



Extended Family Newsletter

Issue 35 - January 2020

Happy New Year!

A Happy New Year to all for 2020!

Carlisle Extended Family Report – July/December 2019

We met in St Gabriel's convent on 2 July to make final plans for the 'Afternoon Tea' event which we were to hold on 4 August.

On August 4th the Afternoon Tea took place with 120 tickets sold. At last all baking done and sandwiches made, we served a lovely afternoon tea to everyone with more than enough food for all. The event proved to be a great success both socially and financially as we raised and were able to send £1000 to Sr Rosemary in London for the 'Mozambique Disaster Fund.'

Extended Family members and 3 Sisters joined other Extended Family members for our annual gathering in Noddfa on October 6th. Once again this was a very special weekend. It is always lovely to meet up with Extended Family members from other areas and enjoy the hospitality of the sisters in Noddfa.



We met in St Gabriel's convent in the evening of 10th December to celebrate Advent with a short service of prayer and reflection which had been compiled by Greg. We were joined by the

Sisters and friends of the Sisters to celebrate this special time of the year and enjoyed a shared supper. The whole evening was thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended.

Maureen Wilson

Seafield Extended Family Meeting, 24th November

Eleven members met at Seafield on Sunday 24th November 2019, with Sisters Eleanor, Gertrude and Paula. Four apologies were received. Eleanor opened the meeting by first inviting Janet Hardman to update us on the results of her third, recent visit to Zambia.

Janet was delighted to report that the Functional Reflexology Therapy she and Lorraine had introduced there was now on the curriculum and a special Rainbow Room had been set up for the children at St. Malumba's. She showed us a video of the new room, the children involved in various activities and a thank you message from Sister Ailda from Brazil who was there training to be a teacher. Lorraine, her partner in Functional Reflex Therapy attended an International Conference on Reflexology and then went on to Alaska where she was invited to present a workshop. Lorraine received a Gold Award for Innovation on their behalf. Eleanor pointed out that Janet and Lorraine had funded themselves and perhaps our group could purchase items for them. Obviously, it would be best for Janet to advise what is most needed. Janet had to leave our meeting at this point.

After an introduction from each of us, Eleanor talked about their latest visit to Noddfa which unfortunately Kath had to pull out of because of illness. She suggested a smaller meeting of our group sometime in the new year.

The topic turned to looking at the call to vocation, be it to a religious or lay life. We watched a video entitled "A house where life flourished for all" showing Father Gailhac's deep compassion for all; how much it now mirrors that of Pope Francis' compassion today. Eleanor then invited Kath to tell us about her own path to her call of vocation.

Kath told us she had always wanted to be a teacher. Whilst still a sixth-former she was visiting a Hospice which initially she thought would be sad and daunting. But she enjoyed it, found it rewarding and regularly helped a lady who would not have eaten unless Kath had been there to help her because she was unable to help herself. Kath thought about the Daughters of Charity but decided she could help people without becoming a Nun. She became a teacher and taught in an inner-city boys' school with some troubled children and quickly saw how important it was to give every child the chance to develop him-or herself. Throughout her whole adult life Kath was always very involved in pastoral care.

Having taken early retirement Kath joined the Nugent Care Society in a voluntary role and worked with deaf people; she learned sign language. She also started a craft group for the deaf and gave great support to very many other groups. Eleanor pointed out that Kath had chosen not to chase promotion in teaching but to concentrate on pastoral work where she saw the greatest need, and she had been responsible for raising more than £120,000 for missions at home and abroad. For Services to the Community Kath had been awarded the BEM.

Eleanor talked briefly about Synod 2020 and where the process was up to now. Each of us shares the Mission of Jesus and we should pray together for the success of the Synod. She also drew attention to the recent e-mail message from the EFM in the United States.

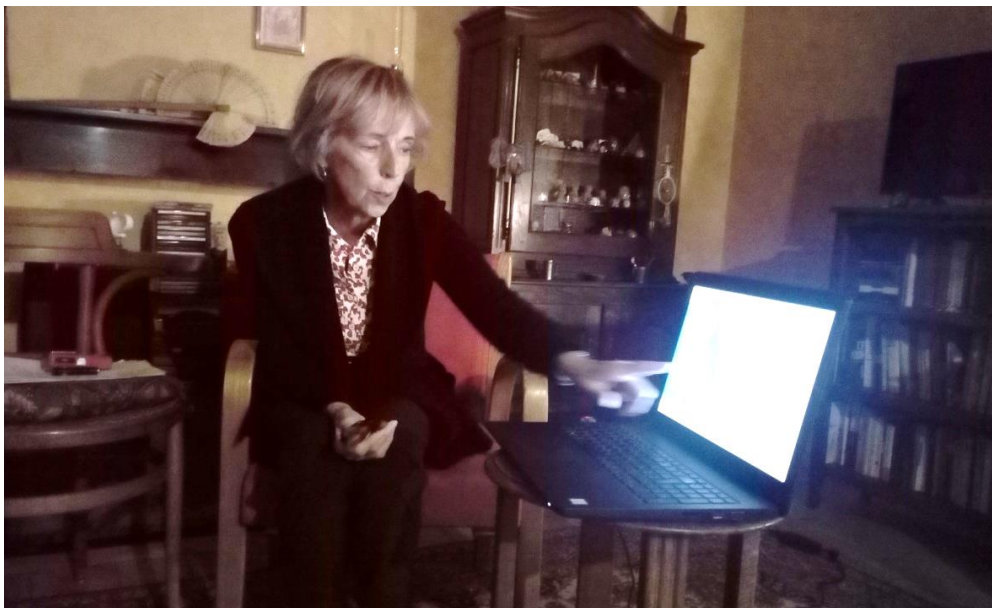
Paula talked about progression within the RSHM Order and the General Chapter Meeting held recently in Brazil. The first two days were spent reflecting on Scripture, specifically (a) Jesus on the way to Jericho and the woman at the well; (b) the visitation of Mary to Elizabeth; (c) the Good Samaritan; (d) Mary of Magdala at the tomb of the Risen Christ; and (e) the marriage feast of Cana. The theme of the Chapter Meeting was “Encountering” and how do we encounter Jesus in our lives. Paula then read the SHM Extended Family Prayer.

Paula also extended an invitation to anyone who so wished to join the Sisters in a Rosary and Prayer Service which they offer at Arrowsmith House on Tuesdays from 5.30 to 6.00 p.m. Kath quoted from Saint Teresa’s writings about encountering Jesus. We must use our eyes and ears to encounter him constantly. She played “Turn to Me” and read the poem “He is there”; then played “No longer I but Christ who lives within me; the life we live is not our own”. Kath concluded with the Prayer “I give you my hands ..., I give you my feet”.

Pauline McManus

Marchiennes/Somain Community Extended Family Meeting, December 8th

Last October, our community of Northern France, Srs Cécile, Marguerite Marie, Marie France and Myriam, had the good fortune and the joy of welcoming Clare Horn, responsible for the Extended Family of the Eastern Province of America. We met for friendship and learning about her experience on the border between Mexico and the USA.



Last spring, together with Srs Mary Lang and Mary Heyser (who died in November 2019), Clare spent 15 days in El Paso serving migrants seeking asylum in the United States.

We have all followed in the news the generous mobilization of this Texan city that welcomes migrants "released" from American detention centres where their identity, their antecedents and their possibility of being received on American soil by families or relatives have been scrupulously checked. Received in a hotel (costs financed by charities) volunteers provide food and clothing and get in touch with people who will provide the plane tickets or bus for their onward transfer.

Clare served meals, Sr. Mary Lang, who speaks Spanish, facilitated various administrative contacts, and Sr. Mary Heyser had turned into a "taxi driver" to accompany people to the airport and help them with the final travel arrangements.

The slide show projected by Clare has made us aware of the dehumanizing conditions endured by these people including many children. Poignant stories of lives have touched our three volunteers, indeed the entire team of volunteers; stories shared for a few hours in human fraternity and that they entrust to the Lord in an Our Father in the evenings of their exhausting days.



Our local RSCM community is particularly sensitive to this issue of migration, which often moves and divides world opinion at the beginning of this 21st century. Indeed, three of us join weekly asylum seekers housed in a disused Somain hotel. For a year now, with other volunteers, we find people who have fled Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, and more recently Sudan, Eritrea, Somalia, Nigeria. Many young men alone, few families "in full" - the wives and children having lost husbands and dads.

Convinced that integration requires knowledge of the language of the host country, we introduce them to the basics of our French language. The challenge is great because the means are limited: space not conducive to learning activities, the short time of their stay and rapid rotation of groups welcomed with almost no finances to support these volunteer actions.

We also try to be attentive to all the dimensions of individuals by promoting the links with the Christians of the parish and the Baptist Temple for the spiritual dimension, by supporting young students from a nearby high school to build a project of cultural outings with the children or by exploring the possibilities of collaboration with a sports club that proposes to open its football training to the "temporary residents" of this hotel where two little girls have just been born!! In this liturgical time that brings us to Christmas, we recognize with wonder that God comes to visit us in this very place.

Sister Marie France

18th November 2019 – Extended Family at Béziers

Around forty of us met on Monday 18th November to pray around the text of Luke, Chapter on the theme of Mission – a time of recollection, prayer and shared food.

Several phrases touched us but I will just give an overview of our discussions during a time of prayer.

“Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man” - Peter feels humble in front of Jesus. We need others to accompany us, helped by prayer and service. It is difficult to free ourselves from too many activities.

“Cast your nets” – To follow Jesus it is necessary to live with confidence in a delegation of power; we can act for ourselves. Peter evolves psychologically, he acts more through obedience than through confidence and a miracle results. He then has another view of Jesus who is the Master from whom come the words “I am a sinful man”.

“They left everything and followed him” – They were so touched by Jesus that they were ready to respond to his call. To follow Jesus is to surpass yourself, be able to love each other, rebuild self-esteem, leave your comfort zone, move, risk leaving the shore, reach out to others, go into deep water to fish with these ‘nets’. To follow Jesus is to be holy, to copy Jesus, to have him in the heart to light the flame of love, to welcome others - as did Jean Gailhac with the young women and their children – is to make a sign to others of solidarity and collaboration.

“Live Without Fear” – John Paul II urged the world “don’t be afraid”. ‘God-fearing’ isn’t being afraid, but it is the call to trust, knowing how to answer the call with one’s heart to move = out of our own narrow horizons. If the Lord calls, we are no longer alone, he is with us. The chosen song “On the roads of men” gave us an answer: go to your brothers with a child’s heart to proclaim Jesus Christ alive.

Marie Chantal Vaissière

As always thanks to the contributors and to Sister Thérèse-Marie for her work on the translations to and from French.

The newsletter is published in English and French versions. If you (or someone) else would prefer to receive the French version then please get in touch.

Could you 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, even!) are equally welcome to the email address below.

Similarly, if you would no longer wish to receive the newsletter, please inform the editor at the address below.

E-mail: efnewsletter@outlook.com