

Equipes Notre-Dame

## Newsletter Teams of Our Lady – Irish Region

### Team Retreat — Assisi



One of the Dublin Teams, Team 36, decided to do their annual retreat for the first time somewhere outside Ireland, and precisely in Assisi, Italy. This is their report:

This year, our team organised the annual retreat in Assisi, Italy. A new couple originally from Assisi, Paola and Paolo, joined our team one and a half years ago; this represented then an occasion to jocularly say “Wow, we could think about having our next retreat there!”. And beware what you wish for... As the time went by, this fantasised idea became more and more a strong desire, and a possibility that, by January, all of our team embraced. The following weeks were spent trying to shape up our idea, focusing on various aspects: the theme of this unconventional retreat and how we could prepare for it, contacting a few friars in Assisi, finding a location where to stay and have our meetings. The preparation implied some challenges and one painful decision: one of our couples had to give up the idea of joining the team in Italy.

contd.p.6

**Autumn 2019**

**Issue 118**

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### **Inside**

[Regional Couple](#)

[Regional Chaplain](#)

[Prayer Intentions](#)

[RC Weekend](#)

[Mixed Team Meeting](#)

[Around the Region](#)

## From the Regional Couple



Dear Friends in Teams,

We hope you all had a pleasant summer break and are looking forward to the Vocation and Mission challenges as we journey together in Teams of Our Lady in Ireland.

We wish to thank Brendan and Rosemarie, Dublin Sector Couple who manned a stand for Teams recently at the Youth 2000 Summer Festival and a thank you also to the couples who have volunteered to go on the Expansion committee: our first meeting will be held on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> September in Avila Carmelite Centre, Morehampton Road, Dublin 4, commencing at 10.30am. We are still open to more volunteers if anyone is interested.

The Mullingar Annual Retreat will be held in La Verna Centre, Ballinderry, Mullingar on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> September and will be facilitated by Fr. Thaddeus Doyle. Maybe this could be a time to invite new couples to attend as an introduction to Teams? We will be welcoming also Faye and Kevin Noonan from the UK who are taking over from Paul and Helena McCloskey as the Zone couple for Eurasia and will be visiting Ireland for the first time.

The Responsible Couples' weekend is being hosted by the Galway Sector this year on 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> October. The venue is Croí Nua, Rosary Lane, Taylor's Hill, Galway City facilitated by Fr. Charlie Sweeney MSC. We would encourage everybody who can, to attend this important event in the life of Teams. In circumstances where the Responsible Couple cannot attend, the Teams should nominate another couple to attend in their place. The cost incurred by the Responsible Couple should be borne by the Team as a whole. In particular circumstances however, assistance will be provided if needed to ensure that all our Responsible Couples have the opportunity to attend our important annual Teams event. The Super-Regional Couple, Piotr and Dzidzia from the UK will also be attending. (We have passed on our sympathies to Piotr on the sudden death of his brother in Poland.) Please also let Joe and Áine Clayton know of any changes to your Teams and details of your new Responsible Couples so that they can update the Register.

We wish everyone God's blessings and protection of Our Blessed Mother Mary and look forward to meeting all the new Responsible Couples at the weekend in Galway.

Jim and Elaine Keogh





## From the Regional Chaplain, Fr. Peter Sexton

### Anxiety

If there is one thing parents want for their children above all else – it is that they would be happy : and every caring parent will go to great trouble to relieve their child of worry and anxiety, to reassure them that all is well – and as they grow older they know how important it is for their children to get their priorities right – that this is crucial in terms of happiness.

If there is any consistent theme throughout the Scripture it is ‘Do not be afraid – do not worry – I am with you – trust in my enduring love and care for you’ – in the astonishing words of Isaiah – ‘Even if a mother should forget the child of her womb I will never forget you’. And this climaxes in the Gospel when Jesus says to his disciples: ‘There is no need to be afraid, little flock, for it has pleased your Father to give you the kingdom.’ Because our faith is small we resist the radical implications of Christ’s words. But in the phrase of the author of the Cloud of Unknowing: ‘Trust him we must if find him we would.’

Jesus is not speaking just to small children who need constant reassurance that Mammy and Daddy are there and all is well – he is speaking to adult disciples, to you and to me about anxiety and worry, a central issue for us all. And he starts by saying no one can be the slave of two masters : you cannot be the slave of both God and Mammon – which can be translated not simply as money but as the sway of wealth in any shape or form : our financial security; our health; our reputation; our perceived status with others - And then He goes on to illustrate how futile is our worry – but it is all in the context of God's providence and care – ‘ how much more will He look after you – you men of little faith !’

And yet is not worry the most normal and appropriate thing in the world? How can you say to someone who has a sick child or is finding it difficult to make ends meet or faces great uncertainty about the future – don't worry! That's all very well for you to say – don't worry - if you don't have my worries! And yet – that IS what Jesus is saying! He is challenging us radically, to the roots of our being and living – he is bringing to light the whole areas of unbelief and lack of faith in us in the light of God's loving care. The message of the Good News Jesus is sharing with us is that there is only one Absolute – the Living God – and everything else, that is **everything else** is relative and is to be treated in the light of the one Absolute.

The call is to get our priorities right – to set our hearts on his kingdom first – which means the centrality of God in our lives - and his righteousness – and all else will be given! We pray in the Mass after the Our Father – protect us from all anxiety – not deliver us from it, as it is part of the human condition – but from its power, from its hold over us, from the sway of Mammon, of wealth!

The radical call of the Gospel is to be care-free – without care – not care-less about the needs of those around us, which of course is a different characteristic altogether – and each of us here is called to ponder what that will mean in his or her life – what does it mean to seek first his kingdom and his righteousness ? We know, we sense this is the path to liberation, to happiness at the deepest level, and yet it seems so elusive!

Parents playing with young children is a wonderful sight as the children romp joyfully and without a care in the world in the protective presence of mother and father – a sign of the Father's care, not God’s anxiety! But adults living and relating joyfully in un-self-centered freedom or growing old gracefully without resentment is an even more wonderful sight because it is grace realised, it is the kingdom come. And it is to this grace, to this kingdom that each one of us is called, in a way appropriate to our history and temperament.

The call of Jesus in the Gospel is always a call to freedom. But to answer this call always involves taking a risk. All growth, all reconciliation or mending a quarrel, has to begin with taking a risk – or chancing your arm. The origin of that phrase, as is well known, has to do with a feud between the Butlers of Ormonde and the Fitzgeralds of Kildare in 1492.

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This led to a violent skirmish outside St Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin that was out of control, and the Butlers rushed into the Cathedral for refuge. The Fitzgeralds followed and the leader of the latter ordered a circle in the door separating them to be cut and thrust his arm through in a gesture of peace – he chanced his arm. There was hesitation on the Butler side – was this a gesture of peace or a cunning ploy to deceive them? And then the leader of the Butlers grasped the arm (that he could have mutilated) and the two families were reconciled. It was a risk worth taking.

There is another story told of a man captured, thrown into prison, and in sick anxiety about the prospect of his being tortured the following day, tossed and turned and could not sleep. And then suddenly he came to himself and said – 'but this prospect is tomorrow – I am here today – and I only have today' – so he turned over and slept like a log!

Many of us live much more either in the past or the future in our minds than in the present. In the past going over again and again what could have been different and beating ourselves up that things were not different – or even more in the future agonising about what might happen or what could happen, in an area where we have no control whatsoever – whereas the call is to live in the present, in the now, in the only area we can make choices about our response – it is the mark of the saints, most of whom are ordinary people not canonised like yourself and myself, a mark of the disciples of Christ, of happy and contented people, people willing to trust Him, of taking that Christian risk – each day has enough trouble of its own!

Suggested readings:

September: Luke 12, 11-32

October: Ephesians 3, 14-21

November: 1 Corinthians, 1-13

## **Prayer Intentions**

**For those who are ill:**

**Eddie Lloyd, Galway**

**Margaret Lamb, Belfast**

**Deirbhile, grand-daughter of Michael and Eithne Clenaghan, Belfast**

**Two sisters and a niece of Michael Flanagan, Belfast**

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## **Responsible Couples' Weekend**

**Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> October and Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> October**  
**Croí Nua, Rosary Lane, Taylor's Hill, Galway**

### **Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> October**

Registration: 9.30-10.00 am

Facilitator for Saturday Fr. Charles Sweeney MSC

The Saturday session begins with prayer at 10.00 am

The afternoon session will conclude with Eucharist.

A light Lunch and the Team Meeting / Dinner will be provided by various host families.

### **Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> October**

The Sunday session will begin with prayer at 10.00 am and will conclude with Eucharist, followed by lunch.

Cost **per person** for the weekend is €60 (*Chaplains Free*)

If travelling by train please let us know and we will try to arrange a pick-up from the train or else there are taxis available adjacent to the train station

We hope to provide some accommodation in various homes but it will not be possible to accommodate all attendees:

**Bookings should be made by 22nd September**

### **Booking to and information from:**

**Marguerite & Stephen O'Neill**  
**Heath Lodge,**  
**Circular Road,**  
**Galway**

**Phone: 091-527 477**  
**Mobile: 087-834 9711**  
**Email: [sjp.oneill@yahoo.ie](mailto:sjp.oneill@yahoo.ie)**

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This was a source of distress, for we had to come to terms with the impossibility to share this unique experience completely, with the whole team. Another test we had to go through was the difficulty to secure the availability of a friar whom we were directed to in order to lead us in the retreat, but who was hard to get in touch with. This, however, was a powerful reminder and, eventually, a teaching lesson that we should always trust in God's Providence, in spite of all our fears and our need to "have everything under control". And another extraordinary gift of the Providence was that that friar, brother Eunan, was not only an English speaker, but Irish as well! While emails were exchanged and bookings were made, we focused on our preparation for Assisi and its central spiritual reference, Saint Francis, whom we discussed and learnt about during the study topic of our last 4 meetings. Finally, at long last, we arrived in Assisi on the 22<sup>nd</sup> June. The place we stayed in (a Franciscan convent, whose founder's motto was "God knows what He does"), the fascinating walled town, the quiet in the narrow medieval streets... all welcomed us with great charm, and we spent the next 3 days in a blessed and joyful atmosphere (in spite of the heat!). We began and finished our days with the morning and evening prayers all together, in the old convent chapel. Brother Eunan led us in our retreat's core meetings, while he knowingly took us to some of Saint Francis' dearest places: the convent of San Damiano, where Francis heard Jesus' voice from the Crucifix inviting him to rebuild His Church, and la Porziuncola, where Francis lived with his brothers and the Franciscan order was first officially recognised. The themes bro. Eunan disclosed to us were Rebuild the Church, Prayer and Mission, and we'd like to give you a hint of what was discussed there:

a. Rebuild the Church: Francis felt the mission he was called to was to rebuild the Church, and he did so by repairing its flaws, not by destroying it or criticizing it. Francis really loved the Church in spite of all the scandals that tainted it at the time, because to him it was Jesus' spouse.

b. Prayer: Francis' prayer was universal, just like Jesus' Word. Francis loved the creation and he praised our Lord in every moment, for everything, as reports his beautiful Canticle of Creatures. He also loved every person, and he expressed his love with his desire to help everyone to be saved – so much so that he asked and obtained from the then Pope to make Assisi a place of pilgrimage where its inhabitants and all the visiting faithful that weren't able to afford a trip to Rome, Santiago or Jerusalem could still worship and obtain the plenary indulgence.

c. Mission: Francesco and Clare knew by praying and listening to God's voice what their mission was. Do we know what our mission is as Christians? From where do we start? What and how do we preach?

To savour the Franciscan spirituality as much as we could in those 3 days, we visited other places linked to Saint Francis, such as Santa Chiara's Basilica, the Carceri Hermitage and the massive Basilica of Saint Francis. In between our sacred space, we also had jovial social moments. We were even treated to an open-air procession followed by a classical concert, one evening, in the inspiring setting of the San Damiano front square!

Another relevant moment came at the end of our retreat, when we met with the Team of our Lady based in Assisi. We had contacted them prior to our arrival in Assisi, and they welcomed us in their Responsible couple's house with unrestricted friendship - and tasty refreshments! Our meeting flew between a lot of chatting, the exchange of questions and information, explaining to each other how our teams are organised. We really experienced the sense of community in belonging to the same Team in spite of living in different Countries, and it was a heart-warming feeling.

This retreat was enriching and unique in many ways, from a spiritual point of view but also because it allowed our team members to spend together more time than usual and in a different context. In the words of our couples who were there:

Emer and Andrew: While we were very impressed with San Damiano and the other basilicas, for us the most memorable part of the retreat was the experience of the Team. For Andrew it was the sharing of

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of Eucharist, Morning and Evening Prayer in a 12th century church with our Team and for Emer the abiding memory is the kindness and concern shown by other team members particularly in ensuring accessible transport to and from the various places we visited.

Paola and Paolo: We grew up in a village near Assisi and our team's retreat helped us connect more deeply to the spiritual core of our home land. In addition, we felt blessed for the gift of caring and looking after each other as a group. The acknowledgement of our companions' needs and the spontaneity in taking care of each other were testament of the power of God manifested through Teams.

Annelle and Stephen: We found our retreat experience gave us the opportunity to deepen our faith as a couple and as a team. To be in such a sacred space together, growing together in our understanding of Franciscan spirituality with the gentle guidance of Brother Eunan was wonderful. Our daily praying in the beautiful convent chapel was a profound experience. There were so many gifts received in our time together. The sharing of our faith was well paired with lovely social times; including meeting the members of the Assisi team. We will always treasure the special grace of our time together.

Now, while we will bring those memories with us forever, we would also like to encourage any team who would consider venturing on the same path. We would be happy to share all the necessary information and the contacts, in case you wanted to walk in Saint Francis' steps!

Ilaria Furlan and Pierpaolo Dondio



## Communion in a Mixed Teams Meeting 2019

Last May we were very glad to participate in a mixed team's meeting at Pat and Carmel Cunneen's home. After a warm welcome, the meeting progressed, following Father Caffarel's recommended structure. We soon felt part of that Team, of that Family, that seriously desired to live a committed and deep life of faith; even with everyday flaws and frailties, difficulties and concerns.

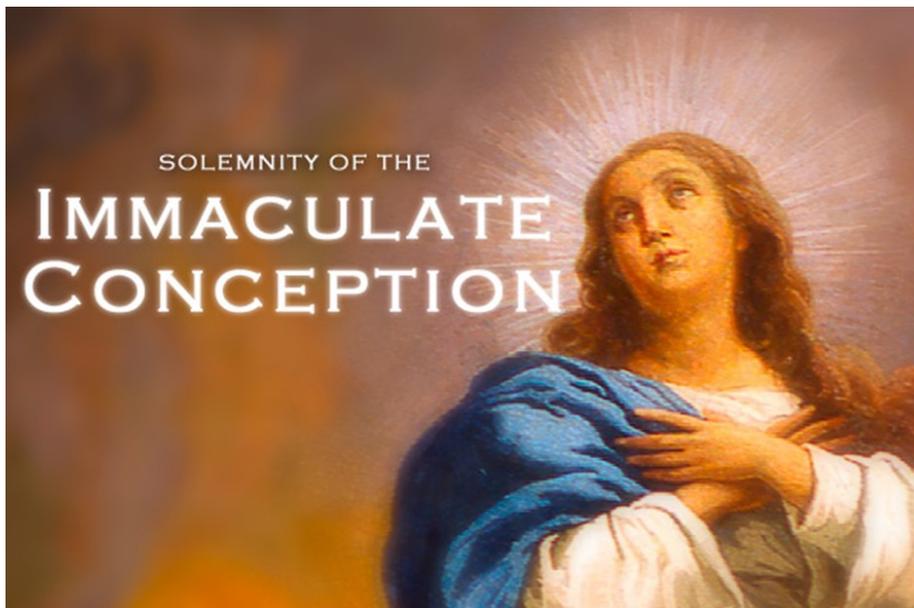
Sharing, reflecting and praying with a Mixed Team refreshed for us, not only the essence and spirituality of the Teams of Our Lady but also the richness of living in Church, and how each couple and person's experience can help others to grow and persevere.

We need community, we need honest communion between people, to know God's face, to seek Jesus' path. This is an important aspect that may lay forgotten if we just passively attend Mass next to strangers.

This has even more meaning for us, as our story with Teams of Our Lady started five years ago, shortly after we got married in Lisbon (Portugal). Teams are an important movement in the Portuguese Church, definitely energized by the youth groups that the couples also nourish. Our desire to be a Catholic married couple and to root our family in Christ, found in Teams the practical guidance and support that we were looking for. And the community!

After three children, six home changes and several challenges, we were blessed to find ourselves in Dublin, finding the same support and guidance within the same Movement, and Church. We left the mixed team's meeting, thankful and with a sense of mission.

David and Filipa Reis, Team 41



**DUBLIN SECTOR 7<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER VIGIL MASS  
IN AVILA @ 6.00 PM  
SAVE THE DATE**

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## Around the Region

### Dublin

#### DUBLIN SECTOR PICNIC

We had our annual picnic in Ardgillan Castle in Balbriggan. It is a beautiful estate with house and gardens, play areas and picnic areas. We were blessed with a lovely sunny day. Everyone brought a picnic and we all sat around and chatted as we had our lunch. Before lunch we played some fun games organised by Mark and Ann. We finished early as some people had to go to other meetings and others wanted to see the All Ireland football final.

Brian and Una Moore



Dublin Sector 7th December, **Vigil Mass for the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception**, Avila Centre, Donnybrook, 6pm. Save the date.

**Dublin Sector Retreat 2020**

**28th March, Emmaus Swords.**

Save the Date

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## Belfast

We are looking forward to the RC Weekend in Galway on 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> October. Croí Nua is a lovely location and the Galway teams always make us feel very welcome.

We are planning to get a retreat organised for Belfast Sector in the near future and Fr. Gerry Cassidy CSsR has agreed to lead the event. Margaret Lamb (Belfast 1) has had a big operation but is recovering gradually. Please keep her in your prayers. We ask also for prayers for Eithne and Michael Clenaghan's granddaughter Deirbhile, and Michael Flanagan's two sisters and niece who are ill.

Moyra and Brendan Bunting

## Mullingar

### Teams of our Lady Retreat 2019 (Mullingar Sector)



EQUIPES NOTRE – DAME (IRELAND)  
CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT FOR MARRIED  
COUPLES

The Teams of Our Lady, Mullingar Sector Retreat has been arranged for Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> September in La Verna Centre, Ballinderry, Mullingar Co Westmeath.

The retreat will be facilitated by Fr Thaddeus Doyle

Time 11am - 3pm

Cost €20.00 per person

Tea and coffee facilities will be available but please bring your own lunch. We are looking forward to as many Team members as possible attending, if possible bring a friend.

Katrina & Franz Molloy  
Team 6

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## Galway

The annual Teams picnic took place on Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2019. The weather in Galway had been superb around that date. Unfortunately, the weather broke and the Sunday gave us persistent rain!! We gathered for mass in the parish church in Gort, Co. Galway, a short distance from Coole Park, the venue for our outing. It must be said that the Mass, said by Father Tommy Marnon was a lovely occasion.

The church was almost full and we experienced a real sense of community. Fr. Tommy always has an appreciation for Teams of Our Lady. The day happened to be the Feast of Corpus Christi, so Fr. Tommy led a procession around the town for the Feast Day with wet but enthusiastic parishioners. Our Team couples journeyed to Coole Park. We were not as courageous as the Gort parishioners, so we adjourned to the lovely restaurant/café in Coole Park to avoid the rain. We thoroughly enjoyed the get – together, the chat and the sense of community. We learnt once again that even if our plans do not work out as we initially plan we can still enjoy ourselves.

Reminder to Galway Team Couples that Galway has been chosen for the Responsible Couple's Weekend on 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> October. The planning for this special event is underway.

We would ask you for continued prayers for Eddie Lloyd who is ill in hospital.

Jack and Anne Hutchinson



**DUBLIN SECTOR  
28<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2020 IN EMMAUS, SWORDS  
SAVE THE DATE**

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## Celebration of 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Teams in Great Britain

Teams in Great Britain will celebrate their 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on 16<sup>th</sup> November with a special mass at Westminster Cathedral, at 2.30 pm. This will be followed by afternoon tea in the Cathedral Hall.

It will be spiritually uplifting and a joyful celebration of Teams and the Sacrament of marriage.

The organisers are inviting Team members to contribute £15. Chaplains and children are free.

If you are interested in attending please go on the Super-Regional website [teams-transatlantic.org](http://teams-transatlantic.org).

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## Teams Ireland 50th Anniversary 2014      Were you there?



Newsletter Editors: Paddy and Jacinta Quigley  
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We would like to receive contributions for the Winter Newsletter by Sunday 1st December

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