

# EXCHANGE/ÉCHANGE

## NORTHERN EUROPEAN PROVINCE

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## PROVINCE DE L'EUROPE DU NORTE

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September 2020



The Season of Creation has a special significance for the Catholic Church, particularly since Pope Francis established 1st September as an annual World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation.

The Season of Creation or Creation Time is marked throughout the Christian world from 1st September to

4th October (Feast of St. Francis of Assisi) and celebrates the joy of creation as well as encouraging awareness-raising initiatives to protect the natural environment.

The following resources are offered for use in dioceses, parishes and in the home, during the Season of Creation 2020.

Sunday Liturgy Notes for the Season of Creation 2020 – click to download [Sunday Liturgy Notes for Season of Creation 2020](#)

A Week-Day Prayer Service for the Season of Creation 2020: Cultivating Hope – click here to download [A Week Day Prayer Service for the Season of Creation 2020](#)

Practical Actions for Parishioners – click to download [Practical Actions for Parishioners 2020](#)

Leaflet for the Season of Creation 2020 – click to download pdf versions for web [Cultivating Hope 2020 Web Version](#) or for print [Cultivating Hope Leaflet 2020 Print version](#)

## POPE FRANCIS QUOTES ON CARING FOR OUR COMMON HOME

“We need to strengthen the conviction that we are one single human family.”

“The Earth, our home, is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth. In many parts of the planet, the elderly lament that once beautiful landscapes are now covered with rubbish.”

“Never have we so hurt and mistreated our common home as we have in the last 200 years.”

“We are not God. The Earth was here before us and was given to us.”

“The idea of infinite or unlimited growth, which proves so attractive to economists, financiers and experts in technology is based on the lie that there is an infinite supply of the earth’s goods, and this leads to the planet being squeezed dry at every limit.”

“Yet all is not lost. Human beings, while capable of the worst, are also capable of rising above themselves, choosing again what is good, and making a new start.”

## **JPIC INTERNATIONAL TEAM**

As JPIC International Team we have had several Zoom calls over the past few months and at our last meeting we made a commitment to put a renewed effort into the Celebration of the Season of Creation this year. I am extending that invitation to each one of you to also make this commitment at whatever level that is possible for you. Most parishes highlight this celebration so it would be good to join in whatever is happening in your local areas. There are other resources available on the internet from The Irish Bishops' Conference.

The theme for this year is "CULTIVATING HOPE" and we are encouraged to join with our sisters and brothers in the ecumenical family in prayer and action for our common home. It is also the 5th Anniversary of Laudato Si' and I attach a special prayer composed by Cafod to celebrate this milestone as well as engaging in creative ways of addressing the current global pandemic.

Dermot Lane has recently published a book that may be of interest to you.  
The title is: Theology & Ecology in Dialogue - The Wisdom of Laudato Si': (June 2020)

If you participate in any event with a group or in your parish, please send pictures to Mary Jo McElroy for submission to RSHM website.

Ellen O'Leary

### **PRAYER FOR 5TH ANNIVERSARY OF LAUDATO SI'**

Loving God,

Creator of heaven and earth and all that is in them,  
you created us in your own image and made us stewards of creation.

You blessed us with the sun, water and bountiful land  
so that all might be nourished.

Open our minds and touch our hearts,  
so that we may attend to your gift of creation  
Help us to be conscious that our common home  
belongs not only to us, but to all of your creatures  
and to all future generations,  
and that it is our responsibility to preserve it.

May we help each person secure the food and resources that they need.

Be present to those in need in these trying times,  
especially the poorest and those most at risk of being left behind.

Transform our fear and feelings of isolation into hope and fraternity  
so that we may experience a true conversion of the

Help us to show creative solidarity  
in addressing the consequences of this global pandemic.

Make us courageous to embrace the changes that are needed  
in search of the common good.  
Now more than ever may we feel  
that we are all interconnected and interdependent.  
Enable us to listen and respond  
to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.  
May the present sufferings be the birth pangs  
of a more fraternal and sustainable world.  
Under the loving gaze of Mary Help of Christians,  
We make this prayer through Christ Our Lord.

### FAREWELL TO ANN COYNE-NEVIN, MANAGER MADONNA HOUSE

Our motto UT VITAM HABEANT - "That all may have Life" was what attracted Ann to work with us and during her 7 + years of service in Madonna House, giving life to all whom she came in contact with has certainly been her inspiration. Her time with us was a constant balancing act - responding to the changing needs of our



sisters as their health needs changed and having an eye out for future needs that were likely to evolve. She was responsible for introducing many new policies and protocols - all with the safety and well-being of the sisters in mind. However, it was over the last 6 months, together with her dedicated staff that she really excelled herself in response to coping with the demands made in dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic. All possible safeguards were put in place to protect the sisters - securing protective clothing, participating in Conference calls, monitoring access to the building to mention but a few.



Finally, during Ann's time with us 15 sisters went to their eternal reward and again together with her team, she facilitated their passing with the utmost dignity and respect.

We are very grateful to Ann for her wonderful service and we wish her a happy and fulfilling retirement and we hope she is leaving us with joy in her heart and a spring in her step as she reflects on the "legacy" she is leaving behind as she moves to the next chapter of her own life. Ad multos annos!



New Manager: Thankfully, we have been able to secure a new manager. Her name is Mrs. Bridget (Bee) O'Grady. We welcome Bee to her new post and hope she will be very happy and fulfilled in the role. She took up her office on the 7th September. **Ellen O'Leary**

## BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Congratulation to Terezina O'Byrne who celebrated her 95<sup>th</sup> birthday in July and to Clare O'Keeffe who celebrated her 90<sup>th</sup> in August. Despite Covid-19 restrictions both Terezina and Clare managed to celebrate their significant birthdays and they thank all who remembered them and sent birthday wishes.



## BEREAVEMENTS

Sister Dorothy Bartels who died on July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020, in Regina Residence, Orange, California. Dorothy was 93 years of age and in the 74<sup>th</sup> year of her religious profession. In preparing her funeral liturgy, Dorothy requested that this quote be used: "Death is not extinguishing the light; it is putting out the lamp because Dawn has come."

Sister Rosalina Silvares Duarte Nunes who died on 12<sup>th</sup> August, aged 78 and in the 54<sup>th</sup> year of her religious profession. Sister Rosalina was a member of the Fatima community.

Sister Gwen Power who died on 2<sup>nd</sup> September in Madonna House. Gwen was 95 years old (she would have been 96 on September 5<sup>th</sup>) and in the 70<sup>th</sup> year of her religious profession.

Sister Mary O'Neill died on September 5<sup>th</sup> in Madonna House. Mary was 98 years old and in the 80<sup>th</sup> year of her religious profession.

Cathy Dwyer's father, Charles Smyth, who died suddenly on 30<sup>th</sup> July.

Sheila McCarthy, Esther's sister in law who died on 1<sup>st</sup> September.

Francisca Antonio Luis, sister of Sister Joana Antonio Luis, Mozambique region.

We remember the deceased and their families in our prayers.

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Sister Kathleen Hamilton RIP died just as the last Exchange was being sent. Barbara has submitted the homily of the mass and some reflections on Kathleen's life:



Many were able to follow the mass online on 11th June. Kathleen had worked with the celebrant Fr Philip Inch in several parishes and roles in Liverpool since 1997 when she came to Fazakerley:

*When I prepare a sermon for a funeral I am often struck by God's timing - and no more so than today. Sr Kathleen (or Sr James as she was once known) dies on the feast of St Joan of Arc, a formidable lady and her funeral is on the feast of St Barnabas, a faithful companion and the child of encouragement.*

*Joan of Arc, they say, was most at ease in the company of men! If it doesn't sound strange to say, so was Kathleen, and especially if the men were priests! (a bit difficult for someone who lived as part of a female religious congregation!)*

*Kathleen was a perfectionist, one of her greatest qualities and also one of the greatest crosses she had to carry. Joan of Arc demanded much of herself, she would not take second best mostly in herself, she was exacting. Kathleen was just so for example, if she were counting parish money, which she did over the years in lots of the parishes she worked in she would not stop until it was correct to the final penny. I remember telling her it's only a penny, but she would start all over again to find one penny. This was a formidable quality and I think in many ways for Kathleen it was something of a cross. She was very exacting, not with others, but with herself. She judged herself more severely than she would ever judge anyone else. In many ways with others she was a Barnabas - a daughter of encouragement. She encouraged others, spent time with them, cared for and nurtured them. Just think of the hundreds of Christmas calendars she sent every year just so that she could bring a little joy into the lives of the many people she had ministered to and met in her long life of ministry.*

*She had great patience when she was showing someone how to do something, play the piano, learn a new skill, learn about the faith or caring for someone but lacked patience with herself (and dare I say it with those in authority).*

*She always wanted to be doing, she was never meant to be a contemplative. For Kathleen being busy was what mattered, and she would turn her hand to anything and everything, no task was too humble if she could be of help or of use. She spent hours visiting people, she was totally faithful to that. She would travel miles to play the organ at Mass or for a funeral. She loved to sing and she had a sweet singing voice.*

*Let me reflect on three final things:*

*Barnabas was the faithful companion of St Paul - if Kathleen were your friend it was a faithful friendship, she would go to the ends of the earth for you. (I know that personally).*

*For Kathleen, her family was especially important, in later years Mary, Eileen and all Eileen's family. It was a joy to be with many of them in Ireland for various jubilee celebrations over the years. It was wonderful to hear them speak so admiringly of Kathleen who nursed her parents, who had a special place in her heart for nieces and nephews and for her large extended family.*

*And finally, she was ready to die. In the last few years, after cheating death more than once, her constant refrain was why am I still here? I used to say to her, "so that we can all remind you of how loved you have been and are." I hope she heard that, I hope she knew that, but I imagine that it will only be in sharing in the love God that she will come to the fullness of believing and knowing that.*

At the graveside, where some RSHM were joined by a few parishioners, Fr Inch also mentioned her many years of ministry with the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart Fathers, in Kirkby, St Albans and Ireland. Indeed, when Fr Michael Connell phoned us from Cork he spoke warmly of her collaboration, generosity, her many gifts and was glad her funeral would be at the beginning of the Novena to the Sacred Heart! She will be fondly remembered by them. We were glad that a woman who had worked with her during this time also joined us at the cemetery. Thanks to Fr Inch's expertise with technology Kathleen's family and many others were able to follow her funeral and burial ceremonies.

Kathleen was undoubtedly most at home and fulfilled in the Parish setting. However, her time in Arrowsmith reminded us of other times, places and gifts. She had a great gift for recounting her experiences, usually in a very humorous way. With Mary Lambie we heard tales of school and Parish life in Upminster. There were also tales of when she had been in Kirkby, first in 1956 in the newly



opened St Gregory's Comprehensive school and then in a Parish from 1982 - 1993, interrupted by two years caring for her Father.

Before becoming a member of the Arrowsmith community Kathleen had also regularly helped there for a while coming once a week when her good company, cooking, kindness and generosity were appreciated. Of course, we relied on her to play for our Jubilee celebrations and funerals which she was always so thorough in preparing and willing to do. Her singing was always a joy whether as "party pieces" or in the liturgy. It was fitting she continued this even after she died in her recordings at her funeral celebrations and moving to hear her sing, "Into your hands Oh Lord I commend my spirit "at the end. RIP.

*Barbara Bailey*

### TRIBUTE TO SISTER GWEN POWER

When Sister Gwen from Carriglong, Tramore entered with us in 1949 she knew what she was giving up, having coped with not only the challenges of starting her own business, but also the companionship of many friends with the freedom to enjoy life, as it was then, to the full.

However, at 26, influenced by a near neighbour and cousin she decided there was more to life, entered with us in 1949. Wiser than her many companions in the novitiate, she was looked up to a lot and helped steer her younger sisters on "the straight and narrow!"

Gwen was very creative and generously served our Institute in many places, as far as Rome. She was gifted with her hands and so her mouthwatering trolleys of desserts could only be compared with those on the menu of a Michelin Star 5 Restaurant. Up to last May, Gwen was taking orders for embroidered cushions, tablecloths etc., all works of art! She never let up, always willing to go the extra mile.

A founding member of the Grianán Community in 2010 she, many a time, calmed "troubled waters!" One of her favourite songs was " Bridge over troubled waters" and, as younger members of her family passed away, thoughts naturally rested on her own demise and she requested a picture of a bridge spanning a river be included in her Funeral Mass Booklet with the reading of "The Journey to Emmaus", her favourite gospel story. Gwen made so few demands on people, we were only too happy to comply with her requests.



A woman of deep faith and prayer, immersed in the spirit of our Founder, Jean Gailhac, our community in Grianán will be greatly diminished by the death of Sister Gwen as will her numerous friends inside and outside her religious community and especially her family.

Those of us who knew you, Sister Gwen, can truly quote the Lord's words: "Well done good and faithful servant!" May your gentle soul, welcomed by our loving and merciful Lord, in the words of the late John O'Donoghue,

"smile in the embrace of your Anam Cara."

*Clare O Keeffe*

### EULOGY FOR SISTER MARY O'NEILL

When I stopped to think about the qualities/gifts that Sr Mary had what came to mind was:

CARER, PROVIDER, FRIENDSHIP AND LEGACY of PRAYER

Mary grew up in a place called Baile na Lachain (town of the ducks) near Cloghane in County Kerry. We used to tease her about the name and say even though she didn't waddle like a duck she did cover a lot of ground when



she ministered to the housebound and sick, especially in the Parish in Upminster in Essex. When it was difficult for her to continue walking to visit people we bought a 4 wheeled scooter for her and occasionally a parishioner would say, "please ask Sr Mary to slow down on that scooter!"

As a child Mary was surrounded by love from her parents, her brothers, relatives and friends. She learnt her caring quality from them and carried it with her all her life. Before she entered, she had planned to do nursing, but she met one of our Sisters and decided to become a Sacred Heart of Mary Sister. After Profession she ministered in the Convent in Ferrybank and was extremely popular with the students. Later she ministered in our Convents in England in Hillingdon, Cromer and finally in Upminster.

Mary was a provider, especially when she was responsible for catering in the community. She always made sure there was plenty of provisions, especially in the deep freeze. One time when she was going on holidays she told me there was sufficient in the freezer in case we had an emergency...like a funeral. How true it was...one day when I was looking for something I found 13 apple tarts in the freezer.

Friendship was one of Mary's great qualities. She had many friends and maintained contact with them no matter where she lived. When she died on Sunday Sr Freda gave me her Address books...yes books, there were 3 large ones with address in many areas of Ireland, England and New Zealand where her brother Michael had lived.

Mary left a legacy of prayer. That speaks for itself. I would like to end with a little reading on a leaflet I found in one of her address books about a person with dementia but could apply to anyone who suffers severe frailty: Perhaps the person with dementia – freed from all pretension, totally incapable of spiritual self-examination might be an icon of God's grace to us? Having the privilege of being present to this person in her extreme frailty brings us into the very mystery that is the pure love of God.

Rest in peace, Mary.

*Patsy Butler*

### **33 Meditations On Death: Notes from the Wrong End Of Medicine by David Jarrett**

This book was reviewed in The Tablet in May. A few of us in the Liverpool/Noddfa area have read it and recommended it to some of our friends and colleagues so we thought it worth recommending it to our other sisters too. To give you a flavour here are some quotes from the Tablet Review and the dust jacket.

"This entertaining volume is the distilled wisdom of consultant geriatrician Dr David Jarrett, gleaned from 4 years of clinical practice. The 33 Meditations combine case studies and autobiography to explore the complex, and often frightening business of dying in the twenty-first century." (Tablet)

"An extraordinary, unflinching rumination that brings us into a more companionable relationship with death, and in doing so helps us to live. This book will stay with you". (Derren Brown)

"I wonder what Jarrett would be writing in these days of Covid 19 when we are reminded of the reality of dying, treatment and death as part of our everyday environment and news locally and globally. No doubt the next edition will include another informative, reflective and at times, gently humorous Chapter on these times".

**Barbara Bailey**

## LESSONS OF LIFE FROM A SUNFLOWER FIELD

Growing up in rural northwestern Iowa, one would expect I'd be familiar with sunflower fields, but no one in our area grew them. After a friend mentioned visiting the colorful fields in a nearby county park, I was intrigued. When I went a week later, I arrived too late. Instead of a stunning view like a Van Gogh painting, the desolate fields reflected Samuel Beckett's book *Waiting for Godot*. The once brilliantly colored flowers had matured quickly with the extreme heat. Now the faded yellow and brown tattered heads of the plants drooped downward on bent stems, reminding me of the curved-over woman in Luke's Gospel with her head reaching toward her heart. I almost turned around and went home but something inside nudged me to get out of the car and look more closely.



Once I walked into the field, disappointment turned to wonder. I never knew how large the sunflower heads could be, some eight inches wide. Because of such abundance, the seeds' weight forced the stems to bow and bend. My thoughts became absorbed in how much it costs the plants to bring forth this rich harvest. I noticed flocks of goldfinches deliriously feeding on seeds spilling out from sunflowers that were now transformed into nourishment, easily giving of their

summered lives to enrich others.

As I walked out of the field, I felt urged to return. Something more waited to be learned from the surrendered sunflowers. Two days later I walked slowly through the field, the heavily hanging heads brushing against my body as if to say, "Listen, we have something more to tell you." And speak they did, about the energy of release, the ability to freely liberate what had been their glory, how the dying field held not only a harvest of fulfillment but the acquiescence of what it contained, an acceptance of giving away what was really never theirs to keep.

Those heavy, drooping heads replete with ripened seeds spoke to me of personal diminishment, of all sorts of loss bound to come sooner or later. Not only does this required transition happen to individual persons. Societies and organizations also experience seasons of bending low. Dying comes before rising. Death arrives before new birth. Few want to accept this reality. But accept it or not, this pattern shapes how growth usually occurs. Unable to hold their heads high any longer, the sunflowers bowed to the way life naturally unfolds, the ageless pattern of life, death, rebirth—sunflowers teaching me anew that I, too, wend my way through this configuration, slowly bending the stem of my life, allowing my head to reach my heart—accepting, releasing, fulfilling.

I thought I was finished with the sunflower field but now I know I will return one more time. Before the snow flies I'll go and stand in the field of stubbles. With the harvest completed, I'll view the empty field—one with riches given over to a voracious columbine. I'll stand there, absorbing the truth of release given for the benefit of others. I will take in yet another truth: the fallow time of emptiness following release, much like humans when what has grown and matured eventually departs, leaving barren soil to rest in winter's



fallowness. I will wait, then, for the coming spring when the field will again be filled with sprouting seeds, seeds alive with a new pattern of growth, liberation and generosity.

Abundant peace, Joyce Rupp (sent by Eleanor Dalton)

## REFLECTIONS ON THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

### AND THE PEOPLE STAYED HOME

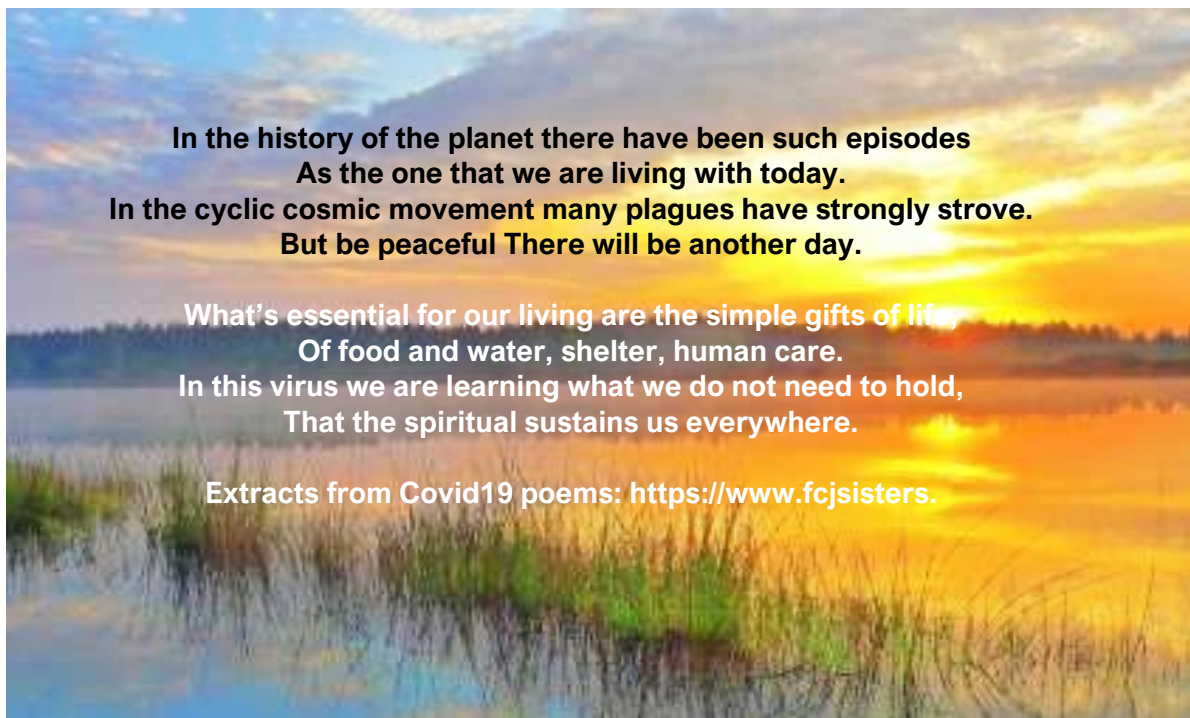
*And the people stayed home. And read books, and listened, and rested, and exercised, and made art, and played games, and learned new ways of being, and were still. And listened more deeply. Some meditated, some prayed, some danced. Some met their shadows. And the people began to think differently.*

*And the people healed. And, in the absence of people living in ignorant, dangerous, mindless, and heartless ways, the earth began to heal.*

*And when the danger passed, and the people joined together again, they grieved their losses, and made new choices, and dreamed new images, and created new ways to live and heal the earth fully, as they had been healed. By Kitty O'Meara, an Irish American teacher.*



**As the harsh restrictions lessen and the world begins to move  
May we hold fast to the lessons we have learned  
That we're part of Mother Earth and open to her love,  
And our future plan of action we'll discern.**



Please send material for the December Exchange by December 5th