

## FROM THE PROVINCIAL COUNCIL



NEP PROVINCIAL CHAPTER 2013  
PEN CHAPITRE PROVINCIAL 2013

### PROVINCIAL CHAPTER

We are very grateful to all of you who participated in the chapter – those of you who prayed at home, those who took part in the area meetings and those who came to Birmingham. We know that the facilitators made us work hard, but they were impressed with the level of preparation and the willingness to work and to reach consensus. We felt our hearts burning within us as we journeyed together during the days in Birmingham. We thank you for putting so much energy into this whole process so that we are able to say we have reflected, as a body, on our situation today and the paths leading us to the future.

We have already heard that sisters have passed on information and the ‘story’ of the chapter to those who had to remain at home. You will each receive a copy of the three areas we have chosen to embark on as our province response to the General Chapter commitments.

Shortly we will be visiting communities and individual sisters, starting with the North of France in November. Two members of the council will visit each community. We will be in touch with you about dates and what you would like to talk about while we are with you. As a chapter we have already agreed that the visits would include “asking individuals and communities where they see themselves in 2018 and how we might organise ourselves in the future.” (c.f. paragraph on Structures) We would also like to hear your response to the other areas agreed upon at the chapter. We look forward to this time ahead.

### PROVINCIAL CHAPTER EVALUATION

Thank you to all who sent in the evaluation sheet regarding the Provincial Chapter. It is most helpful to have your responses and much appreciated.





**BRIDGET HUSSEY**



Bridget's funeral Mass at Our Lady of Dolours Church in Glasnevin was packed with family and friends, as well as RSHM. It was remarkable how many spoke to us afterwards, grateful for her help and her presence in their lives.

There were past pupils from Hollywood, Chaplains and ex-prisoners, a strong contingent from the Granada Institute, representatives of the Christian Brothers, with whom she was working until she became ill, people who had worked with her in the Samaritans and others who had personal counselling with her. There were ex-RSHM and members of other congregations who were friends or members of a cosmology group with Bridget – and many others. John Lonergan reminded us that Bridget was one of the first two female chaplains in Ireland, saying that the establishment did not like it, but the prisoners loved them!

During the Mass, Mary Jo welcomed everyone and recalled the meeting in Madonna House at the end of July, saying, "It was a struggle for her to speak, but her message was clear. She saw the call for us as Religious today to keep exploring our spirituality, to pay attention to our care of the Earth and to be inclusive in our thinking and our actions, so that 'all may have life'." At the end of Mass Jo, her niece, spoke about how much she meant to her family and Pat Walsh, from the Granada Institute, showed a real appreciation of her in her relationships with those who worked with her and those who attended the centre. Fr. Ciaran, who knew her from her time as prison chaplain and in 'Granada' and who had accompanied her in her last months in the hospice, spoke about her suffering and her struggle with her illness, helping us to realise that this was a necessary part of her journey as she moved towards the Light she could see ahead of her.

There was a very moving service the evening before in the hospice chapel, with RSHM community, family and friends. We were also aware that in Madonna House the community had celebrated Bridget's life with the same evening service and with a Mass using the same readings and hymns as she had chosen for the funeral.

## **BEREAVEMENTS**

*Our prayers and sympathy are with:*

Sr Eileen Purcell on the death of her sister, **Sheila Purcell**, who died on 23<sup>rd</sup> October

The 70 Drumcondra Road and Madonna House communities on the death of **Sr Bridget Hussey** who died in Dublin on 26<sup>th</sup> October at the age of 69 years and in the 51<sup>st</sup> year of her Religious Profession.





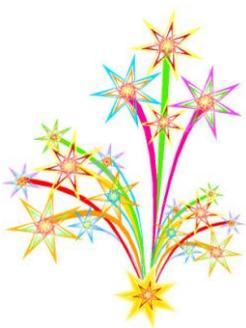
How can we bring alive a whole history if not by sharing it generously with all those who for so many years have worked with us, the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary?

In 1913 on the eve of the First World War, an international community of religious arrived in Cambrai. Today we are still here, rejoicing in the history that continues. We have been, for one hundred years, and continue to be truly in solidarity with those with whom we live and work in this great city.

With the team of the Association of the Friends of Jeanne d'Arc, we have selected a theme: *A Centenary for Today* and we have a programme of celebration for the whole year.

First of all, a delegation of three young college students and five adults (the director, teachers, and others) followed an intensive two-day schedule of events in Béziers. They studied the foundation and source of life transmitted by Father Gailhac, Mother St. John, and our first sisters and on their return to Cambrai shared all that they had experienced from this memorable visit.

The members of the Association of the Friends of Jeanne d'Arc have produced a video and set up a website. Commemorative stamps will be issued in honour of the Centenary of the Collège Jeanne d'Arc. In the month of September, there was an Open House for past pupils and parents, former Board members and lay directors.



On 12<sup>th</sup> November, in the morning of the closing day of the centenary, events will focus on rejoicing and thanksgiving. In addition to the students' work shown in the Collège Jeanne d'Arc, there will be celebratory fireworks on the Grand-Place de l'Hotel de Ville de Cambrai, with all the students invited to a festive meal. In the afternoon, Monsignor Garnier will offer a blessing in the renovated chapel of the school and then preside at a Mass of Thanksgiving in the Cathedral.

During this celebration, Sister Mary Jo McElroy, at the invitation of the RSHM of Cambrai, will again give Francis Renault, Director of Collège Jeanne d'Arc, the Missioning Letter from the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary, as a pledge of their loyalty and support. Finally, a toast in friendship with the "Centenary beer" will seal the joy and friendship among all the participants.



## SHEPHERDS BUSH



On 14<sup>th</sup> October, the parishioners of the Church of the Holy Ghost and St Stephen, in Shepherd's Bush, gathered for a "Mass of Thanksgiving and Farewell" for Joanna Whooley as she moves on to Ferrybank. The chief celebrant was Mgr Jim Curry, Episcopal Vicar, and the preacher, Fr Allen Morris. The other priests present had been parish priests in the past or had been there on supply over a number of years. Mgr Curry paid a very warm tribute, on behalf of the Diocese, to Joanna for 25 years of devoted service to the parish. He presented her with the Diocesan Medal and framed certificate in appreciation. The homily was another expression of deep appreciation. Fr Allen Morris referred to the spirit of Père Gailhac

and Mère St Jean and, mentioning Joanna's ready smile, said he considered joy as one of the fundamental marks of religious women today. The Mass was followed by a most enjoyable meal in the Parish Hall, provided and prepared by a group of parishioners. Joanna herself expressed her own appreciation of all that the people of the parish have been to her over so many years.

The celebration marks the end of the RSHM presence in Shepherd's Bush parish where the Sisters have worked since 1975 and lived until 2008.



## BON PASTEUR – recent news!

Françoise Thérèse and Philo had falls recently but are recovering well. Here we see them being supported by Vivienne.





I CARE ABOUT CARE

There has been a lot on the UK news about the poor quality of care given to the elderly and disabled in their homes. A movement started in Manor Park which has spread through the UK and developed into **The Citizens UK Social Care Campaign.**



They hope that others will join in this campaign for specific standards of care provision:

**Proper Training:**

Care workers trained to a high standard including dealing with dementia, moving and handling and in mental health

**Better relationships:**

Consistency of care worker to care recipient;  
e.g. 90% of care provided by small team of named primary care workers

An effective strategy to involve communities and build relationships

**Enough time:**

At least 30 minutes for Home Care visits  
Home Care workers paid for travel time between visits  
Sufficient staffing in Care Homes



**Dignity in work:**

A living wage for care workers  
An occupational sick pay scheme  
A clear pathway for career progression



## VERIANNA'S STORY

(This is a story of the plight of Asylum Seekers with whom Eleanor has been involved through her work as a volunteer with the Merseyside Refugee and Asylum Seekers Support Group MYRANG)

Verianna (not real name) is a well educated Muslim woman from Albania who fell in love with a fellow country man, Ailbe (not real name) who is a Catholic. As a result she had to flee her own country and initially found refuge in France and later in Liverpool where she was reunited with Ailbe who had borrowed money to travel there to be with her.

Verianna found refuge in MYRANG and the parish priest in the area befriended her and Ailbe and the local community also came to their assistance. Verianna at her own request received instruction and was received into the Catholic Church and later married Ailbe there and again the local community rallied around to make this a memorable occasion for the young couple as their status in the country was still not recognized. They managed to get a flat and were able to live together.

The couple eventually got a court hearing and the following week they were ecstatic as they received their papers. However, their happiness was short lived as the Home Office questioned their case and their papers were cancelled. They applied a second time and were refused again. Verianna became pregnant in May and in August their money was stopped. They now had no income and eventually lost their flat and were taken to a detention center where they were fed and given 70p a day each. Through a Religious Congregation who works in Albania, Verianna was offered the opportunity to live in safe accommodation there but, because of the family hostility, they knew their safety would be at risk.

The parish priest in the refugee center again came to their assistance and felt it might be an opportune time to put in a request to get them out on bail but for this they would need an address and money to back the request. The offer of accommodation came from an unusual source. The parish priest's sister is the Prioress of the Carmelites and they offered their old convent as an address for the couple and the Sisters also offered to put up the bail.

The offer of bail was accepted and the couple were released from the detention center. Application was again made to the Home Office but again turned down due to technical errors. However, they have a good solicitor working on the case and he is still hopeful of securing a positive response. Meantime, they are attending the centre and are again receiving material and emotional support from the local community. They remain optimistic about the future despite all the setbacks they have received to date. Let us hope and pray they will soon receive a positive response.

