

Keeping in Touch

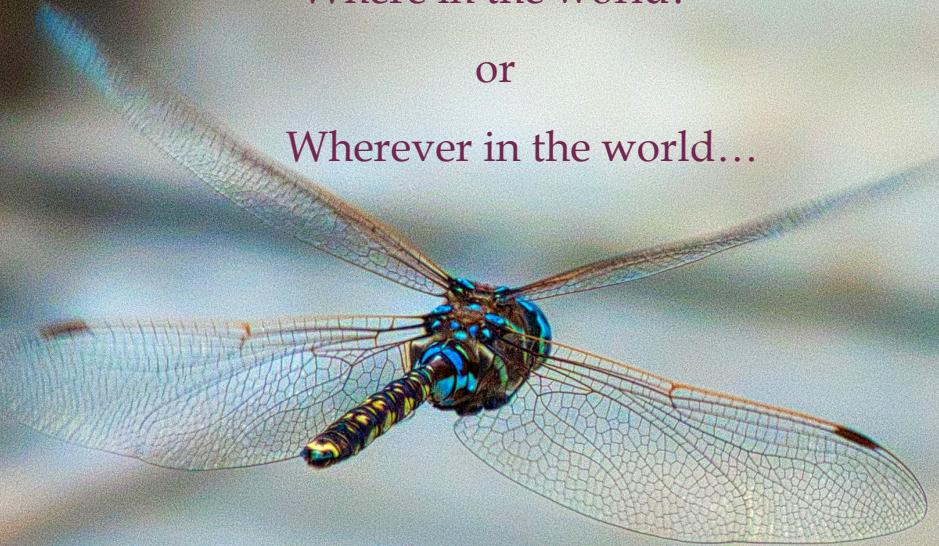
SSHJM



Where in the world?

or

Wherever in the world...



February 2021

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Editorial

We send you greetings from a very wintry and snow covered Chigwell. The ‘beast from the east’ is what we call this cold snap but to tell you the truth, staying inside is now what we are all used to, and we have adapted to what a year ago would have felt like imprisonment. The delayed Chapter has given us extra time to reflect with and to get to know Fr. Selvam who will facilitate the Chapter.

This edition is a little smaller than usual but packed with interesting articles and reflections from our young and older sisters, both near and far. We always have something to celebrate and our jubilarians give us many examples to be proud of who we are as well as the opportunity to reflect on the good and not so good in our lives.

Zambia, such a young country seems to move from graduation to graduation (that is a boast not a complaint). Some of the busiest of our sisters have taken the time and effort to tell us what is happening.

The pandemic hopefully will soon be under some semblance of control with the vaccinations which we pray will be for the whole world not just for some of the more fortunate among us in the richer countries.

Let us know what is happening where you are—we love to
Keep In Touch.

Anne,

Reflection for Ash Wednesday - 2021

When you give alms, do so in secret. When you pray, go to your room or find a secluded place where surely your Father in Heaven will find you. When you fast, do so with joy. This is how we are greeted through the Gospel reading of today. God is telling us he will seek us out and find us in the place where we are, in the place where we desire to be totally, sent in prayer or in quiet acts of generosity.

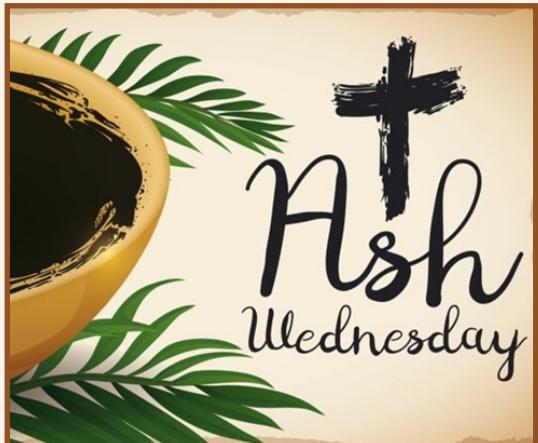
This Ash Wednesday you hear Jesus ask us to be in a quiet place to pray to the God who loved us into being and wants to spend time with us. There we open our souls and Jesus promises God will surely see us there. There is no need for words, but perhaps some of us need a jumpstart to lead us back into the Gospel story. The sentiments of your loving heart have drawn you to this moment to just be in God's loving presence. With the psalmist you may find yourself opening this precious time of silence with God praying: "Lord, I am here! I long to do your will. I long to see your face. Oh God, you are my God for you I long. My entire being pines for you".

The next action of today's Gospel is the giving of alms. It is good to take something from one's budget and hand it to the homeless on our streets, but the needs of refugees huddled in icicle trimmed tents, families at borders of European, Asian and American countries all clamour for freedom, for a livelihood, for healthcare, even just for food and clean water. Human Trafficking is an issue that has caught the attention of our minds and hearts. All these issues are people calling to us to hear their pleas which in many cases call for a significant donation. Maybe where you are other needs come to mind. We cannot meet them all and are grateful that as a Congregation together we are able to do something. However, there is more to almsgiving than the money angle. We can be almsgivers individually by providing the service of our skills be it writing to advocate for others or by lending a hand. Our KIT quarterly magazine over the years has revealed photos and stories of our Sisters and Companions in action in all the nine countries where we are present, planting crops, teaching ecologically friendly use of fuels, working in clinics and schools for the poor, for the disabled and

marginalized, volunteering at soup kitchens and accompanying lonely shut-ins of our neighborhoods and parishes. The current pandemic makes it more challenging but, nevertheless, we have all found ways to be present and supportive while wearing our masks.

Finally, there is fasting. To deprive oneself with mindfulness in the moment of longing is a discipline that reaches one's soul if done for love. To fast in the traditional way from food is good but to fast from the quick, unkind word is better. To fast from gossip from judgmental thoughts that lead to unkind words is even better. Fasting from viewing a favourite TV show, a book whose next chapter you are dying to read and to fill the time with a generous action like calling a lonely parishioner or neighbour, dropping them a note, offering a word of encouragement to the Sisters with whom you live are actions that bring joy to our hearts and to the Heart of God.

Today we received the Ashes “sprinkled” upon our heads in the ancient form once again in use this year because of Covid 19. Ash represents completion. No more energy can be extracted. Life has been burned away, destruction is complete. Lent, beginning with administration of ashes, marks entrance to a time that is stark and bare, marked by themes of penance, mortification, sorrow and pain. It is a time to begin to remember the sorrow Jesus experienced, first in rejection by all but a few disciples, his arrest, scourging, walk to Calvary and Crucifixion. In prayer we walk with Jesus, hear him again tell us to wash one another's feet in humble service. Ash Wednesday brings us back to basics and opens the door to Lent, the pathway to Easter.



Sister Kathleen Laverty

God Presence

I am with you always, yes, until the end of time. Mt C28:20.

Today no matter where we live, we exist under the dark, life threatening cloud of Covid19. The majority of us either knows of someone who is infected, or a person who has died of Covid19. We thought some years ago that AIDS was bad and yes, in the first few years of the AIDS illness when we did not fully understand how it was acquired or spread it was a big worry. AIDS is still a massive health problem throughout the world but thanks to research and advances in medical care, people living with AIDS can enjoy a good quality of life, if they follow the medical advice and treatment appropriate for them. Of course that is if the person lives where the medication and medical expertise is available to them.

The Covid19 virus, thought to be closely related to the AIDS virus, is still in-part a mystery even to scientists, as it has only been with us for approximately 16 months. It is much more transmissible, is rapid and aggressive in its attack, for many progressing to death within days or hours after showing signs of infection. Statistics are alarming of deaths all-over the world. It is amazing that the more developed countries appear to be the worst affected. We thank God that a vaccine has been discovered which we hope and pray will bring the disease under control very soon.

Daily we hear of guidelines repeated over the media from the Ministry of Health to be observed to protect us from becoming infected and infecting others with Covid19 and it usually ends with “and stay at home” Yes we heed these guidelines and stay at home only venturing out when necessary wearing our face mask and carrying hand sanitizer. God has protected us so far and we trust that He will continue to do so.

When a person close to us succumbs to the virus our anxiety levels heighten and we ask why? In these moments the phrase “stay at

home” echoes in my mind and I ask myself where our real home is? Our journey here is on earth is leading us to our heavenly home where we believe we will be with God “enjoying the beatific vision” But His promise in Matthew C28:10 is ‘I am with you always” should sustain us in these very anxious times of trying to understand what the new norm means for us. Covid19 has brought almost to a stand still much of what we thought was progress and necessary for development, like air travel. But today it has been reduced by approximately 80% due to the pandemic and is a risk factor in spreading the infection. We had become a world of meetings and gatherings considered so necessary to develop and celebrate but today such events are almost a criminal offence because of Covid19. Zoom has replaced to some extend such meetings but the personal touch is missing which is vital for good personal relationship building. Does this mean all is doom and gloom for us?

This period of Covid19 may be a time for us to evaluate what is really important to us on our journey towards eternal life. God has not left us orphans, “I will not leave you orphansbecause I live you will live also” Jn. C14:18. As we pray our morning offering each day may we be strengthened in hope and faith, to go forward in these troubled times with renewed zeal to live a life of loving service and reconciliation, deepening our relationship with God and each other. We can only serve in the space where we live but, like St Theresa, we can be missionary in spirit, interceding for leaders to seek God’s guidance in their plans to have a unity of purpose in ruling so that God’ love and justice will reign, bringing true peace and happiness to all.

We Meet God in the Now.

I was regretting the past
and fearing the future:
Suddenly my Lord was speaking
My Name is I AM

He paused
I waited.
He continued
When you live in the past
With its mistakes and regrets,
Life is hard.
I am not there.

My name is not I WAS

When you live in the future,
With its problems and fears,
Life is hard.
I am not there.

My name is not I WILL BE.

When you live in this moment
Life is not hard.
Life is an opportunity
I am here
I love here.
I love you.
I take delight in you.

I give you an abundance
Of what you need
To respond lovingly
To every opportunity

My name is I AM

Sister Elizabeth Mooney

MY EXPERIENCE IN BAULENI SPECIAL NEEDS PROJECT LUSAKA.ZAMBIA

"Our spirit is one of humility, simplicity and devotion, qualities that enable us to search together for new ways to bring Christ to all".

It is a privilege to be able to share my experience in Bauleni Special Needs Project. In Det 6:4 God calls me to love with all my soul and strength and to keep this love in my heart, hence my experience of apostolate has been that of responding to this love of God by working in the project and being with people who are in need of care.

I have worked in Bauleni for nine months and worked in different departments. First I worked in Skills and IGA's office working with one of our workers, Gladys, who has helped me to know what activities take place in Bauleni Special Needs Project e.g. food shop, bakery, hammer-mill and farm. It was a good experience because I had to learn how to enter things on the computer and all data from shop, bakery, farm etc. I was given the responsibility of giving out things for bakery, store room and making sure that everything ran well.

After two months I was moved to the hammermill to help in collecting and recording money, I enjoyed working there and I learnt how to deal with



different people and personalities and also how to welcome the customers.

From the hammermill I was given the opportunity to work in the finance office. It was not so easy at first because I had to learn a lot of things including the terminology used in accounting, but after some time I was used to the system. In the finance office I was given also the responsibility of writing receipts, imprests and petty cash. I was taught also how to enter imprests on the computer as well as going to the bank with the accounts clerk to deposit or withdraw funds.



I thank Mr. Peter Ngulube the finance manager and Valentine Mupinde the account clerk for their great patience with me.



The experience has helped me to improve in writing imprests in the community and I now know more about our project in Bauleni. I had time also to attend the workshops on child protection and time to interact with children, sitting with them and listening to their stories. I tried to be with them even if I was not giving them anything but just my presence.

I see my experience in reference to St Paul to the Philippians 2:1-11 in which Paul calls us to participate in the spirit of Christ to sympathise with the afflicted having the same love of Christ and to count others better than myself. This experience has taught me to reduce myself to the level of others in humility just as Christ who though he was in form of God did not count equality with God but reduced himself to the level of humanity.

With love I extend my gratitude to all who supported me especially my Sisters in Nyumba Yanga community, the members of staff in Bauleni and all the Sister of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. Your generosity and support is very much appreciated. I cannot end without thanking Sister Mary Mangan our Congregation leader and Sister Yvonne Mwila unit leader /Project Director for giving me this good opportunity which has helped me.

God bless you all.
Sr Christabel Machisa



Sister Christabel, along with her companions, Sisters Cecilia, Beatrice and Mary Gorreth renewed their vows on February the 1st. We take this opportunity to congratulate them and to assure them of our continued prayer support.

21st Graduation Bauleni Special Needs Project

On the 12th December 2020, Bauleni Special Needs Project held their 21st Graduation, when 133 graduates received their certificates. This was a large number because for a number of reasons, particularly Covid19, the graduation ceremonies did not take place a few times. All 133 graduates were not present but the good news was many are in employment and were unable to attend. Certificates were given for; Food Production 59, General Agriculture 37, Tailoring and Design 21, and Carpentry & Joinery 16.



From the initiation of the courses at Bauleni Special Needs Project (BSNP) the graduates always received a certificate which was good. At first it was a certificate declaring that they had completed the course but it was not recognised within the Ministry of Education. Having it, many students were able either to get employment or it helped them to go on to do further training. But today, thanks to the interest of the Management of BSNP in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, the certificate is now recognised within the Ministry of Education and is of far greater importance for people when seeking employment or for accessing higher studies.

As usual it was a joyful, celebratory day for all present. It was also a very busy day for the management staff as the examination papers for Grade 9 (State exams) were being delivered to be stored in the strong room, which meant the head teacher was fully occupied and unable to be present for the ceremony. BSNP has a secure room,

known as the strong room, which is used each year by the Ministry of Education as a storage and a distribution point for the schools in the area at examination time. It is the responsibility of the head teacher at BSNP to supervise the delivery of the boxes and to be present when the teachers from the surrounding schools collect their papers and to accept them again once the examination is done.

Some BSNP senior staff who are upgrading their qualifications were sitting examinations so they were also absent, but that did not dampen the atmosphere for the graduates as they had been informed where their tutors and supervisors were and they understood. Sister Elizabeth Mooney and Sister Christabel with the five novices represented the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. Mrs. Esther Tembo deputy Head Teacher of Bauleni Special Needs School represented the Ministry of Education.

The hall had been very beautifully decorated for the occasion, the staff and other students provided some enjoyable entertainment, in the form of a cultural song and dance in which Sr. Christabel took part.

The Master of Ceremonies for the morning had the ability to maintain order and follow correct procedures to give the occasion the formal atmosphere it merits and at the same with his jovial banter at appropriate moments added a spirit of joy and laughter to the occasion making it truly a celebration.

Sr. Elizabeth Mooney congratulated the students on their success in obtaining the certificate but reminded them that knowledge alone was not enough to gain success. Good implementation of the skills they had learned coupled with a right attitude to work and building good relationships in the work place would earn them success and respect. She reminded them that today the business world is highly competitive and at times operates in a harsh environment, but she felt confident that they had been given the necessary guidance and skills during the training, equipping them to succeed.

Light refreshments were provided for all once the ceremony was over.

The certificates were given to the graduates but without the handshake and hugs from the family members due to the Covid19 restrictions. Also only one school photographer was allowed but not surprisingly the odd phone camera was spotted during the giving of the certificates.



Back to the clinic

California style!



Above Sister Kathleen Laverty in one of her rare working days at the clinic. Sister Kathleen usually works from home doing online consultations with her clients. Here she is pictured with the clinic Administrator. We thank God that she, Kathleen, has received the vaccination and the clinic hopes to take part in the vaccination programme soon. We also give thanks for their generous help and pray that they keep safe these days. California has very high rates of the Covid 19 virus.

On Hearing of Palliative Care



'We are very sorry, there is no more active treatment that we can offer you, we are referring you for palliative care.' These can be frightening words, even when they are not totally unexpected.

We are all fragile human beings and illness in its many guises can visit us uninvited at any age. Modern medicine has made wonderful advances offering cure or comfort to an increasing number of illnesses. Ethical medical research continues to expand offering a better quality of life to many who suffer. Sadly, cure is not always possible, and in such situations, compassionate care is a fleshing out of the Gospel where Jesus reaches into the heart of all who suffer with the touch and words of comfort, wholeness and peace

The sick person needs to know that their voice is heard at every stage of their illness and in a particular way when they have reached a palliative stage of their journey. Many but not all wish to be told

the truth about their condition by their doctors and the manner in which this news is delivered is important. A private meeting where the sick person may have the company and support of a loved one needs to be set up where the sick person, clinician and their advocate can speak openly and honestly about their concerns, fears and hopes for the future. Some may wish to be on their own with their doctor and nurse and this too needs to be respected.

Many ask families and staff to listen to and honour their wishes at this most critical time. Some may wish to ask what medical and nursing care will be made available to them and is it realistic? What are the cost implications and if so, who pays? Will the person be able to continue to live at home or is admission to Nursing Home or Hospice necessary? They may need help to put financial or legal affairs in order and may need the support of a Social Worker and Solicitor to do this. All will wish to be kept comfortable and every effort undertaken to keep pain or distressing symptoms at bay.

Depending on the nature and stage of illness, the person may have a list of wishes that they would like to enjoy while they are able. A chapter of a book may need to be completed, a favourite place visited or a grand-child welcomed into the family. Some may wish to celebrate their marriage to their partner or attend a child's wedding. Reconciliations with family or others may be necessary before the person is able to complete their journey on earth and every effort needs to be made to help them to achieve this desire.

The search for meaning in their illness will continue, all the stages of loss and grief, like anger, denial and bargaining will bubble up at different or maybe unexpected times. The person and family

throughout this journey need sensitive, compassionate understanding and support so that acceptance and peace can finally be found. The cultural and faith norms of the person and family must be respected and honoured. Where an active faith is present, the presence of a minister of religion and the reception of the Sacrament of the Sick or other ritual can be a source of healing and comfort for the person and family, enabling them to surrender their lives in peace to the God who is calling them home.

Many wish to plan their funeral liturgy, both in its content, place and meaning, and the celebration of their life and these wishes should be given respect.

‘Palliative care accompanies the sick person and their family on this final journey, whether the care is at home, in a hospice or hospital.’

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60 Years On-the-go

February 2021

In Herne Bay, Sister Angela Burke celebrated her Diamond Jubilee (60 years) but she is not slowing down! Sister Angela keeps herself busy with her Hospital Chaplaincy work.

She has been chaplain to Canterbury Hospital for the past six years' She visits several wards twice a week. This photograph was taken in the Dialysis unit. The unit is very large, and each patient has to come for dialysis three times a week for four hours at a time. The patients are very friendly and love her visits.

She chats with them and prays with them if they so wish.

It is rare that a patient would refuse prayers. Unfortunately, she is not allowed to visit the hospital at the moment because of the Corona virus.



Sister Angela would like to thank everyone for their prayers, masses, gifts and good wishes on the occasion of her Diamond Jubilee. She is very touched and grateful for your kindness and thoughtfulness. She is having Holy Mass offered for you all.

Jubilee Celebrations in Marian House

On the 2nd February, we celebrated the Platinum Jubilee of Sister Dorothea and the Diamond Jubilee of Sister Ellen.

Despite the fact that we were very restricted, we made the most of the day and I think it is true to say it was enjoyed by all!

Our day began with a zoom Mass celebrated by Father Tony Cornforth. It was extra special because we were able to include Sister Angela who was also making her Diamond Jubilee in Herne Bay. In addition, the Sisters from Pield Heath were also able to participate. Being able to unite online helped to bring us much closer together. Father gave a lovely talk and we were able to renew our Vows together. What was extra special was the fact that Sr Dorothea was well enough to attend the whole of the Mass and she thanked everyone afterwards!

We were also greeted by Sister Rosemary earlier in the morning and Sisters Julie and Janet greeted us through the window during dinner! We really look forward to the day when we shall all be able to meet in person and have a real celebration!!



We enjoyed a lovely lunch (socially distanced of course) and again it was a great joy that Dorothea was able to be with us.

In the afternoon we had a film about Fatima, this brought back happy memories for many of the sisters watching.

It really was a day of joy and we made the best of it. Sisters Dorothea and Ellen were delighted with all the lovely greetings they received and also for the lovely flowers from the Leadership Team. It all helped to make the day very special for our jubilarians. They would like to thank you for all your kindness and we ask the Lord to bless you all.



Across the sea to Jubilee Celebrations in Cork

Sister Gabriel of the Dolours celebrated her Platinum Jubilee in Cork

The day started with a special morning prayer for Sister Gabriel.

Mass was celebrated online with the Dominicans, who gave her great notice.

Sister Gabriel was joined by the Sisters in Cork for a lovely meal followed by the cutting of her Jubilee cake.

Evening prayer was with Bishop Fintan Gavin, the Bishop of Cork and they were also joined by the Poor Clare Sisters who had their novices with them.





Adios Juanita R.I.P.

We received the sad news recently that our dear old friend Juanita has gone to the Lord.

For any of you who have had the privilege to live in or visit El Salvador, you will know that Juanita has been very much a part of our history there since the very beginning.

Juanita was married to Marcos and both had special educational needs. They lived in Tamanique and were a marginalised targeted couple who were treated with derision and violence by most of the town's folk, especially the children. They lived in a hole or cave like excavation where they had to crawl to get in but at least it was a place they felt safe.

The children threw stones at them and they, in turn, reciprocated with great accuracy, this situation took a lot of time, education of both groups and a great deal of advocacy by the sisters to change. Slowly the community came round to a more compassionate way of accepting both Juanita and Marcos as a part of the community and the couple blossomed into cheerful, contented persons who were helpful to all around.

On the Sisters arrival they set about getting a house built for them but due to the vulnerability of their situation they were unable to stay there long.

Sister Barbara organised for a local woman, Nubia's mother, to allow them to stay with her and for many years paid for their keep.

Barbara asked Juanita and Marcos to come to the convent every morning to do a simple job of sweeping the yard and in that way they were able to feel that they were working for their living. They also had their breakfast and received their wages daily as budgeting was difficult and theft was always a risk. That gave them enough to buy a simple lunch and 'pupusas' for dinner (always with a coke or Fanta).

Juanita considered Sister Barbara as her mother and in fact called her 'mammy'.

Marcos died several years ago but Juanita carried on as usual. Then when we were leaving Tamanique, Barbara organised that Juanita be cared for in a Home for the elderly and there the Congregation sent monthly donations for Juanita as the Home is run on charity.

Sister Dayssi took on the role of visiting Juanita monthly and was sure to have a special little gift for her each time. Of course, Juanita was very popular in the Home and at first was able to help in small ways.

Juanita's life was simple and although for many years she lived a miserable life, she was not embittered by the violence but was transformed by the love and care that she received from Marcos, her husband, by the Sisters in Tamanique and they in turn gave example to the larger community who responded and accepted the poorest of the poor among them as a loved sister and brother.



Editorial Team:
Sr. Anne Griffin, Mrs Emma Shaw & Sr. Barbara Dundon
Chigwell Convent,
803 Chigwell Road, Woodford Bridge IG8 8AU
Tel/Fax: 020 8506 0359
Email: communications@sacredheartsjm.org

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