

AFRICAN LINK

NEWSLETTER OF SMA LAITY GROUPS

Society of African Missions, Dromantine, Glen Road,
Newry, Co Down, BT34 1RH.



NEW LAY OUTREACH WORKERS APPOINTED

As an expression of its commitment to new and more meaningful engagement with lay people in the work and mission of the SMA, the Irish Province has appointed two part time Lay Outreach Workers. **Katherine Dullahgan** (below) from Dundalk but living in Cork is based in the SMA house in Blackrock Rd, Cork. **Cormac Ryan** (right) from Dublin, is based in the SMA



house in Ranelagh, Dublin. They can be contacted at laity.cork@sma.ie and laity.dublin@sma.ie respectively. We welcome them both to the SMA family and wish them well in their work.



The SMA logo above shows a map of Africa and three doves symbolizing Faith, Hope and Charity, last words of SMA founder, Bishop de Marion Bresillac. The SMA was founded on December 8, 1856 at the Shrine of Our Lady of Fourviere, Lyons, France.

WALTHAMSTOW SMA PARISH WINS ECOLOGY AWARD

Congratulations to the SMA Parish of Our Lady of the Rosary and St Patrick, Walthamstow which was awarded the Cafod **LiveSimply** award in March in recognition of its efforts to “live simply, in solidarity with the poor, and sustainably with creation.” The first SMA Irish Province parish to win such an award, it was only the second parish in the diocese of Brentwood and the 24th in England and Wales to receive the **LiveSimply** award. The award was the result of a year long effort by the whole parish, driven by the Faith in Action group (pictured below after presentation of the award with Kevin Conway SMA, Angelo Lafferty SMA and Stella Creasey MP). The Faith in Action group came together with the support of the parish personnel, John Brown SMA and Kevin Conway SMA in March 2016. In November 2015, the whole parish had embraced the SMA Thumbprint Campaign for Climate Justice and the Faith in Action group felt that pursuing the **LiveSimply** award was an effective means of building on and reinforcing that commitment.



Among the activities that earned the parish its award were the opening of the parish hall to the homeless and creating a rota of volunteers; developing a vegetable patch; banning disposable crockery and cutlery at parish functions; using eco-detergents and Fair Trade products; initiating an annual “Walk to Mass Sunday” and encouraging cycling to Mass by installing bicycle racks at the Church. It is hoped this is just the start of more great things in Walthamstow.

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SMA ECOLOGY PROJECTS

Gardens - Wilton and Ranelagh

In December 2015, prompted by the publication of *Laudato Si'*, the Irish Province adopted an Ecology policy, one aspect of which was the promotion of garden projects at SMA houses. The garden at Wilton has gone from strength to strength in the intervening period, with the construction of a poly tunnel and the installation of water butts to gather rain water. The garden, overseen by Tom Kearney SMA (pictured above), produces organic potatoes, sweetcorn, strawberries, pears, raspberries, rhubarb, peas and a variety of herbs, much of which is used



in the Wilton kitchen. The garden has many visitors and members of the L'Arche Community have a plot which they plan to develop themselves.

The Ranelagh Community are continuing with their urban garden, collecting rainwater using the nearby spouting and a rain butt, and producing, onions, garlic, cabbages, radishes, lettuce and tomatoes from their vegetable troughs. In addition there are a variety of fruit trees growing in the main garden

Eco Spirituality Dromantine

In Spring 2017, the Dromantine Community issued an invitation to anyone with an interest in caring for creation, ecological matters or the spirituality underpinning these issues to come together to share thoughts, ideas and experiences on this vitally important subject. About a dozen people attended the first meeting and a very lively and full discussion took place about what interests, inspires and concerns people on the issue of caring for creation. Everyone agreed that having a space in which to talk and where ideas could be shared and developed would be a positive development and the group agreed to meet again in four weeks. The group, which has been growing in size, has now met several times, and expresses itself thus: *"A gathering of interested people who want to create a space in which we can explore how best to live our relationship with God, with each other and with creation, ensuring we will hand on a better world to future generations. We will explore a variety of practical ways in which we can give expression to all of this."*

The group will meet again in the first week of September and reflect on practical ways to express care for creation, exploring existing activities and others which may be initiated in the future.



Climate Volunteers



Last year the SMA advertised for volunteers with an interest in Climate Justice or care for creation to undertake training in delivery of the Thumbprint Campaign for Climate Justice. Training was held in Dublin, Claregalway, Dromantine, the Midlands and twice in Cork and a total of 43 people have been trained to date. They have begun to deliver the Thumbprint in school and parishes across Ireland and are a vital part of the SMA mission in Ireland.

NEW FVC DIRECTORS TAKE UP POSTS

MUNSTER –Ignatius Malwa SMA from Zambia, was ordained in 2008, following which he worked in Nigeria for 8 years. He first visited Ireland in 2014 when he travelled to many parts of the country meeting FVC members and celebrating Masses in each of the various provinces. He returned to Ireland in January 2017 for a period of orientation and from the beginning of August assumed the role of FVC Director in Munster from Fergus Tuohy. Ignatius is adjusting to the Irish fondness for tea but finding it more difficult to get used to our weather.



ULSTER -Dan McCauley SMA, a native of Clady, Co Tyrone, returned to Ireland in 2014 after more than 40 years in Kontagora in Northern Nigeria. Following a sabbatical, he was appointed to Youth Ministry, working with the FOA and the Summer Camps in Dromantine. He assumed the additional role of FVC Director in Ulster in February 2017 following Lee Cahill's departure to Cork. Although Dan is already a familiar face to many FVC members in Ulster, from September, he will move into the Director's role full time.

LEINSTER –Paul Monahan SMA is from Skerries, north County Dublin. Before his ordination in 1994, he spent a year of his training for priesthood in Zambia. After ordination he went back to Zambia where he worked until 2000. Returning to Ireland, he became Bursar of the Ranelagh Community and oversaw mission box promotion in Leinster. In 2003, he was appointed to the SMA parish in Neilstown, Clondalkin, where he ministered until 2013. He assumes the role of FVC Director after a period caring for his mother and is looking forward to the challenges and opportunities for fulfilment which his new role may hold.



SMALA – ALBINO PROJECT

SMALA, the SMA Lay Association based in Dromantine, is supporting a new SMA project in Tanzania to build a house for Albino children on the SMA land of Bwiru Hill, Mwanza. It will be a home to around 15 Albino children who will live with the missionaries and will go to school from there.

The children cannot go back to their natural families because in the past 20 years, the number of Albino children and adults who have been attacked, abducted from their homes or killed in Africa has increased dramatically. This is

often motivated by sinister traditional beliefs incited by witchcraft and the belief that a body part from an Albino used during some rituals, or intercourse with an Albino girl can bring good luck, prosperity or a cure of AIDS. The house project has become a priority for the SMA in Tanzania whose government is of the view that security is no longer an issue for these children and plans to return them to their homes,

from special refuge centres, cutting any funding available to ensure their safety or provide for their needs. The SMA is an international Society and there are still Irish SMAs in the country, enabling SMALA to become involved in supporting the project through raising awareness as well as funds, both of which will uphold the human dignity of these children and adults. For more information on this issue, contact any member of SMALA or view the link <http://youtu.be/DLt4MrCzsM>





SOCIETY OF AFRICAN MISSIONS

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To have items included in the newsletter or to include a name on the mailing list for AFRICAN LINK, please contact Dympna Mallon, Laity Coordinator at SMA Dromantine, 96 Glen Road, Newry, Co Down, BT34 1RH, phone (028) 3082 1024, email: laity@sma.ie.

SMA SUMMER SCHOOL

The **SMA Summer School** took place in Dromantine from 7-9 July and the theme was *“Faith Responding to Changing Times”*. More than 100 people attended over the course of the weekend from all over Ireland and beyond, to hear the three keynote presentations which were given by Justin Kilcullen, Paul Vallely and Dr Fáinche Ryan.

Justin Kilcullen is a qualified architect who began his career in Africa building low cost housing. Executive Director of Trócaire for 20 years, he now works as a mentor with senior managers in the voluntary /community sector. He addressed the topic of **“The Sustainable Development**

Goals: A Faith Response”. The Goals represent the vision agreed by world leaders to tackle and end global poverty and related issues between 2015 and 2030.

Paul Vallely (pictured right) is Visiting Professor in Public Ethics at the University of Chester, a Senior Research Fellow in the Global Development Institute at the University of Manchester and author of the best-selling biography *“Pope Francis: Untying the Knots”* and its sequel *“Pope Francis: the Struggle for the Soul of Catholicism”*. Paul’s presentation theme was **“Can Pope Francis resolve the tensions and differences within the Church and influence others beyond it?”** He gave a lively and engaging evaluation of the Pope’s efforts to reform and modernise aspects of the Church as well as his commitment to engagement with people’s of all faith and none.



Dr Fáinche Ryan is currently Director of the Loyola Institute in Trinity College, Dublin, and was previously a lecturer in Theology at Mater Dei College, Dublin. She received a Doctorate in Systematic Theology from the Pontifical University of St Thomas Aquinas, Rome in 2006 and was appointed Director of Studies at the Margaret Beaufort Institute of Theology, Cambridge. Fáinche spoke on the subject of **“Imbalanced Leadership within the Church: The Challenges and Consequences”**. Fáinche touched on many aspects of Church history and practice, and asked if it is possible to achieve unity without requiring uniformity within the Church. She reinforced the need for each person to become more theologically literate and challenged everyone to ask themselves “Is my faith important enough to me?”

A new element in this year’s event was the showing of **“Dare to be Wild”** a film telling the story of **Mary Reynolds** which was shown after supper on Friday night and thoroughly enjoyed by those attending the Summer School. Mary, who won a Gold Medal at the Chelsea Flower Show for her design of a “natural garden” gave a workshop during the event on **“Remembering our Roles as Guardians of the Earth.”** Other workshops were provided by **Sr Nellie McLaughlin** on **“Laudato Si’ and the Call to Conversion-Impossible Challenge for the Modern World?”**; **Dr Bryan McMahon** on **“The Reality of Direct Provision and the Christian Duty to demand change”**; **Rev Ivan Steen** on **“An Inclusive Parish: Christian Imperative or Optional Extra?”**; **Dr Jessie Rogers** on **“A Woman’s Voice in the Church; Biblical and Newcomer Perspectives”** and **Fr Gerry O’Hanlon SJ** on **“The People on the Margins: A Faith Response in A Secular Society”**. Our thanks to all who contributed to the event’s success as we look ahead to Summer School 2018.