

EASTER 2018

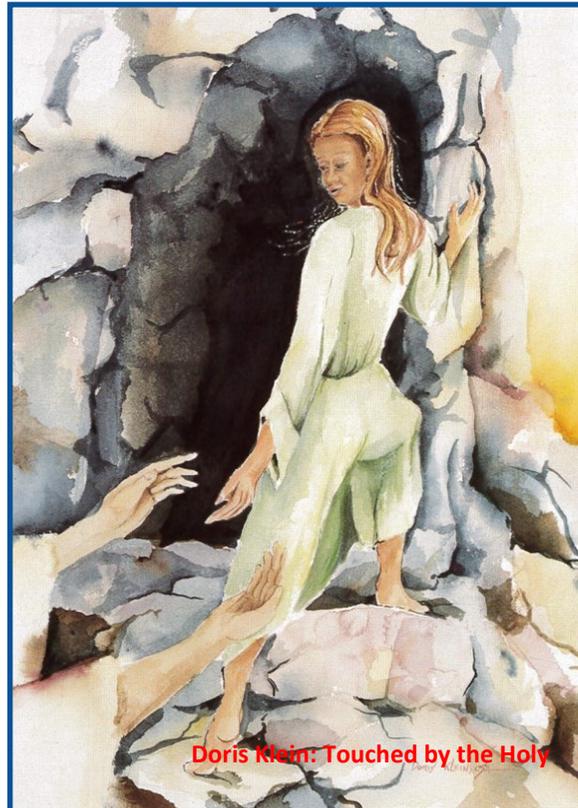
Now that Spring is in the air and the memories of the 'Best from the East' and 'Storm Emma' are becoming more distant, our thoughts, our prayers, and hopes center on Easter with its promise of joy and hope.

Easter greets us as the women in the Scriptures greeted the Risen Lord. St Luke tells us in Chapter 4 of his Gospel that "some women from our group have **astounded** us" (Jerusalem Bible). The Good News translation says "some women of our group **surprised** us." The Message translation reads "some of our women have completely **confused** us."

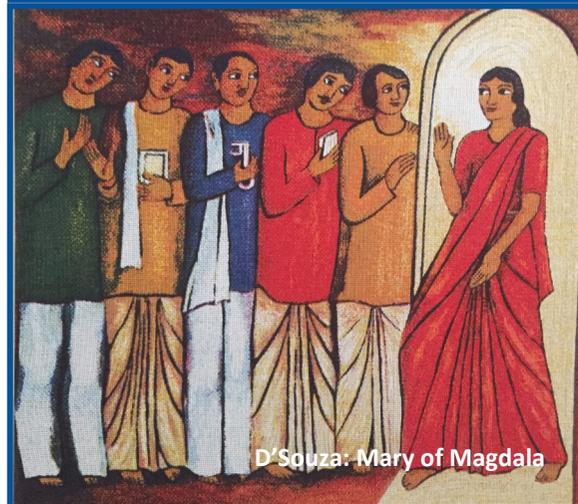
Whatever about surprise, confusion or astonishment over the weather our faith takes us to a deeper level where we are drawn into the mystery of life-death-resurrection; where we move from the darkness of pain and sorrow into the light and hope of new life; into the promise that Jesus "is going before you into Galilee; it is there you will see him." (Mark 16:7)

Artists like Doris Klein (*Touched by the Holy*) or Lucy D'Souza who created the Mary of Magdala section of a Misereor Lenten Veil (*Biblical Women—Guides to the Kingdom of God*) capture something of the spirit of Resurrection. D'Souza sees Mary Magdalene as a radiant woman in red, the colour of love, as she comes from the light of the risen Lord to bring the good news to the disciples who are still in the dark and in fear. She told them "I have seen the Lord." D'Souza says of her image: "What is particularly remarkable in this story is the courage Mary shows by going to the tomb, her loving persistence as she is looking for his body, and that Jesus gives her the mission to tell his disciples the good news of his resurrection. It is this mandate to proclaim the good news that caused St Augustine to call her 'apostle of apostles.'"

We now receive the same call.



Doris Klein: Touched by the Holy



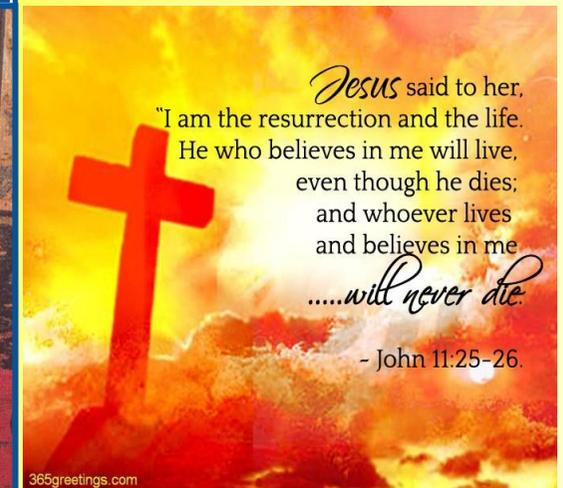
D'Souza: Mary of Magdala

MAGDALENE AT RESURRECTION

Doris Klein: *Touched by The Holy*

We stand at times before the dark and empty caves of life wondering what has happened to the Source of our being. Tentatively balanced on the rocks, we wonder which way to turn as we grieve the loss of what was and wait in empty alone space for what might be.

Much like Mary Mgdalene in the story of Easter, we don't recognize the face of the Beloved and are taken completely by surprise as we hear our name whispered in this empty space. Turning, we reach for the extended hand of the Holy and the enfolding embrace of the Divine, knowing that somehow, through this journey, we have been called to a fuller, deeper way of knowing.



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Jesus said to her,
"I am the resurrection and the life.
He who believes in me will live,
even though he dies;
and whoever lives
and believes in me
.....will never die."

- John 11:25-26.

From the Secretary General: Sr Liz Murphy, RSM

When I watch *Reeling in the Years* on RTE I marvel at how much happens in any one year. Similarly here at the AMRI office I marvel not only at how time flies but how much happens in any one day! It may be a phone call ordering a copy of our Retreat and Conference Guide, a request about the payment of an appropriate stipend, wondering about facilitators or translators for Chapters, seeking information about Garda Vetting, or just asking to speak to a member of staff. Looking back briefly over the past three months here are some of the highlights that may be of interest to you.

JANUARY 2018

The year began with the planning of two workshops on **GDPR** - General Data Protection Regulation, in light of the forthcoming legislation due in May. We were heartened to see such interest, and so not only had we one workshop on January 23rd filled to capacity, but a second one took place on February 6th. Our very sincere thanks to Marianne Matthews, solicitor, for her excellent input and guidance.

Following some work completed in 2016 by the combined Executives of CORI and IMU on a Strategic Direction for AMRI a Strategic Planning Group was established by the Executive in January to draw together the strands of what will become an **AMRI Strategic Plan 2018-2021**. The draft of this work will be presented for consideration and ongoing discernment at the AGM on Wednesday 30th May.

The Executive has given considerable time and thought to a Review of the **Religious Formation Ministry Programme**, commonly known as the Loreto House Programme. This is now in the capable hands of Dr Andrew McGrady (Reviewer) and a supportive team. There are 26 participants on the programme 2017/2018 and the Executive has confirmed its continuity into 2018/2019. The search is currently underway for additional staff.

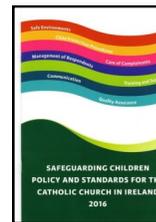


Work is also continuing on the proposed **CLDP - Collaborative Leadership Development Programme** and a meeting was held on 9th January 2018 to further the possibility of having this programme in place early 2019. A follow up meeting of the committee with responsibility for this will be held on Monday 9 April after which additional information will be circulated. There is wide interest in this Leadership training for 'younger' religious and lay colleagues in the areas of congregational leadership and leadership in ministry.

The new **Memorandum of Understanding 2018-2021** was signed jointly by the IEC, AMRI and Towards Healing in January 2018. Soon afterwards the first tranche of payment for 2018 was transferred from the pledged payments generously submitted to date by some of the contributing and supporting congregations. The commitment of all to the implementation of this new MOU is vitally important as we go forward. I will be contacting congregations next week about honouring payment of pledged amounts.



AMRI has been involved with the IEC in negotiations about **Towards Peace** which had been under a Committee structure. A new Steering Committee is now in place and will have its first meeting on Wednesday 4th April. One part-time staff member is now employed with a new contract replacing the previous two part-time staff. The office is based at Columba House, Maynooth.



The National Office for Safeguarding Children under the Coimisce Company Structure submitted its 2017 estimate for €420k. The cost to AMRI for 2017 is €126k. This cost will have to be built into our Annual Subscription as it is paid directly from the AMRI office. The cost for 2018 will have an additional cost due to the planned Company Review.

Work began in January on the **2017 AMRI Audit** and is continuing to date. Full details will be available at the AGM on 30 May.

FEBRUARY 2018

Our Papal Nuncio, His Excellency, Archbishop Jude Thaddeus Okolo, had expressed a wish to meet with the Executive of AMRI. This meeting took place at the Nunciature on 1st February 2018 where we were generously hosted with an address, mid-day prayer together in honour of St Brigid, followed by lunch. His address was circulated to all and published on the AMRI website.



The *World Meeting of Families 2018* was included in our discussions with the Papal Nuncio who encouraged us to seek a meeting of religious with the Holy Father. Following the announcement of the presence of Pope Francis in Ireland August 25/26 a formal letter of welcome from AMRI has been forwarded to him this week.

Two Stands at the RDS have been booked under the name of AMRI for the Exhibition Space Wednesday 22 - Saturday 25 August. Both Act to Prevent Trafficking (APT) and **Vocations Ireland** have already expressed interest in sharing this space with AMRI during those days. An invitation to our member congregations to share this space is now open. Please contact the AMRI office as soon as possible so that decisions can be made about sharing time, cost, availability of personnel on the days, etc.

"OUR LIVES ARE IN YOUR HANDS ... O LORD"

"OUR LIVES ARE IN YOUR HANDS ...
O LORD
"Our Lives are in Your hands"

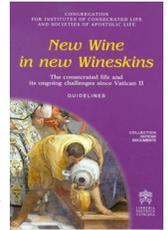


2nd FEBRUARY 2018
Feast of Presentation in the Temple
CELEBRATION OF CONSECRATED LIFE

This was the theme of the Ritual circulated by AMRI for the Celebration of Consecrated Life on 2nd February. It is heartening to hear how this day is celebrated around the world and in many Dioceses here in Ireland.

The Archdiocese of Dublin held its celebration on Saturday 3rd February at the Carmelite Church, Terenure and took the theme *New Wine in New Wineskins* based on

the book with that title published by CICLSAL.



IEC/AMRI

Meetings are held regularly between the four Archbishops and four representatives of AMRI. On 20 February Fr Marc Whelan (President), Sr Kathleen McGarvey (Vice President), Br Edmund Garvey (Executive) and I met with the Archbishops where discussions took place on matters of mutual interest including Towards Healing, Towards Peace, COIMIRCE, and the World Meeting of Families 2018. The next meeting will take place on 29 May 2018.



MISSION COLLOQUIUM: February 8-9

To honour the 100th anniversary of their founding the Columban Fathers hosted a colloquium on Mission at Dalgan Park. Input was given by nine congregational Leaders based in different parts of the world. Aably facilitated by Sr Clare Slattery the 30+ participants explored mission now and into the future. It was both inspiring and instructive to be present.

MARCH 2018

UCESM is the combined Conference of European Conferences of Religious “at the service of religious life in Europe.” I attended the 18th General Assembly held from 5-10 March at Snagov in Bucharest. The theme of the event was *“Widen the space of your Tent”* from Isaiah 54.2. The plight of migrants and refugees and the services offered by religious in all parts of Europe were widely explored. There were about 80 participants from all parts of Europe - some representing separate male or female conferences while many are now joint. Monsignor Jose Rodriguez Carballo represented CICLSAL and preached eloquently on the **New Wine in New Wineskins** booklet. A further booklet on the economics relating to religious has just been published but is not yet available in English. Sr Carmen Sammut and Sr Pat Murray were there from UISG and outlined some of the new collaborative developments religious are undertaking in various parts of Europe in serving displaced people.

The new Chairperson of UCESM is Fr P Zolt, a young priest from Hungary.



Sr Marjolein OP from Belgium together with Ms Nicole Jacqué act as Secretariat staff based in the office in Brussels. It was interesting to note that the only lay Secretary General in Europe is Dr Patrick Chatelion Counet from the Netherlands. The next General Assembly in 2020 is planned to take place in Malta.

There was a strong recommendation for neighbouring Conferences to meet and collaborate more. To this end Fr James Boner, Secretary General of Conference of Religious of England & Wales and I will meet in Dublin May 30/June 1. It is not possible for Sr Patricia Orr, Conference of Religious in Scotland, to join us but all three will meet in Swanwick in May.



LAUDATO TREE PROJECT

On Monday 26 March President Higgins and his wife Sabina hosted a reception at Áras on Uachtaráin on

DESERTIFICATION and IRELAND'S ROLE IN THIS GLOBAL CHALLENGE

This event was in support of the Society of African Missions ‘Laudato Tree Project’ which is under the patronage of Archbishop Kieran O’Reilly. This is a major SMA initiative in the lead up to the World Meeting of Families 2018, in association with the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). Inspired by Pope Francis’ 2015 environmental encyclical “Laudato Si” and the “Great Green Wall” project across 11 African countries, the “Laudato Tree” project aims to build support for climate action and tree planting, in Ireland and the Sahel region. Sr Sheila and I were honoured to be among the invited guests.



REFERENDUM ON 8th AMENDMENT

A couple of congregations contacted the office checking if AMRI would be offering workshops or making a formal statement in relation to the Referendum confirmed now for Friday 25 May. An Executive Working Party considered this and there was much discussion and deliberation. Focus was then directed to the material already available on the Choose Life 2018 website of the Irish Catholic Bishops (www.catholicbishops.ie) which has issued 8 Newsletters to date online. These have been circulated to parishes around the country as an awareness raising process. Mention was also made of the forum organised by the Loyola Institute at TCD for Friday 13 April. See www.tcd.ie/loyola-institute/

within their dioceses. This was therefore a gathering of the leadership of Catholic Education, and good leadership demands an ability to communicate ideas and meanings grounded in reality in a way that is inspiring, compelling and so makes the work and lives of others more significant.

The Conference was gifted with a spectrum of speakers that offered those present an opportunity to connect once more with their own vision of Catholic education and to commit themselves anew to the mission rooted in that vision.

Archbishop D. Martin of Dublin was the keynote speaker. Mr. Paul Barber, Director of the Catholic Education Service of England and Wales, Dr. Amalee Meehan DCU and mother of two Primary school going children and Mr. Fechin McDonagh SC, focussed on the national and international contexts. The afternoon invited participants to engage with the Strategic Plan for Post Primary schools, led by Mr. Gerry Lundy, Executive Chair of the Implementation Group, with Drs. Eugene Duffy and Aidan McGrath OFM, offering a reflection from both ecclesial and canonical perspectives.



All present recognised the critical juncture for the Catholic Church generally, and for Catholic education in particular, in Ireland. This new context is one marked by much greater pluralism and diversity than before and by a very vocal lobby that is looking, not just for alternative provision in the field of education, but for the exclusion of the Church from any role in state funded education institutions.

Some Updates

Reserved Appointments

The Minister for Education and Skills has advised that he is issuing a circular to all school managements whereby appointments to all publicly funded positions in education settings must be conducted through a transparent open appointments process. This will proscribe 'reserved posts' for priests/religious.

Proposed New Primary School Curriculum and R.E.

The buy-in process in the development of the new Primary School curriculum has begun with a bright, cheery event on 21st March. Research papers made available and presented made no provision for a Patron's programme, nor for Religious Education as part of the core architecture of a modern society, such as the emerging Ireland. ERB and Ethics alone may support some shared ethical vision, though this is 'light touch', as each pupil is unique and this individuality must be especially nurtured.

R.E. in Community Schools

The recent D.E.S. circular 13/2018 on the positioning of R.E. in Community schools and Colleges (it is no longer to be a core subject, but an optional one, with alternative subjects offered to pupils instead of R.E.), has not taken cognisance of the legal agreements around the provision of R.E. in these schools e.g. Deed of Trust. The Community schools are in joint trusteeship with Catholic trustees, diocesan and religious, and clear legal guarantees are in existence and recognised in the Education Act 1998, for example. The circular side-lines denominational Religious Education and formation.

It may be advisable for religious trustees to advise their relevant ETB co-trustees of the obligations arising from Deeds of Trust. Such letters should advisedly be copied by Trustees to all Boards of Management of these schools. Advice is available from AMRI on request. (eithne.woulfe@amri.ie)

AMRI EDUCATION MEETING

AMRI will host an EDUCATION meeting for its members in early May, date awaiting confirmation, as we are currently negotiating suitable dates with speakers. This will be an important meeting as it will not only look at the actual education and political/social context in Ireland at this time, but offer you an opportunity to be suitably informed as Trustee and/or Trust member of the emerging Implementation of the Strategic Plan for Trusteeship/Management interests in Catholic Post Primary schools in this country. Many of you funded the development of this plan which has been accepted in principle by both the IEC and AMRI. An implementation group has been active since Autumn 2017, and it is hoped incremental realisation of the plan will begin in the near future (2018).

From JUSTICE OFFICE: Sheila Curran, RSM

What follows is a brief summary of some of the recent activities of the Justice Desk.

Celebration of 60 Years of St. James Missionary Activity in Latin America.

The Missionary Society of St James the Apostle, was founded by Cardinal Cushing in Boston in 1958. It is an international organisation of diocesan missionary priests who volunteer for a minimum of five years to serve in Peru (previously in Bolivia and Ecuador). Over 60 years, 400 priests from all over the English-speaking world, (25% were Irish), ministered in Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru.

In February, I was invited to work with the Missionary Society of St James the Apostle as they celebrated 60 years of missionary activity. The work involved a number of different meetings and workshops culminating in the week-long celebrations at their Centre House in Barranco, which were enriched by the presence of Cardinal Sean O'Malley and Bishop Robert Hennessey from Boston, together with Bishops from Ireland and Peru, as well as 70 former members and people from the parishes in which the St James priests had served down the years, in Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru.

I was one of three keynote speakers, together with Padre **Gustavo Gutiérrez, OP.**, (pictured) and Mgr. Allen Aganon, from the Diocese of Parañaque, Manila.

My presentation focused on three areas:



A) 50 years since Medellín Conference, and how the Preferential Option for the Poor, a consequence from the Medellín conference, is reflected in two of Pope Francis documents, The Joy of the Gospel and Laudato Si.

B) the challenge of implementing these documents in parishes, particularly from the perspective of having lived and worked with the people of Latin America, who are experiencing the consequences of climate change and unethical practices by transnational companies involved in the extractive industries and

C) how to create bonds of solidarity given the changing face of mission today.

The visit of Pope Francis to Peru coincided with the St. James Celebrations, and helped underline the fact that, since Vatican II, the church in Latin America has gone from being an Occidental Church to being a Universal Church. St James Society now has missionary priests from the Philippines, Ghana, USA, England and Ireland. Their present leader is Fr. David Costello, from Limerick Diocese. I was very grateful for the invitation (all expenses paid) to work and reflect with them as they celebrate their 60 years. All I can say is *mil gracias*.



Housing and Integration in partnership with the Irish Refugee Council

I continue to work with the Irish Refugee Council (IRC) and participating congregations on this project.

We are in the process of looking at ways in which we can consolidate the project into the future. We have met twice since December where member congregations have opportunity to share their experiences and address some of the critical issues that arise. We are also working on a research proposal which will be presented to the AMRI Executive. If agreed on, it will shape our work into the future.

Spirasi Befriending Project

This programme continues to expand and has a positive impact on all who participate. I attended the recent launch of Spirasi Strategic Plan in their newly refurbished offices. The collaboration of AMRI members and the financial support which we have given to the Befriending Project was graciously acknowledged. I would like to express my gratitude to Deirdre Markey in particular, for all her hard work. She works one day a week on this project and we are delighted to continue our collaboration with this project. If anyone is interested in participating in the Befriending Project please contact me at the AMRI Justice Office. Volunteers - male and female are always welcome. (01 5310055 or 087 3582111)

Dublin Interfaith Forum and European Anti-Racism Network

AMRI is a member of both groups and I am currently part of a team developing training for faith communities to work on issues related to racism. The first trial run of the training programme took place last February with members from different faith communities. It was well received. I will be organizing a racism awareness workshop for AMRI

members after Easter. I also attended the launch of ENAR's Strategic Plan entitled "Combatting racism in 21st century Ireland. For further information follow this link. <http://enarireland.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/ENAR-Strategic-Plan.pdf>.

The Irish Refugee and Migrant Coalition,

AMRI is a member of this coalition which seeks to advance the rights and dignity of people on the move and those in need of international protection. This month we sent a letter to *an Taoiseach* Leo Varadkar, asking him to clarify the comments made in Washington where it was reported that "uncontrolled mass migration" was one of the main challenges facing Ireland.

Community Sponsorship Programme for Refugees

The Irish Government is currently developing a programme on Community Sponsorship for Refugees. The Irish Refugee and Migrant Coalition presented a discussion document to the Government on this topic. Faith groups have also been consulted. The Canadian model is the one in which the Government has shown most interest. Exchange field trips by representatives of the Government and a number of NGOs was made to and from the Canadian Government involving those in the Community Sponsorship Programme to Dublin. I participate in the round table discussions with the Canadian group who outlined the benefits of such a programme. Faith groups play a significant role in the Community Sponsorship Programme in Canada. Consultations and discussions are ongoing and we are awaiting a document to be produced by the Irish

Government outlining a proposed model for Ireland. There are many advantages to such a programme but it all depends on how it is organised.

Justice for Undocumented

I continue to work with MRCI in advocating for the regularisation of undocumented people in Ireland. We actively supported their St Patrick's Day weekend, where over 100 undocumented men and women living across Ireland posted selfies of their faces, homes and families online to raise awareness of the estimated 20,000-26,000 undocumented people living and working in Ireland. We all need to keep reminding our political leaders that when they are highlighting the situation of the undocumented Irish in the USA, undocumented migrants want to remind them of the other un-documented Irish who live here, belong here, and are contributing to Irish society.

City of Sanctuary

This organisation is encouraging schools and parishes to become places of Sanctuary for refugees and asylum seekers. Christ Church Cathedral in Dublin has recently become a Cathedral of Sanctuary. Perhaps we could encourage our places of education and Churches to become places of Sanctuary. For further details see: <http://ireland.cityofsanctuary.org>.

Advocacy

I continue to advocate for the changes in Direct Provision and work with others in the area to develop an alternative model. We continue to advocate on the Right to Work for Refugees as the present ruling is very restrictive. Decent work for all is one of the

UN Sustainable Development Goals, which the Irish Government helped to develop. Yet with this present ruling: (An asylum seeker is required to pay between €500 - €1,000 for a 6-12 month employment permit) Asylum seekers living in Direct Provision currently have a weekly allowance of €21.60. Applicants must find a job that pays a starting salary of at least €30,000 per annum, while their prospective employer must show they were unable to find a suitable Irish or EU citizen to fill the position. Asylum seekers will also be unable to apply for a job in more than 60 different areas including positions in hospitality, healthcare, social work, childcare, general care services, marketing, sales, administration, textiles, printing, housekeeping, food and construction. This is very unjust.

Sisters of the Troubles

Together with some of our members, I link with Dr. Lisa Isherwood from the Institute for Theological Partnerships, University of Winchester and Dr. Dianne Kirby from University of Ulster who are working on a project entitled "Sisters of the Troubles." The role of Catholic clergy during the Troubles is well documented but work of Catholic sisters is less well known. This has led to the development of witness seminars in which a number of Sisters have participated, some of which have been recorded, and will eventually be available to the public. A documentary "Sisters of the Troubles" compiled by Rosie Dawson was broadcast on the BBC World Service on 25 March. See <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0623s43>

Happy Easter to all

FROM Lay Mission OFFICE: Jim Farrell jim.farrell@amri.ie

A number of the 8 lay mission support groups in various dioceses across the country have been meeting over the past few months. Some gatherings had to be rescheduled due to the big snow in February. These groups are providing a support network for returned missionaries and volunteers to meet together to discuss issues of mutual concern and to exchange ideas as well as providing a space for reflection in a faith environment. Two of the groups are involved in trying to give support to lay missionaries on current assignment overseas while another group is primarily focused on Justice and Peace work in their diocese. Some members of another group have been involved in setting up a diocesan Laudato Si' group and are trying to get parishes to set up their own groups. It is hoped that a new group will be set up in Killaloe diocese very soon. A gathering for returned missionaries and volunteers in that diocese has been planned for 19th April in Ennis. If you know of any returned

lay/religious missionaries or volunteers who might be interested in attending these regular gatherings, please contact me on 083 8422468 or jim.farrell@amri.ie

(Following my request I am now with AMRI 3 days per week Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays)



UCD in partnership with AMRI

UCD Volunteers Overseas (UCDVO), in partnership with AMRI, facilitated a number of IT Skills Exchange Workshops for returned missionaries during the months of February and March 2018 at the UCD campus. On this course, 10 UCDVO volunteers who are preparing to travel to Tanzania and Haiti to work on an IT education project in summer 2018 tutored 10 returned missionaries in IT skills on a 1:1 basis over a number of hours each week. In return, missionaries shared their own personal stories about working overseas to help the students prepare for their work in Tanzania and Haiti. Missionaries learned some new IT skills on getting the most out of their smart phones and laptops as well as using Microsoft **Word** and **Excel**. The tutoring matched the level of skill of the missionary participant. Students also got an insight from the returned missionaries about the challenges of working in another culture, tips on how to cope, the importance of learning to engage

with another culture and of course enjoying the experience there. This inter-generational event provided an opportunity for mutual learning and the exchange of skills and knowledge was really beneficial to everyone. On 15th March, the last day of the programme, a story-telling event took place at UCD campus where missionaries told of their own personal journey which brought them to work in many different countries in Africa and elsewhere. A graduation ceremony followed with students presenting certificates to the missionaries on completion of their IT Skills Training Programme. Sr Liz expressed AMRI's sincere gratitude to Zoe Liston and her colleagues at UCD for facilitating this Intergenerational event and expressed the wish that other Universities might follow this example. If you are interested in getting involved in next year's programme, please contact me.



Fit for Life 10 Week Programme

Twenty three very enthusiastic returned Missionaries have been meeting for an hour each Wednesday morning at Blessed Sacrament Hall, Dublin for a Fit for Life exercise programme. This 10 week programme provides opportunity for exercise but also for meeting friends, having a welcoming cuppa and general chat. A new Programme will be publicised shortly. Contact Liz: liz.murphy@amri.ie



FORTHCOMING EVENTS

6-13th April: Social Change Initiative hosted by Church World Service in Washington DC. Sheila invited

Wednesday 11 April: Executive Meeting, AMRI Office

Friday 13 April: Loyola Institute TCD: Forum: **Living Humanely: Perspectives from Law, Morality and the Sciences**

Sunday 22 April: AMRI Northern Ireland AGM. Guest Speaker is Breda O'Brien

Tuesday 24 April: AMRI Finance Committee Meeting

Monday 21 - Wednesday 23 May: Conference of Religious of England & Wales AGM, Swanwick Centre

Tuesday 29 May: AGM of Towards Healing, Maynooth

Wednesday 30 May: AMRI AGM, Emmaus Conference & Retreat Centre

21 - 26 August: World Meeting of Families, Dublin

Booking for **AMRI AGM:** Information will be circulated on Monday 9 April for return no later than Friday 11 May 2018

Bed and Breakfast at Emmaus Tuesday 29th May. 40 places available on first come basis. **Bookings through AMRI.** Cost €65.00 for B/B

AMRI AGM from 9.30am Arrival/Tea & Coffee, commencing 10.00am
Light Lunch 1.00pm. Liturgy 5.15pm. Evening Dinner: 6.00pm. Cost: €100

MESSAGE FROM UCESM

**18th GENERAL ASSEMBLY
MARCH 2018**



During these days we have had the opportunity to experience our unity through diversity. Gathered together as the religious of Europe, we have heard the call of God and the Church, to go out towards the people in need.

We are deeply moved by the suffering of millions of displaced people who migrate from all over the world and within Europe. As UCESM (the Union of European Conferences of Major Superiors), we want to enlarge the space of our tent to welcome them.

Inspired by the Gospel of Jesus, moved by the Holy Spirit and the challenges we heard throughout our time together, we commit to continue to support the migrant population in Europe. Through respecting and defending the dignity and human rights of all migrants we will endeavour to address their needs through accompaniment, service and advocacy.

UCESM, comprising intercultural communities in the Church in Europe, commit to stand beside our displaced brothers and sisters in friendship and prayer. We also support everyone in their right to have a home. Our hope is to be open to each one with a listening heart.

We are all called to go out, to meet migrants, to take action as a congregation and from our communities where we are. It is by uniting on this global path of understanding and action that we will be a prophetic witness of God's love to all people. By loving each other, including our neighbour and the other, the space of our hearts will be enlarged and our 'tent' will encompass many more.

Snagov, 9 March 2018