

FROM THE PROVINCIAL COUNCIL



NEP PROVINCIAL CHAPTER 2013
PEN CHAPITRE PROVINCIAL 2013

We thank all of you who came to the July area meetings to hear about the General Chapter and for your willingness to enter into the process leading up to the second part of the Provincial Chapter (11th – 13th October). It is now getting closer and to make the most of the short time we have together at the Chapter we are sending out a letter and reflection papers, prepared by the Chapter Preparation Team and the Formation Team. These will help us in our personal reflection and group discussion. They should arrive for the beginning of September.

Some of the participants at the July area day meetings.







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MARY MILLIGAN LECTURE IN SPIRITUALITY

The first 'Mary Milligan lecture in Spirituality' was given by Sandra Schneiders in April this year in Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles. The subject is 'The Resurrection' and the WAP have offered us copies. We are ordering one for each community, but if anyone would like their own copy please let us know.

HOLY SPIRIT SISTERS CELEBRATION



You will remember that we spoke of the Holy Spirit Sisters celebrating their full recognition as a Religious Institute by the Holy See. We have received a letter from Judith about it and there are some photographs from Lelia.

The Holy Spirit Sisters celebration went extremely well. It was a great day and I was very happy to be there to join with them for this very important and special occasion. It was held in the grounds of the cathedral in Monze. It was a huge gathering of sisters, priests and local people from all around the diocese. The Bishop celebrated Mass. We RSHMs were thanked by him for our work with them, especially in the early years. The symbols at the offertory were beautiful and so significant. A Jesuit priest scattered seeds on the ground, symbolizing their beginning with Bishop Corboy, then our Sr. Florence watered the seeds symbolizing the help necessary for growth and Sr. Marianna presented a young plant growing and still in need of development and nurturing. It was so simple and beautifully done.



At the end of Mass Sr. Marianna gave a lovely speech and gave thanks and praise to RSHM sisters for all we had done with them over the past 42 years since their foundation. I was very aware of all our sisters who had lived and worked in Zambia over the years and in particular those directly involved with the Holy Spirit Sisters and remembered them all very specially during the Mass. They were all very happy that I was there representing the province and thanked me very much for coming. I was really delighted to be there and meet them all again. It was a wonderful day of celebration and joy.

Judith Penkert



MESSAGE FROM DOMINIQUE

Dear All,

The new moon is shining high in the Lusaka sky to-night, making the sky magic with the shepherd's star shining brightly too as in winter skies. It is winter here; the weather is exactly as you would dream of: cool at night and warm during the day, with a nice breeze, just right. I appreciate my duvet plus a blanket. In the morning, at 6 am when we go walking to Mass, I regret my brown jacket left in Somain. Since there is no barometer or thermometer in the house, I approximate the temperature between 24 and 28 degrees in the day, it will remain so (more or less) until the end of the month, I'm told.

I got a wonderful welcome from the community here in Lusaka: Pamela, Margaret and Mavis; and the "summer" member Judith P. who spent some weeks in Harare and now in Lusaka. I'm looking forward to seeing Edna early September. Before then Margaret Fielding will have come and gone, as will Veronica B. A regional community is a place of welcome, and Lusaka lives up to its vocation and mission. In the next few weeks I will have made acquaintance with many RSHM's of the Region, and not only.

A big achievement for me is driving in Lusaka; it is an automatic car 4X4, bigger than I'm used to; left-hand driving is another challenge; there are no signposts except for the speed limits. Many of you have been to Zambia and know what the city is like. I have not yet seen the police in the city, but it seems that they are very zealous. I don't know if there are any points to lose or gain. The streets are pretty large in general in our part of town but there are no sidewalks, and pedestrians are everywhere, vendors with goods of all kinds surround the cars at the street-lights.



Many of you wrote to me for the feast of Saint Dominic; thank you for your kind thoughts and prayers. We celebrated by visiting a game park about twenty miles from here; a few wild boars were kind enough to say hello to us, the lions were caged in, the antelopes were walking around among the people.

We have the BBC on television and follow the international news; not very encouraging to listen to; the elections in Zimbabwe were the interest of the week; Mugabe is out on his own!

I'm settling in slowly but surely, missing what and who I left behind, appreciating new surroundings, and new faces. I hope to keep you in the picture by regular contributions to Exchange, and maybe even some pictures.

Love to all
Dominique

BEREAVEMENTS

Our sympathy and prayers are with:

The Dunmurry community on the death of **Sr. Joan Lynam** who died on 1st August at the age of 86 years and in the 63rd year of her Religious Profession.

The Sisters of the EAP on the death of **Sr. Vianney Stewart** in Tarrytown on 1st August at the age of 91 years and in the 73rd year of her Religious Profession.



Active against Global Hunger

You may recall receiving information in the April and May editions of Exchange on the IF Campaign, which is aiming to make 2013 the beginning of the end of Global Hunger. The following report on the response of the Justice and Peace Group in the parish of Penmaenmawr and Llandudno Junction, in conjunction with other groups in the diocese of Wrexham, was sent in by Pauline Stott.

JUSTICE AND PEACE GROUP, PENMAENMAWR/LLANDUDNO JUNCTION

On the 8th June I joined with CAFOD to attend the 'IF' Rally in Hyde Park. Our aim was to call on the G8 World Leaders to act for a world *Free From Hunger*.

We arrived in Victoria at 11am and attended an Ecumenical Service before setting off on our two-mile walk to Hyde Park. At the Park 45,000 people gathered and we spent the afternoon in joining our voices with those people around the world who hope to raise awareness through the IF Campaign:

IF : Governments keep their promises on aid, invest to stop children dying from malnutrition and help the poorest people feed themselves through investment in small farmers (1 in 8 children go to bed hungry.)

IF : we force governments and investors to be honest and open about the deals they make in the poorest countries that stop people getting enough food.

IF: governments stop big companies dodging tax in poor countries, so that millions of people can free themselves from hunger.

IF: we stop poor farmers being forced off their land, and use the available agricultural land to grow food for people, not biofuels for cars.

On June 15th Anne McArdle and Maria Pizzoni represented the group in Belfast. A group of 25 organised by Christian Aid left Holyhead to make the journey by ferry and coach to Belfast. They brought with them a 5 ft high bottle carrying the messages to the G8, from the young people from the South Wales Valleys. This effort claimed a great deal of attention all the way to Belfast until it landed in the Botanical Gardens. The day was interesting and meaningful with speakers from Bangladesh and Africa. The resolve to eliminate hunger and poverty was never stronger, **IF** politicians could agree to support the **IF** campaign.

Anne and Maria received great hospitality from the Dunmurry community while they were in Belfast.

This two day Conference was a project of All Hallows College, Dublin, in association with Mísean Cara, the Irish missionary Union and Kimmage Development Studies Centre and took place in the College 5 – 6 June 2013.

The aim of the Conference was to reflect on the changing reality of mission and missionary development today and to vision effective ways that will continue the endeavour initiated and sustained by Irish missionaries over many decades in developing countries all over the world.

The Conference was an event of the Gathering 2013 and attracted over 200 delegates and speakers from Africa, Asia, South America, Australia as well as from Ireland and Great Britain.

Speakers at the Conference acknowledged

- The work done by missionaries in the past and the legacy that is now being transferred to local religious who are committed and trained to carry on this great work.
- As we look to the future we see a significant decline in the number of Irish missionaries so how do we prepare for the succession of mission and for good-practice missionary work into the future.
- It is important to look at the role the volunteers and the lay missionaries will play in missionary work in the decades ahead.
- We also need to look at the role Ireland can play as it continues to support the people in the developing world not only by its human resources in personnel but in funding as well, to enable the missionary development to progress where the people of the global south may become self-sufficient. We need to listen to those who are now charged with the task of continuing the mission to tell us what they need both now and in the future and we need to journey with them.

We were privileged to have eight members in our group and we were quite International. The following attended the Conference: Beatrice Magaya (Zambezi), Arsénia Sapátinha (Mozambique), Máire Concannon and Marie Fitzpatrick (EF SHM-NEP serving in João Pessoa, Brazil), Breda Shelly (EAP) Dominique Treacy and Catherine Dunne.

I would like to express my deep gratitude to the Sisters of NEP who were outstanding in their welcome, hospitality, generosity and availability to our young visitors from Africa and who provided them with a truly memorable time in Ireland as we went from North to South in an RSHM experience.

The presentations are available on line at www.miseancara.ie (homepage). You will see a heading **Mission Today and Tomorrow** where presentation papers from the Conference are available to download.

Arsénia and Beatrice wish to share something of their experience with us.



Beatrice Arsénia



Beatrice Madeleine Arsénia

Arsénia Sapatinha RSHM

It is with great joy and gratitude that I share with you what my experience in Ireland meant to me where I attended the International Conference – Mission Today and Tomorrow in early June. It was an important growing experience for me; an eventful trip – deep and meaningful in every way. Not only did I visit new places and meet new people but it helped me cope with my fears of the unknown and enabled me to overcome the barriers of insecurity.

I am deeply grateful to the sisters who made me so welcome, who warmly invited me into their communities and were a significant part of my visit to NEP. The day at Glendalough was but a dip into Celtic spirituality where I experienced the abundance and beauty of God not only in nature but in the peaceful silence and harmony which surrounded me. It was the springboard for the peacefulness and enthusiasm of the days that followed.



The Conference presentations were challenging for me, not only in content but also language; meeting many people and absorbing necessary information. By the first afternoon session I was more attuned to the spoken word, became more involved and identified more with the presentations. The focus was on the dignity of the human person, the role of the missionary and the laity in the developing world today and the passing on of the charism for tomorrow. This focus is fundamental to all development. Respecting and recognizing the dignity of the human person must become the norm and standard by which we minister. We are called to be peacemakers but where there is peace there must be justice also. We need to work with our brothers and sisters of different cultures and different religions, to dialogue together to bring about a better world for all. As one speaker said “If you have come to help me, you are wasting your time... But if you have come because your liberation is bound with mine, then let us go together.” The Conference participants showed great enthusiasm for carrying on the mission of Jesus and of handing their legacy on to the newer member of Communities and indigenous missionaries in the global south. We are invited to live a life of global solidarity. We share the earth with all its inhabitants and respect the integrity of creation. "We are called to be agents of change. We are not here to conquer the world, but to illuminate it - new vision, salt of the earth, light of the world."

These lines and many more shared experiences are very close or even equal to my own Mozambican reality. They are inviting me to look into the world and at the realities that surround me and that touch my day-to-day life. I return from this conference with a new look, a compassionate heart and filled with memories of my experience which will enable me to grow more deeply in my RSHM commitment in living out our mission “that all may have life”.

Finally, I want to say that I will keep all the sisters I met close to me in my heart. I thank God for giving me this opportunity to meet you and to share our RSHM story. I thank you for your wonderful hospitality. Wherever I went, I was made to feel at home – Drumcondra, Tallaght, Ferrybank. It was a privilege for me to spend time with you and to share in the joy of your living out your commitment. And special thanks to Sister Breda who was responsible for organizing this experience and making it possible.



I also want to thank my Region for allowing me to attend the Conference and for the trust they placed in me. May God bless each, who directly or indirectly made this experience possible and give them the graces they need most in life and mission. I have the responsibility to pass on this experience to all. Having already begun, it will now be easier since I have managed to get the physical material provided on the internet.

Bea Magaya RSHM



My heart was full of joy as I arrived in Dublin. Being part of such an international conference was a great honor to me. It was a new experience that gave light to my vision for the future. I was reminded of a relay race where we pass on the baton to the others after we have done our part; we are not in the race alone but with others. I learned that I am continually called and sent on mission.

It was enriching meeting people from different parts of the world. And meeting people from Zambia and Zimbabwe from other congregations was amazing. All were united by the desire to reach out to those in need through the support of Misesan Cara. The conference was a transforming experience for me as a young participant. It helped me to see myself as a missionary today and empowered me to be a missionary in the future.

What impressed me the most was the emphasis on the fact that we exist and work in a continually growing and changing world. . .we are only part of a whole. . .what I begin others will carry on. This awakens the growing need

for solidarity and good succession.

I experienced a great welcome from the sisters all over Ireland. We had a pilgrimage to Glendalough. The place was so peaceful and so full of life that it was like the touch of God. The visits I had in Ireland allowed me to be in touch with our RSHM history and our origins. I experienced us as daughters of Gailhac united by our desire to continue the mission of Christ.

I appreciated the environment. The beauty of the grass and beautiful gardens of flowers was an enriching experience.

To all the sisters in the NEP, thank you for your very warm welcome and hospitality. I wish to express my special gratitude to Sr. Breda who was my companion during my visit.



Beatrice and Arsénia enjoying some 'downtime' in Tramore and meeting an old friend – Patsy.



10 ANALYSIS
Debating the future of mission

Over 200 Irish and international missionaries gathered for a two-day conference in All Hallows College, Dublin last week.

Mags Gargan
Over 200 Irish and international missionaries gathered for a two-day conference in All Hallows College, Dublin last week. The aim of the conference was to reflect on the changing reality of mission and humanitarian development today, and to plan effective structures that will continue the work of Irish missionaries over many decades in developing countries all over the world. Over 50 per cent of the speakers were from Africa, and the opening address was given by Fr Agbonkiri-annegho Orobator SJ, Jesuit Provincial of the East African Province, who said that Ireland now represents a new mission frontier in the world Church.

Other speakers acknowledged the legacy of Irish missionaries and considered the planning being put into the handover to local missionaries. The role of volunteers and lay missionaries in development and in mission in the years ahead was also discussed, as well as the role of faith-based values in developing countries.

The conference was addressed by Minister of State for Trade and Development, Joe Costello TD. Irish Aid, through Misesan Cara, contributes €16 million annually towards the development and humanitarian work of Irish missionaries and their local partners.

Minister Costello paid tribute to the work of missionary organisations and said: "The long tradition and commitment of Irish missionaries has led the way for much of the Irish Government's approach to development." "Irish missionaries tend to work in remote communities, working with those most marginalised and forgotten people and communities in whom poverty, hunger and inequality is an everyday occurrence," he said.

Irish missionaries are key partners in the achievement of the goals of the Government's Development Competence Programme.

A book on 'Sustained Theological Approach' written by Kenny Smith, Sr I McManus of the Holy Rosary, St. Stephen Moore of University was also lauded during the conference.

Interpreting mission's role in conflict

The first session of the conference addressed the impact of Irish missionaries over the decades in developing countries, and looked to the future of mission in the area of conflict and inter-religious dialogue.

Jacob Kavunkal SVD, Associate Professor in MCD University of Divinity, Australia described as "remarkable" the role of Irish missionaries in the spread of the Faith and for the betterment of the quality of life in Asia.

He said that "mission today has to be open to all religious traditions and cultures" and "we must admit openly that all genuine religious traditions are part of the divine plan".

He defined mission as a life-centred ministry, which will lead to the transformation of civil society with an emphasis on justice and the practice of human rights.

"The significance of mission to the civil society can be understood only when we realise that the purpose of mission is transformation of the world and not the growth of the Church or the safeguarding of its interests," he said.

Kathleen McGarvey OLA, who works in Nigeria in the area of inter-faith dialogue, especially with women, used Nigeria as a case study on why and how the Church must give priority in its missionary endeavours to situations of conflict.

"Obviously our mission as Church cannot be reduced to development, as though the two were synonymous, but our mission, to be a sign and an instrument of Communion, obliges us to be concerned for the joys, hopes, griefs and anxieties of all people, especially the poor and those in underdeveloped countries, and to be actively involved in changing this situation," she said.

'Women are the first teachers for everybody and to a large extent they are the model in the home'

Sr Kathleen said religion has a bad reputation in relation to war and peace, but religion has also been a positive source of hope, strength and inspiration for people to challenge and non-violently confront situations and structures of injustice. "I believe we have a responsibility to ensure religion is taught and practiced as a positive and not a negative force," she said.

Sr Beatrice Magaya RSHM, Sr Pamela Penkert RSHM, Sr Kay O'Neil FMDM and Sr Arsenia Joao Sapatinha RSHM.

Sr Kathleen's co-presenter on the panel was her colleague, Amina Kazare who is the Muslim Coordinator of the Women's Interfaith Council in Nigeria.

She listed five key issues that contribute to intolerance and violent religious conflict: Lack of understanding of religion by some of those who represent Islam or Christianity; Lack of polite and diplomatic approach in preaching; Extremism, fanaticism and bigotry by some religious leaders; Use of religion as a vehicle to amass wealth; Lack of trust between the followers of the two religions.

In relation to missionaries and development aid, she suggested that more "community buy-in" was needed. "Where there are people of two faiths in a community, it is important to ensure that it is done as an interfaith project and that both the Muslims and Christians are taken along because if we are not given a sense of belonging, there will be mistrust which will lead to the collapse of the whole concept."

Speakers Sr Kathleen McGarvey RSHM and Sr Arsenia Joao Sapatinha RSHM.

Sr Agnes Agbom, C of MSHR and Sr Nora I.

Speakers Sr Kathleen McGarvey RSHM and Sr Arsenia Joao Sapatinha RSHM.

Sr Leonie O'Connell FMSA, speaker

Beatrice and Arsénia were photographed with Pam at the Conference – for the Irish Catholic!