



FROM THE PROVINCIAL COUNCIL

Congratulations to: Srs Marie Clune and Aline Leonard who celebrate their **Diamond Jubilee** on 11th June

also

Srs Monica Gribbin, Kathleen Hamilton, Agnes Hunt, Maeve Kelly, Clare O'Keeffe and Pauline Stott who celebrate their **Diamond Jubilee** on 14th June.

EGC – Enlarged General Council

Much of the EGC meeting in March was about planning with the use of financial and human resources projections.

One of the hopeful signs in the Institute came from the Portuguese Province. Many of the sisters in Portugal felt that when they no longer had a community in Mali they should be open to founding a community in another country which was Portuguese-speaking. They have received an invitation to go to a parish in East Timor, in the diocese of Maliana. They have been asked to live in a community close to the people, doing Pastoral work, teaching the Portuguese language to children and young people and working with women's groups and families. Some sisters have been to visit the diocese and they think that it would be a suitable place for them to found a new community. They ask us to pray for them as they continue their discernment, so they can make their decision in the near future. We are united with them as they take this courageous step in the name of the RSHM.

There was interesting news in relation to the Philippines. As you know, Kathleen Connell and other Sisters from the WAP and the EAP have been in touch with the Association of Mother Butler Mission Guilds, which are very numerous throughout the Philippines. The President of the Association has asked that RSHM help with the spiritual and theological formation of the members of the Mission Guilds. The proposal is that some RSHM from different provinces should meet together to draw up a plan for various courses and then some RSHM (possibly different people) would go to train leaders who would give the courses in the different areas. We have been asked to suggest Sisters who would be willing to participate in some aspect of the formation. If you think you could help in any way, please speak to a member of the council and we can give you more information.

SOURCES OF LIFE: The Generalate of Mary Milligan RSHM

We are in the process of distributing copies of "The Generalate of Mary Milligan RSHM 1980-1985", a reflection of her time as Superior General. Some of you will have received a copy and others are on the way. We extend our thanks to Catherine Dolan for her work in putting Mary's writings together and to André Dullaghan for getting the book published.

CoR CONFERENCE SWANWICK, March 2012 *Mary Jo McElroy*

Baroness Nuala O'Loan was one of the speakers at the conference and 'A Splendid Torch' was her theme. She began with the following quotation from George Bernard Shaw.



"This is the true joy in life, the being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one; the being thoroughly worn out before you are thrown on the scrap heap; the being a force of Nature instead of a feverish selfish little clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy.

My life belongs to the whole community and as long as I live, it is a privilege to do for it whatsoever I can. I want to be thoroughly used up when I die, for the harder I work, the more I live. I rejoice in life for its own sake. Life is no 'brief candle' to me. It is a sort of splendid torch which I have got hold of for the moment; and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations."



BEREAVEMENTS

Our sympathy and prayers are with:

Arrowsmith House Community
on the death of Sr Margaret O'Brien
who died on 23rd April at the age of 95 years
and in the 75th year of her Religious Profession.

MAY SHE REST IN PEACE



Margaret had several names: Peggy, Mme Alexis, (Peggy Alexis) and Sr. Margaret O'Brien, but they did not indicate different personae. She was always herself, REAL with no pretences, no masks; in essence warm-hearted, caring about others, showing great humanity. Her spirituality was never an added layer. There was nothing forced or artificial. Her love of God made her more human. She had a sense of humour and entertained us all with her stories.

I knew her in Seafield where she taught me until I was 14 – 50 years ago! She was an inspiring teacher and helped many of us to enjoy Shakespeare and Dickens and other set texts that, in the hands of others, could have seemed boring. It was not just a question of passing exams. She had the gift of making good literature accessible to all and helped others to love reading. We remember her as having charge of the 'general reading books' in Seafield, where each pupil had to read two or three novels a term, in her own time, aside from set texts. Six of us here today are past pupils of Margaret – a token number to represent the thousands of pupils influenced by her in her teaching career.

Her love of literature helped her appreciate people – with all their flaws and eccentricities. Margaret accepted us without being judgemental. In class she didn't lose her temper and she had no favourites.

In 1962 she went to Barrow as headmistress of Our Lady's and when Eleanor and I went to that community in 1969, straight from the Novitiate, she was superior and provincial councillor, as well as head. She was able to balance these responsibilities. One person said, "She had the gift of being in two places – her heart was fully in school and fully in community, in the care of the sisters". She was a strong woman when faced with difficult circumstances. She worked hard but had time to support us, giving us no sense of the inconvenience of having two young nuns who were wrecking the good order of the house. Eleanor and I had a year of cooking and washing – learning how to live in community! We were let loose in the kitchen with little sense of how to cook a dinner for fourteen – and Margaret would encourage us. (We used to say Margaret always commented on how good the dinner was on a Sunday when we had ice cream.)

At that time I had the good fortune of going into some of Margaret's 6th Form classes and it was there, when I was a bit older, that I really appreciated what a marvellous teacher she was. One of her colleagues from Barrow has said that Margaret was "one of the most educated teachers she ever met." She was balanced and had a large vision of the world.

Paul told us a story this morning about meeting a 'Union man' who had been in touch with Margaret at the time when Roslyn Park was closing and, without knowing he had any connection to Margaret, he said, "There's a nun there who is the fairest and most honest woman you could meet."

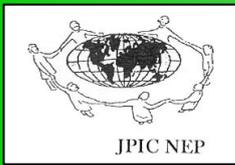
In Ealing, Ballyfoyle and Manor Park, Margaret was a very welcoming presence – she would make everyone feel at home. She had great gifts for working in a Parish – the warmth of her personality and her genuine interest in everyone she met. She loved Manor Park, where she spent eleven years and they loved her and still speak about her. In that situation, the ease of her conversation and her story-telling were great advantages. She made scenes come alive with her gift of words and made others feel at ease with her.

Those of us in community with her over the years would hear stories about Emly – about the O'Brien's and the O'Dea's, all the family past and present. She loved her family. It is good to see so many of you today and we thank you for your visits to her over the years. Today we remember too Srs de Sales and Angela and Anne Frances and we are glad Fr Paddy could come. You have your memories of her visits home – and the stories she told about us!

And that was the sad thing for many of us, seeing her these last few years without words. The communication dried up and it was hard to know where Margaret was, what she was thinking.

I have admired greatly the work of the Carers here in Arrowsmith House, who were able to sense her moods through the smiles and the twinkle in her eye. We thank them for their respect and kindness, for knowing how to understand her and for their love. There are moments of her life here that will be remembered. Last year at the Grand National sweepstake Margaret drew the horse called "Talkative" to the amusement of those who knew her in former times.

We remember Margaret as she was in her prime, when she was talkative! She was always able to meet the other person with interest and as an equal. She lived out the charism of the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary with a heart of compassion "so that all may have life"- and we loved her.



“ Snippets” from JPIC “antennae” sisters around the province

FAMILIES IN NEED IN BARROW

Pierre Dullaghan

To-day in Barrow there are families struggling to put food on the table for their children. A Food-Bank is being prepared to provide help for those in need. Our parishes are involved in collecting non-perishable food. As soon as sufficient food has been collected vouchers will be issued to Doctors and Care-Centres. These vouchers will be exchanged for 3 days food supply from the Food-Bank. The on-going response to the appeal is very generous. Parcels of food are being left at the Churches and here at our house. We then collect the food and bring it to the nearby Baptist Church where the Food-Bank is being prepared for the distribution.

Please keep this project in your prayers.

LONDON CITIZENS - comprising North, South, East (Telco) Manor Park, West Ealing, Shoreditch.

Dorothy Ward

This is a power organisation enabling ordinary people to identify and act on problems and to improve civic life and extend social justice.

Mayoral Accountability Assembly: For me it was the first time that I had attended such a meeting - what an experience! 2500 people of all ages: young to old, employed and unemployed, professional and inexperienced.

The present mayor had to account to the meeting about how he had responded to his promises of 2008. As it was not a political party meeting we were all reminded to sit, to listen respectfully with no interruptions as to whether we agree or disagree with the candidate. Each candidate, Jenny Jones (Green Party), Ken Livingston (Labour), Boris Johnson (Conservative) and Brian Paddick (Lib Democrat) was given two minutes to respond to the agenda.

THE AGENDA

Testimonies of Citizens were given, appropriate to each part of the agenda.

- 1 A better governed London: Attend at least one London Citizens Assembly giving an annual report.*
- 2 A better housed London: Affordable rents, Land Trusts, use of Olympic Legacy, Constitution for Landlords.*
- 3 A brighter future for Young Londoners – employment, apprenticeships etc.*
- 4 A safer London – City Safe – Protection against street violence, shops to be involved providing a safe haven for those feeling threatened.*
- 5 A living wage for Londoners.*

PS – Boris Johnson was re-elected!

ECO SCHOOL – LISBURN

Kathleen McCartan

St Joseph's Primary School, Lisburn, recently established an Eco School Committee.

“Our objective is to make our school a greener and healthier place. We are trying to make school dinners and packed lunches a bit healthier, recycle the school's waste and we aim to achieve a bronze award this year, hopefully in the coming years, the silver, gold and green flag. Please help to make our school a greener place.”

(Extract from the School's Website)



NO MORE TRAFFIC ON OUR STREETS

Kathleen McCartan

This is an Awareness Campaign against Human Trafficking taking place in Belfast, between 12th and 20th May. Activities will be held throughout the city in different venues. For more information:

<mailto:info@nomoretraffik.com>



FROM THE CONFERENCE OF RELIGIOUS IN MOÇAMBIQUE

The wave of robberies on religious houses in Moçambique has claimed its first victim. On 3rd May the Consolata Fathers were attacked in their mission and Fr Valentim Camal died as a result of severe head trauma.

We are making public our outrage and we protest against the violence which is plaguing our country in so many ways, victimizing innocent people and claiming lives. Trafficking in human organs, sexual violence, recent kidnappings, murders, robberies are the expression of the violence, making our good citizens hostages in their own country, in their own homes.

AN TAIRSEACH WICKLOW SABBATICAL

Barbara Bailey

"Come and explore spirituality in the context of an evolving universe, an endangered earth, the Christian tradition" is the invitation on their brochure. I have just completed this inspiring ten week programme based at the Dominican Ecology Centre Wicklow. I resonate with Ines, EAP, who describes it in the latest edition of Soundings. The balance of input, reflection, indoor and creative activities in the company of sixteen other explorers certainly suited me. I even regained my taste for painting landscapes and writing poetry (not part of the course).



The Centre also offers shorter retreats/courses with the same leaders. I would particularly recommend:

In Search of the God of the New Story:

3 - 8 June. Mark McDonnell ofc and Pauline McGrath OP

Finding God in the Singing Heart of the World:

17 - 22 June John Feehan and Hugh O'Donnell

It is also possible to join part of the ten week programme, in Autumn or Spring, including the intensive week looking at our evolution over 14 billion years in the context of the discoveries of contemporary science. Most worth-while.

Still on the theme of evolving within crises and hope, several in our group went to the meeting in Dublin organised by the Association of Priests on the Bank Holiday Monday. One thousand lay and clerical participants gathered, including seven other RSHM! For me the inclusiveness and level of dialogue during the day modeled the kind of Church most of the participants were seeking. There is an excellent account of the meeting in last week's Tablet.





REFLECTION GROUP

Patsy Butler

Sisters from Pen, Seafield and Fazakerley, 11 in all, met in Fazakerley on Wednesday 2nd May. Agnes got a great “Welcome Back”.

Eleanor offered a reflective prayer using a diagram from Adrian Smith W.F. titled ‘Re-visioning the Church’. The diagram was of an elongated broken shape, (rather like a barrage balloon) with captions:

Jesus gave birth to a
Vision for his own people
after his death his followers carried
The vision beyond Palestine.....
The vision attracts increasingly more people ...
which necessitates a hierarchical organisational structure
..... The structure boxes in the vision.....
The energy of the vision is expended on
preserving and promoting the structure....
The vision is resuscitated
in contemporary context,
giving new energy
and requiring
new structures

OR

Energy diminishes, the vision is lost.
The structure which held the vision becomes irrelevant.

Following the prayer we had a very lively discussion on the article on Jeremiah by Walter Brueggemann.

Points raised were: radical,
words daunting,
our lives are simple,
there is conflict in all walks... even in nature,
conflict in the Church.

It was decided that we needed to reflect further on the article and Jeremiah before offering questions to be considered.
All enjoyed the delicious lunch ... and chat.
Thanks once again to Fazakerley for their hospitality.

Next meeting 29th May, hopefully we’ll have our “homework” done!!!!

MILLENNIUM GROUP MEETING: 14th -17th May

DIAMOND JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS!



OTHER MOMENTS OF THE MILLENNIUM GROUP MEETING

