

# EXCHANGE/ECHANGE

## NORTHERN EUROPEAN PROVINCE

## PROVINCE DE L'EUROPE DU NORD

MAY 2019

[WWW.RSHM-NEP.ORG](http://WWW.RSHM-NEP.ORG)  
[WWW.RSCM-PEN.ORG](http://WWW.RSCM-PEN.ORG)

### OPENING AND BLESSING OF NAOMH BRÍD



various social and pastoral organizations as well as missioning sisters to Africa and Brazil

The campus once used for secondary education has now been developed into residences for the elderly and retired sisters of the congregation. Because of the aging profile of the sisters there is an ever increasing demand for suitable facilities which respond to their growing needs. In response to these needs Naomh Bríd was



erected to provide accommodation for eight sisters. Most of these sisters ministered in the Ferrybank area at different stages.

March 19th, the feast of Saint Joseph, was the day chosen for the official opening of Naomh Bríd. Mass was celebrated by Bishop Dermot Farrell, assisted by Fr. Kieran O' Shea and Fr. Jim Crotty. Bishop Farrell acknowledged the legacy of the sisters by referring to the poverty of that time compared to the more affluent society of today. The mass celebrated the dedication of the sisters of the past as well as hope and optimism for the future. After the mass the Blessed Sacrament was installed in Naomh Bríd oratory after which Bishop Farrell blessed the entire building. All present shared a celebratory meal in Madonna House, the residence of sisters who need nursing care. During the meal anecdotes about past times were shared and enjoyed by all. We appreciated the presence of Bishop Dermot from his busy schedule and the presence of Fr. Kieran and Fr. Jim.

This year, 2019, is significant in the life of the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary in Ferrybank since it marks 140 years of the Sisters arrival from Bezier, France. Their initial ministry was in St. Brigid's primary school (now Good Counsel ). Since 1879 education has developed enormously in both the primary and secondary sectors in Ferrybank. Over the years the sisters saw the necessity to undertake other ministries and became involved in



erected to provide accommodation for eight sisters. Most of these sisters ministered in the Ferrybank area at different stages.

March 19th, the feast of Saint Joseph, was the day chosen for the official opening of Naomh Bríd. Mass was celebrated by Bishop Dermot Farrell, assisted by Fr. Kieran O' Shea and Fr. Jim Crotty. Bishop Farrell acknowledged the legacy of the sisters by referring to the poverty of that

*We, the Naomh Bríd Community have settled into our beautiful apartments. We wish to thank each community and individual sisters for your prayers, masses and gifts which we greatly appreciate. A special thanks to our local sister communities, Madonna House, Grianán and Castle Oaks for their help, welcome, their visits and gifts. As a new community we feel very much part of the province and we hope to continue to embrace the new as “women of hope, joy and compassion”. On the 8<sup>th</sup> we welcomed Virginia to the community and hope she will be very happy among us.*



With prayer filled thanks, Agnes, Esther, Freda, Madeline, Patricia and Patsy

**NEWS FROM**

**ARROWSMITH HOUSE**

The garden room in Arrowsmith House was built for the purpose entertaining visitors. It has recently turned into a multi-purpose room, used for a comfortable retreat, entertaining and it is ideal our weekly exercise class.



of  
for

Nicola Williams



Sister Pierre enjoying her birthday celebration four days after she arrived here.

Sister Evelyn enjoying a visit from her family in the new room.

Some of the children from the Ursuline convent who come to learn sign language with Sister Anne. Sister Agnes has just joined us and is enjoying watching the children.

There are still some good Samaritans on the roads – Pierre and Agnes were in the rain one day with one of the carers when a kind lady stopped her car and gave them an umbrella each. **Anne Curran**

## SUNFLOWERS MEETING 23 - 26TH APRIL 2019

Twenty of us gathered together in Noddfa on a bright Spring day. Breda and Joanna had prepared a prayer leading us from the Emmaus journey, into our own journeys over the past years and onto the next few days when we would be “discussing all that had happened” as we went along.

Our first morning focused on some initial preparation for the Province “reports” for the General Chapter. These will be shared at the Chapter less formally than usual initially by each delegate in small groups. We have been asked that our reports be about how our Province has responded to the Context and Commitments of the General Chapter 2013. The discussion was enriching particularly for the five delegates who were present.



In a session before supper, we did a similar reflection in relation to our Provincial Chapter Statement. We will be able to draw on other discussions and the contributions made in the last Exchange in working further on this. As this reflection process evolves it will be shared in the Province before it is taken to the General Chapter.

After all that work we were delighted to relax and start early celebrations of the 50th Jubilees of Eleanor and Mary Jo (actual date being October 18th) and Patricia’s 60th (16th August). We had a wonderful meal and then bubbly, cake, gifts, speeches, many stories with much chat and laughter!

On Thursday we embarked on a longer personal and small group reflective time on our personal



journeys. Using the text, “The Station” we were reminded that, “the true joy of life is the trip” yet it cautioned us to be aware that, “regret and fear are twin thieves that can rob us of today” and finally exhorted us to realize that “life must be lived as we go along”. Another extract from a book, “The world I fell out of” enriched our reflections “focus on what constitutes your life at the time and love what you already have”, wrote the author Melanie Reid, who had been totally paralyzed but for the use of her right hand in a riding accident.

After coffee we were launched into the wider world. Pat Gaffney (breaking her retreat time) spoke to us of her experiences over the past 29 years as General Secretary of Pax Christi in Britain from which she had just retired. Like ourselves, her first thoughts were about Tarcissius whose

education for Peace and Non- violence she admired. Since then the organization had grown. She recalled her involvement during changing times with different priorities and crises. Some of those she mentioned were Nuclear threat, end of the Cold war, conflict in Northern Ireland and recently in the Middle East, the constants of the armaments trade and nuclear submarines patrolling our shores. At the same time, she noted, with hope, her experiences of the power of women, grass roots movements and social media, pressure groups and very specially, Pope Francis whom she had met and worked with recently. Very topically, she talked about the rise of knife crime and some of the work she and others were doing with families, especially the mothers effected by this in London and

Manchester. All this spoke to our sense of “interconnectedness” and “global consciousness” which we had highlighted as areas of growth in awareness and integration into our spirituality when looking at our General Chapter 2013 document the previous day.

The Eucharist, shared with the Parish as usual, continued the celebrations of the Jubilarians, a fitting ending, In the words of our final Hymn:

We shall go out with hope of resurrection...

Our hearts afire, the Spirit deep within us

“Fullness of life for all” our joyful lives proclaim.

[Barbara Bailey](#)

## THE MILLENNIUM GROUP MEETING IN PEN

Seven of us, Aileen, Bernadette, Joyce, Maeve, Mary, Paula, and Teresa gathered in Pen from 7th to the 10th of May for our annual meeting together. Our numbers were down this year by more than half and we certainly missed the presence of those who were unable to come. Despite our smaller number, and the persistent rain during the two full days, we had a very worthwhile meeting. Ursula's and Kathleen Buckley's presence, in their role as delegates to the General Chapter meant that we reflected on General chapter preparation topics on both mornings. The sharing was rich and varied and we were able to affirm, add to, and deepen the reflection already done by the Sunflowers.

Our shared morning prayer each day refreshed and sustained us as did the celebration of the Eucharist by Fr. Moses a Nigerian Priest on Thursday evening. On Thursday afternoon as it was still raining, Mary Jo showed us two very interesting PowerPoint presentations, newly arrived from Rome. One dealt with environmental destruction and its link to poverty and the other in which a very able and articulate LCWR leadership team spoke of the present reality of Religious Life in the USA. So though there were no opportunities for walks in Pen or Llandudno, no retail therapy, no climbing of Jubilee (as if we could) no wonderful sunsets over Puffin Island, we were still able to enjoy the luxuriant vegetation around Noddfa. The trees seemed taller, greener and greater than ever. The azaleas outside the windows of the link corridor were wonderfully brilliant. As usual the welcome and hospitality of Noddfa was first class and we have surely increased in body mass over the two days.

We did discuss our future as a group and considered the pros and cons relating to its continuance. We opted in the end to continue for another year and settled on the dates of May 18 - 21, 2020. Though we know that the future is in God's mind and none of us have any guarantees relating to it, yet the Pen team need to have some indication of continued interest from all Millennials by the 31st of August 2019 at the latest so they can manage their bookings. Please let Bernadette know what you would like to happen personally, all being well.

DIAMOND JUBILEE  
CELEBRATION

On May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2019, we celebrated Sr. Catherine McCarthy's diamond Jubilee. It was a glorious day weather wise and the warm sunshine put us all in good spirits.

The day began with a meaningful prayer service prepared by Clare. This took place in our oratory and we thanked God for Catherine's long life of commitment. Tributes were paid to Catherine, and it was pointed out that one of her most endearing qualities was that she never says, "NO" to the many demands made on her time and experience.



After the service we made our way to the Marine Hotel. Clare had forewarned them that we were

celebrating a jubilee, so they gave us a warm welcome and escorted us to a big dining room with a table laid out at a window, overlooking the river so that we could watch the world go by. We had it all to ourselves. The mood was good. We talked a lot, laughed, shared memories and compared the past with how it is today. The food was delicious, and we all agreed it was one of the nicest meals we ever had.

We left the hotel at around 4 o'clock and as I walked down the path to my apartment the words of an old song kept ringing in my ears: "Count your blessings one by one". We are indeed blessed.



*I am very grateful for the mass cards, gifts and good wishes I received for my jubilee. Catherine*

### PANCAKE TUESDAY IN NODDFA

For about 16 years on Shrove Tuesday, we have always invited the local community to Noddfa, to enjoy savory and sweet pancakes and a drink – but there has always been an admission charge! The first year it was to help pay for the expenses of renovating the kitchen. After that it was always for charity, often for carers. For the last few years what we have collected has been for refugees. This year we decided the money would be divided between refugees and the people who have suffered from the dam bursts in Brazil.

When the JPIC animators met in Belo Horizonte in 2017, we went to the town of Mariana to meet people who had lost their homes, because of the recent dam burst there. It



was very moving to meet those who had lost their livelihood and all their possessions and the leaders of the movement that was helping them to fight for their rights for compensation from the mining companies whose lack of maintenance caused the dam burst. This tragedy had not only affected the people living nearby, but also those who lived along the polluted river, over



500 km away. Fishermen could no longer fish, women could not wash clothes in the river, children could no longer play there. The people living near the river suffered from terrible illnesses because of the dangerous minerals that had flooded their land and invaded their houses.

Ana Helena and Rosinha had organized this visit and other members of the Brazilian province came with us. In January this year, Ana Helena and another 2 Sisters of the Brazilian Province moved to Linhares, 500 Kilometers down river from Mariana, where people were still suffering and had received no compensation. Linhares had been a town that attracted tourists, as it was near the mouth of the river. Nearly all the inhabitants had lost their work, and many were suffering from different illnesses. The Sisters were going in a spirit of solidarity to support them and to help them fight for their rights.

At the same time, 25th January this year, there was another dam burst, in Brumadinho, near Belo Horizonte, caused by the same mining company (Vale). This was worse with the loss of 270 lives. We saw terrible images on the television. Once more they were promised compensation.

That is in Brazil – but there is a link to the NEP, at least to part of it. The big mining companies have their main investments in London. That is where the decisions are made that affect these people. Some of the Manor Park community have been at meetings organized by the London Mining Network, which campaigns for justice for people who work in mining, or who have lost their land or homes in tragedies caused by these big companies. Kathleen and Dorothy went to the protest about Brumadinho! (See picture below, taken from the LMN website)

The JPIC team, in consultation with the General Council suggested that delegates going to the General Chapter in Belo Horizonte should take an offering from each Province and Region to give to the people who have suffered from the dam bursts. We decided we could use some of the money from the pancake evening for this region to give to the people who have suffered from the dam



bursts. We decided we could use some of the money from the pancake evening for this.

Our pancakes were very good this year – and brought a good response. We had a display of pictures of Brumadinho, as well as quotes from Ana Helena's letter about the people of Linhares. People were generous. We took in £700. We gave £350 to Eleanor for her work with refugees and asylum-seekers and we have £350 to send to Belo Horizonte with the delegates. **Mary Jo McElroy**

Belo Horizonte,  
Brazil.

*Dear Sisters,*

*We live in a time where there is a lot of mud: in politics and nature. It is hard to have to face the pains of the dark of the earth and this political moment! Such difficult and hard times that we have never experienced!*

*The pain of darkness, mud, brokenness - people, furniture, gardens, and dreams!!!*

*Children, young people, employees, schools, churches, .... everything disappeared and now it is skin diseases, alcoholism, depression, prostitution, changing the way we feed and treating animals, abandoning our knowledge of nature for other values.*

*There is no more river fishing, no swimming as it is the mud that fills the river and fields ... and the nets of our fishermen all piled up. This causes us sadness and they are depressed.*

*Everything is different now: Restart! How do we deal with this new situation? The diseases are coming fever, itching, coughing, diarrhea, drunkenness, suicides - and unemployment, the terrible tragedies caused by all this!*

*Many communities have been affected and impacted and still cannot account for the effects of the tragedy: Regencia, Degredo, Caieiras Velhas, Pontal, Ipiranga Quilombolas, many indigenous communities among others.*

*There are those on the part of the government and the company of SAMARCO (and VALE) who want to solve this with hand-outs, and never want to negotiate about the rights of those affected. It is hard to hear the expressions of fear, pain, emptiness of the local people and fishermen and now with the great crime of Brumadinho, they fear they will be forgotten, because almost nothing has been resolved yet.*

*When the Dam broke in the Bento Rodrigues district, Mariana MG, on the 5th November 2015, we saw the serious social and environmental consequences in many cities in the states of Minas Gerais and Espirito Santo along the Rio Doce until the River reached the Sea.*

*In the Provincial Chapter our statement says "to take care of our Common Home, as a commitment to Justice, Peace and the integrity of Creation" ... and to work for justice and Solidarity ", so in response to this appeal: Judith, Clair and I have formed a community - Our Lady of Light, where we try to be present to this affected population.*

*Together with the diocese of Colatina, the Trade Unions, the Capixaba Forum in defense of the River Doce, the Association of Residents and Fishermen we are establishing the presence of the Religious of the Sacred heart of Mary here in this place where so many are suffering.*

*There are many strategies, meetings, studies, readings and recognition of those affected and we are working with MAB – the Movement of those affected by the Dams.*

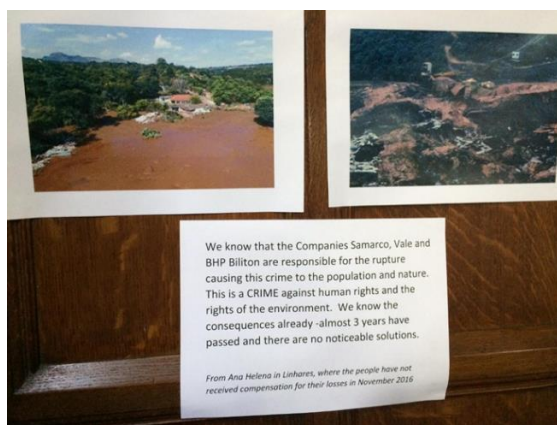
*We know that the Companies Samarco, Vale and BHP Biliton are responsible for the rupture causing this crime to the population and nature. This is a CRIME against human rights and the rights of the environment. We know the consequences already - almost 3 years have passed and there are no noticeable solutions.*

*These companies have committed crimes because they disregard safety rules to guarantee profit ... today we live with toxic mud, unemployment, poor health and the most serious thing is that the water is contaminated by heavy metals (mercury, arsenic, lead, chrome and others...)*

*Our mission from the provincial chapter is consolidated in this gesture of being an RSHM presence among these suffering people for the recognition and restoration of their rights and a return to their former way of life, "united in the service of the fullness of Life and integrity of creation", here we are in Linhares.*

*Pray for our presence to be one of Hope with people who have no more dreams .... and surely Gailhac would support us with his blessing!*

**Judith, Clair and Ana Helena**



## BEREAVEMENTS



Sister Eileen Purcell of the Madonna House Community died peacefully on 1<sup>st</sup> May. Eileen was 85 years old and in the 62nd year of her religious profession.

Extracts from Patsy's eulogy at the funeral mass of Eileen:

When I was asked to say a few words about Sister Eileen I thought, "what am I going to say?" but on returning from the funeral parlour on Wednesday, Sister Immaculée, said to me, "She never even hurt a fly", how true that was. Everyone spoke about Eileen's gentleness. So many

lovely things were said about her that I thought, "What in the name of God are they going to say about me!" Eileen was the eldest of seven children and on leaving school she worked in Grave's office for some years to help the family. She was twenty-two when she entered and when she was professed, she went to Endsleigh Training College in Hull. Over the years Eileen served the province in many areas: Lisburn, Carlisle, Chivuna for three years, Kirkby. Then back to Zambia to teach in Mukasa Junior Seminary, then Liverpool where she was headmistress in Saint Joan of Arc Primary School (the first school our sisters taught in Liverpool in the 1870's). The latter was a very rough area and the school was broken into 24 times during Eileen's ten years there. Eileen was very tolerant and just learned to cope so any moveable equipment (typewriter, t.v., copying machine etc.) was brought home every night. That was no mean thing. Imagine having to do that every evening! Eileen was honoured by the queen and was invited to a garden party in Buckingham Palace. Teresa Allen was honoured that morning by being conferred with an MBE and invited to the party. We met Eileen at the gates of the Palace, smiling as always. She was wearing a lovely navy dress with white flowers and said, "I bought this in M & M in honour of the occasion. I usually buy my clothes in charity shops!"

She had great devotion to Our Lady and her lifelong friend Maura Moore (Sinnott) who was so devoted to her during her illness, said a few days before Eileen died, "She will wait until May". And so she did dying on the 1<sup>st</sup> of May. There is an old saying, "the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world". To paraphrase that I think the sister who lives with gentleness endears herself to all. Rest in peace, Eileen, as we pray for you pray for us that we may live truly Christian lives.

*Parish of St James,  
Chestnut Grove  
Bootle*

*Dear Sisters,*

*I was sorry to hear this morning from a phone call received quite early that Sr. Eileen Purcell has died. The call enabled me to say mass for her at 10 am. Thank you for letting me know. She and I were friendly and worked together for a big number of years. We scouted out the Lake District in preparation for school holidays with the pupils and on one occasion I joined them for a few days. I also said mass in Kirkby and Birkdale on numerous occasions - happy memories. In addition, I stayed in Ferrybank on more than one occasion and was royally received and welcomed. Very few of her staff remain, but one Mrs. Leaper is still working in St. James, now All Saints, and I have sent a message to her with the news. While staying with the sisters in Ferrybank we had some memorable outings to Dungarvan, Woodstown and the Gold Coast.*

*Eileen worked hard in St James and was very popular. May she rest in peace – her work done and her award waiting for her. My life was enriched by my knowing her. I forgot to mention that one of our outings was to Passage East where my father was born. His father was a customs officer there and my dad was baptized in Crook parish church before the family moved to Dungarvan He wasn't back in that church until my brother brought him down from Galway to his cousins funeral when my dad was 92 years old, so I must have some Waterford blood flowing in my veins. [Michael Duggan](#)*



Virginia's sister, Mary Mullane who died on 14<sup>th</sup> April at Carraiglea Residential center, Dungarvan.

*On behalf of the Mullane family I wish to express our deepest gratitude to all my S.H.M. sisters for all your support during the illness and subsequent death of our beloved Mary. Your expressions of care and sympathy were deeply appreciated by all. We felt so supported by the many who attended the funeral, by the masses said for Mary and for all the messages of sympathy received. Mass will be said for all your intentions as an expression of gratitude and a big "THANK YOU" to each one.*

*Blessings on all,*

Virginia.

Maria Dina de Freitas died February 18th in Lisbon. Maria Dina was 78 years old and was 53 years professed, RIP

Sister Evelyn Gill, RSHM, died on April 16, 2019 at Marymount Convent. Sister Evelyn was 82 years old and in the 65th year of her Religious Profession.

Brian Curran, Anne's brother, who died on April 21<sup>st</sup>.

*I would like to thank all those who sent mass cards e-mails and expressions of sympathy on the death of my brother Brian R I P .He has not been buried yet as there has to be a postmortem, please remember his family as they wait at this sad time. Mass will be offered for all your intentions .*

Dan Fenelon, nephew of Teresina who died on 23<sup>rd</sup> march.

*Since the Exchange was published with a request for prayers for my two nephews, Dan and Paddy I have felt and experienced the strength of the province prayer and concern. I want to say "thank you" to each one for the support this was for me. My family and I appreciated all the messages, masses, prayers and the presence of the Grianan community in Myshall on 25<sup>th</sup> for the requiem mass. Paddy is still in Vincent's hospital and I ask you to continue praying for Marie, his wife, Donhall, his son and his daughter, Kathleen. Teresina*

Fr. Edward Mc Sweeney who died on 10th April 2019 in Ireland. Fr. Edward was Parish Priest in St. Stephen's, Skipton for many years, and appreciated very much our RSHM presence in St. Stephen's (Teresa McCarthy)

We remember them and their families in our prayers.

