

The Courage of our Founders

As our pilgrims prepare to embark on the second Kildare Ministries pilgrimage to Ireland (21 September – 5 October), it is timely to reflect upon the courage of our founders. Pilgrims will be visiting Solas Bhríde, an ecologically sustainable spirituality centre founded by the Brigidine Sisters in Kildare in 2015. The Sisters seek to provide a place of welcome, tranquillity and peace where people can find nourishment for life's journey, in an environment where right relationship with self, others, the cosmos and God is nurtured. Pilgrims will also visit Ballygriffin, the birthplace of Nano Nagle and while there learn about the Presentation Sisters' call "to listen together with compassionate hearts to the Spirit of God in the cry of the Earth and of people made poor," (from the *Constitutions of the Union of Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary*).



The time of pilgrimage coincides with the *Season of Creation* instituted by Pope Francis. During this season (1 September - 4 October), Christians across denominations and around the world are invited to pray and care for creation. Together share these reflections from Pope Francis from his 2015 encyclical *Laudato Si*, 'On Care for our Common Home':

The entire material universe speaks of God's love, God's boundless affection for us. Soil, water, mountains: everything is, as it were, a caress of God. (LS#84)

Inner peace is closely related to care for ecology and for the common good, because lived out authentically, it is reflected in a balanced lifestyle together with a capacity for wonder which takes us to a deeper understanding of life. (LS#225)

The biblical accounts of creation invite us to see each human being as a subject who can never be reduced to the status of an object. (LS#81)

The same mindset which stands in the way of making radical decisions to reverse the trend of global warming also stands in the way of achieving the goal of eliminating poverty. (LS#175)

Let us not only keep the poor of the future in mind, but also consider today's poor, whose life on this earth is brief and who cannot keep on waiting. (LS#162)

Many things have to change course, but it is we human beings above all who need to change. (LS# 202)

The earth, our home, is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth. (LS#21)

Is it realistic to hope that those who are obsessed with maximizing profits will stop to reflect on the environmental damage which they will leave behind for future generations? Where profits alone count, there can be no thinking about the rhythms of nature, its phases of decay and regeneration, or the complexity of ecosystems which may be gravely upset by human intervention. (LS#190)

We can see signs that things are now reaching a breaking point, due to the rapid pace of change and degradation; these are evident in large-scale natural disasters as well as social and even financial crises, for the world's problems cannot be analyzed or explained in isolation. (LS#61)

One particularly serious problem is the quality of water available to the poor. Our world has a grave social debt towards the poor who lack access to drinking water, because they are denied the right to a life consistent with their inalienable dignity. (LS#29-30)

There has been a tragic rise in the number of migrants seeking to flee from the growing poverty caused by environmental degradation. They are not recognized by international conventions as refugees; they bear the loss of the lives they have left behind, without enjoying any legal protection whatsoever. Sadly, there is widespread indifference to such suffering. (LS#25)

The universe unfolds in God, who fills it completely. Hence, there is a mystical meaning to be found in a leaf, in a mountain trail, in a dewdrop, in a poor person's face. The ideal is not only to pass from the exterior to the interior to discover the action of God in the soul, but also to discover God in all things. Saint Bonaventure teaches us that "contemplation deepens the more we feel the working of God's grace within our hearts, and the better we learn to encounter God in creatures outside ourselves". (LS#223)

Pause for reflection/discussion

Turn to Courage resource:

<http://www.kildareministries.org.au/courage.html>

Slide 8: Brigid, Woman of Hospitality (3rd photo)

How does the story of Brigid and the apples, and the call of Pope Francis in *Laudato Si* challenge our stewardship of resources?

Slide 9: Nano, Take down your lantern

How does the Raphael Consedine poem about Nano, and the call of Pope Francis call us to solidarity with the poor?



Pray together this prayer of blessing taken from the reflections journal carried by pilgrims, while especially considering the name(s) of pilgrim(s) travelling from this particular group:

*The blessings of sun
the blessings of moon
the blessings of east and of west
to guide us on the way
to lighten our eyes
to strengthen our will and our loving.
the blessings of earth
The blessings of air
the blessings of fire and water
to fill us with heaven
to free us with mercy
to stir with us flames of compassion.*

