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Newsletter

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As I sit here at my desk in my new office in AMRI enjoying the Autumn colours of the beautiful trees outside, I realise how much I must be thankful for.

We have travelled a long and winding road but finally arrived here in July. Of course, I was still working from home because of covid but gradually as things began opening so did the office spaces and the AMRI staff began to work in the building 2 days per week and 3 days at home.

I am delighted to say I have joined the team David Rose the Secretary General, Fidelma Mallon Accounts, Helena Conolly Communications, Toni Pyke Justice and Anne Donnellan Office Administrator and already we have formed great relationships and are able to support one another in various ways.

Although I have not yet met the AMRI Executive we have been able to welcome Sr Mary Hanrhan PBVM as a member of our Executive thus linking us with the AMRI Executive. Sr Mary met with us for the first time at our last meeting for this year. Mary is enthusiastic about being part of our team and I am sure will have much to offer us. Thank you Mary for saying yes and welcome to Vocations Ireland.

We are still in the process of transferring our accounts to AMRI accounts. This has been the longest part of the process as the banks procedures are extremely slow. Once the accounts transfer over, we will then be able to officially close our Charity and come under the AMRI Charity Status.

There will be no real change to the working of our accounts except that they will go through Fidelma as the accountant. We will still be sending out our invoice for subscriptions in January. The monies we have will be used for the work of Vocations Ireland and to pay the salary of the Director of Vocations Ireland.

We did not plan for the Conference & AGM normally held in November for two reasons.

Covid has put a lot of pressure on people, and we witnessed our members becoming very tired. We were aware that we had already had an EGM and numerous webinars and conferences during the year so the Executive took the decision to plan for a Conference and AGM in the Spring. Hopefully we will have risen out of the new wave by then and getting back to live meetings by the Spring.

As we enter Advent let us wait patiently and with great hope for the birth of Jesus. We hope that 2022 will bring us to new horizons



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Director Vocations Ireland

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The final of the Vocation Music Award UK/IRL 2021 showcased 16 self-penned songs written by young people on the theme of Vocation. It was the culmination of a project undertaken by Vocations teams in Ireland and the UK, that saw over 40 young people initially enter the competition.

On September 16th, via YouTube Live Stream, the top 10 were announced, followed by the winners placed in 1st 2nd and 3rd place. These 10 will go on to record an album in 2022.

Even though the final took place online (due to Covid restrictions) it did not detract from the impact of their message or their talent. The quality of song writing, their integrity as young writers, and the level of their musicianship were inspiring. It is well-known that young people have suffered massively during the Covid pandemic. Interestingly most of these songs were written during lockdown! What it gives us is an insight into their seeking, their search for God, their purpose and calling in the midst of a global pandemic.

Being a judge and coordinating the final event was humbling and inspiring in equal measure. Well done to all!

Helena Connolly, AMRI Communications Coordinator



Welcome Sr Mary

My name is Sr Mary Hanrahan. I am a Presentation Sister and I am currently the Provincial Leader of the Northeast Province here in Ireland and also vice-president of AMRI. I worked for many years as a teacher and Principal at secondary level after which I spent 11 years on our Congregational Leadership Team. Before coming into my present role I worked for 7 years as a prison chaplain, a role to which I hope to return when I finish in leadership. I have always been interested in promoting vocations to religious life and have worked on a number of commissions over the years. I am delighted to be the link between the AMRI Executive and Vocations Ireland and I look forward to being able to support the work of Vocations Ireland and also to learning from the wisdom, energy and enthusiasm of this vibrant committee.



Colm O Mahony OSA

Hello All and Happy Advent!

I am sure by now in most of our communities and places where we minister the “Christmas Rush” is in full flow. Boxes of decorations and lights are being dusted off, untangled and vows made that next year we will definitely pack things back in a much better way! On the streets, lights have been hung to create that festive feeling and shops have been putting out their own Christmas decorations and special offers. People are planning what to buy, what to cook, what do I need to post off to loved ones and while there can be a sense of feverish shopping people are in good spirits. Christmas after all is a time for families, a time for loved ones, of sharing and forgetting life’s cares for those few days.

Yet, we are still in Advent, a time that seems out of place for many around is. Advent calls on us to slow down, to prepare not for gift giving but to receive the greatest gift; the birth of Christ. It can be all too easy to get caught up in the excitement of Christmas without actually giving ourselves time to prepare. Advent can be a space to take a retreat – even if it is online, a space to take more walks in the morning to see God’s creation. It is remarkable that at the time of year when nature seems to be dying around us, the Christ Child was being born to life. It can also be a time of hope, hope for what the New Year will bring. Hope in how our ministry will adapt to the current ever-changing situation. Every new birth is a sign of God’s presence and love and this Advent can afford us the time and space to truly encounter God in our fellow community members, family, friends and ministry.

Vocations Ireland is looking forward to its own new birth working with AMRI for the promotion and support of religious life in Ireland. It is a time of change but also of growth and opportunity. The Executive and I are excited about what this new dynamic can bring and we look forward to collaborating with you all in the New Year. So once again, enjoy the peace and expectancy that is Advent and I wish you all a most happy and blessed Christmas and New Year.



I was delighted to be in collaboration with Nov UK & Vocations Scotland in the 26th UN Climate Change Conference which was hosted by the UK in Glasgow, my home town. This was indeed a great privilege and one of real historical importance.

Our time in Glasgow was a busy one filled with meeting hundreds of people on the streets of Glasgow. We shared stories and discussed the importance of God's call for each of us to become better stewards of the earth. We shared how some of our religious communities are creating new ways of caring for the earth and really trying to respond to Laudato Si. We gave out packets of wildflower seeds and prayer cards as well as our Vocations Ireland bags. Hopefully this gave people the opportunity to bring home the message of caring for our common home and encourage them to plant seeds at home.

We offered a number of events during the event around the city. These were attended by families, communities and youth groups. We began with a Rosary procession at Carfin Grotto on Sunday 31st October. This was attended by followers online and those present at the Grotto with just over 300 in total. One of the young men from Glasgow who made it into the top 10 of the Vocation Music Awards opened our prayer with his song and Fr Richard Redemptorist Provincial led this prayer event with various students from the University of Glasgow and some of the organising team leading the Rosary.



A welcome hub was set up in the Pauline book shop in St Enochs'sq. The Mercy Bus drew attention to the square which was located outside the bookshop and gave the team a chance to engage in conversation with people while giving out the seeds and prayer card. Some people entered the bus for confession and a chat with the priests available. Thank you to the OFM, Blessed Sacrament Fathers and Comboni Missionaries who came to join us in Glasgow and were available to help with confessions.



A version of Night Fever took place in St Andrews Cathedral drawing people into the experience of prayer and quiet contemplation. They had an opportunity to light a candle, pray and go to Confession. The Blessed Sacrament Father's with their parish teams brought the Carlos Acutis Exhibition to the University and St Columba's parish and was visited by many, especially young people during this week.

I am not sure the Conference actual achieved all it should or could have achieved. It would have been wonderful if the delegates had come out on to the streets of Glasgow where they would have really heard the voice of the people. Friday we witnessed and joined with over 5,000 young people march on to George Square. It was the same on Saturday with over 100,000 people march through Glasgow to George Square and then onto Glasgow Green. It was peaceful and led by the Faith Groups and I was proud to be a part of this procession sharing our stories and concerns for the worlds future. I was deeply saddened as were those marching by the fact that the Global South could not be part of the conference this year because of travel restrictions. Surely with all our IT skills and expertise today this could have been addressed.

I was proud of Glasgow, with the friendliness and helpfulness of people, its organisation, provision of masks, antigen tests and pcr tests all freely handed out at train and bus stations. We finished by joining the delegates for the final Mass which took place St Aloysius Church on the 7th November. This was attended by different Catholic organisations, delegates and visitors to Cop26. The Mass was celebrated by Bishop Hugh Gilbert OSB, Bishop of Aberdeen and chair of the Bishop's Conference of Scotland, Papal Nuncio Archbishop Claudio Gugerotti and Bishop John Arnold of Salford Diocese. The Mass was focused on praying for the outcomes of COP26 and the continuing negotiations.

Next year Vocations Ireland hopes to join with the Justice desk in the planning of pilgrimages as a follow up to Cop 26.