



Equipes Notre-Dame

Newsletter Teams of Our Lady – Irish Region

Handover of Responsibility



Issue 95

Winter 2013

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The Super-Regional Couple, Antony and Janet Denman, pray in thanks for the outgoing Regional Couple, Pat and Carmel Cunneen and for the incoming Regional Couple Tony and Breda Preston during the concluding Mass at the Responsible Couples' Weekend. The Regional Chaplain, Fr. Gerry Cassidy, blesses the couples as the Regional Candle is handed over. The outgoing and incoming Regional Couples were presented with aprons bearing the Teams logo by Antony and Janet symbolising their service in the Movement.

From the Regional Couple



For the past four years as Regional Couple and for the previous three as Dublin Sector Couple, Pat and Carmel Cunneen have given generously of their time and have worked tirelessly in developing Teams in Ireland. We have all been nourished and inspired by their personal witness and commitment in advancing the concept of marriage spirituality throughout the Region. We are delighted that Pat and Carmel will continue to spearhead the preparations for the 2014 Transatlantic Super-Regional Gathering and Celebration of 50 years of Teams in Ireland. On behalf of the Irish Region we offer our thanks and best wishes to them.

To have the opportunity to serve the Teams of Our Lady at any level is a great privilege. To serve as Regional Couple for Ireland is a special privilege for us. We are looking forward to working closely with the sectors and together under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to continue the further development and expansion of Teams in Ireland.

We had the privilege recently, at the invitation of the Super-Regional Couple, to attend the Southern Regional Gathering at Womersley in Epsom in the UK and we found it both enlightening and uplifting. We extend our thanks and appreciation to Margaret Barratt for her kind hospitality in welcoming us into her home and to Teddy and Colette Totman for the wonderful meal and get together at their home on Saturday evening. Our thanks also to the Super-Regional Couple Antony & Janet Denman for their support and encouragement and we are looking forward to working closely with you all and our Colleagues in Teams GB over the next four years.

In the month of November we think of our dear departed brothers and sisters and pray that they are enjoying their eternal reward. Pope Francis speaks about hope in our lives and we now look forward with hope to Christmas and the New Year.

Míle Buíochas libh go léir.

Breda & Tony Preston

Prayer Intentions

For the deceased:

Elizabeth Boyle, sister of Eithne Clenaghan, Belfast; Brian Garvey, brother of Fr. Colin, Galway.

For those who are ill:

John McCarrick, Galway



From The Leading Couple

We have belief in love (cf. 1 Jn 4:16)

All of us, as couples of END, say that we are well aware of the difficulties and the crisis we are experiencing today in marriage. We know that our weak spirituality is the result of our incapacity to have a deep and broad perspective to enable us to stop and think clearly about what happens to us.

We are unable to delve into the mystery of God and find strength and light to face the trials that we face. We get lost in the multiplicity of our desires and only the strength of Faith can lead us to believe and trust so that we will find ourselves close to Him; truly belonging to God. The path to salvation is the result of a true encounter with God through mankind.

Faith and Hope strengthen us and identify us with Jesus and we believe that the covenant He made with us will last forever.

We are couples of END, a Church Movement, which leads us to maturity of faith by which we shall be saved. We know that we walk side by side with a Father who knows us by name and makes us capable of listening to Him. A Father who is not strange or mysterious; a Father who leads us on the path, thus becoming our lighthouse and His light will show us how to resist threats.

By assuming this status of dearly loved children, we dare tell others what we believe.

PRAYER enables us to see the light and feel the peace.

Within ourselves there are sources that lead us to find an **oasis of peace and reconciliation.**

In silence, we are capable of understanding the **signs of the times** so we can stop being just curious spectators and critics of a world to which, after all, we belong.

The great challenge that the Gospel gives us today is to believe in love, and live the fidelity of marriage; never failing to engage in dialogue, which should always be present in our families, in spite of challenges.

Being family means living the concerns of humanity to which we belong.

To be rocks in the midst of people who are crying and fighting but who want to believe that God is present in all these uncertainties, is to be a leaven in the family that the Lord has entrusted to us.

We are asked to continually search for God, living with hope in our difficulties, while always seeking the will of God.

Finding people who do not know Christ and showing them the grace of forgiveness should be one of our constant concerns, part of our daily life.

These people who do not know Christ are usually in great need of love, of finding someone willing to listen to them, with whom they may share the joy of being loved, because God's mercy has given them the joy of Hope.

This call made to us since Vatican II and also by Pope Francis never ceases to unsettle us, but is urging us not to be afraid and to open our doors to Christ. "**He is alive and he walks by our side.**" Let us be guided by the guiding principles of our Movement and not create barriers to the voice of the Holy Spirit who will support and nourish our Hope in the battle we have willingly chosen.

Firmly rooted in Prayer, our first battle will be to leave our comfort zone, to let God take the initiative and

guide us. To go back to the source and to abandon ourselves in His sight is to recognize that we cannot follow our path without Him.

Our aim should be to recognize that the cross leads us to resurrection; that the cross is no longer a sign of suffering but a sign of victory that Hope will save us.

If the cross is a sign of God's Love, a Love shown by Jesus in the violence of his suffering, it makes us participants in His victory over death.

So let us be true Disciples of Christ and follow the lead of Mary, a symbol of all hope and an example of total humility. With Our Lady at our side, we will be able to go into the streets, enter peoples' homes and realize the Feast, knowing that she will always be there to teach us "to do whatever He tells you".

Tó and José Moura Soares

From the Spiritual Counsellor



My very dear Friends, It is with great joy that I write you this letter, the first after the International College Meeting held in Bordeaux, which was for all participants a moment of grace and the recognition of the international nature of our Movement. In short, it was a true ecclesial experience. Of all that we experienced together, I came away with a few ideas that I would like to share with all of you, because I believe that we can find in them the desire to experience the charisma and mystic of the Teams of Our Lady.

The commitment (that we must all seek to promote precisely in these times of transition and crisis), dignity and holiness of Christian marriage was highlighted. And this constitutes the novelty of our Movement within the Church. It is our vocation and mission. As couples united in the Lord, you carry in your conjugal relationship signs of your belonging to the Lord, effective signs of the Lord's love for his Church. Through the sacrament, the husband becomes the image of Christ and the wife, the image of the Church. As Christian couples, your mission is to bear witness efficiently to the fidelity and love of Christ for the Church; you are the effective signs that fidelity is the victory of love over time.

The heritage that we received from Father Caffarel not only consists in promoting the holiness of marriage, but also in promoting the harmonious relationship between the priesthood and marriage and this too was highlighted. In fact, the two sacraments have in common the fact that they are efficient signs of the nuptial alliance of Christ and the Church: marriage and priesthood, that is, couples and the spiritual counsellor form an integral part of the Team. And in this manner, a Team is a concentration of the mystery of the Church where the Priest represents Christ, the head and spouse of the Church and the couples represent the Church, body and spouse of the Lord. This is the dignity and the heights to which we are all called!

This is why we must remain very careful so that, within the actual crisis of the priesthood or of marriage, we do not seek solutions that end up being dangerous for all.

In historic moments of crisis and transition, we must remain very firm in our fidelity to the Lord and to the Church. An openness to the signs of the times— that can be negative and contradictory to the Gospel— demands great caution and prudence from us. In this case, the advice attributed to St Augustine can be of help: unity in necessary things; liberty in doubtful things; charity in all things. Charity, which is essential if we are to see our neighbour with God’s eyes, is necessary today because we all need this charity and attention.

For this, we need the *light of faith*, which opens our eyes to hope and love. I suggest that you read this letter in conjunction with the Introduction and first chapter of Pope Francis’ encyclical *Lumen fidei*. And do not forget the two Endeavours that are essential to the charisma and mystic of the Teams: the Sit-Down and Conjugal Prayer. Cultivate your spiritual life, with your spouse and individually, by emphasising the sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist. Without prayer and a sacramental life, it is impossible to live and experience the ideal of holiness to which we are invited by the Lord, who said, “... apart from me you can do nothing .” (Jn 15, 5)

I take my leave of you and entrust you to the Lord by invoking for all of you the abundance of his blessings. May the Holy Virgin Mary, our Mother, be your refuge and the way that leads you to God.

Father José Jacinto Ferreira de Farias, SCJ



Eddie Lloyd practising with congregation before mass at RC Weekend

From the Regional Chaplain



December 2013

Matthew 12: 47-50

Can I freely encourage others to follow their heart without trying to manipulate or control their decisions?

Are there some plans that I am holding on to in my relationship with my spouse, or children or friends or within my work experience? How do I feel about this?

Jesus says; “Just as I have come to do your will, O God” is the motivating force of his life, so the only real principle of choice in my life is to seek out and do the will of God. If my whole desire is to respond faithfully to God’s call and invitations I would not want to turn away from God even in small ways.

Quite frequently we experience a time of alternating certainties and doubts, of exhilarating strength and debilitating weakness, of consolation and of desolation. As a matter of fact, this time is very privileged, because the discernment of spirits which is called for is an entrance into understanding a language of God spoken within our very being. We gain light and understanding. St. Ignatius

January 2014

John 14:23-29

What can I do to provide the time, data, and reflection needed to make a good decision?

In what ways do I check out my motivation as I move into decision making?

February 2014

Mark 1:29-39

How have I noticed the growth in my ability to make good choices when faced with important decisions in my life? What are the signs that give me confidence?

What preparations do I need to undertake to be ready to make an important decision?

March 2014

Philippians 2:12-17. 4:9-13

What helps me to take into account rather than ignore the apparently conflicting pulls which I experience during decision making?

What can I learn when I consider how my decision may affect others with whom I live or am close to?

News from Around the Region

Dublin

Kilkenny: ‘Faith of our Fathers’ Conference was held in Kilkenny from Friday to Sunday 13th – 15th September. Teams of our Lady had an Exhibition Stand there. Una & Brian Moore, Martha Wade, Pat & Carmel Cunneen and ourselves were on hand to speak to visitors about our Movement. There were several keynote speakers in the main hall. On the Sunday Pat & Carmel made a presentation on behalf of Teams. Our presence at venues such as this is important as we try to raise our profile in communities and districts around the country, so that more people, including priests and religious, become aware that there is a movement for married couples.

The Regional Conference was held in the Dominican Retreat Centre, Tallaght this year. As teams increase in number, so do those attending R/C weekends. Our grateful thanks to the Sector team, who put much effort and time into the organisation of the weekend. Judging by the many evaluations received, the highlight of the weekend was the Presentation and Workshop by Donal Dorr. His gentle manner and thoughtful delivery and interaction was informative and also challenging. A special thanks to Pat & Maureen Seery, who, though in teams a short time, gave an inspiring talk on the Endeavours. The text of their talk has been circulated to all R/Cs – well worth a read. The two days offered lively sessions- there were also hand-outs and leaflets. Responsible Couples had useful material to bring home to share with their team members.

8th December Mass: As the 8th falls on a Sunday this year, Masses that day are for the 2nd Sunday of Advent. The Feast is celebrated on Monday 9th. However, to facilitate as many people as possible, especially families with children, it was felt that it would suit better to have Mass **on Sunday 8th at the earlier time of 7pm**. The Redemptorist Community make their Refectory available to us. We again have this spacious and relaxing facility. Let us all gather to celebrate the Eucharist and share precious time together.

Retreat: So many people commented favourably about Avila being a very suitable venue for the Retreat this year, so it was decided to use Avila again. However, it is such a busy place, the only dates available are **29th & 30th of March**. Though it is later than usual, we trust it will suit. Easter Sunday next year is not until 20th April. Further details will be circulated in the New Year.

Joe & Áine Clayton

Dublin Sector Retreat:

Date for your Diary:

Sat 29th & Sunday 30th March 2014

Venue: Avila Retreat Centre, off Morehampton Road.

Belfast

Sector meeting.

Belfast held a Sector Team meeting on 23rd September. Members this year are Deirdre and Declan Kennedy, Liam and Eileen Mc Kinney, and ourselves Moyra and Brendan Bunting.

December 9th will be our date for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception and the birthday of Teams. The venue will be Liam and Eileen McKinney's home, and Fr Ephrem Blake C.P. will celebrate the Mass at around 7.30, after which we will have our social evening.

The sector team also chose the date of Sunday May 11th for the annual Retreat, which will take place again at Tobar Mhuire, Crossgar.

The Down and Connor Diocesan Congress was a wonderful experience for all of us. We were very grateful to have the help of Paddy and Jacinta Quigley.

The RC Weekend, with its theme of Leadership, was greatly enjoyed by those of us who were lucky enough to be able to attend. So many things were memorable, including Fr Dorr's talks, and those of Fr Brian O'Toole and other team members; the Team meeting, the discussion on Study Topics, the hospitality of our host couples, meeting old and new friends. Well done to all those involved in the organisation of the weekend, especially Áine and Joe Clayton. We were sorry to hear of the news of the death recently of Eithne Clenaghan's sister Elizabeth (Liz) Boyle in Dublin. May she rest in peace.

Moyra and Brendan Bunting

Mullingar

We look forward to our celebration for the feast of Our Lady's Immaculate Conception due to take place at the convent Oratory at St. Francis, Ballinderry, Mullingar on Saturday, 7th December at 7pm. We have kindly been offered the facilities at this new venue. Father Daniel will celebrate Mass and we will be able to enjoy a get-together after Mass. A warm welcome awaits all members who will be able to come. It will be an occasion to meet some of the members of the new Team Eleven.

On that date the marriage is due to take place, of the son of Martin and Antoinette Shaw, We have been asked to remember the bride and bridegroom in our prayers, that God will bless them at this special time.

Laura Smyth and Janie Treanor have been bereaved by the deaths of family members. These are indeed sad times for families, and we offer them our sincere sympathy and a place in our prayers.

The Responsible Couples' week-end in Dublin was superbly organized by Joe and Áine Clayton. It took place at the Dominican Priory at Tallaght. Ann Gaffney, Team 7 and Mary Cahill Team 4 from our Sector gave a beautiful presentation on Leadership in Teams, which they based on the prayer of St Francis of Assisi "Lord make me an instrument of your peace." It was accompanied by a recital of the hymn and was a lovely end to their efforts, which were greatly appreciated by all.

As Frank was recovering from a knee operation at that time, I only attended the Saturday sessions of the week-end – all of which were most interesting. We received revised editions of the Teams' literature for each R.C. which we hope you find helpful. A warm and friendly atmosphere prevailed which it was a pity to leave. Many thanks to the Dublin Sector and warmest congratulations on putting together such a varied and worthwhile schedule.

We wish you all a happy and a blessed Christmas with your families and friends.

God bless.

Frank and Margaret Fagan.

Galway

Enda and Joan Colleran have just returned from Greensborough, North Carolina where they were visiting their son Eoin and his wife Heather to welcome a new granddaughter Saoirse, a very welcome sister for Aoibhin. We extend our warmest congratulations to all concerned and wish Eoin and Heather every blessing on their young family.

Margaret O'Dwyer has just retired from teaching in Salerno Secondary School. We wish her a happy retirement, good health and good times in the years ahead.

We extend our warm congratulations to Mary Hynes, wife of Larry, our newest members in Team 3, on graduating from GMIT with a B.A. in Religious Studies. Well done Mary. Delighted at your good news.

Liz Roddy from Team 3 has decided to leave Teams. We are sorry to see her go but wish her all the very best in the years ahead. We will all miss her very insightful and thought provoking articles in the Teams' Newsletter.

Peter and Betty Quinlan's son Eoin and the love of his life, Hannah Murphy got married on the 14th August last. We are so happy for them and extend our congratulations to them both. We wish them happiness, good health and good times on their new journey through life together. We also extend our good wishes to John McCarrick who is undergoing treatment at present and ask you all to keep him in your prayers. We wish him every blessing and hope he will make a full recovery.

We extend our sincere sympathy to Fr. Colin Garvey, O.F.M., on the death of his brother Brian who lived in Canada. May he rest in peace.

Team members from the Galway Sector who were at the Responsible Couples' Weekend in the Dominican Retreat Centre in Tallaght all found it very worthwhile and enjoyed it thoroughly. A highlight of the Responsible Couples' weekend is always the Team Meeting in the homes of Team members. We thank the host couples for their warm welcome and hospitality and the Dublin Sector for making the weekend so worthwhile.

The Mass for the Feast of The Immaculate Conception will be celebrated in the Jesuit House of Spirituality, 6, Sea Road, Galway on Tuesday 10th December at 8.00 p.m. All Team members, family and friends are welcome. We will have the usual cup of tea and chat afterwards.

Wishing all Team members the joy and peace that Christmas can bring and every good wish for 2014.

Máire and Brendan Kelly

Celebrations in 2014: UPDATE

Celebrating 50 years of Teams in Ireland and Super-Regional Gathering

Friday 15th to Sunday 17th August 2014

Teams in Ireland takes this opportunity to honour those who brought Teams to Ireland in 1964, and to show our gratitude. We will also welcome our Super-Region colleagues from Great Britain, Trinidad and Tobago and Africa.

BOOKING

Booking has already commenced with bookings from GB and Australia and Ireland; we also expect bookings from Trinidad, South Africa and Malawi.

NB. We would encourage bookings from Ireland as soon as practicable. This allows us to plan accommodation needs as well as estimating what we can do to help the children of teams to attend.

There is a deposit requirement of €25 pp. Solidarity money has been raised, through the Dublin Sector; there are plans to raise more. This will be used to reduce or eliminate the cost of children attending the conference.

A Children's Programme will be included in the weekend.

This is a historical and unique event for Teams in Ireland. We urge as many as possible to attend the Gathering.

So PLEASE..... let's get PLANNING and SAVING!

VOLUNTEERS

Thank you - we have had a great response to requests for volunteers.

We do need more in certain areas like the Children's Programme Helpers. This will allow helpers to rotate and enjoy parts of the conference. **Further offers of help?**

PAST MEMBERS

We hope to invite past members to celebrate with us. Please help in this process by making personal contact with them or by providing us with contact details.

MEMORIAL BOOK You have made a good start in sending in details of some of our deceased Teams members from around the Region. These will be recorded in a Special Remembrance Book. Currently we have 33 names, with photos & details of **eight** deceased members. A list of these names has been sent to all R/Cs.

Has your team sent details yet? All info to: liamclare@gmail.com

HOSPITALITY

We expect overseas visitors will spend some time in Ireland outside of the conference and we would like to propose that Irish Teams share in providing hospitality as appropriate. All Sectors can offer hospitality. Some may wish to visit different parts of the country for a couple of days.

Down and Connor Diocesan Congress

Saturday September 28th 2013

Brendan and Moyra Bunting

Theme: Our Church, Our Community, Our Commitment

What would a Living Church look like? This was the question discussed in all parishes in Down and Connor about two years ago by more than 3,000 people. This was the Living Church process begun by Bishop Noel Treanor. Five important subjects emerged as dominant in these discussions: Lay Participation, Being an Open and Welcoming Community, Faith and Worship, The Clergy, and Passing on the Faith. The follow-up is a Pastoral Plan unfolded at this Diocesan Congress in the Waterfront Hall in Belfast. The Pastoral plan is very impressive explaining how people, priests and bishops will work together to create an open church in which everyone has a part to play. One of the key objects of the Plan is to have Pastoral Councils in every single parish in the diocese, and to have a Diocesan Pastoral Council. This should ensure that laity and clergy work together.

Fr Alan McGuckian SJ presented the Pastoral Plan at the start of the day. There were many excellent speakers including Breda O'Brien, a columnist with the Irish Times, who was the keynote speaker; Martina Purdy, a broadcaster with the BBC; Fr Peter McVerry SJ; Bishop Alan Abernethy (Church of Ireland Bishop of Connor) who shared his faith journey alongside his development officer Mr Trevor Douglas.

From our point of view as members of Equipes Notre-Dame it was a good chance to make Teams better known. We were delighted to have the chance to put up a stand at the Congress. In all there were 41 stands. It was a (good) new experience setting up our stall. We got various tips from Áine and Joe Clayton e.g. to put a tablecloth on the display table, and to print out A4 size logos and display them on the front of the table to catch the eye; also to bring Sellotape, blu-tak etc!

A lot of people passing by took information leaflets. We chatted with as many as possible. We feel that having a stand at the congress will help more people to be aware of the existence of Equipes Notre-Dame. Stands were on 3 floors of the Waterfront Hall. Ours was on level one. Quite a few members of Teams attended the Congress – at least 8. In all around 1,700 people attended the Congress on Saturday. (Friday was for the young people of the diocese.) Our stall was there for both days, so we hope some teachers had a look at it! We found the Congress excellent in every way and look forward to the implementation of the Diocesan Pastoral Plan.

Short Reports – Events attended

Pat and Carmel Cunneen

Cillín Hill /Diocese of Ossory

A much smaller version of Eucharistic Congress (conference/speakers/stalls). There was relatively lower level of curiosity about Teams, and other stands had similar issues. We managed to also get a workshop slot which had limited attendance. Overall we got some names to follow up for Carlow and Dublin. A Navan contact was passed on to Navan teams.

Irish Bishops' Conference on Marriage.

Was very well attended by Irish Bishops. The Conference was opened by Bishop Jones, Teams Chaplain, Sligo. Most of attendees were from Accord including several Teams members. Accord and Iona Institute were mentioned. Content was good but no 'husband and wife' presentation or slant in the content. As a follow up, contact was made with Irish Bishops' Secretariat with a view to putting Teams of Our Lady; its spirituality and its operation in Ireland on the website. An information letter was sent by post and email to all Accord offices (c.30) setting out what Teams of Our Lady can offer.

Trinidad and Tobago

We were delighted to attend the 30 years celebration of Teams in Trinidad and Tobago. The celebration manifested itself in a weekend retreat led by Bishop Robert Llanos (Trinidad), a former Teams Chaplain. About 20 couples attended, with Antony and Janet Denman representing the Super Region. He gave 4 talks centering on 1 ; our Sonship, arising from our Baptism., 2 ; MARY, chaste wife and Mother of Jesus, 3 ; JOSEPH, chaste husband of Mary and father 4 ; JESUS, chaste Son of Mary. He rounded all the talks with a focus on chastity within marriage, arising from the sonship of baptism and the model of the Holy Family. There were other presentations including a 'reeling back the years' since teams were formed in visual media, giving good food for thought for our own upcoming celebrations.

Jeff and Pasqui Hosford, secondees to the Satellite Teams working party gave an understanding of the inner workings of their mandate. The Super Regional couple outlined the workings of the Super Region, including Malawi, which resulted in a monetary collection for that (Malawi) cause. There was also a good mention for 2014 Gathering in Ireland which drew significant interest. Children are real attendees at Teams functions in Trinidad laying the clear foundations, and already evident in the next generation of Teams. Overall the spirituality, openness and hospitality of the 'Trinnies' left a lasting impression, and their importance and gift to our Super Region.

During the weekend there was the ceremonial Regional Couple change with Gregory and Shamagne Bertrand handing the baton to Dwight and Christine Gonzales. The Team 1 Trinidad Team formed 30 years ago were given also a special presentation to mark their fidelity to the movement.

The Study Topic Joan Kinsella Dublin 3

The Teams' literature states that the purpose of the Study Topic is to deepen our faith.

Love and knowledge go together. We love God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent and the Study Topic is a means to increase this knowledge of faith.

It is not and should not be merely an intellectual exercise. It is a study directed towards each person's own spiritual life.

We can read the latest inspirational books and attend retreats and seminars and even the Roman catholic Conference and come away feeling good. But without the willingness to be spiritually challenged we cannot and will not change.

The Study topic should not be looked at in isolation. It is an integral component in the platform that is our life in the teams. It is one of the legs that integrated with the other endeavours/challenges to help us to live fully our Christian lives. Try taking your Study Topic into our prayer and mediation and let it change us to experience a new way of living – a new relationship with God – a bigger God than the one we are probably used to.

Do we want to be spiritually nourished or spiritually challenged. Many of us settle for the comfort and security of what we know and remember what Jesus said to the Samaritan woman

“Whoever drinks of the water I give here will never thirst. Indeed the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life” John 4.V.14

In recent enquiries among several of the teams I questioned as to what was important about the Study Topic and what people were looking for the answers were varied and included

Education and information - people wanted to learn more about their faith

Encouragement – that we are not alone

Energy – they wanted something that would give them life

Challenge – they needed something to challenge and provoke them

Change – they wanted something that would encourage them to change – move out of their comfort zone

Community – to listen to others accepting their points of view which might agree or not with theirs

I remember as a school girl labouring through Francis Bacon's essay on Books. Some books are to be tasted and others to be swallowed and some few to be chewed and digested. If we now measure our most recent Study Topics using these criteria then we can or may measure how successful they have been in developing our Spiritual lives.

It would be easy to coast through the year reading but not digesting the designated chapter. It would be easy to have a spirited discussion at the meeting around this chapter. How real is that? Do we have strong views? Do we discuss for the sake of discussing or do we share where the reading has challenged us and changed us? How do we choose our Study Topic?

I have prepared a list of books which our team have read over the years. The list is not exhaustive and definitely not compulsory. Some we have enjoyed. Some we have hated but all stimulated discussion, informed us and on reflection hopefully changed us. The books fall into three main categories. The Gospels and the Sacraments, Spirituality and Prayer and the changing face of Christianity.

The Gospels and the Sacraments

One of the earliest Books we did was a Tale of 2 Testaments. To someone reared in a Catholic tradition reading the Old Testament was not something encouraged except for likes of Gospel. This book scored 9 on the information and education scale. It served to put the Old Testament into context as the story of a people to history of the Israelites as chapter 2 starts over half dozen ages in as many pages. It reduces the Old Testament to manageable proportions. It does not score highly on the 3Cs however but as you know we are all on a journey and we need guide books – this was one.

Albert Nolan's book Jesus Today however ticked the boxes of the 3Cs. It challenged us to look again at the relationship Jesus had with his father that was the sources of his wisdom, his clarity confidence and radical freedom. We were provoked into considering whether our lives in any way mirrored that of Jesus.

My personal favourites on the spirituality side were story telling faith and imagination and a new look at Grace and spirituality of wholeness both on the book list. Reverting back to a tale of 2 Testaments I said it was a story these 2 books deal with the importance of story in our lives in Bausch's book. Story telling brings our lives into focus – each of us have a story to tell. I firmly believe that no story is too trivial. Huesch takes the story a step further – he wants us to find the graced moment in the story and then to share it on to the community – no one is on island. I can say these 2 books ticked all boxes for me.

The final category – Change and our place in the universe is best represented by Peter McVerry's book Jesus Social Revolutionary – where is God to be found. In our community we can express our radical solidarity through sharing what we have and who we are and in that sharing present a value that is in contradiction to the values presented by our culture. We have come full circle. I hope these few words will help you to look at the Study Topic as an integrated part of the challenges presented to us. Love it or loathe it, it will change us if we let it – go out and be Counter Cultural.

STUDY TOPICS~

- W. Riley, 1985. *The Tale of Two Testaments*. Veritas Press: Dublin
- J. Fenton, 1988. *Finding the Way Through John*. Mowbray Press: London
- A. Nolan, 2006. *Jesus Today: A Spirituality of Radical Freedom*. Orbis Books: New York
- E. Lyons, 1994. *Jesus: A Self Portrait by God*. The Columba Press: Dublin
- J. Ratzinger, 2007. *Jesus of Nazareth*. Bloomsbury: London
- M. Byrne 2004. *The Way It Is: The Narrative of the Birth of Jesus*. The Columba Press: Dublin
- W.J. Harrington OP, 2002. *Mark: Realistic Theologian*. The Columba Press: Dublin 3rd Ed.
- Pope Benedict *Jesus of Nazareth* Bloomsbury
- P.J. McDonald & C. M McDonald, 1995. *The Soul of Marriage*. Paulist Press: New York
- B. Grogan SJ, 2011. *To Grow in Love: A Spirituality of Ageing*. Messenger Publication: Dublin
- William Bausch *Storytelling Imagination and Faith*. Twenty-third publication
- P. Bernier, SSS. 1981. *Bread Broken and Shared: Broadening our View of Eucharist*. Ave Maria Press: Notre Dame, Indiana
- B. Huebsch, 1989. *Rethinking Sacraments: Holy Moments in Daily Living*. Twenty third Publications: Mystic, Connecticut
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Pictures 1, 2, 3 from RC Weekend

Pictures 4 and 5 from Trinidad and Tobago 30th Anniversary Celebrations

Picture 6 Teams Stand Down and Connor Congress