



Newsletter

Issue 15 - November 2011

Extended Family Gathering, 6-8 May

Some things don't change: the drive from York to Penmaenmawr, the concerns over the logistics for the weekend, the lists of 'things to do', the arrangement of cat-care, you know the sort of thing... Some things don't change: Wow, that view!! That warm welcome! That bottomless teapot! That caramel custard! You know the sort of thing. Whenever I find myself immersed in the 'Noddfa Experience', my unflinching reaction is "If only all my family and friends could be here, sharing this".

The weekend at Noddfa marked a big change in the EF 'management': Moira, Ruth and Colette had stood down from the Core Group, to be replaced by Sr. Catherine Dolan and Patrick (joint chair-people). Sr. Aline Leonard, Eileen and Peter Silvester, Kath Nolan and Kath O'Neill had joined. Sue and Sr. Kathleen have remained in place. If there had been any doubts about the success of the weekend, they were soon dispelled by the atmosphere of love, support, positivity and readiness to 'make this work'. In other words, the Holy Spirit was present.



Our two speakers, Sr. Kathleen Connell and Sr. Catherine Dunne, were totally inspiring.

Sr. Kathleen spoke entertainingly about the early founders of the Institute. There were amazing tales of many redoubtable women who, with sometimes amusing and often heroic tactics, were totally driven by Gailhac's vision. Sr. Catherine gave us a taste of her work on JPIC - a subject about which we are all aware, but don't really know much. The talk left us in no doubt of the relevance and urgency of the matter - counteracting the exploitation of those

who are vulnerable, mostly because of poverty. We all felt it was important to get involved, and the follow-up sessions asked us to come up with concrete suggestions to get EF groups started.

The Sisters at Noddfa embody a loving, positive, and caring hospitality, and this filters through to the rest of us. The liturgies and Mass set us up for each session, and running through the weekend like a jet stream was prayer and spirituality - the 'virtual' becoming 'reality'. But the true reality will be our willingness to flesh out all the suggestions, and bring to life all the good intentions.

Sue Black

A Reaction ...

The whole atmosphere of Noddfa was immensely welcoming and both Val and I were greeted with affection and warmth. It was a joy for us both to meet up with Sr. Patrice and Sr. Pauline, friends of long standing from our days as school secretary and Art teacher at the RSHM school in Upminster.

Each day's programme was very well organised with prayer and discussion. As the weekend progressed we had time to become more acquainted with other Extended Family groups. In my individual group on Sunday the main topic of discussion was Trafficking, and what steps we could take in our locality, be it in prayer, awareness and trafficking.

Maggie Ollington (Upminster)

"That all may have life"

"Where have we come from?"

"Where are we now?"

"Where are we going?"



These three questions shaped the weekend. Sr. Kathleen Connell explored the question of where we have come from beautifully, with her presentation on the founders of the Institute, showing what inspired them, what they achieved, and how much they worked with lay people right from the start.

Sr. Catherine Dunne addressed one of the main focuses of the Institute today, trafficking, and really brought home to all of us the evils involved, inviting us, as Extended Family, to become more aware of the problems, and more involved in combating them.

Building on these presentations, we were invited to focus on the future, and to decide together what practical steps we could take back to our own localities from the gathering. The ensuing discussion groups provided a wealth of suggestions:

- Keep in touch with the two volunteer workers from Dublin who were with us and were soon to go to Brazil to work with RSHM.
- Recruit more members of EF, including younger people.
- Develop some form of commitment to EF.
- Establish prayer groups.
- Promote the RSHM mission statement.
- Raise awareness of human trafficking.
- Pray for the trafficked.
- Use the internet, including the RSHM website, for information on trafficking.
- Have a regular item on trafficking in the Newsletter.
- Assist RSHM with fund-raising.
- Make people more aware of RSHM ministries in local areas, especially in the field of Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation.

In all the discussions, there were three recurring themes:

Prayer
Raising Awareness
Trafficking

and it was decided that action in these areas would be the practical steps which we would take back to our local communities.

In responding to the discussions Sr. Kathleen reminded us of the invitation given to members of the Extended Family to join in the ministries of the RSHM. She cited Eugene and Apollonie Cure as patrons of Extended Family since they helped to make Gailhac's vision concrete. The Laity made his dreams possible. Extended Family is bringing the hidden treasure of the laity into the light.

Patrick



"That all may have life"

Celebrations

Not that the Noddfa weekend was all hard work and serious discussions. With us were three members of the Institute who were celebrating their Golden Jubilees this year, Sr. Catherine Dolan, Sr. Teresa McCarthy, and Sr. Kathleen O'Donovan, so of course, we had to celebrate! And to mark such wonderful milestones, each Jubilarian was presented with a small gift from the group. Ad multos annos!



There were presentations too, to Ruth Long and Colette Kearney, two of the original members of the Core Group, who had stood down earlier in the year. We owe them a great debt of gratitude for all their contributions to the development of Extended Family over the six years they served on the Group. Thank you both, and God bless you!



Ealing Meeting 22nd February 2011



Our third meeting of the Extended Family Group, in Ealing, began with the usual 'cuppa'. Barbara was welcomed to her first meeting with the group and after a brief 'recap', Kathleen was invited to light the Extended Family Candle. We introduced the group to two Capacita relaxing, breathing exercises which were followed by the hymn 'You are the Fire'.

Andre then presented her beautiful power-point on our Foundress, 'Apollonie's Story', after which there was a spontaneous discussion. The meeting closed with the hymn and the prayer of the Institute. But the evening didn't end there - Andre played her violin for us and the evening really ended with a lively Irish jig.

Sr. Aline Leonard

"That all may have life"

Having advertised this meeting through the parish newsletter, twenty two people attended together with community members and the six of us on the steering group.

Feeling that we needed to revamp enthusiasm, as we were floundering a bit as to where to go next, we were influenced by the “lot of talk” about charism that seemed to be circulating at the time, and, after much discussion, we decided to present the three aspects of our lives (Charism, Spirit, Mission) “from the inside out” as it were.

For each there was a poster defining our subject from the Constitutions, and appropriate pictures were used from ‘Like a River’ to illustrate and embellish. The following are a few of the points raised under each heading.



Charism

- Charism of all Christians through Baptism
- Our Charism - the gift given to Gailhac, the first sisters, and all who followed.
- It identifies us as us, and not what we do.
- Our calling is the foundation of our lives which demands a daily response.
- Since 1980 there is a new movement to share our charism with the laity.
- Today we are challenged to find ways of ensuring that Gailhac’s charism continues to be life- giving for all called to share it.

Spirit : Faith (belief) ; Zeal (commitment; enthusiasm)

- Spirit of fire. “I have come to cast fire on the earth” was a phrase often used by Gailhac in his writings
- Gailhac made Faith/Zeal a characteristic of the Institute.
- The General Chapter(2007) called us to weave new dimensions which will generate hope/life for all. We are called to listen; to accompany; to be compassionate; to embrace the Institute focus on justice, peace, the integrity of creation.

Mission

- The challenge of the gospel and the spirit of Faith and Zeal urges us to respond to the needs of our time.
- We place ourselves and our resources at the service of those most in need of justice.
- To work for justice is no longer an option.
- Mission is expressed in a diversity of ministries, in diverse cultures.
- Whatever our age or circumstance each of us participates in mission.

Following the presentation there were suggestions for action, including prayer for the mission of the sisters. The details of this action are to be worked out.

Sr. Sheila Morgan

Barrow, 24th February 2011



Foundation Day saw a group of friends and past pupils gathered here in Abbey Road. To give a special slant to our reflection we invited Sr. Catherine Dunne to join us. We focussed on Father Gailhac's burning zeal to reach out to the young women in Beziers who had lost the sense of their dignified value in God's creation.

We took a spiritual journey in 'Faith and Time' to accompany Father Gailhac in the realisation of his dream in spite of criticism and opposition. Having shared this we leapt 'forward in time' to see, with the help of Sr. Catherine and her experience as a member of the JPIC team, how the fire of Father Gailhac's

enthusiasm is burning strongly throughout the Province. Her power point illustrations were

“That all may have life”

extremely thought provoking and challenging. The response and sharing was deep and encouraging.

We ended with a candle prayer highlighting the need to keep the spirit of hope alive in our hearts in order to strengthen our peace, our faith and our love. We each lit a personal candle from the Hope Candle and recited together the Prayer of the Institute. It was a heart warming time together and we finished gathered around the table to celebrate! - truly a day to remember.

Sr. Pierre Dullaghan

Barrow - Auction to raise funds for Mission in Africa



On 27th March, a Grand Auction was organised by Pat Hurley and friends. Pat is the former headmistress of St. Columba's school on Walney Island. The event was generously supported by parishioners from Barrow, Ulverston, Dalton and Walney and

was held in St. Columba's School. The Mayor of Barrow and his wife attended and he was auctioneer! The atmosphere was vibrant, with tombola, bargain stalls, and great raffle prizes. The staff and young pupils played welcoming and fund raising roles throughout. The auction was exciting and fun with such items as a TV set, Whiskey from the House of Commons, a signed football, and Famous T-Shirts. The result was a tremendous total amounting to £2,620! The money has been sent, and gratefully received abroad. It was shared between RSHM. sisters in Zambia and Mozambique, and with the Holy Spirit Sisters in Zambia. We hear the money is very welcome for repairs to school buildings, supporting Hostels, equipping an operating theatre and helping the sisters to continue their support to the needy.

Sr. Pierre Dullaghan

Next Issue

Thank you to all who have contributed to this issue, and as ever, our thanks to Lizzie Owens for the translation of the French edition.

You will have seen the suggestion from the May Gathering that we have a regular item on trafficking in the Newsletter. Could we do this? Would anyone be willing to provide an update on trafficking issues two or three times a year? Please let me know, at the addresses below.

And as ever, please keep your articles, photos, prayers, thoughts and reflections coming, especially your activities for November 13th, and for Foundation Day in February.

The next Newsletter will be with you in March, hopefully, and the deadline for contributions is

25th February 2012

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Best wishes from the SHM EF Core Group (NEP)

"That all may have life"