



NEWSLETTER

May 2020 Issue No. 3

Special Coronavirus Edition

leadership education
and formation project

*'Leading with Faith
in the Future'*



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During the Coronavirus





Andrà Tutto Bene – All Shall Be Well!

Dear Friends,

We are living through extraordinary times as the world seeks to overcome the coronavirus pandemic.

Good leadership is needed as never before. In recent weeks, we have experienced a number of really powerful moments of leadership from Pope Francis. Both his 'Urbi et Orbi' messages were truly inspiring and prophetic. Political leaders like Angela Merkel in Germany and Jacinda Ardern in New Zealand seem to be leading their respective countries with great wisdom and skill. In Ireland, people have responded with huge support and co-operation to the measures introduced by the Government to combat the virus. Regrettably in some parts of the world we have seen examples of very poor leadership. The consequences of this are still unfolding.

However, aside from major world figures, what has been incredibly inspiring is the generosity, courage and compassion of millions of ordinary people. We think of our doctors, nurses, hospital chaplains, frontline and essential workers. We think of young people delivering food, looking out for the elderly and the vulnerable. Many people are spending every hour of the day on the phone and online staying in touch with those who need a listening presence. School staffs and students are learning to work and collaborate online. Let us keep all these people in our prayer.

Indeed, so many people are praying as never before, surrounding the world with an energy of love and healing. Let us remember especially the deceased and the bereaved. We pray also for those recovering from illness, through great medical care.

Many members of the Presentation Family and past pupils are serving in the health sector, and other essential services. Let us be there for them to offer words of encouragement and support.

All of us, in different ways, are called to leadership at this time.

As the pandemic raged in Italy, the children of Puglia started drawing rainbows and captioning their pictures with the Italian phrase

– *'Andrà tutto bene' (All shall be well).*

In the Christian spiritual tradition, this phrase is found in the writings of the medieval mystic, Julian of Norwich. It reminds us that in Christian faith, evil, destruction and death never have the last word.

In the words of the American poet, Adrienne Rich:

*My heart is moved by all I cannot save
so much has been destroyed
I have to cast my lot with those
who age after age, perversely,
with no extraordinary power,
reconstitute the world.*

At Easter, we proclaim "Christ is Risen"! Love is eternal, love endures and triumphs even over death itself.

Let us continue to support as many as we can, in whatever way we can and be witnesses to Christian hope at this time

Never underestimate the power of a prayerful and listening presence. Never underestimate the power of a single act of human kindness. Stay safe and well.

Br. Martin Kenneally

Director

L.E.A.F. Project.

May 5th – Feast of Blessed Edmund Rice

Feast Day Greetings from The Presentation Brothers

May this Feast Day remind you of the great things God did through Blessed Edmund Rice.
May His Spirit fill you too with hope and love.

“Who will ever measure all the good that has come from the spiritual insight, warm heart and determined faith of Blessed Edmund Ignatius Rice.”

Pope John Paul II



Invitation

You are invited to pray this version of the prayer during the time of pandemic. The feast of Edmund Rice is on May 5th. A Novena of Prayer begins on April 26th (nine days before the feast). We pray, through the intercession of Blessed Edmund, for all those in need.

A Little Bit of History:

An epidemic of typhus spread across Cork in 1816 and 1817. It took many lives in the city. The Brothers opened their school as a fever hospital. Many helped in caring for the sick. Br. Michael Ignatius McDermott died on 4th June 1816 at the age of 22.

Blessed Edmund Rice Prayer During the Time of the Coronavirus

Here is an adaptation of our traditional 'Blessed Edmund Rice Prayer' for the time of the coronavirus.

O God, we thank you for the life of Blessed Edmund Rice.

He opened his heart to Christ present and appealing to him in the poor.

He lived through times of revolution, disease, and famine.

May we follow his example of faith and generosity during this time of the coronavirus pandemic.

Grant us the courage and compassion of Blessed Edmund, as we seek to support one another, protect the vulnerable and overcome this virus.

Bring those who have died into the fulness of your love in eternal life. Comfort the bereaved. Grant health to those who are sick.

Bless health care personnel and all essential workers who bring healing and hope to people at this time.

We make this prayer through Christ, Our Lord.

Amen.



Thinking Ahead Christians in a Post-Pandemic World

There is no doubt that major challenges in mission await us. Beyond this crisis, there will be a need for repair, renewal and healing. Many people, most especially those who suffer poverty and disadvantage will need help. God is setting a new agenda for the Church.

Religious and lay groups are called to be at the centre of this.

Pope Francis would say we need to proceed by way of discernment. What is God asking of us now as we seek to respond to a suffering world?

We will need to set aside our own agendas to respond to the great call of our age. We will have to take on this challenge in the context of economic recession.

What prophetic response will the Presentation Brothers and the Presentation Family make?
How will Presentation school communities respond to the new needs of young people?

These are issues of discernment for all leaders, formators, educators.
These are issues of discernment for each one of us.

What response will I make?

The L.E.A.F. Project During the Coronavirus

Here at the L.E.A.F. Project, we have continued to stay in touch with people by phone, online, through What's App and Zoom meetings. We posted messages to our network on Palm Sunday, Holy Saturday and Easter Tuesday. We invited people in the Presentation Family and L.E.A.F. Community to record 'Messages of Hope'. Thanks to Bishop Fintan Gavin, our Bishop here in Cork and Ross for kindly recording the first message.

These will be circulated on What's App and will be available on the L.E.A.F. Project website:

www.leafprojectpb.com

We are responding to and circulating requests for prayer.

Br. Martin is available to listen to people at any time - 087 226 0531.

All these efforts are gestures of solidarity and ways for us to stay in connection with one another during this time.

St. Beuno's Retreat Centre in North Wales also has a team of spiritual directors available to speak to people on the phone or online. It is a service for those who may wish to have a spiritual conversation during this time of pandemic.

Email: deirdre@beunos.com

See further information on this service elsewhere in our Newsletter.

We are also engaging in dialogue and planning with many people on the challenges that await us post-pandemic. We hope that the L.E.A.F. Project will be ready to respond in new ways to the needs of people in the time ahead.

We are there for one another, as we seek to be a positive presence and help to others through this crisis.



Talk to a Jesuit or a Spiritual Director

St Beuno's Jesuit Spirituality Centre is a retreat centre in North Wales and offers a range of long and short individually guided retreats. It is seen by many as a spiritual home where God feels very present both in the buildings and the surrounding landscape.

During this time of lock down, the community at St Beuno's would like to offer the opportunity for people to speak to either a Jesuit or a spiritual director.

Spiritual conversation was very important to St Ignatius's mission for the Society of Jesus. Jesuits today and the people that work with them reach all parts of the world and engage in spiritual conversation in many different ways.

It is not difficult to start a spiritual conversation. Spiritual conversation involves both talking and listening, and at the heart of spiritual conversation is the desire to understand how God is at

work in daily life. This time of lock down and uncertainty may well be a stimulus to seek God in a new way or share with him what thoughts and feelings are around. We all have a yearning to be met and understood and at the moment there is a particular need to connect with those around us, to get a sense of how to live in and through this present time and to learn and appreciate what really matters. Spiritual conversation is one way of making this connection.

If you would like to have a conversation with one of the Jesuits or spiritual directors on the team in St Beuno's then please email Deirdre at deirdre@beunos.com

and she will facilitate this conversation for you. Conversations can take place on the telephone or via Zoom, Skype or Facetime; whichever works best for you. We look forward to hearing from you.

The St Beuno's Community

A day in
MUH
with
Fr. Marius
O'Reilly



Fr. Marius O'Reilly is a priest of the Diocese of Cork and Ross and is Chaplain at the Mercy University Hospital. He is a past pupil of Colaiste an Spioraid Naoimh, Bishopstown.

What is it like being a hospital chaplain at this time?

Hospital Chaplaincy is always interesting. No two patients, no two days, are the same! I am constantly inspired by our health care workers. They are very practical people, and just get stuck in. Their instinct to care is amazing to behold and learn from. It is wonderful to be part of their team.

Describe a day in the Mercy Hospital?

A typical day in the hospital involves visiting the sick, Mass, prayer, and more visits in the afternoon. You may be surprised to learn that it is not as busy as it was. Unfortunately, patients are afraid to come in, which worries us.

What do you see as your central role as a chaplain and priest during this crisis?

With patient occupancy significantly reduced I found myself spending more time with the staff. This was the big change. Initially there was a lot of fear. We expected a hurricane to land. Now, Covid 19 is the new norm.

A word of Hope.

I always find St Paul's words to the Romans to be very encouraging: "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him." (Romans 8:28) So, stay close to the good Lord, and don't waste time worrying - all will be well!



Let your light shine today!

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate,
our deepest fear is that we are powerful
beyond measure.

It is our light, not our darkness,
that most frightens us.

We ask ourselves
Who am I to be brilliant,
gorgeous, talented and fabulous?
Actually who are you not to be?
You are a child of God.

Your playing small doesn't save the world.
There's nothing enlightened about shrinking
so that other people won't feel insecure
around you.

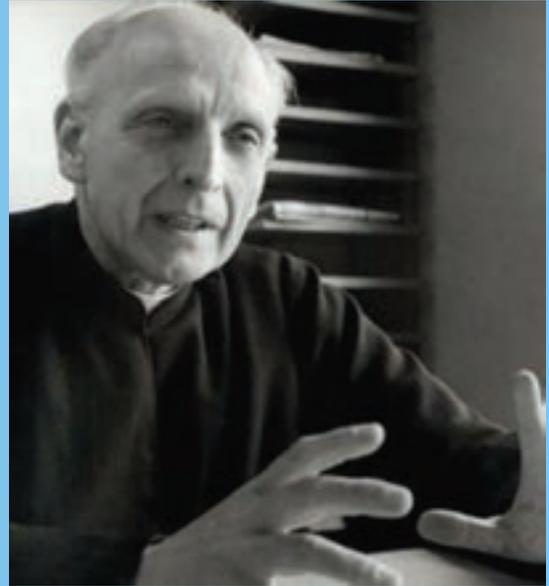
We were born to make manifest
the glory of God
that is within us.

It's not just in some of us
it's in everyone.

And as we let our light shine
we unconsciously give other people
permission to do the same.

As we are liberated from our own fear
our presence automatically liberates others.

Quoted by Nelson Mandela
in his Inaugural Speech
as President of South Africa, 1994.



Falling in Love

“Nothing is more practical than finding God,
that is than falling in love in a
quiet absolute, final way.
What are you in love with,
What seizes your imagination,
will affect everything.
It will decide what will get you out of bed
in the morning,
what you will do with your evenings,
what you read, what you know that
breaks your heart,
and what amazes you with joy and gratitude.
Fall in love, and it will decide everything”.

Pedro Arrupe, S.J.

27th Superior General of the Society of Jesus

For Reflection:

Trace your experience of being truly loved
in your life. How has it changed you?
Trace your experience of truly loving
another/others in your life.
How has this experience changed you?
Through the above, what have you learned about.

(a) God's love?

(b) Love as a commitment?

A Personal Encounter with Christ is at the Heart of Church Renewal

Bishop Fintan Gavin of Cork and Ross challenged young people to find deeper meaning in life and renew Church and society through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Speaking at a 'Welcome Event' organised in his honour by the Presentation Brothers and the Presentation Family in Cork, Bishop Fintan said the encounter with Christ brings joy, hope and renewal which are greatly needed in our world today.

The 'Welcome Event' held at the Mardyke House Conference Centre on January 14th was organised by the Presentation Brothers L.E.A.F. Project. A huge crowd attended the 'Welcome Event' representing the various groups within the Presentation Family and including many third level students and young adults. Along with prayers and music, the centre piece of the event was a thirty-minute interview with Bishop Fintan conducted by two U.C.C. students.

"I was very impressed with Bishop Fintan's openness and inspired by his vision for the Church in Cork & Ross" said Br. Barry Noel, Vocations Director for the Presentation Brothers, "the energy, generosity and faith of the young people were also very impressive".

Bishop Fintan expressed gratitude for the warm welcome he has received since his appointment as Bishop of Cork & Ross. He commended the work of the Presentation Brothers and the Presentation Family and looked forward to working together to build God's Kingdom.

Br. Ray Dwyer, Province Leader of the Presentation Brothers, presented Bishop Fintan with a framed photograph of St. Finbarr's Oratory at Gougane Barra.

In a much appreciated and entertaining concluding address, Anthony Kenneally, Principal of Scoil Iosaef Naofa, Cobh, said that the people of Cork, hoping to better their fortunes in football had prayed that God would send Gavin to Cork! Their prayers had been answered! His teaching colleague, Kinsale and Cork Womens G.A.A. star, Orla Finn, then presented Bishop Fintan with a personalised Cork football jersey, to enthusiastic applause!

"I really enjoyed the Welcome Event" said recently professed Presentation Brother and Maynooth student, Simon Fernandes, "Bishop Fintan was great and the presence of so many young people showed the vitality of the Presentation Family".



Teacher and Cork Womens Football Star, Orla Finn, presents Bishop Fintan with a Cork jersey, watched by Anthony Kenneally, Principal, Scoil Iosaef Naofa, Cobh.



Young Adults involved with the L.E.A.F. Project pictured with Bishop Fintan at the Welcome Event.



leadership education
and formation project

OUR MISSION

To educate, form and mentor leaders, especially young people, who will serve out of a faith-based and Christian vision.

- **Facilitate leadership** education and mentoring for individuals and groups within our Presentation Family and beyond.
- **Provide faith** formation opportunities, with a particular thrust towards developing lay leaders in Church and society.
- **Support and co-ordinate** the education of young Presentation Brothers and young lay leaders in West Africa.



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*In a world which cries out
for solidarity and service...*



VOCATIONS TO RELIGIOUS LIFE: IS GOD CALLING YOU?

If you are interested in knowing more about becoming a Presentation Brother, Please contact:
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Mob: 087 751 9794

Email: barrynoel@PresentationBrothers.org

The Presentation Brothers are an international Catholic Congregation of Lay Religious. Our mission is Christian Formation especially of young people and in particular of those who suffer poverty and disadvantage.

*Pilgrim Brothers with the
Compassionate Christ
in an evolving world.*

STAY CONNECTED TO L.E.A.F.

If you wish to be added to our mailing list please send your contact details to:

leafprojectpb@gmail.com

Thank you for reading this newsletter. You are welcome to share it with friends, colleagues and others who may be interested in the work of the L.E.A.F. Project. Comments and feedback are welcome.



Leading with Faith in the Future