

The feast of Mary's birthday was a fitting day to celebrate this new moment in our RSHM life in Ferrybank.



Even though the last months of 'labour' had been somewhat frustrating and prolonged, with the sisters moving into Grianán Close only a few days previously, all this was forgotten as we enjoyed praying in the spacious, yet simple, chapel adjoining Madonna House and then visiting and feasting with the new community in Grianán Close.

Anne (Care Manager) welcomed about 40 people including RSHM, Frs. Crotty and Dempsey; John and Emma Architects; Eamon the foreman and staff from Madonna House. Through ritual and prayer we blessed, not just the buildings but the giftedness and dedication of those who had shaped and worked on them and, of course, especially the sisters of Madonna House and Grianán Close who would pray and live in them.



Next it was the turn of Grianán Close Community to give us a warm welcome to their home.



We took the short and gentle walk next door, no steps! and turned into the little courtyard around which four of the apartments are clustered.



As we sang ‘Bless this house O Lord we pray’ I was invited to add the final clods to the base of a miniature tree in the centre. I was reminded of some of the words of the blessing:

*‘May this be a home of courage
Where healing and growth are loved’.*

I recalled that the seeds of this day had been in our Provincial Chapter conversations and responses from the questionnaire sent out soon after. We began to dream. So many had questioned, supported and encouraged us on the way, including donations, gifts and some financial help from other Provinces and Region. The tree is a living symbol of our interdependence and wider community that has made all this possible.

Just a few steps then for our celebratory feast in the Community Room, around which the other four apartments are clustered. A covered way adjoins the two.



It was a time to chat, to visit, to browse. Words or even photographs cannot convey the workmanship, quality and attention to detail (such as ample storage space).

It leaves to the sisters in Grianán Close to say more as they settle in and become involved in Madonna House and the locality. Plants have still to be planted, pictures hung, arrangements in the little oratory, office and laundry completed.



I will finish with the Act of Commitment the Sisters of Grianán Close made as it is apt for us as a Province Community and in our own communities.

Response: Together Lord we will build a home in a new world

*With the bricks of tolerance we build together a better world
With the bricks of belonging we build together a better world
With the bricks of understanding we build together a better world
With the bricks of sharing we build together a better world
With the bricks of hope we build together a better world
With the bricks of community we build together a better world.
With the bricks of love we build together a better world.*

SHARING OUR RESOURCES

The RSHM Sources group has asked that each Province have a sister to facilitate the sharing of RSHM resources regarding our history so that there is a network across the Institute. André Dullaghan has agreed to accept this role for the next three years.

MADONNA HOUSE COMMUNITY

Sr Katherine Quilligan has now joined Madonna House Community. We wish her every blessing.

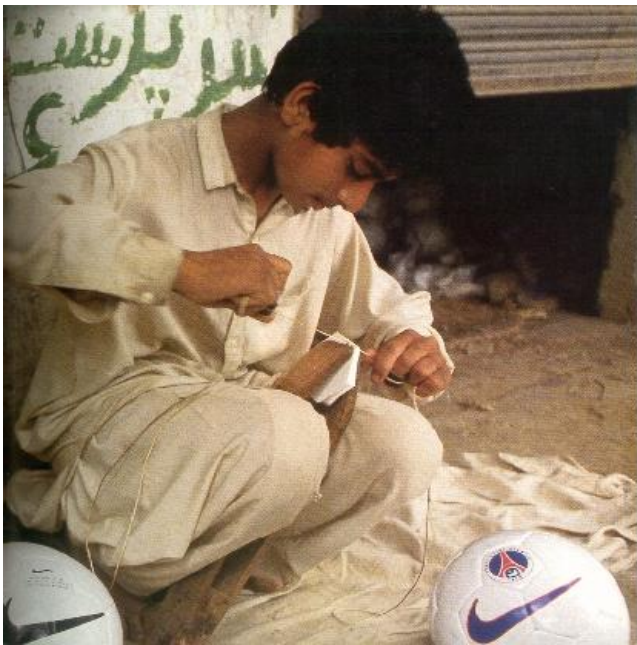
BEREAVEMENTS

Our thoughts and prayers have been with:

Sr Joan Lynam on the death of her sister Patsy Lynam who died on 30th July.

“Because women and children are those most affected by the negative aspects of globalisation, they will be the focus of our action for justice”. General Chapter 2001

“God has made the earth and all it contains for you to share. The earth’s goods must be divided fairly and this right of everyone to a just share comes first. All other rights must help, not block, this basic right of every human being.” Populorum Progression Paul VI



Child Workers:

The working classes may be injuriously degraded oppressed in three ways:-

1. When they are neglected in infancy
2. When they are overlooked by employers and are thus rendered incompetent
3. When they are paid low wages for their labour

Employment of Children 1818

Robert Owen

Child workers do receive wages which they earn by hard work, education and health care. Working conditions are improved but they still have the more difficult tasks e.g. crawling under machinery to keep it clean and working for long hours.

Child Labourers

They are a different category and are often trafficked children. They are forced to work without remuneration, receive no health or educational benefits and are fed just sufficiently that enables them to work longer. If they do not work hard enough they are beaten. Mainly, they work in sweat shops, brothels and plantations e.g. cocoa Beans. Many collect the beans for the chocolate that we eat in the west e.g. Easter Eggs. The estimated work 14-15 hours a day living in slave-like conditions. It is estimated that 8.4 million children are trapped in the worst forms of child labour.





Child Soldiers: “Let the children come to me.”

War makes a country unstable and business and agriculture suffer. Around 300.000 children as young as seven are fighting in wars around the world. Conflict often kills the young. Government forces as well as rebel armies use child soldiers. Often young girls are sexually abused and forced to “marry” adult soldiers. These children are snatched by traffickers, brain-washed, drugged and taught how to use a gun to kill. By the time the child is 10 or 11 he could have killed many people including other children. It is very difficult to debrief them and many continue to suffer traumas and flashbacks.

Child of the Street:

“I was a stranger and you invited me in.”

There are many reasons why children are living on the streets in the big cities of our world. Often they are not wanted at home, or it is to escape poverty and violence. There are also escaped child soldiers, child labourers and child workers. Drugs, stealing, hunger, shooting all create a violent world. They are special targets of gangs and local police and many die at their hands. Some babies are born on the street and live with their young mothers in sewers. Here there are many dangers from rats, poverty and illness.



Child of Violence

Many children suffer abuse and violence by their own family. Starvation, brutal beatings and general neglect has ended in the death of the child. In spite of intervention by health workers, social workers etc. the neglected child has died. “Whatever you did for the least of my brothers and sisters you did it to me. Enter into the joy of my Lord.” *Matt 25*

“Do not honour Jesus here in Church clothed in silk and then pass him by unclothed and frozen outside.”
St John Chrysostom