

## EXCHANGE JULY 2012

### FROM THE PROVINCIAL COUNCIL



CONGRATULATIONS TO:

*Srs Christine Caldwell, Anne Curran, and Dorothy Ward*

*who celebrate their **Golden Jubilee** on 22<sup>nd</sup> August.*

### THREE MONTHS TO THE CHAPTER



NEP PROVINCIAL CHAPTER 2012  
PEN CHAPITRE PROVINCIAL 2012

As we approach the time for Olympics and holidays, we remember our pilgrimage towards the Provincial Chapter. We thank you for sending in the group responses from all areas of the province and for the personal responses. Catherine Dolan and Moira Lever are going to synthesise the responses and this synthesis will be sent to communities in September. This will help us reflect on the important issues we want to discuss at the Chapter. We shall be sending the reports from the Provincial Council, the Formation and JPIC teams and the SHM Extended Family at the same time, so we can prepare well for our time together and so those who are not able to come to Birmingham are able to share their ideas with the participants. We hope you can arrange dates for meetings of your area reflection group/ community in October to discuss the reports and synthesis.

### BEREAVEMENTS

Our sympathy and prayers are with:

Sr Joyce Attwood on the death of her sister, **Margaret Connolly**, who died on 27<sup>th</sup> May.

Sr Esther McCarthy on the death of her sister, **Ita Bladen**, who died on 9<sup>th</sup> June.

Srs Mary and Catherine Dunne on the death of their brother-in-law, **Larry Ward**, who died on 5<sup>th</sup> July.

The Sisters of the Portuguese Province on the deaths of

**Ir. Maria Celeste Mendes da Silva** who died in Braga on 15<sup>th</sup> May at the age of 92 years and in the 67<sup>th</sup> year of her Religious Profession.

**Ir Maria Alice Martius** who died in Braga on 3<sup>rd</sup> July at the age of 87 years and in the 53<sup>rd</sup> year of her Religious Profession.

The Sisters of the Eastern American Province on the death of **Sr Loretta Ruvo** who died in Tarrytown on 27<sup>th</sup> May at the age of 68 years and in the 49<sup>th</sup> year of her Religious Profession.

## RECENT PICTURES FROM OUR CARE COMMUNITIES

*Bon Pasteur community  
with some staff (June)*



*Arrowsmith House  
community and staff  
waiting outside for the  
Olympic torch to pass  
(June)*

*Madonna House  
community with  
Anne and visitors  
(December 2011)*





## NOTES FROM THE NOVITIATE - *from Karina Kelly*



The other day a visiting priest who came to celebrate mass with us here remarked on how lucky I was to be making my novitiate here and that is certainly true. I feel very fortunate to have been sent to Brazil, a country where a day rarely goes by without sunshine, the people are warm and open and there is an incredible diversity of plant and animal life. It has been a wonderful experience to come to this vast and beautiful country. I already have many happy memories of my experiences here. Some of the highlights have been attending Novinter (a monthly series of lectures which about 50 people making their novitiate in Belo Horizonte attend), travelling to the countryside just outside Belo Horizonte and helping out in local 'pastorals' (social projects run in the city and a nearby favela supporting homeless people and children). There have, of course, been difficult times and the kind of challenges with which anyone who has moved to a new country or entered a novitiate will be familiar: missing family and friends; adjusting to a different language and culture; and adjusting to religious life.

To give you some idea of our lives here, we spend time each day in community and personal prayer, attending mass, studying and attending classes. We live in one of three houses located beside an RSHM school

and usually treat the sisters in one of the neighbouring houses to a dose of our singing at their Monday morning mass. Between attending classes, completing assignments and doing whatever needs to be done it's usually a busy day. Outside the house we attend classes such as Novinter, and monthly Bible studies and we visit a spiritual director. Believe it or not there are occasionally differences of opinion among the novices and to help us resolve any conflict we attend group therapy twice a month. Fortunately for us the sessions are held in a very lovely part of the countryside outside Belo Horizonte where we have seen some beautiful views and visited a local waterfall. The emphasis in the Novitiate is on experiential learning and developing the ability to live in community. Internationality is given high priority and we make every effort to use both English and Portuguese.

The month of June was particularly enjoyable as Brazilians celebrate the feasts of Sts. John, Peter and Anthony with 'festas Juninas'. A festa Junina is a mock country wedding where everyone dresses up as country folk (check shirts and jeans for the men and flouncy dresses for the women) and dance traditional dances. The festa is kicked off by a 'bride', 'groom' and 'padre' who lead the dancing. I've been told it also sometimes includes a sheriff, a shotgun and an irate father! This is accompanied by festa junina food: popcorn; canjica (a pudding made from maize that is similar to rice pudding); hot dogs; and barbecued meat among other things. The school here did a fantastic job of celebrating with the parents and children. The three and four year olds started the celebration dressed as tiny brides, grooms and friars, very funny to watch. We also had great fun celebrating with our Novinter group and the pastorals. The creativity and dynamism of Brazilian culture is a pleasure to experience. Many community groups put a great deal of effort in to celebrating events such as Carnaval and the festas Juninas. The first few months of my time here have been both demanding and enriching. I look forward to whatever the next stage in my journey brings.





'Loved by God with an Everlasting Love' was the title of the first of many rich and expertly prepared handouts from Margaret.

This set the tone for our time together, re-affirming our 'yes' to our call to Discipleship (the theme of our Retreat). As we reflected on our Faith Journey we prayed with well chosen Scripture texts. Extracts from Father Gailhac's letters, Constitutions, Chapter Documents, Poetry and works of Art were treasures appreciated by all. The experience was enriched by our surroundings, providing us with reminders of the enthusiastic response of our Founding Community and encouragement to keep fanning the flame of our own enthusiasm.

Thank you for this opportunity

## FERRYBANK KNITTING GROUP

Waterford News & Star  
May 29, 2012



Dolores Carroll started the knitting project in Ferrybank to create clothing for orphans in Moldova. Local Ferrybank ladies responded to her appeal for help and a number of items have now been packed up ready to be shipped out to the children. Dolores is starting off another project for babies in Africa, known as "fish n' chip babies", so called because they are wrapped in newspapers and sent home just days after they are born. They don't have blankets.



## FEAST OF THE SACRED HEART OF MARY

The RSHM communities in Béziers celebrated the feast of the Sacred Heart of Mary together in La Devèze, using the prayer service for the feast, beginning our journey towards the General Chapter and having a lovely meal outside in the sunshine.



## GOLDEN JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS AT THE MOTHER HOUSE

*Ursula Canavan*

We were very happy to welcome to the Mother House Sisters Marie-Dominique Treacy, Catherine Dunne, Lelia O'Shea and Dorothy Ward who celebrated their Golden Jubilee on Saturday 19 May. As well as the sisters from the Bon Pasteur and la Devèze, others came from further afield: Marie France from Rome, Bernadette, who was back from Brazil, Marguerite and Myriam from Le Rheu, Marie-Cécile from Somain and Thérèse Marie from Wavrechain. Unfortunately, Brigitte and Monique, who would have liked to come too, weren't able to do so. It was a lovely celebration, full of joy, of pleasant company and sharing of good memories.







## **SOIRÉE FOR BERNADETTE McNAMARA**

*Ursula Canavan*

On 22 May we had a lovely evening in the Mother House to celebrate Bernadette's first home coming from Brazil. Our SHM sisters, local clergy, members of the Extended Family, past pupils of the Cours St Jean and other friends of the community and of Bernadette attended. Bernadette gave a colourful power-point presentation of her life in Brazil, after which we all enjoyed a wonderful supper made up of the savoury dishes and desserts which the guests had brought.



## CELEBRATING A DOUBLE: *Bridget Hussey*

It was a sunny Saturday afternoon, one of a very few in June when the Dublin communities and Catherine's sisters Betty and Mary, gathered in Tallaght to celebrate the Jubilees of Agnes (Diamond) and Catherine (Golden)—110 years of committed service of others in various ministries in Ireland, England and Zambia. Agnes and Catherine worked together in Zambia—colourful photos and images of their time there brought the experience very much alive. The founding of the Holy Spirit Sisters was recalled, as was the continuing development of the congregation. They were remembered in the celebration with prayer and good wishes.



The afternoon started with a simple prayer ritual of joy and gratitude that included a contemporary litany calling on the God of women and men of all time to lead us to God's kingdom and to freedom. We then enjoyed a beautiful buffet prepared by Tallaght community (most of the preparations done by the Jubilarians, we were told!)

During the meal we caught up with one another and enjoyed a lovely evening of simple joy and sharing. Thanks to Agnes and Catherine for providing the occasion to celebrate their lives thus far—wishing them both good health ad multos annos to dream, create, trust and continue to engage in many more mutually life-giving relationships with those deprived of life by injustice and exploitation.

## MAYNOOTH CELEBRATION:

*Ellen O'Leary*

Agnes also celebrated her Jubilee with colleagues from ICPO (Irish Council for Prisoners Overseas) Maynooth, where she has been a volunteer for over a decade. Every week she goes to the ICPO office to write to prisoners serving life sentences in the UK, many of whom she has known since her time in Wormwood Scrubs in the 70s. Breda Power from the ICPO London office pays her this tribute:

***“Sr. Agnes has championed the plight of prisoners particularly those serving lengthy sentences for many years now. Her commitment and contribution to the incarcerated is second to none. To the families she is a 'towering strength': to those without family, a 'saving grace'. It is impossible here to put into words or to do justice to such a wonderful person. We would therefore just like to say 'Thank you Sr. Agnes, for your loving kindness, support, example and inspiration to all.*”**

*Joanne Joyce (ICPO Co-Ordinator)*

This is just a short extract from ICPO NEWS where you can read the full article written in appreciation of Agnes and her work on behalf of prisoners over several decades. Wishing you many more years to continue this good work Agnes!



## PATRICK BLACK'S FUNERAL *Catherine Dolan*

Patrick's funeral Mass at St. Paulinus Church, York, on Wednesday, 4<sup>th</sup> July, brought together his family and many, many of his friends. There was a bus-full of friends and former colleagues from Barrow, including Patricia Kavanagh. From Carlisle Moira and I went with Peter Silvester, a member of the SHM Extended Family Core Group. Mary Jo McElroy, Aline and Kathleen O'Donovan travelled from London. Mary Jo attended the funeral to bring the appreciation and gratitude of the Northern European Province for all that Patrick had been and done for the Extended Family during the past eight years. All had come to remember Patrick, to give thanks for his life and to celebrate his entry into eternal life. The funeral Mass was fitting for Patrick who had such a great feeling for liturgy which gathered people together for worship, reflecting his own faith and devotion. Choirs from St. Paulinus Church, from Barrow, and from the Ladies' Schola Cantorum of Middlesbrough Cathedral, sang beautifully, including music composed by Patrick, both recently and from twenty years ago when he composed music for the first Mass since the Reformation in Furness Abbey.



After the funeral Mass most of the congregation accompanied Patrick to the crematorium for final prayers. The presence of so many at the celebration of Patrick's life was a great tribute to him and to Sue and their family.

The celebrant, Fr. Tim Bywater, a long time friend of the family, spoke of Patrick's professional life as a teacher and then head of Sacred Heart Primary School in Barrow for twenty-six years. He spoke of Patrick as a man with gentle but firm authority, who respected all with whom he came in contact, and he emphasised his friendliness and generosity. He reminded us that Patrick was a great family man, and that he shared his great love of liturgical music in many situations wherever he was.

Sue was very much affirmed by all the cards, messages and Mass cards which she had received. She and her daughter, Lizzie, and son, Joseph, were grateful for the presence of so many and, in the midst of their sadness, witnessed to their deep belief in the reality of the Resurrection and Patrick's entry into eternal life. Patrick's and Sue's son Aidan was unable to be at the funeral as it had been necessary for him to return to the United States. He had been with the family during the last days of Patrick's illness. The family considered their being together at this time as one of the blessings for which they were all grateful. May they continue to be aware of blessings as they journey through this time of loss and sorrow, and may Patrick rest in peace.





## **JPIC: AROUND THE PROVINCE:**

*Sent by Kathleen O'Donovan, Teresa McCarthy and Françoise Wyckaert.*

### **TRAFFICKING: The modern day slavery**

**The Olympics are not bringing just sport to London, but, as with all major international events, the tragedy of human suffering will be present in the form of “SEX FOR SALE”**

This is how we presented the subject of Trafficking.

To heighten awareness of the enormity of this problem we invited Sr Pat Kenny, Sister of Charity, to speak to a gathering of Extended Family members and parishioners in Upminster on May 24<sup>th</sup>. Pat is her congregation's representative dealing with Trafficking, and has wide international experience being a member of Trac, Unamina and Renate. Pat gave us a well informed presentation, highlighting the problem on our doorstep.

### **100 Days of Peace**

We are asked to join in prayer for peace before and after the Olympics.

8<sup>th</sup> June - 27<sup>th</sup> July    50 days before  
9<sup>th</sup> Sept - 28<sup>th</sup> Oct    50 days after

Peace was an original ideal of the Greek Olympics, and also of the modern Games revived in 1896 by Pierre de Coubertin. 100 Days of Peace is an initiative to encourage people to pray for peace, organize peace events and make the 2012 Games an occasion to celebrate peace: in our hearts, in our neighbourhoods, reaching out nationally and internationally.

**Sr. Pat Kenny** also addressed a Meeting in Carlisle on the subject of Human Trafficking and some sisters from Carlisle and Castlemilk attended together with members of the Extended family.

**TARA** Trafficking Awareness Raising Alliance, which is organized by Glasgow City Council, the Police, the Churches and other Agencies, is also calling on everyone to be vigilant for the 2012 Olympics, especially when the games are taking place in Glasgow. This group is very active and has been responsible for many prosecutions in the area.

**“Fracking”** : The Castlemilk Community sent a letter to Charles Hendry, Minister of State for the Environment, expressing their concern about the damage to the environment that will be caused by Hydraulic Fracturing or “Fracking”. They asked him to stop this process and instead put resources into the renewable energy technologies that are vital for combating climate change. They received an acknowledgment saying their comments would be taken into account before any decision is made about whether to allow “fracking” to resume in Lancashire.

## Earth Hour

The Theatre, St.Nazaire's Cathedral, the Pont-canal, the Hotel de Ville... the Arenes, the Madeleine church and other monuments in Béziers were switched off during one hour to participate in WWF's "Earth Hour" on March 31st. As well as 1.8 million people around the world, our elderly sisters in the Bon Pasteur community participated in this action to protect our planet from climate change.

### Rio + 20 & Our RSHM International JPIC Meeting – June 2012:

*Ellen O'Leary*

As you are aware the Rio + 20 Conference on Sustainable Development took place in June of this year and our RSHM International meeting was immediately after that. This was well timed by way of inspiring us and hopefully leading to appropriate decisions and action.

Rio + 20 was a crucial meeting in which it was hoped world leaders would commit to a sustainable future for our planet by looking at problems such as food, energy and water security. This was a follow-up to the 1992 summit which was a ground breaking meeting that put climate change and biodiversity on the global political agenda. The idea then was that the needs of our generation could be met without compromising the needs of generations to follow. Alas, 20 years later 1 in 5 people still live on less than \$1 a day.

Current trends are pushing planet earth to its limits. If every person on earth lived the high consumption lifestyle of the average person in our hemisphere, we are told we would need the resources of 3.5 planets to meet our needs. The big question for each of us is - what am I doing? What can I do to reverse this process?

During our JPIC meeting I was heartened to hear from Brigid Driscoll (our RSHM NGO representative) who together with Antonietta Abreu and Rosinha Pereira had participated in Rio + 20 that there is at least some hope that we can and will find a way forward. Alongside the main Conference in Rio there was a parallel event – the People's Summit which was acknowledged as a driving force in the creation of the final document that was agreed by the main Conference. This document was passed on to the Secretary General of the United Nations to develop. Among other issues being worked on, the Millennium Development Goals will be re-created as Sustainable Development Goals. The Secretary General recognizing the input of the People's Summit offered the following words of encouragement - "you have served as guides, you represent the people of the world, the most vulnerable, please continue to play this role as the outcome of Rio + 20 is over to you."

As part of our Institute JPIC planning for the next 2 years, we have also committed ourselves to working on the Millennium Development Goals, especially numbers 7 and 8, demonstrating our responsibility for sustainable development and working in partnerships. We will also continue our commitment to eliminate human trafficking.

This is a very brief overview, however, my hope is that it conveys some small sense of urgency that will spur us on to "create right relationships in the promotion of justice, peace and integrity of creation" enabling us to place "ourselves and our resources at the service of those most in need of justice." (Mission Statement).

In conclusion I quote from a letter in the Irish Times (passed on to me by Teresina O'Byrne),

***"Rio + 20 is a chance for us to choose rather than accept, the future we will in"***