



# NEA NEWSLETTER

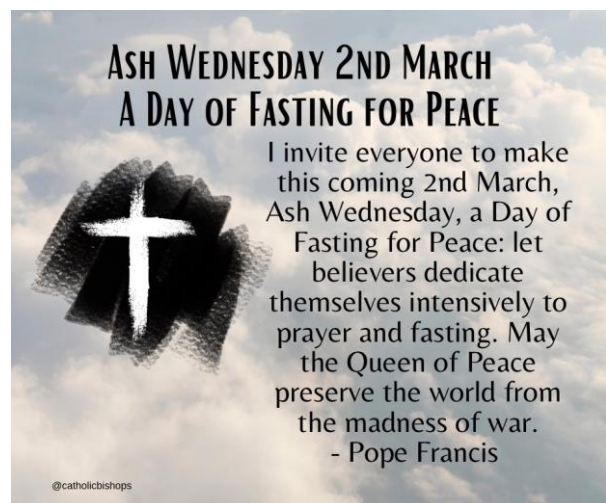


## MARCH NEWS 2022

**FEAST**  
of  
**ST DAVID**  
of  
**WALES**



**HAPPY FEASTDAY TO ALL OUR WELSH CONNECTIONS**



### **PRAYER FOR PEACE**

Goodness is stronger than evil.  
Love is stronger than hate.  
Light is stronger than darkness.  
Life is stronger than death.  
Victory is ours through Him who loves us.

*Desmond Tutu*



## PEACE IS ...

Peace is the resulting action on an agreement to end a war.

Peace is the mutual laying down of weapons.

Peace is the worldwide cessation of armament production.

Peace is the reconciliation between adversaries.

Peace is the change of hearts and minds of people who wage war.

Peace is the smile of the refugee housed following exile from home.

Peace is the satisfaction in the face of the hungry child just fed.

Peace is the return to childhood of a boy soldier.

Peace is the respect for women and their equal rights  
as human beings.

Peace is the just, merciful and compassionate use of power  
by the powerful.

Peace is the empowerment of disadvantaged and marginalised  
people.

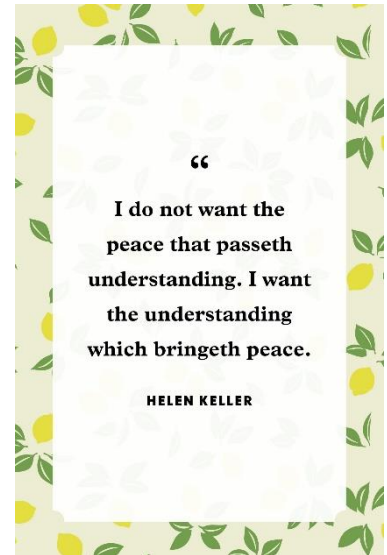
Peace is the healing arrived at through truth and reconciliation commissions.

Peace is the mutual respect of people of all faiths and none.

Help us, Lord, to continue to strive for peace in all of its forms.

Amen

(Trevor Stockton/CAFOD)



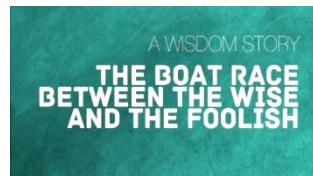
## Builder or Wrecker?

I watched them tear a building down;  
A gang of men in a busy town.  
With a mighty heave and a lusty yell,  
They swung a boom and a side wall fell.

I said to the foreman, "Are these men skilled  
As the men you'd hire if you had to build?"  
He gave me a laugh and said, "No indeed!  
Just a common laborer is all I need.  
And I can wreck in a day or two  
What it took the builder a year to do."

And I thought to myself as I went my way,  
"Just which of these roles have I tried to play?  
Am I a builder who works with care  
Measuring life by the rule and square,  
Or am I a wrecker as I walk the town  
Content with the labor of tearing down?"

- Unknown Author



## A WISDOM STORY

There was a great race between a team of the wise and a team of the foolish. The wise people won by a mile. So the foolish people hired an expert to figure out what went wrong. He reported that the wise people had one person steering and eight people rowing, while they had eight people steering and only one person rowing.

"Aha," said the foolish people who immediately restructured their team: Now they had one senior manager, seven management consultants, and one rower. In the rematch, the wise people won by two miles! After further intensive consultations, the foolish people fired their rower!



# Spring

Gerard Manley Hopkins

Nothing is so beautiful as Spring –  
When weeds, in wheels, shoot long and lovely and lush;  
Thrush's eggs look little low heavens, and thrush  
Through the echoing timber does so rinse and wring  
The ear, it strikes like lightnings to hear him sing;  
The glassy peartree leaves and blooms, they brush  
The descending blue; that blue is all in a rush  
With richness; the racing lambs too have fair their fling.



What is all this juice and all this joy?  
A strain of the earth's sweet being  
in the beginning  
In Eden garden. – Have, get, before it cloy,  
Before it cloud, Christ, lord, and sour with  
sinning,  
Innocent mind and Mayday in girl and boy,  
Most, O maid's child, thy choice and worthy  
the winning.



## SOME WAYS TO MAINTAIN PEACE OF MIND IN TOUGH TIMES:

*(adapted)*

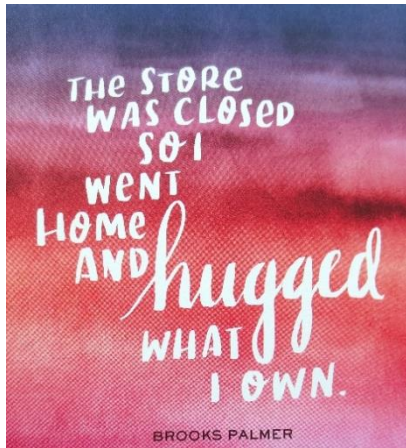
- 1. Turn it off:** Limit time spent on the negative news, on the phone and on the computer. Be informed and empathetic but balance the pain with an appreciation of the positive aspects of life.
- 2. Trim, trim, trim:** It's a given that if your life is overflowing you will never be able to achieve balance and manage it all. It's just not possible. Try to be selective about how you use your time.
- 3. Pay attention to your health:** Our health really does affect the quality of our lives and our work. We are far more productive and happier when we get enough sleep, eat a little healthier and fit in some type of activity.
- 4. Minimize Toxins:** i.e. Minimize the negative influences around you. Avoid toxic people (complainers, whiners, poor attitudes.) If you can't completely avoid them, at least minimize contact and tune them out as much as you can. Surround yourself with positive, supportive, can-do people whenever possible.
- 5. Do something creative:** Meditate, write, sketch/paint, listen to music, do some yoga or simply sit quietly for a few minutes each day and do absolutely nothing. Pay attention to the small things, the details.
- 6. Spend Time Alone:** Making time for you is probably the hardest thing to do for the typical overworked and overwhelmed person, but it is crucial for lowering stress, increasing happiness and peace of mind.



**7. Move TOWARDS something instead of AWAY:** Retreating into yourself and away from the bad news is not helpful. You are capable, you are courageous, you can cope. Make some active, positive choices in your life. This will give you confidence that you have some control over your world.

**8. Get up, move:** Change your physical state. Your body affects your mental state. Take a walk and pay attention to what's going on around you. Look at the beauty of nature at this time of the year.

**9. Remember Fun:** Laugh, joke, play, find your sense of humour, find and share a daily joke. Nothing makes you feel better than a good old-fashioned belly laugh. You have to balance the sadness with the joy in so far as you can.



### ST. PATRICK'S PRAYER

*(for all of us and especially this year  
for the people of Ukraine)*



May the Strength of God pilot us / them.  
May the Power of God preserve us / them.  
May the Wisdom of God instruct us / them.  
May the Hand of God protect us / them.  
May the Way of God direct us / them.  
May the Shield of God defend us / them.  
May the Host of God guard us / them  
Against the snares of the evil ones,  
Against temptations of the world.  
May Christ be with us / them!  
May Christ be before us / them!  
May Christ be in us / them,  
Christ be over all!  
May Thy Salvation, Lord,  
Always be ours / theirs,  
This day, O Lord, and evermore. Amen.



## CELEBRATING AGNES' NINETIETH BIRTHDAY IN NAOMH BRID



On the 8<sup>th</sup> March Agnes celebrated her 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday in Naomh Bríd with the Community here. She had specifically requested a very simple marking of the big day and we did our best to comply with her wishes. However, the cards messages and flowers all bore testimony that over the long years Agnes had touched many lives in different ways and in many communities, apostolates and in different parts of the world.



The prayer service with its adaptation of Psalm 104 reflected Agnes' great love of Nature and the cosmos. She attributed this great love to her home background and particularly to her father whom she termed a cosmologist in his own right, long before it became a household word. She spoke with great gratitude as she voiced her sharing on the Psalm of all the opportunities she had experienced such as her family upbringing and early life in Co Cork, her calling to religious life, her studies for the

teaching she was asked to pursue, her call to begin education work in Zambia, her work with prisoners and their families in England and Ireland over many years and about her retirement and about the love and care she experienced in her present situation.

All of us had experienced different aspects of life with Agnes over the years and we were able to link it all in our hearts with the key phrases of the last strophe of the Psalm- *'all creatures depend on you... When you give your Spirit, they are created. You keep renewing the world!'* As we sang the refrain *'Sing a new song, sing all you lands'* we felt confident that all that were afflicted with rumours of war would soon be able to sing their new song and so we did lift up our hearts and rejoiced in the sharing of what was a simple but very meaningful meal as we continued to share our stories.

Virginia



*Agnes with her brothers John and Vincent and her sister Greta*



**For protection and peace:  
St. Joseph 19 March**

Come to my aid in these times of  
anguish and difficulty ...



Today, like never before, during this time marked by a global crisis made up of several factors, St. Joseph can offer us support, consolation, and guidance.

Joseph lived a fairly obscure life – on the periphery. Jesus was born in the periphery and he spent his life in that periphery until the age of 30, working as a carpenter like Joseph. Jesus always goes towards the peripheries. This should bring us great trust because the Lord knows the peripheries of our heart, the peripheries of our soul, the peripheries of our society, of our city, of our family, that is, that slightly obscure part that we do not show, perhaps out of shame.

To all the men and women who live in the most forgotten geographical peripheries of the world, or who experience situations of existential marginality, may they find in Saint Joseph the witness and protector to look to.

*St. Joseph, Comfort those who feel alone and support those who work silently to defend life and human dignity. Glorious Patriarch Saint Joseph, whose power makes the impossible possible, come to our aid in these times of anguish and difficulty. Take under your protection the serious and troubling situations that we commend to you, that they may have a happy outcome. Our beloved father, our trust is in you. Let it not be said that we invoked you in vain, and since you can do everything with Jesus and Mary, show us that your goodness is as great as your power. Amen.*

Recommended by Anne Murphy.

Anne writes: “I have been getting this online weekly ‘magazine type’ letter to interested readers, for years. It used to be called *Brain Pickings*, compiled by Maria Popova; it's now under a different name (*MARGINALIAN*). It is wide ranging in subject matter. Each point that is underlined/red print is a live link, and can take the reader - *perhaps after the initial reading* - to related topics. It can, of course, be used just as it stands, without digressing or going off at a tangent.”



<https://www.themarginalian.org/>

At this sad time, a poem in a recent issue of MARGINALIAN included this 'extra' piece.....

### LET THERE ALWAYS BE LIGHT (SEARCHING FOR DARK MATTER)

*by Rebecca Elson*

**For this we go out dark nights, searching  
For the dimmest stars,  
For signs of unseen things:**

**To weigh us down.  
To stop the universe  
From rushing on and on  
Into its own beyond  
Till it exhausts itself and lies down cold,  
Its last star going out.**





Whatever they turn out to be,  
Let there be swarms of them,  
Enough for immortality,  
Always a star where we can warm ourselves.

Let there be enough to bring it back  
From its own edges,  
To bring us all so close we ignite

The bright spark of resurrection.



The Annunciation – Christopher Panza

## The Annunciation 25 March

### Memorare

*Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thine intercession was left unaided.*

*Inspired by this confidence, I fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins, my mother; to thee do I come, before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy hear and answer me.*

Immaculate Heart of Mary  
pray for us and all your suffering people.

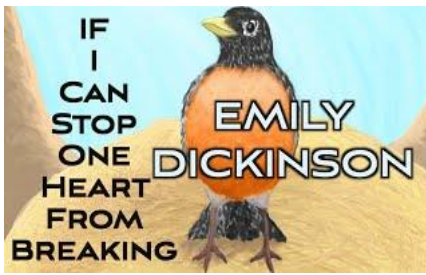
## NO MAN IS AN ISLAND – John Donne

No man is an island,  
entire of itself;  
every man is a piece of the continent,  
a part of the main.  
If a clod be washed away by the sea,  
Europe is the less,  
as well as if a promontory were.  
as well as if a manor of thy friend's  
or of thine own were.



Any man's death diminishes me,  
because I am involved in mankind;  
and therefore never send to know for  
whom the bell tolls;  
it tolls for thee.





If I can stop one heart from breaking,  
 I shall not live in vain;  
 If I can ease one life the aching,  
 Or cool one pain,  
 Or help one fainting robin  
 Unto his nest again,  
 I shall not live in vain.

## Ecological Conversion

Inspired by A Creed for Today ch.17 by Donal Dorr

*contributed by Dominique Treacy*

Ecological Conversion has four dimensions:

- 1) affective, 2) intellectual, 3) moral commitment,
- 4) moral conversion in practice

*(Parts 2 – 4 will be included in future newsletters)*



### Part 1: Affective Ecological Conversion



The most immediate and central is affective conversion. This has to do with how we feel rather than how we think. Once we are affectively converted we feel different about the animals, the trees, the plants, the landscape, the stars, and the people around us. We have a sense of being linked to them, of being part of this extraordinary web of life and of the whole cosmos. We may have a sense of awe when we look at the face of a child, or look through a microscope at the complexity and beauty of a daisy. And we marvel at the whole process of evolution through which all these realities emerged over billions of years.

Furthermore, if we are affectively converted we can at times experience something of the joy, the beauty and the life-energy of the creatures around us. We may even share something of the joyful abandonment described by the poet Patrick Kavanagh in his poem 'October': *Collected Poems* p. 218

*'I want to throw myself on the public street without caring  
 For anything but the praying that the earth offers.'*

The affective aspect of conversion remains truncated and even distorted if we fail to respond to the invitation of Pope Francis to allow ourselves

*'to become painfully aware, to dare to turn what is happening to the world into our own personal suffering' (Ls, 19).*



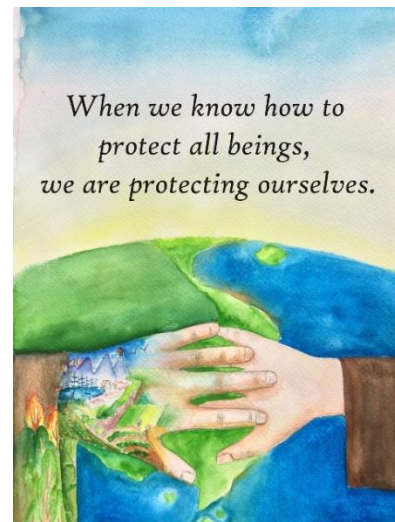


It is important for each of us to allow ourselves to fully experience this pain and our responsibility for what is happening. We must not try to avoid it or to distract ourselves from feeling it. If we do not let in the full weight of the grief and guilt we feel, we will find ourselves stuck, unable to move on to effective action.



I venture to add that I, as a Christian who is part of the more privileged segment of humanity, have to acknowledge my own sinful situation, my culpable immersion in a sinfully exploitive way of life (and death). I must face up to the painful and angry challenge put to each of us so powerfully by Greta Thunberg in her address at the \united \nations on 23 September 2019:

*“You have stolen my dreams and my childhood with your empty words”.*



**PUPILS OF GOOD COUNSEL GIRLS' SCHOOL in FERRYBANK parade around the grounds of Madonna House before St Patrick's day - to the delight of all the sisters.**





## Lines Written in Early Spring - *William Wordsworth*

I heard a thousand blended notes,  
While in a grove I sate reclined,  
In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts  
Bring sad thoughts to the mind.

To her fair works did Nature link  
The human soul that through me ran;  
And much it grieved my heart to think  
What man has made of man.



Through primrose tufts, in that green bower,  
The periwinkle trailed its wreaths;  
And 'tis my faith that every flower  
Enjoys the air it breathes.

The birds around me hopped and played,  
Their thoughts I cannot measure:—  
But the least motion which they made  
It seemed a thrill of pleasure.



The budding twigs spread out their fan,  
To catch the breezy air;  
And I must think, do all I can,  
That there was pleasure there.



If this belief from heaven be sent,  
If such be Nature's holy plan,  
Have I not reason to lament  
What man has made of man?



## Ecological Conversion

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*contributed by Dominique Treacy*

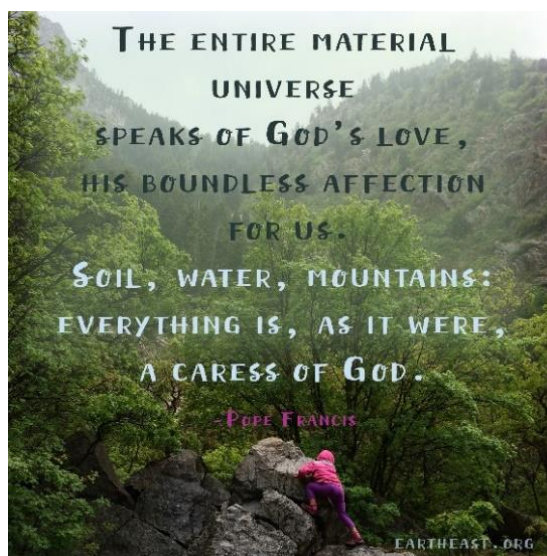
Ecological Conversion has four dimensions:

1) affective, 2) intellectual, 3) moral commitment, 4) moral conversion in practice

### Part 2: Intellectual ecological conversion

It is scientifically verifiable that the Earth is being damaged irreparably by human activity. Waking up to this reality is the intellectual aspect of our conversion. “We see with new eyes”. It is a new and richer understanding of how and why we are so interconnected. It means that we begin to realise how the process of evolution has operated in our universe from the very beginning. Evolution has become real for us because we see it taking place all around us; and we even have some inkling of the direction in which it is moving – towards ever-greater interconnected complexity.

Once we begin to understand the process of evolution and the interconnection between the different aspects of our world, we can no longer deny the myriad ways in which our modern way of life is disrupting the natural pattern of nature. We wake up to an awareness of the immense damage that is being done to innumerable non-human creatures, as well as to the humans who have been pushed to the margins of our world. The crucial element of the disruption of our world is the utterly unjustified sharp distinction that has been made between what is called ‘nature’ on the one hand and, on the other hand, human ‘society’.



**Always end your day with a positive thought. No matter how bad things are, tomorrow is another chance to make things better.**

**A good laugh and a long sleep are the two best cures for anything.**

*- Irish Proverb*

**Keep your face always toward the sunshine,  
and shadows will fall behind you.**

*Walt Whitman*