

Keeping in Touch

SSHJM



September 2023

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Photo on front cover; Sisters Rosemary and Bernadette with Father Victor Braun's vestment

A Word from the Editor

Dear Sisters, Sacred Heart Companions and Friends,

In this edition we put a great focus on the 'fruits of our labour' i.e. the senior Sisters in Marian House here in the U.K. and in Cork, Ireland. In both houses we see how our senior Sisters are loved and cared for. This special ministry has always been of great importance to us.

Today's multi-cultural ministry remains ever changing and yet often the same as we witness with two of our younger members reaching out to persons with special needs. Indeed, Sister Mary Lesa in Pield Heath School has a long history to build on in the PH school which was first established by Mother Winefride Tyrrell in 1902 (P.10). These callings to 'special people' are being responded to also in other countries and continents and we congratulate Sr. Sylvia Mulenga for her graduation as teacher in the field out in Zambia and Uganda (P.24).

Sometimes we forget little parts of the past and recently Sr. Bernadette discovered the vestments of Father Victor Braun in the sacristy in Chigwell. A quick word with Sister Rosemary Clerkin and the history unfurls P. 30.

Another little surprise was the donation of a stamp collection and, having monetary value, our Treasurer Sister Elizabeth Dawson quickly appeared on the scene.

I am desperately looking for a few more photos for the calendar as it is really time to print them. It is always a priority to show how we express our charism, so please do get out with your cameras or phones and send me in a few pics please. No need to dress up .

Coming up to October and the feast of St. Margaret Mary we remember to pray for all our Novices.

With love and prayers to you all

Anne

Refreshed look, Peaceful Atmosphere, Tender Care. Marian House 2023.



Marian House was officially opened on the 11th February 1988 in response to the increasing care needs of our Sisters. Cardinal Hume said Mass and blessed the Home on 19th May 1988. It is registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC). In a recent favourable inspection



report, residents stated that they are well cared for by polite, friendly, well-trained staff. Staff are supervised by Kemi Ola Care Manager who ensures that the quality of care is continually reviewed and kept to a high standard by having all staff trained according to CQC standards. Kemi is conscientious in attending all meetings for Care Home Managers arranged by the Local Health authority, so she is fully aware of the standards required to deliver good quality care. She implements these standards in the Home by training the care staff in all aspects of care and she supervises the quality of care daily. Good teamwork by Kemi with Pam our profession administrator, Dagmawit Shitaye finance person and the Sisters in St Mary's Community (also within Marian House complex), ensure that the standards are well maintained, and all are committed to this level of care and to improve it if and when necessary.



A new entrance has been created for visitors of the lay residents to allow a little more privacy for the Sisters.



Sister Ellen enjoying the newly decorated foyer with Kemi, our Care Manager and Sister Mary Ita.

Marian House is situated close to Hillingdon NHS Hospital which offers residents immediate care in times of acute illness. There is good collaboration with the local G.P. Services, Palliative Care teams and other specialized medical personnel to ensure the maximum care for every resident. The Claretian Missionary Fathers of Hayes parish provide chaplaincy care at Marian House completing a holistic care package for the residents.

From my distant memory I recall hearing the plans for Marian House been discussed by Sister Oliver and the then Leadership Team. It is thanks to them that today we have a suitable well-planned facility to care for our Sisters and others who need care.

Originally only religious Sisters from our own congregation and Sisters from other religious congregations were cared for at Marian House. But with the building of Sacred Heart Convnet in Ireland, many Sisters retired back to Ireland we have been able to open the doors of Marian



The chapel has a new streaming system which allows sisters to receive good online Mass services which are also streamed to all the rooms in the house.

House to women needing the care we provide. Each person seeking admission to Marian House is assessed by Kemi, the Care Manager, to ensure we can provide the care that individual requires to live life to the

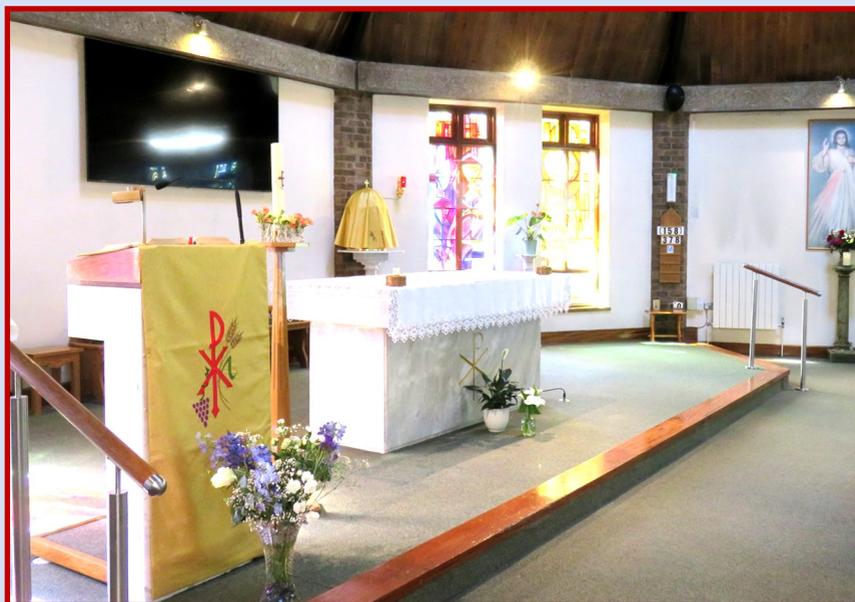


Staff are enjoying giving good quality care and residents being cared for.

full.

It is a joy to see the Sisters and the ladies all enjoy spending time in the chapel, having their meals together and participating in recreational activities. All residents, and their families, know that they are coming into a Christian atmosphere at Marian House and the response from all who have either come in to be cared for or to visit are in admiration of their experience. The friendly welcome with soft music in the foyer, the comfortable bedrooms with a pleasant view of the gardens, the quiet of the chapel to just sit and ponder are appreciated. Recent touches like the change of furniture in the foyer, freshly decorated rooms contribute to the joy and comfort of Marian House.

The atmosphere and care provided at Marian House aptly fulfils our Acts of Chapter (9) in that we provide a quality of care for those entrusted to our care “that is person-centred, holistic, contemplative and life giving”.



The chapel with large TV screen which links to all rooms.



Activities board to remind everybody what is happening and when.



Pam, our MH administrator is certainly kept very busy and happy in her office always ready with a welcoming smile

My Experience in Pielt Heath Special School



I would like to share my experience from the time I joined Pielt Heath House School.

First and foremost, I wish to give glory to God for making all things possible and allowing me to be in this school. On January 16th 2023 I joined class 3W which had seven students, two classroom assistants, and one teacher. It was a joyful and warm welcome that I received from the staff. Many of them helped me

understand new ways of doing things, both around the school and in the classroom. It was a big change because coming from a different background, (Zambia) we do things differently but I was delighted with the opportunity. The first two weeks settling in were challenging - a new environment with different principles, ways of doing things, and ways of learning. At the same time, I got to know several students with different disabilities and learnt how to understand them, help and handle situations which were challenging for them and for me. However, with God nothing is impossible and where there is a will there is a way. It took me time to understand how the power of God was working in all its perplexing manners. Being in the school has enabled me to understand,

feel, and learn how to care for and listen to other people, especially children with different disabilities. Furthermore, being positive whenever possible allows me to believe that I can accomplish more each day.

They are children of different religions, homes, and backgrounds, some with sad faces and some with and happy faces. Hence, these are the children who need my love, support, and time. Just to be with them and sharing a smile can transform them. All these experiences enable me to ponder and thank God for the compassion and love that He has for them and me. Every day we come together as a family, we share laughter, joy, happiness, sadness, and time. I believe and trust that we are related and connected through the divine God who is the maker of heaven and the earth. Saint Francis of Assisi expressed this idea in his Canticle of the Sun, speaking of "Brother Sun" and "Sister Moon", "Brother Fire" and "Sister Water." What I have received as a gift, I give as a gift, and I will find the original gift multiplied and enhanced. God's grace, precisely because it is a grace, cannot be held on to, rather, it is held only in the measure that it remains grace, that is to say, a gift given away. When I realize this truth then I enter willingly into the loop of grace, giving away that which I am receiving every day. For it is all about the love of Christ who calls us to follow him. Fr Victor Braun gives us another reminder by telling us that; "Only Two Things Matter Jesus Christ and the Poor"

I would like to thank all the staff who teach, guide, and support me in the experience that I am enjoying each day. Thank you, Lord, for the blessings you have bestowed on my life. You have provided me with more than I could ever have imagined. You have surrounded me with people who always look out for me.

Sister Mary Lesa

Platinum Jubilees

Cork

1953- 2023

Three Platinum Jubilarians

= 210 years of vowed life

dedicated to

Jesus Christ and the poor.



Sister Mary Sarto



Sister Mary Austin



Sister Bridget Ryan



Sister Mary Sarto



Born in 1932 in Dungarvan, Co. Waterford. With both Sisters Austin and Bridget, she first professed Vows in 1953 and made Final Vows in 1956. Sarto trained as a teacher and quickly developed a passion working with and for the poor. The relationships made with students and staff have endured over decades with

some past students of Mount Olivet, where she was in the sixties, still writing to her. After M. Olivet she spent some time in Zimbabwe (then Southern Rhodesia) and in Scotland. Sarto, who was always involved in social justice, was asked to train as a Social Worker for the work with mothers and babies in Cork, Ireland. She helped develop the adoption process and improved living standards for many unmarried mothers over several years, involving the Dept' of Education, FAS, VEC, and other groups. During this time her interests spread, and she became involved with supporting victims of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster. She has always continued her academic studies to respond to the needs around her and has degrees and diplomas in abundance. Environmental issues and Care for Creation have always been great passions of Sarto and many successful projects evolved. So many were her works and initiatives that she was awarded Cork Person of the Year in 1987. That was not the end of her many projects, she kept on going and even now has to be encouraged to *'put her feet up'* maybe in her own meditation garden!



Above top: Sister Bridget McCourt, Sister Sarto and Sister Laura

Below: Sister Brigid Finn and Sister Elizabeth Mooney (left)



Sister Bridget Ryan,
Sister Mary Sarto
and Sister Mary
Austin. The three
Platinum jubilarians
- once more
renewing their vows
and remain fully
committed after 70
years!



Below; Heidi and Molly join in
the congratulations of their
great aunt Sarto.



Above; We brought Sarto's sister,
Birdie, from her Care Home to
celebrate the big day.

Sister Mary Austin



Born in February 1935 in Athlone, Co Roscommon, Sister Austin entered the congregation in 1950 following in the footsteps of her elder sister Mary RIP. She made her first profession of Vows on August 28, 1953, and then went on to train as a teacher of English thus preparing for ministry wherever she was to be sent. Her teaching

ministry was varied in England, Scotland and in Zambia. She was adaptable and on leaving formal teaching, took up the management of a retirement home in Herne Bay. Always a woman for justice and speaking out for the oppressed, Sister Austin found herself volunteering in the ministry to Refugees, the poor, prisoners and the lonely. In the parishes she helped with the RCIA programmes and often the parishioners who came to the convent for instruction, became personal friends. In the congregation Sister Austin spent years researching, translating and catalogued over 500 letters of our Founder Father Victor Braun and promoted his cause for beatification. In the Recusant journal she published an important study on Father Braun's contribution to the development of the Church in England and Wales. The book *Sunsuntila* (the history of our Sisters in Zambia), was written by Austin in 2014 and is still a popular read for many young women discerning their vocation in the religious life. Now she is taking things a little easier here in Sacred Heart Convent Cork Taking more time for prayer and reflection.



“Give Thanks with a grateful Heart”

Left. Noel and Bernadette Sister Austin’s brother and sister. Behind them is Aggie sister of Sr. Bridget. Behind Sarto is Francis (pink shirt) Sr Bridget’ s nephew and to his left is Elsie, Heidi and Birdie; Sr. Sarto’s family.



Left: ‘Framed in flowers’ Sister Austin, Noel, Sister Margaret, and Bernadette



Above Sister Austin with her nephew and Left Sister Mary Jo and Sister Margaret doing the readings at mass

Sister Bridget Ryan



Born in 1934, so she's not very far from another great milestone; her 90th birthday. Her place of birth was Golden in Co. Tipperary and she certainly had 'golden red hair'. With both Sisters Austin and Sarto she Professed First Vows in 1953 and Final Vows in 1956 and she also went on to train as a teacher. Bridget loved her ministry in teaching in the Infants Department and was kind and gentle with the children and with the parents who placed great confidence in her. Her kindness and gifts for fun, art and crafts, and singing enriched all the communities where she lived in the U.K., California and in Ireland. On retiring from teaching (she was already living in California), Bridget decided to train as a Massage Therapist and offered her services to those who were unable to afford it, those who most needed and particularly persons with Special Needs. At this same time Bridget was involve in Parish Ministry in two parishes in California where she was greatly loved.

A great walker she loves to get out and enjoy the countryside. Bridget arrived back here in Ireland in 2015 to retire (again) and she quickly became involved in supporting the Alzheimer's society just next door!



Above; seated,
Sister Bridget with
her sister Aggie
with Francis and
Sarah behind.

Right; Bridget
and Aggie framed
in flowers and
making a pretty
picture.





Left: Sister Sheila and Sister Myra enjoying the flower frame as are Sister Nora and Sister Marian below



Above: Sister Mary Clare and Sister Celine and Right: Sister Mary M. (top) with Sister Catherine McLaughlin and Sister Julie

Rt: Sister Mary Jo and Sister Gerald, below Lt. Sister Shiela and Sister Ignatius. Below Rt. Father Aodhán and father Colin. Below middle: Sister Margaret , Sister Annie Mary and Sister Brigid





A blessing from Anim Cara: (read during the sermon.)

May the light of your souls mind you, may any worry or anxiety that you may have about becoming old be transfigured. Sisters, may you be given wisdom for the eye of your soul to see the beauty in this time of harvesting. May you have the commitment to harvest your life, to heal anything that was hurt in you, to allow it to come closer to you and become one with you as you name it, claim it and tame it. May you have great dignity, Sisters, may you have some sense of how free you are, and above all when the time comes, may you be given the wonderful gift of eternal light and beauty that is within you. May you be blessed and find a wonderful love in yourself and for yourself.

*Congratulations
Sisters Bridget, Austin and Sarto*

Service of Love - Special Education



As teachers of special education we work with students who have various learning disabilities, developmental delays, or physical disabilities. We try to ensure that students with disabilities receive the support they need to reach their full potential. If they can't learn through one method then we teach the way that they can easily understand . It was through my years of experience in our special school with learners with Special educational needs that ignited my interest in becoming a teacher of persons with special educational needs. One significant event happened

in 2018 when I was working with people with disabilities in Kasama. One of the students was Deaf and I found it very difficult to communicate with her. I also found that I couldn't understand others with disabilities. This challenged me to learn more about special education and therefore be of greater help to them and in my ministry as a whole. I wanted my ministry to be lifegiving. As they say “only a special teacher can hear what a child cannot say”.

In 2019 when I was asked to enroll for especial education and enrolled in the programme of ‘Business studies with Hearing impairment’. The was a distance learning course at Zambia Institute of Special Education (Zamise). I was delighted. Now my desire of becoming a

special education teacher was becoming a reality. I knew working and studying was not going to be easy for me, but I told myself that if other special education teachers managed then so could I. I can manage for the sake of that child with special needs.

My years of studies were not easy, for sure, especially the time when the world was fighting the Covid-19 pandemic and many things came to a stand-still. WE students were unable to attend the residential parts of the course which meant that the course was much longer than initially expected.



My experience in college was challenging because I felt that much more was expected from a ‘Sister’. Many other students think that a Sister knows everything in all courses. That is certainly not the case because even a sister has to learn. My experience in our Special schools did give me an advantage because I could relate what we were learning to the different disabilities that I had already seen. This

did make some of my learning easier.

Finally, my years of study came to an end in May, 2022 after writing my final examinations. The anxiety of waiting for results for more than nine months was another experience, especially when everyone is asking you when are you graduating and you do not know because the results are still with the University of Zambia (UNZA).



Whatever, goes up must come down! at last all-powerful master, on 1st September, 2023 I was among many other students who graduated at Zambia Institute of Special Education in Lusaka Zambia. Graduated in absentia with a Merit, I am now a confirmed Secondary teacher of Special Education. It was not easy it can only be through the help of God that I succeeded .

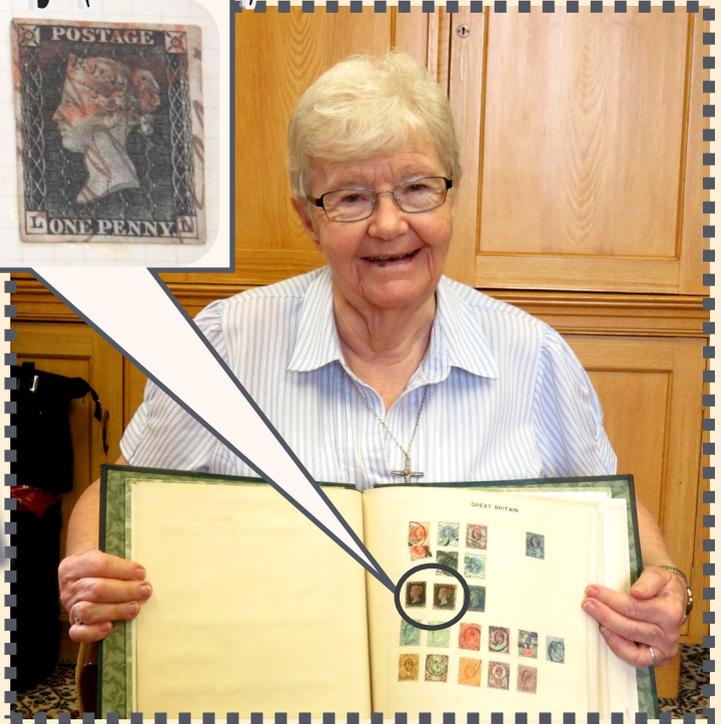
“The only disability in life is a bad attitude”. Students don’t care how much you

know but they do know how much you care.

I would like to extend my gratitude to the current leadership and the former leadership team for the opportunity given to me to study and to all our Sisters for their prayers and support. I am very grateful to God for the grace of perseverance, and I wish you all God’s blessings.

Sister Sylvia Mulenga Bwalya.

A Penny (or two) for the missions



A surprise call came through to Chigwell recently from a lady in the Parish. She heard that Sister Pierina collected stamps for the missions. The lady's husband had recently died and left a large stamp collection which she didn't want but she did want to donate them to help others. As she had met Sister Pierina she felt that Chigwell would be the ideal place to donate them.

Sister Elizabeth Dawson eagerly took up the offer and asked for a Stamp Dealer to value the collection. There are however, so many stamps that he was unable to accurately value them. BUT, on examination identified not one but two '**Penny Black**' stamps - these are extremely rare and quite valuable.

Now you can see that Sister Elizabeth is very happy at the thought of receiving a good donation for our missions. First things first - they must be kept in the safe and then have a proper evaluation.

Herzlichen Glückwunsch

Vienna Chapter of Elections 2023

General Councillors:

Sr. M. Andrzejka Ochman - 1st General Councillor and Vicar General

Sr. M. Adelinde Grandits - 2nd General Councillor

Sr. M. Margareta Štědroňová - 3rd General Councillor

Sr. M. Dorota Wrona - 4th General Councillor

Sr. M. Adelinde Grandits appointed as General Treasurer and

Sr. M. Monika Leimlehner confirmed in her position as Secretary General.



Congratulations



Victor Braun wrote to his Sisters: "I Send you my deepest blessing, which I draw for you from the heart of Jesus!"



Sr. M. Andrzejka, the new Vicar General



Sr. M. Margareta, Sr. M. Andrzejka, Sr. M. Damaris, Sr. M. Adelinde, Sr. M. Dorota

Hidden Treasure



SISTER ROSEMARY CLERKIN PICTURED WITH FATHER VICTOR BRAUN'S VESTMENT IN CHIGWELL CONVENT

Sister Isadore a Sister of Sister Arsene Murphy told this provenance of the vestment of Father Victor Braun to Sister Rosemary Clerkin many years ago when Sister Rosemary was a young Sister living in Mile End in the East End of London. There were three Murphy sisters from Clonmel in Tipperary, Sister Helen was the third.

Sister Arsene as a young Sister lived in Charolles at the same time as Mother Francis de Sales who was previously the Mother Provincial in Homerton and the second Superior General of the Sister Servants of the Sacred Heart. Mother Francis de Sales knew Father Victor Braun who founded the Charolle Community. Sister Arsene was a nurse there where they ran both an orphanage and a care Home. At this time poor Mother Francis de Sales was living as a member of the community. She ended her days working in the scullery peeling vegetables. The superiors were not happy at her poor use of finances when she was Provincial of the English Province. The result was that she put the whole Congregation into severe debt for many years.

When Sister Arsene was changed to Cardiff she took the vestment with her (probably because the community in Charolle was closing). Sister Arsene was asked to care for the 'poor sick' catholic families in Cardiff in the Bute Hospital (the Lord Ninian). The Bute family funded many of our convents in the early days. The hospital was small and inadequate for the many needs so Sr. Arsene raised funds for an improved hospital, also known as the Lord Ninian. This was soon also insufficient for the needs of the 'poor sick' of Cardiff and Sister Arsene once again raised funds for the new hospital St. Winifred's. Sister Arsene didn't transfer to St Winifred's as she had trained Mother Dymphna to be matron and she remained with Sister Patrick in the Lord Ninian.

Sister Patrick told Sister Rosemary Clerkin about the vestment and that is how it came to light. Later on Sister Etheldreda RMG brought the vestment to Chigwell Convent where it is cared for and only comes out on very special occasions.

Editorial Team:
Sr. Anne Griffin & Sr. Elizabeth Dawson
Chigwell Convent,
803 Chigwell Road,
Woodford Bridge IG8 8AU
Tel/Fax: 020 8506 0329
Email: communications@sacredheartsjm.org
www.sacredheartsjm.org

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