

## EXCHANGE JULY 2013

### From the PROVINCIAL COUNCIL

We are looking forward to the meetings in July and appreciate the sacrifice many of you have made to be present. Those of us who were at the General Chapter are hoping to pass on something of our personal experience as well as talk about the main discussions and outcomes. We are glad to know most of you were able to see the web page or receive the news from it with the help of others. We thank the communities and those of you who sent messages on the Forum. They were appreciated by all.

If you are not able to attend the meeting about the General Chapter in your area, we hope you are able to arrange to go in another area.

The Provincial Chapter Planning Team will meet with the facilitators on 7<sup>th</sup> August and then with the Formation Team on 8<sup>th</sup>. The Formation Team will then prepare material for us to use for personal and group reflection in September so that at the Chapter we will be able to agree on what is important for us in the next six years.

### MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL CHAPTER COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE:

Still to come at [www.rscm-gen.com](http://www.rscm-gen.com) are photos of our final days and final ritual, so continue to check the website periodically.

*Joanne, Joan and Rosinha*

## UPMINSTER: THANKSGIVING MASS AND CELEBRATION



On 22<sup>nd</sup> May St Joseph's church was crowded for the special Mass to celebrate the life of RSHM in Upminster and surrounding areas. Sr Sheila began by thanking the parishioners and friends of the Upminster community over the years for their support. This close relationship was obvious at the 'party' afterwards when the house was filled with friends who spent the time recounting memories and stories and enjoying the 'spread'.



## *Part of what Mary Jo said at the Thanksgiving Mass.*

*Thank you all for coming here tonight to give thanks for the relationship between the sisters of the RSHM community here in Upminster and the friends and parishioners who have supported them.*

*We celebrate the life and presence of the RSHM during 86 years. While living in Upminster, these sisters had a wide outreach. They worked in schools in Hornchurch, East Ham, Elm Park and Custom House, as well as the junior school here in the parish and Sacred Heart of Mary School. Sr. Teresa also worked in the parish in Hornchurch after retiring. Many of these sisters are here tonight and those who cannot be here are praying with us.*

*The sisters who are here have come to thank you, our friends and parishioners, for the support you have given to our community during these years. It has been life-giving for them to be part of such a good parish and we appreciate the valuable relationship with the priests here and all of you.*

*Our Charism is 'That all may have life'..... We'll still have a presence in East London, but we are not sure what form that will take – some sisters won't be too far away. We hope that Sr. Rosemary will still work in St. Francis Hospice and that Sr. Kathleen will still have her work with women in need at 'Women at the Well'. As you know Sr Teresa has already moved to our community in Liverpool, Sr Mary and Sr Máire will shortly move to Waterford, and, later on, Sr Sheila will move to Carlisle.*

*All of us have memories – it could be of Sr. Immaculata or Sr. Saint Esprit who taught us. It could be of the many sisters who were buried from this Church. It could be of conversations that were important to us. For most of the sisters who have lived here it will be of the daily meetings with friends, here at Mass, or in the streets, at school or in the convent.*

*We want to thank you, again, for that experience of sharing life together and for your support and friendship.*

## **BEREAVEMENTS**

### **Our sympathy and prayers are with:**

Sr Nuala Mullins on the death of her sister-in-law, **Brid Mullins**, who died on 10<sup>th</sup> May  
Sr Esther McCarthy on the death of her sister, **Philomena McCarthy**, who died on 24<sup>th</sup> May  
Sr Kathleen O'Keefe on the death of her brother, **Johnny O'Keefe**, who died on 1<sup>st</sup> June  
Sr Rosemary Lenehan on the death of her sister, **Frankie Masterson**, who died on 6<sup>th</sup> June  
Sr Monica Gribbin on the death of her sister, **Margaret Lee**, who died on 16<sup>th</sup> June  
Sr Regina King on the death of her sister, **Biddy Magnier**, who died on 18<sup>th</sup> June

Sr Terezinha Cecchin on the death of her sister-in-law, **Rosa Cecchin**, who died suddenly on 18<sup>th</sup> June.

### **The Sisters of the Eastern American Province on the deaths of:**

**Sr. Madeleine Cain** who died in Tarrytown on 22<sup>nd</sup> May at the age of 89 years and in the 67<sup>th</sup> year of her Religious Profession.

**Sr. Colette Mahoney** who died in Tarrytown on 14<sup>th</sup> June at the age of 86 years and in the 67<sup>th</sup> year of her Religious Profession.

**Sr. Eileen Kearns** who died in Tarrytown 6<sup>th</sup> July at the age of 76 years and in the 58<sup>th</sup> year of her Religious Profession.

The Sisters of the Western American Province on the death of **Sister Denise O'Neill** who died in Orange on 24<sup>th</sup> June at the age of 97 years of age and in the 79<sup>th</sup> year of her Religious Profession.

## HOLY SPIRIT SISTERS

The Holy Spirit Sisters of Monze Diocese have now had their Constitutions approved and have been officially recognised in Rome. They are celebrating this great occasion in the life of their Institute on the 27<sup>th</sup> July. We know some of you have received invitations to go for this event, as you have been instrumental in their formation and growth as a religious institute. We also know that the Sisters are in need of money to complete a house they are building and that two of the Sisters have been in hospital after a car crash and another is seriously ill. Considering this, we decided that we would donate a gift of money to them, rather than asking someone to travel to Zambia to represent the province. Judith is there at the moment and will be at the celebration as well as the other members of the region who have close contact with the Holy Spirit Sisters.



### OUTREACH TO ZAMBIA *Catherine Dunne*

I am borrowing Dolores' term when I share a happy event with my friends in the bridge club in Tallaght. On hearing that I was going to Zambia last summer they presented me with biros, pencils and rubbers. This year they asked to run a charity morning of bridge for me and raised €660.00 promising to do another in September.

In addition one man, Declan, has loaded me with hundreds of *Paddy Power* little betting biros, no reflection on Declan's pastimes!

They will go a long way to help Fiona, Holy Spirit Sr in her class of 90 pupils.

She is delighted as some have already arrived.

There is more to bridge than counting cards and scores so I recommend it highly.





## THE EXTENDED FAMILY CORE GROUP MEETING: CARLISLE 24-25 MAY *Aline Leonard*

The first part of the meeting was to share with the group, the meeting of Catherine, Moira and Aline with the Provincial Council, 3 May 2013. The Council was very supportive of and interested in our work. They encouraged us to continue to support the local groups and help them, if necessary, to progress from reflecting on our early history and its ministries to those of the present day. A natural progression would be, and may be beginning to take place, to an emphasis on action for evangelical justice.

The preparation and planning for the Extended Family meeting in Penmaenmawr, 25-27 October 2013, with the theme, "Hearts burning within us as we journey", took up the major part of our time. This is the fourth such meeting and it will be one of reflection and emphasis on the points raised in our meeting with the Provincial Council. We will be fortunate to have with us in Pen, Rita Arthur, RSHM, who until recently was the Institute's NGO Representative at the United Nations in New York. We look forward to her sharing with us her experiences.



**The General Chapter, 6-27 June 2013** was one of the two important meetings, on which we reflected and explored ways in which our Extended Family Groups could take part. This involvement would be chiefly through the support of their prayers. Hopefully, at the October weekend in Pen, Ursula Canavan RSHM will tell us about the General Chapter, where representatives from all over the Institute will have evaluated our mission at the present time and will be giving hope and encouragement for our journey in the next six years.

The other meeting will be:

### **The Northern European Province Chapter, Part 2, in Birmingham 11-13 October 2013.**

The theme, like that of the Extended Family Gathering in Pen, will be "Hearts burning within us as we journey." Extended Family involvement in the NEP Chapter has yet to be decided.

The final task of the week-end was the decision to put information in the Exchange following the Core Group Meetings. We encourage communities and Sisters living singly to download the Extended Family Newsletter.



Please encourage the lay members of the Extended Family Groups to come to Pen 25-27 October, 2013.

Thank you.



## UPDATE ON LEGISLATION RE: BUYERS OF SEX IN IRELAND:

We were delighted with the announcement that a strong recommendation has gone to the Minister for Justice by the Oireachtas after long consultations to bring in legislation to criminalise the buyers of sex. It is rewarding for all who have campaigned for this over many years, TORL, Ruhama, APT and many others. Interviews have been widespread on papers and media presenting a very positive response to the news. (See facebook [aptireland.org](https://www.facebook.com/aptireland.org) or [turnofftheredlight.ie](https://www.turnofftheredlight.ie))

### *These are some Extracts below:*

The report of the Oireachtas Committee on Justice calling for the criminalisation of payments for sex through prostitution is warmly welcomed. Current laws have been facilitating a form of slavery, because the prostitutes have essentially been compelled to turn to pimps, not police, for protection.

It is crazy that it is legal for a man to pay for sex but it is a crime for a prostitute to accept money for sex. Reversing the situation by banning the purchase of sexual services could more readily be enforced by gardaí. Decriminalising the status of prostitutes would help reduce the stigma and thus enhance the opportunities for prostitutes to seek official support against effective enslavement. It would also afford better opportunities for legal authorities to put the pimps and sex traffickers out of business.

The Immigrant Council of Ireland is one of 68 organisations, with a combined membership of 1.6m people, which form the Turn Off the Red Light Campaign to seek such a change in the law.

The justice committee has come to its conclusion after studying hundreds of written submissions, as well as six months of hearings at Leinster House. During the process, doctors, nurses, public servants, human rights and children's rights organisations, and many more made the case for changing the law. However, the recommendations are really a tribute to the survivors of prostitution who testified to the committee. These women chose to relive the horror of their ordeal by retelling their stories. It is their bravery which has given hope to those still trapped in a life of threats, abuse and violence today.

Debates on future laws are taking place in France and other continental countries as well as closer to home in Scotland and the North. If these jurisdictions proceed and Ireland does not, then we will absolutely be a soft target for criminals.

Public support for our campaign has been overwhelming and without doubt secured this milestone, however, it is important to note that our law has not been changed yet. The recommendations will now be considered by the minister, Alan Shatter.

We will be encouraging Mr Shatter to conclude his consideration in a timely manner and move to legislate at an early stage, as any delay only benefits the criminals.

*- Denise Charlton is chief executive of the Immigrant Council of Ireland*