



NEA NEWSLETTER



JANUARY 2021 NEWS

An extract from *Journey of the Magi* by *T. S. Eliot*



“A cold coming we had of it,
Just the worst time of the year
For a journey, and such a long journey:
The ways deep and the weather sharp,
The very dead of winter.”

.....

A hard time we had of it.
At the end we preferred to travel all night,
Sleeping in snatches,
With the voices singing in our ears, saying
That this was all folly.

..... there was no information, and so we continued
And arrived at evening, not a moment too soon
Finding the place; it was (you may say) satisfactory.
All this was a long time ago, I remember,
And I would do it again, but set down
This set down
This: were we led all that way for
Birth or Death? There was a Birth, certainly,
We had evidence and no doubt.

I had seen birth and death,
But had thought they were different; this Birth was
Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death.
We returned to our places, these Kingdoms,
But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation,
With an alien people clutching their gods.
I should be glad of another death.



AND NOW THE WISE WOMEN

Beginning of the RSHM Mission in Zambezi – Agnes Hunt

On the 6th January 1966, two sisters, Mother Odile and Sister Vincent (Agnes) set out from Ferrybank to Zambia. That was 55 years ago. The sisters had no missionary experience, no travel experience and little money but plenty of goodwill and readiness for the work ahead. The journey took the sisters via seven airports and twelve days to reach their destination. A forced landing in Zurich due to a technical problem and another in Benghazi (Libya) due to a desert storm delayed their progress. They arrived in Chivuna on the day the girls returned for the new academic year and went straight into classes. Many difficult days and happy days followed. I pay tribute to Mother Odile today and all the great sisters who have gone to their reward since then. From small

beginnings many blessings flow to great - as is the case with Chivuna.

Agnes



Departure of Mother Odile O'Mahony and Sr Vincent (Agnes) Hunt from Ferrybank on 6th Jan 1966. Sisters: Sr. Pauline Gannon (Purvis), Rita Casey, Bernadette Bowen, Malba Walsh, Virginia Mulcahy, Sr. O'Callaghan, Elizabeth Furlong, Teresa English, Coline M.



CONGRATULATIONS
SILVER ANNIVERSARY

Foundation of the Zambezi Region
6th January 1996

The first Council of the Zambezi Region
on 6 January 1996.

Carol Schommer, Virginia (first Regional Superior)
and Philippa



On this joyous occasion for the Zambezi Region we, unfortunately, received the following very sad message from Lelia.

4th January 2021

Dear Sisters,

We write to share with you some sad news from Chivuna. On New Year's Eve, two of our pupils from St Joseph's who were travelling home after writing their final exams were involved in a serious road traffic accident. One of them, Kalinda, died on the spot and her friend Limpo survived, but with serious injuries. Sisters Deborah and Precious happened to be travelling back to Chivuna that same day and they were one of the first to come upon the scene of the accident. It was a traumatic experience for them as they first recognized the school uniform and then recognized Kalinda and Limpo. They were then involved in communicating with the police and the school and helped to get the injured girl to Monze hospital and attended the mortuary as the dead bodies were brought (four others also died in the accident). On the 2nd January, Deborah travelled with other members of school staff to Livingstone for the burial of Kalinda. She was able to meet Kalinda's parents and report to them, first hand, on the tragic event. They continue to be in contact with Limpo and her mother.

We kindly ask your prayers for the repose of the soul of Kalinda, for the speedy recovery of Limpo, for the families of both girls, for the whole school community and especially for Deborah and Precious.

We wish each one a New Year of Peace and Hope,

Lelia for the Chivuna community.

We keep all in the Region in our prayers



BEREAVEMENTS

We offer our sympathy to the Portuguese Province on the recent deaths of:

Sister Maria Augusta Ribeiro Lopes who died on December 29th, aged 87 and in the 59th year of her Religious Profession. Sister Maria Augusta was a member of the Braga Community.

Sister Maria Luísa Martins de Brito who died on December 31st, aged 99 and in the 69th year of her Religious Profession. Sister Maria Luísa was a member of the Braga Community.

An alternative to the Wise Men – to honour our Wise Women!

If three wise women had journeyed to the stable
Instead of the three wise men
Imagine how different things might have been
That night in Bethlehem.

Those three wise women would have asked for directions
As they travelled on their way,
They'd never have relied on one lonely star
Five billion light years away.

And so, they'd have arrived on time for the birth
That night in Bethlehem.
They'd never have turned up twelve days late
Like the three wise men.

The three wise women would have rolled up their sleeves
And cleaned up everything.
The ox and ass would have been given a bath
They'd have made the place fit for The King.

Then think of the gifts they would have brought
To keep Baby Jesus from the cold,
Bright blue blankets and matinee coats,
Not myrrh, frankincense or gold.

The three wise women would have looked after Joseph
And sent him off for a break.
While they sat gossiping with Mary,
Over tea and some chocolate cake.

Then the three wise women would have waited around
For the three wise men – as foretold.
They'd have wanted to check out the gifts that they'd brought –
Particularly the gold.

Finally – when they'd left the stable
Clean and sparkling in Bethlehem
The three wise women would have set off for home
Arm in arm with the three wise men.

Eithne Reynolds ©

News from Dunmurry

We here in the North as elsewhere have been going through the various changes in the story of the virus and its effects on our region. We have the pattern of lockdowns with their confusing rules and restrictions and the times of relaxation. We here in Dunmurry have been following the developments of Covid on RTE and BBC. This is one of the reasons for confusion as we listen to the different decisions for the South the North, Scotland Wales and England.

Now it is lockdown time and the “Stay at Home” message has returned in all its rigour. The exam, formerly called the 11plus, due to take place this month of January on three Saturdays, was cancelled yesterday, though there may be a one-off test in late February. The decision is a challenging one for children, parents and Grammar Schools as new criteria for entrance to Grammar schools will have to be worked out if an exam does not take place. Every decision here

has to be argued over often on party political lines making it difficult to reach a consensus on any issue.

One can notice that more and more people seem to be out walking especially with their dogs. We are blessed to have a new Park very close to us and it is a great place for walking.

Dunmurry is a hilly spot so any walking is up and down hills unless one goes to the Lagan tow path which is flat and very popular with walkers and cyclists. Once again the Churches are closed for public Mass. Now that so many Churches have a Webcam with Masses on-line, daily Mass goers can still feel connected to their Parish Mass. There are glimmers of light in the darkness of this difficult time and it is good to see the positives among all the negatives.

Mary Murray



A lovely and timely contribution from Patrice!

"Taken from the Winter Issue of Women, Word Spirit magazine"

MEDITATION

I was
just sitting....

not catching up with the newspapers -
too many of them unread...

not doing the exercises
the physiotherapist prescribed
for five times each day....

not reading the 800 pages
of the book I'm enjoying...

not even wasting brainpower
on the prolificity of puzzles
I wrestle with each day...

not stroking the cat
and listening to her purr
nor drawing a comb
through her lavish white fur

I was
just sitting...

by Pat Pinsent



**KEEP
CALM
AND
JUST
SIT**



BLESSING THE THRESHOLD - shared by Lelia O'Shea

This blessing has been waiting for you for a long time.
While you have been making your way here,
this blessing has been gathering itself,
making ready, biding its time, praying.
This blessing has been polishing the door,
oiling the hinges, sweeping the steps,
lighting candles in the windows.

This blessing has been setting the table as it hums a
tune from an old song it knows,
something about a spiralling road and bread and grace.

All this time it has kept an eye on the horizon,
watching, keeping vigil,

hardly aware of how it was leaning itself in your direction.

And now that you are here, this blessing can hardly believe its good fortune
that you have finally arrived, that it can drop everything at last
to fling its arms wide to you, crying welcome, welcome, welcome. —



Jan Richardson

Party in The Park - Congratulations Aline!



On Sunday, 10th January, Grange Road and The Park gathered together in our own bubble to celebrate Aline's 89th birthday in style !

In these most difficult and uncertain days we wanted to take the opportunity to mark special occasions with some time together, so Joanna cooked a beautiful meal and we duly enjoyed ourselves reminiscing over previous birthday gatherings and expressing gratitude for all that we could share together at this time.

As Carmel has said repeatedly over the last months, we are most certainly 'receiving the hundredfold in this life' with the care we share for each other, the time we have to relax and reflect and the safety we experience in our communities.

Aline was queen for the day and she celebrated with flair and elegance as you can see.

To each of our sisters we send love and prayers for your health and safety in these dark days.

Aline, Carmel, Joanna and Mary Jo

All of us are advised to stay at home so that we can be safe. However, we can still look out our windows and see some of the beauty of creation even if it is only the sky,

Here is a poem by R.S. Thomas, a Welsh poet.

The View from the Window

Like a painting it is set before one,
But less brittle, ageless; these colours
Are renewed daily with variations
Of light and distance that no painter
Achieves or suggests. Then there is movement,
Change, as slowly the cloud bruises
Are healed by sunlight, or snow caps
A black mood; but gold at evening
To cheer the heart. All through history
The great brush has not rested,
Nor the paint dried; yet what eye,
Looking coolly, or, as we now,
Through the tears' lenses, ever saw
This work and it was not finished?

R. S. Thomas



First profession of Elizabeth, Lesley and Naomi

@ 1.00 pm our time on Saturday 23 January

Follow the profession by using this link:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC5wD0CmmuKayzK9hUMDuTCw>

KATE



JANUARY

22nd 2021

What does a Covid Golden Jubilee look like?
Something that could never have been imagined fifty years ago.
Something that has caused great suffering and loss in today's world.
Something that has perhaps brought us to a new place in our own lives.
Something that invites us to do things differently.

For us here in Grianán our wish was to celebrate Kate's Golden Jubilee in style. Present circumstances obliged us to do otherwise. We therefore agreed to having a short encounter in our own bubble where we shared a moment of congratulations and jubilation.

We thank God for Kate's warm presence among us and wish her abundant blessings during her jubilee year.

Brigitte



On Sunday 17 January Seafield & Noddfa communities joined in the Liverpool J&P Zoom meeting. The following is a short extract from St. Anne & St. Bernard's Newsletter about the meeting. Eleanor

Care for our Common Home: what is closest to your heart?

The Justice and Peace Annual Memorial lecture was given Sunday 17th January by Mary Colwell, a journalist, writer and environmentalist. She spoke so encouragingly of how we might 'prepare for a future full of hope amid chaos and uncertainty' and suggested that each of us should choose one animal, bird, flower, tree or issue that is truly close to our heart. Then we should find out all we can about it and seek either:

- **to protect it.** In her case it was curlews who are now seriously endangered, so she found out why and has helped developed campaign groups across the UK, bringing together like-minded people and starting to make a difference. It could be bees or butterflies or hedgehogs that you specially care about

- **or campaign for it.** For instance, it might be that you want to help rid the ocean of plastic waste, so you could become really well informed and join organisations or start/join petitions, encourage local actions, such as beach cleans, poster campaigns. It might be



ensuring that everyone has access to clean water; again, you can campaign, raise funds as Frances has done with getting us to fill water bottles with loose change and join in actions such as CAFOD's Walk for Water

Her idea was that Pope Francis in Laudato Si is calling us to action and we cannot spread ourselves too thinly or we will lose hope and achieve little. So perhaps this week you might want to think about which one cause is closest to your heart and maybe talk to family and friends about it, maybe get them to do the same.

The talk is available at www.youtube.com/c/LiverpoolJusticeandPeace

Falling in love with Nature

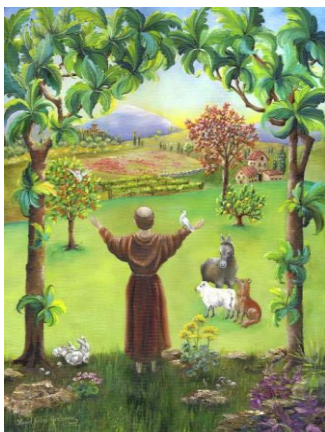


A “taster” from Donal Dorr’s New Book:

“A CREED FOR TODAY”:

Faith & Commitment for our new Earth Awareness”

In his 2015 ecology encyclical Laudato Si, Pope Francis suggests that St. Francis of Assisi was in love with nature:

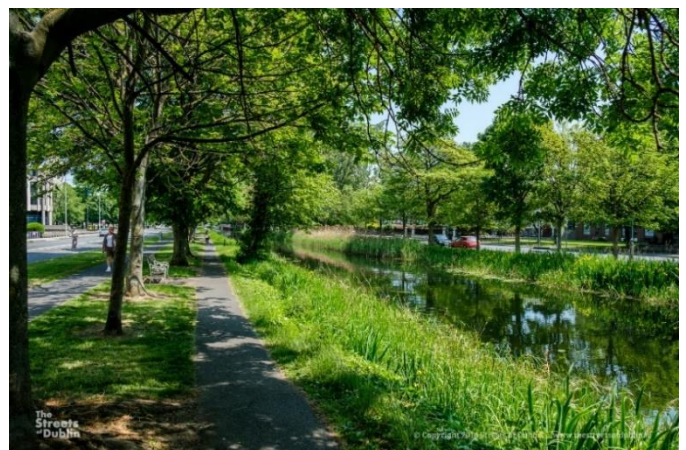


“Just as happens when we fall in love with someone, whenever he would gaze at the sun, the moon or the smallest animals, he burst into song, drawing all other creatures into his praise.” (L.Si 11)

Donal Dorr, commenting on this, writes: Pope Francis is inviting us to follow the example of St. Francis by allowing ourselves to fall in love with nature, with all the creatures around us this is a move from the mindset that in the past and to some extent even today, sees spirituality as an escape from the world, to one that is nourished by the world around us, that embraces it, loves it and is committed to protecting it.”

Mary Oliver in her poem: *“When I am among the Trees”* says: “the trees save her, by telling her to stay still, to take life easy, and to allow herself to let light shine in her and out from her.”

Patrick Kavanagh was another poet whose poetic sensibility was nurtured by the countryside where he grew up. When he came to live in the city, he managed to “feed” the “gaping need” of his senses by walking along a canal in a busy suburb of Dublin. (Canal Bank Walk).



Donal in his book quotes many poets who experienced the power of nature to provide them with spiritual nourishment. e.g. Denise Levertov, R.S Thomas, Gerard Manley Hopkins etc.

Suggestion: Take a walk in nature this week and note how it may speak to you and how you might respond

Note: The JPIC Team intend to contribute to the Newsletter from time to time and invite others to contribute to this section (JPIC) if they wish.

Sr Margaret Lee's name was omitted from the recent jubilee list received from Rome.
Hopefully Margaret will be able to celebrate her silver jubilee safely later this year.

Date of profession: 6th July 1996.



End of January snow in Ireland – didn't last long!

