



Extended Family Newsletter

Issue 24 - December 2015

Solidarity

After the terrible events of 13th November, the thoughts and prayers of those of us on this side of the Channel go to those who have been affected on the continent, well-expressed by UK Prime Minister, David Cameron:

*"We stand with you. United.
Your values are our values. Your pain is our pain."*

At this time let's take to heart Pope Francis' prayer:

*"Fill us with peace, that we may live as brothers and sisters,
harming no one."*

UN Climate Change Conference

As we know the United Nations Climate Change Conference is taking place in Paris from 30th November until 11th December. The Conference objective is to achieve a [legally binding](#) and universal agreement on climate from all the nations of the world.

Civil Society Groups worldwide are mobilizing to raise awareness of the urgency of the issue and the need for a strong binding agreement. Inspired by Laudato Si, many faith-based groups are committed to taking action. As Pope Francis reminds us, *"Leaving an inhabitable planet to future generations is, first and foremost, up to us"*. We invite all our Extended Family to join the RSHM in praying for the work of the Conference, using Pope Francis' words:

*'All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures. You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.
Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty.
Fill us with peace, that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one.
O God of the poor, help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth, so precious in your eyes.
Bring healing to our lives, that we may protect the world and not prey on it, that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.
Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain at the expense of the poor and the earth.
Teach us to discover the worth of each thing, to be filled with awe and contemplation, to recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature as we journey towards your infinite light.
We thank you for being with us each day.
Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace.'*

15th November, 2015: Meeting of the Extended Family at Seafield

Our November meeting was on the theme of 'Women in Ministry'.

Sarah, a third year student nurse, did a six-week placement with the Holy Spirit Sisters at Monze in the summer and enjoyed the hospitality of the Lusaka, Chivuna & Choma communities. Sarah shared a PowerPoint presentation of her experiences and said she would like to return to Zambia sometime in the future.

We reflected on 'Five Women of Exodus' by Rev Amy Butler which provoked a lively discussion with lots of stories shared. We used the quote from Pope Francis which Catherine sent and we supplemented it with other quotes.

Esmerelda, an asylum seeker from Albania, has been coming to the group for a few years now and two of the women have befriended her.

Kath Nolan led the closing prayer. We remembered Ruth who was on the committee and died since the last meeting.

Eleanor Dalton

Carlisle Extended Family: Our Journey October 2014 – October 2015

Our journey has taken us to 3 continents since our meeting together last October. It began on the African continent – in Zambia. We had heard that the Holy Spirit Sisters in Zambia needed help with educational materials for their mission school. In November 2014 we organised a 'Saturday Brunch'. This took place in the parish hall at Our Lady's, immediately after the lunchtime Mass. The entry charge included a bacon/sausage buttie and tea/coffee. We had the usual raffle and a cake stall and we managed to raise £700 for the project.

This event was followed in December with a carol service in Christ the King church where there was to be a display of Christmas Trees, erected and decorated by various organisations in the city, each tree being decorated to reflect the work of the organisation. We obtained a tree and decorated it with hearts cut out in red and silver card and on each of these hearts we wrote an appropriate word or phrase appertaining to the work/spirituality of the sisters. There were about 20 trees and there was a donation box placed beside each tree. This event raised for us £70 which was given to the RSHM mission fund.

In June back in Europe – Carlisle to be precise, on 13 June we welcomed speakers from England/Africa/Wales and Scandinavia to join us in our day for the 'Celebration of Consecrated Life.' This was a joint event with the sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary of whom there are two living and working in Carlisle. The event commenced with Mass in Our Lady's parish church at 12.10 followed by lunch in the parish hall. Invitations had been sent out to other religious in Cumbria, friends of the sisters, parishioners and of course the Extended Family members from Barrow. Bishop Michael came as the celebrant of the Mass. We were very fortunate to have our own Greg Smith to arrange the music and the liturgy for the Mass. "The

Mass was beautiful, moving and prayerful” were words used by some of those who attended and it was very well attended. The hymn singing was great.

After the mass we had lunch in the parish hall followed by each of the invited speakers giving a short résumé of their own personal spiritual journey. The speakers were: Sr. Edith SHJM working in Zambia at present but originally from Scotland, our own Sr. Mary Jo from Wales but originating also from Scotland, Sr. Hilda a young sister from the Cistercian Monastery of Hying, Nikolas a young Scandinavian man from Cor et Lumen Christi Lay Community in Wigton near Carlisle It was a privilege to hear how the Lord had touched each of the speakers in a different way and yet each one's story was so special.

We had great feedback from the day with remarks like “Best one yet” “Where do we go from here?” “How can we better it?” The event came to an end with a fabulous rendition from 'Sister Act', full habit being the order of the day, by parishioners from St Margaret Mary's including one of our Extended Family members. This was a great ending to a great day.

The next continent was Asia. On 16 June we had a wonderful presentation, given by Sr Madeleine, about work being undertaken in China. It was a very moving presentation and some of the slides Sister showed us really brought home to us all the plight of the poor people in China. Following on from this event, in August, members of our Extended Family and some of their fellow parishioners organised a 'Noodle Night' in St Margaret Marys parish centre. We all ate very well for a nominal price and after we had eaten Eileen gave a brief overview with slides provided by Sr Madeleine of the work being undertaken in China. This event raised £500 which is at present on its way to China.

We are now in the process of moving on to Syria – Our aim is to help the refugees. We are hoping to buy and send direct, essential equipment such as tents and blankets – but we are still researching the requirements. On 17 October we are going to have a 'Saturday Brunch' as last year, which was such a huge success and well attended. We will have a raffle, tombola and cake stall and hope to raise enough money to help in some small way, those whose lives have been broken by the issues that surround them in Syria.

What we hope to do:

- As a follow on from these events we have invited a member from the parish Justice and Peace group to come and share with us some of the issues they are aware of that are in need of our help.
- Our own spiritual growth: We are hoping to organise a pilgrimage to Béziers next year.
- We have our monthly Extended Family meeting which always starts with a quiet prayerful time. We have two prayer days – One during Advent and the other during Lent. We have also joined with the Sisters for Prayer and of course refreshments when they have had special celebrations.

Maureen Wilson and Yvonne Gibson

17th October 2015: Carlisle Extended Family Fundraising Event

As mentioned in our report that we gave to the Extended Family weekend in Noddfa, our next venture would be to look at the Syrian Refugee situation and think what we could do to help so on Saturday 17th October we held our first fundraising event to help the Syrian Crisis.

Following the parish lunchtime mass, we held a 'Saturday Brunch' which turned out to be a huge success. Our admission charge included a lunchtime snack, we had a tombola stall, a raffle and a cake stall.

In a two-hour period, we managed to raise £1000 for this worthy cause. We have been able to give a donation of £250 to a local organisation who are transporting goods for the refugees, this money will be used to help purchase fuel for the vehicles. We have also sent £750 to SVP twinnage – which is the worldwide SVP organisation and the money will go direct to Syria. It will be used to help those refugees who haven't yet been placed in a camp.

We thank all those people who helped in any way to make this event the success it was.

Maureen Wilson

18th November 2015: Meeting of the Extended Family at Béziers

After Ireland, Brazil and Mozambique, the Extended Family from Beziers met on Wednesday to discover the foundation of Porto, the first foundation of the Portuguese Institute until the most recent in Eastern Timor. In a very hostile political and religious context, Father Gailhac's audacity, the Hennessy family's perseverance (Mother St Thomas Hennessy, Miss Margaret Hennessy, Mother St Marie Hennessy) and Mother Sainte Croix's thoughtful support, impressed us.



Mother Ste.Croix was the General Superior at that time. Through one of her letters to Father Gailhac we discovered her taking a mother's care for the little foundation and we welcomed her advice still useful for us today.

Pope Francis's words "Go towards those who are weighed down by sorrows... and announce the merciful embrace of the Father" resonated in our heart to help us to go through the bloody events yet solidarity, too of Friday the 13th of November very present within us.



Each foundation knows difficulties. Our prayer takes account of those of our church today in so many countries and of so many people. With songs from her country (Mozambique) Sr.Valeria Erneio gave thanks for all she has received from members of the Extended Family during the six years she worked for the mission of the Mother House. She invited the Extended Family to her farewell on the 13th of December before her departure for another RSHM mission in Mozambique on the 22nd December.



Our friendly meeting ended by a very full dining table... of apple pies!!!



Our next meeting will be in February 2016 to discover the Eastern American Province.

Thérèse-Marie, RCSM

As always thanks to the contributors and to Sister Thérèse-Marie for her work on the translations to and from French.

The newsletter is published in English and French versions. If you (or someone) else would prefer to receive the French version then please get in touch.

Could you contribute an item to the newsletter? Photos and articles – no matter how short – are always welcome and will be held for the next available newsletter. Don't delay - exercise your literary talents now! Contributions in English or French (both, even!) are equally welcome.

Electronic copy by email or as an attachment is preferable, as are digital photos - but handwritten copy and prints are welcome too. See below for the email and postal addresses:

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