



Extended Family Newsletter

Issue 31 - July 2018

News from the Core Group

Greetings from the Core Group!

In June, we celebrated the Feasts of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and of Mary on consecutive days. Their hearts are a frequent theme of Gailhac's writings. Mary Milligan, in her well-known book, "That They May Have Life", writes "The heart of Jesus is often linked with the heart of Mary in Gailhac's writings. Indeed, he rarely speaks of the heart of Mary without referring in some way to the heart of Jesus."¹

These words below, taken from one of Gailhac's letters written around 4 years before his death, she uses to demonstrate this very point. They provide a useful reflection for these two great feasts:

"It is true that the heart of Mary is the treasure of graces, for Jesus Christ has confided them to her to distribute to us, but Jesus is the source; it is from this divine heart that all the riches of heaven come to us. If we love the heart of Mary, even more we should love the heart of Jesus; it is the heart of Jesus that has created the heart of Mary, the heart of Jesus is eternal; the heart of Mary has limits, the heart of Jesus has none. The moon owes its light to the sun, the sun burns with the light which is its being."

These words remind us that whether we are bathed in the warmth of the sun or in the light of a full moonlit night, we are always bathed in the love of God as we journey in faith and in life.

¹ see p103/104

The Annual Gathering at Noodfa

The dates for this year's gathering were announced in the last newsletter. This year the gathering is later than usual, from Friday 9th to Sunday 11th November because the Provincial Chapter will be taking place in Dublin around the time that we would normally be in Noodfa.

Our theme for 2018 continues our 'Journeying' themes, and will be "Our Faith Journey" In planning the weekend, the Core Group have taken into account your feedback from last year and have tried to build in some more free time for reflection and some optional activities for people to try. The 'booking list' will be opened in September – after the 'silly season' is over. One of the changes proposed for this year is to have an earlier start for the musicians and singers so that the practice for the prayer services and the mass does not have to be crammed into the other activities of the weekend. We will agree a time in the afternoon with Sr Patrice for this session and let you know.

In one of the sessions, we hope to give feedback from the Provincial Chapter to bring the Extended Family up to date on the directions emerging from the Chapter meeting. Keep an eye on your emails or listen out for news. You are all invited to come but, sadly, places are limited: we have just 30 places available to offer.

John Newby

News from the Extended Family in Furness

Monthly Prayer Meetings

Our Monthly Prayer Meetings continue, normally on the first Monday of the month at 7pm, in the Convent on Abbey Road in Barrow. Again, we will be taking a break in August and our next meeting on 3rd September will be our last one with the Sisters, who are due to move later in September. We hope to continue the prayer meetings with people from the regular attendees taking the lead on a rotating basis, meeting either in the Parish Centre or in the homes of some EF members.

One of the key things we want to do is to make sure that after the Sisters have gone is to continue to gather on each of the three major feast days and celebrate the day. The plan is to join up with the Carlisle Extended Family and the Sisters to do this, either in Barrow or Carlisle. We have already shared gatherings for Foundation Day in Barrow and the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Mary in Carlisle over a few years.

For Foundation Day in 2019, it would be good to do what we did for this year's 120th Anniversary Celebrations of the RSHM in Barrow and invite Past Pupils of the Croslands Convent School as well as other parishioners to join us to celebrate both the foundation of the Institute and the blessings brought here by the Sisters over those 120 years. Hopefully, we will also be joined by some of the Sisters too.

The Carlisle Gathering for the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Mary

Again, this year, our friends in Carlisle invited us to join them for their celebrations of this major feast day of the Institute. This was welcomed because we were not able to organise a gathering in the parish centre this year. A small group of us travelled up to Carlisle on a quiet sunny morning, four EF members and three of the Sisters (Sr Moira was already there).

I don't want to repeat what the Carlisle EF are reporting, so just a few notes about the day. It was moving to see and hear the 8 Sisters present renewing their Vows in a simple ceremony in the middle of Mass.

It was no surprise to find that Fr Frank Osman's jokes at the end of Mass haven't got any better in the years since he was in Barrow but it was good to see him looking so well.

Afterwards, in the Hall, it was good to meet up with so many familiar faces and to catch up on news of what's gone on since we last saw each other. We met St Juunza Mwangani, who was visiting the UK from Zambia, and enjoyed her talk about her life as a Holy Spirit Sister and her work and mission in the Monze Mission Hospital. We also found out that she was taught in the senior school in Chivuna where our Sisters worked and had later worked there with Sr Eleanor Dalton.

A good outcome of the day for us was that Sr Juunza agreed to accept the invitation from Sr Pierre to come and visit Barrow. You can read about that below.

As always, the shared lunch provided a real variety of tasty food and a chance for more chatting with friends old and new.

Our thanks to the Carlisle EF for a wonderful celebration and a good day out. Hopefully, next year we will be able to persuade more people to get up early on a Saturday morning and travel up from Barrow in time for the 10am mass – that is – if we get invited. At least now, having made the journey to Carlisle so often, it doesn't seem that far away at all.

Sr Juunza's Visit to Barrow

Sr Juunza was able to make a short visit, stopping just two nights. She stayed at the Convent and spent time with Sr Pierre, Sr Joyce, Sr Ann and Sr Moira. Lots of stories would have been shared by Sr Pierre and Sr Moira, both of whom spent several years working in Monze Diocese.



During her time here, on Friday morning Sr Junza was able to meet pupils from St Columba's Primary School on Walney Island, who continue to support the James Corboy Primary School in Monze and send funds there through the "Helpers of the Holy Spirit Sisters", a group set up some time ago by Fr Jerome Ainsworth who also spent many years in Monze (as did our new Bishop, Paul Warbrick). In the afternoon, Sr Juunza was back on the mainland to meet up with the pupils of Sacred Heart Primary school, located in the middle of the town. Sadly, there wasn't time to visit our other two Primary Schools, Holy Family and St Pius X. Perhaps next time?

In the evening, Sr Juunza gave her presentation about her life and work as a Holy Spirit Sister, working as the Senior Hospital Administrator in the Monze Mission Hospital. An invitation had been sent out at short notice to the whole of the parish and to the Extended Family. Fortunately, many of the EF members were able to attend.

Sr Juunza said that she considered the Holy Spirit Sisters to be the first branch of the Extended Family of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Mary because their formation had been guided by the Sacred Heart of Mary Sisters following their foundation in 1971.

Her presentation told of the mission of the Holy Spirit Sisters and their compassionate approach to running the Hospital in difficult circumstances 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

The stories of the work they do and the size of the population they serve (800,000) moved those listening.

In Question Time, Sr Juunza told us of her next major project, which is to build a 20-bed Baby Intensive Care Unit. At the moment the lack of facilities at the hospital means that some babies die soon after birth. When she said “There is no greater sadness than to send home a mother without her baby; no greater sadness”, the sounds from the audience meant that this had touched them deeply. For this project, the Hospital needs £70,000. That works out at just £3,500 per bed. The group present hoped that they can work to raise enough money to pay for at least one of the beds, perhaps by rekindling the local Helpers of the Holy Spirit Sisters group, and that other Extended Family groups may also want to join in or take up that challenge.

After her busy day with us in Barrow, Sr Juunza was whisked off again at lunchtime the next day, travelling down to Garstang with Fr Jerome to meet the people from his former parish who formed the original group of Helpers of the Holy Spirit Sisters.

Our time with Sr Juunza may have been short, but it certainly was a blessing to have her with us and it was certainly a very inspiring time too. By the time you are reading this, she will be happily back home after a long time away on her sabbatical leave and back into her work. Please remember her and her colleagues in your prayers.

Noddfa 2019

Excitement is beginning to build here in Barrow, with people already asking if they can have a place, but the booking list isn't open yet. They are looking forward to another inspirational weekend in that lovely place and meeting up with people we may not have seen since last year.

Béziers Pilgrimage 2018

The group that went to Béziers this year had an eventful end to their week. The French Air Traffic Controllers and the Public Transport Unions were going on strike on the day planned for their return, so Ryanair announced on Sunday teatime – while they were still at the seaside in Val Res - that their flight was cancelled, along with 400 other affected Ryanair flights. In the ensuing chaos, they were lucky to find the last few remaining seats on flights from nearby Carcassonne and get there by train from Beziers. Sadly, it meant losing a day and a half of time in Beziers but, at least, they didn't have to stay in Beziers until Ryanair could get them home on another flight from Beziers Airport on the following Saturday or Tuesday. Now the mission is to get refunds out of Ryanair for all of our Barrow-based group who flew home. The joys of air travel will always be with us, no matter which airline we fly with, and as long as the French Air Traffic Controllers go on strike over Bank Holiday Weekends.

The motto of the tale is, I suppose, don't plan your trip to Beziers to coincide with a Bank Holiday weekend.

The report of the pilgrimage is elsewhere in the newsletter.

Sr Pierre and John Newby

The working of the Holy Spirit in our Lives

We planned to have the usual informative day on the 9 June to celebrate RSHM feast day of the Sacred Heart of Mary. It was decided to ask a local priest to speak about his Zambian experience as he had worked the Monze Diocese in Zambia the same area where RSHM have a mission. The priest was approached only to find out that he would not be available on 9 June, a disappointment for him as well as ourselves, but he did give me the name of another priest whom he thought would be delighted to help us out, as he had visited Zambia in Monze Diocese and was now a retired priest living in our diocese.

I arranged a meeting and discussed what Carlisle EF had planned. Then came the blow: he told me that he would be out of the country on 9 June but that I shouldn't be too disappointed as he had some news that might interest me. He told me that he would have a visitor staying with him at that time and as he was not going to be at home he was looking for things that might be of interest to her in his absence and he thought she would be delighted to help us out.

This visitor only happened to be a 'Holy Spirit Sister' from Zambia Monze Diocese, as she wasn't yet in UK I had to wait for her arrival to ask if she could help. A few weeks later Sr Juunza arrived in Cumbria and I was able to contact her, she told me she would be very happy to come and speak about the work undertaken by the Holy Spirit Sisters in their mission. It was arranged that she would come to Carlisle the day before the event and spent that time looking around the city and she would stay the overnight with the RSHM sisters in Carlisle. This is when I really saw the Holy Spirit at work, the 'Holy Spirit Sisters' in Zambia are an offshoot of our very own RSHM sisters.

I met Sr Juunza from her train in Carlisle and took her back to the convent to meet the sisters and have the usual coffee and biscuits. Sister Juunza dropped her bag off in her room and joined by Yvonne (EF) we set off for a day in Carlisle. We headed firstly to Carlisle Castle where there was a display of the ceramic poppies that were on tour to various cities in UK. These were some of those originally made and displayed 4 years ago, at the Tower of London to commemorate those who had died in World War One. The three of us were amazed by the sight of the 'Weeping Window' as it is named.



We then took a tour of the historic castle which had housed many years ago, none other than 'Mary Queen of Scots' who had been held captive there. Leaving the castle, we took in lunch, at sister's request 'traditional fish and chips' which was enjoyed by all. Then time for a

little retail therapy as sister looked for small gifts for her family in Zambia. We ended the day with a visit to Carlisle Cathedral which was originally an Augustinian Catholic Priory and is now an Anglican cathedral.



We returned to the convent tired and foot-sore to that welcoming cup of tea.

Saturday 9 June -Feast of the Sacred Heart of Mary

The day started with an IT technical hitch, which took a little time, patience and prayer before the problem was finally resolved. We were then able to attend 10am mass in the parish church of Our Lady & St Joseph. A general invitation at the end of mass was given out to all to come and join our celebration in the parish hall.



It was lovely to welcome members of the Barrow Extended Family as well as parishioners and friends of the sisters. About 40 people in total came along and received a welcoming coffee and biscuits and as everyone took their seats Greg gave a formal welcome to Sr Juunza who then proceeded to give us a very informative insight to the work of the Holy Spirit Sisters in the Monze mission varying from teaching and nursing to working in admin. She explained accountability for all monitory donations and how difficult it as at times when monies had been received for project A and yet project B at that time had a greater need but moving money was not allowed; this was often a heart-breaking situation.

Sister Juunza finished her session with a short time for questions and Sister was then thanked for her input by myself on behalf of the Carlisle Extended Family. Thanks also went out to all those who had come along and supported the event, which ended with a very enjoyable shared buffet lunch and time for a chat.



On Tuesday 26 June, we met in the convent for an overview of the day which we all felt had been a great success.

We then proceeded to plan our next event in August which is to be: 'Afternoon Cream Tea' and depending on weather would be held on the lawn outside the parish hall or inside the hall should weather cause difficulties. This is to be a fund-raising event.

Maureen Wilson

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.

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