

Picture courtesy of Sr Annie Thunston

EDITORIAL

“I have great respect for the past. If you don't know where you've come from, you don't know where you're going”, said Maya Angelou, the American poet, singer, and civil rights activist. But she added, “I'm a person of the moment. I'm here, and I do my best to be completely centred at the place I'm at, then I go forward to the next place.”

Do these words resonate somewhat with us, members of the *Holy Family*, as we enter our Bicentenary year? For the past couple of years we have been looking back at our spiritual heritage and deepening our understanding of its *Roots* in the light of present day insights into theology, ecology, cosmology, scripture studies..., discovering where we are now as we prepare to go into the future.

At their September 2019 meeting, the Council of the Family charted a clear course of action for all five vocations of the Family of Pierre Bienvenu Noailles to meet the needs and challenges of our time and the coming time. The upcoming General Chapter of the Religious Institute will be seeking to discern where its members stand with regard to their particular purpose in the Family, the Church and the world.

We can, therefore, “go forward” in faith and hope and love, as our Founder urged us to do, confident that God who began this good work in us, through Pierre Bienvenu, will go on completing it until the end of time (Phil. 1:6).

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REFLECTION FROM A MEMBER OF THE ICT

RECONCILIATION DAY



As we know, there is division and hostility among nations and even within nations and families. It can be quite overwhelming wondering what can be done to solve, even to a small degree, such an insurmountable problem. We can only try within our own everyday life to make a difference.

Some background. In South Africa, the date 16 December has been celebrated annually since 1838. At first it was commemorated by the Afrikaans nation as a religious holiday and was called *Day of the Vow*, commemorating their victory over the Zulu nation at the Battle of Blood River. They believed this victory had been ordained by the “God of Christianity”. This event contributed to the development of Afrikaner nationalism, culture and identity.

Over the years this holiday had various names until the end of Apartheid in 1994. On 16 December 1995 the Government renamed it the *Day of Reconciliation*. The purpose was to foster reconciliation and national unity. This change of name was accepted by the majority of people in the country.



Many celebrations are held on this day throughout the country – large events as well as small celebrations. Last December it was decided to

have a *Reconciliation Meal* at the Denis Hurley Pastoral Centre which is attached to the Emanuel Cathedral here in Durban. This centre is named after Archbishop Denis Hurley OMI who, at the time of his consecration as Bishop, was only thirty two years old. He was a great advocate for justice and peace.

The aim of the pastoral centre is to serve the needs of the poorest people in Durban. These services are offered through its clinic feeding scheme, vocational training, educational and community support and pastoral outreach. South Africans, migrants and refugees are welcome. Holy Family Sr Cathy Murugan, a social worker, is very involved there.

This particular day, the reconciliation meal, was an invitation to sit down with the citizens, including the homeless in the community, and to get to know them a bit better.

Living in this country I have interacted with people of various race groups. In fact, the members of our secular group here are of varying race groups. However, to my shame, I have not had much interaction with the homeless. I speak to them when

I come across them but I had never sat down to a meal with them.

This particular day, the reconciliation meal, was an invitation to sit down with the citizens, including the homeless in the community, and to get to know them a bit better.

Currently I am reading, *The Universal Christ* by Richard Rohr in which he writes that, “*Jesus came to show us how to be human much more than how to be spiritual*”. In my early Christian journey I thought

that becoming more spiritual was what it was all about. One matures.

Anyway, I thought I needed to learn something more about the homeless, on a one-to-one basis not just reading about them, which I had done up till then. We are all human beings and interconnected with each other and creation. I needed to find out more about what it is to be more human. I had no idea what to expect before I went. There is much crime in this city and one is always on the alert. However it was an enlightening experience. We were requested, if possible, to sit between two homeless persons. The atmosphere was joyous; there was much talking; the food was well prepared and the serving of it was very orderly – each table went in turn to collect their plates. We were also entertained by a choir which, being composed of Africans, exuded

energy. I found it interesting that before we sat down to the meal, in place of saying grace, we held hands and sang the national anthem.

During the meal we were each given a blank card and were invited to write a Christmas message in it and to hand it to someone at the table who we did not know.



Reconciliation meal

I found out much about William and Michael, the young men between whom I was seated. They, like many others, had come to the city from the rural areas to find work but of course they joined the many others who came to the city for the same reason and were unsuccessful. Work is not easy to find here. William and Michael, and I am sure the others there, each had a bag containing all they had. During the day they try to find work and at night sleep where they can, holding

onto their bags. The Pastoral Centre provides ablution facilities, clothes and food.

They told me of broken promises on the part of the relevant officials in the city and they seemed to know that money meant for them, from certain organisations, was not actually reaching them. I cannot, of course, verify any of that.

I left that meal in a very thoughtful mood, having learned much. I also wondered what I, having taken a small step towards reconciling with this section of society, could do to bring about greater reconciliation, not only on 16 December, but every day.

Pat Kelly
A member of the Secular Institute

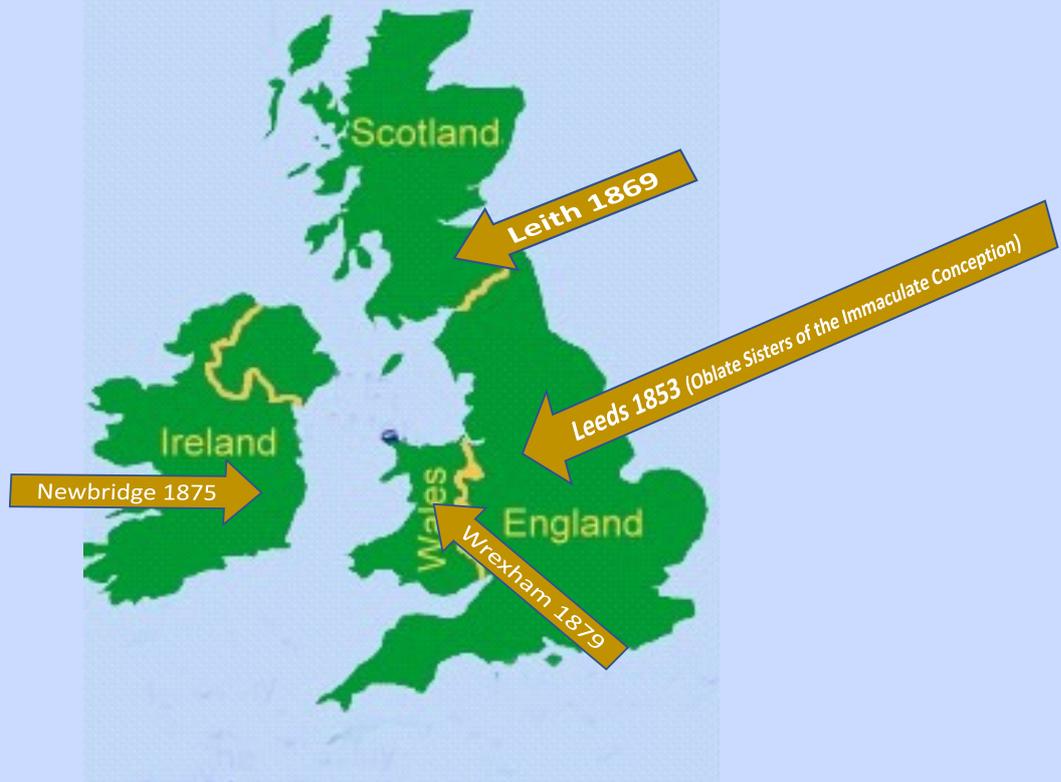


When Jesus wanted to explain to his disciples what his forthcoming death was all about and remind them of his teaching, he didn't call a meeting; he invited them to a meal.

Holy Family beginnings in Britain and Ireland

(One Unit - 4 Countries)

First foundations in each country



When four Oblate Sisters of the Immaculate Conception arrived in Leeds 14 February 1853 to help the Oblate Fathers in their pastoral work in that city, they had no idea they were planting a seed which, when grown, would be grafted on to the tree of the *Holy Family* in 1868.

The four - Srs. Mary Xavier Geddes, Mary Evangelist Day, Mary Ignatius Harris, Mary Joseph Dorratt - had made their novitiate in Notre Dame de l'Osier, Dauphiné, France.

At the end of their novitiate, Fr. Cooke OMI, who was to play an important role in the *Holy Family's* advancement in England and Ireland, received their vows in the name of Bishop Eugene de Mazenod, Superior General of both Congregations. Bishop de

Mazenod then sent them to England to found a community of religious women there, the first since the Reformation.

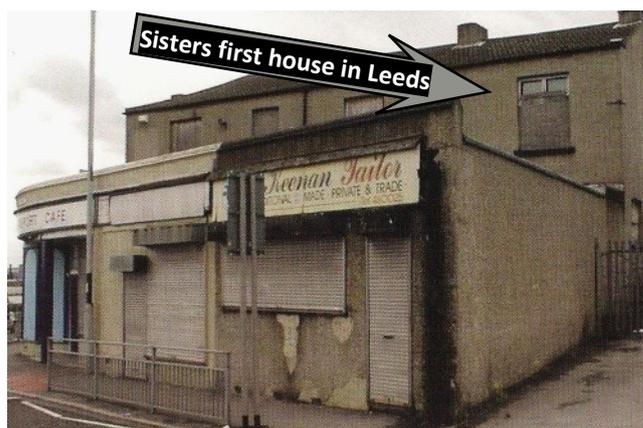


Fr. Cooke OMI



At the time, Leeds was experiencing the worst effects of the industrial revolution. Men, women and children worked long hours in the textile mills with little remuneration. Living conditions were poor, often squalid; education was minimal, if available at all.

After a period of initiation guided by Fr. Cooke, they began visiting the sick poor in their homes; they opened a night school for the factory girls using a cellar that ran the length of their house and served as a laundry by day. To meet immediate needs, other schools were started in run-down buildings with no amenities.



But the Fathers and Sisters had a long-term plan for the mission which they were implementing little by little with admirable faith in Divine Providence, the generosity of donors coupled with their own persevering efforts. The sisters, with the approval of the ecclesiastical authorities, went in pairs soliciting alms as far afield as Scotland and Ireland to raise funds for a Church, a convent, schools, an orphanage...

Around 1863, the sisters heard rumours of a proposed amalgamation with the Association of the *Holy Family*. Leaving the congregation they had grown to love deeply caused the community, which then numbered fourteen, deep pain and sadness. However, after much anxiety, prayer and reflection, most of the Oblate Sisters accepted the proposal as being God's will. The affiliation eventually took place in 1868.

During a time of transition and initiation into the spirit and constitutions of the *Holy Family*, the sisters continued their ministry of service to the people of Leeds. Foundations of smaller houses continued in the suburbs of Leeds as the population developed and improved housing brought people away from the inner city.

By now the seed, so painstakingly planted, was able to scatter its own seeds. Bishops of other dioceses, seeing the work being done in Leeds, invited the sisters to make foundations in other parts of Britain.

In 1869 a foundation was made in Rock Ferry, Birkenhead.

The novitiate was established there. Rock Ferry was to become the hub for the *Holy Family* in Britain and Ireland. From there, sisters went out to other towns in Britain as foundations were requested, and eventually to the "foreign mission" in Sri Lanka and Africa.

It was there, too, that those preparing for final commitment came for a time of reflection and prayer.

In 1957, the Novitiate was moved to Kilmacow in Ireland.



Rear view of Rock Ferry convent. Novitiate to the right



In Rock Ferry Garden, l-r, a Novice & Sister of the Immaculate Conception, a Postulant, a Novice & Sister of Our Lady of Hope

A Question of Habit

As we know, after the affiliation with the *Holy Family*, the Oblate Sisters retained their original habit until the *Holy Family*, which had different habits for the different Branches, decided on a common habit for all.



Brief News

The City Bin Company congratulates Griffith Downs Household for being in the Top 4% of recyclers

Well done!

As you know, proper green and brown recycling are some of the best, and easiest, ways in which we can have a positive impact on our environment.

With this in mind, 65 Griffith Downs made a fantastic impact in 2019! You diverted a full 85% of waste away from the General Waste bin, thus ranking in the Top 4% of our customers in Dublin City Council.

This is an achievement to be really proud of, and you're definitely playing your part to promote positive environmental behaviour.

So keep up the great work in 2020 and THANK YOU for choosing The City Bin Co.!

The City Bin Company

NEWLY CONSTITUTED LAY MEMBERS GROUP

Holy Family Lay Members in Magherafelt and Draperstown have recently amalgamated. We had our first meeting in the Convent House, Magherafelt on Tuesday, 28th January 2020.

We look forward to being a vibrant group guided and inspired by our H.F. ancestors whose lives were shaped by the Venerable Pierre Bienvenu Noailles, our inspirational 'Good Father' and Founder.

Marie and Winnie

UPCOMING EVENTS

February 2020						
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	22
23	24	25	26 Ash Wednesday	27	28	29