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WHEN THE FOUNDER'S VILLAGE BECOMES A MISSION LAND



Castel Team: Fr Maria, Fr Antoine Chenu, Fr Eleuthere Oensavi

At the 2016 Provincial Assembly of our Lyon Province (France), it was suggested that an SMA community be established in the birthplace of our founder, the Venerable Bishop Melchior de Marion Brésillac.

After several years of planning (including discussions with the local bishop) this suggestion became a reality when Archbishop Michel Cartatéguy, SMA, (emeritus Archbishop of Niamey, Niger) officially installed the new SMA pastoral team in the parish of Saint-Michel du Lauragais in Castelnaudary.

Fr Thibault Renaudy, the diocesan priest coordinating the parishes in the area, said: "We are happy to welcome the SMA family to this parish which has an historical importance for them." Father Maria, from the SMA Indian Province, arrived in Castelnaudary at the end of July 2022. He expressed his joy to be part of the pilot team of the new mission: "I am still discovering the parish. I am aware that this project is not only important for me as a person, and for the Lyon Province, but for the whole SMA family. Our presence in Castelnaudary today gives a deep meaning to the life of the Founder by making him and the SMA charism known through various activities in collaboration with the local church".



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Fr Maria is now joined by two other priests: Father Eleuthère Ouensavi, from the Benin Republic, who was appointed to the Lyon Province to study at the Catholic University of Toulouse and, at the same time, to lend a hand in St Michel's parish. He brings with him a rich missionary experience from his time as a missionary in Abidjan, Ivory Coast. Fr Eleuthère was also involved in training our SMA seminarians in that country before being called to Castelnaudary. He describes his first impressions as a return to the roots of the SMA. He is convinced that working as a missionary in France is "relevant and compatible with the SMA charism", concluding that at some point we receive, and at some point, we are also obliged to give.

Fr Antoine Chenu, aged 83, an associate priest and an Honorary SMA member worked alongside the SMA in West Africa for 44 years. He has been working in Castelnaudary for several years before the SMA arrived. Fr Antoine welcomed the SMA priests, saying "I am happy to be part of this team even though I am old". His presence will help to establish a balance between the old and the new, bringing different points of view to the table, contributing to increased innovation and creative problem-solving of the pastoral challenges in the local church.

Another reason for the SMA presence in Castelnaudary relates to the ongoing Cause for the Canonisation of the Venerable Bishop de Brésillac SMA. Should the Church officially recognize his exemplary way of life through his canonisation, "it would be a great testimony to the local church of Saint Michel where he was born, raised and ministered", declared the former Archbishop of Niamey. "It will be easy to do some things to make him, his works and his vision of the mission known," he added. As well as that, this SMA team will "be at the service of the local Church in the way our SMA Founder was", concluded the Archbishop. "So, in the name of the Provincial Council and in the name of the whole SMA family, I am happy to officially install this new apostolic community and I hope that it will bear abundant fruit".

Fr Dominic Wabwireh, SMA

The SMA Founder was ordained in 1838 as a priest for the diocese of Carcassonne, France. He was then appointed as a Curate in his home parish, Castelnaudary. He had always wanted to be a missionary but the opposition of his father caused him to put this plan on hold. However, in 1841, he joined the Paris Foreign Missions Society and went as a missionary to southern India. In 1846, he was ordained titular Bishop of Pruse and later appointed as the Vicar Apostolic of Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu. Due to differences with the other bishops about ordaining local clergy and other matters, Bishop de Brésillac resigned in 1855. On returning to France, he founded the SMA on 8 December 1856 in Lyon for missionary work among "the most abandoned" in Africa.

In May 1859, he arrived in Freetown, Sierra Leone, though Yellow Fever was sweeping through the town. He died of the disease six weeks later, on 25 June 1859.

One of his founding resolutions was "to use every available means, all my strength, all my mind, towards the training of a native clergy." Thank God, this resolution has seen huge numbers of diocesan clergy in the countries where we work. And, since 1992, our Society has been blessed with more than 350 African SMA priests. Today, we also have 63 Indian, 26 Polish and 13 Filipino SMA priests.

Through the Family Vocations Community (FVC), thousands of Irish families are supporting the training of our seminarians in Africa, India, Philippines and Poland. Contact your local SMA House if you would like to help this work of training and supporting SMA priests in Africa or send an email to info@sma.ie for further details.



Archbishop Michel



Castelnaudary Church

Here is a trustworthy saying: **If we died with him, we will also live with him** (Phil 1:21)

Please pray for our OLA and SMA missionaries and our deceased supporters.

- Sr Grace Rowan (Curragh, Co Kildare) served in Nigeria and Ireland, died on 21 September 2023, aged 86 years.
- Sr Rosarii O'Sullivan (Athea, Co Limerick), served in Nigeria and Ireland, died on 16 January 2024, aged 103 years.
- Fr Frank Coltsmann (Strokestown, Co Roscommon), served in Nigeria, Canada and Ireland, died on 3 February, aged 90 years.
- Fr Con Murphy (Toames, Kilmichael, Co Cork), served in Nigeria, South Africa, Kenya and Ireland, died on 8 February, aged 87 years.
- Fr Seamus Nohilly (Cummer, Tuam, Co Galway), served in Nigeria and Ireland, died on 24 February, aged 80 years.
- Fr Val Hynes (Skehanagh Upper, Ballintubber, Co Mayo), served in Nigeria and Ireland, died on 15 March, aged 78 years.
- Fr Donal Fennessy (College Road, Cork), British Province, served in Nigeria and England, died in Lafia, Nasarawa State, Nigeria, on 27 March, aged 82 years.
- Sr Majella McCarron (Derrylin, Co Fermanagh), served in Nigeria and Ireland, died on 30 March, aged 84 years.

Lord God, welcome our deceased supporters, benefactors and missionaries into the peace of your Kingdom. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

SMA PREPARATORY PROGRAMME IN TANZANIA

In 1983 the SMA decided to admit African, Filipino, Indian and Polish seminarians to the Society. This decision has borne great fruit and, 41 years later, our SMA membership has grown, especially in African countries.

which they begin to explore whether the life of an SMA missionary priest is what they are called to, and become familiar with the SMA: our history, mission and spirituality. They are also introduced to the subjects they will later study in one of our SMA major seminaries in Kenya, Nigeria, or Ivory Coast.

Looking at the photographs one cannot help but be reminded of the verse from St Luke's Gospel where the Pharisees complained to Jesus about the noise of people praising him as he entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. Jesus replied to them, "I tell you if these were silent the stones and rocks would shout out" (Luke 19:40).

The buildings among the rocks on Bwiru Hill will not only be a training centre for SMA students. They will also serve as a place for spiritual direction, retreats, language learning, training programmes for lay people etc. The Centre will, in time, be able to receive guests visiting Mwanza.

We, the SMA team in Tanzania, are deeply grateful to all who have supported us and helped with the costs involved in establishing this Centre. It will play its part in helping the growth life and the development of the Tanzanian District.

An important source of funding for this Centre is the Family Vocations Community (FVC) of the Irish Province and other Grants from the Province. The FVC brings together people who want to support the training of priests for Africa. For further information about how you can support Priests for Africa contact the FVC Director at your nearest SMA House (addresses on back page) or write to info@sma.ie

Gerry Forde

29 SMAs are working in Tanzania coming from Benin Republic, Canada, Central African Republic, India, Ireland, Nigeria, Philippines, Poland, Tanzania, Togo and Zambia.

There are eight Tanzanian SMA priests: two working in the country and the remaining six in other African countries.

We have 28 Tanzanian students at various stages of their training – in the Preparatory Programme, in the International Spiritual Year (in Benin Republic), on Stage (working in a parish alongside experienced SMA missionaries), studying Philosophy and Theology.

We also have two lay Associates (from Netherlands) and two religious Sisters (from a Polish Congregation).

There are now over 800 SMA priests worldwide, more than half of them come from what we initially called the "SMA Foundations." Today SMA's work and live in 17 African countries as well as in Europe, the Americas and Asia. We are blessed with over 400 students in formation for priesthood, most of whom are studying in SMA seminaries and Formation houses in Africa.

One of these new, as yet to be completed houses, is located on Bwiru Hill, Mwanza, Tanzania, which will be the SMA Preparatory Programme centre for future missionary priests from Tanzania.

In the SMA structure, the 29 SMA's in Tanzania, are officially called a 'District', that is an area with growing numbers of local vocations and the potential to become a self-sustaining Unit (Province)



Fr John Kilcoyne SMA with the SMA Vicar General, Fr Francois dePaul Houngue

within the Society. I was appointed the District Leader in 2019 and I am assisted by Father James Shimbala from Tanzania. Fr James is also the Director of the Preparatory Programme.

Due to the increasing number of young Tanzanians asking to join the Society, we decided to build a Centre for their initial training. Work at River Hill began in mid-2022. The location is spectacular not only because it commands panoramic views of Lake Victoria but also because of its amazing terrain. Mwanza is called Rock City for a very good reason: there are massive rocks everywhere and Bwiru Hill is no exception. As a result, the building project has been challenging, demanding the breaking of hundreds of tons of rock, levelling uneven ground, and designing the buildings to fit in with the sloping and multi-level site. To date the administration block and accommodation buildings (consisting of 16 bedrooms) have been completed, along with the kitchen and a recreation room. The community Chapel, dining room and classrooms will be built when money is available. For the moment we are using an office as a classroom for the five students in the 2023/2024 class. Fr James and Fr Evantus Kene (from Nigeria) are in charge of their training. The nine-month Preparatory programme is the first step on their journey to becoming SMA missionaries. It is a time of discernment, during



Students at Prayer

THE WRECK OF THE CALIFORNIA

LOOKING BACK ON A MISSIONARY'S JOURNEY DURING WORLD WAR II



Father Michael McLoughlin, SMA



HMS_California_WWII

Below is an edited version of an account written by Father Michael McLoughlin, SMA, telling of his eventful voyage to Nigeria during the Second World War. It was first published in the March/April 1964 issue of the African Missionary. Fr McLoughlin, from Kilmeena, Co Mayo, was ordained in 1930. He was fifty-three years in Nigeria, working in the vast territory of Yorubaland. He spent most of his time in what today constitutes the Archdioceses of Lagos and Ibadan, and the Diocese of Ijebu-Ode.

In 1943 I was due to return to Nigeria after a long-delayed holiday in Ireland. Getting back proved even more difficult than getting home. Berths were secured on board the once luxury liner "M V California" sailing from Glasgow. Now a troop ship, it was painted grey and bristled with guns. Cabins designed for four now held eight. But one could not complain, the important thing was to get back, however uncomfortable or long wartime detours might make the journey. In spite of air cover many ships on the West African route had been bombed or torpedoed. We crossed our fingers as we sailed past Ireland heading west into the Atlantic on 7 July 1943. There were twenty-five missionaries on board, among them twelve SMA's and seven members of the Sisters of Our Lady of Apostles (OLA). Our convoy was a small one of three ships, guarded by two destroyers and a sloop.

We turned south, towards Africa, far out in the Atlantic. On the afternoon of 10 July there were loud explosions as the destroyers dropped depth charges. We must have attracted submarines. On the following day, about 7pm, we had an alert after dinner. Worryingly the "All Clear" did not follow but we could see nothing, nor hear the sound of enemy planes. The suspense mounted and we waited. Without warning all the ship's guns opened up a terrific barrage. The din was absolutely deafening and every part of the ship vibrated. Suddenly there was a terrific explosion and the ship lurched badly. Next a second and more deafening explosion rocked the ship from stem

to stern. The engines went silent. While the guns above us were firing as hard as ever, we knew the ship had suffered severe damage. In the light of torches, I saw the wreckage along the corridor outside. Occasional moans seemed to come from the debris. Soon we heard the call: Abandon ship. Life-boat Stations!

On the boat-deck we could see the fore-part of the ship in flames. "M V Duchess of York" was afire amidships about a quarter of a mile away. Overhead, I could hear the drone of planes but could barely see them. They remained too high for the range of the ship's guns. As we were lining-up at our life-boat positions, another order sent us scampering: "Action Stations"! But our gunfire held off the attackers and we returned to the life-boats. The wounded and women went first. Two of the priests had to swim for it and were eventually picked up. We saw many clinging to scraps of floating wreckage and rafts.

As we got some distance away we could see the whole ship was an inferno, with loud explosions as ammunition stocks blew up. One of the priests who was near the Purser's office when the last bomb hit, was hurled along the corridor by the force of the blast.

I scarcely recognized him with torn clothing, a blackened and bleeding face. Final rescue came in the form of a destroyer already crowded with survivors from the "M V Duchess of York".





The victims of the explosion were horribly wounded or burned. This was certainly war at close quarters.

The destroyer set course for Casablanca. With only the clothes on our backs we now felt what it meant to be destitute and how much the trifling baggage we lost really meant to us. Several "alerts" were sounded during the day but an attack did not follow and we felt immense relief when the "All Clear" sounded.

On Tuesday, 13 July, we docked in Casablanca, Morocco. The American forces welcomed us ashore and gave us a fine reception, provided us with everything, including army uniforms to change into, beds and accommodation. We then learned that one hundred and ninety souls were lost from the two ships. Thankfully all twenty-five missionaries were safe, suffering nothing more than shock.

It took two weeks before we finally got under way on another boat, the "TSS Nea Hellas". We reached Freetown in six days. From there we boarded the "RMS Tamaroa" and sailed down the west coast of Africa, without incident, to Lagos. With only uniforms to declare at the Customs, we got through easily. I was, at last, back safe and sound in Nigeria.

Edited by Gerry Forde



TOWARDS A SYNODAL CHURCH IN MISSION



Introduction

This Synodal Assembly (Rome, 4-29 October, 2023) was unique in the recent history of Episcopal Synods on several accounts. It was held in the Vatican's Audience Hall, not the usual Synodal Hall. Among the 400 participants (including observers and facilitators), were a significant number of religious and lay men and women (70), all with voting rights. The method of the synod was also new (for Vatican meetings). It gave a voice to all the participants and facilitated what was termed 'conversations in the Spirit' (35 round tables of 10 participants – mixed – each person being given a chance to speak several times). It involved many moments of silent prayer, speaking (3 mins), and listening, followed by free exchange. The final 42-page Synthesis Report, entitled '**A synodal Church in Mission**', summarises the results of these conversations. All 81 paragraphs of the report received the two-thirds majority of votes necessary for inclusion in the document. It should be noted that the report is not a final document but rather 'a tool at the service of ongoing discernment.'

Structure of the Report

The Report consists of an introduction, a conclusion, and three sections, entitled respectively 'The face of the synodal Church,' 'All disciples, all missionaries,' and 'Weaving bonds, generating communities.' Each section contained subtopics split into three headings: 'Convergences,' which highlight areas of agreement, 'Matters for Consideration,' pointing to subjects for further discussion, and 'Proposals,' suggesting specific actions.

Convergences

The Assembly was practically unanimous in affirming the fundamental equality and dignity of all the baptised (as clearly taught by Vatican II), while respecting the specific identity and role of the laity in the Church. The Report notes that many assembly members warned against the danger of

'clericalising' the laity, creating 'a kind of lay elite that perpetuates inequalities and divisions among the People of God'. The Report states: '*Before any distinction of charisms and ministries, we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body*' (1 Cor 12:13). Therefore, among all the baptized, there is a genuine equality of dignity and a common responsibility for mission.' By the anointing of the Spirit, who 'teaches all things' (1 Jn 2:27), all believers possess an instinct for the truth of the gospel, a *sensus fidei*. Synodal processes enhance this gift and allow for verifying the existence of that consensus of the faithful which is a sure criterion for determining whether a particular doctrine or practice belongs to the Apostolic faith' (Report, p. 9). This is a hugely significant statement. It underlines the importance of consulting the faithful, not just on practical and pastoral issues, but also on matters of doctrine, a principle vigorously argued by Cardinal John Henry Newman over a century and a half ago, in 1859.

The Report states that there was a '*widely reported need to make liturgical language more accessible to the faithful and more embodied in the diversity of cultures*'.

Without questioning continuity with ritual tradition and the need for liturgical formation, the Report acknowledges the need for further reflection on this issue and for greater responsibility to be given to episcopal conferences in this area, along the lines of the *motu proprio* (Personal Letter of the Pope,) *Magnum Principium* (2017).

The Report stresses the need for greater participation of laity (especially women) in the life and mission of the Church and in decision-making processes at all levels (from local to universal), saying that this 'can contribute to a more vibrant and missionary Church'. This will require the creation of new lay ministries according to the needs of local Churches. The Assembly endorsed the establishment of a special 'baptismal ministry listening and accompanying'. The Report also calls for special attention be given to the formation of priests so as '*to avoid the risks of formalism and ideology that lead to authoritarian attitudes and to clericalism*'. Priests need to be trained in the art of listening to, and collaborating with, the lay faithful on a basis of respect and equality.

Matters for Further Consideration

There were a number of significant issues on which Assembly delegates did not reach consensus, and which, therefore, require further study and reflection. One issue was the meaning and implications of Synodality itself. Many delegates found the term confusing. The Report calls for an 'in-depth terminological and conceptual study of the notion and practice of synodality' to be undertaken and presented at the next meeting in October '24.

The Report also calls for the establishment of a 'special intercontinental commission of theologians and canonists' to examine the canonical implications of Synodality.

While the reports of the local and national synodal assemblies, especially in the Western world, revealed enormous support for the ordination of women as deacons, the ordination of married men, and the removal of compulsory celibacy for priests, the Rome Assembly did not reach agreement on these issues. It did, however, agree to examine them again at the second Universal Assembly this coming October.

Neither did the Assembly agree on what it termed 'difficult issues'. These issues are: gender identity and sexual orientation; the end of life; ethical issues related to artificial intelligence; and irregular marital situations. The report states that these are controversial issues in society as well as in the Church, and that, to address them, the Church must take account of 'perspectives from the human and social sciences, philosophical reflection and theological elaboration'. It is noteworthy that the Report avoids using the term 'LGBTQ+' – the term non-binary persons use when referring to themselves as a group.

Proposals

The Report makes several important proposals on the issues discussed by the Assembly. I will not attempt to refer to all of them but simply to highlight those that struck me as particularly significant.

- Under **Lay participation in the Church**, the Report proposes that the responsibilities assigned to the existing ministry of Lector be expanded to become 'a fuller ministry of the Word of God, which, in appropriate contexts, could also include preaching.' The Report also envisages the creation of a new lay ministry of accompaniment and listening, and 'a ministry for married couples committed to supporting family life and accompanying people preparing for the sacrament of marriage'.
- Under the specific heading, **Women in the Church**, the Report calls for the participation of women in decision-making processes at every level in the Church, taking on greater roles of responsibility in pastoral care and ministry. The Report states: '*There is an urgent need to ensure that women can participate in decision-making processes*'. The Reports notes that Pope Francis has significantly increased the number of women in positions of responsibility in the Roman Curia. The same should happen at other levels of the life of the Church, and Canon Law must be adapted accordingly. The Report goes on to propose that women be involved in seminary teaching and training programs (as happens in some Western countries). Research must continue on women's access to the Diaconate, drawing on the work of two Commissions already established. Furthermore, liturgical language must be revised to make it more respectful to women. Liturgical texts and Church documents should 'be more attentive not only to the use of language that takes men and women into equal account, but also to the inclusion

of a range of words, images, and narratives that draw with greater vitality on women's experience.'

- On **Religious**, the Report proposes the revision of *Mutuae Relationes*, a 1978 document on the relationship between Bishops and Religious, in the light of synodality. This revision must involve all those concerned.
- Regarding the **Formation of Priests**, the Report call for a thorough review of formation for ordained ministry in view of synodality, including a revision of the *Ratio Fundamentalis* (*The Gift of the Priestly Vocation*), published by the Congregation of the Clergy, Rome, 2016).
- Regarding the **role of Bishops in the Church**, the Report calls for the establishment of a process 'for a regular review of the bishop's work, with reference to the style of his authority, finance and Safeguarding. It also requires a review of the criteria for selecting bishops, including consulting the People of God. The Report also recommends further study on the doctrinal and juridical nature of the Episcopal Conferences, and on the canonical status of continental assemblies of Bishops; and the creation of new international ecclesiastical provinces, for the benefit of bishops who do not belong to any episcopal conference.

Conclusion

The Episcopal Synod on Synodality was an experience of synodality rather than a discussion about synodality. While some people who followed the synodal process closely were initially somewhat disappointed that the Assembly did not come up with more radical proposals for the renewal for the Church, on further reflection, the degree of consensus it achieved is remarkable, given the great diversity of viewpoints represented in the Assembly. The fact that even controversial proposals were not rejected out of hand but included under matters for further study and reflection, is surely significant. In any case, the success of the Assembly must not be judged just by its Report. Pope Francis wants us to focus more on the synodal process itself than on the issues discussed.

As the experience of the Assembly proved, the synodal process creates an atmosphere of respectful listening that can unite members with very different viewpoints. The ultimate aim of the synodal process is not to turn the Church into a more democratic Institution, but to enable the People of God to fulfil its responsibility to announce the Good News of God's love and mercy of God to all humanity and indeed all creation. It is to achieve this goal, that Pope Francis wants the entire Church to become synodal. As missionaries committed to the service of God's reign in the world we must respond wholeheartedly to this challenge, and strive to embed synodality in the heart of the Church wherever we work.

Fr Michael McCabe, SMA

Ar scáth a chéile a mhaireann na daoine



OLA Leadership Team Sr Janet Nutakor, Sr Mary Crowley, Sr Gabrielle Farrell

The core of the OLA mission is to know and love God, and to make God known and loved. With God at the centre, our mission unfolds through various ministries with a commitment to non-violent action for justice, peace, and the integrity of creation. We focus on the poor and marginalised, particularly women and children, and we do this by working closely with like-minded people.

The 18th OLA General Chapter took place last year, and the first part of the OLA Ireland Assembly took place in January 2024 when we, along with our lay staff and other collaborators discussed some of the projects with which we are associated. We focussed on collaboration, exploring how this is a key strength for us as we move forward together, in a time of significant transformation.

St Paul's conversion experience on the road to Damascus was the backdrop to this sharing. We could see vulnerability etc. not as a difficulty but as an opportunity to experience our connectedness, rely on others, do things in a new way. It was only in his vulnerability and reliance on others that Paul found God.

In the shelter of each other we find life

We were reminded of the saying, "Ar scáth a chéile a mhaireann na daoine," ("In the shelter of each other we find life."). It is in each other that we find our strength and our purpose. Transformation, shelter, and interconnectedness echo profoundly within the OLA, highlighting that our strength and future lie in the very principles of vulnerability, unity, and shared purpose. We were encouraged to adopt a mindset of gratitude for the past, passion for the present, and hope for the future, embracing each moment with purpose and intention.

Voices of Collaboration: Insights and Reflections

"One Heart, One Mission, Witnessing to God's Love in the World". We listened to different groups we are connected to in various ways. Each of them shared their thoughts, experiences, and insights, underscoring our collective journey towards a more just and interconnected world.

Social Housing Education Project (SHEP)

Jim Sheehan, the director of SHEP, shared insights into their journey since moving into the old school building at Ardfoy in late 2018. He highlighted the significance of their adult education programs and emphasised their commitment to care for the earth by fostering awareness among volunteers to become better stewards of our planet.

Cork Migrant Centre (CMC)

The CMC representatives spoke of how the Solidarity Garden (in the grounds of Ardfoy) has become a beacon of hope and inclusion, offering migrants a sense of community and belonging, while fostering intercultural exchange and encouraging outdoor engagement, particularly for women living in the Direct Provision Centres who felt stifled and isolated.

Horticulture LTI

Funded by the Cork Education & Training Board (ETB), the Horticulture Centre serves as an educational and skill-building hub, enabling individuals to explore gardening, whether as a hobby or a career. Being on the Ardfoy grounds has the added benefit of building relationships with the other groups on the property.

Society of African Missions (SMA Ireland)

Gerry Forde, the SMA Justice Officer, explained the work of the OLA/SMA Joint Justice Committee, highlighting the transformative power of collaboration in moving from a reactive to a proactive planning approach. They focus on three issues: advocating for Africa and its diaspora, fighting trafficking, and nurturing environmental stewardship. We have moved beyond organisational boundaries, forging alliances with SHEP, CMC, and extending to numerous organisations throughout Ireland.

Two other activities were highlighted by Gerry: the annual Intergenerational Climate Conference, which last year engaged over 300 participants from varied backgrounds, including schools, community organisations and individuals; and the Three Faiths Forum Earth Day event held in Ardfoy with the involvement of SHEP, the Horticulture Gardens, and the Solidarity Garden.

Ardfoyle Staff

The support of the Ardfoy House Staff creates the 'space' that allows our collective mission to flourish. A number of OLA Leaders expressed gratitude to them for their essential role in fostering a collaborative environment. Through these testimonies, it became evident that collaboration lies at the heart of our shared mission, enabling us to create meaningful connections, promote social justice, and cultivate a sense of belonging and empowerment within our community.

Further Reflections

"Behold, I am doing a new thing; do you not perceive it?" (Isaiah 43:19). This passage brings into focus the divine providence guiding our collective journey and the unfolding of new opportunities within our collaborative efforts. Drawing these threads together, it becomes clear that the willingness to embrace vulnerability, to say yes to new opportunities, and to work hand in hand has been instrumental in fostering not just communion but profound transformation.

Edited from an article (Collaboration, Magic and Little Miracles) by Michelle Robertson, OLA Communications Officer. To read the complete article go to www.olaireland.ie and then to OLA News.

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