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Newsletter

October 2020

“Christ Is Alive”

During the past 6 months or so I have never been more aware of Christ being fully alive in me, in those around me, and in all of creation. Pope Francis when he wrote ‘Christus Vivit’ in 2018 after the Synod on Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment addressed it not only to young people, but to the ‘entire people of God’. He wanted us all to remember that Christ Is Alive in all of us, no matter who we are, no matter where we live, and no matter what is happening in the world around us. Staying indoors as much as possible in the early days, I experienced Christ alive in my family and friends who checked in with me through many modes of technology from phone calls, texts, Facebook messages and the eternal Zoom calls. We celebrated Mass together online and I witnessed Christ alive in the presiders and ministers and volunteers who made this possible. As I continue to work from home, I am reminded daily how Christ is alive in the sisters that I work with and the people that I minister to. All around us in the early days we saw the signs of spring in all its glory. That soon changed to Summer, and now we are heading into Autumn with the leaves starting to turn and the blossoms fading as the colours change in my garden from vibrant colours of spring and summer flowers, to the autumnal golds and browns. All these signs remind me how Christ Is Alive all around me. Within me I have settled into a new way of living that they say will be with us for some time and the fact that I know that Christ is in this, makes it much easier to get through each day with a grateful heart.

We may all be suffering from Covid-fatigue now, but this newsletter brings you the current and upcoming news in the world of vocations. We hope that you are all keeping safe and well and we encourage you all to send us in any stories or news that you wish to share in our newsletters.

Anne-Marie Whelan

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God Still Calls: Discerning Together In Creating A Shared Future Fionnuala Quinn OP

In the September issue of The Furrow, Fionnuala Quinn, a member of our Executive, shared an article where she says that ' For religious life to survive in the twenty-first century, there is need for listening, creating and dialoguing together, between senior members of religious communities and those discerning their call to religious life'. The full article can be found in The Furrow.

THE STORY OF RELIGIOUS LIFE AND MINISTRY DURING COVID

I would like to invite vocation directors to send in stories, photographs, reflections of what they personally or what their congregations were doing during this time. I am hoping to collate these stories and memories to share with young people as they are really interested to know how Religious coped during these times and what many of them did to help during this difficult period.



Now is a time where we are all getting used to communicating virtually, and it seems that will be with us for a while longer. If you need to get some help on how to do this, don't forget to book for the **Communications Workshop** on 10th November. You will have received a booking form – please return as soon as possible to Margaret. This is for basic and advanced users of social media and online platforms.

Have you also considered how to continue to work with discerners and young adults at this time? Now is a good time to get your website and social media up to date and share stories and information.

The **ALPHA** courses are now available to run online – see their website <https://ireland.alpha.org/>
We also hope to run a **Samuel Programme** online in the coming months. If you know of a young adult that would benefit from this then contact Margaret at info@vocationsireland.com

God Still calls.... Even in times of pandemic....

Four of our Sisters in the Province of Peru /Cuba made their perpetual vows on July 20th. And eleven young women from Guinea are beginning their first year of Novitiate training in Dakar, Senegal. Early days I know but a very positive sign.

Praise God!

Sisters of St Joseph of Cluney.

86 years of Service as a Benedictine Sister



Photo Credit The Chicago Catholic

Sister Vivian Ivantic, OSB has just celebrated her 107th birthday and was happy to be interviewed three times to share her 86 years as a Chicago Benedictine, as well as living through not one, but two pandemics!

Enjoy reading the [Global Sisters Report](#) by Dan Stockman, The [Lake County News-Sun](#) [Chicago Tribune](#) article, as well as the [Chicago Catholic](#) article.

15 YEARS LATER! By Br Pat Lynch OFM



I began my ministry as Vocations Director for our Order – Franciscans OFM here in Killarney 15 years ago last September. I spent the first three years here before moving to the Franciscan Abbey in Galway for six years and from there I moved to the Friary in Athlone for four years. My last two years in that ministry was spent in the Franciscan Friary, Merchant's Quay, Dublin 8. It was such a change for me arriving here in 2005 after spending many years teaching in our then boarding school, Franciscan College, Gormanston, Co Meath. Recently I was appointed Guardian of the Franciscan Friary, Killarney, also the Novitiate for the Northern European Franciscan Provinces. So, in a way I'm still very involved with Vocations. Since coming here I was present at the Diaconate Ordination of Damian Casey OFM in Merchant's Quay and on Saturday 12th September we had two Solemn Professions in Killarney Friary, Ronan Sharpley OFM, Co Leitrim and Denis Aherne OFM, Co Kerry.

I can safely say and without exaggeration that my years as Vocations Director were challenging, rewarding but extremely happy years. I grew into the ministry and just loved it. In the past fifteen years I met and interviewed hundreds of men discerning their vocation to the 'Franciscan Way of Life'. For many it was a once off meeting, for some it was fairly regular meetings over a period of six months or a year and for a few it was a bit longer. Needless to say, not all entered and of course a few of those who did apply or display an interest weren't accepted. Also, some of those who were accepted, indeed some very fine young men, decided after some months or even after a number of years that this WAY wasn't for them. However, we've been blessed with those very fine men who have stayed and made Solemn Profession, with some going for Ordination within the Fraternity.

For those starting out I'd recommend that you see it as much more than recruiting vocations – it's much wider than that and of course one never knows the impact for good one has even in a once off meeting. Perhaps it's the first personal encounter that a young man or woman may have with a Religious, Sister, Brother or Priest. I'd suggest that you get out into the 'MARKETPLACE'.

I went everywhere to Shopping Centres, Ploughing Championships, Universities, Third Level Colleges and major and minor events in the RDS. I contacted Chaplains in Universities and Colleges and was invited in to Career Days etc. I even put on 'Twilight Retreats' and was also involved with 'Samuel – Discernment groups'. I was occasionally invited into Secondary Schools, but normally that was to talk about St. Francis and the Franciscan Charism. The 'MARKETPLACE' ministry was the most challenging. Initially I was very nervous wondering how people would react but in all my outings I never had one bad experience. I often ministered with other Religious Priests, Sisters and Brothers and of course sometimes with Vocations Ireland. Advertising is extremely important and of course a good Website, changed regularly is a must. I don't believe in booklets or materials with a lot of information about an order because they're very expensive and are normally just dumped. What I found people picking up and liking are prayer cards for various occasions. Good and catchy banners are important too particularly if you are setting up a stand.

Finally, I'd suggest that you keep closely involved with 'Vocations Ireland'. There you'll find great support from many other Religious. If ever I can be of a help or support please don't hesitate to contact me at brpatofm@hotmail.com or by telephone at 0871346267 May the Lord give you peace and joy as you continue this challenging but very rewarding ministry. If you've just been appointed please see it as a real blessing.



It is that time of the year when we see changes happening. New appointments to leadership roles, new bursars, new vocation/formation teams, and new vocation directors. I would like to thank in particular two vocation directors who are moving to pastures new. Br Pat Lynch OFM and Fr Alan Neville MSC. Both of these vocation directors have given many years' service to vocation ministry including serving as members of the Executive of Vocations Ireland. In my role as vocation director of Vocations Ireland I am indebted to both these men. They were inspirational and invaluable, always ready to help whenever I needed it which I can assure you was often. Their wisdom and experience were so important but so was their fun and laughter and their availability. Thank you, Pat and Alan. You will indeed be a great loss and I know personally I will miss you. I also know that vocation ministry will still play a huge role in your lives. You both believe passionately in vocations and know that vocation ministry is the responsibility of every member of the community and for that reason I know you will continue to cultivate vocations. Pat, I wish you every joy and blessing in your new ministry in Killarney and Alan I wish you joy and blessing in your new ministry in South Sudan. I look forward to hearing about your ministries and the odd photograph or two for use on our Website and newsletters. Thank you both for your support, friendship, encouragement, laughter, and prayers. Stay safe and may God be with you both.

Margaret Cartwright

INTRODUCING PARTNERSHIPS

In the next couple of newsletters, I will introduce you to organisations that we partner with. These partnerships are important as they help us to broaden our horizons in Vocation Ministry to be able to journey together, learn from one other, and grow in awareness supporting one another through listening to the Spirit at work in each one of us. For me personally it is an opportunity to have a synodal approach to creating a culture of vocation



The National Religious Vocation Conference

Vocations Ireland have been partners with NRVC for several years. We have collaborated with them in delivering workshops for Vocation Directors, providing professional training for those in Vocation, Formation and Leadership. We share ideas at conferences and meetings and support one another in many different ways.

NRVC produce the Horizon Magazine and Vocation Guide both of which provide great resources. If you are interested in subscribing to NRVC or HORIZON contact Marge Argyelan for more information.

margyelan@nrvc.net

Here is a sample of some resources produced by NRVC:

Study and Reflection Guide for 2020 Study

This new resource was created to have meaningful conversation on 8 topics in vocation ministry. It's a twenty page compendium booklet to the 2020 Study on Recent Vocations to Religious Life for vocation directors, leadership, and all those who pray, invite, and encourage vocations to religious life. If you desire bulk orders of 50 or more, please email nrvc@nrvc.net for further discounts.

If you are a writer, blogger, photographer, poet. Or maybe you enjoy reviewing books or movies.

Would you like to share your gifts with a wider net of vocation personnel? Then please make contact with Margaret Cartwright who serves on the Horizon Editorial board email info@vocationsireland.com or with Carol Schuch Scheiber HORIZON EDITOR cscheiber@nrvc.net

NRVC 2020 Virtual Convocation events

- INSPIRING KEYNOTE SESSIONS on the theme *2020 VISION: Focus on Hope*
- FEATURED SPEAKERS, including Fr. Linh Hoang, O.F.M., Ph.D.; Fr. Dave Kelly, C.P.P.S., D. Min.; and Sr. Addie Lorraine Walker, S.S.N.D., Ph.D.
- An opportunity to PRAY TOGETHER bilingually in a prayer, entitled *La esperanza nos rodea/Hope is all around us*, led by composer/musician Jaime Cortez.
- Opportunities to SHARE EXPERIENCES and ASK QUESTIONS in breakout groups
- NEWER ENTRANTS' INSIGHTS from those who entered after 2002

Plus three workshops to enhance your professional skills on the following topics:

- *Candidate Issues in Immigration Law* presented by Mr. Miguel Naranjo
- *Communicating Key Messages of Hope* presented by Sr. Maxine Kollasch, I.H.M.
- *The Impact of the Consumption of Gaming and Pornography* presented by Fr. David Songy, O.F.M.Cap., Psy.D.

See their website for lots of useful information and news <https://nrvc.net/>



www.vocationsireland.com/

AGM NEWS

Due to Covid-19 the Executive have taken the decision to postpone the AGM until next year. Date yet to be confirmed.

However, we will host our **Autumn Conference** via zoom on Saturday 7th November 2.00p.m-5.00pm. Booking details will be released next week.

The title for the November Conference is ***How to Reimagine the Future of Religious Life***. The speaker is Sr Carol Zinn SSJ Executive Director of LCWR.

UPDATE ON PROGRESS WITH AMRI

The Executive and working party have worked diligently with AMRI for quite some time now. Last week some of the Executive met with AMRI's Canon Lawyer and Civil Lawyer. We reached agreement on the Terms of Reference for Vocations Ireland to become a Committee of AMRI. This will be presented to AMRI's Executive and Vocations Ireland Executive at their next meeting. We have agreed to work towards reaching a final agreement to move Vocations Ireland to become a committee of AMRI early in the New Year. If both AMRI and Vocations Ireland's Executives agree with the final proposal, the aim then, is to begin to wind up Vocations Ireland as a Charity and come under AMRI'S Charity. We will keep you fully informed of the process. We will require an AGM to be held as part of the process.

Margaret Cartwright
Director Vocations Ireland