



Equipes Notre-Dame

## Newsletter Teams of Our Lady – Irish Region

### From the Regional Couple



Dear friends in Teams,

We hope you are all well and have enjoyed the summer break. Some of us lost dear ones and we remember and keep them and all deceased members of Teams in our prayers.

We need to be conscious of how unnecessarily we overburden ourselves at times to achieve high level objectives we set for ourselves. St. Ignatius lists three things that block us from God and from living life to the full: obsessions with wealth, honour and pride. Wealth would be the burden of debts for money we really didn't need, wanting to have the best, demanding others look up to us, always feeling we have to be first etc. Then of course we have less room for God. The narrow gate is the happy gate. We need little to be satisfied. We can have too much religious baggage; too many rituals and prayers and not enough love and compassion. When we live simply there is room for everyone. Jesus invites us to meet him at this narrow gate and be less cluttered. Then we walk with him and will need no more.

“The Joy of Love”, (*Amoris Laetitia*) and the World Meeting of Families Conference in Ireland are being hosted by the Council for Marriage and the Family of the Irish Episcopal Conference. It will incorporate the launch of the World Meeting of Families 2018 in Ireland and provide an opportunity to meet and engage with different movements and associations. It is being held on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2016 from 10.00am to 4.00pm in Saint Patrick's College, Drumcondra, Dublin 9. The Guest Speakers are Archbishop Diarmuid Martin and Archbishop Eamon Martin. Pre-booking and registration is required. For information and booking, contact Alison Cullen, Council for Marriage and the Family, [marriagefamily@iecon.ie](mailto:marriagefamily@iecon.ie) or call (01) 505 3012. We would encourage as many Teams members as possible to attend. contd. p2

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**RC WEEKEND 1st and 2nd OCTOBER MULLINGAR (see p8)**

## Issue 106

## Autumn 2016

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At time of going to press, recorded interviews were planned for 3rd September 2016 with groups supporting marriage and the family in an Irish Church context. Teams of our Lady were invited to participate, and a centre piece of the October 22nd Conference will include an audio-visual presentation of these interviews.

We had the great privilege of being invited by the International Leading Couple, Tó and Zé Moura Soares from Portugal, to attend at the Teams International College at the Hayes Conference Centre in Swanwick in England in July this year. As a Couples' Movement in full communion with the Church, the College took place in a climate of mercy and as a sign of the attention paid to the challenges faced by couples and families in a world where the values of marriage and the sacraments are almost entirely unwelcome.

We had the opportunity to share our services performed with the capacities that God gave each one of us in His infinite Love. We acknowledged our awareness that God's gifts are meant to be shared and not to be kept to ourselves. We were delighted to accept an invitation to share and participate in a Round Table discussion about the way piloting is done across the Super-Region (in our case the Region of Ireland). We also had the opportunity of answering some questions from the ERI Couple, Clarita and Edgardo Bernal, who coordinated and animated these discussions.

We are looking forward to meeting you all at the Responsible Couples' Weekend in Mullingar on the first weekend in October. We would encourage all responsible couples or a representative from each team to attend.

With our very best wishes, God Bless,

Breda & Tony Preston

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## **News from around the Region**

### **Dublin**

#### **Summer Outing**

Our Summer outing took us to St. Enda's, Ballyboden on Saturday, 25<sup>th</sup> June. Up to 50 attended. It was a typical 2016 Summer's Day with the rain never too far away. However it managed to stay away for the afternoon we were there. The highlight was a guided tour of St. Enda's, the school founded by Patrick Pearse in this beautiful setting under the Dublin Mountains. We learned from the excellent guide in great detail about the foundation and operation of the school and Pearse's enlightened approach to education, including his love for the Irish language and culture and his commitment to the achievement of both political and cultural independence for Ireland. One illustration of the latter was the emphasis on extra curricular drama, sport and nature study. The walled garden and the beautiful grounds, now fully restored, provide an education on nature in themselves. We learned that many distinguished people visited the school during Pearse's time, including Douglas Hyde and William Butler Yeats. The events that took place a hundred years previously – the Rising and the execution of four staff members of St. Enda's, Patrick and Willie Pearse, Thomas McDonagh and Con Colbert, were brought very much to mind. It was hard to reconcile the departure of these four young men from the beauty and calm of St. Enda's to the Rising and their certain death. However, the fact that so many are remembering and commemorating their sacrifice one hundred years later is testimony to the respect of the generations since for their great sacrifices for Irish independence. A visit to St. Enda's is strongly recommended to family and friends and entry is free.

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Afterwards we relaxed in the walled garden and the courtyard over coffee and had a stroll around the grounds. A few of us had gone earlier to Marlay Park and enjoyed what it had to offer, especially its market, fine walled gardens and scenic walks. It might be a main venue for a future Summer outing. However, we would very much appreciate if a Team would volunteer to organise the Summer outing for next year (2017) and bring us to your area. You would have our full support. We won't feel it coming around!

### **World Meeting of Families (WMF)**

Preparations for the WMF are beginning in earnest. A Gathering of Groups involved in supporting marriage and families in the Church is taking place in St. Patrick's Drumcondra on Saturday, 22<sup>nd</sup> October. Teams have been invited to attend. We have circulated a flyer and booking form to all Team members in Dublin. There is no fee but places are limited. So we would ask you to book as soon as possible. We would also ask Responsible couples to ensure as far as possible that at least one couple is present to represent your Team and report back.

Some Teams are considering using the Pope's Exhortation on the family, *Amoris Laetitia, The Joy of Love*, as the study topic for the coming year. As the Exhortation is long and detailed we would suggest focussing on Chapters 4, 5 and 7 on marriage and parenting, and on Chapters One and Three on the spiritual foundations. We aim to hold a Dublin Sector gathering on the Exhortation now after the main Gathering on 22<sup>nd</sup> October, particularly in the context of Project Growth. We will be in touch with the details.

### **Responsible Couples' Weekend.**

Congratulations and many thanks to our neighbours in Mullingar for organising the weekend to which we are really looking forward. Details are elsewhere in the Newsletter. We would urge all Responsible Couples in the Dublin Sector to attend and look forward to seeing you there.

We were saddened to learn of the death of Kathleen Preston, mother of Tony. May she rest in peace.

### **Dates for your Diary:**

Mass for Feast of the Immaculate Conception, **9<sup>th</sup> December**, Avila.

Retreat, 2017, **18<sup>th</sup> February**, Avila.

Gerry and Grace Mangan

### **Mullingar**

We are looking forward to seeing as many RCs as possible for the Responsible Couples' weekend on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> of October 2016 in the Bloomfield House Hotel. We are privileged to have one of our own Team members Mr Stephen Cummins as our main speaker. Last year Stephen spoke in Rome to the Teams International Regional Couples' Gathering to great acclaim.

Congratulations to Eoin O' Meara and Fiona Kennedy who were married recently.

Pauline and Richard Sheridan

contd. p7

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**From the Regional Chaplain**

**Fr. Peter Sexton SJ**

Scripture suggestions :            October : Jeremiah 29, verses 11-14  
   November : Romans 8, verses 31-39  
   December : Luke, chapter 2

Reflections on the Assumption.

1. When I was sitting in the Luas recently in mid-August coming from Heuston looking around at the various faces I was asking myself what difference does the then-coming feast of the Assumption make to all these people, some with that look of living ‘lives of quiet desperation’ – most of them haven’t the slightest awareness of it and so couldn’t care less about it. But for us Christians and therefore for everyone in the Luas it makes all the difference in the world! It is the feast of dignity and destiny; first that of Mary, the one we call Our Lady, – because she is the beloved of God, which is her dignity, she has been assumed into the fullness of God’s life – which is her destiny; and secondly of us because we too are no less the beloved of God, which is our dignity, and we will be assumed sooner or later into the same fullness of God’s life, past our wildest dreams, which is our destiny. The fact that the people in the Luas, and often ourselves in our unbelieving moods, have little or no appreciation of this reality doesn’t make it less real – just more sad. One can understand why Patrick Kavanagh writes that ‘to be dead is to stop believing in the masterpieces we will begin tomorrow.’
  2. When Pius XII made the solemn declaration of the Assumption in 1950 he acknowledged that he was simply affirming what was the belief of the Church, the people of God, from early centuries. In most places it was the principal feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and it is the patronal festival of many of Europe’s great Marian cathedrals, including Notre Dame in Paris. There has never been veneration of a tomb of Mary. The Eastern Church celebrates the Dormition of the Theotokos (and seemingly didn’t see any need for a dogmatic declaration as everyone knew about the Assumption!)
  3. Caravaggio has a painting of the death of Mary, which was rejected by the Carmelites in Rome who had asked for it, because it was too shocking - meaning not traditional and in huge contrast to traditional paintings of the Assumption – Caravaggio shows Mary just after her death lying on her back with bare feet and swollen ankles, surrounded by mourning apostles and Mary Magdalene – looking so ordinary in death, yet with a light shining on her and a disciple’s raised hand pointing to her destiny.
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4. The joy of the Gospel on this feast is the account of Mary's unselfish visit to Elizabeth that evoked the Magnificat, the ultimate hymn of appreciation of what God has done that is echoed every evening in the Church's Vespers.
  5. Despite an abundance of excess and tacky Marian art we remember that Mary is, like each of us, a creature, who always points to the Lord, as Hopkins says in his wonderful poem: *The Blessed Virgin Mary compared to the air we breathe*: 'Mary Immaculate, merely a woman, yet whose presence, power is Great as no goddess's was deemed, dreamed; who this one work has to do, let all God's glory through, God's glory which would go Through her and from her flow Off, and no way but so.'
  6. I heard a sermon recently describing so well our religion as essentially a religion of hope, trusting in the promise of God. In Newman's *Dream of Gerontius* (which Elgar set to music) there is a wonderful passage where Gerontius, who is a kind of Everyman, the one who has just died, and immediately after death says: 'I went to sleep, and now I am refreshed. A strange refreshment; for I feel in me an inexpressive lightness, and a sense of freedom, as I were at length myself. And ne'er had been before.' Surely a profound insight into what is ahead for all of us, a completion only possible when face to face with the mystery of God.
  7. Artists of all kinds have been drawn to try to portray something of the beauty and magnetic attractiveness of Mary - for some, Raphael's *Madonna and Child* or Michelangelo's *Pieta*, or the many *Ave Marias* such as Gounod's or Schubert's - everyone has their favourites. But for most people there are very ordinary reasons for her appeal: she has been at the centre of Christian devotion since the beginning when she steadied the early Church after the Ascension: people know that she had a hard life, to put it mildly, and been through it all (a sword will pierce your heart); and consequently people of all sorts feel at ease with her. Her goodness, like all genuine goodness, is both attractive and energising. She is the first Christian, though the mother of Christ, and she kept faith ('When the Son of Man comes again will he find any faith on earth?'). Devotion to her has always been simple: the Hail Mary, the Angelus, the Rosary.
  8. The feast of the Assumption proclaims the precious nature of the human body that therefore demands the highest respect and so this feast is an invitation to celebrate the goodness and the joy that God promises us at the end of time.
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## **Thank You, Frank and Margaret**

The Mullingar sector would like to pay special tribute to Frank and Margaret Fagan who recently retired as Sector Couple.

They worked tirelessly as Sector Couple for many years and we take this opportunity to express our immense gratitude to both of them, for all that they did for Teams of Our Lady during that period of time.

When we think of Frank and Margaret the words that spring to mind are the following: committed, prayerful, positive, hospitable, caring, encouraging, loving, adventurous and fun-loving. It was always a joy to spend time with them, and nothing was too difficult for them. be it dealing with e-mails and the internet, (which Frank set about accomplishing- simply to facilitate Teams of Our Lady), checking out venues for our various gatherings, (even going down to Russborough House one summer to see if it would be suitable for our summer outing), organising our group to attend the 50<sup>th</sup> Eucharistic Congress in the RDS in 2012, organising a very successful information meeting etc. etc.... They constantly sought out ways to re-enforce and to expand our group.

Frank and Margaret's belief in the ethos of hospitality extended to all Teams' members, not alone to the Mullingar Sector but to visiting members as well.

In brief we cannot thank them enough for their practical and prayerful contribution over many years. Their love of the Teams of our Lady movement was so obvious in so many ways, and we know that the best tribute which we can pay to them is for us to keep up our efforts and prayers for the expansion of the Teams of Our Lady, especially among young couples.

Assumpta O'Meara (On behalf of the last Sector Team)

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### **Prayer Intentions**

#### **For those who have died:**

**Phil Faraday**, sister of Joan Colleran, Galway

**John Smith**, brother of Bishop Michael Smith

**Vincent Sheridan**, brother of Richard Sheridan, Mullingar

**Kathleen Preston**, mother of Tony Preston, Dublin

**Sister-in-law** of Brendan Bunting, Belfast

#### **For those who are ill:**

Margaret Lamb's daughter, **Máiréad**, Belfast

Maureen Mc Mullan's sister, **Stephanie Murray**, Belfast

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## **Belfast**

As is customary the Teams generally take a break during the months of July and August. The weather at home has not been great but there are always places to go, appointments to keep and chores to attend to around the house and especially in the garden. For some of us baby sitting duties are still the order of the day. Many Teams meet up at least once during the summer break. Our Team met up at a Belfast restaurant for a meal and to catch up with all the news that was happening in our family circles.

Declan and Deirdre Kennedy celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> Wedding anniversary on the 22nd August. Although in a different Team we were delighted to receive an invitation to be with them, their family and friends to celebrate their special day. The day started with Mass celebrated by Fr. Gerry Cassidy their Chaplain assisted by a priest friend from the Jesuit community in Belfast. The readings selected were so appropriate for a couple on a journey of love – Ruth v 16-17, Corinthians 1 v 1-8 and Gospel from John c15 v 9-12. A lovely three course meal was provided after the Mass and their children gave enriching and sometimes funny accounts of growing up in their family of six children – three of whom were adopted. To finish the day we all enjoyed rousing music and nearly all present participated in the dancing.

The Door of Mercy in our Diocese of Down and Connor is in St Patrick's Church in Donegal St. in Belfast. Like others we entered through the Door of Mercy and completed the pilgrimage around the church as set out in the information provided.

Some families might say their children didn't turn out the way they wanted even though they were given a good example. In a book by Fr. Brian Grogan he says that God would respond gently in the circumstances by saying "yes I know because I watched you and supported you in your efforts. You wonder whether I care. I know I'm mysterious. Much of what you did may not bear fruit in your lifetime. So it was for Jesus: he died without seeing the fruit of his efforts. Only at the end of history will you see the outcome of your good deeds, your sincere prayer, your generous sacrifices." These are very comforting words.

Charlie and Maureen McMullan

## **Galway**

It was a summer of mixed weather in Galway this year but as always the Film Fleadh, the Arts Festival and the Galway Races made up for any lack of sunshine.

Team 2 are looking forward to getting together after a summer of very mixed weather. They have become accustomed to travelling to their meetings and have had some pleasant days in Sligo when John McCarrick is hosting. They are having their September meeting in John's home in Portugal and a trip to Fatima is planned. Jean Hutchinson who was a baby when Team 2 began has just gained a degree in International Commerce in NUIG and is off to Dublin to work and continue her studies. Mark Lloyd has reached the significant '50' and the Lloyds celebrated in true Lloyd style with all the family gathering in Galway coming from Wales and Dublin. Team 3 enjoyed a summer night out together at the end of the Galway Races when they attended 'A Night at the Dogs' fundraiser for the Abbey Church in Francis street. A good night of fun and laughter for all. Owen and Breege Quinn were delighted to have their son Peter home from Lexington, Kentucky for a three and a half week holiday during July and August.

Team 3 were saddened by the death of Joan Colleran's sister Phil Faraday who passed away in May after a long illness. May her gentle soul rest in Peace.

It is hoped to have an opening of the year Mass on Tuesday October 11th in the Abbey Church at 7.30.

Margaret and John O' Dwyer.

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## Responsible Couples' Weekend

**Saturday and Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2016**

### **Bloomfield House Hotel Mullingar**

**Registration: Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> October at 9.30 am.**

The R.C. Weekend will conclude with Mass on Sunday at 12 noon celebrated by Bishop Michael Smith followed by lunch.

Cost **per person** for the weekend is €75 (*Chaplains Free*).

We are delighted to have Mr Stephen Cummins as our keynote speaker.

A number of Team members in Mullingar are in a position to offer accommodation. Please let us know by the **12<sup>th</sup> of September** if you would like to avail of accommodation with Team members.

Accommodation is available in the Bloomfield House Hotel; rates available from the hotel.

Hotel contact details:

Phone number: 044 9340894

Email: [info@bloomfieldhouse.com](mailto:info@bloomfieldhouse.com)

A list of local Bed & Breakfasts is also available on request.

The closing date for receipt of applications is **Sunday the 18<sup>th</sup> of September 2016**

Booking to and Information from:

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