

Keeping in Touch

World meeting of families - Ireland



World Youth meeting - Panama

...New beginnings

...Meetings/looking back

....Celebrations of Life

February 2019

Contents	Page No
Editorial	3
Reception of New Aspirants	4
Lake Road Novitiate	6
Diamond Jubilee – Sr. Mary Clare	7
Prison Visit, Zambia	8
Zambia Unit Meeting	10
World Youth Gathering – Panama	12
Carol Singing – Dublin	16
Congratulations to St Anne’s School – Roscrea	18
The Way of the Monk	19
Sean Ross Abbey – Transformation	20
Pope Francis visits Knock	22
Sacred Heart Statue – Restored	24
Memories of a Childhood Christmas	26
Sister Margaret Healy RIP	30
Sister Mary Zita O’Brien RIP	32
Sister Alphonsus Manning RIP	34
Sister Teresa Maunsell RIP	36
Sister Margaret O’Leary RIP	37
Dates to Remember	38

Editorial

In this New Year of 2019 we certainly seem to move from one celebration to another. We thank God for those starting off in Religious Life as Candidates and then each initial stage after – we move on to Diamond Jubilees and then to the greatest celebration ever—that we here on earth have yet to see but four of our sisters have recently gone to heaven as have some of our family members. We have also celebrated with the Holy Father with Families in Ireland and with the world's Youth in Panama where Sr. Mervis joined with so many others throughout the world in dedicating themselves to the Lord as Mary did so long ago. Our young people in St Anne's Roscrea give great witness to Global Sustainable Development which won them an award. The older generation in Roscrea remind us of the importance of preserving the past in the restoration of Sean Ross Abbey. Finding and restoring the past is taking place also in Liverpool where the Sacred Heart has been given a new home and Sr Johanna Mary goes off to visit Him there. There are many projects carried out in the congregation and all demand generosity and funding – Mo O'Dwyer is a constant in fundraising in Dublin for our projects in Zambia (the cold is no obstacle). As we approach Lent and Easter we enter into times of prayer and reflection and please remember to share some of your reflections with the rest of us **Keep in Touch!**

Anne and Emma



Rejoice in the Lord for New life.....

On the 24th January, we had the Reception of two Aspirants Mary and Flaviour into the Candidacy program in Mbala Chapel. On the same day Sisters Lucy and Lucky renewed their Vows during mass. It was such a joyous time for us. We had a full house. The Candidates from Kasama,

six Aspirants and the five Novices were with us on this wonderful day. It was a joyous day for us all.

Sister Yonne presented Mary and Flaviour with fitenge, (skirt-wraps), a symbol of service.

They were quickly donned - setting out on the journey in religious life. We thank God that we are blessed with vocations in our SSHJM charism.





Back row; Bertha, Scholastica, Hilda, Felistus, Monica, Cecilia, Christabel, and Margaret.

Middle row; Patience, Mary Gorreth, Flaviour, Comfort, Mary, Fancy, Anne and Beatrice.

Front row; Sr Lucky, Sr. Muda and Sr. Lucy

All in all there are 6 aspirants doing their come-and-see in Mbala under the direction of Sr Muda. 5 candidates in Kasama (what some of us oldies would have called postulancy). There are five novices in Lusaka with Sr Esther Suico as directress and several (I have lost count, sisters in temporary vows).

“Congratulations to you all and thank you to all the sisters involved in formation we promise to support you all in prayer”.



WELCOME

to Lake Road NOVITIATE

'SPIRITUAL YEAR'



DIAMOND JUBILEE Sister Mary Clare



In Chigwell Convent on the second of February this year, while Lake Road, Lusaka, received five new novices, Sister Mary Clare celebrated 60 years of Religious Life and yes she is a 'diamond sister'. Mary Clare arrived here last year after spending many years in Ireland, her native home and close to her beloved family. Even after so many years she listens to and responds to the call of the Lord in her life. We place her here on this page as an example to all our newer members and pray that we all may follow her example. Congratulations Mary Clare we pray that you will enjoy many more years with us and continue to let your light shine showing us the way!

Prison Visit - Zambia

We, Sisters here in Lusaka, made our annual visit to the Women's prison on Monday 31st of December and it was a special day for us all. God really did bless the event, firstly through the generosity of the Sisters and friends at home who provided the finances and other items like soaps and t-shirts for us to be able to treat the women to a delicious meal and give them a little gift. Usually there are 100 - 110 women but this year there were 163 women, this was our first challenge as we had only planned for the usual number. When I was first told of the 163 women my response was why so



many? The answer was "when poverty levels increase in the community the prison population also increases"..... tells its own story.

At 12 noon we entered the court yard, after the usual security checks, to see the women sitting under the shade of a big tree in the center of the yard. The stilted atmosphere gave a sense of fear and depression as they were so quiet and lonely looking. There was one person sitting on the edge of the group with a scarf over her bent head, she looked so lonely but we are instructed not to ask questions or interact with the women so leaving her there alone was not easy.

The women always sing a song for us when all the items we bring are carried in, that helps to bring a bit of life to the group. When they had ended their song Sister Esther played her guitar, Sister Margaret and Sylvia sang a few carols the group was transformed into a happy, cheerful group, it was absolutely amazing, even the woman on the side had discarded scarf and joined the group clapping to the music.

Then the meal was served and it would be great if you the benefactors

could see the joy on their faces as they got chicken, Kapenta (small fish) vegetable, mealie meal, a soft drink and a small pack of soap, Vaseline, toothpaste etc. plus, a t-shirt. There were eleven children who got a small toy each and a milk drink. Within minutes of getting their packet many put on the t-shirt.

As we always have to be out by 14.00 hrs. It was soon time for us to go once the meal was served but this year Sister Esther and the Sisters sang a few more carols and as we left the place transformed into a happy group of women singing, dancing round with exclamations of 'thank you, please come soon again, God is good.'



The prison officers said "they would love if we could come possibly at Easter as our visit means so much to everyone. Many other church groups visit but only their own members and that is understandable but there is never the joy and happiness that our visit brings. Years ago I understood how effectively sport could unite the people in the compounds and on Monday I realised how equally effectively music and song can unite a very diverse group in difficult circumstances.

We are a few who are privileged to be at the front line to see the happiness the visit brings to the women but is only with your help can we do it. I explained to the women why we could do it and they well and truly send their thanks and prayers. Then one officer explained that they could arrange for us to get a photograph of the group if we requested it at least six weeks before our visit as permission takes a while to process.

My thanks to all who made it possible with finance, items to put in the gift packs and also to the Sisters and people here who helped to do the shopping, packing, and preparing the meal.

May God bless and reward each one as only He could.

Sister Elizabeth Mooney

Zambia Unit Meeting

Lake Road, Lusaka

4th & 5th January 2019.

Ten of us gather at Lake Road Community for our first Unit meeting in 2019. Four Sisters, Rosemary, Lucy, Sylvia and Mulenga were unable to be present because they were attending lectures.

The meeting began with Sr. Yvonne welcoming all, with special welcome to Sister Esther Suico to Zambia and assurance to her of our support as she prepares to receive five novices to begin their spiritual year on 2nd February.

For the first day we had invited Mr. Wedrick Chola to give input on project management. As you are all aware project management is a very serious business now, so we need to be well acquainted with the current thinking and processes of development. Mr. Chola was still on cloud nine after spending six years in America furthering his studies in project management. He divided his input into three areas

- ◆ Fundamentals of Management
- ◆ Introduction to Project Management
- ◆ Project Manger
- ◆ Evaluation...

He was deeply impressed by the work culture he witnessed in America. He is passionate that their concept of you honestly earn what you get and needs to be emulated in Zambia if we are to bring about the much desired development. He emphasised the need for good IT skills (which have to be continually updated) meticulous record keeping, team work and a good comprehension of the project objectives by all staff if a project is to be sustainable. It was a valuable input for us which will need discussion and application in the project to be effective in our project work.

Day two was community reports and planning for the year with emphasis on that we study and implement our Strategic Plan.

As finance is a big issue in the Unit we pledged to be more prompt in our reporting and to budget wisely. It was amazing listening to the report how much work we actually do.

Just now many of the Sisters are studying to obtain their professional qualifications but the apostolates go on. It is also great to hear the each Sister who is studying is doing well. So the future for Zambia Unit is promising as the Sisters are committed. The necessity of a good community and prayer life is the bed rock of success for us was highlighted.

Sr. Yvonne closed the meeting by informing us of some changes to take place in the Unit.





It was a great privilege and honour to attend the World Youth Day which was held in Panama. I give thanks to God who made possible to go there, and allowed me to experience his love and mercy at the deepest level through confession, catechism, holy hours, music and Mass. In this short time, I learnt of other cultures and traditions. The occasion was practical and creative and no one felt alone or bored. I can say that it was a wonderful and joyful experience for me.

The theme for world youth day this year was dedicated to Mary, *'behold I am the servant of the lord, let it be done to me according to your word.'*

Beautiful and profound words that sound so simple and so very easy to say. In our daily living how do we respond to Jesus? Do we respond with a generous heart as Virgin Mary did? Do we take care of all that God has entrusted to us? How do I dedicate my time? The Holy Father said, 'holiness needs to become part of our solution. Each one of us has been called by God to be saints and reproachable before him. To be a saint he said is about becoming authentic, authentic in holiness. He tells us to go against the current, to know how to weep and to suffer, to be generous and with that logic to help those in many circumstances who are suffering in the present.

A saint protects the unborn, seeks justice, prays, is joyful and is loving. A saint lives the mercy of God and shares that mercy their neighbours. To be a saint is not a myth but a reality. This is our destiny and our testimony of life, just like many saints like St Augustine and St Margaret Mary. All the saints, in their lived reality show us that holiness is possible

in every culture and in every time. There is no discrimination of sex or class. The Holy Father said, “do not be afraid, take courage, become a saint today. Do not forget that the one who will walk with you is Mary”. We must not renounce our youth or joy, but to show the world that it is possible to



be a saint and to be happy with very little. One of the Panamanian Bishops said that slogans or dynamics cannot fulfil you, young people look for contentment, not intellectual reasoning, but they long for someone, God, to believe in not just to speak about.

Pope Francis said, walking with Jesus is a risk and always a grace. It is a risk, because Jesus Christ knows that his words and actions go against the spirit of the world, with its many ambitions, proposals and ‘throw away’ cultures. It is a grace that commits us to live by faith and to know Jesus entering into the depths of his heart and understanding the power and significance of his words.

There were Inspiring and touching testimonies from many young people, they expressed how violence has affected their lives; emotionally, mentally and physically. These actions left then and most of their families destitute. It made them question, “how do we move forward with pain, injustice and absence of peace”? The Cardinal responded that in this situation we should remember the mercy of God, and especially Mary who was not aware that the sword would pierce her heart. In addition, he said, whatever Mary went through cannot be compared to the joy of resurrection. He encouraged us never to give up but to continue fighting for peace and justice.

The desired is that each one of us has a chance to realise our dreams, projects and hopes through the power of the Holy Spirit who invites us to be the incarnation of love. This is far from easy, but through the intercession of Mary we place ourselves in the hands of God.

Other important activities, were the sacrament of Reconciliation and Holy hour where everyone had a great opportunity to experience Jesus Christ present and to participate in the Eucharist that feeds our soul and helps us confront many challenges in life. During these moments with Jesus we enter the deepest understanding of ourselves, we reflect on how we live in a society that does not share our values. There are so many things that hurt the very core of our hearts and minds, but those things cannot stop on our way to fulfilment.

During 'The Way of the Cross' we reflected on the sufferings of Jesus. The cross Jesus carried is a sign of the love and mercy he has for us. It is an invitation to be reconciled with my neighbour. The cross we carried was shared by young representatives from all over the world to symbolise that we are one in Jesus Christ in spite of our differences. It is the same God we worship and through his Son we are all saved. The Cross brought us together to embrace one another.

Pope Francis pushes us far beyond the narrow and rigid attitude of simply obeying rules, regulations and crosses to the threshold into another world of the 'Life in the Spirit', showing us how to live not by the letter of the law but by this new way. He hopes that the *Social Doctrine of the Church* will support us in confronting many situations which we come across. Then assist us to construct a new society of *charity, love and mercy*.

In conclusion the Holy Father said, "Go therefore, and make disciples of all nations, announce what you heard and experience". He told us to continue to make a 'Mass' for the Lord, to go share your.....

... *Joy, Love and Enthusiasm*.

Sr. Mervis



Carol Singing 2018 - Dublin



Congratulations, once again, to the **Zambia Appeal Group** , who collected the sum of €5,650 of which €3,727 was collected on the street, outside the GPO in Dublin, 18th December. The remainder came from people who could not come along but sent donations plus the impromptu raffle organised by one of the group's great supporter, and more donations are on the way.

In addition to the above, the Group received a generous gift of €6,000 through the kind gesture of Mary and Richard Harrahill (Trustees) who celebrated their 30th wedding anniversary last June. They suggested that instead of friends and family giving them gifts, that people if they wished, could give a donation to the Zambia Appeal Group. This special gift has gone towards the building of a new playground primarily for special needs children and construction of playground apparatus such as a climbing frame, parallel bars, see-saw, sand play area and a controlled water play area at a special needs project in Lusaka.

As Sister Elizabeth from Lusaka, explained in her thank you to the group ... *“Like any place in the world today education is the most important way to success for both the individual and a nation. Here in Zambia children/students now have educational institutions to go to and to gain qualifications that will enable them and their families to come out of the poverty trap. But support, especially financial support, is key to enable them enter the learning institutions and gain the necessary qualifications empowering them to get meaningful employment and earn a decent income. That is what you as a group have done and are still doing for many children/students here in Zambia over the years.*

Renewed thanks and God bless.

Sister Elizabeth Mooney



Congratulations to St Ann's School, Roscrea



Tara Kenny, Amy Whelan, Robert Reid, Marie Irvine, Michael Delaney, Catherine Whelan, Brendan Murphy, Jacinta Kelly, Celine Bailey, Thomas Sheehan.

Irish Aid Awards 2018: 'Global Sustainable Development'

Children and staff from Classes 8 were proudly awarded an Irish Aid Award, from the Minister of State for the Diaspora and International Development, Ciaran Cannon, TD, in May 2018, in recognition of their achievement for global awareness. The aim of the award programme was to help pupils explore the links between their lives and the lives of children in developing countries and the transforming role of education. The children's response was to research a topic in partnership with school personnel and family members based on the following statement:

*Everyone working together,
to transform our planet!*

The Way of the Monk / Slí an Manac



Recently, December 2018, Sisters Bridget and Margaret from Roscrea attended the book signing of the latest book of Dom Laurence of Mount St Joseph Monastery, Roscrea, Ireland.

The book is a photographic Camino of one hundred and forty years of the life of Mount St. Joseph.

As they were having their books signed they were caught on camera and a delighted Dom Laurence says it was;

"The photo of the day."

Sean Ross Abbey – Transformation!

Sean Ross Abbey today is the ruins of a 12th, 15th & 16th century abbey church that was once owned by Augustinian monks who built it on or near the site of a 6th Century abbey built by St. Cronan who later founded Roscrea town. When our Sisters came to Roscrea in 1931 and bought the site then called Corville House Estate, they renamed it Sean Ross Abbey, linking it back to St. Cronan who had called his prayer cell Sean Ross meaning ‘old wood’ in Irish.

The present abbey ruin is a recorded monument and as such has great historical significance and for almost 30 years we have been trying to get the Office of Public works (National Trust in UK!) to take responsibility for it. In 2013 we were very disappointed to get a letter stating categorically that they would not accept it. By this stage it was a real health & safety hazard for our residents, school children and public visiting the adjoining cemetery, including the grave of Michael Hess, son of ‘Philomena’!! Thanks to our present Leadership team and grants from the National Heritage Council and Tipperary County Council, we have been able to make it safe. Much work is still needed and hopefully the new owners will continue this conservation work.

In the current edition of “Roscrea People”, Barry Noyce, our Grounds Manager writes: ‘The ruins of Sean Ross Abbey, referred to as the “Cradle of Christianity of the town’ lay under siege by the greatest mother of all – Nature! All her elements were, and to some extent still are claiming back to the earth these ancient stones’.

Plans began in 2015 with the formation of a small group of interested volunteers working alongside the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus & Mary who own site. The Sisters commissioned a Heritage Conservation Plan and Roscrea Heritage Society donated €5000 to get the project moving. Grants were sought from sources and after all the necessary regulations were completed work commenced’.

Stone masons were engaged and, for some of the time, Barry worked alongside them. The work was labour intensive and slow as each stone had to be removed, vegetation cleaned off and the stones replaced in exactly

the same position. It was a major jig saw puzzle!! Vegetation included mainly ivy which penetrates its roots to a great depth in the wall, as well as trees that had become embedded and dislodged stones in various places.

We are happy to announce that Sean Ross Abbey is now safe for visitors to come and see the great conservation work that has been in progress for the last few years. As the Congregation passes on this historic site to new owners, Sean Ross Abbey stands as a visible legacy from us to the people of Roscrea and the many visitors who come to the grave yards each year.

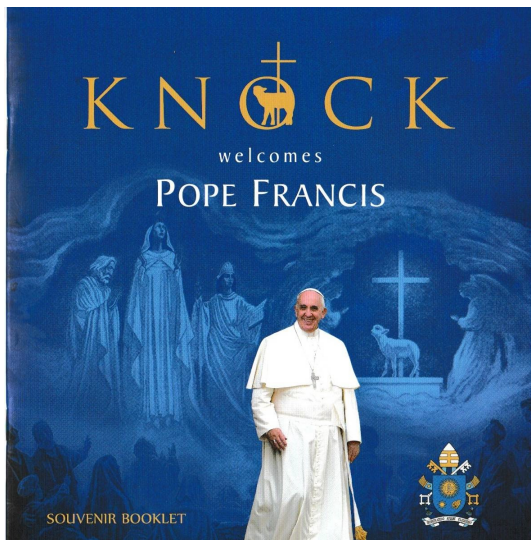
Barry concludes: "It is a beautiful and tranquil place and a home where many souls rest."

The photos give you an idea of the state of the Abbey before and after the work that has been done.



Pope Francis visits Knock!

World meeting of
families August 2018



Pope Francis was sure of a very warm welcome to Knock, albeit a very wet one.

From 8am and through to the Pope's arrival we were treated to lots of Irish traditional entertainment. This was followed a reading of witness statements of the visionaries of August 21, 1879 to the Church Commission.

This Apparition is very different from others, not a word was spoken by Our Lady in the company of St. Joseph, St John the Evangelist. She had one finger pointing heavenwards and in the other hand the book of Scriptures - and also unique to the Apparition is the representation of the Eucharist in the appearance of the Lamb on the Altar, standing in front of a Cross.

Then out of the grey laden sky appeared the Aircraft, Pope Francis had arrived in Knock. When the door of the plane opened and the Holy Father appeared at the entrance, spontaneous cheers and flag waving erupted from the large welcoming party.

At the Pope's arrival at the Shrine, more flag waving and cheers erupted from all of us gathered at there, it continued as Pope Francis entered the

Pope-mobile and started his tour around the three designated. During the tour the Pope-mobile stopped directly in front of the shrine. As he came alighted he was greeted by Father Richard Gibbons the Parish Priest. Father Gibbons had stated clearly from the beginning that the people of the parish including the Sisters from Fatima House would be special guests for the Pope's visit and be given priority in the seating area.

The Holy Father turned, smiled and waved and entered the Apparition Chapel. Then a gong boomed out and the gathered pilgrims immediately fell silent. The only way I can describe that SILENCE is by stating how profound it was. Every passing second it grew deeper, no baby or toddler's cry broke that silence. Silent prayer was shared by all and brought the friendship of God closer and tangible. How good it is when we can be gathered together in prayer and worship.

For me the sight of the Holy Father's face when he looked at the representation of the Apparition was one of "awe and wonder"! While in the Apparition Chapel Pope Francis presented a Golden Rosary to the Shrine, which is now on display in a special receptacle near the gable wall with the Golden Rose and Papal Candle presented by the then Pope John Paul 2 on his visit to the shrine in 1979.

I would also like to mention here that a special candle holder carved from a combination of maple and beech wood by a father and son especially for the Holy Father's visit was placed in the Apparition Chapel and in which the Holy Father placed a lighted candle. It is very unique and beautiful and will now hold the Paschal Candle at the Easter Services. Also, a special Papal chair was carved and is now on display in the Knock Museum for all to see.

The Holy Father, then made his way to the podium and addressed the gathering. He spoke in his native Spanish encouraging us all and once again apologising for the abuse carried out by those within the Church who had been entrusted with the spiritual lives of others.

Pope Francis left something of himself in Knock. His spirit and love for the Church and all that it stands for the salvation of all humanity.

All that remains for me, as a true Scot, to say is " ..will ye no come back again".

Sister Mary Bernadette Ward.

The restored Statue of the Sacred Heart !

Late last year Sister Johanna Mary read an article in the Liverpool Echo about a rare religious statue thought to date back to 19th century France which has been restored after being saved from a builder's skip in South Liverpool.

The statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus was spotted earlier in the year after being smashed in two and apparently dumped in a builder's skip at Allerton Priory. John Burns, who was developing the site, sent photographs of the statue to his friend John Morgan. The pictures were then sent on to Brian Jones who decided it was worth restoring.

Brian contacted Chris Butler (the artist behind the bronze statue of The Beatles on the Liverpool waterfront) who agreed to refurbish the statue on the condition that he did not get paid for it, he just wanted to do it. Chris's wife is French and she helped trace the origins of the statue back to the Notre Dame area in Paris. Chris oversaw the repair of the statue, which has now been bronzed.

After its restoration, Brian decided to donate the statue to the Eldonian Community Centre in Vauxhall, Liverpool. He explained that he was from the area and has known the founder Tony McGann for years. That part of Liverpool is the traditional home of Irish and Italian immigrants, many of whom were Roman Catholic. So it seemed only natural to donate the statue to the Eldonians.

Brian explained that he found a prayer online which has since been inscribed at the base of the statue. The prayer was written by an Eritrean boy, who was an asylum seeker living at some kind of holding Centre for immigrants in the UK.

The statue of the Sacred Heart with its open arms now stands at the entrance to the Eldonian Community Centre. Sister Johanna Mary has since visited the Centre to see the statue.



Historical note for our newer members:-

Allerton Priory was a residential school for girls with special educational needs. The school was opened by the Servants of the Sacred Heart in 1890's and closed in 1985 with Sr. Mary Jo as the last head teacher. Many sisters will have fond memories of living and working there, including Marian Hogan, Christina Doona, Myra Brennan, Elizabeth Tobin, Kathleen Buckley, Angela Burke, Rosemary Clerkin (sorry if I missed anyone).

It appears that Allerton Priory had many statues and when the house closed, a neighbour, Pat Crowley RIP, cleaned and painted them all and then donated them to several catholic schools in Liverpool !!!



Memories of a Childhood Christmas

As long as I can remember Christmas has been a very special family, community and religious experience in my life.

As a young girl in Ireland I recall times when there was snow on the ground, though this did not happen every year. Icicles hanging from eaves of houses were long, cold and shiny. We children would break them off and lick them like ice lollies.

I am the first born in my family. I never remember feeling alone. There was always someone to play with at home and then there were also the children from up and down our street. We lived in Magherafelt, County Derry, Ireland.

I loved my town at anytime, but at Christmas it was really special. It seemed the town was there to entertain me, my siblings and school friends. When it snowed we made icy slides on our street. Living on a hilly street provided us with gravity to assist our runs and leaps onto the slide, whizzing over the length of it while standing or hunkered down. And doing this while holding or sucking on an icicle was magic.

We children knew every inch of our town and were free to explore in safety and ease. Our slides never lasted long as sensible adults would come and put salt on them to melt the ice for the safety of the town's citizens. For us that was a mere temporary and accepted inconvenience until we could design and create our next slide. Besides we had lots of other things to do.

Christmas was a time when we looked forward to seeing the nativity scene set up in the church. Ours was almost life size, even the figures of the donkey, ox, sheep and camels seemed to us to be real and just frozen in time. There were Mary and Joseph standing by the manger and we looked with longing at the empty place where Jesus would be laid at midnight Mass on Christmas Eve. I remember the singing and loved it all the more when I was able to be in the choir where we sang all the songs familiar to us here in the USA and others less so. The combination of secular and religious themes never disturbed me as I saw it all as part of

the Christmas story of God come among us with gifts of joy and trust that I felt strongly as a child.

During several weeks leading to Christmas Eve we would walk all round the town businesses with our pencils and shop quiz papers in hand. Each year the shops of the town participated in a competition. A scrambled word was placed in each window for the children of the town to unravel and present to Santa who then gave out prizes on 'the Diamond' a kind of central square at the top of my street that branched out in four directions.

Santa gave each child a wrapped present and the winner of the competition got a special prize while the townspeople stood looking on. I do not recall ever thinking I would win a prize nor do I think I cared. I just remember joy and excitement each time I figured out a word and its meaning. Of course, this was an exercise done usually with a friend which added to the fun. I remember the last time I walked round the shops. I was 11 years 6 months old at the time and I was with my neighbour and friend, Helen Kennedy. First of all we walked up our street to Mario Walters Chip Shop across from the Cinema on Queen Street to buy chips. Then with our hands warmed by the hot chips (French Fries here in USA) we made the rounds of the shops with our lists to unscramble.

There was a little snow on the ground and it was cold but Helen and I were well dressed and, huddling together in the glow of friendship's happiness, sharing the bag of hot chips, we were warm as toast. She was Protestant, I a Catholic, in Northern Ireland where such details mattered not to us that night. It was the feast of St. Nicholas, December 6, 1958. The very next day my life was to change forever as I would be emigrating to San Francisco, California, via London, England with my mother and six young siblings.

But we children did not seem to understand what a momentous thing was taking place next morning. I said goodbye to Helen after we had managed to figure out several of the quiz answers. Our houses shared the same back garden wall. I walked in through our back door to the kitchen. The fire in the sliver range my mother was so proud of was hot

and the kettle was steaming. The house, decorated with balloons, and accordion type colourful paper lanterns and bells were hanging from the ceiling. Our packed suitcases were stacked by the front door and I recall sitting briefly on them, perhaps out of curiosity. Then I climbed the stairs, leaving the warm kitchen, to find my mother. My youngest siblings were all in bed asleep. Mammy was seated on the couch before the fire in her bedroom, a large room that was also used as our sitting room. Aunts and uncles were gathered around my mother. I recall uncle Albert leaning on the mantelpiece gazing into the fire with a faraway look. Granny McKenna was there and I was glad that she was staying the night with us. The Christmas tree with its pretty coloured lights shone in one of the windows where from this place of prominence it overlooked the very place on the street where days before we kids had created our magical slide.

There was a sadness in the air. I began to feel afraid. My mother was crying. Aunt Mary gave her a brandy. I was shocked and feared something awful would happen my mother as I had never seen her nor my father drink alcohol, but living between two pubs I had seen what happened to people who got drunk and it scared me. But no harm came to her and she soon got down to the business of final preparations for our departure. Clothes were laid out for each child in readiness for the morning's journey, the result of which was to give us the best Christmas present ever, our daddy. We had not seen him for two years six months. A daddy for Christmas is a mighty present.

We arrived in San Francisco sixty years ago on December 8, 1958 (*see photo*). Within days he brought home a Christmas tree and presents were placed beneath it. The same traditions we had known in Ireland were continued. Each child received a Christmas bundle of presents after midnight Mass. There was no snow. California sunshine at Christmas was unexpected. We sang the carols we had known in Ireland and learned new ones, including the Little Drummer Boy and White Christmas.

On Christmas Day we sat round the house showing each other what we had received. Each bundle had hankies, an orange and an apple, books

and chocolates, games and puzzles and something special like a doll or jewellery, airplane models or a dolls pram. A jigsaw puzzle was opened and we sat completing it with my mother while daddy read a book or the newspaper. We played games and helped my only brother glue his model airplanes. I was a long way from Magherafelt, but I was at home, basking in the happiness being with my father and mother, my brother and sisters, sharing the familiar customs of Christmas.

It is Christmas once again and I find myself living on Liberty Street in El Cerrito. The Sisters of my Religious Community continue to be present here in the collective memories of the parishes where we have ministered since 1953. This Christmas my sister, Mairead, presented each of her six sisters with a gift of old family movies spliced in a flash drive. What a precious surprise! It not only contained images of Christmas Eve 1964 showing us gathered round my smiling mother, but also, on this (2018) my golden jubilee year, what a surprise to see scenes from the day I made first Vows fifty years ago in Watsonville. Memories of a childhood Christmas were suddenly merged with memories of Christmases over many years as a Sister of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

Sister Kathleen Lavery



Sister Margaret Healy RIP (1920 - 2018)



Margaret was a woman of many talents above all was a 'people - person'. Born on 28th September 1920 she was so proud of her home in Derry Berrings, in the parish of Dunamore, Ireland, a home where praying together was equally important as work on the farm. She was the youngest in the family and always said that having three brothers broadened her outlook. Family life and the closeness and friendship of neighbours were very important to her. She had the unique ability to relate to all age groups, both in the classroom and the parish.

Her primary and secondary education, here in Cork, laid the foundation for her future ministries. Her devotion to the Sacred Heart began in her own home and was the means eventually of her choosing our Congregation, prompted also by a talk given by Mother Augusta O'Flynn (who was *professed in 1907!*) who spoke of our Orphanage in Lewisham.

After doing her Leaving certificate she decided to write her letter of application to enter in Chigwell. Having been accepted she left home (this was during the second World War) and she made her First Profession in 1942.

After completing her teacher training with the Mercy Sisters in Hull, she taught for 9 years in St Peter's Primary School, Dagenham.

In 1954 with 5 other Sisters she set sail for California and taught for 10 years at Sacred Heart School, Turlock, a town in the heart of the San Joaquin Valley. She was then transferred to St Jerome's School, El Cerrito which looked out on the beautiful San Francisco Bay. This was challenging for her because she was both Principal and class teacher with no secretary in the office! Somebody somewhere was praying for her because she got a volunteer who relieved her of some of her responsibilities.

Having spent eight years in El Cerrito she was transferred to St Anne's School, Sacramento where she endeared herself to students, parents and colleagues but above all to her Religious Community.

She retired from teaching and was given a Sabbatical which she took in Hawkstone Hall and enjoyed it immensely. It was then she enrolled in Catechetical Courses (in Ireland) which were invaluable for her in her new ministry of adult religious education when she returned to St Anne's and later to St Paul's parish Sacramento. 13 years later she returned to St Jerome's parish where she enjoyed retirement with a small community of Sisters and renewed contact and friendships with many of the parents whose children she taught.

In 2009, homeward bound to Cork, her City by the Lee, she settled very happily where family, Sisters and friends could visit her regularly. She endeared herself to the staff here, one of whom described her as a "woman of dignity and so trustworthy." Among her many qualities were discretion, fidelity, loyalty, love for music, song and dancing.

Life is full of partings – all kinds of partings – from loved ones, from places where we have lived and worked.

Every one of us here and so many more of the family and friends who cannot be present, pray her into that eternal life that she so yearned for. What a welcome awaited her! We have such consolation in the doctrine of the Communion of Saints - never, ever really parted from our loved ones. Margaret will always be with us. Margaret may you rest in peace and joy, but we will surely miss you here.

The Cork Community

Sister Mary Zita O'Brien RIP (1931 - 2019)



We found a quotation by Kahlil Gibran which sums up so well the life of you, Sister Zita.

"Your living is determined not so much by what life brings to you as by the attitude you bring to life; not so much by what happened to you as by the way your mind looks at what happens"

Sister Zita – Catherine O'Brien was born on the 30th of October 1930 to Thomas and Joan O'Brien in Limerick. She was one of a large family of eleven children. She always remained very close to her family.

Sister entered our Congregation at Chigwell Essex on the 16th of June 1955 at the lovely age of 25, after having met one of our Sisters from Limerick who was home on holidays. Sister Zita received the habit (entered the novitiate) on February 2nd 1956, made her first Profession of Vows in 1958 and Perpetual Vows in 1964.

Sister had an enquiring mind, was a great conversationalist, and she endeared herself to young and old.

Very quickly her talents and abilities were recognised. She trained in

Nursery Child Care and in Health and Welfare for the Elderly in Mable Fletcher College in Liverpool, all of which were invaluable to her in all her ministries in our Care Homes for children and for young adults with Special Needs.

She worked in the following Convents; Chigwell, Leyton, Carlisle, Cardiff, Hillingdon, Kelton and Cork. In all the Convents where Sister Zita ministered she was outstanding and meticulous in all that she did. In the later years when Sister came to Bessboro, Cork, she was in charge of the dining room. She was very welcoming to the many visitors who came to the house.

As we already mentioned her talents were many and varied. She wrote poetry, played the guitar and piano. She was a very competent needle - woman. She dressed dolls beautifully which were sold as fundraisers. Skilfully she made dresses for the children who were in her care. She was a Perfectionist in every way.

Sister said that her Patron Saint, St. Zita, “was a domestic servant” and she was following in her footsteps. Sister had special devotion to St. Padre Pio, read widely about him and made many novenas to him. She spent many hours each day in silent prayer and joined the Community in prayer from her bedroom by the T.V screen

In our quotation at the beginning we read:-

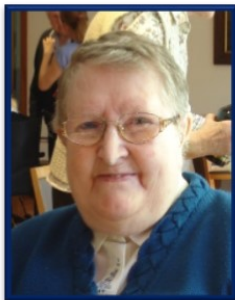
“Your life is determined not by what life brings to you, as by the attitude you bring to life” Sister Zita surely lived this fully.

As we say farewell to you now dear Sister Zita we pray that you may now rest in peace with the Lord.

The Cork Community

Sister Alphonsus Manning RIP

(1930 - 2019)



Sister Alphonsus was born Mary Teresa Manning in “Glenview House” Johnswell, Co. Kilkenny on the 29th September 1930 to Patrick Manning and Winifred Manning/ O’Neill and was baptised on the 30th of September in St. John the Evangelist Church in Kilkenny.

Sister was the fourth youngest of twelve children, eight girls and four boys. Her only sibling alive is Joe and he is here with us today. She had lots of nieces and nephews, grandnieces and grandnephews and many in-laws and friends, our sympathy go to you all. She loved her family and spoke about them often to the Sisters. She always looked forward to their visits.

Sister Alphonsus entered our congregation in Chigwell, Essex, 15th October 1950, one month after her 20th birthday. She made her first Profession of Vows on the 28th August 1953 and her Perpetual Vows 28th August 1956. She then went on to train as a nurse in Preston, Lancashire.

Her Sister, Imelda, who was two years younger also joined our congregation on 2nd August 1952, did great work in the UK and El Salvador. She died 22nd October 1999.

Sister Alphonsus lived in the following places. Chigwell, St. Winifred’s Hospital Cardiff, Lemmington Hall in Northumberland, Mount Olivet in Surrey, Ormskirk in Lancashire, Roscrea and she retired to Cork in 2011.

Sister worked a lot with children who had health problems and children and adults with special needs. She was very kind and caring and very

dedicated to her work and always had a great sense of fun. She loved the children and they loved her and looked up to her as a caring Mother.

St. Alphonsus Liguori, who was Sisters Patron Saint, founded the congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer in 1762. We know the congregation as the Redemptorist. Many people use his quotations, one of them being ***“If you pray, you are positive of saving your soul. If you do not pray, you are just as positive of losing your soul”*** So Sister Alphonsus used to say, “I must pray because I don’t want to lose my soul and end up in a place I will not like!”

Sister had a lovely prayer to Our Mother Mary and it is this;

*Take my hand O Blessed Mother,
Hold me firmly lest I fall,
I am nervous when I am walking,
And on thee I humbly call.*

*Guide me over every crossing.
Watch me when I’m on the stairs
Let me know you are beside me,
Listen to my fervent prayer.*

*Bring me to my destination,
Safely every single day,
Help me with my undertaking,
As the hours pass away.*

*And when evening falls upon us,
And I fear to be alone,
Take my hand O Blessed Mother,
Once again and lead me home.*

So now Sister Alphonsus as we say farewell to you I will quote once again from St. Alphonsus – He said-

“Your God is ever beside you- indeed- He is even with you”.

We know Sr. Alphonsus that you are **totally with Him now**, may you rest in peace and enjoy seeing the face of God. Amen.

Sr Anne Therese, the sister of Teresa, thanks everyone for the Masses, prayers and kind wishes she received and for the repose of the soul of Teresa.

May the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary be everywhere loved



Sister Teresa Maunsel

1932—2019

Professed 61 years, aged 86 years

Sister Teresa didn't want a eulogy and this is not one but as I lived with Teresa for several years in St. Dominic's , Mount Olivet in the eighties, I thought I would just share a memory or two with you. Teresa loved her work with the children and had great child care experience. When I arrived (green behind the ears) Teresa kept a look out for me when the children took advantage of my naivety. One little boy just had to wink and the whole group would shout and jump and pay no attention to anything I had to say. Teresa would just walk in and suddenly they were angels of the most innocent haven fallen straight from heaven. Teresa took those I failed to manage and taught me a lot about residential care of children, we had many a laugh and the children thrived with a bit of care, security and discipline. Teresa was a great driver and I soon learnt where all the hospitals and clinics were as well as routes through London to drive to Chigwell, pre-M25. I pray that she will now rest in the love of the Lord after her many years of suffering which was lessened by the great care she received in Marian House.

Sr Anne Griffin

May the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary be everywhere loved



Sister Margaret O'Leary
1946—2019

Professed 51 years, aged 73 years

Sister Margaret gave us all a bit of a shock as she left us with little warning but we rejoice with her before the Lord. Many of our Sisters together with her family and friends gathered in Colwyn Bay to celebrate her life in the celebration of the Eucharist.

One or two little comments were passed on to me that say something of Margaret: She radiated the JOY OF THE GOSPEL by her way of life and expressed it in her compassion for others. Margaret had a great love of creation, she was her faithful to her prayer, her community and her family which were true expressions of our charism. Her humanity was enriched by a very witty sense of humour and apt turn of phrase. Margaret suffered with a severe hearing loss but even that shaped her into the beautiful person that she was.

Many of Margaret's family were present and they said she was a 'mother' to them all, she loved family gatherings, remembered every birthday, 1st communion and confirmation and "keeping the local Post Office in profit"!

Margaret lived and served in many houses in the UK and Ireland and will be missed by us all.

Lest you Forget.....



Sisters Jubilee's 2019

50 Years Golden Jubilee 28th August

Sister Lorna Walsh

60 Years Diamond Jubilee on 28th August

Sister Catherine Lehane

Sister Celine de Jesu

Sister Marie Carmel

Sister Marie Majella

Sister Therese Cooney



70 Years Professed on 28th August

Sister Mary Laura

2019 Sisters 90th Birthdays

Sister Pauline McCullagh	22 nd May
Sister Mary Simeon	24 th July
Sister Dominica	31 st August
Sister Bridget Mc Court	17 th November

Saturday 18th May 2019 - Congregation Day

We hope to celebrate this special day,
together by Webinar (details later)



- * Our next edition of Keeping in Touch is due out in June. If there is anything you would like to include, please send us an article with photos if you can!
- * We are still looking for volunteers for the feast-day reflections, needed soon; 3 more for Lent please

.....We already have a newsy report from Sr. Clara on her life and apostolate in the UK.

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

For private circulation only