find a better life in Europe. Where does this resilience come from? Isn't a good part of it the fact that adversity brings out the inherent goodness and compassion that is in the majority of people? We know this by the way people respond in times of crisis.

Resilience comes through connectedness - to family, to community, to inner strengths, to a sense that life is more than the circumstances we see in front of us. Was this what the poet Rainer Marie Rilke meant when he wrote, "Perhaps everything terrible is, in its deepest being, something helpless that wants help from us."? Could we apply these words to ISIS?

The coming year, like every year, will test the resilience of the human spirit whether by public chaos and disaster, or personal agony and despair. But what will remain consistent through the turmoil of life is human perseverance. People find comfort and strength in different ways - in religion, a belief system or they have personal reasons.

It is "knowing the reason for the hope that (we) have" (1Peter 3, 15) that enables us to say gladly and joyfully:

A HAPPY NEW YEAR!



Message from Sr. Gemma (Unit Leader)

DEEP INCARNATION

We have come to the end of another year. How quickly time passes! Life seems to be rushing by at an increasingly rapid pace. There seems to be little time for pausing to reflect and savour the now before we are rushed on to the next event.

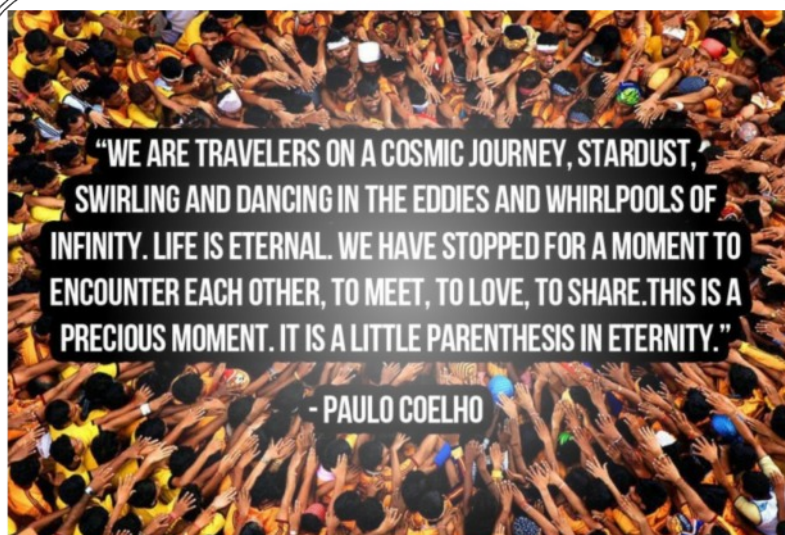


All too often this is what happens with Christmas. One of the greatest feasts of the Christian calendar gets lost in the avalanche of Christmas cards, shopping for presents, and exhausting rounds of Christmas celebrations where, invariably, we eat and drink too much. What if we took more time to reflect on what Christmas is really all about - the profound mystery of the Incarnation; the root and source of our faith? The great God of the universe becomes human in the person of Jesus, is born into a humble family, lives and suffers and eventually dies as we humans do.

Bethlehem reminds us that the greatness of God's majesty is not in the realm of the eternal. God is not up there on "his" throne, all powerful, invulnerable, watching over us from afar. No, God is Emmanuel, "God with us", engaged with us, one of us. This can seem too much for us to take in. No wonder we exchange the mystery of the Incarnation for Christmas, with tinsel and holly, the babe in the manger, the angels singing and the Kings on their camels bringing presents. We reduce the Incarnation in our attempts to understand it but, as the Franciscan Richard Rohr claims, the Incarnation is something more mysterious, more awe inspiring. He says: "The Incarnation of God did not happen in Bethlehem 2000 years ago. The Incarnation actually happened 13.7 billion years ago with a moment that we call the "Big Bang". That is when God actually decided to materialise and self expose" (www.huffingtonpost.com).

Two thousand years ago was the human incarnation of God in Jesus, but before that there was the first and original incarnation through light, water, sun, moon, stars and every created thing that now exists. The Word of God was present at that first flaring forth, billions of years ago. This insight about the Cosmic Christ was already intuited in the earliest days of Christianity and articulated in the prologue to John's Gospel, and in the Pauline hymns of the letters to the Colossians and Ephesians. (John 1: 1-3; Colossians 1: 1-20; Ephesians 1:9). All speak of Christ existing from all eternity. We have never really unpacked the profound meaning of these references but now they have new significance in the light of the new story of the universe.

The Incarnation tells us that God is intimately connected to us and to all creation from the very beginning of time and space; that God truly loves creation. This "deep" way of reflecting on the incarnation provides an important insight. By becoming flesh the Word of God confers blessing on the whole of earthly reality in its material dimension, and beyond that, on the cosmos in which the Earth exists. Rather than being a barrier that distances us from the divine, this material world becomes a sacrament that continuously reveals the Divine Presence.



Installation of the Unit Leadership Team

The members of all the nearby communities and some from those further away in the north west and north east of Britain gathered in Aberdare Gardens on Saturday 5 December for the installation of the new Leadership Team. Two representatives from Ireland who set out early that morning were unable to travel. Bad weather prevented their plane from departing.

The ceremony was conducted by outgoing councillor, Bernadette Deegan. She led the gathering in prayer and read the official document appointing the Team. They were encouraged by, and very grateful for, the many messages of support and encouragement received.



L to R: Srs. Claire McGrath, Catherine Lavery, Carmel Bateson, Gemma Corbett (Unit Leader), Kathleen Diamond, Bernadette Deegan)



...a banquet prepared...

After the solemn part of the day, everyone assembled to enjoy a beautifully prepared buffet lunch, for which credit goes to Kathleen Diamond and Catherine Lavery. Some of the Oblates from Quex Road joined them and all spent a very pleasant afternoon together.

The team will be going to Matillac from 17 – 23 January 2016 to meet with the General Leadership Team, together with the teams of Lesotho, South Africa and the Network of Latin America.



Enjoying food and friendship

MARCH FOR CLIMATE CHANGE DEAL

Many people assembled on a wet and windy day (29 November 2015) under Marble Arch to walk the 4 miles to Parliament Square and Downing St. to deliver our messages of support for the work on Climate Change. We were 8 sisters in all, soon joined by a Lay Associate from Woodford. An estimated 50,000 marched in Central London that day joined by crowds of umpteen millions marching in the capital cities around the world for the same cause. We had our own banner – naming our Holy Family Association, and we were a diverse group comprising sisters from Asia and Europe, some with missionary experience.

As we progressed down Park Lane we their placards sporting messages such **“Peace in Syria”, “End of carbon mining”, “Stop Ocean levels rising”, “foot-print”**, and various other clean air, and the end to the industrialisation and multi-national the rights of minorities and every added to the melee of banners.



were aware of many others carrying as **“No to fossil fuels” “No Fracking”, “emissions”, “War on Want”, “Stop Change Policies”, “Cut the carbon** messages calling for a campaign for exploitation of the earth by companies. The evils of Deforestation, conceivable mix of politics were also

The campaign to keep the temperature reasonable level had truly taken off. A was paraded through the crowds with the poor Arctic polar bears fighting for their existence as they slithered on the bows of the deck of their Arctic home. It was all very poignant and very catching of the imagination of what could happen if governments did not make radical changes in policy, and if we were not also prepared to make the necessary changes in our own lifestyles.

levels of the planet down to a huge “float” of a model Arctic iceberg

A truly happy atmosphere prevailed – almost carnival if the demonstration had not been on such a serious issue. Push chairs and prams were pushed by willing but tired parents who wanted to make their presence count as they considered the bleak future of their offspring if they didn’t take action on their behalf. Many students—some on subsistence grant levels due to government cut-backs –also joined the march against the present policies of selective objectives favouring the nation’s wealthy. Some participants wore plumage and had different birds’ costumes to highlight the plight of the endangered species of the planet due to climate change. One felt, yes, the younger generations would hold us to account if we failed them in their thirst for a better world, and for them there was no “Plan-(et) B”; it was time for the Paris talks to do what was necessary.

Whatever the outcome of the future results of our Paris Talks it was good to know that we as sisters played our part, were well represented, and were also supported in prayer by so many others as we marched for “CLIMATE CHANGE”.

Sandra Harrington
Woodford

There was euphoria in Paris and throughout the world when the agreement to tackle climate was signed by 195 nations. Those who had participated in marches and vigils and gone to Paris to keep up the momentum during the conference are equally thrilled. The big question however is, **WHAT NOW?** Implementing the agreement is a matter, not just for governments, NGOs, or other bodies, but for each individual on the planet.

SO, WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Paris treaty on Climate Change: historic moment for humankind

Sean McDonagh, SSC analyses the Paris agreement



On Saturday evening December 12, a multilateral treaty on climate change was signed by 195 countries. This took place at the end of the Conference of the Parties (COP21) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Le Bourget, Paris. For many people who have been engaged in climate negotiations or those who have reported on the yearly Conference of the Parties (COPs) to the UNFCCC, this was a historic moment.

There are so many different and complex aspects to the treaty. These include commitments to reducing or eliminating greenhouse gases from our industries, transport and our homes in the 21st century. It also envisages helping poor countries adapt to the reality of climate change through establishing a General Climate Fund of \$100 billion annually. Finally, rich countries have committed themselves to making clean, non-fossil fuel technologies available to poor countries.

Towards the end of the second week of the negotiations, it became clear that no country would get everything it wanted. In fact, major compromises had to be made. A lot of credit for the agreement must go to the French Foreign Minister, Laurent Fabius and French diplomats. Since COP 20 in Lima in December 2014, they had lobbied every single country in pursuit of a deal. They took time to ensure that the three major pollutants, the United States, China and India would sign up to the deal. During the final negotiations, French diplomats worked tirelessly to achieve compromises. Many of us who have attended previous COPs, especially the failed COP in Copenhagen in 2009, remember the frustration and anger we experienced when two weeks of negotiation failed to produce any viable treaty.

At most of the COPs which I attended during the past decade, the Catholic Church was barely visible, but at COP21 in Paris, the reverberations from Pope Francis' powerful encyclical *Laudato Si'* could be heard.

According to Professor John Sweeney, climatologist and emeritus professor of geography in Maynooth, Co. Kildare, "the 31 pages of the Paris treaty provide a roadmap for tackling the worst extremes of global climate change. The future pathway to sustainability has been laid out for 195 countries, virtually the entire global community, to offer present and future inhabitants of Earth hope that human-induced climate change can be contained."

According to Lord Nicholas Stern, a British economist who has worked tirelessly on the economics of climate change, the Paris treaty is extremely important. For him "It is a turning point in the world's fight against unmanaged climate change which threatens prosperity. It creates enormous opportunities as countries begin to accelerate along the path to low-carbon economic development and growth."

Kumi Naidoo, the International director of Greenpeace welcomed the agreement. For him it "will put the fossil fuel industry on the wrong side of history." However, he is very aware that the "emission targets on the table are not big enough." And "the nations that caused the problem have promised too little to help the people who are already losing their lives and livelihoods."

The treaty binds nations to keep the average global temperature rise to below 2 degrees Celsius and to aim at a 1.5 degree Celsius rise. Getting the figure of 1.5 degree Celsius on the UN agenda was a major breakthrough for small island states whose very existence is threatened by sea-level rise as a result of climate change. Tony de Brum, the charismatic Foreign Minister for the Marshall Islands played an important role in forging this coalition of the ambitious nations. However achieving this goal will not be easy. The agreement which each nation had made to cut greenhouse gases before they arrived in Paris, would result in a 3.7 degree Celsius rise and not a 2 degree rise. So, there is a huge amount of work which needs to be done in this area.

Regrettably, aviation fuel and bunker fuel for ships are however absent from the agreement. Currently these account for the emission equivalents of Germany and South Korea combined.

Also a lack of adequate consideration of human rights is also apparent, an ironic omission occurring in the draft issued on UN Human Rights Day!

Despite major omissions, the Paris agreement demonstrates that global cooperation has the potential to steer us on to a safer path for both people and the planet.

[Click here for Source](#)

SHAMROCKSPRINGS

In our November issue we gave an account of a meeting on Climate Change in Newbridge and facilitated by SHAMROCKSPRINGS, a group dedicated to protection of the environment.

One of the leading members is Deirdre Lane, a past pupil of Holy Family Secondary School who maintains close links with the sisters. Having discovered the artistic skills of Sr. Imelda Coyne, as well as her love of the natural world, she asked her to paint some shamrocks for SHAMROCKSPRINGS, which she duly did.

At the meeting, as a token of appreciation, Deirdre presented Imelda with a gift bearing the words of Pope Francis: *"The climate is a common good, belonging to all and meant for all"*.

The gift was a large biscuit in the shape of a shamrock. There was some doubt as to whether his Holiness had actually baked it himself.



Srs. Máiréad, Síle, Imelda, Claire, Catherine, Esther



Close up of biscuit, a bit crumbly after being admired by many

KNIT FOR THE PLANET ONE STITCH AT A TIME

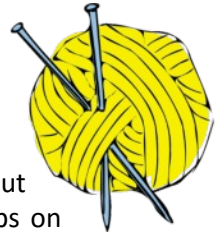
Knitters in Newbridge Convent have joined the Woolly Angels. To find out who they are I went to this site: <http://knitfortheplanet.com/> and extracted the following.

WHO ARE THE WOOLLY ANGELS?



Newbridge Woolly Angels

They are an inspirational collective of men and women from around the world who support renewable and sustainable energy.



They are essentially an optimistic, peace loving bunch but they get quite ticked off when the government harps on about how wonderful fracking is!

The Woolly Angels are everywhere; in towns and cities, in villages and hamlets and if you listen very carefully, you'll hear them clinking tea cups, dunking biscuits, clacking needles and casting on powerful stitches from their balls of yellow wool.

If you see a white feather on the ground, caught on your clothing or simply floating on the wind, the chances are one of the Woolly Angels has just breezed past you en route to a Knit In.

Their symbolic yellow wool is about to be knitted into 1ft x 1ft, also known as 12 inch squares (that's 30cms in new money) and in the not too distant future, those squares will be joined together to spell out a positive message.

The Woolly Angels are preparing to launch a series of global knitting projects (yes, you heard that right) that have two incredible aims:

1. To raise awareness of the urgent and irrefutable need for clean, sustainable, renewable energy through the convivial medium of knitting and talking,
2. To donate lovely warm blankets to wonderful organisations like domestic violence refuges, homeless centres and so on.

The first of these creative and exciting events will take place on the Jurassic Coast in Lyme Regis in Dorset and the blankets that are made there will be donated to two refuges in the south west for people fleeing domestic violence.

To find out how you can become a Woolly Angel, visit the site above.

UPCOMING EVENTS

January 2016						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 *World Day of Prayer for Peace Global Family Day	2
3	4	5	6	7	8 **Holy Family Foundation Day Foundation of the Sisters of Saint. Martha 1857	9 The Finding in the Temple celebrated the day before the Baptism of Jesus
10 Baptism of Our Lord Jesus, the Christ	11	12 Affiliation with the Oblates 1858	13	14	15	
17 Leadership Teams meet with GLT in Martillac	18	19	20	21	22	23 Feast of the Betrothal of Mary and Joseph Martillac meeting ends
24	25	26	27	28	29	30 World Leprosy Day
31						

* For Pope Francis's Message for Day of Peace, [click here](#).

** The date our Founder used for the foundation when Zoe de Raquine spoke to him of her desire to be a Religious in 1820