



CONGREGATION OF CHRISTIAN BROTHERS EUROPEAN PROVINCE

Drawn by mystery,
we answer the chapter call and commit to a new way of
being brother in a changing world.

April 2015.

Greetings from the Province Centre where things are back in full swing after visitation and the Easter break.



Reflection in Emmaus with Michael Godfrey and Bridget Mathews:

The PLT spent three days in Emmaus, from Monday 13th to Wednesday, 15th April, for reflection facilitated by Michael and Bridget.

Monday was spent reflecting on how we are as members of the Team. We found this a very useful exercise after nearly a year in office.

On the remaining two days Bridget guided us in reflecting on the Creation story and the New Consciousness. These sessions incorporated an Earth, Water, Fire and Air ritual and a sharing on Jesus and the New Consciousness.

The grounds of Emmaus were at their spring best and contributed to a very fruitful and enjoyable few days.

Visitation:

Visitation in the province is nearing completion. All the members of the PLT are most grateful for the welcome, hospitality and

openness which they experienced during their time with the communities of the province. It was a pleasant and encouraging experience for us.

As a next step in the process, the PLT are devoting Tuesday, 16th June to a reflection on the visitation experience and to drafting our response to that experience.

OWITF Meeting on 18th April:

One of the highlights of the last few months was the gathering in Emmaus on Saturday 18th April. The aim of the day was to dream about what Our Way into the Future communities might look like in the European Province.

We were pleasantly surprised by the size of the gathering: seventy brothers from the European Province were joined by Peter Harney (Geneva), Michael Godfrey (Australia) and Elser Llanos (Latin America).



Liam Deasy set the tone for the day with a centering prayer and a reflection on the calming of the storm from Jn 6:16-21 interspersed by excerpts from the Nairobi Chapter document.

The remainder of the day was facilitated by Cora Lambert.

The starting point was our present reality – our experience of community in the here and now.

We moved on from that to envisioning the future. We were asked to “imagine that its 2020 and this experience of living Our Way into the Future has been as good as, if not better than, you have anticipated”. The table sharing was around what that experience had been like for us.

Moving on from that, we took a look at what we believed the essential elements of OWITF were.

The final piece of the jig-saw was what recommendations the gathering would be giving to the PLT in planning the next stage.

The day was quite long and intense and some last-minute adjustments had to be made to the outline plan in the light of the larger than expected numbers attending. However, the meeting was very ably facilitated by Cora in her own unique style using “sticky walls”.



The various items which appeared on the “sticky walls” and the final individual suggestions for the next step have been collated. We have engaged Cora again on Tuesday, 12th May to help the PLT in discerning the next step.

PSP:

Mention of the PSP has been made in a number of previous newsletters. In particular, two main interrelated issues have emerged.

Firstly, the fact that some communities are ending up the bi-monthly PSP period with a very small balance in the current account. There are reports that some brothers have been unable to have a holiday due to lack of funds and it is obvious also that some communities have very little reserve in the event of an unusual expense.



As an interim measure to address this issue the province finance office, the province bursar (Eddy Coupe) and ourselves are going to make some adjustments to a number of accounts to tide them over for the present.

Secondly, a number of communities have relatively large balances on current and /or deposit accounts. While we have ourselves referred to this on previous occasions, the province auditor questioned these large sums in a recent conversation with L&P. We would urge communities which have funds surplus to their ordinary requirements and prudent planning, to have dialogue in community to discern what is the best use for these funds.

It is our intention to engage with communities in a complete review of PSP in the early autumn.

Community Closures:

The PLT has taken a decision, after dialogue with the community, to proceed with the closure of the community in Portlaoise. Normally closures and withdrawals are a slow, drawn out affair and we anticipate that this will be no exception.

Initial dialogue has taken place with a number of other communities.

Good Friday in Emmaus: (Liam)

When a small group constellated around Mark, Jim, Monica, Vivek and Aiveen to offer an alternative experience to the regular Good Friday liturgy, nobody knew what the take-up would be. The idea was to spend the whole day in reflective (and fasting) mode in Emmaus. Advertising was not high-profile but invitations were given by word of mouth mostly. This was to be an alternative to the 'usual' Three Hours' Agony and Stations of the Cross.

Tom was volunteered to ‘get the cross’ organised; Monica got the cut-outs and pins for attaching to the Cross; Donal and Vivek chose the music for the reflection on the Stabat Mater, and Vivek got his father-in-law, Phil to edit a segment of the movie “Of Gods and Men”.



We launched the day with a call for Silence and a reflection on the Stabat Mater, taken from the BBC.

We then viewed a 30-minute clip from "Of Gods and Men" in which the community sat around a 'Last Supper' table and discerned whether to remain in that area of danger or to abandon the village for their own safety. Finally the ultimate sacrifice was asked of them and they were murdered by the rebels ... After this there were gentle sharings followed by time to reflect on what was taking place in our hearts.

We then had time to write on our own personal paper crosses which we pinned to the central cross as part of our Prayer around the Cross, with Taize chants being softly played in the background.

After a lunch of a bread-roll and soup we then began the pilgrimage of the afternoon. Printed texts of “Reimaging its Meaning” were given out and ‘stations’ were marked out around the ground of Emmaus. We didn’t follow the traditional Fourteen, instead we followed the Via Dolorosa as held up to us by the stories of our own human experience of suffering in the world. The group moved from ‘station’ to ‘station’ where we had a scripture reading, a reflection and meditative music, before processing mindfully to the next station.



All-in-all the whole day was a moving experience which touched each one of us deeply and we hope to have something like it again next Good Friday.

Young Adult Ministry: (Chris)

Young Adult Trip to India in March:

Chris accompanied 7 Camp Leaders, 3 girls and 4 boys, to St. Mary's Orphanage in Dum Dum, Kolkata to work with the children of the Lotus Programme and the special needs children. They were superb, related very well to all the children, taught them games, songs, arts and crafts and sport. We fitted in some tourist activities and shopping, where they haggled with the best. The visit had a deep effect on the leaders who are already planning for next year with a focus on outreach to the most marginalized. The Brothers and Jim in Kolkata were wonderful hosts.

ERST Student Leadership Conference:

Our 3rd conference took place in the Red Cow Inn, with 120 students and 30 teachers from all over the country. The conference is

student-centred so students acted as MC, introducing the speakers and giving presentations. The spirit of Edmund is alive and well in our schools as indicated by the wonderful accounts and sharing of the great work being done by students and teachers.

Edmund Rice Education Beyond Borders:
Chris facilitated a gathering of teachers and principals from ERST schools, part of Edmund Rice Education Beyond Borders, in Callan. After a tour of Edmund Rice's House and the chapel led by Malachy Gillen, the teachers spent the afternoon sharing on Edmund's values and the manner in which they live out those values in school today. The teachers' reflections were truly inspiring and challenging.



Maranatha Youth Club Kilbarrack:
Chris completed a 6 week leadership programme with the leaders from the club, which is run by Dick Fields. They are an inspiring group of young adults who are planning further developments in the area, especially with local young people and the elderly.

Edmund Rice Camps:
The Camps' training sessions are in full swing in Cork, Omagh, Dublin, Kilkenny, and Waterford, as leaders prepare for the Camps in July and August. Two further camps are in the planning stage – one in Belfast and the other in Kilbarrack.

England

(Dominic)

Br Constantine Coleman:

Dominic attended the funeral of Brother Constantine Coleman in Plymouth on 28 April. Cons was a grand old stalwart of the former English Province.



He was a native of Plymouth and when he retired after 4 Headships and 6 years on the Provincial Council he moved into Nazareth House in Plymouth where he died at the age of 91. Eight Brothers and several friends made the journey down to Plymouth and gave Cons a fitting and moving farewell.

Visit to St Timothy's, Liverpool:

During Easter week Dominic spent time with the community in St Timothy's Liverpool. While there they visited the sites in Manchester connected with the Christian Brothers who had a school in the mid 1800s in the centre of the city. They also visited the historic city of York, famous for its Minster (cathedral) which dates back to the eighth century. There is so much history in this beautiful city with splendid exhibitions detailing the city's connections with Roman, Anglo-Saxon, Norman and Tudor times.



Funeral:

Br Ollie Cleary passed away on 22nd of April in St Patrick's Nursing Home, Baldoyle. A large crowd gathered on both the evening of 24th April in Kirwan's Funeral Home, Fairview for rosary and evening prayer and again in St Peter and Paul's Church in Baldoyle for the funeral Mass on 25th April. At the burial, the haunting strains of 'Silevenamon' floated out in the rain over the Blessed Edmund Rice Cemetery – a touch that I think Ollie would have appreciated.

May both Constantine and Ollie rest in peace.

Dates for your Diary:

A week of events celebrating the Feast of Blessed Edmund is being organised in The Life Centre in Cork from 5th to 8th May. Full details from The Life Centre.

The Timirí are organising a family day in Callan on the afternoon of Saturday, 9th May from 2.00 to 5.00.

Longer term, the jubilee celebration for jubilarians and their guests is scheduled for Saturday, 19th September in Emmaus. Full details later.



Conclusion

Many thanks to those who have sent us comments and suggestions for the PLT Newsletter.

God Bless,

Edmund, Dominic, Paul, Chris, Liam

(The photographs in this issue were taken during visitation in Callan and include the house and chapel in Westcourt; the King's River and the Friary in Callan and the organic, free-range, egg-providers for Damien and Malachy in Chapel Lane. The Good Friday pictures are Liam's and Dominic supplied the photographs from Plymouth Hoe, where Drake played bowls, and York Minster).

Request:

We are very short of material for the Province Updates newsletter.

Hilary would really appreciate information about events taking place around the Province and accounts of events which have taken place. Photograph would also help a lot!

Visitors:

*Among the recent visitors to the province centre were:
Br Michael Godfrey and Sr Bridget Mathews;
Br Peter Harney (Geneva).*