

AFRICAN LINK

Newsletter of SMA Laity groups



Society of African Missions, Dromantine, Glen Road, Newry, Co Down.

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SMA CHANGES AT DROMANTINE

September saw the first of some changes in personnel here at Dromantine. **Fr Mossie Kelleher** (pictured below) returned to his native city of Cork at the end of September to join the SMA Community in Wilton. Fr Mossie had been a member of the Dromantine Community for 16 years and had been a popular retreat master throughout his time here. He was frequently sought for retreats beyond the Retreat and Conference Centre and had spent a week in Wales giving a retreat to a religious congregation in July.



His most significant role during his time in Dromantine however was as founder and Chaplain of SMALA, the SMA Lay Association. Fr Mossie had begun the groundwork for a Lay Association

in 1999 and the group was formally recognised at the Provincial Assembly in 2001. SMALA has had a membership of between 30-40 people throughout its existence, and they are involved in various areas of work, including the collecting Mission Boxes, assisting with Family Fun Day and fundraising for various African projects. Fr Mossie will now act as resource to the SMA parishes and communities in Cork, and doubtless to many others too.

At the end of October **Fr John Denvir** (left) will take up a new appointment as Assistant Leader in the SMA Community in Blackrock Rd in Cork. Fr John , who is originally from Downpatrick, Co Down, has been Co - Leader in Dromantine with Fr Paddy O'Rourke since 2011. Before joining the Leadership team at Dromantine he was based at the SMA House of Formation in the Philippines.



With Fr John's departure to Cork, Fr Aodhán Mc Crystal joins Fr Paddy as the new Assistant Leader here in Dromantine. Fr Aodhán (pictured below) who hails from Dromore, Co Tyrone has returned from Nairobi, Kenya where he was the Guest-master in the SMA Regional House and then assistant pastor in St Joseph's Parish, Jericho. Fr Aodhán also worked in Nigeria, South Africa, Zambia, India and the Philippines. We wish all three SMAa well in their new roles and ask you to please remember them in your prayers.



The SMA logo shows a map of Africa and three doves symbolizing Faith, Hope and Charity , the last words of SMA founder, Bishop de Marion Bresillac. December 2nd 2013 was the 200th anniversary of his birth in Castelnaudry, France.

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FR BILL FOLEY SMA



Fr Bill Foley was born on 13 October 1935 in Ballybunion Co Kerry and was ordained an SMA priest on 14 June 1960. His first appointment was to the Archdiocese of Lagos In Nigeria in 1963. In 1967 he was recalled to be Master of Aspirants at the SMA Novitiate in Cloughballymore, Co Gal-

way. In 1968 he took charge of the major seminary in Dromantine and in 1971 oversaw the transfer of SMA students to Maynooth to be trained with diocesan and other seminarians. He was Rector of the SMA House, Maynooth for a year before spending two terms on the Provincial Council. From 1983-90 he returned to Dromantine as Superior and was very active in the Promotion of the Mission Association Cards to generate funds to support the Missions. His hospitality and willingness to sing a song or two were legendary and he worked tirelessly to promote the FVC and the Summer Camps in the North of Ireland. His knowledge of Canon Law also enabled him to contribute to the Armagh Regional Marriage Tribunal. He later returned to Nigeria and also spent time in Kenya. Many people connected with Dromantine recall him fondly for his great work and spirit. Fr Bill died Cork on 30 July. May he Rest in Peace.

FR SEXTON DORAN SMA



Fr Sexton Doran was born in Ballynahinch Co. Down , in the parish of Loughinisland on 8 June 1933. Although his desire was to be a vet, he set out initially to study pharmacy but found it was not to his liking. Having returned to the family farm, he began to consider the priesthood, and decided to follow his uncle and namesake Fr Sexton Doran to the SMA. Completing studies at Dromantine from 1958-63, he was ordained on 18 December 1963 and was appointed to Nigeria from 1964-68.

In 1968 he was recalled from Nigeria "to take charge of Promotion work" in Northern Ireland. In his role as Vocations Director from 1968-72, he not only encouraged many young men to become missionaries but he was also instrumental in the establishment of the Boys Camps for sons of the Family Vocations Crusade sponsors. It is a tribute to that vision and foresight that the Summer Camps are still running and as popular as ever, with both boys and girls. In 1972 he was appointed as Superior of Dromantine for one year before leading a group of SMAs to establish a new presence in Ndola, Zambia. He remained in Zambia until 2009 when he returned to the SMA House, Blackrock Road, Cork where he died on 9 September. His Requiem Mass and burial took place in Loughinisland on 12 September. May he Rest in Peace.

FVC ANNUAL MEETINGS

As always, September saw the Annual Masses taking place across all the various FVC regions. Fr Ignatius Malwa SMA travelled from Kaduna, Nigeria to represent the 18 SMA priests newly ordained this year who have been supported by the prayers and donations of FVC sponsors and Head Sponsors across the length and breadth of Ireland. Fr Ignatius, who was ordained in 2008 and is from Zambia, celebrated Masses in Munster, the West of Ireland, Leinster/ Dublin and Ulster before preaching at the final night of the Novena to St Therese in St Joesphs SMA parish, Blackrock Road, Cork. In a change to the traditional format there were three

Masses this year in Ulster: in Magherafelt, in Strabane and in Dromantine and all those attending had the chance to hear about Fr Ignatius' work and the importance of the support of FVC members, not only to those who are in formation, but also to those, like himself, who are ordained and working in difficult and challenging environments.

Fr Ignatius is pictured on the right with FVC sponsors at a Mass held in Ennis, Co Clare.



DROMANTEENS SUMMER CAMPS

Every year in July and August, Dromantine changes completely. The Retreat and Conference Centre is transformed from a place of peaceful reflection and serenity to a hive of activity. The air is filled with noise, laughter and the daily chanting and singing from the dining room as lunchtime arrives. The arrival of the boys and girls for the weekly camps creates a tremendous energy and excitement around the building which is quite unique. The anxious faces which can sometimes be seen on Sunday afternoon as the bags are offloaded and the cars disappear, have been transformed by the end of the week and the atmosphere of celebration in the Chapel at the Mass on Friday



afternoon to conclude the week is something which has to be experienced rather than described.

The hectic schedule for each week, planned by Fr Kevin Mulhern SMA and the Friends of Africa, and delivered by the Leaders and Managers, includes prayer and reflection time each day, Mass (with lively congregational singing), various individual and team sports and the talent show, on which a country's (team) honour often depends. One of the most unique sights of the camps is the pyjama parade on the front lawn around 8.30am at the start of each week when the fire drill takes place. Having conquered that, the boys and girls are ready for anything else the week may hold, as the above photographs illustrate.



SMA SUMMER SCHOOL 2014 - "THE CHANGING ROLE OF THE LAITY AND THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH"

Each year in July the SMA hold an annual Summer School and this year the theme was "The Changing Role of the Laity and the Mission of the Church." Traditionally an event for members of the Society only, this year the members of the SMA Laity Commission were invited to attend. Over the three days, presentations were given by Dr Vicent Kenny, former CEO of the Volunteer Missionary Movement, Dr Justin Kilcullen, former Director of Trócaire, Ms Kate McQuillan, a Catechist who delivers programmes with Trócaire, as well

as Fr Michael McCabe, Provincial Leader of SMA. There was much discussion about the ways in which the ideas and values of Vatican II have impacted (or not) on the shape of the church in existence today, as well as the responsibility felt for the church of the future, a point which was reinforced by the presence of Kate McQuillan's 6 week old baby son, Robert. In addition to discussing issues of change, it was a Summer School which truly initiated change with the first laity, the first women and the first baby in attendance. We look forward to Summer School 2015.





SOCIETY OF AFRICAN MISSIONS

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If you have any items for inclusion in the newsletter or if you know of anyone who would like to receive AFRICAN LINK, please get in touch with Dympna Mallon, SMA Laity Coordinator at SMA Dromantine, 96 Glen Road, Newry, Co Down, BT34 IRH, ph (028) 3082 1024, email: laity@sma.ie.

UPCOMING EVENTS

After last year's appearance of **Santa at Dromantine**, there is great excitement that he has agreed to come back and stay for a few days again this year. He will be here at Dromantine between Tuesday 16 and Sunday 21st December. To book phone Paula on (028) 3082 1224 between 10-11.30am and 1-2pm or email santa.dromantine@sma.ie. (see brochure below)
There will also a Christmas Fayre held at Dromantine on Saturday 6 December from 12-6pm and on Sunday 7 December from 1-6pm. For more information contact Breda - email bmeara@hotmail.com or phone 07927906594

YEAR OF de MARION



December 8 2013 marked the bicentenary of the birth of Melchior de Marion Brésillac, founder of the **Society of African Missions**, and the beginning of a year dedicated to him by all international units of SMA. In recognition of the importance of the Founder's life and principles, each African Link during 2014 will highlight some aspect of his life and work.

In October 1858, the first missionaries of the new SMA were sent to the new Vicariate of Sierra Leone, granted to Bishop de Brésillac by the Vatican Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples. He planned to join them himself as soon as possible and to leave his deputy, Fr Augustin Planque to run the seminary in Lyons which had only two students, and oversee the development of the Society at home. On May 14 1859, along with two others, he arrived in Sierra Leone but a yellow fever epidemic in the region meant that within six weeks, five of the six SMAs were dead, including Bishop de Brésillac. The survivor returned to Europe where Fr Planque, later to be the first Superior General of the SMA, and one other priest carried on the Founder's work. For the next 50 years Fr Planque developed vocations, trained candidates and sought financial support for the SMA and the missions in which it worked. The spirit of the Founder survived his death and the Society flourished against the odds. Today that legacy sees SMAs from various countries working in 16 African countries as well as India and the Philippines.

Admission: Children £12.00
(two years or under £5)
Adults £10.00
Discount for Group bookings.

Contact Paula at
Tel: 028 3082 1224
Booking Strictly 10 - 11.30 & 1 - 2pm or
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