



Extended Family Newsletter

Issue 26 - October 2016

Meditation for Autumn or the End of the Year

He is the living stone, rejected by human beings but chosen by God and precious to him; set yourself close to him so that you, too, may be living stones making a spiritual house as a holy priesthood to offer the spiritual sacrifices made acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. As scripture says: Now I am laying a stone in Zion, a chosen precious cornerstone and no one who relies on this will be brought to disgrace. (1 Peter)



(Durham Cathedral pillar illustrating 'the stone which the builders rejected...the corner stone')

Reading (1 Corinthians): After all, we do share in God's work: you are God's farm, God's building. By the grace of God which was given to me, I laid the foundations like a trained master builder, and someone else is building on them. Now each one must be careful how he does the building. For no one can lay down any other foundation than the one which is there already, namely Jesus Christ. On this foundation, different people may build in gold, silver, jewels, wood, hay or straw but each person's handiwork will be shown for what it is.

The Brick: The bricklayer laid a brick on the cement, then, with his trowel spread another layer and brick. The foundations grew, the building rose tall and strong, to shelter men. I thought of that brick buried in the darkness - no one sees it, but it accomplishes its task, and the other bricks need it. Lord, what difference does it make whether I am on the roof top or in the foundations of your building, as long as I stand faithfully in the right place?

Prayer (Paul to Ephesians 3 14-20): This is what we pray, kneeling before the Father, from whom every family, in heaven or on earth receives its true name. We ask God to give us power through his Spirit to be strong in our inner selves, and that Christ will make his home in our hearts through faith. May our roots and foundation be in love, so that we may, with all God's people, have the

strength to grasp the breadth and length, the height and depth of Christ's love, although it can never be fully known - and so be completely filled with the fullness of God. Glory be to him whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine; glory to him from generation to generation in the Church and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever. Amen.



Suggested music: 'Dives and Lazarus' (Vaughan Williams) and Bernadette Farrell's 'Let nothing trouble you' (For the one who has God lacks nothing; God alone is enough. (St Teresa of Avila)

Sue Black

Extended Family – Carlisle Group

In Carlisle our plan is that we continue to meet on the 3rd Tuesday of each month and below is a little synopsis of what has been happening since the last newsletter.

9 April – We held a 'Charity Auction' in the Waterton Hall. Sadly, the event was not very well attended but those who did attend thoroughly enjoyed the experience. Our own man 'Greg' with the 'Gavel' did a great job, in convincing potential purchasers how much they really did want the item. At the end of the event we did have surplus goods and it was decided to have a car boot sale, unfortunately the wet-through Greg and Catherine had to call time on the day and the goods remaining were taken to a charity shop. We still managed to make £1000 which has been sent to SVP Twinnage to be directed to support for Syrian Refugees.



17 May – Sr Mariana Bbalo the Mother General of the Holy Spirit Sisters based in Zambia -gave an update on their work with a power-point presentation showing the school and various activities that take place at the school. She mentioned that our previous donation had enable them to purchase chairs which will be used by parents of the children and they are now in the process of building toilet blocks. This was an enjoyable evening which was attended by about 30 people.

27 September – We were pleased to welcomed Sr Rosamond Blanchet RSHM General Superior and Sr Mary Genino General Councillor when they joined us for our time of worship in the chapel, this was followed by an informal chat between our guests and ourselves in front room. Sisters Roz and Mary talked about the how the vision has changed from mainly working in schools to the present day when much of their work is with the poor, the needy and the vulnerable throughout the world. We were then able to tell them what was happening in our area and how it affects each one of us. Giving thought to ‘What does the RSHM Extended Family Mean to Me?’ The evening concluded with a shared supper – a very enjoyable evening had by all.



Reflection and prayer in the chapel



Chat in the sitting room



Shared supper



Sr Mary & Sr Roz

We have two important events in our dairy –

7-9 October - 6 members of our group to join members of Barrow group for a Retreat in Noddfa

18-22 October - 6 members of our group to visit Beziers

We should have plenty to write about next time!

Maureen Wilson

A Quick Trip to Béziers

Everyone connected with the Extended Family will have heard about Béziers - birth place of the RSHM founder, Jean Gailhac, site of the Mother House and beautiful city at the southern end of the Canal du Midi.

So, when we realised that Sister Pierre (most passionate advocate for Béziers) was going to be there while we were in Lourdes at the end of August, it wasn't a difficult decision to arrange a visit.

Four of us stayed in Bon Pasteur for 24 hours. It's a peaceful haven in the city and within easy reach of all the 'must see' sights.

We managed to sneak into the ground floor of the Curé's home, walk down the beautiful boulevard in the centre, go to mass in the Sister's local parish and see the childhood home of Père Gailhac - if only from the outside. It was all even more picturesque than we expected.

Jacques, friend of the Sisters, gave us a fascinating tour of the church of St Aphrodise, which was where the young Jean Gailhac worshipped. It has been derelict for some time but is being restored and is now hosting concerts and some services. The Mother House was beautiful. There was filming going on to record the history of the building and the work of the order. It was sad to see a single Sister living there as caretaker, but there's lots of innovative thinking going on as to how to best use the house, whilst maintaining its significance.

On a superficial level, Béziers is a lovely city and well worth a visit, but staying with the Sisters and experiencing their great hospitality and company, certainly gave me some insight into why keeping that link with the past is so important. My advice would be "go and see for yourself" -- I'll certainly be returning!

Liz Nugent

Furness Extended Family Monthly Prayer Meetings

In February this year, the Furness EF managed to achieve one of the aims set at last year's Noddfa Gathering and began a series of monthly gatherings to pray with the Sisters. In fact, this had been a wish for much longer. Meetings are normally held on the first Monday of the month in the Convent on Abbey Road in Barrow. Numbers attending have been around 20 or so, and people from all of the church communities in the Barrow and Ulverston/Dalton parishes have come along to take part. Sr Pierre has been leading the sessions, which normally take a theme based on the close-by Marian feast day or upon discipleship and service in the charism of Fr Gailhac. Different forms of prayer have been used in the sessions held so far, with contemplation and silence being a common part of them all. People are now becoming more confident in sharing too.

Of course, it wouldn't be a family gathering without a cup of tea and some biscuits afterwards. It never surprises me how long people take to chat about this and that, sometimes building new friendships and sometimes coming up with good ideas for future sessions and activities.

These prayer meetings have given us a more frequent 'heartbeat' to our family gatherings in Furness. Previously, we were focused on the gatherings linked to the major events in the Institute's calendar – 3 or 4 a year. Hopefully this will draw us closer together and help us to spread knowledge of the Extended Family, the charism and work of the Institute and help the Extended Family to grow – both in numbers and the level of commitment of its members.

Our next meetings will be on Monday, 4th November and 5th December at 7 pm in the Convent. If you live in the Furness area and haven't been yet, do come along to one of these if you can. We look forward to welcoming you.

John Newby

A Regional Gathering

At a recent Core Group meeting in Carlisle, the idea of a Regional Gathering of the Extended Family in the North West was discussed. Out of that came a proposal to get together members of the Carlisle, Furness and Liverpool Extended Families in a "central" location. Then, putting the gathering on the 12th November was mooted, linking it to the Founder's Birthday (13th November). Finally, it was just the topic and location to sort out.

The outcome of all this is that our first EF North-West Regional Meeting will be held in Lancaster on Saturday, 12th November, between 10:30am and 3:30pm, in the Lancaster Cathedral Parish Centre, Balmoral Road, Lancaster, LA1 3BT.

The topic chosen is "The Integrity of Creation & Pope Francis's *Laudato Si*".

Lancaster was chosen because it is a reasonable distance for EF members to travel from their home base, the day can be a pilgrimage to the Cathedral, with an opportunity to attend Mass and to enter through the 'Door of Mercy' on the day before it closes on the 13th November for the end of the Year of Mercy and it has suitable venues to host a sizeable gathering.

The timetable for the day is:

1000	Arrive for pre-meeting cuppa
1030	Welcome and Introduction to Laudato Si
1045	Session 1:
1145	Visit to Cathedral, entering through the Door of Mercy
1215	Mass
1300	Lunch
1345	Session 2:
1445	Review and Discussion
1515	Final Prayers
1530	Farewells and Departure

We hope that many people will come along and support this event and to learn more about the content and messages of *Laudato Si*. Every member of the RSHM and the Extended Family is welcome to attend the gathering. You don't have to be a 'north westerner' to come. If you want to come, you can reserve a place by emailing rshmef.furness@gmail.com or by contacting any of your local Carlisle, Furness, or Liverpool EF co-ordinators no later than Wednesday, 9th November. Please bring a packed lunch with you for this event. Tea and coffee will be provided. A small donation would be appreciated, to help to cover the costs of hiring the hall and providing refreshments throughout the day.

We, as the NEP Core Group, also hope that this event will encourage other regional groups in the Province to arrange their own gatherings, where it is feasible to do that.

John Newby (for the Core Group)

If it's Monday, it must be Barrow! (The Superior General's 'Visitation of the Province')

An important and interesting event for us here in Furness, for Community, Extended Family and Past Pupils of Crosslands Convent School, was the visit of Sr Rosamond, Superior General. Thanks to information circulated by word-of-mouth, emails, Facebook pages, and the Parish Bulletin, many people joined us at mid-day for Mass and a Shared Lunch and then, in the evening, at the Novena for the Centenary of St Columba's Parish and School.

Sr Roz was much impressed by the great turnout and expressed her pleasure at having the opportunity to meet and speak to so many people associated with the Congregation. She gave a vivid picture of the present and future mission of the Institute and the challenges for the future living out of our charism. It was a most enjoyable 'get-together' for all. It was particularly exciting for the 'Old Girls' and so good to hear exclamations of joy as former classmates met again after many years. I feel it gave many people an eager appetite to repeat this sort of reunion.

Sr Roz was also very pleased to visit Furness Abbey and Crosslands School then to pray with us at the Cemetery at Crosslands where many of our Sisters are buried.

Sr Pierre Dullaghan

Our Noddfa Retreat – A Weekend of Prayer

On 7th, 8th and 9th of October there was a short Retreat initiated by the Furness Group at Noddfa. We were joined by groups from Carlisle and Liverpool, and by a person from York. Canon John Watson led us in prayer, with the main theme of “Come apart and rest awhile”, encouraging us to take stock of our Spirit of Faith and our prayer life. It was a very helpful, peaceful weekend. Time was very well planned leaving plenty of time for quiet reflection, either alone or in small groups.



Fr John and the group (minus Dot Bannaman, who was taking the photo)

For many, this was a first time in Noddfa and for some a first experience of this type of prayer time. The beauty of Noddfa, the warm welcome and generous hospitality were deeply appreciated by all. For many it was also an introduction to official Morning, Evening, and Night Prayer of the Church. The prayer was led by Barry and was concluded by prayer and a solemn blessing from Canon Watson. It was truly a joyful, prayerful weekend with time also for friendly get together chats.

Sr Pierre Dullaghan

The editor apologises that, due to other commitments, on this occasion the French version of this issue will be distributed rather later than this English edition.

As always thanks to the contributors - could you become one of them and contribute an item to the newsletter? Photos and articles – no matter how short – are always welcome and will be held for the next available newsletter. Don't delay - exercise your literary talents now! Contributions in English or French (both would be great!) are equally welcome.

If you (or someone) else would prefer to receive the French version, then please get in touch.

Electronic copy by email or as an attachment is preferable, as are digital photos - but handwritten copy and prints are welcome too. See below for the email and postal addresses:

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