

EXCHANGE NOVEMBER 2012

PROVINCIAL CHAPTER PART 1



NEP PROVINCIAL CHAPTER 2012
PEN CHAPITRE PROVINCIAL 2012

We wish to thank all who participated in the Provincial Chapter, for the good will and energy you brought to it and all of you at home who participated in the Chapter with your prayers. We were very conscious of the Holy Spirit guiding us through Mary and Gabrielle, our facilitators, and felt united to all of you at home.

We thank those of you who sent greetings and good wishes. We also received greetings and assurances of prayers from other Provinces and Regions and the General Council, who were represented by Catherine Patten.

We thank all of you who helped in any way to make the Chapter a life-giving time for us, with fun as well as the more serious work.

We shall send a copy of the final statement to each of you.

AWARD FOR SERVICE – Extract from “The Irish Times” Saturday 27th October 2012



“An Irish nun, Sr Agnes Hunt, will be presented with an international humanitarian award. The award is named after Mgr Hugh O’Flaherty from Co Kerry, who came to be known as the Scarlet Pimpernel of the Vatican. He is credited with saving more than 6,000 Jews and others by setting up an escape network during the German occupation of Rome in the 1940s.

Sr Agnes, who spent 16 years at Wormwood Scrubs Prison, was nominated by the Irish Council for Prisoners Overseas and was chosen due to her commitment and empathy towards Irish prisoners overseas and their families.

Joanne Joyce, co-ordinator of the prisoners’ body, stated in her nomination submission: “Thirty-four years after her first day in Wormwood Scrubs, Sr Agnes remains committed to supporting prisoners.”

BEREAVEMENTS

Our sympathy and prayers are with:

The Madonna House Community on the death of **Sr Bernard Fay** who died on 7th October at the age of 95 years and in the 70th year of her Religious Profession.

The Sisters of the Eastern American Province on the death of **Sr Bridget Mary Fitzgerald** who died in Tarrytown on the 22nd September at the age of 88 years and in the 57th year of her Religious Profession.

A warm welcome to Thérèse Marie Potelle who joined the Mother House community on 27 September. She has been plunged in at the deep end, as we have had three groups from Marymount schools since her arrival: the Principals and Board members of Kingston, Neuilly, Nomentana and the Villa, teachers from Fifth Avenue, New York, and past pupils from Neuilly, Barcelona and Nomentana.



We have also hosted a meeting of the RSHM in Béziers to plan our meetings with our Extended Family this year. Our focus will be the Year of Faith and Thérèse Marie, as a member of the JPIC team, has offered to give a talk on some aspect of JPIC.

It is not a question of “all work and no play”, however, as Thérèse Marie, like the rest of us, has enjoyed having our visitors and has had some lovely, relaxing meals with them.

DAILY LIFE IN THE NOVITIATE

Karina Kelly

From Karina's last letter (It will help answer the question about what happens in the Novitiate)

Our life here is very structured and doesn't vary very much from week to week so I don't feel like I have very much news to share but I thought I might tell you some of the things that have happened here in September and hope I won't be boring you too much!

We have started needlework in a craft class run by one of the sisters here (Dina Fontes da Silva) which has turned out to be great fun. We have the class once a week for a couple of hours and Dina has lot of experience in this area so we've been making some very nice things. I have started on vagonette (a kind of needlework) and am going to use the piece that I've made to make a tea towel (I told my mother if I sent it home no one was to be allowed use it). We have also been painting the tea towels, adding crochet and the others have done some knitting. In the evening during our shared time together we usually watch some telly and do a bit of needlework. Hopefully what we've been doing will make nice gifts.



We had a visiting teacher, Ir. Lourdinha Lima from the community in Sao Paulo who gave us a three day course on the Gospels to complement the Bible Studies course we are doing. It was difficult to cover so much material in three days but it was a very interesting course which gave us another perspective on the information we had received already. We will

have completed the first year of our course next month, this year focussed on the New Testament and next year will focus on the Old Testament. We also attended a lecture given as part of the work that the sisters do with young people here through their colleges that gave us an insight into some of the dangers of the internet, in particular social networking sites in terms of invasion of privacy and that kind of thing.

We had a night out at the local Municipal Park and Arts Centre where the city put on free movies, bands, art installations and amusements. It was very popular with the people of the city and there was a huge crowd. The city of Belo provides a lot of funding for cultural events and they are very well organised, there were lots of big installations such as a huge dynamo made out of the wheels of about twenty bikes, when you turned the pedal on one the rest turned and generated the energy to light a bulb, great fun! It was a great idea to use the park at night and for a different purpose, Brazilians are very good at using the same facility for multiple purposes, for example using school buildings all day rather than leaving them empty after four.



The Municipal Park in Belo Horizonte



The kitchen in the Novitiate

JUBILEE CELEBRATION OF MONZE DIOCESE August 25th 2012

Catherine Dunne

The highlight of my time in Zambia was most certainly the Monze Diocesan Jubilee celebration. Preparation had gone on during the previous year in the form of study groups, retreats and processions. There was even a Eucharistic Congress in Mazabuka. Prior to the celebration religious and guests were invited to a gathering on the 23rd at St Kizito's Pastoral centre. Sr Evan, Holy Spirit Sister, led us in an engaging reflection on each decade of the history of the diocese. She had a real anthill as an analogy of how the missionaries worked as she saw them, supporting each other, greeting each other on the way but always focussed and on their way about their business.



The open air Mass on the 25th in splendid sunshine, with plenty of colour, music and special traditional dancing left us all very proud of the diocese. Of course the only Europeans to be seen were a few very white heads in the audience. One particularly powerful symbolic gesture struck me very forcefully. In 1962 when James Corboy SJ became the first bishop he had one Tonga priest and that remained so for around 17 years, much to his regret. At the end of the Jubilee Mass there was a little ceremony to mission a Tonga priest to Botswana to help the diocese there.

During the rest of my stay I visited all the communities. I was very impressed by the young Sisters both RSHMs and Holy Spirit Sisters. They carry a heavy work load with the demand to upgrade their studies and continue their responsibilities. Lay people are doing the same. The changing scene in Zambia calls for adaptation and wisdom. I was delighted to share in the communities and Sr Evan and I spoke to many classes in Chivuna and in Charles Lwanga College on Human Trafficking. I feel Evan is well prepared now to launch out on her own and she feels the work of raising awareness is essential.



As the heat grew more intense I was glad to leave even to the continuous rain and autumn chilling weather. There will be a DVD of the Jubilee later.



JPIC LINKS Dorothy Ward

JPIC Links is a group attached to COR and they held their meeting on Sustainable Development. The speakers were from The Global Poverty Project and World Development Movement. The talk from the Global Poverty Movement was called 1.4 billion reasons. It was called this because there are 1.4 billion people in the world suffering

abject poverty. The presentation addressed the questions:

- What is extreme poverty?
- Can we do anything about it?
- What are the barriers to ending extreme poverty?
- Why should we care?
- What can I do?

Several specific helps for us came up e.g. Parish Food Banks which run locally are very charitable but surely there is also the question of justice that the government should address. Escalating prices caused by speculation have caused prices to rise dramatically. The price of maize, a staple diet of many in the 3rd world, has so increased that many have to choose between feeding their children against such luxuries as health care or education. It is hoped that the meeting of the financial ministers will make new rules strong enough to tackle food speculation. Banks and hedge funds have created complicated investment products to enable them to make money from speculating on food. Barclays is the biggest player and has made £500 million from food prices in the past two years.

Why not write to George Osborne before the finance ministers make their decision? As we were using four of the millennium goals for the basis of our lecture it was questioned what will happen after 2015. We were told that three countries had been nominated to write goals for later. One of these countries is Britain and it was suggested that we write to the Prime Minister and our own M. P. asking them to include the disabled in them as this was a big problem in many other countries where they were often totally ignored.

Alex Scrivener, Policy Officer at The World Development Movement, spoke about similar programmes that they had set up under the title *Justice for the World's Poor*. Climate change was causing a big problem as many people were unable to continue growing the usual crops and many did not have the means to diversify or the land.

Abbey to Africa

Over 700 students and teachers from Abbey Community College took part in a sponsored walk around the Ferrybank area on Friday 12th October as a fundraising effort for Zambia. Ferrybank has a long association with the Zambian mission since M. Odile and Agnes set out over 40 years ago to begin the RSHM presence in Chivuna. Involvement had waned in recent years because the school followed the official Mission month charities which were the focus of fundraising.



The renewed interest in and commitment to the RSHM Zambian mission this year is due to the enthusiasm of one of the young teachers in the Abbey – Ellen Lynch – who funded herself on a visit to Zambia for three weeks this past summer. She visited the various works of the mission in Lusaka, Choma and Chivuna and was overwhelmed by the work that is being done by our Sisters and the people they work with. She cannot praise the Sisters enough for their welcome and care of her when she was there. This, in itself, has been a great witness to all our staff and has been a very positive message about religious life in a country where the news of religious life

is not always good. Ellen has spoken of little else since she returned and was the driving force in this awareness raising and fundraising effort in school. The Mission month of October provided the opportunity to focus on Africa, particularly Zambia, and we have been able to inform all the class groups through the RE teachers of the situation and mission in Zambia. Students can identify with students there who have such a struggle to access education. Much as they might like to be out of school themselves they realise that an education is the best gateway to freedom of choice in the future. It has been a marvellous opportunity to speak of the continuous work that is being done on the missions. I appreciate the fact that a young teacher is interested enough in



the mission to go there and to follow the visit up with such enthusiasm. It is a compliment to all the RSHMs who have given years of service. It is wonderful to have re-established a strong link with the RSHMs in Zambia and hopefully this will continue well into the future when there are no longer RSHMs teaching in Abbey CC.



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Ellen with one of the other teachers as they supervise the sponsored walk.



There was a fantastic response from the students and we are still counting the money!

Amazing in a time of recession.

Mary Gough,

It was a lovely opportunity to be able to spend four days in Romania mainly in Bucharest, the capital. Two of us went from APT, Act to Prevent Trafficking, and were linked with an IBVM Sister through our European link group. The purpose was to explore how APT could link and support those working on prevention in a source country for Human Trafficking. Sr Adina lives in a community of fifty two, all Romanian and all but about five under the age of fifty five. They are the original Mary Ward Sisters.

Romania is 80% Orthodox, State sponsored Church. Social work would not be part of the work of the Catholic Church, 7% Catholic, 8% other faiths. When I saw Bucharest, and later Bresnov, beautiful cities, I said I wonder if they could help Ireland! However as their history unfolded I had a very different view. While the country has many beautiful sights, salt mines, forests and is still very traditional in ways it has a very sad history. The recent period of forty five years of communist rule up to 1998 under Ceausescu's dictatorship has left its mark on both the people and the economy. Religious were scattered and many did not return to communities. Some spent up to ten years in prison and do not speak about it. Properties are still not returned to congregations and are in bad condition. The poor working economy together with a share of corruption leaves widespread poverty in rural areas. Young children are left to elderly people while the young go abroad and so these children are vulnerable to trafficking and exploitation.

We visited four shelters, three for domestic violence and one for trafficked people. Some donors have been very generous towards projects and we are particularly interested in supporting Sr Adina to run an awareness raising programme against Human Trafficking especially in Moldova, (not to be confused with the Republic of Moldova). We recommend that she trains others to work with her and eventually to bring people out of an attitude of apathy and denial towards Human Trafficking. As a treat we saw the castle of Ceausescu, another 'Versailles', and some of the magnificent mountain heights. APT members are now delighted to be linked to an outreach region as a new venture.



Sr Mary Mangan and myself with staff



At a retreat centre