

PRESIDENT'S REPORT
Marc Whelan C.S.Sp.

The purpose of AMRI is to represent and promote active collaboration between Religious Institutes, Societies of Apostolic Life and Missionary Organisations, so as to respond to existing and emerging realities both in Ireland and overseas by supporting and energising the life and ministries of their members and of the wider Church with a renewed sense of hope and relevance.

AMRI is still very much a recent foundation and we are still at the stage of growing into our role and mission. To say that we are just the amalgamation of two organisations of similar purposes and objectives would be to miss the point that we are engaged in something new and seeking to forge new pathways for discipleship and Gospel commitment in Ireland (cf Is 43:19). We seek to bring together religious, members of Societies of Apostolic Life and lay people in a desire to work together in the sowing of the seeds of a new Church.

In these days of Pentecost, we recognise how much we need to be attentive to the promptings of God's Spirit as we seek to plough new furrows buoyed up, as we are, by the grace of a rich harvest, fruit of those who ploughed before us.

Among the objectives we have given ourselves are the development and promotion of religious, apostolic and missionary life as a vibrant, prophetic, organic and integral feature of the life of the church.

It has been an honour for me to serve as the first President of AMRI. I have been privileged to serve with an excellent and truly committed Executive Committee, and supported by the dedicated and talented staff working with the Secretary General. I would like to think that in the spirit of leadership in religious life we have worked together as a team taking a conciliar model as our way of operating.

Obviously, as with any new organisation, much of our time has been taken up with issues of governance and putting in place the structures and systems necessary for an effective and accountable service to the mission entrusted to us.

The Executive Committee put in place a Working Group to refine and give precision to the strategic framework that was the fruit of such hard work during the transition period that led to the creation of AMRI. With the help of a Consultant, Ms Anne Kelleher, we believe we can now present to the organisation a Strategic Plan that will set the path for us for the next three years (2018-2021) and which will be complimented by an Implementation Plan to ensure delivery of our strategic direction at all levels of the organisation.

While working on this Strategic Plan the Executive Committee also put into place two sub committees of the Executive Committee: Finance and Governance and Justice and Peace. A group of lay missionaries also meet regularly as does Act to Prevent Trafficking, an initiative supported by AMRI. I would like to thank all those people from our different member organisations for giving of their time and expertise to serve on these groups. It is at the level of sub-committees and working groups, working with the different services of AMRI, that I believe much of our work and mission will be achieved.

We maintain excellent relationships with the Irish Episcopal Conference and three times a year we have a structured conversation with the four Archbishops on issues of mutual concern and interest. We are also very grateful for the support of the Papal Nuncio to Ireland. Many of our members belong to communities and organisations that straddle more than one jurisdiction. We seek to enhance good relationships with our sister conferences in Europe through membership of UCESM. We are especially close to the Conference of Religious of England and Wales and the Conference of Religious of Scotland with whom we hope to develop even closer ties and cooperation into the future.

My participation in the Executive Committee has enhanced my service of leadership within my own community and I am very grateful for this. I would like on my behalf, but also on behalf of the Executive Committee to thank and acknowledge the work of Sr. Liz Murphy (Secretary General), Sr Sheila Curran (JPIC), Mr Jim Farrell (Lay Mission Coordinator), Sr Eithne Woulfe (Education), Aoife O'Brien (office) and Sandra Neville (Garda Vetting). I also thank our staff on the Religious Formation Ministry Programme at Willow Park - Sr Ann Concannon, Fr Tom McNamara, Br Peter Roddy and Sr Geraldine Collins. All AMRI staff render such an important service to our membership and ensure that AMRI remains a vibrant and prophetic voice in our Church.



Marc Whelan C.S.Sp.
President AMRI May 2018