

## Church Ministries

### MINISTRY IN SAINT ANNE'S PARISH, FINAGHY, BELFAST: Mary Murray



Since the end of August 2006, I have been involved in parish ministry, having spent three happy years with university students in the Catholic chaplaincy in Belfast. There I discovered the importance of the ministry of presence, of visibility. In the parish ministry, presence is also essential. Listening and talking to people is at the heart of my present ministry. I do this in a variety of ways: attending meetings of various parish groups such as the lectio prayer group and the youth forum, visiting the housebound in their homes, often bringing them communion during the week, visiting in a residential home. It is a joy to meet so many different people.

I also help to facilitate a Baptism team, and a Liturgy group and am involved in the Parish Pastoral Council as an ex officio member. The latter is presently engaged in drawing up a plan of action for the spiritual development of the Parish in line with our Mission Statement. I also have the joy of giving courses in Scripture.

This year attention is being given to the Gospel of John. I am fortunate that the Parish Priest Fr. O'Donnell wants the help that I can give and is open to giving support, advice and freedom to proceed. I, on the other hand need to be flexible and wise in the use of time, and to allow others to develop their gifts. I need to go with the flow. What others can do I do not need to do. I also need to constantly remind myself that my ministry is ultimately for Christ's glory and not my own. I am happy to have this present opportunity to be in the heart of the Parish. My community is very supportive of my ministry and for that I am grateful.



### DIOCESAN MINISTRY: Marie Dominique Treacy



In the Church in France, the requests for adult baptisms are on the increase. To answer this need, most of the dioceses have created a service called "the Catechumenate". In the diocese of Cambrai in the North of France, I am a member of the catechumenate team for the past five years. There is an average of thirty adult baptisms every year, slowly on the increase. It is a whole new and wonderful experience for me to "walk with" women and men who are discovering the gospel for the first time. To witness to their new faith in Jesus, their refreshing understanding of the Word of God, their joy at the prospects of living the sacraments of Christian Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist is a grace for me. The reasons why these people want to become Christians, why they ask for Baptism, are as varied as their social backgrounds. Some think it is necessary in order to get married in the Church; some others want to be godparents; but mostly people are looking for a direction to their lives. Through the catechumenate programme they have found "life in Jesus" and all of them are a blessing to the local community and parish.

## A DIOCESAN MINISTRY: Eleanor Dalton

For the last seven years I have been working with children/adults with special needs in the Archdiocese of Liverpool. I am part of the Community Specialist Team at Nugent Care which in the past was known as the Catholic Social Services.

I support children preparing for the Sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist, Reconciliation, Confirmation and I accompanied a couple preparing for Marriage.

Because of their complex needs it has proved more beneficial to work with some children individually both at their Special Schools and at home.



*Workshop with people with disabilities*



*Mass with people with disabilities*

## Training and Meetings

- I network with Chaplains in Secondary Schools and our team works closely with children in Primary Schools raising awareness and funds for the Good Shepherd Fund which funds the different projects we run.
- I do a 'Play in a Day' in Primary Schools "Nobody's Children" which links in with the Victorians but tells the story of Fr. Nugent - the founder of Nugent Care.
- I attend Inter Diocesan meetings in Preston, Birmingham London and share good practice with people who do similar work.
- Widget training using symbols and pictures
- Visiting homes of children
- Working with people with Learning Disabilities



### **Annual Mass with people with disability:**



Prior to the mass a lot of drama and dance preparation is done in the various clubs in the Archdiocese so that the members can take a leading part in the Mass.

### **Retreat days**

are held for people with learning disability and are prepared by the Catholic and Anglican Churches as are the Work shops and Worship at the Disability Awareness Day in Warrington. Several adults with disability and Mental Health problems have followed Journey in Faith.



*Eleanor working with asylum seekers*

