



Kildare Ministries

Newsletter 7.17

As this newsletter goes to print, 22 pilgrims from our ministries have returned to their various roles across the network. I have received many emails from them over the past few weeks, offering a small insight into their reflections on their experiences. The time of pilgrimage is very special and unique; it cannot be compared with the everyday, and the task of integrating its learnings into the everyday can take months, even years.

It seemed most appropriate that we hand over the task of sharing reflections on the pilgrimage to our pilgrims themselves, and I thank them for the insights they have offered to this newsletter. I would also like to offer deep and heartfelt thanks to all those without whom the pilgrimage could not happen:

To the team of Erica Pegorer, Linda Kiernan (Clonard College), Anne Young (Presentation Sisters Victoria) & Paul Spence (Spiritual Director) who planned and lead the pilgrimage: it was an extraordinary blend of wisdom, experience and good fun that guided this journey and the pilgrims all knew they were in great hands;

To the Trustees for your support and input across the planning and during the time away;

To the leadership teams of the Congregations of Brigidine Vic, Brigidine NSW and Presentation Vic: thank you not only for your support and good wishes but for enabling members of your congregations to attend;

To all of our Boards, Councils and College leadership teams who supported members of their Colleges to attend and 'held the fort' in their absence;

To our office team of Kate Kelsey, Monica Lang and Rita Grima who kept the home fires burning without missing a beat;

To all our families and loved ones who missed us, but supported us all in sharing this wonderful time away;

And lastly to our fabulous band of pilgrims. A pilgrimage is only a success if pilgrims enter into it fully and the generosity of time, energy and spirit you all gave to this experience enabled the fruits it bore. Thank you for the gift of yourselves to one another.

I leave the final word to the spiritual giant Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, who was quoted often throughout the pilgrimage by our guides and speakers:

"Do not forget that the value and interest of life is not so much to do conspicuous things...as to do ordinary things with the perception of their enormous value."

Andrea Grant
Mission Leader

Prayer—Pilgrims

(Patrick Kavanagh)

I saw them kneeling by the holy well –

It was for life, life, life they prayed:

Life that for a farmer is land enough to keep two horses,

Life that is a healthy husband to a maid.

I saw them climbing the holy mountain –

It was the knowledge, knowledge, knowledge of life they pursued:

Knowledge that is in knowing what fair to sell the cattle in,

Knowledge that is in being able to cart an acre from a field.

I saw them lying on the burning stones –

It was vision, vision, vision they desire:

Vision that is forecasting a mare's hour of foaling,

Vision that is catching the idler, newly hired.

I saw them kneeling, climbing and prostrate –

It was love, love, love they found:

Love that is Christ green walking from the summer headlands

To his scarecrow cross in the turnip-ground.





Reflection from the Kildare Ministries Pilgrimage to Ireland

'Your three highlights?' This has been a constant question since returning from the Pilgrimage. The answer varies each time. It isn't that I can't make up my mind – it is just that every day held its own highlights.

The *reflective* tone was set on the first morning with a session of Centring Prayer and the *historic* tone was set with the afternoon visit to Brú na Bóinne. It is hard to imagine standing in a tomb built more than 5000 years ago. Later visits to old monastic sites, Clonmacnoise, Inis Mor and Glendalough, highlighted the age and depth of the commitment of the early monks to the spread of God's word and love. Brigid, of course, had her double monastery in Kildare. Standing in the Fire Temple there, even without the fire, brought the past into the present. Also in Kildare, it was wonderful to see and spend time in the Solas Bhríde Centre and see one of the Hermitages - such a beautiful centre, alive with the spirit of the goddess Brigit and St Brigid.

Standing in Daniel Delany's childhood home and to pray in that space was a very moving experience. Then to arrive in Tullow, the birthplace of the Brigidine Congregation. It was like coming home. It was an incredible experience to see and be in the buildings, grounds and the Church where Daniel and the early Sisters lived, worked and prayed.

The time spent in Ballygriffin and Cork earlier, learning about Nano Nagle and the Presentation Sisters, was like another home-coming. I knew that there were many similarities between the Brigidine and Presentation Sisters. In fact, the early Brigidines wore the Presentation habit. I was inspired by the work still being carried out by Nano's Sisters and their co-workers in and around Cork.

Our day at Glendalough was one I will never forget: the deeply reflective pilgrimage led by Michael Rodgers and then the moving Mass – moving in both senses of the word, being moved while moving from significant site to significant site for the various parts of the Mass, finishing in the Women's Church.

Other highlights in brief: the ritual at Mass Rock. Noelia Molina quoting from the poem about Nano Nagle in her Spanish/Irish accent 'Go Out!!', making my first-ever Brigid's Cross, nearly being blown off Croagh Patrick half way up and Mick, our wonderful bus driver.

It goes without saying that none of this could have happened without the wonderful organisation by the team, the quality of the various guides and presenters, the rituals and times of reflection that interspersed the Pilgrimage, and the wonderful group of pilgrims who were committed to making this a rich and lasting experience.

Lia Commadeur csb
Kilbreda College





Reflection from the Kildare Ministries Pilgrimage to Ireland

I was honoured with an invitation to join the participants on this journey of learning, growth and companionship. My presence among the pilgrims was unique given my volunteer role as a member of a stewardship council. Neither a teacher nor administrator, my opportunity to learn from my fellow pilgrims has been, perhaps, even more valuable.

What did I experience and learn? Firstly, my understanding of the history of education in Ireland due to the challenges placed before compassionate and brave people such as Nano Nagle has given me an insight into the foundations on which our Kildare Ministries schools base their commitment to bring education to all. The courage of Nano in teaching the poor and needy in spite of the Penal Laws which denied schooling to so many, in particular Catholics is a legacy which lives with us today.

I see and feel the compassion and willingness of the *Kildare Education Ministries* board and teachers in our schools to respond to the challenges that discriminate and restrict the opportunities to learn and escape poverty, oppression and ignorance just as Nano chose to do. As a member of St Joe's stewardship council, I have gained confidence in the knowledge that my decisions based on caring for others, will be supported. My sense of a common philosophy has been founded through the pilgrimage.

The pilgrimage has also given me an understanding of the foundations of our faith through the bond with Celtic spirituality. The appreciation and acknowledgement of our need to care for this gift, earth, exists in both Celtic and Christian values. I was introduced to the marriage of this common spirituality through the details of Brigit's life and work among the needy, her compassion for her fellow mankind.

I have returned with a greater comfort in my faith which sits more closely to simply living as a better person and caring for others as Jesus taught us. The true value we can bring to others is through our caring not the pomp and ceremony that often distracts us from the foundations of faith. The work of the Sisters in Kildare and Ballygriffin along with the volunteers at Brigit's Garden where they are working to restore the earth and providing learning to others became a strong message to me that we all must look back to basics to move forward. We can all lose our way through the complex nature of institutions. The future strength of faith, the church, can be found in our past.

What else did I learn on this journey? The opportunity to interact with the Sisters, the teachers, staff and board members on the pilgrimage through the formal ceremonies, lectures, gatherings and informal companionship has been of

great benefit in building my network and hearing how other schools operate. I feel a strong sense of support across Kildare Ministries. As a council member, I now feel that I can reach out if necessary to gather a broad range of advice from others in looking to provide critical advice and guidance to my fellow councillors and the Principal at St Joseph's. I hope that I was able to provide a different perspective to my fellow pilgrims that may be of some help to them in their work or even their personal lives.

During the pilgrimage my memory constantly returned to the opening lines of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*:

*"When April with his showers sweet
The drought of March hath parched to the root
And bathed every vein in such liquor
Of which virtue engendered is the flower,
When Zephyr also with his sweet breath
Inspired hath in every wood and heath
The tender crops and young sun
Hath in the Ram his half course run,
And small birds make melody
That sleep all the night with open eye,
So pricks the nature in their hearts,
That longing (in) folk to go on pilgrimages"*

Although not spring in Ireland and perhaps lacking the presence of some of Chaucer's more colourful companions such as the Miller or Wife of Bath I feel our journey was an awakening and refreshing of ourselves with spirit of the earth. Needless to say, Ireland is a beautiful country full of wonderful people. There are so many lasting memories, but for this country boy, a vision that will sit in my memory forever was watching the speed at which the grass grew while we drove past!

Taken from the opening verse of Geoffrey Chaucer's Canterbury Tales. Some words have been modernised but the essence of the verse remains as intended by Chaucer.

Shane Stacey

St Joseph's Stewardship Council



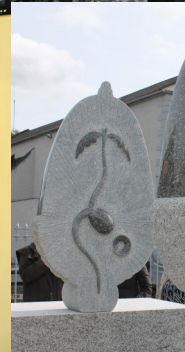


Collage of photos from Kildare Ministries Pilgrimage to Ireland





Collage of photos from Kildare Ministries Pilgrimage to Ireland





Marian College Sunshine West

In the year that Marian College celebrates its 60th anniversary, a newly commissioned artwork tries to capture the mythology surrounding Brigid of Kildare, and her lasting legacy in Brigidine schools. The text below gives some context to what has been represented in the bronze relief and painting.

In the years between 451 and 524 CE a young Irish woman lived a life that had so much impact that she continues



to inspire commitment and connection to our Catholic faith, even 1500 years later. Legends tell us that she was moved by the poverty in which people lived, by the needs they showed. Her compassion and thirst for justice were well known and at the forefront of her actions, even if this put her in conflict with society in general.

There are many miracles attributed to St Brigid of Kildare, most of these involving praying to God to inspire and support her to give to those in need what they asked of her. The miracles tell us that, with God's love, Brigid was always able to provide. This compassion and thirst for justice, underpinned by her deep and abiding faith in God, were driven by her relationship and love for Jesus and her commitment to be in right relationship with those on the margins, those not able to advocate for themselves: the outcast, the poor, those who society deemed were not enough.



In our new sculpture and painting, commissioned to commemorate our 60th anniversary, we have sought to represent some of the legends and stories that capture the values that St Brigid of Kildare embodied in her life, and the values we continue to promote and live out today at Marian College. These legends may not speak a historical truth, but they do speak a human truth, a truth about how we should be in relationship with each other, with our neighbours and with all of creation.



The backdrop for our Brigid is a painting of the landscapes of Ireland and Australia. Legend tells us that Brigid was born across a threshold, not in, not out, not belonging to either, yet belonging to both. Sometimes this is known as a liminal space, a time when things are changing, when an old order or way

of doing things is dissolving, but the new order that is emerging is not yet understood.



Marian College Sunshine West

Our Brigid spans the liminal space between two countries, an Irish saint who lived a long time ago, whose life continues to have impact for our very different lives here in Australia in contemporary times. So, what is common, what moves from the old to the new, from one place to another - it is the values that Brigid embodied in her life, compassion, justice, hospitality, hope, courage and wonder, arising from her faith in and faithfulness to Jesus.

Brigid's arms are outstretched, there is a sense that she is inviting us along, beckoning us to follow. What is it that Brigid is inviting us into? As we look to the top left-hand corner of the mural we see the Kildare Ministries cross painted into the Australian landscape.



Brigid is inviting us forward into a new liminal space - a space of possibilities, as Kildare Ministries stamps its identity within the Catholic church in Australia. The Brigidine sisters have taken an act of courage and struck out on a new journey, entrusting their story, St Brigid's story, Daniel Delany's vision, to our care. We enliven the stories by who we are as a Kildare Ministries community every day: we keep faith with the tradition by bringing the values to life and ensuring we live our Mission to be a transformative community, contributing to a new order emerging from the liminal space.

A new church entity in its own right, entrusted with the work of governing 10 schools across Australia, Kildare Ministries will work to support schools in their fidelity to our shared story. As a Kildare Ministries school, the Marian College story has been woven through time, a rich tapestry of experiences that fashion our identity and shape what it means to be people of faith in this present age. Our commitment as a Kildare Ministries school in the Brigidine Tradition means that we will continue to seek new ways of living the Gospels into being, our response to Jesus' challenge to realise God's

kingdom on earth. We will challenge our students to go forth into the world carrying the flame inspired by the Lamp of Learning to make a difference in their world.

We will be faithful to the legacy of St Brigid of Kildare, inspired by her hospitality and compassion. We will be stirred to action by the example of Bishop Daniel Delany who believed in the power of education to liberate the impoverished; and we will honour the Brigidine sisters, who over successive generations have built the community we proudly proclaim as Marian College, today.

Rita Grima and Ray Pisani
Marian College Co-Principals



Wellsprings for Women

Dandenong

The spring brings fresh ideas and exciting news

Wellsprings has recently experienced some exciting changes.

Firstly we have revamped our logo of the well. The well is a place where women traditionally come together. At *Wellsprings* we hope to go beyond simply providing a place for gathering, as what happens here spills over in our participants' life in the form of joy, hope, empowerment, connections and friendships. Modernising our logo reflects our plans to honour our tradition whilst also moving forward to reflect the current needs of isolated women.



Since 23 March 2017, Wellsprings is working under our new CEO Dalal Smiley. Originally, Dalal is from Lebanon. She migrated to Australia with her mother and younger brother in 1976, to escape the Lebanese war. Dalal has a vast background in community development. She was amongst the first community development students recruited in the mid-eighties.

Today, her passion for community development has grown even bigger. **What attracted Dalal to Wellsprings:** was our mission of working with the most disadvantaged women in our society, to build their capabilities and shape their lives in accordance with their talents and aspirations. She is looking forward to lead *Wellsprings*, as we continue to work according to our mission and towards our vision of becoming a place for acceptance, healing and growth. **What Wellsprings means for Dalal:** "Phenomenal work achieved by highly committed, capable and selfless individuals driven to make a difference, motivated by our values of Justice, Compassion, Hope, Hospitality and Courage."

We are also happy to welcome three new board members to our team: **Carmel Collins, Minh Nguyen and Joy Marocco.**

Finally, Wellsprings is proud to announce that we have introduced new programs as a result of new funding

Empowering women, a continuing journey

During this period of renewal, we continue to focus on our aim to be a welcoming, empowering and caring place for women. Wellsprings continues to provide social support and education and to promote women's wellbeing.



Our Computer and English classes flourish with multicultural participants, who we see grow and develop every day. Focusing specifically on young women and their education, we have included an after-school homework support program in our weekly schedule and offer an English Conversation class which mothers attend whilst they are waiting.

Our craft, sewing and art classes offer opportunities to socialise and connect with others, whilst we foster creativity and community together with our participants. Students from our Productive Learning in Australia program have made great advances in confidence and skills with some already selling products and others moving further on their pathways to employment or small business ventures.

With mentoring programs and drop in sessions, we can individually cater for the needs of each participant. We are also re-introducing our Home Visitation program to reach out and provide friendship and support to women who, for whatever reason, are unable to leave their own homes.



Wellsprings for women

Dandenong

Wellsprings vision for the coming year

The DSS grant is to develop programs that raise awareness on family violence and especially on prevention and early intervention. This is now a high priority for us. The VWT grant will be used to strengthen intercultural connections between diverse women and tackle racism, while the Andrews Foundation grant will be used to foster greater sense of belonging for migrant and refugee women.

We have become increasingly aware of the growing need for services specifically for women in the growth areas of Casey and Cardinia, as more of Wellsprings' traditional cohort move to these areas. We are thus taking steps to provide classes and activities located at various venues within these areas. We are starting with multicultural playgroups with the first set to commence in early November at Fleetwood Primary School in Narre Warren and planning for others underway.

Robyn Erwin

Acting Manager



Acceptance—Healing—Growth



Student Seminar Day at Presentation Family Centre Wednesday 18 October



On Wednesday 18th October four Year 10 students from Clonard went to the Presentation Family Centre in Balnarring with a group of other students from Kildare Ministries' schools for a volunteering experience. We helped out by doing some small tasks to clean up the centre. Some of us painted park benches while others put fresh mulch on the children's playground. While we were there we learnt a lot about the amazing work Presentation Family Centre does in providing a holiday space for families in difficult circumstances. The day went quite fast and despite the heat it was really rewarding to be working with an amazing group of young people with a shared ambition to help the community.



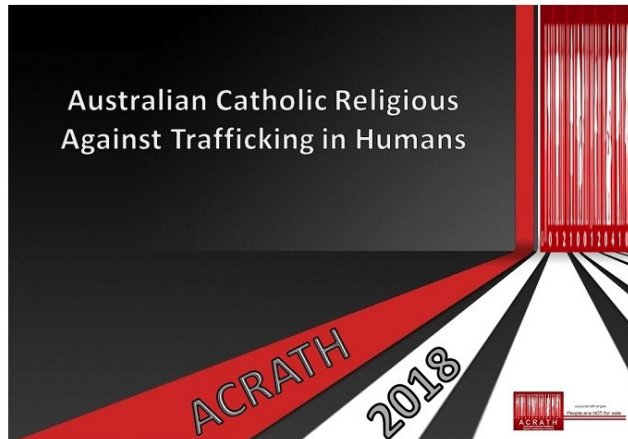


**Kildare Ministries
Calendar of
Events For
November and
December 2017**



Date	Event
2 Nov	Faith Leaders and Justice Co-ordinators Seminar
3 Nov	KM Principals and Leaders
11 Nov	Board and Stewardship Council Induction Seminar
17 Nov	Wellsprings for Women Annual Dinner
21 Nov	KM Trustees Meeting
22 Nov	KM Trustees and Members' Council Meeting
24 Nov	KM Members' Council Meeting
5-6 Dec	Faith based Governance and Dispute resolution Conference
20 Dec	The Office of Kildare Ministries closes
24 Jan 2018	The Office of Kildare Ministries re-opens

ACRATH CALENDAR 2018



The ACRATH calendar, first published in 2015 created awareness of human trafficking globally and here in Australia.

We hope this 2018 edition continues to:

- Promote awareness of human trafficking issues
- Promote ACRATH and its work
- Showcase some of the anti-trafficking work being done by a range of organisations, worldwide and within Australia
- Fundraise for ACRATH's work
- Provide some income for a project in South East Asia supporting victims of human trafficking

The Cost of the Calendar is \$10 (GST Free)

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