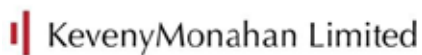


# Annual Report

2024-2025

Gospel Leadership  
Social and Ecological Justice  
Towards a Synodal Church  
Collaboration and Services





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# President's Message

**Fr. Joe McGee MSC**

*President, AMRI*

***“Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls”.***

*(Jeremiah 6:16)*

Since October 2024 it has been a privilege and a challenge to work on the Executive Council of AMRI in collaboration with committed people who passionately care about religious and lay missionary life. We are sometimes challenged by the negative legacy from our collective past which at times overshadows the positive and unique contribution that Religious Life has made to this country for generations. We continue to reflect on our present realities and challenges of today. As we look to the future, some groups are facing diminishment, some continue to serve God's people from ever decreasing human and financial resources, while some continue to welcome new members. We are conscious also of new groups of Religious that are recently arriving to minister into Ireland and lay societies of apostolic life who work throughout the country.

## ***Hope in a Chaotic World***

The world we inhabit is increasingly influenced by the political leadership of a few influential voices who promote power and strength over peace and reconciliation. They emphasise excessive nationalism over and above seeking peace and prosperity together with others. As Catholic Christians, we take inspiration in the events that surrounded the death of Pope Francis and the election of Pope Leo XIV. After his death Pope Francis was cherished and remembered by people of all creeds and none, who celebrated and mourned the loss of a great moral leader who was never afraid to speak and practice the

Truth of the Gospel in simplicity and love. The legacy of Francis and the promise of Leo's new leadership, which focuses on peace, encourages and supports our brothers and sisters who work for peace, justice and the care of creation in ways that will never make headlines. This Annual Report highlights how AMRI members and those working on our behalf as AMRI staff are doing what Pope Leo XIV said in his first public address that, *“We must seek together how to be a missionary Church, a Church that builds bridges and embraces dialogue, always open to receive people, with open arms – everyone, all those who need our charity, our presence, dialogue and love”.*

Looking back on the year we pay tribute to AMRI staff who work tirelessly promoting our collective mission in key areas such as JPIC, Vocations, Ongoing Formation, APT, Synodality, Archives and Lay Mission together, with the secretarial backup that is efficiently provided. The AMRI website and the regular noticeboard keep all members up to date with current events and programmes on offer. We also thank the members of the different sub committees who give their time voluntarily when invited to attend meetings and share their expertise.

I would like to extend special thanks to Gerard Gallagher, Secretary General, whose energy and availability to the Executive, as well as to individual members and communities, must

not be taken for granted. He is a vital link and point of contact between AMRI and the different organisations and church bodies with whom we network. In this past year, with the generous support of the AMRI staff, Gerard ably facilitated the move of the AMRI offices from the Missionaries of Africa at Templeogue to the Spiritan community in Kimmage. Appreciation is due to both communities who have supported accommodation for our AMRI offices.

Special mention and gratitude to Sister Anne Codd pbvm, who has tendered her resignation following her appointment as Unit (vice-province) leader in the Presentation Sisters community in Pakistan. As Leadership Support and Development Officer, Anne has worked hard providing resource material and much needed opportunities for members in leadership roles. She has given countless hours as an AMRI representative on the National Synodal Team, hosting meetings of leaders and members of our Religious Congregations and Missionary Societies around the country. We wish Anne every blessing.

I'd like to also express our gratitude to Margaret Cartwright who will retire at the end of 2025. Margaret has directed Vocations Ireland for many years and has contributed greatly to AMRI in recent years. Margaret has a distinguished record of working in a faith-based environment which goes back to her days in All Hallows College. She has created a space for Vocational Discernment and support within the Irish Church for Religious. She is extremely well known and respected as she travels and meets religious all over Ireland. Her support of younger religious and those discerning vocations has brought Margaret to many events over the years. We wish her well in her retirement.

### ***Religious Formation Ministry Programme – Closure, Summer 2026***

It is with deep regret that during this past year the Executive had to make the decision to bring the Religious Formation Ministry Programme to a close in 2026.

Since its inception in 1982, the RFMP, affectionately known to many as the “Loreto



House” Programme, has remained a beacon in the area of formation for formators and leaders, striving to equip participants with human, spiritual and pastoral competencies to face the ever-changing challenges of the Church and the world.

While having served the universal Church for so long, the increased strain of running an international formation programme within the constraints of decreasing numbers and resources and increasing uncertainties, has brought it to a stage where it is now time to move gracefully towards a conclusion. The Executive did not make this decision lightly but over the course of several meetings and moments of prayerful discernment. Further details will be made available throughout the year regarding ongoing initiatives to mark this closure of a programme that has been for participants and staff members alike an incredible journey and a momentous milestone in their lives.

### **Significant challenges that lie ahead for the Executive in the coming year.**

#### ***Safeguarding of Children and vulnerable Adults***

Safeguarding remains both a challenge and an opportunity for all of us. The public fallout from media reports in the past year cast a shadow over all of us. Fallout and challenges from the Report of the Scoping Inquiry into Historical Sexual Abuse in Day and Boarding Schools Run by Religious Orders and the subsequent Government Commission of Investigation will demand a lot of attention and communal

discernment among AMRI members in the coming year. All of us have already made generous contributions towards redress in its various forms, be it individually negotiated compensation packages, contributions to former government redress schemes, contributions or to the services of Towards Healing and Towards Peace together with the employment of Safeguarding personnel to say nothing of legal fees and other forms of professional advice. Nevertheless, direct financial redress/compensation from Congregations to survivors will challenge Religious Congregations for some time to come. Financial support for Towards Healing continues to present a challenge to us. Spikes in numbers having access to their services since the publication of the Scoping Inquiry, has necessitated a recent request for additional funding beyond their annual budget for this year.

Outreach to survivors is a priority for all of us. We all do our very best in this regard with the support of our Designated Liaison Person (DLP). Many of us have met personally with individual survivors and have listened to their harrowing accounts. Many of us have been directly or indirectly instrumental in the healing journey of some. Our Congregations have been instrumental in the setting up of robust policies and procedures that ensure our schools, parishes, retreat centres, and youth activities and services with vulnerable adults are life-giving places of safety and healing.

### *Scoping Inquiry – Commission of Investigation*

DLP's have expressed frustration and disappointment at what they call a "deafening silence" from AMRI when reports like the Scoping Inquiry have been published, or statements are made in the public arena. It is the understanding of the current Executive that we do not have the authority to speak with one voice on such matters that affect our Congregations differently. The Executive hopes to arrive at a definite protocol on this issue having taken stock of the views of members. With the recent announcement of the establishment of a Commission of Investigation into the handling of historical child sex abuse in schools, AMRI members need to reflect on how we might work

together as we cooperate with this government led investigation.

### *Independent strategic review of child safeguarding in the Catholic Church in Ireland RSM Report.*

In 2021, the Irish Bishops' Conference (IEC) and AMRI, in line with best practice, initiated a major and wide-ranging independent external review of child safeguarding in the Catholic Church in Ireland. The review evaluated all aspects of safeguarding and outreach to survivors, including the impact and effectiveness of the important work done by the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCCI) and the two support organisations for survivors, Towards Healing and Towards Peace. The initiation of the review was welcomed by the three organisations.

The final RSM report was presented to the commissioning bodies of IEC and AMRI before Christmas 2024. Representatives from AMRI, IEC, the National Board, Towards Healing and Towards Peace are currently working on how to implement the recommendations which include ongoing outreach to and inclusion of survivors, vulnerable adults, communication strategies, new Catholic organisations, new risks in an increasingly digital age, training and data protection.

### *IRS – Irish Religious Stewardship*

At the 2024 conference presentations were made outlining the challenges of diminishment,



falling numbers and aging membership together with challenges of governance and the care of our members. Not least the preservation of our various unique charisms into the future was highlighted, so the People of God can continue to be served as our founders and foundresses envisioned. Prior to the conference the Executive had set up a working group to study how congregations and societies gradually finding themselves in this position might be supported into the future. We look forward to receiving the findings of this working group at our AGM.

### ***The Synodal Pathway***

AMRI representatives have continued to work with the National Synodal Team. A summary of the reflections compiled from the AMRI regional meetings is available on the AMRI website. This has been submitted to the National Synodal Team (NST), together with the fruit of meetings in the dioceses and other groups and movements in the church in Ireland. The pre-synodal assembly which will take place in October of this year, will draw this work together and mark the beginning of a year of focused pastoral action and reflection, which will culminate in a formal synodal assembly in October 2026. AMRI is challenged to keep a close eye on developments and so keep our members informed.

### ***Meetings with the IEC***

The meetings with the IEC continue. Four times each year the officers from the Executive are invited to meet with the four archbishops during their Maynooth meetings. These meetings are called to share themes that are of mutual interest to both parties. The meetings are cordial and informative. They serve to cultivate a good working relationship between the bishops conference and AMRI.

### ***Further Changes and Challenges as we move forward***

All members of the Executive are provincials or assistant leaders of our respective Congregations. It can be challenging to hold together the leadership of our Congregations and the leadership AMRI. While it is a privilege to work as part of the AMRI Executive team, all of us would admit that we simply cannot give the time and energy this task deserves. How do we manage this into the future? As an Executive we are reflecting on the possibility of inviting former leaders or others with expertise to become (non-voting) members of the executive. This would avoid the necessity of changing the Constitution. These extra members would have more time to attend meetings and to progress the work of the Executive. In this way the Executive could give greater service to the whole group.

### ***Conclusion***

Wars and hostility continue to erupt across the planet. Millions of our brothers and sisters live through forced displacement, violence, and despair. We cannot afford to lose the focus of our missionary vocation. Pope Francis reminded us in his last encyclical, *Dilexit Nos*, that the *“Heart of Christ shines as a source of light and love, capable of unifying what is scattered and of restoring to the world what it most deeply needs: its heart. We are called to have a heart wounded by the world’s pain but not resigned to it; a heart open to the outcast, willing to get its hands dirty, to heal wounds, and to reach out to those who have fallen. From this springs our hope”*.

As Congregations, and Societies of Apostolic Life we too are living through this tumultuous era. Unanticipated challenges are compelling us to navigate differently and adapt our structures to accommodate new and emerging realities. Not only do we need to reorganise the external structures, but so too our ways of life and mission, so that they respond more faithfully to the charisms we have received.

Under the theme of our annual conference *Sustaining Hope: Leadership Now*, let us walk together, building structures that serve, where every decision is inspired by a truly synodal spirituality based on listening, communal discernment and creative initiative.



# AMRI Members

*Leaders of Missionaries and Religious in Ireland*



## *Collaborating and Connecting*

- Irish Episcopal Conference
- National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland
- Towards Healing
- Towards Peace
- Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life
- Misean Cara
- National Mission Council
- Union of the European Conferences of Major Superiors
- Other National Conferences of Religious
- Missio Ireland
- Communicators for Women Religious
- Catholic Youth Ministry Ireland (CYMI)
- National Synodal Pathway



## ***Our Vision***

Inspired by the Good News of Jesus, our vision is a creative and compassionate living of religious and missionary life in a synodal Church, responding with hope to the signs of the times, to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.

## ***Our Mission***

Our mission is to provide leadership and support to our members, to foster collaboration, and to promote spirituality, social justice and sustainable living on a shared journey of faith.

## ***Our Aims***

### **Leadership**

Provide leadership development and governance support.

### **Social and Ecological Justice**

Work for justice, peace and the integrity of creation.

### **Towards a Synodal Church**

Contribute to the re-visioning of a different Church through synodality: communion, participation and mission.

### **Collaboration and Services**

Develop AMRI as a collaborative organisation, a membership network and service provider for members.

### **Strengthening AMRI**

Strengthen the AMRI secretariat and committees to ensure delivery of the strategic plan (2022-7), *A Future with Hope*.



# Secretary General's Overview

*Gerard Gallagher*  
Secretary General

*'In history, God is revealed in the faith, love and hope of people, even people on the margins of the churches and beyond their visible boundaries.'* Thomas Hallic, *The Afternoon of Christianity*

Recently Pope Leo XVI said, *"hope is a constant source of joy, whatever our age"*. Reflecting back over the year in AMRI there is a lot to be hopeful for. As Secretary General of AMRI, I get to encounter and experience some of the great work still being carried out by our Members.

As you read this Report, you can notice the theme of Hope percolating through all the various dimensions and work of AMRI and our Members. The team here in AMRI continue to work hard and support all of our Members in their leadership roles. They are an extremely gifted team. Each of whom works to their best of their ability and are fully committed to their role.

All of us are 'on the road' reaching out and supporting congregations individually and collectively. In line with our Strategic Plan, we are endeavouring to echo *A Future with Hope* in all the services and outreaches we provide.

Later in 2025, AMRI will say goodbye to Sr. Anne Codd pbvm and Margaret Cartwright. Both have made a significant contribution to the building up of the Church in Ireland over the years and not just with AMRI. I know the President of AMRI has mentioned them in his report. Just to say their work ethic and commitment to the mission of the Gospel informed everything that they worked on nationally. They have been amazing colleagues to work with on our team and I have found both of them very supportive of me in my role. I also want to express my gratitude to the Executive Council of AMRI and all who

collaborate and represent AMRI on its various committees and groups. A special mention to those who served on the previous Executive under the leadership of Fr. Tim Lehane SVD. The new Executive Council began in October at Manresa for an official handover. Congratulations to Fr. Joe McGee MSC and Sr. Barbara Murphy IBVM, who agreed to become President and Vice-President respectively. The Executive Council are committed to work on behalf of our Members and expertly carry out this role as models of collegiality and synodality.

Throughout the year I have continued to visit and connect with many leaders of congregations with their communities and leadership teams. Many are grappling with considerable change, and encounter many pressure points. Leading and living Religious life today is not easy as you contend with aging communities and the resulting ongoing leadership decisions that need to be made as a result. Religious life is changing. However it is not ending.



## New Beginnings

During the year, AMRI's lease with the Missionaries of Africa came to an end. This reality was signalled at last year's Conference and AGM. We have fond memories of our 7 years there. I'd like to express appreciation to all the Missionaries of Africa for their support and kindness whilst we were based there.

At the kind invitation of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit (Spiritans), AMRI moved into its new offices in Kimmage Manor in June 2025. We have been bowled over by their welcome and kindness. We encourage all of our Members to come and visit us in Kimmage and to consider attending some of our upcoming meetings that will be hosted there during the year.

We also said goodbye to Pope Francis this year. He was a beacon of hope for many in the world, continually challenging people to go to the peripheries and live the Gospel in new ways. As a Jesuit he instilled a new culture of discernment in faith. His vision for a Synodal Church continues to develop.



We welcomed Pope Leo XVI, an Augustinian with rich connections to Ireland. He emphasises hope as a vital aspect of the Christian faith and a source of strength in a world facing many challenges. He highlights the importance of living out one's faith as a sign of hope. His care for the poor, reflecting a deep commitment to building a world where all can live with dignity, aligns with the ongoing work of AMRI and its Members.

*"We see the importance of fostering a spirit of missionary discipleship in all the baptized and a sense of the urgency of bringing Christ to all people."* Pope Leo XVI

## AMRI on the Road

At AMRI we endeavour to balance being office based and also meeting our Members 'on the road'. Over the past few years we have established ongoing events and gatherings

for our Members. These include the Annual Remembrance Service held in November for recently deceased Religious and Missionaries. The Regional Meetings for Leaders and Synodal updates are now a feature of our regionalised outreach to Members. We continue to meet New Leaders and support them in their role. These have become important appointments for the AMRI Team and some of the Executive to listen and respond to the challenges that our members are grappling with.

AMRI regularly supports Missionary Discipleship for all its Members at home and overseas. We hosted a number of gatherings for returned and retired missionaries. We also have met with some newly arrived religious who are

taking up appointments as missionaries here in Ireland. We also supported Scratch Productions who produced the documentary *'The Last Irish Missionaries'*, which aired over the summer of 2025. The Lay Mission Committee of AMRI recently hosted the webinar series: *We Need to Talk*. It also hosted a

gathering of lay people to discuss a new forum of laity.

AMRI continues to meet annually with Congregations engaged with the Mission Awareness Programme that is conducted in many dioceses and parishes. Listening to their important testimonies on how they are received in local parishes as they discuss the impact that missionaries make in the universal Church, is important in highlighting the continuing, critical work of Irish Missionaries. We acknowledge and appreciate the local Bishops who help to facilitate this collaboration.

Along with Missio and Misean Cara, AMRI collaborate in planning the annual RTÉ mass on Mission Sunday. This is an important collaboration demonstrating the vastness of the Irish Missionary Church.



## Dealing with the Past

At the end of our 2024 Conference, we hosted a conversation with Members who were impacted by the O'Toole Report into Sexual Abuse in Religious Catholic Schools. This led to further gatherings to discuss and discern the next steps. We have much more work to do in this area as we respond to the past and plan for the future.

AMRI works closely with the Irish Episcopal Conference on our One Church response to issues related to Safeguarding. A Strategic Review of Child Safeguarding in the Catholic Church in Ireland was carried out by RSM Ireland. It is available on the AMRI website.<sup>1</sup> AMRI Members continue to serve on committees and boards associated with Towards Healing and Towards Peace. We are grateful for their service.

## Jubilee Year of Hope

The year, 2025, is designated as a Jubilee Year of Hope. With the theme of "Pilgrims of Hope", AMRI led a number of Jubilee events. You can read Toni Pykes report to find out more about the Symposium on Justice that was held in Marino earlier in the year. Two Jubilee pilgrimages were also offered to Members. I had the pleasure of leading a group of younger religious to the Jubilee of Youth. It was good to witness many of our younger religious reach out to the young church.<sup>2</sup> Later in 2025 AMRI will lead a delegation to the Jubilee of Consecrated Life, 6th – 13th October. The Irish Embassy to the Holy See and the Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated life and Societies of Apostolic Life will promote the photographic exhibition *Daring to Hope* during the Jubilee of Consecrated Life in Rome.



## Synodal Pathway

In the report by Sr. Anne Codd pbvm, Leadership Support and Development Coordinator, you will note how AMRI continues to contribute to the Synodal Pathway here in Ireland and also on your behalf to the wider consultation globally. The voice of Religious and Synod is unique, and it is pleasing to see how AMRI leads in this area both in financial contributions and personnel on the ground.



## Communications

It is vital that AMRI communicate some of the many positive initiatives and contributions of religious life and mission more widely. I'd like to acknowledge the work of our Communications Committee that is always on standby to help and shape some of AMRI's public announcements and responses.

At present we do not have a designated staff person in this role. We have outsourced part of this role to an external consultant who assists us with developing and publishing our bi-monthly noticeboard. The audience of our noticeboard continues to grow, as does the content, and it is thanks to our Members and the multitude of their diverse activities that contributes to the popularity of the publication.

The AMRI Website is still an important window into the work of AMRI. It is both a resource for Members and an archive into what has been happening. There is lots of information there all in one hub. Please do take a look and share.

## Snapshot of activities over the last 12 months

- Press Releases covering, Jubilee, Gaza, RSM Safeguarding report, Obituaries
- Multiple media requests for information on topics ranging from Scoping Inquiry, to Safeguarding and background information on the funeral of Pope Francis and Election of Pope Leo XIV
- Two Newsletters per month
- Website weekly updates

- *Regular Blogs on various social and religious topics*
- *New Podcast channel featuring Religious who make a difference*
- *New Retreat Guide published online*

## Social Media & Blogs

AMRI has an active Social Media presence. Content is regularly shared on both Facebook and Instagram. It is great that some congregations now support it and repost some of our published material. Earlier this year we deactivated our X (Formerly Twitter) account. The decision was based amid the growing concerns as regards the increasingly far-right, fascist, racist and misogynistic content on the platform.

Through our JPIC work we are continuing to develop our Blog section. Some of these are 'opinion' pieces and we are building up our Podcast series. You can find out more about the content by checking out the AMRI website and staying up to date with our social media.



AMRI continues to take part in public debate. Throughout the year we produce Press Statements on a variety of issues, on Justice, Peace and Ecology, Safeguarding and Church matters. AMRI has a voice and our Members are encouraging us to continue to occasionally speak on their behalf.

## Collaborations

Throughout the year I have had the opportunity to continue to serve on various Councils and Committees. From the National Mission Council, to serving on the Board of Intercom, to attending the annual conference of the Conference of Religious of England and Wales (Corew). It is important to be able to meet and network with people on the ground and with the many religious who continue to work with those 'on the peripheries'. It is energising to sit in on

some of the APT meetings or speak at the ABRI conference and with the Communicators for Women Religious.

## New Challenges

There are many diverse files on the desk of the Secretary General. Some are continuing to grow in importance.

Some congregations have taken part in discussions around the Irish Religious Stewardship project. There was positive feedback to the presentations made about the project at our 2024 Conference and elsewhere in the report you can read more about how this project has progressed.

Since 2022, I have taken the lead for AMRI on the question and need for a Shared Archive for Religious, which has been years in discussion. Today, AMRI has an expert committee overseeing this initiative. You can read more about this further into this report.

I'd like to express a word of thanks to Nicola Keogh

L&P, and our company secretary, who works closely with myself and the Executive Council around issues of Governance and Compliance.

Our 2025 Conference takes up the theme of Sustaining Hope. We are people of hope. Oftentimes, the background noise of the complexities and demands of daily life can obscure this reality. Enjoy reading this report and finding out more about how AMRI continues to shine a light on the hope that exists in all forms of religious and missionary life today.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.amri.ie/strategic-review-of-child-safeguarding-in-the-catholic-church-in-ireland-final-report-november-2024/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.amri.ie/jubilee-of-youth-hope-does-not-disappoint-a-review-of-our-week-in-rome/>



# Religious Formation Ministry Programme

**Jennifer Burke RJM**

*Director of RFMP*

*Coined over 2,500 years ago and attributed to the Greek philosopher Heraclitus, the adage claiming that “the only constant in life is change” is as relevant today as it was then. In many ways, it captures the essence of the Religious Formation Ministry Programme’s experience this year.*

With boxes packed and items of furniture labelled, we were ready to move from Willow Park House in Blackrock, to our new home in Clonmore House in Stillorgan in July 2024.

A number of factors however led to a delay in the renovation works being carried out in the latter and as a result, we found ourselves unpacking boxes and reinstalling ourselves in Willow Park for the first two months of the new academic year!

This year’s passionate and committed group of nineteen participants (sixteen women religious and three religious priests) hailing from Cameroon, Czech Republic, Ghana, India, Nigeria, Pakistan, South Korea, Togo and Zambia had the unique opportunity of experiencing two “Loreto Houses”!! Their transformative RFMP journey began on Thursday 19th September 2024 in Blackrock. During the November mid-term break, we re-packed everything and relocated to Clonmore House in Stillorgan, where their journey concluded on Friday 20th June, 2025.

Once again, we extend a deep word of gratitude to the Spiritan Congregation for their dedicated support of the RFM Programme for so many

years. We acknowledge the generosity of the Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus who welcomed us for most of the 2024-2025 academic year.



The four pillars of human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral formation, are the threads constantly being woven together to create the unique RFMP tapestry. They provide the Programme with its inner dynamism and outer framework, offering participants the space in which to grow, develop and

find their voice within a synodal model of Church. Each step of the journey invites participants to deepen their self-awareness, to embrace emerging theologies, to broaden their knowledge base and to develop skills for the challenges of mission today.

The first term placed special emphasis on personal development, with work focusing on the underlying philosophy of the RFM



Programme which states that in order to journey with others, one must have made the journey themselves. The introduction of new workshops on *Synodal Leadership, Enneagram, Transactional Analysis and Self-Esteem together with familiar, core topics such as Focusing, Listening Skills, Life's Healing Journey, Family of Origin and Group Process*, sought to achieve that aim.

The second term broadened the outlook and challenged participants to encounter “the other” by embracing Training for Transformation; Building Community; developing Spiritual Accompaniment skills and engaging with people from different faith traditions, different sexual orientations and different social backgrounds. The RFMP Team is deeply appreciative of so many people who make these experiences possible. We are especially delighted to be able to continue a long association with many organisations working to empower the marginalised and bring about social change in quiet and unassuming ways across Dublin city and county. This opportunity for Pastoral Placement and for Pastoral and Theological Reflection never fails to make a strong impact on our participants.

The third and final term began with an eight-day directed retreat in the newly refurbished Manresa Spirituality Centre, led by the team there. The focus then moved specifically to preparation for formation ministry, before culminating in a time dedicated to living intentionally through the transition towards a new beginning.

Throughout the year, both as part of the RFM Programme and by their own initiative, participants availed of opportunities to celebrate and share the richness of their own cultures and to immerse themselves in Irish culture. The former, through liturgy, Intercultural Day celebrations, and Traditional Religions explorations. The latter, through launching wholeheartedly into the *Walls of Limerick* and the *Siege of Ennis* dances around Saint Patrick's Day, sampling traditional food and drink delights, and enjoying days out to different parts

of the country. Even the Irish weather had an impact on the course of events this year, with Storm Éowyn's gale force winds on Friday 24th January, 2025, giving rise to a red warning for the entire country and forcing us to stay home and continue the Programme on Zoom!

The testimony our RFMP participants was recognised through their participation in the Mission Sunday Mass televised on RTE on the 20th of October, 2024. They also attended a variety of initiatives organised by Vocations Ireland and others in the Dublin Diocese throughout the year. A further notable presence was during the SMA/OLA Annual Pilgrimage to Knock which took place on Saturday 24th May, 2025. We acknowledge the generosity of the SMA Fathers who invited the RFMP participants to join the pilgrimage and to enliven the celebration of Eucharist in the Basilica with colour, music and dance. In this way, the RFM Programme offers living witnesses of our faith and a new vision and example of religious and priestly life in Ireland to others.

The element of change mentioned earlier, was also evident within the RFMP Team. Sr. Jennifer Burke RJM, who joined the RFMP Team in 2021, took up her new role as Programme Director in mid-June 2024. She and Donal Kirk, CFC, ran the Programme until November 2024, when the Team was joined by a third member, Sr. Angèle Nkamsi, MSHR. Angèle, originally from Cameroon, brought her experience in formation and leadership to the Team, having been novice mistress for a number of years and having served the last eleven years on her Congregational Leadership Team, based in Dublin.



As this year draws to a close, Loreto House is on the move once again! Following an appeal made at the AMRI General Conference in October 2024, which highlighted the Programme's need for a new home in September 2025, the Marist Brothers in Lansdowne Road approached AMRI to make their premises on Lansdowne Road available. The move from Stillorgan to Ballsbridge will take place over the summer months and we will be ready in September 2025 to welcome the new group of international participants already processing their visa applications and eagerly preparing for the 2025-2026 session.

The 2025-2026 session will indeed be a unique one, for it marks the final year of what will be the forty four-year history of the Religious Formation Ministry programme, affectionately referred to as "Loreto House" by the over one thousand religious women and men from all over the world who have crossed its threshold since 1982. Following a decision made by the AMRI Executive, the official

communication issued by them in May 2025 summed up the current reality with these words: *"While having served the universal Church for so long, the increased strain of running an international formation programme within the constraints of decreasing applicants and resources and increasing uncertainties has brought it to a stage where it is now time to move gracefully towards a conclusion"*.

While this is a sad time for everyone associated with the RFM Programme, we wish to embrace it with hope and gratitude. Our desire is to celebrate the rich and inimitable spirit of "Loreto House" that has brought life and transformation to countless individuals and that continues to bear fruit throughout the world.



In conclusion, the RFMP Team wishes to acknowledge the continued support of the AMRI Executive and the AMRI Formation and Leadership Development Committee. A special word of thanks to Joe McGee MSC and to Gerard Gallagher for their regular visits and ongoing support.

We express our sincere gratitude also to the many religious and lay guest speakers who generously share their knowledge and expertise with our participants. Several of them have been a part of the RFMP family for a long time and they bring their wisdom and insights based on years of experience; others have been incorporated this year bringing freshness and cutting-edge thought to the group.

In particular, we wish to acknowledge Fr. Donal Dorr SPS who we were privileged to have with us several times during the month of October 2024, before he retired to Kiltegan. Donal has been a loyal contributor to the RFM Programme over many years. In his own gentle way

and drawing on his deep well of wisdom, he has opened the minds and hearts of so many RFMP participants to the cosmic dimensions of our Christian story.

We also deeply appreciate Sr. Mary T. Barron OLA, President of UISG, who took time to visit Loreto House on the 14th February, 2025. It was a wonderful opportunity for all of us to listen to her share her personal experience of the Universal Synod in Rome.

Last, but by no means least, we acknowledge the support of the many Congregations, Societies and Dioceses who continue to entrust their finest members to the Religious Formation Ministry Programme adventure. *With all of you, we continue the journey by walking.*



*“May your love be  
upon us O Lord, as  
we place all our Hope  
in You”*

*Psalm 33*







# Justice, Peace and Ecology

**Toni Pyke**

Justice, Peace & Ecology Coordinator

*So much has happened in our world since writing last year's annual report from the AMRI 'justice desk'. I echo Dr. Gabor Maté in revealing that my "heart is broken" as I reflect on the events of the last 12 months. Conflicts around the world persist and in some areas, have escalated.*

Michelangelo's Pieta sculpture is a powerful image of Hope in the midst of despair. In this Jubilee Year of Hope, all who follow the Christian path must never give up on hope. Yet, in the midst of all the suffering in the world we still witness the lack of global attention to obscene violations of human rights and human dignity, the total disregard for international law, the indifference to human suffering and the unapologetic neglect of the truth in its reporting, along with the impunity of those perpetrating such criminalities, is breathtaking. What is most troubling is the contempt for the individuals and groups seeking to uphold the rule of law and ensure compliance with agreed international standards and legal structures. We see the continued erosion of rights not solely in conflict zones, but also in well-established democracies, where civil liberties, legal protections and established rights are weakened and corrupted, spilling over across the globe.

As we have seen in recent months, the denial of human rights and human dignity across the US and increasingly across Europe and the rest of the 'western world' is particularly troubling. In a globalised, technically advanced environment, with instant communication no-one, anywhere, can plead ignorance. One makes a conscious choice to ignore the realities facing the worlds'

poor and those left 'furthest behind'. There is no defence for those who deny the genocide in Gaza or the 'ethnic cleansing' in the West Bank and the man-made threat of famine; or the various ongoing wars and conflicts across the world including, Ukraine, Afghanistan, Myanmar, Haiti, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan and South Sudan, Tigray in Ethiopia, Pakistan - to name but a few. There are millions of people displaced across the world, families fragmented, lives lost, hopes shattered. This is without the devastation to our common home, intensified by the global war arsenal.

Pope Leo XIV recently reminded us that: ***"One truly helps if one is willing to feel the weight of the other's pain,"*** and that our compassion ***"is expressed through practical gestures... because if you want to help someone, you cannot think of keeping your distance; you have to get involved, get dirty yourself, perhaps be contaminated"***.

This mission to act has been the driving force over the course of the last 12 months at the AMRI justice desk, with a focus on further consolidating a collaborative approach to challenging contemporary social and ecological injustices, despite the threat of being "contaminated".

***Below is a brief overview of some of the activities undertaken during the last 12 months:***

### ***AMRI Justice Symposium***

On the 5th April, AMRI held its first Justice Symposium, hosted at Marino College of Higher Education in Dublin. The event, *A Future with Hope: Responding Together to Social and Environmental Justice Challenges in the 21st Century*, sought to bring together for the first time, those among the AMRI membership working on issues of justice, peace and ecology to begin to reflect on the key issues impacting on our modern society and to explore new and creative ways of challenging global injustices.

Key to doing this is through collaboration. There were more than 40 attendees at the symposium, including religious and lay members from some 20 congregations and other individuals representing various NGOs with longstanding connections to them. During the conference, an 'In-Memoriam' section referenced some of those from the gathered congregations and beyond who have been instrumental and inspirational in



their work for social and environmental justice. Those attending the symposium noted new names from the floor "on whose shoulders we stand". The event was organised with the collaborative support of the Dominican Sisters Congregation Justice Office, Presentation Interprovincial Justice Desk and the Presentation Brothers.

The outcome of this symposium can be found on the AMRI website.

### ***Africa Europe Faith and Justice Network Ireland Antenna***

The Africa Europe Faith and Justice Network (AEFJN) Ireland Antenna, is a collaboration of 9 religious congregations and AMRI. The Antenna continues to meet monthly on-line and explore ways in which to support and promote awareness raising, advocacy and campaign for solutions around issues that impact on sub-Saharan Africa as they relate to EU policy. AEFJN Ireland collaborates with AEFJN Secretariat in Brussels and other antennae across the EU and Africa. During the past 12 months, the Antenna organised and delivered 3 informative webinars focused on relevant issues: *All I Want for Christmas is... Hope: Exploring Hopeful Practices for a Sustainable and Meaningful Christmas; Safe Birth 4 All: A Human Rights Issue, with a focus on early childhood marriage; Hope Not Fear: Practical Actions to Tackle Racism and Promote Hope*. These, and all other webinars can be accessed through the AMRI website. Each webinar engages with speakers from across a variety of organisations who contribute their time and expertise on the issues explored in each webinar. AEFJN Ireland continues to collaborate with the Irish Coalition for Business and Human Rights, advocating for the development of a UN binding treaty on business and human rights. All AEFJN Ireland work and events are organised and undertaken by volunteers and committed groups and individuals. The antenna has no budget and relies on the generosity of the affiliated congregations and AMRI. If you are interested in joining and getting involved with the AEFJN Ireland antenna, email [aefjnireland@gmail.com](mailto:aefjnireland@gmail.com)



## ***SafeBirth4All Campaign for the Prevention of Obstetric Fistula***

This has been an exciting year for the SafeBirth4All coalition and campaign. Since the official launch of the Campaign in May 2024 by coalition members AMRI, the Medical Missionaries of Mary, Edward Flynn CSSp and midwife Eirene Carson, Misean Cara hosted the Coalition at their AGM and subsequently joined as coalition members. In March this year, 4 members of the coalition travelled to the UN in Geneva while the Human Rights Council was in session. The focus of the visit was to raise awareness of the realities of Obstetric Fistula at the UN, to seek ways in which to highlight the wider human rights implications of the issue for women and girls across the world and to explore areas of collaboration for the prevention of Obstetric Fistula. The group were facilitated access to the UN through Geneva for Human Rights, who also gave briefings about the UN and its mechanisms. The visit included meetings with representatives from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the body tasked with ending obstetric fistula globally; with the human rights office at the World Council of Churches (WCC) active in advocacy work on the prevention of obstetric fistula; the Special Rapporteur Assistants on Violence Against Women and Girls and on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The group also met with the Deputy Permanent Representative of the Permanent Mission of Ireland to the United Nations; with Franciscans International; the Dominicans for Justice and Peace and Permanent Delegate to the United Nations; and with the director of Safe Access to Health for All (SAHFA) who have developed an exciting and unique new phone 'App' for mothers and their healthcare workers - Jambo Mamma! As a follow-on, Geneva for Human Rights, the WCC and Rights Proof made an oral statement at the 58th Human Rights Council session titled: *Human Rights Based Approach to End Obstetric Fistula: A Global Call to Save Thousands of Mothers and Newborns*. Working in Geneva offers the opportunity to be in contact with representatives of many countries and to advocate with them about the importance of having policies and taking action at a National Government level for the prevention of obstetric fistula within their respective countries.

SafeBirth4All hosted its first Conference on 21st May: *The Untold Story of Obstetric Fistula*, at the Carmelite Community Centre on Aungier St. in Dublin, to mark International Day to End Obstetric Fistula. Consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist at Chelsea and Westminster hospital London, Dr. Shane Duffy, shared his knowledge and wisdom in responding to this debilitating birth injury. Dr. Shane has spent more than 2 decades organising and conducting fistula repair surgeries at Kitovu hospital in Uganda, originally managed by the Medical Missionaries of Mary from 1955 and subsequently handed over to the local Congregation of the Daughters of Mary (DM) in 2001, who currently run the hospital. To date, the hospital reports having performed 9057 fistula repair surgeries and trained 44 Ugandan surgeons. The second speaker, Ms. Eva Kyenyi from Kenya, a fistula survivor and advocate spoke of her experience and raised awareness of the realities for the millions of women across the world who live with, or who are at risk of, Obstetric Fistula. Attendees in person and online were encouraged to get involved in the campaign to prevent and ultimately end obstetric fistula by supporting and engaging through the campaign's 4 pillars: **Prevention, Advocacy, Rehabilitation and Treatment (PART)**. The event was highlighted in the Irish Catholic.

To learn more about Obstetric Fistula and how to prevent the injury globally, or to get involved, contact the AMRI Justice Desk or check out the website, **[www.safebirth4all.com](http://www.safebirth4all.com)** and social media platforms including **Facebook**; **X (@SafeBirth4All)** and **Instagram (@safebirth4all)**.







Also check out the AMRI website for further news and blogs on obstetric fistula and the SafeBirth4All Campaign.

### ***Daring to Hope: Irish Religious Sisters Embracing the Unknown (1923-2023) Photographic Exhibition***

This year saw the winding down of the popular photographic exhibition *Daring to Hope: Irish Religious Sisters Embracing the Unknown (1923-2023)*, which shared the multifaceted social ‘her’ story of Irish Religious Sisters over a 100-year period. The exhibition has been hosted at 28 locations throughout the island of Ireland and in Rome, Italy. The exhibition will make its final appearance in October 2025 at the Basilica San Silvestro in Capite, during the Jubilee of Consecrated Life in Rome. The exhibition, along with new additions from individuals related to religious sisters can be explored on the website [www.daringtohope.ie](http://www.daringtohope.ie).

### ***Belonging Without Boundaries***

This has been an active year for the newly formed ecumenical group, *Belonging Without Boundaries*. Formed in 2024, the group exists to “promote truth with compassion, working towards an inclusive and welcoming society throughout the island of Ireland” and is comprised of members from various Christian denominations, including the Church of Ireland, Methodist Church, Presbyterians, Irish Episcopal Conference, Dublin Interfaith Forum, Crosscare and AMRI. Since forming, the group has linked in with the Catholic Schools Trusts, Schools of Sanctuary and Act to Prevent Trafficking to

explore possible areas of collaboration and action. In preparation for World Refugee Day on the 20th June, the group developed an informational brochure to encourage wider education and awareness of the rights of refugees, those seeking international protection and other migrants and the importance of Christian values in responding to these realities. Printed leaflets were shared in various Catholic, Methodist, Presbyterian and Church of Ireland parishes on the island of Ireland and is available for wider sharing in PDF format. *Contact the AMRI justice desk if you are interested in receiving a copy.*

### ***‘The cry of the earth’ – Living Laudato Si***

AMRI continues to support the work of Sr. Anna Byrne DC, who represents AMRI at Eco-Congregations Ireland (ECI). This year, AMRI took part in a conference organised by VITA-IMPACT, *Laudato Si’ in Action – Impact Investing for a Just World*. The event explored investment in next-generation solutions, responding to the “cry of the earth” and “cry of the poor” in line with Catholic Social Teaching. Case studies from various religious congregations and societies in Ireland and the US, along with presentations from Total Impact Capital in Washington DC and Vita Impact in Ireland and Africa, gave testimony to the creative, workable and sustainable solutions to contemporary climate challenges through smarter social impact investing. Subsequent to this meeting, several religious congregations have indicated an interest in further exploring creative options to ensuring sustainability into the future.



## Acting for Peace in a Jubilee Year of Hope

It has been a traumatic year for the people of Palestine. As the world watches, critical infrastructure is ruthlessly bombed. Children, women and men massacred. Access to basic humanitarian aid such as food, water and medicines blocked, triggering a famine.

Increasingly, the situation in Gaza is recognised as a genocide and in the West Bank, ethnic cleansing. We see thousands of individuals around the globe protesting the impunity of the occupying power and the blatant violation of international law. Pope Leo XIV, and Pope Francis before him, have consistently called for peace in the region, particularly a ceasefire in Gaza and the immediate delivery of “fair” life-saving humanitarian aid. Echoing these pleas, AMRI issued a press release: *A Call for Peace in Gaza and the Middle East*. Inspired by the daily calls between Pope Francis and Father Gabriel Romanelli at Holy Family Catholic Parish in Gaza, AMRI wrote a letter of solidarity and support to Fr. Gabriel and those seeking refuge in the parish. Haunted by the realities on the ground in

Gaza, the AMRI justice desk have written various blogs on the unfolding situation. These can all be found on the AMRI website. Demonstrating solidarity with the people of Palestine, AMRI marched alongside the Dominicans for Justice and Peace in national marches in Dublin city centre, organised by the long established NGO Ireland-Palestine Solidarity Campaign.

In early January, AMRI and the Jesuits hosted a *Pilgrimage of Hope: Peace for Gaza* solidarity event at Manresa Jesuit Centre of Spirituality in Dublin. Attendees walked Manresa’s Labyrinth in silence, reflecting on the impact of the current realities taking place in Gaza. Together they watched the award-winning documentary film Budrus, highlighting Palestinian peaceful protest from destruction by Israel’s Separation Barrier. In the afternoon, Fr. Damian Farnon, a Chaplain to the Irish Defence Forces reflected on his recent tour of Lebanon and the escalating attacks there. The pilgrimage was the second such event organised by the Jesuits and AMRI in solidarity with the people of Palestine and to pray collectively for lasting peace in the region.





### *Teamworking*

The AMRI justice desk continues to support and actively engage with the work of Act to Prevent Trafficking (APT-AMRI), a working group within the AMRI-JPIC Committee (see *separate report*), and with the programme of work of other members of the core AMRI staff team as part of the overall AMRI approach to teamworking.

On a final note, and looking towards a hope-filled future, the AMRI justice desk aims to further consolidate existing collaborative initiatives and explore new areas and issues reflected during the AMRI Justice Symposium. We have begun to record an AMRI podcast series to highlight and share some of the great work being undertaken by AMRI members across the globe, the first of which was an insight into the work of the Capuchins at the Capuchin Day Centre in Dublin. To keep up to date with ongoing news and happenings from the AMRI justice desk check out the AMRI website ([www.amri.ie](http://www.amri.ie)), consider subscribing to the AMRI



noticeboard and follow AMRI on various social media platforms. While trying to keep abreast of the many injustices in our world, if you or your congregation is interested in a particular issue of justice, peace and ecology, or would like to get involved in existing work, please do not hesitate to contact AMRI.

Those who make  
*Peace* sow the  
seeds of *Justice* by  
their peaceful acts.

*James 3:17-18*





# Act To Prevent Trafficking

*Sr. Denise O'Brien, LSU*  
*Chair APT Steering Team*

*“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free” (Luke: 4)*

Act to Prevent Trafficking (APT) is a faith-based group which seeks to create public awareness of the issue of Trafficking in Persons (TIP) and works collaboratively to specifically prevent the trafficking of women and children.

APT is a committee of AMRI and comprises representatives from various religious congregations and missionary societies and secular members. APT was founded in 2005 after an initial meeting that took place between Sr. Nóirín O’ Shea, RGS and then Secretary General of CORI Fr. Michael Drennan SJ, to propose a meeting Against Human Trafficking, to present research undertaken by Sr. Helene Hayes and an update by Sr. Gerardine Rowley on work with victims of human trafficking of Ruhama, an NGO established by the Good Shepherd Sisters. This meeting took place on 25th November with some 60 people in attendance. The stories of the harsh reality of human trafficking shocked and angered the participants, who agreed that we needed to act together to combat this heinous crime. On 19th of December 2005 the first meeting of the CORI Anti-Trafficking group of Religious took place at Dunardagh, with 12 religious representing different congregations. This group was later to be called APT-AMRI and we are joyfully celebrating 20 years in 2025.

We work collaboratively with Religious based

groups including, RENATE, (Religious in Europe Networking against Trafficking and Exploitation), the Santa Marta Group which is Vatican based, MECPATHS (Mercy Efforts for Child Protection Against Trafficking) and Talitha Kum, founded by UISG (International Union Superiors General). APT-AMRI also collaborate with relevant government departments, for example, the Department of Justice, where we represent the voice of civil society and over the past year members have attended meetings with the Department. Currently, we meet with the Department in relation to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) to discuss and debate a new Bill for the identification and support of victims of human trafficking. We also meet with the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) and collaborate with the Governmental Department of Environment, Climate and Communications and their Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) section, where SDG Goals 8.7 and 16.2 relate to human trafficking.

Our **cAPT**ives Human Trafficking awareness-raising programme for Post-Primary Schools in the Republic of Ireland is under review at present and a module on Pornography is to be included. We are grateful to Ruth Breslin of SERP (The Sexual Exploitation Research and Policy Institute) for her work and support in this regard. In 2025, APT successfully received a grant from

the Department of Justice to support and expand the cAPTives programme. This is unprecedented and illustrates the extent of government interest and confidence in the important mission and crucial work of APT.

### *Some positive outcomes of the cAPTives programme and key events include:*

- New contacts from the Post-Primary Schools Chaplains' Conference held in Roscommon
- Students in Mount Mercy College, Bishopstown, Cork city, having just completed the cAPTives programme, enjoyed a rare and wonderful interview with Timothy Schmalz, the Sculptor of the work 'Let the oppressed go free'
- Possible inclusion of the cAPTives programme in the NCCA curriculum
- Collaboration with the Religious Formation Ministry 'Loretto House' Programme on anti-trafficking
- A module on trafficking has been incorporated into the training of healthcare workers by the Health & Social Care Education and Human Trafficking group (HSCEHT) group in Ireland. Two members attend their monthly meetings.
- APT members attended the Annual Day for the Elimination of Extreme Poverty on October 17th., which presented an opportunity to inform those present of the issues related to Human Trafficking
- Supported two conferences during the year: the Santa Marta Conference in Cork, and the second conference took place at NUI Maynooth, focused on the theme "Human Trafficking from a Faith and Justice Perspective". This conference was organised by Sister Mary Ryan RSM (a former founding member of APT) and Dr. Suzanne Mulligan
- As an initiative to mark APT's 20th anniversary, posters and calling cards were prepared for distribution to health care settings, parish centres and beyond around the country. This will be a long-term initiative and calls on all of us to play our part
- An additional initiative to mark APT's 20th anniversary has been the complete overhaul and launch of the APT website

*Thank you to all who support us in this work.  
If you would like to get involved in the work of APT, please contact [info@aptireland.org](mailto:info@aptireland.org)*





# Vocations Ireland

*Margaret Cartwright*  
Vocations Ireland Director

*“Everyone is born as an original, but many people end up dying as photocopies. Don’t let that happen to you!”* Carlo Acutis quoted in *Christus Vivit*, 106.



As I write my final report for Vocations Ireland and AMRI, I am filled with pleasant memories of the many Religious who have supported me and the work of vocation promotion. Indeed, some individuals who are now living their life as a religious or missionary started their vocational path as a result of encountering the work of Vocations Ireland and maybe some prayer cards appealing for vocations. Religious life continues to evolve, and I wish to convey my appreciation for those who have supported the work and outreach of Vocations Ireland across the years.

In June 2025, our Vocations Ireland Conference was titled, *“A Hope-Filled Church: an opportunity for Religious and Youth to share their stories, their faith and their hopes for the future”*. This was the first official event in Kimmage Manor, the new home of AMRI. Those attending reflected on how they can create more space for vocational discernment and awareness. This mirrors what Pope Francis noted in his Exhortation on Youth, *Christus Vivit*.

## *Journeying on a synodal path*

The challenge to remain hopeful can be difficult when faced with the new challenges in the world. The changes in demographics, the prevalence of countries at war, the rise of secular society, congregations in decline, an aging population, and the decreasing number of people entering religious life are just some of the current realities in today’s world. Yet, despite all the negativity that surrounds us, I am enthused with tremendous hope for the future of the Church and the future of religious life. The reality of Religious Life continues to change. It will continue in a new way and most likely be different from previous expressions.

Pope Francis invited us to be a synodal church. While Synodality is not new to religious, it has awakened within us the possibility of responding





to changes by becoming more synodal in our thinking and practice. There is no absolute clarity regarding where we are going, but it is evident that the Spirit is hovering and leading us. I believe we are on a shared journey expressed in a spirit of discernment with those who are on this synodal pathway. In this space we try to 'listen' amidst all the chaos and noise in our world today. We are missionary disciples walking a well-travelled road on the shoulders of the courageous women and men who went before us.

Throughout this past year I have been enriched, strengthened and encouraged through my engagement with our youth and the younger religious members of our congregations. Since September 2024, Vocations Ireland has been engaging with young people in various settings, including youth groups, school retreats, Transition Year events, National Ploughing Championships, the Divine Mercy Conference, Youth 2000 and Flame UK.

We also held our Annual Conference in May and celebrated Vocations Sunday in Maynooth with a great group of young people and some younger religious. We try to celebrate Vocations Sunday in different venues around the country each year. We have also been encouraging conversation moments between the younger religious and young people. It has been an absolute joy and blessing to be part of such conversations. We have engaged with various religious congregations at these events, as well as at workshops and conferences that we have held either directly through Vocations Ireland or with AMRI.

I have met many of you personally through supervision sessions or at international and inter-congregational meetings, both in person and via Zoom. This year, Vocations Ireland was invited to be guest speakers at the UCESM Vocation Workshop, the National Religious Vocation Conference and the Chicago International Members meetings, discussing topics such as Youth Ministry, *Cristus Vivit*, Pilgrimage and the use of Artificial Intelligence in Vocation Ministry. In Vocations Ireland we continue to network and meet with those interested in vocations ministry.



This is carried out by working and networking with many congregations who wish to promote vocations to a wider audience. I have also benefited from international meetings where the topic of vocations continues to be discussed. The reality and challenges in Ireland are similar to other parts of Europe and the western world.

### ***Vocations Ireland Membership and future possibilities***

It is becoming increasingly challenging to continue to fund the work of Vocations Ireland as membership and subscriptions continue to decline. Some congregations have made the decision to no longer accept new vocations. Others continue to fund our work as they appreciate the promotion of a 'Culture of Vocation'. This decline is part of the wider reality of Church. The demographics of Church is one that illustrates an aging cohort. This is mirrored in the AMRI membership statistics. Over the past eight years membership of Vocations Ireland has dropped from 150 congregations to 44. However, there are some congregations who



have noted they wish to resume their subscription to Vocations Ireland.

Included in the membership of Vocations Ireland is the continued collaboration with AMRI, who cover the salary, phone and travel costs of the Director of Vocations Ireland. The subscription is therefore able to support the outreach of Vocations Ireland to a series of events and initiatives such as hosting stands at events for the Ploughing Championships (€3,000) or at the for higher options and some Transition Year (TY) events (€ 2,000). Vocations Ireland also purchase 'giveaways', such as the highly sought after prayer cards, pens and wristbands to promote vocations. These are not only important for significant events but also for invitations to parishes, schools, or youth groups when giving talks. At Vocations Ireland, we promote all congregations, orders and societies, which ultimately saves smaller congregations from incurring significant expenses.

It is worth noting that if a congregation is a member of Vocations Ireland, it is essential to support these events. We receive numerous suggestions on how to promote vocations, but we also need the presence of religious at these events. Vocation Directors do not have to attend to everything themselves. We encourage our supporters to invite other members of their community to come to our many events. These can be great encounters, meeting with younger people and create new spaces for dialogue.

### ***Collaborating with AMRI***

Recently, I participated in events for returned missionaries, hosted by AMRI. Some attendees expressed interest in being involved in attending Vocation Ireland events. As I work alongside my colleagues in AMRI, Toni Pyke from the Justice office and Sr. Anne Codd in the Leadership office, I am aware of the many ways that we can interact and share more



stories with the youth parish and school communities. The team approach at AMRI is one I welcome and one that excites me, as it widens the scope of vocation ministry. Our younger generation would love to and need to hear about the work we do for people experiencing homelessness, those trafficked into Ireland, the poor and the various educational opportunities available beyond the traditional Leaving Certificate options.

### ***Pilgrimages For The Holy Year. Rome And 'Kimm'ino***

The Secretary General and I supported congregations to travel to Rome for the Youth Pilgrimage in July and are looking towards the Pilgrimage for Consecrated Life for the Holy Year in October. We will take the popular photographic exhibition *Daring to Hope: Irish Religious Sisters Embracing the Unknown (1923-2023)* once again to Rome, a story that so clearly acknowledges the contribution of our Irish religious and missionaries across the world.

At our new home in Kimmage Manor, the Spiritans have developed a mini-pilgrimage on the grounds which AMRI and Vocations Ireland plan to organise with members. This will be scheduled for the Spring of 2026 and will provide an excuse for members to visit us in our new office in Kimmage.





### *More New Beginnings*

Vocations Ireland ratified their new Executive at their conference in May. We welcomed Fr. Michael Troy O.Carm, Sr. Suzanne Nguyen FMM, Sr. Patricia Murphy, Sisters of Charity of St. Paul the Apostle, and Anne Marie Whelan, our lay representative. Our new executive team met on Zoom in September.

### *Plans for 2025*

After the Ploughing Championships and Higher Options in September 2025, we plan to have an in-person reflection day to review events and conversations and explore new ideas and opportunities for the coming year. This year, we are distributing the AMRI Annual Report digitally in advance of the

conference, in the hope that you will take the time to read and reflect on the report with your communities. Perhaps you might like to share your observations and suggestions at the 'Talk to AMRI' opportunity as to how we can continue to sustain hope and offer you support in vocational ministry.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone who has supported me in my role as Director of Vocations over the last eight years. Sadly, it's time for me to retire and spend some quality time with my husband, my daughters and their families. Vocations Ireland are currently reviewing a job description in preparation for advertising the role more widely. It is my hope that we can advertise the role at the end of October, allowing time for interviews before I finish in December and facilitate sufficient time for a new person to settle in before the start of the new year. The move to Kimmage has enabled me to leave the office in order and hopefully with enough stock on hand to ease the transition period. After the pilgrimage to Rome for Consecrated Life, I will be able to focus on closing files and preparing a handover document.

It has truly been a privilege and a blessing to be part of Vocations Ireland and, more recently, AMRI. I know that religious life is facing many changes, and so I take this opportunity to wish each of you every blessing for the future and once again thank you for your support, love, and kindness.

**Margaret Cartwright**, *Director Vocations Ireland*





# Leadership Support & Development

***Sr. Anne Codd, PBVM***

*Leadership Support & Development Coordinator*

***The work of supporting leaders is integral to every aspect of AMRI's activities and initiatives. Our core team at Kimmage Manor collaborate closely to offer the best service possible to AMRI members in all their rich diversity and their varied challenges, in current contexts, to fostering the reign of God.***

## ***New Leaders Event***

In November 2024, a two-day residential event was organised for those newly elected or appointed to a position of leader/leadership team member at Provincial or Congregational level. The event provided an opportunity for networking and to consider the ministry of leadership as and for mission. The programme included a guided in-depth exploration by participants of their personal gifts and challenges, specifically in their leadership roles, some practical implications of thinking systemically and with compassion about their groups, communities and institutions, as well as self-care in leadership.

## ***Regional Meetings of Members***

Five meetings were organised in February 2024. These took place in Dublin (North, Central and South), Cork, and Dundalk. The 65 participants represented 40 Congregations and Societies (24 female and 16 male). Updates on the ongoing work of AMRI were provided by members of the AMRI team. Review and consultation regarding the format and effectiveness of the Annual Conference is also a feature of the regional meetings. The views and requests of the participants are relayed to the conference planning team and impact the evolving approach to the event.

This year, there was wide-ranging conversation on the Jubilee year and some discussion among participants about localised initiatives to highlight the theme of hope. The opportunity to connect with peers in person was welcomed by participants.

These dates will be scheduled for February 2026 and leaders will be contacted directly.

## ***Enabling ourselves, as AMRI, to take our place on the Irish Synodal Pathway***

During February to April of this year, Fr. Timothy Lehane SVD and Sr. Anne Codd pbvm (AMRI





## The Synodal Pathway of the Catholic Church in Ireland

representatives on the National Synodal Team) hosted six meetings of leaders and members of our Religious Congregations and Missionary Societies at Glasnevin, Donnybrook, Cork, Dundalk, Tallaght and Galway. There was also a Zoom conversation with members of two contemplative communities. There was a total of some 200 participants.

In order to bring to the table of the National Synodal Team a specific contribution based on the experiences of Religious in their life in mission, two key articles from the Final Document of the Synodal Assembly October 2024 were selected for reflection, conversation and points for submission.

Articles 65 and 118 taken together comprise a significant acknowledgement that, arising from their charisms and spirituality, our Congregations and Apostolic Societies have a rich experience of decision-making through dialogue and discernment, harmonising of individual gifts, pursuit of common mission – what are now recognised as ‘practices of synodal living’. The Final Report encouraged us to ‘interrogate’ Church and society from the perspective of this experience. It is noted, too, that religious communities can be ‘laboratories of intercultural living’ for Church and world. Our rootedness in local contexts, while enjoying global reach through our internationality, is noted as a gift to our church communities. Moreover, the outreach of Religious to a wide range of ministries, including those at the peripheries, is acknowledged. The well-spring of spirituality and the hospitality of monastic communities are referenced with appreciation. All are encouraged

to foster relationships within Church to ‘facilitate an exchange of gifts’.

In addition, it must be noted that article 99 makes an interesting observation: encouraging a culture of mutual accountability in the Church, the Final Document references as valuable models the structures and procedures of Congregations and Societies, including Chapters and Canonical visitations. Tribute was paid in all the meetings to the work of UISG and USG in context of the synodal process. It was felt that they contributed significantly to the remarkable advance (between the synthesis report from the first Assembly October 2023 and the Final Document October 2024) in the recognition afforded to the vocation, charisms and ministries of religious congregations and missionary societies as integral to church.

A summary of the reflections compiled from the AMRI regional meetings is available on the AMRI website. This has been submitted to the National Synodal Team (NST), together with the fruit of meetings in the dioceses and other groups and movements in the church in Ireland. The NST is now engaged in discerning priorities calling or attention. The pre-synodal assembly which will take place in October of this year will draw this work together and mark the beginning of a year of focused pastoral action and reflection, which will culminate in a formal synodal assembly in October 2026. AMRI’s reflections have also been sent directly to Sr. Pat Murray IBVM, Executive Secretary of UISG.



## ***MISSION NOW and into the future***

In October 2024 and April 2025, AMRI hosted two gatherings of returned missionaries and new missionaries at Avila Retreat and Conference centre in Dublin. The focus of these gatherings was to consider how we understand and live Mission Now and to explore ways forward in new partnerships. During the October meeting facilitated by Pat Coyle, Dr. Carmel Gallagher's book: *Retired Missionaries and Faith in a Changing Society* was launched by then Minister of State in the Department of Foreign Affairs Mr. Sean Fleming TD. The first of two panel discussions focused on the wisdom of the experience of mission as it relates to the rich cultural context and diversity of 'living with' people, as one participant, Sr. Ndidi Anozie MSHR notes:

*"...On deeper reflection, part of what sustained many missionaries was the welcome from the people; their courage, resilience and passion were motivating factors to work for justice for all. The experience of seeing them as human beings enabled us to develop a strong friendship of care and compassion. People who held on to their faith despite their own suffering was strengthening."*

The second panel discussion explored the impact of returning to Ireland after many years on mission overseas and some of the challenges of their experience in the 'New face' of Ireland. Sr. Ndidi describes this aptly:

*"many recognised that they are learning their new environment; one where most of the people they work with would not like to be called missionaries, one cannot just enter someone's house for a visit and where there's a collapse of the Church as an organisation. The world as we see it today is controlled by mobile phone; no one has time for the person sitting next to them because they are communicating with their mobile phones. The great welcome we used to receive from all is not what we receive now on return. The climate, social ills, homelessness, migrants etc. make the headlines and we have to cope with all of these... Though we are at the*



***low end of the graph, we are not at the end of the road. Hence the need to live our life to inspire others..."***

Moving on from the day and in a spirit of hope for a 'new face of mission' proposals such as 'a new way to be church', 'greater involvement of the laity in decision making', 'small Christian communities', 'allowing the Spirit to guide us', being a more synodal church' among other ideas were explored. The meeting ended with a closing remark from Archbishop Kieran O'Reilly SMA.

The second meeting of Returned Missionaries took place on the 29th of April with some 30 returned missionaries to a (mainly social) event also at Avila Retreat Centre in Donnybrook, Dublin. The day of mixing and meeting was greatly enriched by interludes of prayer-rituals, music and sharing. To begin, we had a lively animation of the group, Latino style by the Brazilian group, *Tales Musica*, kindly introduced to us by Fr. Severino, OFM Cap, Halston Street Parish, Dublin. AMRI Secretary General, Gerard Gallagher, set the context of the gathering with words of welcome and appreciation of the experience in the room – miles and years of missionary journeys 'to the ends of the earth'. One remarkable feature, especially to us as 'onlookers', was the obvious enjoyment there was for participants in being with others who could identify with their experiences. People who have lived through many uprootings, followed



by orientations to new and different peoples and places, cultures and contexts. It seemed not to matter so much whether they had gone east or west, south or places in between. In some cases, people were meeting up for the first time after several years, which triggered many shared memories.

In the afternoon, we were invited into a beautifully calm and deep place of awareness and presence by Columban Sisters, Kathleen Geaney and Mary Anthony Ryan. Having shared life among communities in China, Myanmar and other Asian contexts they were themselves enriched by the responsiveness of the group. It was, in truth, an emotional as well as spiritual experience. Towards the end of the day AMRI explored some initial 'next steps' and invited suggestions for events and other initiatives. The move to our new home at Kimmage Manor offers a welcoming space for such ventures in the days ahead.

One notable feature of the day was the recognition of the women and men and their

respective congregation and society leadership and the opportunities they have had along their way to refresh their spirits and revise their understanding of mission, especially in the post-Vatican II period. This was evident in the research led by Dr. Carmel Gallagher and outlined in her book. It is particularly important that the experience and reflection, wisdom and passion for mission of these members of our congregations, missionary societies and lay mission committee are heard and felt as we make our way along the Irish Synodal Pathway.

Before we went our separate ways, members of the Missionary Sisters of the Holy Rosary Leadership Team prepared us to continue our own missionary journeys, included a ritual 'blessing' of feet, with a characteristically lively song and dance routine.





# Lay Mission Committee Report

**Shane Halpin**

*Chairperson Lay Mission Committee*

*Following the All Hallows conference on synodality, an event in which many of our members were active, the team engaged in some reflection, grappling with the “where to now” question. This followed an intense period of activity culminating in the review of the various reports emanating from the Synodal pathway process.*

In December 2024, Shane Halpin, CEO of Viatores Christi (VC) lay missionary association took over as Chair of the Committee allowing Denise Flack to use her available time more effectively on the AMRI executive.

A key focus of the committee this year has been how best to use its strengths as a group of active and committed lay people working at a national level. The debate around laity and lay mission continued within the committee. We also focus on lay missionaries and missionary discipleship in an effort to provide further focus to the group. It was agreed that a concerted effort should be made to make the committee more representative. A number of lay mission organisations were invited to attend our monthly meeting with limited success, possibly indicative of organisations who are either part-time or already stretched with the challenges facing their own missions. However, we were very pleased to welcome to the committee in December, Kevin Mascarenhas, Director of Integration and Support and Dr. Carmel Gallagher author of *Retired Missionaries in Faith and Changing Society*. Working on the principle of being a national

focused committee we began to explore the National Voice for Lay people again, this time from a European perspective. It was evident from our committee’s limited knowledge, that Germany in particular, had moved the synodal process among lay people arguably the furthest of those countries within Europe. It was agreed that we needed to hear their story. So a webinar was planned for early April 2025 to hear the experience of laity outside of Ireland.

With assistance from Julianne Moran, General Secretary of the Synodal Pathway, a number of potential speakers were asked. These included

Josian Caproens, President and John Smartt, Secretary of the European Laity Forum along with Dr. Karlies Abmeir of ZDK Germany. The speakers were asked to focus on the European experience of setting up and running a lay representative forum within their respective country and clerical structures.



The webinar was very well received and as a result of the enthusiasm expressed by those present a facilitated planning session is being planned for June at Kimmage Manor. It is hoped that this will be an event which will focus minds on what we want to see by way of a forum and how it might work and how we might move it forward in collaboration with existing organisations and of course the synodal pathway.



# Association of Bursars of Religious Institutes

**Linda Downes**

*Chairperson ABRI*

*This year's ABRI Conference took place in March a month earlier than in 2024, and while the committee was initially concerned about the weather, we were fortunate to enjoy beautiful conditions for our walks in Dromantine - hardly noticing that the cherry blossoms had yet to bloom.*

The Executive Committee of ABRI curated a packed and diverse programme, carefully balancing insightful content with valuable networking and social opportunities - an essential aspect of the conference experience. The conference was sponsored for the second year in a row by Marsh McLennan (MMC) and was attended by over 120 delegates from all over Ireland, with some travelling from the UK. The theme of the conference was 'Guided by Faith, Governed by Wisdom'. There was a diverse range of interesting speakers and workshop presenters covering several topical issues, and each engaged with the theme in a unique manner.

## **Inspiring Keynote Address**

Our keynote speaker, Ms. Amanda Francis DSS, retired partner at Buzzacott, took us on a fascinating journey through her 40-year career. She reflected on how the working world has evolved alongside major historical events, highlighting key milestones in Charity Regulations and Religious Congregations. Amanda also challenged us to consider our "Next Chapter" and the importance of telling our story.

## **Thought-Provoking Sessions**

On Tuesday morning, we explored Faith-Based Investing with Rob Meaney of Mercer Ireland and Thomas Digenan, Chief Financial Investment Officer at Christian Brothers Investment Services (CBIS). Later that afternoon, Hamish Leese from the Methodist Church in Great Britain delivered an

insightful talk on the urgent need to work towards net-zero emissions. Our final morning featured a discussion on Facilities Management and Future Planning, led by Wendy Hederman from Mason Hayes & Curran and Breda Cullen from HR Team. This session explored both the contractual and employer/employee perspectives, emphasising the crucial role of effective communication. Following the last coffee break, we returned to the conference hall for an excellent session with Niamh Callaghan and Alice Murphy of Mason Hayes & Curran on *What Charities Must Know – Regulatory & Legal Review*. They provided a clear and practical summary of the New Charities (Amendment) Act 2024, the Revenue Commissioners' updated rules for CHY holders, and best practices for engaging with the Charities Regulatory Authority.

## **Engaging Workshops**

**The conference also featured three compelling workshops, each offering insights into timely and relevant topics:**

- Artificial Intelligence – Presented by Joanne Seery and Gareth Neacy of MMC Innovation Centre.
- Insurance for the Future – Led by Danny McGovern, Ciaran Whelan, and Denise Cuggy of Marsh Ireland.
- Finding Greater Meaning, Purpose, and Passion in Life – A thought-provoking session with Fr. Hugh Lagan.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Marsh McLennan, our dedicated sponsors, for their unwavering support throughout the year. A special thank you also goes to the wonderful staff at Dromantine Retreat Centre, whose exceptional service and warm hospitality enhance our experience every year. *Next year's conference will take place from Monday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, to Wednesday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2026.*





# Administration and Finance

*Fidelma Mallon  
& Anne Donnellan*

The Accounts Administrator prepares quarterly accounts, tracks subscriptions, prepares payroll, banking and donations and liaises with the auditor. She transfers the income for Towards Healing. Together with the Secretary General, she prepares the annual budget and records the income and expenditure for all AMRI's programmes.

The Finance Committee meets quarterly throughout the year to monitor and oversee AMRI's finances. AMRI appreciates all contributions from members, which ensures AMRI is well positioned to continue to implement its strategic plan.

Our office administrator handles the behind-the-scenes organisation for many AMRI meetings, annual conference and AGM. She also coordinated with the Secretary General the move of office from Templeogue to Kimmage. She is the recording secretary for the Executive Council meetings and

the first point of contact for AMRI members, dealing with queries by phone and email.

She manages Garda vetting for AMRI members. This service continues to grow as with many congregations are availing of this service. At present AMRI has 53 congregations registered as an affiliate with AMRI for Garda vetting. The number of people vetted between 1<sup>st</sup> September 2024, and 30<sup>th</sup> June 2025 was 678. The Garda National Vetting Bureau require that affiliates are aware of their obligations regarding identity and retention of documents. Training will now be given to all affiliates with a certificate issued when completed.





# Irish Religious Stewardship Update

*Gerard Gallagher*  
*Secretary General*

The Irish Religious Stewardship (IRS) is an initiative of AMRI. AMRI has continued to develop a new governance structure, with the working title of Irish Religious Stewardship (IRS). It aims to assist congregations that are facing major challenges due to aging demographics, decline in new vocations and fewer people available for leadership positions to maintain ministries. There are also emerging challenges around buildings, healthcare of members, statutory requirements for governance of charities, canonical requirements, and coming to completion of mission. These issues all fed into the AMRI Strategic Plan *A Future with Hope* and fell under the vision of Shared Membership Services.

## *The Story So Far*

In 2021 a series of webinars were held on the topic of Future Structures and Trusteeship. The following year, in 2022 several individuals continued to discuss various models and options for the future. In 2023 a working group was formed to advance the work needed to support the vision of the IRS. A draft constitution has been written, with a view to setting up a new charity/company to meet civil requirements in line with the Charities Regulator. A draft Terms of Reference has also been developed.

IRS will be a new structure that aims to help small or struggling religious institutes or societies of apostolic life with all their administrative matters, easing the burden on leadership. It is a purely a civil law entity.

Those who wish become part of the IRS or who avail of its services do not lose their canonical status. It is based on the experience of similar groups which have emerged in Canada, Australia, USA, Belgium and France, several of which have been formally recognised by the Holy See as public

juridical persons in Canon Law. Future Members will also retain their Membership of AMRI even as they commit to the IRS.

At our Annual Conference in 2024, there were two powerful presentations by Sr. Cara Nagle SCE and Sr. Avril O'Regan RLR, who spoke about their respective congregation's deliberations in committing to the Irish Religious Stewardship (IRS) project. A comment from the floor after hearing their testimonies was "what a relief! They have just put words what some of us are thinking". Since then, an expanded working group has been established to consider options and plans in this area.

After the 2024 AMRI Conference, Nicola Keogh (L&P) and Fr. Aidan Mc Grath OFM, hosted a meeting in November in Merchants Quay. There were 27 congregations present, and many supported the proposals outlined at the meeting.

## *Future Steps*

There are many steps ahead in this process. The Executive of AMRI will have some future decisions around the funding structure and how congregations might fund and support it. Funding will be needed to support new staff members yet to be employed to work on this. We are grateful to one Congregation who offered their dormant Charity Number to be modified to fit the IRS. This continues to be worked on. A financial plan and strategic plan will need to be worked on too.

There is a lot more work to be done before the IRS gets up and running. We are grateful to those who have committed time to helping AMRI move forward on these critical issues for many of our leaders planning for the future.

# AMRI Shared Archives Committee

## *The Story So Far*



**Gerard Gallagher,  
Noelle Dowling &  
Dr. Brian Casey**

Since 2023 AMRI has continued to advance the issue faced by many members around their archives. A committee has been formed to represent various congregations, and it also includes experts from Diocesan archives.

Work had taken place with CORI in 2003, so this new committee formation has now advanced the question and the urgency of the archives of religious congregations.

A working group was formed in 2022 to begin a wider consultation among AMRI members. Its members include AMRI staff and a number of archivists from various Congregations.

### ***The Challenge***

Religious Orders, Congregations and Societies continue to plan for a downsizing. Some congregations have very professional archives such as the Capuchins, Christian Brothers, Franciscans, Jesuits and Presentation Sisters and others. Some collections vary in size and scope of contents.

AMRI has responded to this reality by initiating some work for congregations who would like to move towards being part of a shared archive. For some congregations, this is an urgent matter. Guidance is important. Parts of archives have been relocated to other countries, where standards cannot easily be managed or maintained.

Even within AMRI and our move of premises to Kimmage we have had to relocate three archives

as part of this process (*Irish Missionary Union, Conference of Religious of Ireland and Renewal For Ministry Programme – Loreto House*).

In July the Executive Council of AMRI established a new Shared Archives Committee with Noelle Dowling, as Chair. Noelle has huge experience working in Archives. Unfortunately, Noelle has left the Dublin diocese and has taken up an appointment with Department of Justice.

Throughout the year the committee met. It visited a number of archives including the Dublin Diocesan Archive. Funding was given to AMRI by the University of Notre Dame to employ an archivist to scope out a sample number of archives. Dr. Brian Casey was appointed by AMRI for this work.

In July 2025, he presented his report to AMRI, *Voices of the faithful: A survey of Catholic religious Archives in Ireland* for the future purposes of a shared archive in Ireland. It will be published on AMRI's website later in 2025.

### ***The Next Step***

AMRI with the Shared Archives Committee have committed to hosting a webinar with Brian and Noelle to discuss his report later in 2025.

Further recommendations will be examined as well as a proposed funding model and next step.

*To find out more email [info@amri.ie](mailto:info@amri.ie)*



# Diary Dates - 2025-2026

**2025**

## September

16 <sup>th</sup> - 18 <sup>th</sup>	September National Ploughing Championships
16 <sup>th</sup> - 18 <sup>th</sup>	September - Vocations Ireland host a Stand at Higher Options Event in <i>RDS Dublin</i>

## October

1 <sup>st</sup> - 2 <sup>nd</sup>	October AMRI Annual Conference and AGM - Tullamore
6 <sup>th</sup> - 13 <sup>th</sup>	Jubilee of Consecrated Life Rome
14 <sup>th</sup>	Missionaries of Africa Webinar - Faith in Action: <i>Confronting Modern-day Slavery and Human Trafficking</i>
18 <sup>th</sup>	October National Synodal Day - <i>Kilkenny</i>
19 <sup>th</sup>	Mission Sunday and RTE Televised Mass
21 <sup>st</sup>	AEFJN Webinar - The Impact of Reduced Foreign Aid in Africa
24 <sup>th</sup> - 26 <sup>th</sup>	October Religious in Formation Conference - <i>Ballyvaloo, Wexford</i>

## November

6 <sup>th</sup>	AMRI's Annual Remembrance Service for Deceased Religious and Missionaries - <i>Kimmage Manor</i>
11 <sup>th</sup>	Workshop on Pastoral Care of the Elderly Care and of those with Cognitive Impairment - <i>Kimmage Manor</i> – all day (led by Siobhan O' Keeffe SHJM)

## November contd.

24 <sup>th</sup> - 26 <sup>th</sup>	New Leaders' Event, Mount St. Anne's, Killenard, Portarlinton
17 <sup>th</sup>	Digital Missionaries - Kimmage Manor
29 <sup>th</sup>	Reflection Day for New and Younger Religious
30 <sup>th</sup>	Concert Fundraiser for SafeBirth4All Campaign

## December

3 <sup>rd</sup>	Mission Awareness Programme Review
TBC	Advent Prayer for Returned and Retired Missionaries

**2026**

## February

TBC	Regional Meetings for AMRI Members
8 <sup>th</sup>	Feast Day of St. Bakitha, Patron Saint of modern slavery and human trafficking

## March

8 <sup>th</sup>	International Women's Day
TBC	'Kim'mino for returned and Retired Missionaries and Religious

## April

18 <sup>th</sup>	Justice Conference
20 <sup>th</sup> - 22 <sup>nd</sup>	ABRI Conference
22 <sup>nd</sup>	Earth Day

## May

21 <sup>st</sup>	SafeBirth4All Conference
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Sign-up for the AMRI noticeboard, check out the AMRI website [www.amri.ie](http://www.amri.ie) and follow us on Facebook and Instagram to keep up-to-date on all AMRI updates and events.

# Gratitude For Generous Service to AMRI

*In gratitude for all who have contributed to their time and talent to AMRI through their service as Executive Council Members, Committee Members and as a Representatives to other organisations during 2024-25.*

## **Executive Council**

Joe McGee MSC (*Chair*), Barbara Murphy IBVM (*Vice Chair*), Denise Flack VC, Breege O'Neill RSM, Irene Balzan MMM, Brendan O'Rourke CSsR, Jim Noonan O.Carm Disc, Ndidi Anozie MSHR, Angela Cameron OSsR (*resigned spring 2025*)

## **Formation and Leadership Development Committee**

Brendan O'Rourke CSsR, Damien Bresnahan SMA, Aine Barrins, RSM, Patricia Ojo SSL, Clara Chikwana MMM, Gerard Gallagher

## **Justice Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) Committee**

Kevin Hargaden, Gerry Forde, Joe Murray, Denise O'Brien LSU, Tom O'Connor SPS, Michael O'Sullivan, Sally Roddy, Ndidi Anozie MSHR, Toni Pyke

## **Communications Committee**

Joe McGee MSC, Michelle Robertson, Pat Coyle, Finbarr Tracey SVD, Gerard Gallagher

## **Finance Committee**

Breege O'Neill RSM, Anne Doyle RSM, Ray Dwyer FPM, Linda Downes, Donal O'Brien, Paddy Hennessy SDB, Michael O'Sullivan M.Afr, Fidelma Mallon, Gerard Gallagher

## **Governance Committee**

Aidan Mc Grath OFM, Irene Balzan MMM, Nicola Keogh, Gerard Gallagher

## **New Governance – Irish Religious Stewardship**

Aidan Mc Grath OFM, Nicola Keogh (*L&P*), Gerard Gallagher, Joe McGee MSC

## **Lay Mission Committee**

Shane Halpin (*Chair*), Sally Roddy VC, Vincent Kenny, Angie Escarsa, Jim Farrell, Carmel Gallagher/Flynn, Denise Flack VC, Gerard Gallagher

## **Shared Archives Committee**

Barbara Murphy IBVM, Matthew Bruton, Gerard Gallagher, Emma Steward, Nicola Stewart, Karen Johnston, David Bracken, Marianne Cosgrave, Vivienne Keely HF, Nicola Griffin, Margaret Corkery, Fr. Willie Purcell. Noelle Dowling (*Chair – resigned 2024*), Dr. Brian Casey, Anna Burke RSM, Michael Troy O. Carm (*resigned 2024*)

## **Vocations Ireland**

Anne-Marie Whelan, Sr. Patricia Murphy, Srs. of Charity of St. Paul the Apostle, Br. Kevin Mascarenhas FPM, Sr. Jeanne Bott OSB, Margaret Cartwright, Fr. Cyril Odia SDB, Sr. Suzanne Nguyen FMM, Fr. Michael Troy O. Carm, Sr. Eileen O'Connell OP, Fr. Jim Noonan OCD

### *Act to Prevent Trafficking*

Denise O'Brien LSU and the APT Steering Committee

### *Synodal Working Group*

Anne Codd PBVM, Tim Lehane SVD, Gerard Gallagher

### *Visa Working Group*

Tim Lehane SVD, Gerard Gallagher

### *Catholic Education Service*

Fr. Michael Troy O. Carm, Jennifer Burke RJM

### *Association of Bursars of Religious Ireland Committee*

Linda Downes (*Chair*), Aine Mc Goldrick, Paula Fullen, Gerhard Osthues, Doreen Cronin, Gabriella Farrell, Paddy Fitzgibbon, Garry Lyons

### *Towards Healing*

Sheila Devane MMM, Tim Lehane SVD, David Gibson CB, Ryan Holoulasky CSSr, Chris Goodman IBVM

### *Towards Peace*

Hugh Lagan SMA, Anne Sheehy RSM (*resigned December 2024*), Gerard Gallagher

### *Representation and Liaison With Other Organisations*

Liaison with Irish Episcopal Conference  
Joe McGee MSC, Barbara Murphy IBVM, Breege O'Neill RSM, Ndidi Anozie MSHR, Gerard Gallagher

### *Intercom Magazine*

Gerard Gallagher

### *Towards Healing*

Hugh Lagan SMA

### *Towards Peace*

Anne Sheehy RSM, Hugh Lagan SMA, Gerard Gallagher

### *National Board for Safeguarding*

Phil O'Laoide, Nuala O'Gorman RSM

### *National Mission Council*

Denise Flack VC, Gerard Gallagher

### *Missio Ireland*

Joe McGee MSC

### *UCESM*

Joe McGee MSC, Barbara Murphy IBVM, Gerard Gallagher

### *St. Luke's Institute*

Gerard Gallagher

### *Council for Management of Catholic Secondary Schools*

Fr. Michael Troy O. Carm

### *Catholic Education Partnership*

Fr. Michael Troy O. Carm

### *Secretariat of Secondary Schools*

Patrica Bourden, Eithne Wolfe SSL (*resigned 2024*), Fr. Michael Troy O. Carm

### *Catholic Education Service Trust*

Fr. Michael Troy O. Carm

### *Vocation Council Maynooth*

Anne Marie Whelan

### *NRVC International Coordinator*

Margaret Cartwright



# Rest In Peace



## *Sr. Colette Stevenson pbvm*

Sr. Colette Stevenson passed away peacefully on Friday 25th of April this year at the wonderful age of 82 years. Sr. Colette was a Presentation Sister with a passion for child protection and family support that began during her time as a teacher and school board member. Through her experience of parents and families receiving little support at times of tragedy, she took firm action and turned her attention to studying for a master's in marriage and family therapy. It was during her work in this area that she started to note child protection concerns and by 1995 at the request of CORI (*Conference of Religious of Ireland*), Sr. Colette became Director of the Conference of Religious of Ireland Child Protection Office. Moving to the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (*NBSCCCI*) in 2008 as Director

of Professional Standards and then onto the Board of Directors in 2013, she worked tirelessly with compassion, kindness and empathy to nurture the concept of child safeguarding within the Church. Sr. Colette retired from her role as a Board member of the NBSCCCI in July 2024 but continued to support with her well-known practical guidance and wisdom on the National Case Management Committee (*NCMC*). Sr. Colette will be sadly missed by all who had the pleasure of working with her through her many roles in the child protection and safeguarding through the years.



## *Sr. Dr Miriam Duggan FMSA*

On Saturday, 9th August 2025, Sr. Dr Miriam Duggan FMSA passed away peacefully in St. Francis' Nursing Home Mount Oliver, Dundalk. A religious sister with the Franciscan Missionaries for Africa, Sr. Miriam was a surgeon, obstetrician and gynaecologist. After moving to Uganda in 1969, she was one of the first qualified obstetricians in the country, responsible for complicated obstetric cases during a time when Uganda was experiencing civil war. During her 30 years working at St. Francis Hospital Nsambya in the capital city of Kampala, she was instrumental in training midwives and doctors and was able to hand over the running of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology to a Ugandan doctor whom she had mentored. Responding to the HIV

and AIDS pandemic in Uganda, Sr. Miriam supported the establishment of local clinics and mobile home-based care programmes, to care for patients with HIV and AIDS and the rising number of 'AIDS-orphans'. In 1993, she founded Youth Alive and Education for Life to support young people in making responsible choices and provide support programmes to help prevent the spread of HIV and AIDS. The initiative continues today and has extended to 21 African countries. She was regional leader then Congregational Leader of FMSA and Chairperson of the Irish Missionary Union. Sr. Miriam returned to Africa after her time in leadership to work with Hands of Care & Hope based in Kariobangi and Huruma low-income settlements in Nairobi Kenya, supporting marginalised children, out-of-

school youth and those living with HIV. She has received many awards for her work and in 2015, was awarded the Irish Presidential Distinguished Service Award by President Michael D. Higgins.



#### ***Fr. John Hennebry OSA***

Fr. John Hennebry O.S.A. passed away peacefully on April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2025 in the tender care of the staff, Augustinian Community and his family at St. Augustine's, Ballyboden, Dublin 16, after an illness faced with courage and dignity. John, originally from County Waterford, served as Principal of Good Counsel College, New Ross, County Wexford and was Augustinian Provincial for 10 years between 2013-2023. He was an inspirational figure in Irish education and religious life. A man of great wisdom, humility and vision. His leadership within the Augustinian community and his commitment to the development of young people through education marked him as a true servant leader. He carried out his duties with grace and quiet strength, always guided by deep

faith and compassion. Above all, he was a true gentleman. His kindness, sense of purpose, and unwavering dedication left a lasting impression on all who had the privilege of working with him or knowing him. John served the first Executive Council of AMRI as well as many, School Trusts and Irish Episcopal Conference committees.



#### ***Brother Kevin Crowley OFM Cap***

Brother Kevin Crowley OFM Cap passed away peacefully this year. He devoted his life to work with the poor, transforming lives and offering hope to all those who he encountered and welcomed into the Capuchin Day Centre, Church Street. From its humble beginnings it has become a place where the poorest of the poor and those who are down on their luck receive kindness, food, warmth and support. Brother Kevin lived the Gospel by recognising God in the those he met. His policy of reaching out and asking no personal questions meant that people of all faiths benefited from this service of hospitality. He inspired many people to volunteer, donate and assist the vision of reaching out to the poor and homeless.

For They Cannot Die Anymore,  
Because They Are Equal  
To *Angels* And Are Sons  
Of *God*, Being Sons Of The  
Resurrections.”

*Luke 20:36*

