



# Family Links

September 2021

Newsletter of the *Holy Family* of Bordeaux in Britain and Ireland

Issue 6 Volume 7

## Inside

\*

Message from the ICT

\*

What do we perceive /hear  
God telling us ....

\*

Jubilations

\*

Stepping Down

\*

Biennial Opening Prayers

\*

A School of Sanctuary

\*

Little Amal

\*

*Holy Family* Sisters  
Remembered...

\*

Eco-News

\*

Upcoming Events



## FOREWORD

“To travel hopefully is better than to arrive.” R. L. Stevenson’s quote is familiar to us all. It echoes another, older Taoist quote: “The journey is the reward”. If we look back on journeys we have made in life, of whatever kind – physical displacement, spiritual, intellectual – this idea probably resonates with us. The struggles and the joys, the learnings and experience gained in the journey have often been more rewarding, and what we remember most, than the arrival or the achievement.

It all depends on how we make the journey. The trouble with looking forward to something with great hope and anticipation – that may or may not come about, or may be a disappointment when it does - is that we can miss what is happening in the present. Hope, after all, has to do with the future.

This idea comes to mind in these times when all our journeys have to be made in the context of a universal journey through a catastrophic pandemic. We are earnestly hoping it will soon end. That hope is perfectly natural, and it is only right that we should all do everything in our power to make it happen. When it does happen, surely it will be possible for us to think there was something rewarding or beneficial in the journey.

We speak of our Christian life as a journey, and the Bible is rich in images of journeys, all embarked on without any maps or even roads, mostly fraught with unexpected difficulties and hardships. Our Christian faith journey is also one of highs and lows, times of deep joy and hard struggles, but one that we persevere in because we know the reason for the hope we have (1Peter 3:15).



## MESSAGE FROM THE ICT

### A Lesson Learned



Earlier this year, as I am sure everyone will remember, the angel of death visited our community in Newbridge in the guise of Covid-19. As a result, seven of our Sisters died. During those three weeks, there was very little time to reflect at any depth in a formal or conscious way. However, some time later I realised that without my being aware of it, my whole idea of the meaning of death had changed and been transformed. I no longer regarded it as something negative to be feared, or regretted. Rather, I now saw death from natural causes as a completely normal and essential process – part of life’s seamless journey of growth and development rather than an unwelcome rupture where something precious is snatched away from us.

This led me to reflect on where my former, largely unquestioned, ideas of death came from. I am sure I am not the only one to have (even subconsciously) regarded death as something unfortunate that God never meant to happen in the first plan of creation but was forced to impose upon us as a result of our disobedience and sinfulness. It was our fault that God’s idyllic world had been turned into a vale of tears where we wept and mourned as we awaited the return of a perfect Garden of Eden. We inherited Eve’s sin of disobedience and needed to be redeemed. Death was the wages of sin. As a result of this way of thinking, the whole theology of salvation came into being and much of Scripture was interpreted in the light of that theology.

That line of thought of course, comes from a literal reading of the Judeo/Christian creation story, considering it to be factual rather than metaphorical. Like the accounts of creation in all major religions, that story was an attempt by people of the time to make sense of important issues such life, death, good and evil with the knowledge that was available to them. In

general, God was regarded as a kind of interventionist Super-Being organising the world – in some way like the conductor of an orchestra. The Universe had three storeys – Heaven, Earth and Hell – and human beings reigned supreme on the ground floor.

For many years now we, in the *Holy Family*, have been fortunate enough to have been encouraged “to unlearn” many of the things we had taken for granted, and to use the knowledge that is available to us in the twenty-first century to re-visit our beliefs and suppositions. We can no longer accept the writings of intellectual giants like Aristotle or St. Thomas Aquinas as certain unchanging truths.

Rather, we are invited to follow their example and use all the means and knowledge at our disposal NOW to throw light on the great mysteries of life and death. How different their philosophical and theological conclusions would be if they lived in the present stage of scientific and technological development. How different the interpretation of Scripture would be if great scripture scholars of the past – even of the twentieth century – had at their disposal present archaeological and historical discoveries and developments as well as the current understanding of the different literary genres of the various books of the Bible.

Being truly faithful to the past by reflecting deeply on reality in the light of the present, would surely lead us to have a deeper and healthier understanding, not only of death, but of many great mysteries of our faith which would be enriched and enhanced by the wisdom which the Spirit bestows so abundantly on our own times.

*Aine Hayde*  
**Newbridge Community**

## What do we perceive / hear God telling us in this situation we are living?

**T**he Spirit works in and through life and is always present, speaking, revealing, inviting ..., whenever we listen deeply and open our hearts. At the present moment, in the midst of and through this pandemic, the Spirit seems to be speaking so loudly that even the deaf can hear and the blind can see!

This crisis is inviting us to continue on the path of conversion into the new story; it's a wake-up call to change the way we live relationship with ourselves, with humanity, with earth and all Eco systems we form part of. This pandemic has highlighted how fragile life is and how interconnected and interdependent we are; it has made us more conscious of what is really important in life and exposed more clearly how resources are unfairly divided.

It has taught us that we humans can make radical changes quickly and on a global basis to protect life. We now know that radical change is possible, we know we have the capacity to choose, the capacity to act globally.

It has revealed that human beings, everywhere, can respond with care, kindness, appreciation, collaboration, creativity, self-giving, generosity, on a world scale and in a way that has not been so visible before. There is a recognition that we are all in this together and we can act together for the good of all. There is a growing awareness of our negative impact on Earth Life.

Surely, through this visible, tangible response, the Spirit is telling us that it is time to wake up; it is time to move; a new world is emerging; a new story is unfolding. We hear the call; we have the ability to respond. Are we prepared to listen? Can we respond? Will we continue to live in the

“old story” valid for its time but no longer now, in the light of the evolution of understanding and insights we have today? Will we continue to hold onto what is past, or move forward, open to the challenge of change, while respecting that which nourished us in the past?

This is a new era, as Pope Francis reminds us, a new phase of evolution that is inviting us into a forward movement. Can we hear again the call of Pierre Bienvenu Noailles to GO FORWARD, in the reality of the new insights of today? Can we be open to listening deeply? Changes are happening; revelation is happening; the call to recognise our oneness as one humanity, members of one Earth community - diverse, interdependent and interconnected - is being vividly experienced through this pandemic. More than ever we are reminded that dualism, separation and individualism is not the way to life.



Once again, the Spirit seems to say: “Choose life”; be open to new insights of science, cosmology and theology, new ways of living economy, moving away from the desire to accumulate wealth at the expense of the poor and the Earth, promoting a just distribution of goods, living simply, respecting the right to a dignified life for all humanity and all Earth life.

Life is sacred; Earth is sacred; we need to find new ways of promoting, living and valuing this. God is within all that exists. During this pandemic there has been a new interest in spirituality, a new awareness that God is everywhere, that all of us and all life lives in God, that there is no separation, that relationships with one another, with Earth, are vital and the most important reality. The value of stillness, reflection. contemplation is being highlighted.

During lockdown, we have seen many people spending time outdoors, we have seen the level of pollution drop, we have taken time to pause, really look at a tree or a flower recognising the revelation of the divine within and our interconnection with nature. We are more aware of our exploitation of Earth and recognise that to do so is also an exploitation of human beings. The fifth anniversary of *Laudato Si* at this time is surely the voice of the Spirit speaking loudly to us.

We know that where there is chaos, where systems breakdown, the new is emerging – this has been the path of major changes throughout billions of years. And now we stand before another *breakdown - new life emerging moment*. We believe this is ‘Spirit guided’ and that we are being moved to another level of conscious awareness. We have a vivid example of the fact that what happens to one person anywhere in the



world affects all of us. This pandemic has made more evident the dysfunctional reality of our way of living, of the inadequacies of our systems, of the many aspects of injustice, of our outmoded cosmology, theology, spirituality ...

Our call to live the mission of communion in its widest and deepest sense is more relevant than ever.

The pandemic has occurred in our bicentenary year on the eve of our General Chapter – it changed our plans, stopped us in our tracks, surely there is a sign here?

As one writer put it: “*We are in a global breakthrough in evolution and if we want a different world, we must become a different people*”. We can’t go back to “life as usual” we must explore together what “GO FORWARD” means, now 200 years after our first beginning. Surely the Spirit of God is knocking loudly at our hearts, inviting us to open our eyes: “*behold I’m doing a new thing, can you not see it?* Will you respond, knowing that “*I am with you?*” And our Founder urging us to GO FORWARD, into this new era, with hope-filled hearts to love, seek, desire God, revealed and revealing in all things and inviting us to active collaboration and participation in this evolutionary moment.

**Margaret Muldoon**  
**St. Gabriel’s Road Community**

## UPROOTING

Uprooting is difficult  
Especially when things seem to be going so well.  
Do we have to keep changing?  
Is it really necessary?  
What difference will it make?  
Who will benefit?  
Change can be so painful.  
It means re-rooting; beginning again,  
Taking risks, adjusting to the new,  
Accepting challenge.





## JUBILATIONS



It was catch-up time in August for Platinum Jubilarians, Srs. Mary Critchley and Catherine Moran, of Rock Ferry and Newbridge communities respectively. Celebrations, which should have taken place in February, were postponed until lockdown restrictions were lifted to enable more sisters to rejoice with them. We have the following accounts from the two communities.

### Rock Ferry, 9 August 2021

Today Sr. Mary Critchley celebrated 70 years as a *Holy Family* Sister! Her former companions, Sisters Patricia O'Hara and Columba Donnelly, who had died of Covid-19 in January, would no doubt have been celebrating in heaven,

The celebration began unexpectedly on the evening before when a phone call from Mary McDonagh's niece, Eileen, asked if she could bring a cake round. Her mother had seen the notice of Mary's Jubilee in the parish newsletter!

The Jubilee Mass was celebrated in our chapel by Fr. Bernard using the lovely booklet prepared by Sr. Joan and ending with the Magnificat "God fills me with joy, Alleluia. His Holy Presence is my robe Alleluia."

Some photos were then taken of Mary with Fr. Bernard and then Mary with the Rock Ferry Community. (You'll notice it is growing!)



The afternoon prayers too were beautiful. Here is a sample: "Transform us this very day, as we open into the radiance of Christ... when we see with CLARITY the SACRED LIFE we are called to manifest." (Taken from "If Darwin prayed" by Bruce Sanguin.)

After the prayer there was a special surprise for Mary! Her lovely niece, Kate, and her mother, Mary's younger sister, Sheila, appeared on the BIG SCREEN (with help from Carmel!) Mary recognized them straight away. It was a joy to watch her face! Kate started by saying how sorry they were that they couldn't come in person to be with Mary. Sheila then congratulated Mary and told her how much she loved her. She reminded her that she was always a nice girl, kindly and unselfish, and when Mary was chosen to be in the 1<sup>st</sup> Netball Team at Mount St. Mary's College, she was very proud of her. Later on, Sheila was also in that team! We heard, too, that Mary was a good teacher and got great Scholarship results especially in Woodford Green, which resulted in many more pupils wanting to go to the *Holy Family* School!

Our Dining Room, as always, was beautifully decorated by our kind staff, and the lovely cards from Mary's family, Sisters, Staff and friends added to the

festive atmosphere.

Then there was another surprise for Mary – a very beautiful bouquet of flowers from Marjorie, her sister-in-law and family. These now have pride of place in our chapel.

At the mealtime, Mary was asked to lead the singing of her favourite grace to the tune of Edelweis. She still has a lovely clear voice!

### GRACE BEFORE MEALS

*"Bless our friends, bless our food,  
Come O Lord and sit with us.  
Make our talk glow with peace,  
come with love to surround us  
Friendship and peace may it bloom and grow,  
bloom and grow forever.  
Bless our friends, bless our food, bless our  
friendship forever."*



The tune stayed in everyone's head and it became like a signature tune for a very happy day!

We thank all our staff once again for their help and support in making this a very happy day for Mary.

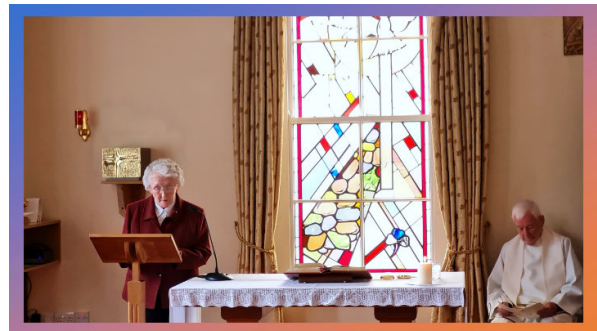
**Sr. Teresa Edward**  
**Rock Ferry Communit**

**Newbridge, 14 August**

Important feasts are generally preceded by a Vigil. On the eve of Sr. Catherine's Jubilee, the Newbridge community had a joyful gathering for prayer, and a foretaste of feasting, to offer her their own personal wishes and gifts. The chosen prayer centred on the Pilgrimage of the Holy Family, with a PowerPoint by Aine, showing the new images erected on the Island of All Graces, Martillac. It was a fitting reminder of our own ongoing pilgrimage in the footsteps of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

The Sisters of the other communities in Ireland, who were free to come, began arriving in the course of the following morning in time for the Eucharistic celebration. We were particularly happy to welcome three visitors from abroad who were in our country, namely, Sr. Eithne Hughes of the GLT, Sr. Cathy O'Gorman from the Unit of South Africa, and Sr. Deepa Fernando of the Colombo Unit in Sri Lanka.

Fr. Joe McDonagh, a former PP in Newbridge and a long-time friend of



Catherine and the community, presided at the Eucharist and was warmly welcomed by Sr. Colette. In his homily, he engaged with Catherine mentioning that she had, in fact, more than 70 years of religious life to look back on. If the period of her first entry into religious life was taken into consideration, that would have been 1950. He recalled some of the important events

of that year, notably the proclamation of the dogma of the Assumption, as well as others down the years. Catherine responded later with words of gratitude and memories of her own, all of which pointed to a life of accumulated grace, wisdom, and wide experience.







Table companionship followed the Eucharist. The beautifully arranged dining room, provided a feast for the eyes before the delicious meal, prepared, by our expert and devoted staff, was served and enjoyed by all. It culminated in the cake

cutting and toast ritual.

Shortly after, all gathered in the “green” room for a sing song. In honour of our proud Kerry woman, the strains of *The Rose of Tralee* and *The Kerry Dance* rang out first.



Then, to the music of Annie’s accordion, all the old favourites were sung. Soon, those who were able to, got up to dance while the others kept time with their feet. Scenes and sounds of wild delight continued into the late afternoon until it was time for our visitors to depart.

The house gradually quietened leaving us with a sense of deep gratitude to all, with particular mention of our devoted staff, who had contributed to making Catherine’s Platinum Day such a memorable occasion.



**Srs Eithne Hughes  
Deepa Fernando  
Cathy O’Gorman  
(now safely back in the RSA)**

## STEPPING DOWN

Over the course of the last few years, I was privileged to act as British President on behalf of the *Holy Family* Lay Members.

Although I started in the position rather tentatively (I don't think I fully comprehended what the position entailed!), I came to find a wealth of spiritual and friendly support. I have had some very interesting and rewarding experiences during my extended term with treasured memories of times shared at our National Assemblies, gatherings, retreats, group meetings, Irish & Scottish Assemblies and Martillac.

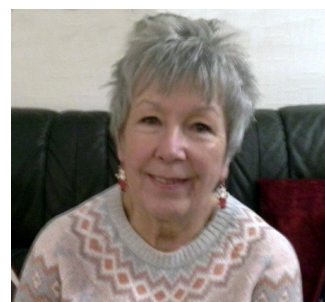
I have now actually managed to 'volunteer' myself as National Secretary for the next year or so and will therefore still be around for a while longer to offer my full support to our new British President - Maureen Bowsley!

In the meantime, I would like to offer a very big 'Thank You' to all members far and wide, to the National Committee, past and present, for their dedication, support and commitment, to the Sisters throughout Britain and Ireland for their support and their welcoming hospitality at our Assemblies and NC meetings. (As Bradford is now closed, Sr Maria's scone baking is definitely being missed!).

One of my last duties was hosting our "Virtual Zoom Biennial Assembly" in June this year, which felt a bit strange, but at least we managed

to keep the communication lines open. It was lovely to see so many of our Lay members and Sisters sharing the occasion.

Sr Catherine Lavery, who kindly stepped in for us, did a wonderful presentation on the day and Jo Doherty's Liturgy was very special.



As we move forward, I'm not sure if we will get another opportunity to meet up again, as we have done in the past, for our gatherings or assemblies. However, keeping in touch with each other, I feel, is very important. There is always the 'old pen & paper and postcards' (to keep the postman in a job) and there are phone calls to keep in touch with each other if you are not able to join in with the communication via the zoom meetings.

"Where there is a Will, there is a Way" and we can unite to support one another, not only in prayer but to keep strong in the firm faith of our Holy Family founder, Pierre Bienvenu Noailles.

Thank You.

*I wish you All well and offer my continued  
thoughts, love and prayers  
Margaret Ramsey xXx*



## BIENNIAL OPENING PRAYERS: Litany of Thanksgiving

Response ®: **We praise and thank you God**

For our Founder, Pierre Bienvenu Noailles, who inspires us with his dream, his teaching, his example and his achievements – ®

For his focus on God Alone through Jesus, Mary and Joseph - ®

For the Holy Family Association and its five vocations – ®

For the deepening of our understanding of God's love and of his spirit within us – ®

For our ability to reflect on God's word, to pray and to reach out to our neighbours and those in need - ®

For the gift of belonging to the Family of Pierre Bienvenu Noailles and for the blessings we have received since we made our Commitment - ®

For our Family meetings, Local gatherings and our meetings at Hope University and on Zoom - ®

For the presence of our *Holy Family* Sisters who drew us into the Holy Family, for their support and for their teachings at our gatherings - ®

For the centrality of the Eucharist in our Family and in the church - ®

For our commitment to fostering Unity and Equality through forgiveness, prayer and action - ®

For the support we give and receive from our Holy Family members and for all those who lead our groups, along with those who offer their services on the National Committee - ®

For our growing understanding of the interdependence / interconnectedness of All species and the need to protect them and to share our knowledge so as to enable us to work together to save our planet - ®

We offer these and All our own prayers and intentions of Thanksgiving in this dedicated year of St Joseph through our Lord Jesus Christ. AMEN.



## A SCHOOL OF SANCTUARY

St. Anne's Primary, Rock Ferry

The plight of refugees and asylum seekers always touches a chord with Holy Family members, remembering as we do the Holy Family as refugees themselves on their flight into Egypt. It has been worrying in the UK in recent years to see attitudes harden towards refugees and the 'hostile environment' created for many people seeking asylum in the UK is a growing concern. Encouragingly a charitable organisation known as Cities of Sanctuary is growing as a movement too, spreading a very different message across the country. This message is now firmly establishing itself in our local area of Wirral including in St Anne's, Rock Ferry.

Sheffield, where the movement was founded, became the UK's first City of Sanctuary in 2007 and Cities of Sanctuary are now to be found across all of the UK and Ireland. City of Sanctuary holds the vision that our nations will be welcoming places of safety for all and proud to offer sanctuary to people fleeing violence and persecution.

Supported by the umbrella organisation City of Sanctuary UK, the movement has grown to include includes villages, towns, regions, libraries and museums, and most encouragingly of all - schools. There are now 25 schools across Wirral who have worked towards and been awarded the status of 'School of Sanctuary', including we are proud to say - St Anne's Primary School, Rock Ferry our own parish

school. The infant and junior schools of our sister parish St John's, New Ferry are also now Schools of Sanctuary.

To gain the award the schools need to **Learn, Embed and Share** the message of sanctuary. To Learn about refugees and asylum seekers, their stories and the need for welcome. To Embed a culture of welcome and inclusion among their pupils and families, not only for any refugee families joining the school but also for anyone who needs support and welcome for whatever reason. And finally, to Share the message of kindness and welcome at school, at home and in the community, in whatever way they can.

Shortly before lockdown began a group of children from St Anne's School with some of their teachers, joined members of five other schools at Birkenhead Town Hall. There they shared some of their work about welcoming refugees, introduced by the council's Multicultural Ethnic Achievement Service (MEAS) who support the schools towards the award. A special guest speaker from Cities of Sanctuary UK congratulated them all before each school was presented with its School of Sanctuary Award by the Mayor and Mayoress.

Well Done St Anne's!

Submitted by Lay Member

<https://stannes.wirral.sch.uk/>

## Little Amal

### A Little Girl on a Long Journey

A story and a journey that some *Holy Family* members may enjoy following is soon to begin. It is that of Little Amal – a young refugee girl who will begin a journey from the Syria-Turkey border in late July, that will see her travel nearly 5,000 miles, to finish her journey with celebrations in a park in Manchester.

Amal may seem familiar to lucky Merseysiders who enjoyed visits in recent years from the ‘Giants’ – because Little Amal is a puppet. She stands nearly 12 feet tall and her walk, crossing many borders, represents the journeys of so many refugees and asylum seekers forced to flee their homes because of war or persecution. Many refugees are children, often children travelling alone, and Little Amal walks tall to highlight their struggles.

Along the way, she will be met by people of many countries, welcoming her and hearing her message on behalf of all displaced children ‘Don’t forget about us.’ It is a privilege for the UK – and a timely and necessary message for our country too - to have Little Amal finish her journey with us. Look out for Amal in the news between July and November on her journey, to be known as ‘The Walk’, and perhaps she will be a reminder for us all to pray for the refugees, asylum seekers and the children she is walking for.



If you are online and want to follow Little Amal's journey this is the link:

<https://www.walkwithamal.org/>

From a Lay Member

Since this article  
was written  
Little Amal has met  
Pope Francis.

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/43010>



Photo: Sarah Loader



## Holy Family Sisters Remembered as they leave the task to others

*Sr. Catherine (Unit Leader) shares with us some of the events that took place to mark the departure of the sisters from Leeds, Bradford and Woodford Green*

On Monday, 13<sup>th</sup> of September, Mass was celebrated by Bishop Marcus Stock, Leeds. He was joined by Fr Sean Crawley, the Bishop's Secretary, Fr Pat Wall PP Crossgates, and Fr Michael Hughes PP Bradford.

The bishop wore the Pectoral Cross used by Bishop John Briggs on the arrival of Sisters to the Diocese of Beverley in 1853. Leeds Diocese was only formed in 1878. He also told

them they were the first Religious Congregation in the Diocese after the Reformation.



On Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup>, Catherine and Margaret (Muldoon) had a prayer with both communities to mark the closing. A framed picture at the front of the altar contains a list of the names of deceased Sisters from Mount St Marys and Crossgates. It will go to Rock Ferry to be placed on the wall outside the Chapel.



Sr. Sheila,  
Fr. Pat Wall (Crossgates),  
Fr. Michael (Bradford)

On Friday 17<sup>th</sup>, Catherine, Margaret, Lucilla and Maria joined the Woodford Community for their closing prayer.

On Sunday the 19<sup>th</sup>, Mass was celebrated in the Parish Church in Woodford Green, livestreamed so we were all able to join in spirit.



### Words addressed to the parishioners

We are sad that the sisters are finally leaving our parish this week. So today, the 11.30 Mass will be offered in thanksgiving for what they have done for us. They came to Woodford some years before St Thomas' parish and church existed. They provided for Parkmore primary school, and St Mary's girls' Grammar School until this combined with St Paul's secondary modern to form Trinity.

They provided teachers and head-teachers for St Antony's until living memory. Times changed. Catholic education had been the preserve of religious orders when nobody else was doing it. Gradually you – the Lay Church - have taken it over and we religious have moved to other concerns.

It was not only school education that the sisters provided. They have been active in many roles in the parish, caring quietly for any manner of needy. They have prayed in their common life and with their Associates. They are among the giants of recent generations on whose shoulders we stand. We thank them heartily.

Now their task passes to you.

## Eco-News



As we know, the World Day of Prayer for Creation is now a significant day in our Catholic calendar, having been formally designated as such by Pope Francis in 2015. In 2019, the Pope urged Catholics to observe the full Season of Creation from 1 September to 4 October, the feast of St. Francis. It is a time for us to become more aware of the condition of our common home, to pray and motivate one another to ongoing action.

Environmental disasters around the globe this summer, from which our islands were not exempt, and the stark report of the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change), published in August, are irrefutable evidence of the need for drastic action if we are to save our beautiful earth for future generations. It is

everyone's task. We cannot rely on governments, or those in power who have vested interests, to act unless they are constantly challenged by the general population.

An American pastor, Max Lucado said, "No one can do everything, but everyone can do something".

One thing we can all do, and many have already done it, is sign the petition to COP26 Leaders urging them to take the steps needed to stop a sixth mass extinction on our planet.

Link: <https://thecatholicpetition.org/>

Please share the link with as many people as you can.

**Read all about it:** Newspaper is one of the easiest materials to recycle. Every time you recycle a pile of newspapers a metre high you save a tree from the chop.



*From 1001 Ways you can save the Planet, by Joanna Yarrow*



UPCOMING EVENTS

OCTOBER	
Friday, 1st	International Day of the Older Peron
Tuesday, 5th	World Habitat Day
Saturday, 16 <sup>th</sup>	World Fod Day
Sunday, 17th	Povrety Eradication Day
Monday, 18 <sup>th</sup>	EU Anti Human TraffickingDay
Sunday, 24 <sup>th</sup>	Wor;ld Mission Sunday
Wednesday, 27 <sup>th</sup>	Birthday of Pierre Bienvenu Noailles