



Extended Family Newsletter

Issue 27 - February 2017

Meeting of the Extended Family- Béziers, 8th June 2016

In March, during our last meeting, we discovered the foundation of the Eastern American Province in Sag Harbor. We continued our trip in the EAP by exploring Mother Mary- Joseph Butler's creative work and growing network of Marymount schools in New York, California and Europe.

We were impressed with the daring touch of genius and vision of Mother Butler in her care to establish schools opening to internationality and promoting an excellent education.



Heither meeting the Extended Family

We became inspired with Mother Joseph's spirituality by three extracts of her letters to the Institute that she wrote during her mandate as the 5th General Superior. Her faith and her zeal still sustaining us in our witness of Christian life.

In the time of prayer, we implored the Holy Spirit to send us to the heart of the world as missionary- disciples at the example of all who came before us.

The evening continued with a shared meal in the presence of the Provincial Council of the PEN. At the Mother-House that week, Sr Rosinha Pereira from Brazil and Sr Kathleen Connell from London as members of the Heritage and spirituality task force joined us: a taste of the internationality of the Institute well appreciated beyond the wall of languages.



A convivial evening!

It was our last meeting for the year. But the team has been asked to prepare more of them!!!

Thérèse-Marie, RSHM

(This article appeared in the French version of Issue 26)

News from Carlisle EF Group

Noddfa retreat: 7-9 October 2016

Six of our Carlisle group met up with fellow EF members from Barrow in Noddfa where we were able to participate in the retreat organised by Barrow group. The weekend was led by our former parish priest Canon John Watson.

Again, we were blessed with good weather to allow us to enjoy the beauty of the gardens and surrounding area including the beach.



Collecting pebbles on the beach

That All May Have Life

Patricia Sydney experiencing Noddfa for the first time made this comment 'On visiting Noddfa for the first time I felt peace and contentment and I look forward to returning. We all enjoyed the weekend both spiritually and socially and look forward to the next time.

Beziers: 18 – 22 October 2016

Six members of our Carlisle group had the privilege of staying in the mother house in Beziers. So much history, too much to take in during such a short time! We were also fortunate to meet up with four ladies from New York who were not EF members but who worked closely with the sisters in various areas of work in New York. This has given us a greater knowledge of some of the work and projects taking place in New York.



Enjoying some sunshine on the steps of the Mother House in Béziers

Our days were packed full – visiting all the places in Beziers area where Fr Gailhac and Appollonie lived and worked and worshipped. We appreciated very much the guided tours given by Sr Marie John and Sr Bernadette and for all the input they gave us.



Group from Carlisle with ladies from New York

On our last evening, the EF members from Beziers came to the Mothers House where they held the meeting followed by a shared supper which they had provided. The evening ended with our rendition of 'We'll meet again' followed by 'Auld Lang Syne' this was a wonderful end to our time with our new-found friends. Hopefully we will meet again – in Beziers.

Sr Bernadette invited us to share a meal in Bon Pasteur house where we met the other RSHM sisters living in Beziers. We had a lovely evening with the Sisters and Group from New York and bonded friendships.

We had little free time but what we had we put to good use. We visited the cathedral (which unfortunately does not have a Bishop – sign of the times) and even managed to climb right to the top of the cathedral via a very narrow winding stone staircase – but the views over Beziers were amazing and worth the climb. Beziers is a beautiful city and this proved to be an amazing trip for us all and a place we all said we would love to return to.



View from the Cathedral 1



View from the Cathedral 2

That All May Have Life

Farewell to Sister Sheila: 3 November 2016

We came together to celebrate Sr Sheila's time with us in Carlisle as she prepared to move on to pastures new. The EF were joined by other friends of the sisters in the chapel as we had a short celebration service this was followed by a shared supper – which was enjoyed by all. We wish Sr Sheila much happiness in Liverpool.



Sister Sheila Looking at the buffet at her farewell celebration party

Lancaster Gathering: 12 November 2016

The EF 'Core Group' organised a Regional Gathering in Lancaster. Members from Carlisle, Barrow and Liverpool attended. The topic for the day 'Laudato Si' – We all learned so much from this day and hope to continue with this theme for one of our events in Carlisle which we open out to all those interested in attending.

Advent Service: 12 December 2016

We met after midday mass for a shared lunch in the convent and then went to the chapel where Greg and Eileen presented a short service for Advent prayer with theme coming from 'Laudato Si'.

Farewell to Sister Moira: 16 January 2017

Sad day for EF Carlisle as we had short service in St Gabriel's chapel to celebrate Sr Moira's time in Carlisle as she prepares to move on to Barrow. We had invited Sr Moira's 'Circle Dance' ladies to help us celebrate and the service was followed by a shared supper and ended with a circle dance. A lovely evening!

We will miss you Moira.



Carlisle EF Group with Sister Moira



In front of the portrait of Mother St John, the foundress of the Institute

Carlisle Meeting: 16 February 2017

We held our EF meeting the highlighted point for future was 'How can we help the homeless/refugees in Carlisle'

Maureen Wilson

News from the Extended Family in Furness

Monthly Prayer Meetings

Our monthly prayer meetings continue, usually on the first Monday of the month. Recent themes have been:

- "Entering the Spirit of Advent", when we made our own Spiritual Advent Wreath
- "From the Old" to the New, looking back and looking forward on our Spiritual Journey
- "Gratitude for the Gift of Life", believing that God is creating me every moment.

That All May Have Life

Foundation Day Gathering

At the moment we are preparing for our big Foundation Day gathering on 25th February. Our theme for the gathering is "Suffer Little Children". Our reflection will look at the beginnings of Fr Gailhac's work caring for young women who had lost their way and needed direction.

Our Guest Speaker will be Anne Diss, a former teacher and youth worker, who has long experience of working in the South Furness area with children and young people with special needs. Our morning will include contemplative prayer and will end with mass in St Mary's church.

Visit to the Mother House

The Furness Extended Family are following in the footsteps of the Carlisle group and are heading off to Beziers in May this year. We have 8 people who are committed to going for a week-long visit and a few more who are still thinking about coming. Flights have been booked – Sr Pierre was first!

Excitement is building as we all look forward to going to see the place where the RSHM was born and all of the things that grew out of Fr Gailhac's vision and charism. We are all looking forward to stopping in the Mother House itself. Our prayer is that the Mother House will be preserved for generations to come, so that they, too, can make this visit.

Sister Pierre and John Newby

Foundation Day Celebration in Lisburn, February 2017

There was a short introduction on the foundation of the institute and the situation in Beziers in 1849.

Aware of the reality of today's world society in a state of unease, dissatisfaction, violence and wars, many people are angry with governing bodies for lack of co-operation in working for justice in a very unequal society and history repeating itself. In 1849 life was not much different, though perhaps on a different plane, when Father Gailhac gathered his little flock about him to face the reality of life in the city of Béziers.



That All May Have Life



To celebrate our 168th birthday of the institute, a small group composed mainly of past pupils from Lisburn and Rathmore came together to reflect and pray about the reality of our time.

We used the DVD on Lectio Divina which was very reflective and relaxing. It reminded us of the beautiful world God has gifted us with to respect, cherish and enjoy; also the creative power of God's word in our lives.

Our friends found it a very good experience and much discussion followed. They love coming together to pray and share and to reminisce and this continued over the usual cup of tea, cakes and tarts which they heartily enjoyed. Our numbers are limited due to shortage of space - but sometimes small is beautiful!



Sister Kathleen McCarten

Meeting of the Extended Family in Béziers, 24th February 2017

Our first meeting of the year took place on 21st October last in the presence of six members of the Extended Family from Carlisle and four members of the Extended Family of New York, enabling us to enlarge our group into the dimensions of the Province and Institute.

An evening of sharing – in two languages, some achievement! – and of prayer focussed on ‘The Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth’ as portrayed by the painter Arcabas and naturally a time of friendship shared with specialities brought by everyone.



The Carlisle and New York groups who visited Béziers in October



Acrabas : La Visitation

We met again on the 24th February for our second meeting. We recalled the birth of the Institute and gave thanks for the mission lived then and now, yesterday and today. In particular, we reflected upon the violence which permeates our realities, social, cultural, economic, and environmental and which causes such great suffering.

Human trafficking is one such source of violence. The document of 8th February 2017 for the feast of St Josephine Bakhita (International Day of Prayer for and Awareness of Human Trafficking) supported our reflection and prayer.



The Crypt

Our third meeting, which will take place on 19th May will continue reflection and prayer around the Parable of the Good Samaritan. We will ask for the strength for concrete action to be within our reach as peacemakers. At this meeting we very much hope to be joined by several members of the Extended Family from Barrow-in-Furness who will be visiting the Mother House at this time. We are already saying to them: "See you soon!"

Thérèse-Marie, RSHM

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.

E-mail: efnewsletter@outlook.com