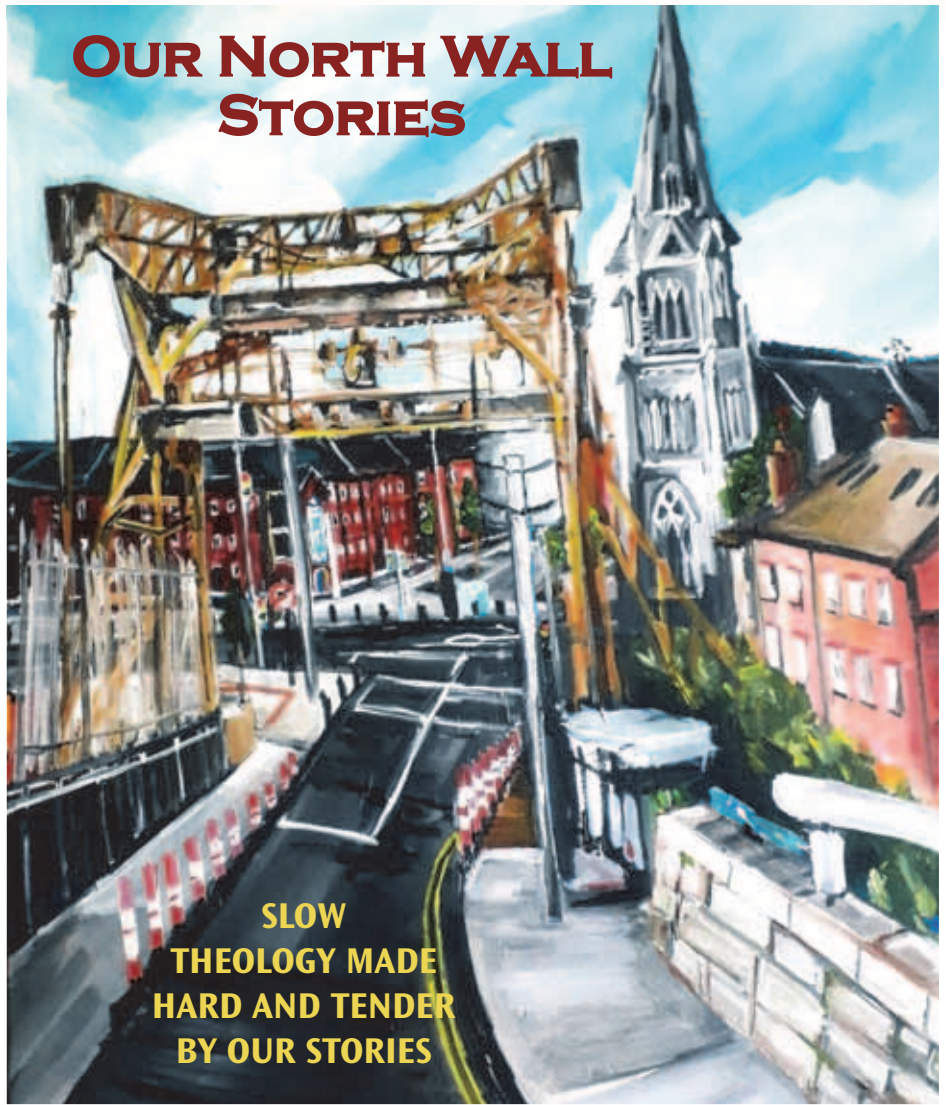


Melting The Middle Class Gaze

**OUR NORTH WALL
STORIES**



**SLOW
THEOLOGY MADE
HARD AND TENDER
BY OUR STORIES**

MARTIN BYRNE

OUR NORTH WALL STORIES

Melting The Middle Class Gaze



Winter icicles, photo by Liz Cotter

MARTIN BYRNE

**SLOW THEOLOGY MADE HARD AND TENDER
BY OUR STORIES**

CONTENTS

<i>Dairne McHenry</i>	Foreword	4
	Introduction	7
	Acknowledgements	10
	Dedication	12
<i>Gemma Dunleavy</i>	I Was Never Young But I'm Not Old Yet	15
<i>Francesca Arkins</i>	The Day We Met The Pope	17
<i>Kimberely Byrne and friends</i>	Creative Musings from St Laurence O'Tooles Girls	19
<i>Pierce O'Leary</i>	Olympics Tokyo 2020	30
<i>Anita Maher and friends</i>	Our Home Place	32
<i>Peter McVerry</i>	The North Wall and the Promised Land	40
<i>Ragnall Cooke</i>	Huttons of Summerhill	43
	Ó Bhaile Bocht, go Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh	45
	Na Gealbháin	46
	Ballybough - The Settlement of the Poor	48
<i>Pacelli O'Rourke</i>	What Might Empowering Justice Look Like?	50
<i>Noel Gregory</i>	Haughey/Gregory	55
<i>Star Family Support Group</i>	Expecting The Best For Myself	59
<i>Brodie McCann and friends</i>	Larriers' Imaginings	64
<i>Niamh Molloy</i>	The Hands Of Hard Working Men	70
<i>Eileen Donovan and friends</i>	God's Search For Us In Communities At The Edges	74
<i>Valerie Smith</i>	The Circle of Life	82

<i>Hugh O'Donnell</i>	Inner City Spirit	84
<i>William Cummings</i>	Wilton Terrace	87
<i>Chloe Gavin</i>	Ireland, I Have A Dream	92
<i>Linda McGrath and Michelle Moore</i>	The Parent Child Home Programme	94
<i>SAOL Project</i>	The Trauma of Poverty	98
<i>Paul Kelly</i>	The North Wall Series	101
<i>Ann Matthews</i>	The Six Miracles of Lourdes, and One Cornerstone of the Parish	104
<i>Marie O'Reilly</i>	What Is Career L.E.A.P.?	108
<i>Paddy Pender</i>	Pope Francis Comes to Town	112
<i>ACRG Creative Writers Group</i>	Surrendering to Hope	116
<i>Jesse Harrington</i>	The Curse of St Laurence O'Toole	120
<i>Katie, Liegha, Ellie, Sophie, Bernie and Maura</i>	A Tale of Two Worlds	127
<i>Nial Ring</i>	The Ballybough Lord Mayor!	129
<i>Chantelle Caffrey and Haley Preston</i>	A Strong Woman Called Kelly	133

Scribbles from the Margins Press, Dublin 2019



FOREWORD

It is a privilege and a challenge to be asked to write the Foreword for this book. With writings from young girls and boys, from keepers of local history, from women and men immersed in their local communities: what words can form a fitting Foreword?

I find inspiration in the above logo with its drawing of the Human Rights and Poverty Stone on Custom House Quay, North Wall.¹ The design and location of this Stone hold a significance which speaks to the writings which follow.

First of all, the Stone is cut into the Quays: Quays where generations of men from North Wall worked on ships and docks; where the nearby Famine Monument is an uncomfortable reminder of the extreme poverty experienced well into the past century by so many in our country, and in particular by those living in areas like the North Wall. Here too is where the Jeannie Johnson is berthed – a replica of ships which carried thousands of Irish men, women and children into death or exile. Some of the contributions in this book add to an understanding of this shared history.

And close by is the Samuel Beckett Bridge, a symbol of a more recent prosperity. The railings of the bridge have the unintended benefit of being a wonderful diving-board for local youngsters. With the first glimpse of summer, they happily dare each other to jump into the Liffey below, while passers-by watch with their hearts in their mouths. Something of the innocence of children – as well as their astute perception - is caught in the writings of the girls and boys from the local schools.

The Circle in the design of the Stone, speaks of inclusion. Anyone who has been in contact with the people of North Wall knows that community is one of their strong points. Even with the demolition of Brigid's Gardens, St. Lawrence's Mansions and Phil Shanahan House, and the changes in the area in recent years, there is still a strong community nucleus which could be the envy of many another area of the city. The bonds formed by years of shared histories and by families looking out for one another are not easily broken. This is surely true too of the communities in Ballybough, Ballyfermot and Cherry Orchard which are included in contributions to this book.

¹ The Human Rights and Poverty Stone, Custom House Quay, North Wall. This artistic creation by the late Joe Connolly is the logo for the National October 17 Committee.

I find significance too, in the fact that there are three languages used in the wording on the Logo: Irish, English and French. All over Ireland now many different languages are spoken. This is a challenge to acceptance and inclusion particularly in North Wall as the community there adapts to now being a highly desirable location for businesses and their workers.

The Quays are part of the DNA of North Wall and the surrounding areas of Dublin, and will surely remain so for successive generations.

May those who read these pages cherish the wisdom they contain and so recognise more and more how 'the very commonness of everyday things harbours the silent mystery of God and grace'. (K. Rahner)

Dairne McHenry

Society of the Sacred Heart of Jesus

One of the Founding Members of the North Wall Women's Centre

Being vocal together about searching through our stories for the spirit of the North Wall community is counter fashionable. These stories are gritty, brave, wise, humorous, quiet, dynamic and contemplative. Reading these stories leaves us with questions such as what sort of spirit resides in this neighbourhood?

We as Christians venerate at the cross of a failed, bleeding criminal. The best prophets today are the vulnerable losers, the expelled and the abused. How different history would be, if we saw the divine presence in all who are poor or who are different from us? The stories of the North Wall have much to teach us about dignity, dreams, respect, community, courage and kinship.

The comfortable with their gaze of indifferent entitlement can be afflicted and disturbed and challenged and encouraged by these stories.

The North Wall Series ²



'Good friends are worth keeping'



'Flowers for the CDC'

² **Paul Kelly** – local photographer celebrates the community with his North Wall Series exhibitions and his amazing Facebook page. The above photo of children is included with parental permission.

INTRODUCTION

The community of the North Wall is a docklands community in Dublin, often unfairly defined by poverty. For the past twenty years I have been privileged to collaborate with this community, in annually publishing a book of its stories, in an urban contextual theology genre. Over a thousand people, both young and old across the community have contributed their stories that are a source of pride in the neighbourhood and a model of engaging in a search for God, from a perspective from the peripheries.

Viewed with some suspicion from a disinterested sanctuary-church, our North Wall story-telling does not for many, rest into some photo-fit notion of urban or even decent theology. Struggling to look after our families we are rarely interested in subtle pronunciations, fourteenth century definitions or erudite arguments. Our priorities are our day-to-day survival, along with care for our families, neighbours and friends. Together, down the years we have tried to combine the rough template of social awareness with a contemplative eye for 'the more' in the stories of the community. We have been foraging together for the spirit, and in our own words we are making efforts at unmasking God. It amounts to a very mixed bag, a twenty-one year catalogue of wisdom and grit and spirit and humanity. There is nothing slick about it. It's a blessed mess.

I doubt if presently there is such a thing as Catholic story telling per se in Ireland. We can parade out McGahern, O'Brian, Joyce, and many more, mystics, in their own right, but we are still somehow not drawn into the harrowing, convoluted, ugly, conflicted, sacred worlds of the struggling in our ghettos. Kavanagh, Heaney, Beckett, Yeats, Greene, Hopkins, Flannery O'Connor, Tolkien and C S Lewis can, and do draw us closer to the edge of mystery.

The most powerful story tellers of God's word, in my opinion, are the struggling people of communities such as the North Wall. Somewhere at the heart of our Sheriff Street stories are pulses, overtones, undertones and intimations of our shamed yet brave humanity, as we are being opened-up and emptied-out for the paschal journey. The music is being played and we are freed-up to dance. This symphonic sound resonates with pain, disrespect and poverty, but has strong defining chords of hope, compassion, humanity and confidence.

North Wallers; Sean O Casey pleaded for a heart of flesh while Luke Kelly inhabited songs of protest. They understood. Within our fractured, beautiful,

struggling and brave community, we as ever, are in this together and do not feel so abandoned, encompassed by the princes of development. Our stories are not those of Evelyn Waugh or of the poverinas of the Latin America favela. These are certainly not the prevailing master-story of development, success and prosperity. Our stories are of the North Wall community during this time of transition and are a precious gold mine of rare, divine and human capital.

Our North Wall stories help us with fresh eyes to see our unfair world differently. They carry a gospel Semtex health warning. By reading these stories we are liable to be born anew or jolted or touched or changed. They herald a world of shared human condition, give vent to the screams of those excluded from the feast, model ways of bottom-up local transformation and they explicate empowerment for justice. The alluring vision and presence of Christ as the reign of God in the North Wall is for those with eyes to see. Put your ears close to the ground and experience in these stories faith, hope and love in action. These stories debunk our middle class filters and expose a God whose name is hallowed and whose signature is most especially to be seen in communities such as the North Wall. Be aware that engagement with these stories exposes us to an awful and terrifying God, who may discommode us.

To dance, to sing, to tell stories, to create art and to take photos is to pray. Our stories are a music that draw us out from the ordinary, harsh, violence of the present and help us together to dive deeper into the darkness, in order to hear the scream and to construct shards of hope. In our stories we get a sense of where 'I' ends and of where 'we' begins. In this mundane place, little out of the ordinary may be happening and few people are paying much attention. However, telling our stories together helps us to interrogate our identity and occasionally there is an emotional resonance that explodes our imagination. In this dockland's soil God has established his tent.

Into our third decade now with these books of North Wall story telling, in an urban contextual theology genre, there is a recognition that the genuine voice of the community with its word can be found here. Personally, I am lucky as a Ballybougher in never being sufficiently either an insider or an outsider, which helps allow the lead horse on this chariot to be the North Wall community itself.³ From the beginning there was no interest in being a fashion photographer for those in the spiritual sauna nor were we inclined to merely

3 Ballybough – an inner city neighbourhood adjacent to the North Wall.

document the community in perpetual transition. We were, through our stories, searching together as a community, and were under the impression that simultaneously we were being sought out.

Sandwiched in the one hundred metres between Mayor Street and Sheriff Street is the disparity between opulence and poverty, between privilege and grit, between opportunity and shame, between dignity and 'scumbags'. Within the North Wall community we are being constantly tooled-up and shook-up, so that an evolving, simple, profound enterprise in unmasking God emerges, through many and various moments in time. In the characters and stories of North Wall people, with names and faces and dogs and hobbies, and with a history of living locally, a mosaic emerges, presenting us with an outline portrait of Jesus. We sense what is best in humanity and feel pride in ourselves as a community.

Our ordinary Sheriff Street stories gift us the gateway into God's mysterious presence and such a scandalous, disturbing assertion does not sit easily with us. God has made his or her home in our many and varied experiences. God's terrifying and awesome presence is both in the earthquakes and in the still, quiet voices of our everyday North Wall pottering.

If we were able to open our eyes and know the depths of God's love for us, we would sense the North Wall as our sacred place, - enchanted, infused and carrying the divine DNA. The streets of the North Wall are God's cloisters weighted 'in Christ' with love. There are no profane places, corners or people in our docklands neighbourhood, as the mystery we call God, penetrates all that exists. The family table, the classroom, the playground, the bingo hall and the littered street are all places where God groans and sighs and laughs and loves. In our longings, frustrations, inadequacies, shames, joys, triumphs, wisdom, community and compassion, God's vulnerable covenant is ever happening.

These books of stories, of sighs, of community, of empowerment and of solidarity are a literature of hope from a peripheral perspective. Drawing attention to the words of excluded people, not generally at the table of the powerful, is incendiary. Honour these stories with your attentive heart. Let your reading of these stories welcome you, alongside struggling people, to the top table where the important stuff happens. In the company of extraordinary, anonymous heroes allow your self, through these stories to sense the local rhythms of ravishment and to feel the pulse of the inner city dance. The community of the borderland people of the North Wall is an ecclesia with an

almost insurmountable glass wall between Mayor Street and Sheriff Street. The scandalous 'good news' of North Wall 'nobodies' expresses something of a surprising God. With 'nothing good coming from Nazareth,' the paradox of the incarnation is underscored, with God identifying with the despised and lowly of our world.

Empowerment for justice takes many expressions and in the gap between pity and the gallows there is space for the revolution in tenderness. Through kinship-engagement and as a constant presence as educator within the North Wall, a mutual, precious gift-exchange between the community and I has emerged. The gathered stories are an expression of this pooled collaboration and confidence, and suggest a direction that leads us to a source of life, as they witness to hope.

North Wall Theology

*We who evangelise a community, "ought to let that community evangelise us."
"This is because each community is the creator of its own culture and the protagonist of its own history. Culture is a dynamic reality which a people constantly recreates; each generation passes on in a whole series of ways of approaching different existential situations to the next generation. ... Each portion of the people of God, by translating the gift of God into its own life and in accordance with its own genius, bears witness to the faith it has received and enriches it with new and eloquent expressions. One can say a people continuously evangelises itself."*

'Evangelii Gaudium' (nn.121 and 122) by Pope Francis.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book is blessed with the generous creativity of eighty remarkable people. To each I am deeply indebted. I am delighted and really grateful also that Dairne Mc Henry has penned such a challenging and affirmative Foreword. Thank you all most sincerely. This book is not a commercial venture. As with previous books the provocative and reflective illustrations that enliven the text and enrich each story are the beautiful compositions of Joe Connolly. Thanks also to Tara Kearns for her remarkable illustrations that adorn the front and back covers. The inclusion of additional local landscape paintings from Tara are a powerful embellishment to this volume. The poems of the school children are accompanied by the beautiful drawings of Ruth O'Connell. Likewise the evocative photographs of Paul Kelly tell a story in themselves and greatly help to situate this book in a very particular context. A sincere thank you is extended to Joe, Tara, Ruth, Liz, Bernie and Paul for their generosity and for their craft, creativity and photos.

Gerald Loftus, Noel Gregory and Sean Beckett have generously donated their skilled and patient eyes as proof readers and for this I am very grateful. Martin O'Flaherty and Paul Hendrick have facilitated each book launch in a conversational manner which witnesses to the priority of the empowerment process. This type of book requires competent professional support and I acknowledge with gratitude the skills and commitment of Christy Hammond and his team at CRM Design and Print for such a wonderful publication. Finally, a special thank you to the Christian Brothers community in Marino for again part-funding this book.



*Silhouette of a jogger,
photo of Liz Cotter*

Let's start looking in the right places for local spiritual leadership. The people who cut the mustard are servant leaders in the community. These are people who promote relational connectivity and health, people with astonishing vision and dreams, people who love the transformational path and work away in small steps with small places, people who are seriously committed to justice and to care for this neighbourhood, people who are wilful, outrageous and audacious carrying their spears in protecting the struggling in the community. Such leaders help us to sense mystery in the ordinary of the North Wall and help us to abandon the cloak of the normal and to feel and see and react beyond our middle class gaze.

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DEDICATION

This book of stories is dedicated to my godchildren who enrich the world with their vitality and goodness: Jessie Byrne, Anna Fairhurst, Saoirse Keaveny, Ellie May Fogarty and Sorcha Greene. I have accepted in good faith that each presented story carries the correct copyright ownership and if there has been any inadvertent discrediting, or if facts are found to be incorrect, then I apologise in advance and will carry the corrections in next year's book. For over twenty years Joe Connolly gifted his contemplative illustrations to the North Wall series of books. His creative collaboration was integral to this process of North Wall theology from its inception in 1998. Joe passed to the source of all creation in May and this volume is dedicated to his memory. This book is also dedicated to Bernie Sheridan who died in September and contributed to the book, "Tell Me About It." Finally this book is dedicated to the memory of Bishop Fiachra Ó Ceallaigh who in 1999 launched "Tell Me About It," and who died in July. May they all rest in peace.



*Joe Connolly,
illustrator of the North Wall books, 1998 – 2018*

Twenty Years Of Urban Contextual Theologising – North Wall Stories To Date

"Listen Up!" 1998, A New North Wall Spirit, 1998, "Tell Me About It ..." 1999, Walking Along With Dockland Mystics, 1999, The Boundary Wall, 2000, A Gutted God, 2003, Unmasking God, 2004, Hope In The Shadows, 2005, Word On The Street, 2006, Small Stories Matter, 2007, Freshly Baked Bread, 2007, Writing On The Wall, 2008, Seepings From The Margins, 2009, Detecting A Break In, 2010, North Wall -Our University, 2011, Rummaging for Mystery in the North Wall, 2012. Old Yarn Theology, 2013, It Takes A Village, 2014, Spinning Straw into Gold, 2015, 100 Gritty Voices, 2016, Our Stories Moving Us From Shame To Dignity, 2017. Our North Wall Stories – Divinity with Skin On, 2018, Our North Wall Stories – Melting The Middle Class Gaze, 2019.

OUR NORTH WALL STORIES – MELTING THE MIDDLE CLASS GAZE



These paintings of the North Wall landscape are by the local artist Tara Kearns



EVERYONE SHOULD HAVE A HOME ⁴



Isabelle Maramotti-Williams, aged four, who made that sign all by herself. Along with 10,000 protesters she carried her placard on Saturday April 7th through Dublin city criticising the Government's lack of urgency on the homelessness crisis.

The inequality of Irish society runs absolutely counter to Jesus' gospel message of dignity, justice and worth. Generations of vulnerable Irish people, born with the wrong postal code are condemned to the violence of acute poverty. To be a decent human and a half decent Christian, we must stand against policies that destroy whole communities of people. The issue of the widening class divide in contemporary Irish society is not just about some ideological cause. It is our call to discipleship ... our fundamental and social and political and theological option that will cost us dearly.

The recent Irish recession with its bailout of the banks is the biggest transfer of resources and wealth from the poor to the rich in the history of the state. Some very few people went to jail but the money for community development, for social housing, for education and for health was slashed, leaving a widening chasm between rich and poor people. We often slag off poor people on social welfare, but with money tight we didn't think twice of bailing-out banks and corporations. Our wealth in big banks will be protected from failure while the many vulnerable will be washed-up as inevitable, small-time flotsam and jetsam.

⁴ I am grateful to Isabelle's mother Marie for gifting this powerful photo which speaks volumes about humanity, compassion and advocacy to this book with her permission.

I Was Never Young But I'm Not Old Yet

Gemma Dunleavy⁵

One day I really was just venting to myself when my mind was on a loop of the cyclical patterns in inner city areas and mentality. The negative effects of that, combined with the organic feeling of community that you get nowhere else, outside of Dublin's inner city stirred me. A love-hate juxtaposition! A real Catch 22, where I feel like one side is stifling, but that stifling is the very thing that brings about the community that makes us all who we are.

I recorded it into my phone walking down the street and then had the thought of making a visual for it. It felt very personal and something that I could stand 100% behind. So, it all came together really easily. I wanted the dancers to represent the women/dressmakers in the community and the choreography was all based around ringing out fabric. In the video the kids can be seen pulling the fabric from their mouths. This was meant to be a representation of the nurturing, feminine energy that trickled down and lives in us all from being brought up by such tough, strong women. Like many kids from this area, I was always told by my family/neighbours when I was too young to even think about what it meant, "You're an old soul" or I'd hear, "She was here before" - probably because I spent my childhood living with and being minded by my nanny and Darkie Bolger, haha! As I got older I started to notice this in all of the kids around here, but it was less present in kids that were from more diluted communities or from no "community" at all.

One moment I really remember vividly was when my 26 year old friend, was visiting from the Faroe Islands. She was chatting to my 6 year old cousin and had to stop herself from telling her about her adult life worries because the conversation was so fluid. She felt like she was talking to one of her own friends.

5 **Gemma** – an extraordinary music, song, dance and film maker from Coburg Place. Gemma's amazing 2018 video can be viewed on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3FD1nrWqIU>

I see it in my cousin Antoinette's two girls, SO much! And it's so rare. There are two sides to the coin though and I feel that because of hardship, and such a heavy sense of empathy in tight communities, some kids don't experience the full innocence of being kids. They have worry and foresight that most kids wouldn't. Then, this is what helps them to grow into the sharp, streetwise, copped-on adults they become. So, I feel in some ways that I was 'never young' even though I'm not yet old, because my soul and brain are a mirror of my nanny's. I wouldn't have it any other way!

And that is where the title and the concept of my video came from!

I could say the same about every single kid in the video.

The link to my video on YouTube is below. Take a look at it if you wish, and note what feelings about being from the inner city community does it evoke in you?



The Day We Met The Pope

Francesca Arkins⁶



On the ninth of August 2018 I met Fr Cyril in town just by chance, and on chatting to him, he said,

“There’s something big happening for Lourdes Parish next week. I can’t say what it is yet as it hasn’t been confirmed, but keep your phone on.” Sure I just thought it was going to be one of the usual masses, and Sr Marie probably wants the kids to do a performance. Nothing out of the ordinary as Sr Marie always tries to involve the children. So, I said my goodbyes to Fr Cyril and never thought again about what he said. That is until I received a phone call from Sr Marie asking could she meet me in the parish hall on Friday the 17th. I met with Sr Marie and she told me that our parish was to host a stop from our Pope, yes Pope Francis himself. I wasn’t to tell the kids but I was to tell them to prepare for something exceptional. We were to prepare a special dance routine, something beautiful with no twerking! (lol)

My daughter Alysia and I had the hard decision of selecting twenty of the children. Alysia trained them for a week, teaching them a lyrical piece to four different songs. They were ready and excited, and still didn’t know who or why or when!

On the Thursday before the Pope’s arrival we sat and told the children who they were performing for, and although they were excited and impressed to be asked, they still didn’t realise how big of a deal it was to be a part of something so special.

On the big day, Saturday the 29th of August, we prepared and were ready. Before the Pope’s arrival the kids performed for the local people. Five minutes before the Pope arrived there was a panic. The music was stopped and we were

⁶ **Francesca** – a mother who coaches dance to young people at the Francesca Arkins Dance and Stage Academy on Sean McDermott Street.

all moved. We were ushered to the barriers at the front of the grounds of Lourdes church. We thought that the Pope must be just going by and not stopping. We were a bit sad for the children.

Then the unthinkable happened to us as a community. The Pope stopped and made his way over to us all. He first kissed on the head my little cousin Rocco Black Arkins. He then continued to shake the hands of all our star dancers, including my own. It was emotional. The kids got very emotional. I had a feeling I couldn't fully describe. For myself, my daughter and the twenty stars, we felt very, very lucky and honoured that day. The day we met the Pope on Sean McDermott Street is a memory we will hold for the rest of our lives. A special thanks is due to Sr Marie and Fr Michael Casey for making it all possible.

Quotes From Pope Francis On Issues Of Poverty

177. ...at the very heart of the Gospel is life in community and engagement with others. 187. Each individual Christian and every community is called to be an instrument of God for the liberation and promotion of the poor, and for enabling them to be fully a part of society. 189. The private ownership of goods is justified by the need to protect and increase them, so that they can better serve the common good; for this reason, solidarity must be lived as the decision to restore to the poor what belongs to them. 198. This is why I want a Church which is poor and for the poor. They have much to teach us. The dignity of each human person and the pursuit of the common good are concerns which ought to shape all economic policies." (Numbered excerpts are from Evangelii Gaudium)

"Let us say 'no' to an economy of exclusion and inequality, where money rules, rather than service. That economy kills. That economy excludes. That economy destroys Mother Earth."

"Today we cannot be satisfied simply with being aware of the problems faced by many of our brothers and sisters. It is not enough to offer broad reflections or engage in endless discussion, constantly repeating things everyone knows. We need to 'de-naturalize' extreme poverty, to stop seeing it as a statistic rather than a reality. Why? Because poverty has a face! It has the face of a child; it has the face of a family; it has the face of people, young and old. It has the face of widespread unemployment and lack of opportunity. It has the face of forced migrations, and of empty or destroyed homes."

Creative Musings from St Laurence O Tooles Girls⁷

The Farm

Yesterday we went to the farm.
I went into the maze.
We drove tractors.
We saw lots of animals.
I saw cats, lambs, dogs,
hens, cows, pigs and horses.

**Kimberley Byrne,
first class**

Summer

Super
Unstoppable
Marvellous
Magical
Excellent
Ravenous for ice cream

**Danni Downey,
second class**

Summer

Sunshine
Umbrellas on the beach
Meeting new friends
Making sand castles
Eating ice cream
Rolling down a hill

**Caragh Watson,
second class**



**Ruth O Connell,
artist**

⁷ The The creative writers are students at **St Laurence O Toole Girls' National School** on Seville Place.

Fairy Payback

Once upon a time in a town called Sparkleville there was a fairy and she had an evil sister. Her name was Mayhem and the good fairy was called Clare. They both had powers. Clare had good powers and Mayhem had bad powers. One day Mayhem took Clare's powers and she was so sad.

But she wanted payback! So she went to fight her.

Clare won and got her power back. She was really happy and she had a party. The evil fairy was never seen again.

**Eve McDermott,
second class**

When Autumn Falls ...

I see yellow, red and orange

I hear crunchy leaves

I smell hot chocolate.

I feel leaves falling on me

**Ellie Byrne,
second class**



**Ruth O'Connell,
artist**

I am friendly and happy.

I want to go to Spain"

I want to be a teacher.

I am Sammie Jo.

**Sammie Jo Stewart,
first class**

I am kind and friendly.

I want to go to
Disneyland.

I want to be a teacher.

I am Kayla.

**Kayla Smyth,
first class**

I am sporty and fast.

I want to go to Dublin
Zoo for two days.

I want to be a jockey.

I am Keisha.

**Keisha O'Driscoll,
first class**

Ms Ryan

She is magnificent and definitely magical.
She's sweet as sugar and strong as spice.
She's romantic and special.
She's as lovely as chocolate.
I've never seen anyone like her.
She's dependable and delightful too.
She is eloquent and exquisite and there's no one like her.
That's why she's extraordinary.
She's jolly and happy all the time.
I really want her to be mine.
I think you call it, that she's remarkable.

Mia McInerney, third class

Ruth O Connell, artist



Sugar

It's sweet but it's not good to eat all the time.
You find it in your treats.
It's as bad as a bull.
You can find it in your drinks as well.
So I would say have it once a week but not all the time.
Because you will get sick.

Geri Ann Downey, third class

Teachers

**Zara Fay,
third class**

Thanking them for all they have done!
Exuberant art lessons that they teach!
Amazing teachers doing hard work!
Captivating projects everyday!
Helping kids to do a good job!
Encouraging everybody to do their best!
Responsible and remarkable students!
So kind and helpful!

Roses are red,
violets are blue
I have five hearts
And one of them is for you.
Roses are red, violets are blue
I have five teachers
And the best one is you.
Roses are red, violets are blue
Woody is cute and so are you.
Love you Ms Ryan.

**Emmy Jo Caffrey,
third class**

Mermaid

As magical as a wizard
She mingles like a fish.
Her hair is as long as Rapunzel's
Her hair blows in the wind.
Her tail is as colourful as a rainbow.
She is as beautiful as me.
She smells like strawberries.

**Daisy Mae King,
third class**

**Ruth O'Connell,
artist**



Unicorns Are Unique

They fly in the sky.
They dance and prance.
They glow in the dark.
They eat sweets in the night.
Their hair is as colourful
as a rainbow.
Their horn is as sharp
as a thumb tack.

**Demi Leigh Murray,
third class**

Best Friends

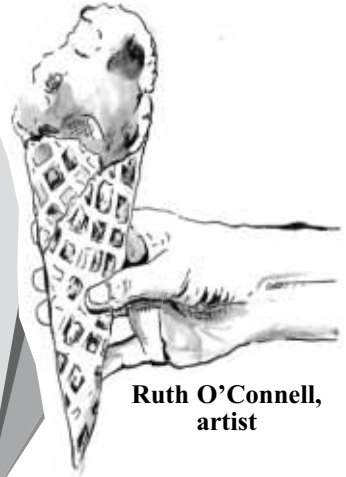
Best friends are hard to find
because the very best one
is already mine.
She may not be perfect
but to me she is.
She is the best.
She is as wise as a fox,
as bright as the sun and
as curious as can be.
She is so helpful,
she is the best.
Besto Cody.

**Chloe Lawless,
third class**

Ice Cream

Ice cream is nice to have in the summer.
It cools you down and it's yummy.
I love it when it hits the end of my tummy.
It's so delicious to enjoy with friends.
You can have all different flavours,
Vanilla, strawberry, banana and mint.
But my favourite is chocolate.

**Tori McCarthy,
third class**



**Ruth O'Connell,
artist**

Summer Rhyme

It is summer time
I am going to do a rhyme.
Let's go to the park.
Until it gets dark.
Don't make a mess.
We have no school.
Just get in the pool.
Play out in the sun.
And let's have some fun.

**Leyla Carr,
third class**

Star Poem

A star is up in the sky
But I will not be able to reach it,
it is really high.
It only comes out at night time.
Let's finish this rhyme.
I only come out when it's dark.
The best view is in the park.
I don't come out in the bright.
Turn off the light.
I am very small.
If you want a wish,
give me a phone call.

**Leyla Carr,
third class**

Sense Poems

Lacie McCarthy,
fifth class

Football

I see the ball coming towards me
I smell the bright green grass.
I hear shouting on the sideline.
I feel sweat rolling down my face.
I taste ice cream when we win.

Slime

Satisfying crunches
Lumpy and crunchy
I love it
Made by me
End of this acrostic poem.

Beach

I see the waves.
I hear the water splashing.
I feel the sand on my feet.
I taste sea water.

Diamanté Poems

Dog
Cute animal
Playing, barking, jumping
Fluffy, adorable, fluffy, adorable
Playing, running, scratching
Cute animal
Kitten

Sun
Yellow, bright
Hot light, dark cold
Darkening, whitening, sleeping
Dark, stars
Moon

Kayla Mooney,
fourth class

Birthday

I see my friends.
I smell ice cream
I hear music.
I feel happy.
I taste cake.

Poems

Ice cream

Nice, sweet
Melting, dripping, sliding
Nice when it is warm out
Cold

Teeth

Wobbly, sore
Twisting, shaking, pulling
Sore when you pull it out.
Toothpaste

**Elizabeth Cash,
fifth class**

Spring

Spring is yellow.
Spring feels like happiness.
Spring looks like flowers.
Spring tastes like food.
Spring smells like
lovely flowers.
Spring sounds like
baby birds.



**Amber Shelley,
fourth class**

Death

Death is red.
Death feels like nothing.
Death looks like darkness.
Death tastes like
gone-off air.
Death smells like
bad breath.
Death sounds like
nothingness.

Couplets

Summer is hot
I love it a lot.
Winter is cold
People are old.
Leaves are all around.
Everywhere on the ground.
I like to clean my room
With my nice broom.
In the lakes
There are lots of snakes.

**Kianna Salami,
fourth class**

Happiness Poem

Happiness looks like
smiles all around.
Happiness smells like fresh
cookies out of the oven.
Happiness sounds like
birds singing.
Happiness feels like
dancing in the rain.
Happiness tastes like
ice cream on a
warm summer day.

Meisha, fifth class

Happiness

Happiness looks like
a bright yellow sun.
It smells like a lovely
barbecue.
Happiness sounds like
fun
It feels like being loved.
Happiness tastes like
candy floss.

Acrostic Poem

Dogs are furry and friendly
Only collars are put on dogs
Goes a long way to catch the ball.
Sometimes can be very
protective.

**Angel O Toole,
fifth class**

Sadness

Sadness looks like
a bleak day.
Sadness smells like
wet leaves.
Sadness sounds like
family fighting
Sadness feels like
pains in your tummy.
Sadness tastes like slop.
Kayla King, fourth class

The Famine

I see young children running into the shop to get the last of the foods.
I smell rotten potatoes.
I hear children weeping and screaming for their parents.
I feel hunger and sadness for all the poor children.
I taste gone-off bread and dried cheese.

Briann Burns, fifth class

Sense Poems

The Beach

I see big, huge sand castles
on the soft sand.
I smell the wavy water
pass by me.
I hear the giggles and laughs as
kids splash in the waves.
I feel the smooth, soft sand
between my toes.
I taste the lovely fresh air
going in my mouth.

School Supplies

I see loads of bright and
colourful school supplies.
I smell all the lovely and delicious
smells from the pencils.
I hear all the blurting and shouting
of 'I want this and that'.
I feel like getting all the
cool school supplies.

**Madison Maloney,
fourth class**

Oreos

Oreos are black and white.
Oreos smell like dark chocolate
and whipped cream.
Oreos sound like they are
screaming, begging me not to
eat them.
But I don't listen to them.
I just focus on the scrumptious
Oreo.
Oreos feel a tiny bit rough but
that doesn't stop me
From what I am about to
do next.
Oreos taste
scrumdiddilyumious
on the tip of my tongue.

**Cassie Reilly,
fourth class**

Winter

Winter is white.
It looks like snow.
It tastes like Christmas dinner.
It smells like hot chocolate.
I hear Christmas songs.
It feels cold.

**Grace Farrington,
fourth class**



Acrostic Poem

Summer

Sun is shining.
Umbrellas are gone away.
Make sand castles
in the sand.
Mothers are happy.
Early birds are up.
Run, run in the sun.

**Teegan Kavanagh,
fifth class**

Friends

Friends are nice and kind.
I remember to show
respect to them.
I'm grateful to have
good friends.
Especially my class.
Never be unkind
to your friends.
Do a special deed
for your friends.
Stay loyal to your friends.

**Shaneece Cleary,
fifth class**

Sense Poems

Summer

Summer is a very bright colour.
It tastes like ice cream.
It smells like violets.
It looks like sun everywhere.
It sounds like birds singing.
It feels like a hot shower.

**Margareta Covaci,
fifth class**

Summer

Summer looks like yellow.

Summer smells like flowers.

Summer sounds like buzzy bees.

Summer feels like hotness.

Summer tastes like salty air.

Éabha Smyth,
fourth class





Olympics Tokyo 2020

Pierce O’Leary ⁸

*“Pearls don’t lie on the seashore.
If you want one you must dive for it.”*
Chinese Proverb

I am an amateur boxing athlete currently dedicated and committed to my boxing career. I have been training within this sport for the last eleven years with Dublin Docklands Boxing Club, I have won eight national titles and competed at many international events, including European and World championships, I have my heart set on making it to Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games. I am fully determined to fulfil my dream with the ability that I know I have.

⁸ **Pierce** – is from Ferryman’s Crossing and in order to fulfil his dream and to train at an internationally competitive level needs sponsorship and funding. His route to success will bring pride and inspiration to that company and to the local community.

I was born and raised in Dublin’s North Wall. As a youth growing up in Dublin’s inner city, choices can be limited and often one can head down the wrong path. I never let distractions get in my way and chose the path of boxing and haven’t looked back since racking up over two hundred wins as an amateur, while only losing 7 bouts. I am a proud Dubliner and hope to inspire the younger generation with my success in the world of boxing. I toyed with football, motocross amongst some other traditional Irish sports but the minute I laced up my first pair of gloves at the tender age of 7, I immediately fell in love. I was so eager to start trading leather I even lied about my age in order to enter some local competitions. My coach eventually found out my real age and continued to train me as he knew I had a special talent in the gym. The pair are still together and share a close bond to this day. I have truly found my passion with boxing and live by its principles day in and day out. I’m a seven times national champion and represented Ireland at the 2016 European Championships.

My dream is to represent my country at the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo. With a gold medal tightly wrapped around my chest, I intend to turn over to the pro ranks and move to the United States to continue my boxing career.

Titles - Pierce O’Leary

Category	Age	Year	Weight
Boy 2	12 – 13	2013	45kg
Boy 3	13 – 14	2014	54kg
Junior Cadets		2014	56kg
Boy 4	14 – 15	2015	60kg
Youth 1	15 – 16	2016	63kg
Senior Cadets	15 – 16	2016	63kg
Youth 2	16 – 17	2017	63kg

Our Home Place

**Geraldine Griffin, Gwen Sheils, Anita Maher, Mary Mooney,
Martin Byrne and Dolores Cox ⁹**

New Carpet, Tears Flowed

As we headed off to school one sunny morning mam said, “I have a lovely surprise for you when you come home.”

We were all so excited going down the road to school. All we could talk about was what was mammy going to get us. We had not got much in our home. There were ten of us and we had to share a bed, - five to each bed as there were only two beds in our room.

“Maybe it’s a new bed,” Ann said, “Ah Jesus that would be great!”

“Maybe it’s a new baby”. John said. “Ah don’t say that. Where are we going to put it?”

“It will be hanging out of the ceiling”, Mary said. We just laughed.

School finished and we ran all the way home. When we got to the house, mam said, “Come in, come in.” When we got into the house, we asked what the surprise was. She opened the sitting room door and there on the floor was a yellow carpet with blue flowers on it. “Jesus Christ, what’s that?” Mary asked.

“That’s my new carpet”, mam said. We all just looked at each other and laughed.

Your little feet will be warm now when you come down in the morning for breakfast.

No more cold feet. Mam was delighted with it.

“Keep that dog out. He is not allowed in the living room any more.”

“Ah ma that’s not fair, poor dog,”

John said. I’m not putting him out in the cold. I’ll bring him in when everyone is gone to bed.

⁹ These reflections were penned by the parents’ group at the **Cherry Orchard Life Centre**.

The next morning when we woke up ma brought everyone down to the sitting room where she had the breakfast on. We heard ma going down the stairs.

John said, "Oh God, I forgot to let the dog out!"

Next thing we heard a scream, "Ah, ah ah!"

"No, my lovely new carpet! I'll kill ye!"

The tears were rolling down her face.

When we went into the sitting room the smell hit us in the face.

All we could do was laugh because the dog done all he had on the new carpet.

The dog had taken care of the yellow carpet!

Geraldine Griffin

My Mother - Salt of the Earth

I am going to write about my mother. She was the strongest woman I knew. She passed away when I was twenty-six. When I was younger she was my rock. She never complained. Although I didn't know it at the time she had a hard life. I don't want to go into that too deeply but my father wasn't around much. She was both father and mother to me and in the sixties that must have been very hard.

She had not got much money but we never went without food or clothes, even if they were hand-me-downs. She was always in good humour even when she was very sick. I remember she used to bring us down to the Ivy Market in Francis Street. I used to think that that was where everyone went to buy their clothes! But at Christmas we went to get our stuff in Frawley's, brand new! I didn't know at the time but we walked home from the town on many occasions. She said the walk was good for us but in truth she had not got the bus fare home. I still think she is the strongest woman I ever met. I could go on but my hand is killing me!

Gwen Sheils

Not Being Heard

I thought she looked very thin in that dress.

Are you on a diet her mother asked?

“No mam,” she said. “I will go now.”

“Be back for dinner.” When Emily came back her mam gave her dinner.

“Mam I don’t feel well.”

“Eat some of it,” her mam said.

Then Emily said, “I’m going upstairs to lie down.”

Her mam was worried about her as the weight was falling off her.

Her mam heard her being sick in the bathroom.

She asked Emily to open the door.

When she got in she found Emily making herself sick.

She was in an awful state.

Her mam was upset as she knew Emily was anorexic and would not listen to anyone.

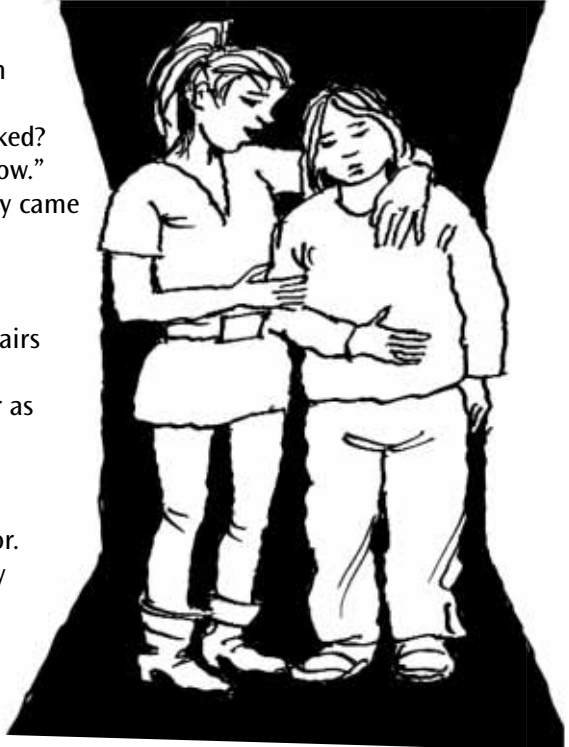
Her mam got her to hospital and it came to pass that Emily was bulimic.

She had an eating disorder.

Why don’t young people listen to their elders?

Thank God Emily got better.

She is one of the lucky ones.



Mary Mooney

There’s No Bus Shelter in Cherry Orchard

For forty years Cherry Orchard was unique in Ireland

Two thousand families and no primary school

The smallest, out of the way, island village had its schools

While poor, little Cherry Orchard infants were bussed down to the mainer

Today Cherry Orchard has its football club and its fever hospital
Its prison and its equine centre, its school and its church
Today the new modular housing is being inbuilt on our many greens
But there is no bus shelter in Cherry Orchard

Old people wait for the bus, exposed to the winds and rain
And the weather is the same here as it is on the Kylemore Road
Arthritis, flues and rheumatism have some protection on the Main Road
But there is no sign of a bus shelter in Cherry Orchard

A decade ago the kind lads in the Civic Office love-bombed us
Gifting us red Cherry Orchard Regeneration umbrellas and jackets
Sprinkling beads and dreams around the neighbourhood
But there is still no bus shelter in Cherry Orchard

The builders, the planners and the speculators are back now
Elvis has been spotted walking along Blackditch Road
And the gents in suits are warning of the dangers of global warming
So, there won't ever be any bus shelter in Cherry Orchard

Martin Byrne

Ballyfermot

Oh to live in Ballyfermot
It was a great day for me when I got the keys to my house here.
I lived in Dolphin House for ten years before that.
I could not believe that I now had a four bedroom house
With a big back garden.
I came to live in Ballyfermot with my husband and five children
Thirty five years ago

Some people say to me,
“How do you live in Cherry Orchard with all that’s going on up there?”
Regarding robbed cars and anti social behaviour.
“But it’s not where you live, but how you live yourself that matters.”

A lot of Ballyfermot people are hard working
The salt of the earth
The shops are great and there is everything you need in Ballyfermot
There are good schools and football for the children to play
Drama classes and much more.
I was not born in Ballyfermot but I am proud to be a Ballyerhead now.
Happy 70th Birthday Ballyfermot”

Mary Mooney

My Ballyer

I remember the day my dad moved to Ballyer.
Sure God we thought we were moving to the country.
I was three years old.
We spent our time running in and out of the house.
My brothers thought it was great gas jumping in and out of the windows
As we came from the flats.

Growing up in Ballyfermot we had nothing, but we had everything
Back then women were called Mrs so and so
Never by their first name.
If you did, you got a clip on the ear.

Ah my Ballyer, as I grew up how innocent we were
Playing with dolls until we were about twelve
Out on the road playing round towers, swinging on poles and skipping
But by God when the street lights came on
You better be back indoors
As my ma would say,
“Nothing good on them streets at night.”

Where would we be without the Gala on a Sunday afternoon?
Poor old Harry the Hippo, sure we couldn't tell what film was on
Too busy getting a chase from Harry and us running screaming

How innocent we were as young teenage girls.
The best thing was getting on our best clothes
And going for a walk up the Kylemore Road as far as the canal
And coming home by the top of Ballyer
We lived in the middle and thought the fellas at the top were all mad
Like North-siders!

There are many great stories to be told about our Ballyfermot,
But be sure of one thing,
The heart of Ballyfermot is the people.

Anita Maher

Growing Up In Ballyfermot

Ballyfermot was a really great place to grow up. I remember the day when we moved to our newly built house. It was a two bedroom house on the corner. It had a big front and back garden and it was great to have an indoor bathroom. I remember our furniture coming on the back of a lorry. I was four then. It didn't take long for us to settle in. We had great neighbours and we made lots of new friends. The people of Ballyfermot are great. Everyone looked out for each other and were always willing to give a helping hand. There were no shops then in Ballyfermot, just a pub called Naltys and the Gala cinema and the chip shop next to it. So, we would have to go to Inchicore or Thomas Street for our shopping. In the lower end of Ballyfermot Road we had our new, big church, Our Lady of the Assumption, and our schools, the De La Salle and the Dominican convent where I went.

We had lots of fields and open spaces back then. We didn't have very much but were happy and made our own fun. The girls played Piggy Beds, skipping and chains. We would make swings on the lamp posts and the boys played marbles, and with a stick and a hoop of an old bike or go down to the Gels to play football. In summer time every house on our street would put up buntings and we would have a street party. All the women would bake all kinds of cakes and food. Everyone would bring out tables and chairs. We would have music, singing and dancing and everyone would have a great time of memories that would last.

We had the California Hills where we sometimes went. A crowd of us would go together and play there for most of the day. Sometimes on Sundays my dad would bring us walking. We would start off in the Lawns, up past the old graveyard and Corrigan's Farm. We would see the sheep and cows as we walked up through the fields as far as the Round Tower and the Paper Mills in Clondalkin where many people from Ballyfermot worked.

We would pick blackberries and wild flowers along the way. We would be very hungry and tired by the time we got home. Sometimes we would be asked in school on a Monday what we did over the weekend and I would say that I went to the country for the day, because that is what it was like – just fields and no houses around.

In time we got our new shops with some of them beside the Gala. We also had some on Drumfinn Park and more were built on Claddagh Green. I think what everyone in Ballyfermot will remember best would be Dirty Aggies where she sold everything loose, even cigarettes and matches. She always had big bread boards full of snow cake up on her counter. You would get a small square for a penny and if you were lucky to have two pence you got a large square.

Many is a time you would be chased out of that shop by Aggie with a hurley stick especially if you went into the shop with anyone else who was not buying anything. I loved Saturday afternoons when we would all go to the Gala to see a good film. We would buy Cleeves toffee as it lasted longer.

Another memory I have from growing up was when sometimes when out playing you would see Nurse Stack coming around the corner on her bike with her big, black bag. We would stop playing to see which house she was going into. We knew this house would soon have a new brother or sister. That day we were so innocent back then that we thought the baby was in her bag, because that is what we were told.

We used to have to walk down the very lower end of Ballyfermot with an old pram or box cart to the turf depot. It was great fun on the way down. We would all take turns pushing each other in the box carts. But it was hell trying to get home with the turf because we were pushing uphill. You would be happy that night sitting in front of a big blazing fire and tasting a slice of toasted, turnover bread. Also we used to have to go down to the stew house. We knew we would be getting our big pot filled with great food that the nuns made ... and the

bigger the pot, the more you got. What was really great was the gur cake. It was lovely and you knew you would get a big slice with your tea that evening. I think everyone in Ballyfermot still talks about the gur cake today. It was so good. They were the good old days.

Now a lot of us that grew up in Ballyfermot have brought up our families in Cherry Orchard where we once played and walked through the fields. We had such great times. We have our own lovely church and one of the best schools. We have nuns, priests and brothers living among us and working hard here to make Cherry Orchard a better place. The only problem here in Cherry Orchard is that we only have one shop and have to go up and down to Lower Ballyfermot for our shopping. What we need is a shopping centre and more places for young people to get involved in. Cherry Orchard is a big place and there are lovely people here. But all we are getting up here is more houses being built on the empty open spaces. This will lead to a lot more people living here and still no shops, as we were promised for years.

We could do with so much more in Cherry Orchard, especially for the younger ones growing up. Sometimes I feel we are forgotten about up here.

Dolores Cox

Compared to other social issues there has been little or no public debate on classism in Irish society and in the Irish church. Keeping our distance, - denying or distracting ourselves from poverty and staying aloof from the homeless or the trolley crisis implies complicity, and as Edmund Burke reminded us, 'For evil to prevail all that is needed is for good people to do nothing.' Conversations about poverty and class seem to be taboo in many respectable quarters. The master story of power and prosperity dominates. An African Proverb states, "Until the lion learns how to write, every story will glorify the hunter." In Dublin, class signifiers such as accent, neighbourhood and educational background are obvious and the side of the tracks that we are born into impacts significantly on the quality of our lives. Martin Luther King Jr. said, "Our lives begin to die the day we become silent about things that matter."

The North Wall and the Promised Land

Peter McVerry¹⁰

Martin Luther King lived and died for his people. His people were not just American black people. He understood that when one person or group oppresses another person or group, both are dehumanised. His immortal words “I have a dream” was a dream that all Americans, black and white, would be liberated. The struggle for racial equality was a struggle to free the white person as much as the black person.

Fintan O’Toole recalls that the morning after his death, King’s hometown newspaper ran an editorial which was headed “A free man killed by white slaves”; the white killer was a slave to fear.

Martin Luther King understood that resorting to violence, in the face of oppression, was to remain oppressed. The desire for revenge was a denial of his dream. He wanted thoughts of revenge, bitterness and hatred to be replaced by an effort to understand, by compassion and love. He wanted black people to be liberated, not only from social and legal constraints, but from the hatreds which those constraints inject into their hearts. If some white people were slaves to hatred and expressed that hatred in their attempts to destroy black people’s hopes and desires and dreams, and even their lives, Martin Luther King did not want black people to become slaves to hatred and to express that hatred in their attempts to destroy and kill.

King’s dream has not yet been realised. Although the legal structures which underpinned racial inequality in the US have been largely dismantled, racial prejudice and economic inequality still persist. The high concentration of black people in US jails cannot be explained by the crime rates. Often too poor to raise bail, many black people languish in jail, often for minor crimes.

¹⁰ **Peter** – is a Jesuit priest, a freeman of Dublin and a life long campaigner for struggling people. This talk was given by Peter at the Human Rights and Poverty Stone on the North Wall on April 4th 2018 to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the assassination of Martin Luther King.

In Ireland, too, many homeless people languish in jail because they do not have the money to pay bail – when visiting Irish jails, people often tell me that there is €50 or €100 bail on them, but they have no way of raising that money and their families cannot afford it. Or they languish in jail because they have no address to be released to; and they have no address because the state has failed to provide them with what many international treaties call “a fundamental human right.” Our political leaders refuse to refer to housing as a “human right”; instead they refer to housing as a “human requirement.” The difference is not semantic; rights are enforceable in law. Martin Luther King fought that black people would have the rights that were denied to them enshrined in law. I have no doubt that, if Martin Luther King were alive today and in Dublin, he would have led the Housing and Homeless march on Saturday in protest at the growing number of homeless people and children, in protest at a housing system which benefits, the wealthy, but not the poor and in support of the demand for housing for all as a human right.

King’s dream has not yet been realised. Racial segregation is still alive and well in many US cities, with black communities living in one part of the city, while wealthier whites live in another. Economic segregation is alive and well in US cities as also in Irish cities, with Dublin 4 just a few kilometres from Dublin’s Inner city, but an invisible wall separates them, much higher and more impassable than any Donald Trump can build. John Loneragan, the former governor of Mountjoy Prison, has often reminded us that 80% of Irish prisoners come from a small number of economically deprived urban neighbourhoods.

King’s dream has not yet been realised. In law, black and white people may be equal in the US, but we have witnessed the resurgence of white supremacy under Donald Trump. At least the Ku Klux Klan had enough shame to hide their faces so that they could not be identified. Today in the US, white supremacists wear jeans or suits, made in the United States of course, but probably by black or immigrant workers. They, today as in Martin Luther King’s time, want a society in which the privileged access of white people to education and opportunity is protected and therefore their privileged lifestyle secured.

In Ireland today, there are those, too, who have privileged access to education, opportunity and lifestyle. Inequality is very visible for those who have the eyes to see. Banks want the salary cap for their CEOs lifted, as they cannot find anyone prepared to work for €10,000 a week, while 47% of young workers under 29 are on contract employment, sometimes on low hours’ contracts or

minimum wage contracts, which pay little more than €10,000 per year. The lifestyle of those who are privileged is secured and passed on to their children by access to fee-paying schools. Any suggestions that fee-paying schools should be abolished will be met with fierce resistance.

“I have climbed to the top of the mountain and I have seen the promised land,” said Martin Luther King. That promised land was a mere speck on the far distant horizon. And it certainly wasn’t Ireland he glimpsed! The challenge which Martin Luther King’s life and death presents to us, whatever land we live in, is to continue the struggle to bring the promised land, where everyone, whatever race, religion, sexual orientation or colour can live a happy and fulfilling life, free from prejudice and discrimination, to bring that promised land closer to fulfilment.



Huttons of Summerhill

Ragnall Cooke¹¹



(Photo included courtesy of Joanna Travers, Dublin City Council)

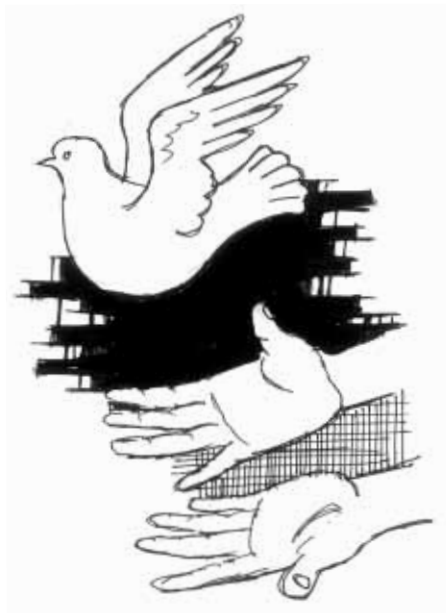
In their time, which lasted from 1779 to 1925, Huttons was the Rolls Royce of Irish coach and carriage makers. Every man employed by them served a seven year apprenticeship. Their parents paid a fee to have them taught a trade. They were indentured to the employer and received very little pay. Sometimes accommodation was provided over the premises. Huttons had their coachworks in Summerhill, where C.I.E. has their bus depot today.

Think of the skill required to manufacture a coach, from design to the final dovetail. Even the construction of a wheel, which required three kinds of wood and the knowledge to make it, is so skilled. Their reputation soared as they

¹¹ **Ragnall** – lives in Ballybough. His family, the Cookes were connected to Huttons for over a century. Robert Cooke, his great-grandfather was the last member of the family to be employed in Huttons.

acquired contracts to build the Lord Mayor's coach in 1791, as seen on St Patrick's Day, and the Irish State Coach in 1853, which is still used today by the Queen in London to open Parliament. Daniel O Connell's coach was also made there and paid for by an adoring public. The Irish Post Office was founded in 1784. Huttons designed and built their coaches with great success. Think of all the leather work required for seating, saddles and harnesses, all these skills lost now.

As the new century dawned in the 1900's, the motor car was slowly making its appearance and it was the beginning of the end for horse drawn carriages. Hutton tried to adapt by getting agencies for cars coming on the market. They were still building wooden bodies for these cars. They were all very expensive cars. But Huttons made one big blunder. Henry Ford offered them the agency for Ford cars but they turned him down. This was their greatest mistake, as Ford flooded the market with cheap mass produced cars, "the all steel baby Ford". They struggled to complete it and finally had to call it a day as the market for expensive cars had all but vanished. The firm went into voluntary liquidation in 1925. What a record for a Dublin Irish firm. Nothing lasts forever. Change is always around the corner. Huttons put Dublin and Ireland on the map for design, expertise and excellence. We will never see their like again.



Ó Bhaile Bocht, go Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh

Ragnall Cooke¹²

Fuinneog adhmaid á dathú agam,
Grian an tsamhraidh ag spalpadh tríd,
Scal ghréine ag damhsa le háthas ar na ballaí
Dul as riocht, ag athrú, is iad táite le chéile athuair
Gan tuairim agam, gan tuiscint céard iad.

Na héin bhroidiúla as gach aird amuigh sa ghairdín,
Ag sior-iomaíocht a mbia laethúil,
Iad ag giolcadh, ag tumadh, ag casadh, is ag tuirlingt,
Is aobhinn a bheith ag faire romham,
Ó nach acu atá an tsaoirse, ó nach ormsa an t-éad.

Is mithid dom machnamh
Cá bhfuil mo thriall,
Mé plúchta leis an rag-obair seo gan faoiseamh,
Gan staonadh lá i ndiaidh lae,
Fuíoll m'óige ag cúlú mar leá chúr na habhann,
Glac sos, glac saoirse ón mbroid seo gan chrích.

Flúirse fillteáin saoire scaipthe ina charn
Rogha leathan, is tuilleadh os mo chomhair,
Iad ag gealladh raidhse ghréine, is scléip,
Is áiseanna as cuimse sa Spáinn
Ach ní rachainn ann ar ór na cruinne,
Is sa Tuairín Dubh is mó mo choinne
Is ann, le craobh Inse Chór, den chonradh a bhéas mo dhúil,
Siad an dream, siad an comhlúadar beo bríomhar.

12 **Ragnall** – as Baile Bocht a chum an dá dhán seo.

Sa teach fial fáilteach Mhic Cárthaigh,
I mBéal Átha an Ghaorthaidh stairiúil,
Oicheanta ceoil, is damhsóirí scléipeach ag gluaiseacht de shíor,
gan rian tuirsiú,
Tigh céilí na gleanna, is an dúiche máguaird,
Teanga, seanchas, ceol, is próbairacht a shúim go smíor,
Sé a ruaigheadh an scáthsa atá ag goilleadh orm le míosa,
Ó nach mise a bheith atógtha, ó nach mise a bheith soar.



A terrace of steps in Cobh, photo by Liz Cotter

Na Gealbháin

Ealta ghealbháin cruinnithe corrabhuaiseach sa chlaí
San airdeall, folaithe, gan ghíog ná corraí
Sa chúl garraí mothrach, le m'áitreamh teolaí
Lear ghrabhróga aráin scaipthe sa chlós ina luí,
A namhaid aiceanta an cat, cuachach ina lúbán,
Suanach, sámh, bréagach nó cliceas cleasaíochta,
Luíochán, oilte ar gach cleas, ealain a cheirde.

Lagar gorta ag sárú a ndúchais, dul san fhiontar,
Rogha an dá dhíogha, ciaptha idir dhá chomhairle,
Géilleadh don chathú, ruathar anall ar tí tarlú,
Nó foighneach, míshocair le súil aibí,
Lúbaire ar dheis na gréine, urchóid ina suí,
Leamhsháinn is baol sa chúl garraí,
Fuascailt na faidhbe, idirghabhálaí.

Mheallas as mo pheata an chomhla shleamhnáin isteach,
Braoinín bainne sa mhias leacht a dhúil,
Giolcadh an chomarthas, i bhfaiteadh na súl,
Gealbháin ag ruatharnach as gach cró folaigh,
Cúiteamh na foighne, fulacht an duais.

Sáite sa léiriú a ruaig buairt is m'imní,
Fai gheann foighne fortacht, réiteach gach uile ní,
Ciúnas suaimhneas athuair tamaill san óasis mo chúl gharraí.

BALLYBOUGH – The Settlement of the Poor

Ragnall Cooke

The place names of the north inner city are precious. Everybody comes from some place, so to identify that place we have place names, *logainmneacha*. In Ireland 90% of our place names come from the Irish language. So, if you have ‘An Ghaeilge’ they are easy enough to decipher. Basically they evolved from a person’s name, some feature of the district, or some event that took place there.

A very common word we use almost every day is ‘Bóthar’, our Irish name for road, which evolved from the word ‘Bó’, a cow, hence a cattle track. The motorway in ancient Ireland was the ‘Slí’, of which there were five. There had to be enough room on these motorways for two chariots to pass one another at ease. These ‘Slí’ all led to the High Kings residence at Tara, ‘Teamhair’ in Irish, which can mean ‘Eminence’ or ‘Assembly Hill’.

One of these ‘Slí’, the Slí Cualainn, crossed the river Liffey (Life) at a point called ‘Bóthar Clochach’, or ‘Stony Road’, which gives us ‘Stony Batter’ today. The ford of the Liffey here was called ‘Áth Cliath’, ‘The Hurdle Ford’. Boulders were laid down in the bed of the Liffey and placed two feet apart. A stake was then driven into the bed behind each boulder and a wattled latticed frame was strung from side to side to enable people to cross at low tide. This later became the official name of our capital city, ‘Baile Átha Cliath’, ‘the town of the hurdle ford’.

Further to the east, down the Liffey we have Dubh Linn, which translates to Black Pool. This pool was formed where the Poddle River joins the Liffey and this is the origin of the name Dublin. The river Poddle formed the moat around Dublin Castle. Today the river is culverted, flowing under Dame Street and entering the Liffey almost facing the Clarence Hotel.

All the land on the northside of the Liffey up to Artane was bestowed on the monks who formed St Mary’s Abbey, by Dermot MacMurrough. For this grant of land they were obliged to provide a seat of learning, a hostel for travellers, and to look after and provide for the poor. Hence ‘An Baile Bocht,’(Ballybough)‘the

settlement of the poor.’ Here the poor were given plots of land by the monks to grow their crops and vegetables.

Leading up to ‘An Baile Bocht’ we have ‘Cnoc Crionáin’, or the hill of the decayed wood. Known as Summerhill today, it was used mostly to graze cattle in summertime. ‘Cluain Luibhe’ or ‘the meadow of the herbs’, is today known as ‘Clonliffe’, where the monks cultivated herbs to cure the sick. Each Chieftain of note in ancient Ireland had a healer or ‘Ící’ amongst his retainers and this is the origin of the surname Hickey. Likewise, the surname Lee comes from ‘Lia’, the ancient Irish word for a physician.

Drumcondra, ‘Droim Conrach’ in Irish, translates to ‘Conrach’s Ridge’, the name of the landowner in ancient times. ‘Cluain Torc’ or ‘Clonturk’ translates to ‘the meadow of the boar’. The river Tolka formed the boundary between Meath and Leinster. Tolka or Tulca in Irish means flood. It still lives up to this name, as it floods every four years or so. Clontarf, or Cluain Tarbh in Irish, translates to the bull meadow. This is where the battle of Cluain Tarbh took place on Good Friday 1014.



An abandoned home on the Aran Islands, photo by Bernadette Purcell

What Might Empowering Justice Look Like?

Pacelli O'Rourke ¹³



Diarmuid Ó Murchú introduced the Conference by looking at the meaning of two key words. Justice and Empowerment need to be clarified at the outset: Justice, in the context of today's theme refers to "the right conditions for life to flourish." And not just human life but all of life; indeed all of Creation as evidenced in the phrase, Eco-justice, that is, the state in which all entities exist in right relationship to each other. Empowerment, which operates from the bottom up, is truly egalitarian and espouses mutuality, thriving on a sense of companionship, all of which stands in stark opposition to Patriarchalism, by which decisions are handed down as dictats from the top. This is the traditional paradigm for the exercise of power globally. A further crucial distinction needs to be drawn between Justice and Charity. While both are valid, desirable ends, we ought not to confuse one for the other. Charity in terms of provision of funding etc. is a social service. As such it has the potential to become patronising and disempowering by giving rise to crippling co-dependency in those who are its beneficiaries. Empowering justice, on the other hand, is concerned with social change. It hinges on the involvement of all in communal decision making, seeking to facilitate adult self-realisation in those on the

¹³ Pacelli – was the reporter at the Margaret Aylward Centre Conference, facilitated by Diarmuid Ó Murchú on April 28th 2018. Gathered in Glasnevin were fifty people who were deeply committed to bottom-up empowerment.

margins. It focuses on the transfer of essential life-skills. Unlike charity as such, it involves commitment to a long term process, facing inevitable opposition from the established institutions.

From a Christian perspective, the rejection of Kingship in favour of Kinship by Jesus is deeply significant.

A remarkable example of empowering justice is to be seen in the practice of restorative justice; that is, restoration of right relationships in a way that involves the whole community. It comprises four aspects Encounter/Amends/ Re-integration/Reconciliation. New Zealand and Canada are the field leaders in the practice of restorative justice today.

A number of other approaches to prioritising justice were discussed including:

(a) **Education** toward cultivating proactive positivity in relation to solving problem situations

(b) **Activism/Lobbying**; engaging the arms of government nationally and locally.

(c) **Networking**. This is the way to the future. It refers to the strategy of deploying to the full, all available human resources to act as co-agents for change. Nothing is more destructive of action for peace and justice than ‘divide and conquer’. The exact opposite of this is to seek out other groups who have similar aims and values and combine forces. Pope Francis’ encyclical *Evangelii Gaudium* is recommended as a very fruitful document for deepening one’s understanding of empowering justice.

A Flavour of the Dialogue with Diarmuid as the Participants Reacted to his Presentation

‘It is important that we advocate on behalf of people rather than merely support them.’

‘Think of empowering as a verb rather than an adjective.’

‘As well as practical help, we have to look at root-causes.’

‘Watch out for the reality of burnout.’

‘The Arts have a huge role to play’

‘We work with the need and the conditions that gave rise to the need’.

‘I am on my parish council, but we are being told what to do.’

Some responses from Diarmuid

‘Empowering is a two-way process; it changes both the empowered and the empowerer.’

‘Indeed, be extremely careful regarding burnout. Who cares for the carers?’

‘When I change my level of awareness, I start attracting a different reality.’

‘We need to honour diversity rather than trying to impose uniformity.’

‘The dualistic dichotomy between sacred and secular needs to go.’

After some conversations in groups these observations were then expressed and noted.

1. It can be tortuous trying to maintain a balance between empathising with people’s situations and at the same time challenging them toward responsibility for change.
2. Increasing divisions and uncertainty in our society. Things are breaking down. Who is in charge?? The eco-dimension; trying to re-imagine what it is to be human.
3. How exactly to be a voice for the voiceless; - anger as a virtue; harnessing anger is problematic.
4. Networking; very challenging; the need to be always evaluating; support as against supervision.
5. Who hears the voices? Discovering the sense of what a particular group is/ or should be is demanding, slow work. Charity/justice; it is not good to polarise the two.
6. Restorative justice; the complexities of the Irish Church. How are local people to be empowered now in this time of closing and clustering of parishes?

Diarmuid’s concluding comment before the lunch break was: ‘Always keep in mind the wider picture; try to work from the principle of thinking globally, but acting locally.’

Participants in the afternoon selected to work in one of the following groups:

Advocacy, Activism, Community Engagement, Homelessness, Prison and Addiction.

We discussed together, *“How can we best implement the empowering vision of this morning’s session?”* The feedback and questions focussed on these areas.

1. We need to listen deeply. The unempowered need to be engaged in the presentation of the issue and in devising and choosing possible avenues toward a solution. We need to be genuinely prepared to act.
2. Leave no one behind. Work out a framework for what is to be done. See the UN document, Agenda 2030. (The goals for sustainable strategy between now and 2030)
3. The primacy of education; taking the risk of counter-cultural development. Lobbying for changes in law. Continual review/evaluation, including management of time as a limited resource.
4. The utter significance of the quality of the relationship between those delivering and those receiving. Therefore, respecting the victims of homelessness etc is paramount.. Endeavouring to balance agency - and self-help. Facilitating personal pro-activity; sensitive coaching in life-skills.
5. Awareness of ourselves; honest appraisal of our real attitudes toward prison and prisoners. Networking toward preventing the situation where people are likely to be incarcerated, and also to improve the quality of life and conditions within prisons.
6. Creating a space for relationship with those you are serving - working collectively as against maintaining a hierarchical structure.

Concluding Comments on Empowerment by Diarmuid

We need to get down to root-causes e.g. the alarming suicide rate in Ireland! People including youth, need to be faced with the hard questions. Time spent in contemplation is time well spent See, Judge, Act; teasing this process out in relation to specific contexts. We need to cultivate “keen awareness of the interdependence of all things under God” (Thomas Merton). Charity can be easy. Empowerment involves a long, hard struggle. Goals need to be realisable. We need to encourage the young. We need to think both personally and systemically. Always remember that we who are working for the establishment of empowering justice need to flourish as well!

Brenda Quinn expressed deep gratitude for Diarmuid’s input throughout the day. “You made it seem doable. You have given us a compass.” As at the opening, a short, quiet spiritual exercise brought the day to a close. A number

of people, “extraordinary practitioners” of bottom-up empowering justice were participants at the Conference. In the course of the day these people briefly, addressed one core question:

What do you see as the kernel for effective development of local bottom-up empowerment?

The following are their responses:

“Never come into a situation with ‘answers’. People need to become agents of their own change.” (*Br. Paul Hendrick CB, Cherry Orchard*)

“Meet people where they are at.” (*Tony Keogh, ACRG North Wall*)

“You need to be deeply committed to compassionate action.” (*Cormac McArt, Westcourt Centre Belfast*)

“Self awareness - to know and accept who you are, so as to be available to serve the needs of others.” (*Noelle Fitzpatrick, Trocaire, Syria*)

“Possessing deep empathy - so that you experience, even viscerally, the same anger and frustration et cetera, as those who are marginalised feel about their situation.” (*Pierre Klein, ATD Fourth World Ireland*)

“To have a deep conviction of the dignity of each person, treating people with the respect they deserve.” (*Sr. Margo CHF, South Sudan*)

Heartfelt thanks to all of the above for affording us the opportunity and the privilege of feeling their passion, their commitment and their wisdom.

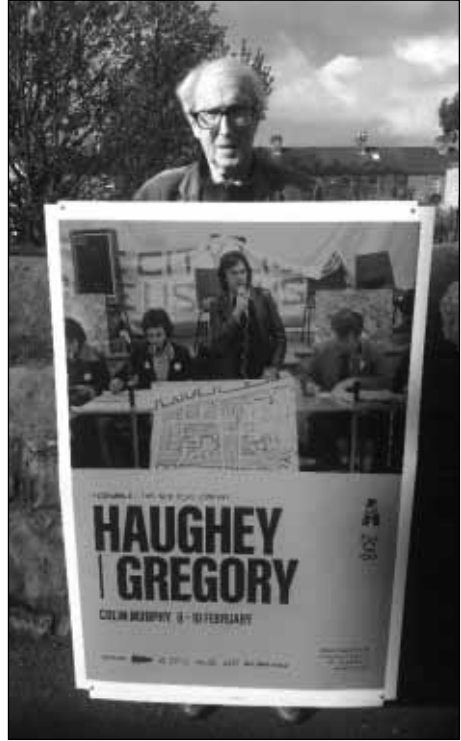


Pebbles on a Kerry beach (photo by Liz Cotter)

Haughey/Gregory

Noel Gregory¹⁴

The high-light of 2018 for me was the performance of the above-named drama in the Abbey Theatre on the Peacock stage in early February to packed audiences on each night, it received rapturous applause from the patrons each night. It was also staged at Croke Park and in Mountjoy Jail. It was about the events leading up to and surrounding the so-called “Gregory Deal” between my brother, Tony Gregory T.D. and the leader of Fianna Fail, Charles J. Haughey T.D. I say so-called because the term Gregory Deal was coined by the media. Both print and broadcast. It was a media creation” I never liked the term “Deal” as the word grubby is often associated with it. The word “deal” can be construed in a pejorative way. The original title of the official contract was “an



agreement between Tony Gregory T.D. and Charles Haughey T.D.” The document laid down the conditions under which Tony Gregory undertook to vote for Charlie Haughey as Taoiseach when the 23rd Dáil met on March 9th 1982 to form a government. It was under-signed by both men and witnessed by Michael Mullen, the General Secretary of the Irish Transport and General Workers’ Union, the biggest trade union in the country.

¹⁴ Noel – a retired secondary school teacher from Ballybough, whose brother Tony represented the local community in the Dáil over many years.

The wags at the time dubbed Haughey/Gregory the 'Prince and the Pauper' but I think the 'Politician and the Politico' would be a more accurate description. Tony was always the quintessential street activist rather than the staid figure of a politician. I always regarded Tony as a politico. To get back to the theatre play, Haughey /Gregory was written by Colin Murphy. I must say that I never enjoyed a theatre production as much in my life. Ruairí Heading was absolutely brilliant as Tony Gregory. He made me feel as if I was watching Tony again in real life and Pauline Kane told me it reminded her of how much Tony is missed by all who knew him. Morgan Jones was outstanding as Charles J. Haughey while Janet Moran was superb as the secretary - Pauline Kane in real life. It was delightful that Dolores Manley got a mention in the play as she helped out with the typing of the "Gregory Deal". Colin Murphy the playwright is building up an impressive portfolio of plays. He previously wrote "Guaranteed" (2013), "Bailed Out" (2015), "Inside the GPO" for the centenary of the 1916 Rising, what my father always referred to as the rebellion and "Lap Dance" about the local area plan for Phibsborough, (L.A.P). I want to congratulate him on his efforts in Haughey/Gregory. I must admit I was a bit wary beforehand, because of his Fine Gael and southside connections, that there might be a bias against the mainly northside "deal". But there was not. It was very fair and balanced indeed. Fishamble Theatre Company can take a bow for their great work on the production side of Haughey/Gregory.

For the benefit of the present generation who might know nothing of the agreements and understandings entered into by Tony Gregory and Charles J. Haughey I will refer now to some of the more salient points in what the media dubbed "The Gregory Deal." Mr Haughey agreed to provide a budget of four million pounds in 1982 to employ 500 men on an environmental works scheme for the benefit of local communities. The 27 acre Dublin Port and Docks site adjacent to the Customs House was to be acquired and developed by three commissioners on behalf of the state. The development plan for the site included 10 acres of local authority housing, 8 acres of industrial development, 6 acres of office space and 3 acres for recreational and leisure purposes, including a multi-purpose leisure centre. Mr Haughey agreed and gave a commitment to create 3,746 new jobs in the inner city between 1982 and 1985. The budget to Dublin Corporation would enable the employment of 150 craftsmen - electricians, plumbers and painters etc, to provide a more adequate maintenance service for Corporation tenants. Dublin Corporation was to increase its house building programme from 1, 350 new houses in 1982 to

2,000 in 1984. Dublin Corporation was to get a budget of 91 million pounds for 1, 600 new houses in 1982, if they could provide that many. Vacant sites were to have Corporation houses built on them at Seville Place, Oriel St., Portland Row, Empress Place, Rutland St., Russell St., Mountjoy St., Phibsboro Rd. and Glasnevin. All Corporation flats were to be provided with showers beginning with the 183 flats in Liberty House, Railway St in 1982. Three thousand flats in the inner city lacked such facilities. One million pounds was to be made available to fit out 500 flats a year. The whole Sheriff St area was to be re-developed.

Three hundred to five hundred adult inner city dwellers were to be re-trained and placed in employment per annum. A 5 per cent tax was to be levied on vacant derelict sites. A tax of 2 per cent of rental income was to be placed on office development to produce one million pounds for inner city renewal. Bank taxation was to be increased and a White Paper to be brought out to examine how banks and financial institutions can be controlled and democratised. A bank levy of 20 million pounds was to be imposed in 1982. Free medical cards were to be given to all Social Welfare pensioners. Home-help services were to be expanded. Haughey agreed to set up a system of regular and rigorous inspections of all institutions caring for children, disabled, mentally ill and elderly, whether public or private, He agreed to control the cost of drugs for the Health Service. A commitment was given to extend neighbourhood youth projects in 1983. A new Children's Bill was to be prepared. It was agreed to double the rates of Supplementary Welfare in September for school books and for clothes at Christmas.

A National Community Development Agency was to be set up to fund local community organisations. The Dublin North Inner City was to be declared an educational priority with an improved pupil teacher ratio, an increased number of remedial teachers, an improved psychological service at primary level. Educational Family Liaison Officers were to be established to improve family contact with schools. At secondary level a new Community School (Larkin Community College) was to be set up in the inner city to cater for three hundred to four hundred pupils with increased facilities such as career guidance. A special pre school facility was to be set up as a pilot scheme for children of inner city areas and special education schemes were to be set up.

A new Inner City Development Authority was to be set up. The Chairman of the authority was to be nominated by Tony Gregory T.D.. The state had future plans

for a major oil refinery. Whitegate Refinery was to be up-graded to eliminate lead from petrol. The Curragh Military Detention Centre was to be closed before the end of 1982. Clondalkin Paper Mills was to be nationalised if necessary. The Eastern bypass was not to proceed but C.I.E. was to get resources for its rapid-rail system. (Dart) However there were four items that Haughey would not agree to at the negotiations. He would not agree to nationalise the banks not to implement the Kenny Report on land. He would not agree to build an oil refinery in Dublin Port or to make Phil Flynn the Chairman of the Inner City Authority, as Tony suggested.

The foregoing is a synopsis of the agreement reached between Tony Gregory T.D. and Charles J. Haughey T.D. in return for Tony to vote for Haughey as Taoiseach on 9th of March 1982 when the 23rd Dáil assembled to elect a Taoiseach and a government. As I said at the outset of this essay I never liked the term “Deal” and I like it less now as “the art of the deal is associated with Donald Trump.” Enjoy the play and don’t miss it when it is staged again in the future. When Mick Rafferty, Fergus McCabe and Tony Gregory made demands on Haughey during the deal negotiations Haughey kept telling them that they were, “pushing on an open door”. He said to them, “You know what I want, what do you want?”





Expecting The Best For Myself¹⁵

In August 2018 thousands of people from across the globe descended on Dublin to celebrate family with the pope. Around here however not all families are perfect all the time. It can be painfully difficult living in a household where violence or addiction or poverty or sickness or suicide or abuse has taken up residence. These visitors take their toll. There can be sleepless nights, worry, lies, isolation, excuses, frustrations, conflict and waiting for the unwelcome knock at the door. Some debts seem never to go away.

As mummies and grannies we often take it upon ourselves to carry the spear and to try and hold it all together. For the sake of the family we try to absorb the pains and tensions and stand up strong. However, inside in ourselves we can sail close to burnout, depression and breakdown. This scary jolt of

¹⁵ Ballyfermot Star Family Support Group, Realt Na Clann – Kathleen, Tina, Anne, Máire, Teresa, Siobhan, Barbara and Margaret.

awareness sometimes helps us to realise that we really, really need to take good care of ourselves. We need support.

This support means being with like-minded people who understand what I'm going through and it means not having to explain time and time again about my story. Support is feeling that I am not alone in this struggle that has come into my home. My home is no longer my safe place, as once addiction arrives, chaos soon takes over.

Being connected with friends is vital. Whether it is meeting for a coffee or a laugh or a chat or a hug or going to the knitting club or to the water aerobics, each helps me to escape the stresses of home. The feeling that I matter when I drop into the Star Family Support Worker and the Star Club and meeting the good people there, allows me to see my troubles differently. There are no questions asked and we can have a laugh and feel support. Here we experience a loving fellowship of equals.

I experienced support when I was invited to go on a retreat weekend with other members of Star that I didn't really know. Being taken out of our environment for respite-time makes such a big difference and we can learn new ways of coping and get stronger in ourselves. I was apprehensive but had the time of my life. The other members made me feel so welcome and I learnt a lot about what I can control and what I can't ... and what I can let go of. I learned a lot about myself. The stronger we are in ourselves, the more we are able to cope with what life is throwing at us.

When stressed with family issues it is all too easy to sit and wallow and feel sorry for myself and allow my worries to get bigger and to become all consuming. This can be the right time to re-focus on my own learning and on my personal development. Addiction Studies and Bereavement Studies can give me the tools to understand some of the processes and the implications that accompany grief or addiction into the family. With Addiction Studies I learnt about family dynamics, change, values and living-up to my own realistic expectations. I would like to keep good values, and leading by example to leave a positive foot print for my family, knowing they are safe and secure in their own lives. With Addiction Studies also, I took a great interest in co-dependency which put me on the road to further education and self-discovery. With Star many years ago, I was involved in a course called Healthy Lifestyle. It was so good preparing organic food, learning shiatsu and meditation, studying body-

mind and dealing with stress in a healthy way. Feeding the body with good nutrition is an aspect of self care.

While into my second year with Star an unimaginable situation happened in my life when my son was murdered. I thought at the time and for many long years after that I would die myself from the torment of the mental and physical pain. In the early years I was just existing, too stubborn and proud to lie down and die. Besides I had another child to look after. I was not there 100%. I was zoned out with unimaginable shock, disbelief and powerlessness. I was a broken person. The person that once was confident and positive lived in sheer dread. I felt every second of my existence was torture. The Star Family Support Worker was very kind to me, taking me aside into her office and telling me the door was always open if I needed anything. I was so grateful for that support and opportunity. There were days I was so delicate I just wanted to be present and not participate in anything. I just wanted to be left alone. I felt so isolated with my own pain. I could not comprehend living without my child. The thoughts were overwhelming and I was so scared. I did not know what to do. I was lost. Attending Star was a great support for me and I felt a sense of belonging from the staff there. We made friendships and had a mutual respect for each other. Listening, encouraging, having fun and leaning on each other are great social outlets, helping me to remember that things are not all doom and gloom.

To get through the tough times I need to know and to believe in myself. If I want something to happen in life I need to go out and get it. My happiness is an inside job and I must put the work in and be my best and get back up on the horse. We need boundaries with our family and friends. Otherwise I will be treated as a door mat. Of course, be there to support the people you love but there are times to let go and allow your children and family members to grow up and find their own paths. Be sure not to give too much of yourself away as you need energy for yourself. Always remember that you are a person with needs, and treat yourself with loving respect.

It is so easy to lose myself when overwhelming stuff is happening in my family. Rather than get snowed under and drown in the chaos and drama, I need to take time to readjust and look again at myself and to re-own my own identity. Can I rediscover myself and trust in my own foundations? This may mean standing my own ground and being different and assertive, and this can be hard for both my family and for me.

When my body gets exhausted I need to listen to what it is telling me. Am I angry, lonely, tired ... am I taking too much on, am I trying to fix everybody else's problems? Am I ignoring my own needs and wants? When things get overwhelming I have found a wonderful escape for myself in massage. It helps me to be still and to relax and to put the focus on me. I can then detach from others and their problems. Also I love to walk in nature and listen to the sounds around me; birds singing, dogs barking and children playing. Another favourite centering strategy of mine is Reki which helps me on a daily basis to re-focus. When I do these exercises everything becomes simpler. Other people may be into yoga, water aerobics, hill-walking or jogging because somehow we all need to connect with our bodies and with nature. For some people gardening is a form of meditation which connects body, soul, nature and God. The rhythms of the year from the early summer beauty of everything blooming into life until the winter time of darkness and sleep, the gardener is brought close to God and finds time out from the demands and stresses of family life.

Meditation or mindfulness or prayer comes in many forms. For one person it can happen in the garden, for another it can be a time of silence with a lit candle, for another a healing massage and for another it can be angel readings. After a stressful day each of the above mentioned is a healing tonic. Likewise, when the whole of Ballyfermot comes together to stand in solidarity at the November Mass of Remembrance and at the June Service of Hope, we are



Sea shells on the strand (photo by Liz Cotter)

helped to feel connected with a wider network of support. Things not usually spoken of because of shame are brought into the light and we feel less isolated and encouraged and inspired.

Being a member of the Star Family Support Group helps to keep the focus on our own care and reminds us that no matter what our problems are, there are friends here to listen. Because of such friendships and support, life has changed for me. We encourage each other with our presence and we change. Such change for the good has a positive knock-on effect then on our family. Ní neart go cur le chéile. There is strength in our togetherness.

Coming Home

I'm exhausted from battling and pushing and pretending
In this fake world of excuses and lies.
My shield is battered and holed and scorched.
Scarred and wounded I need to come home.

Despite my motherly instincts
I can't keep trying to fix things forever.
Now I need to surrender and focus on the bruises
On my own hurting skin.

It's way past time to hug my soul and to celebrate
That I am precious, alive and good enough.
A battle-hardened, fragile warrior
Tending war-wounds in the field hospital of the struggling.

With pride, potter home to find where wholeness and power
Innocence and beauty, however hacked
Sit around the table together
Telling stories of plans, of victories and of destinies.

Find support to journey inwards towards home
On what may be a long and dark camino
And there, breathe and dream and chuckle and hope
Encountering our own wonderful, if broken self, afresh.

Larriers' Imaginings¹⁶

Acrostic Poems

Brodie

Brodie is a good footballer
Rugby is my sport
Octopus is my favourite animal
Dogs are nice to me
I want to be a manager
Every day I have a party

**Brodie McCann,
second class**

Leni

Leni's good at art
Everyday I'm nice
Nibbling on my biscuits
I want to be a millionaire

**Leni Gray,
second class**

Mason

Mason's good at art
Also good at Fortnite
Sand is my favourite
thing to play with
Otters are my
favourite animal
Now I am good at
football

**Mason Meehan,
second class**

Tighe

Tighe is good
I am getting a house
Great at dancing
He is heroic
Everyone is his friend

**Tighe Mason,
second class**

¹⁶ The creative authors are students at **St Laurence O'Toole CBS** on Seville Place.

Rhys

Rhys likes boxing

He is really good at it

Yes he likes football

School is not my favourite

**Rhys Creane,
second class**

Blaine

Blaine is good at football

Loves football

And Fortnite

I love GAA

Never quit football

Even if I hate it

**Blaine Maher,
third class**

David

**David is very good at
everything**

**At the shop I always
want sweets**

Very good at Fortnite

**I like to play duos
on Fortnite**

**David always wins a
game on Fortnite**

**David Byrne,
third class**

Richard

**Richard is good
at football**

Ice cream is nice

**Chips is his favourite
food**

Has lots of friends

Always in school

**Richard is good at
Fortnite**

Doesn't like onions

**Richard Russell,
third class**

My School Day

Today, I am going to tell you about my school day.

First, I got out of bed and washed my face. Then, I did my exercises. I got dressed and walked out the door. When I closed the door, I realised I had forgotten my phone so I went inside and got it. When I stepped outside, my shadow appeared out of nowhere. I slowly cycled to school and when I got there, the bell rang. We all went to our classrooms and started to work.

“Observe this or you will be on a step!” said the teacher growly. I almost got on a step. We got through half the day, then we went to the yard. We played a game in which you had to abandon people and we all had attempts.

Then, we went up and saw our homework. It was impossible to do that much! “Remember to do your homework!” the teacher said happily. I went home and I eventually got my homework done.

**Arthur Cholejenko,
fourth class**

Lón

Am lón a bhí ann. Bhí ocras orm. Bhí mé ag deanamh cáca le haigheadh lóin.

Chuir mé na huibheacha agus an plúr, siúcra agus bainne i mbabhla mór. Mheasc mé gach rud le cheile.

Chuir mé gach rud san oigheann.

I gceann cúpla nóiméad, bhí an cáca réidh. Chuir mé súthla talún agus seacláid ar an cáca.

Bhí an cáca go hálainn. Bhí athas orm.

**Jack McCann,
fourth class**

How To Make Slime

You will need: Glue, shaving foam, spoon, bowl, lid, container, food colouring

1. First, put the glue in the bowl.
2. Second, put your food colouring in a bowl.
3. Third, put the shaving foam in a bowl.
4. After, stir everything together.
5. Finally, you can play with it!

**Calvin Byrne,
fourth class**

Liverpool Poem

Mo Salah is a King
As he runs down the wing
He'll score a goal from thirty yards
While other teams collect yellow
cards
Mané will back Salah up
It's guaranteed we'll win the cup
You'll never beat us at the back
They can't survive our attack

Dyson Reilly fifth class



Mo Salah Song

(to the theme of You Are My Sunshine)

Mohamed Salah a gift from Allah
Scoring goals every week
He got top scorer, a super forward
Please don't take Mo Salah away.

Mourad O'Driscoll, fifth class



Larriers Trip to France

On Monday we got to Eu and had dinner. On Tuesday we went to the French school and we walked to the chapel. We went to Lidl to get sweets too. On Wednesday we went to mass and the war graves. Then we went to the match straight after. After the match we went to McDonalds. Then we went shopping. When that was done we went back to the hostel. On Thursday we got up early, had breakfast and went to the Eiffel Tower. Then we went to Aqua Boulevard. Then we went to the airport, but we got delayed.

The weather was great over there. It only rained for about 2 minutes. The flight was alright and the food was lovely. My favourite part was having the laugh with everyone there. I didn't have a least favourite part, I loved it all. It was great sharing a room with the other boys. I say the boys in 4th class are really going to enjoy it next year.

Tadhg Barry, fifth class

Our Trip to Eu, France

As we all hopped on the bus to leave we all waved goodbye to our mummies and daddies. We eventually reached Dublin Airport and queued up in line for the bags. We waited for an hour and a half. We finally gave in our bags. We checked in and got food in Burger King. We boarded our flight and mostly played switch for the journey.

When we arrived in France we got on a 3 hour bus journey to Eu. We got to the hostel, ate some food and went to sleep. On Tuesday we went to the French school and talked and played. After we climbed a huge hill and got to St. Laurence O'Toole's Church.

On Wednesday morning we went straight to the war graves. We saw Auggie Pullman, Karl R. and Emily S. I'm only joking, it wasn't really them. We went back to town to see the Lord Mayor. We had fun there. After we quickly went to McDonalds and ate some protein. Then we scurried to the shopping centre and went on a shopping spree!

On Thursday (the last day) we first went to the Eiffel Tower, which took forever! We took lots of photos and left for Aqua Boulevard. It was so much fun. I loved France! I highly recommend it!

**Evan Conroy,
fifth class**

Pope Francis and the Vatican decry the profoundly amoral culture of our global financial system, "This economy kills" when a handful of billionaires are literally making a killing while millions living in poverty "are making a dying." "No profit is in fact legitimate when it falls short of the objective of the integral promotion of the human person, the universal destination of goods, and the preferential option for the poor."

Evangelii Gaudium, 2013, 53-60.

*Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Vatican, May 17th 2018,
Oeconomicae et pecuniariae quaestiones.*

Farewell Larriers 2018

2013 we entered this school,
We thought we were mad, we acted the fool,
Until Miss Stafford and Miss Sally taught us the rules.
We had pizza parties and the homework club,
In second class we were really smug.
We performed 'Oliver' and visited the bog,
And a pen licence was the aim of our job.
In third class we all had the same aim,
e were all right on top of our game.
We joined up with fourth class and it was pretty much the same,
Mr McIntyre, Debbie and Niall tried to help us live up to our name.
We went to the Aviva, Tayto Park and took on Cú Culainn,
Some of us were screaming and some of us were hugging.
Fourth class came with Miss Walker and Miss Wrynn,
We walked into our classroom with a big grin.
A few weeks later we had Martin and Hu Ming,
PJ parties, the dab and the bottle flip was in.
We did 'I'm a Celebrity' and a school trip to Fort Lucan,
If only, if only we listened to Mark Candon.
In fifth class we were all set for Clara Lara and France,
In Aqua Boulevard some boys forgot their swimming pants.
Miss Walker, Mr McIntyre and Andy weren't impressed,
As with fidget spinners we became absolutely obsessed.
We went to Trinity, we did the Nativity,
And over to Facebook where we performed a weekly activity.
Sixth class and our time was coming to an end,
But an unbreakable bond as we'd always be friends.
Larrier Legends on the sports field we could not be touched,
In Fairview or Clontarf Road we turned opponents to dust.
To Croke Park and Irishtown with a football we ran the rule,
And finally we brought some silverware to the school.
Confirmation time and Mr Bailey's last year,
In secondary school we will show no fear.

St Laurence O'Toole CBS, 6th Class 2018

The Hands Of Hard Working Men

Niamh Molloy¹⁷

As a youngster I always loved colouring and drawing, but at about the age of fourteen I really wanted to get into it. With drawing, there is a good release and it just takes me away in my imagination for a while. It gives me a great sense of accomplishment when I finish a piece of art work. When I think that my drawing is good it helps me to feel good.

When I was in second year in Marino College preparing for Art in my Junior Cert, two teachers noticed, supported and encouraged me. Both Ms Lennon and Ms Freeman helped me to seriously pursue my Art and I'm proud of the grade B I achieved in both my Junior and my Leaving Certificate.

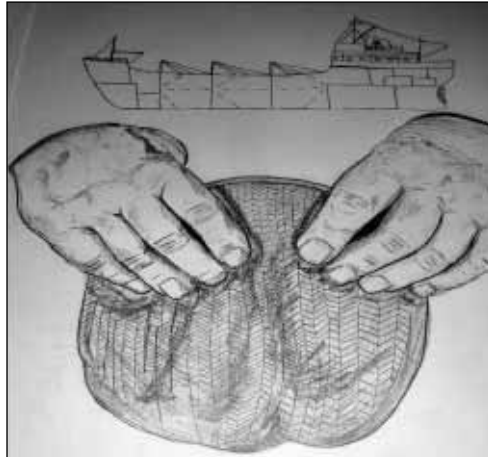
Having studied Graphic Design at Marino College, I being shy, was apprehensive when Roisín Lonergan invited me to exhibit my work as part of the Five Lamps Arts Festival. However, I had a good time and the exhibition went well, and I enjoyed getting much positive feedback. I choose to focus my work on the hands of hard working dockers. The North Wall area gets lots of bad press but after some chats with my granddad, I realised that I come from a people with a tradition of very hard work. My great granddad, Frank Maher was one of those dockers whose hands spent their day lifting sacks and boxes. This community is built on good people. I will introduce you to the six drawings I placed on exhibition.

1. This piece represents the men who worked on the docks and made up our area and community.



¹⁷ Niamh – a Graphic Design student from Ferryman's' Crossing exhibited her drawings in the CHQ as part of the Five Lamps Arts Festival 2017.

2. This piece represents the men who would go down to the docks looking for a day's casual work to put food on the table. The cap on hands is a sign of respect and manners. It also represents the hope that the men who went down to the docks would get picked for a day's work.



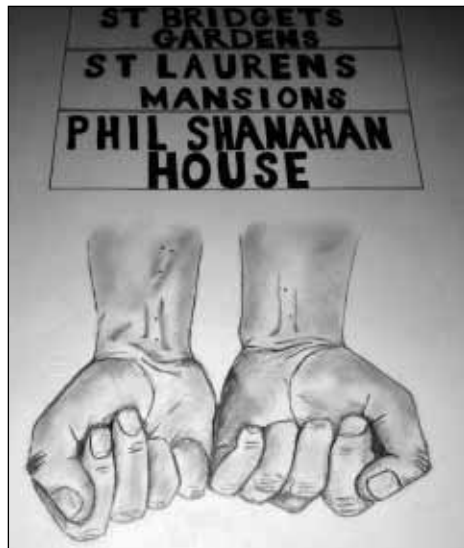
3. This piece represents the trade union and the trade union buttons. If you were a part of the trade union you had permanent work on the docks and if you had a trade union button you could pass it on to your son and he then had permanent work on the docks. The buttons meant you were first picked for the job over anyone who didn't have one.



4. This piece represents the times when work dried up on the docks and casual work was done away with. Most of the men in the community, if not all of them, were out of work. Poverty then struck the community.

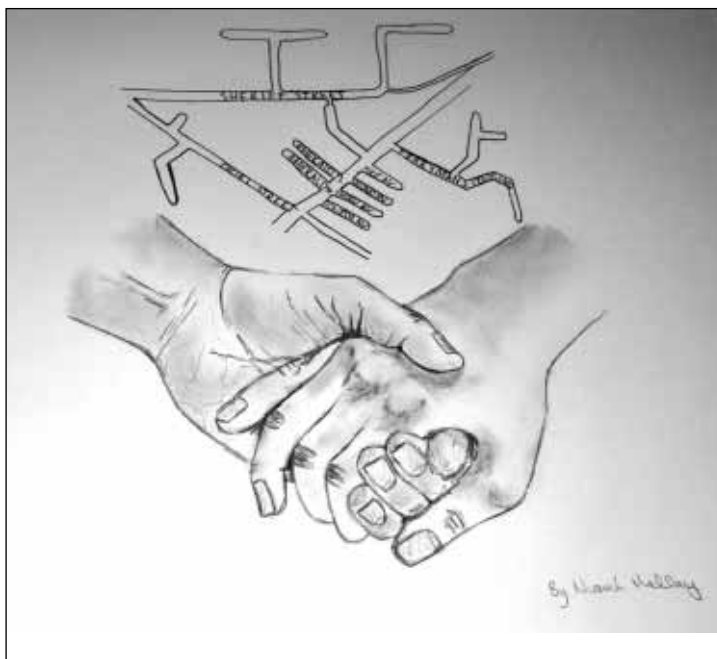


5. This piece represents the heroin epidemic that struck in the 80s. When the work dried up in the docks some men turned to drink. Drugs then followed, out



of boredom and depression of not being able to find work to provide for their families.

6. This piece represents the whole community and everyone in it. When hard times came we got through it together as a community and when good times came we celebrated together. We have all seen hard times and when poverty struck we leaned on each other when needed, because we all have experienced it at one time or another. We have a lot of love and respect for each other in our community, for neighbours, friends, family and anyone who lives here. We all have a sense of pride for the area because of the love and respect we have for each other. We have seen the area being broadcast as a bad place but we come from hard working class people. Hard times hit and poverty and drugs came along with it, but we stuck together and got through it and helped each other along the way.



God's Search For Us In Communities At The Edges¹⁸

Borderlands

Boundaries entrenched in generational insecurities
Open always to gates of opportunities when
Reaching out for mutual understanding and
Deepening bonds of truly listening and seeing
Equality ever grows with offerings of friendship and
Revolutionises humankind's kinship where
Love can conquer all
And with earth's resources justly shared
No one need become marginalised
Deep the commitment needs to be
So lives of mutual giving can also transform us, certainly me!

Eileen Donovan

Christ Stopped At Marlborough Street

Generations living in the flats prayed with
Holy candles in the Old Maids
While Gardiner Street was dripping in novenas.
Sister Louise distributed turf from her cart
And O'Connells looked after the kids of shop owners
But Christ never got to Summerhill.

¹⁸ **Eileen and friends** – were participants in 2018 'Mystery Searching for Us' retreat in the North Wall.

John Paul was too busy to stop at Matt Talbot
Francis managed to glimpse the Magdalene on Seany Mac.
Children were instructed locally to give-up their oul sins
And take their soul-direction from the church
However, many shamed by the violence of poverty
Never got to meet Christ on Summerhill

The north inner city does not feature in travel guides
And appears unaccustomed to progress, or to Christ,
or to theology seminars
Church centralisers view this community as
virgin soil ripe for mission
A not-so-romantic neighbourhood of chancers,
dreamers and anonymous heroes
Resilient with sadness, beauty, struggle, joy and courage
People busy surviving, being Christ, and at times
failing to recognise Christ

The lives and stories of north inner city people
Are harrowing, ... inspiring testaments to humanity
Sad and wondrous and magical and frustrating
Inviting a disinterested world to come and meet and see Christ
And ironically, experience an underground, hidden presence
Making it difficult to leave this place, of God incognito

Martin Byrne



*Steps through the forest, The Spinc, Glendalough,
photo by Martin Byrne*

Community Engagement

I find myself in another part of the world, different to what I am used to. It is eight o'clock in the morning and a Brother's phone rings. A phone call is often ominous at that hour. A neighbour has died during the night. Can the Brother come immediately and bring the van? The ageing neighbour had a stroke some time ago, but the family thought he was improving. During the night he got worse and passed away.

He goes to the family home and expresses his condolences. They need to act quickly: first stop the local police station to show the body to the police and get the death registered. So the body is wrapped in blankets and put in the back of the van, they head to the police station. After the police have checked the body and the man's identity card, they get a certificate and move on to the hospital.

A similar process as a doctor verifies the case. Now to the morgue. There the fridges are broken but an electrician is already at work. Maybe they can be fixed. Meanwhile the body is left lying there, in the heat, still wrapped in blankets. The family head home and begin to make arrangements. How will they come up with the \$30 to get a simple wooden coffin to bury their father?

We have become used to death as a sanitised experience and all the details are taken care of by professional undertakers, sensitive to the family's grief. This is not the way in most parts of the world. Death is harsh and messy. With the artificial protections removed, we experience the end of the person's life as crude and rough. No consoling niceties. Funeral costs are now quickly becoming the family's main worry.

Quickly the neighbours gather. Now you experience what community means. Humanity at its best, responding to the needs of other people. All work is put aside for the day, business is forgotten. The family becomes the central focus. How can we help? How can we support one another? What can you contribute – food, money, minding the children, clothes suitable for mourning? Together we will carry each other through this tragedy and beyond.

John Casey

On Reflection

You think you have it right
as you walk along the street.
But then it comes to hit you
as you make a week's retreat.

Missed chances come to haunt you;
Those graces just ignored.
Instead of up and answering,
You lay right back and snored.

You wonder at your progress;
Are you getting anywhere?
So busy with those many things,
When wanted, you're not there!

So, it's time for some reflection,
To check out where you've been.
If it's still the same old picture;
You must paint another scene.

It's something you must work at
And use these days ahead:
No dithering with past failure;
Be resolute instead.

You need order in your life;
You must listen to God's voice.
He offers good suggestions;
You're the one that makes the choice.

The spirit can be willing;
Desires can be quite strong.
But if you go your own way,
You can get it very wrong.

There are friends out there to help you.
They have been this way before.
If you're caught in troubled waters,
They will help you come ashore.

So allow yourself be guided
By those who do and say.
Give ear to friends' advice
They'll lead you on your way.

You will go from here rewarded.
You'll have purpose in your stride.
Having listened to God's word,
You will seek to spread it wide.

The needs out there are crying
They have to be addressed.
Seek out the local challenge;
Your efforts will be blessed.

Christy O Carroll

Abide In Him/Her

He needs your heart to love,
You need him to transform it.
He needs your ears to listen,
You need to be attentive to his voice.
He needs your voice to speak the truth,
You need his truth to set you free.
He needs your hands to create unity,
You need his hands to heal.
He needs your feet to seek out the lost,
You need him to show the way.

You are entering a relationship
Two intertwined in each other abiding.
The branch bearing fruit, its source in the vine,
There always guiding.
The Father/Mother above
Brings forth fruit through the Dove,
His all-embracing, unconditional love.
Budding forth! Spreading out!
To hearts that shout!
Caught in a great drought!

“Glory be to him whose power working in us
can do infinitely more than we can ask for or imagine.” (Eph; 3:20)

Brian Molloy



Locked Away

Open the locked door and enter.
Clunk! We are then locked in!
It's cold, stark, plain, colourless.
Quiet but not the peaceful kind.
We walk on.

Distant sounds behind closed doors.
Faint music, low voices, TV
Three to a cell.
Bowels emptied, no dignity.
Freedom's gone, telly's on.

Families visit behind a screen.
"Please come home," they're heard to say.
The reply, "I'd rather stay"!

Meals in the cell. Some down time in the yard.

Back in the cell.

Tuck shop a treat if you're good.

Stress inside but more outside.

The telly keeps the lid on.

Lie in bed counting sheep.

Passes the time till another sleep.

No pleasure here?

But they come back.

It's what they know.

There's no relief for

The poor families!

Shelagh Lockery

The margins are places of relationships, where small people work quietly for survival and for dignity. Communities such as the North Wall are collectively branded, silenced and humiliated. These are sacred places to recalibrate, engage, listen, re-programme and detoxify. Witness in such places, pockets of fraternity building towards a humane society that dreams of justice. Can we engage deep and long enough to be transformed and be evangelised?

If we dream and pray to be warriors, prepare to be broken. If we wish to be explorers with a crew of inner city humanity-experts ... If we wish to be brothers with people surviving the violence of poverty ... Then be discommoded and prepare to be both warriors and explorers, allowing the hallowing-out of our bruised, uncertain souls to be the small, alive places of wonder within us.

The Circle of Life

Valerie Smith¹⁹

It is no coincidence that I went to school in Columba's National School North Strand where I've great memories of helping with the distribution of our school lunches with Mr. Battle in the boiler house. Our little bottle of warm milk and a sandwich, Monday cheese, Wednesday treat day, current bun, maybe two if you helped out and cheese again on Thursday and Friday was jam sandwich day.

On lunch break we would dare someone to go into the store room of Stafford's Funeral Home to search for dead bodies. I shiver when I think of this.

After school my brother Wesley and I were summoned to our Aunt Edith Morris's shop on Summerhill Parade where we would help out serving the local community. My aunt Edie was known as Mrs Morrisey by the local families even though her real name was Morris. Her shop was situated between Tom Alan's Pharmacy and Sean Duff Cycles. She used to sell everything from shoelaces to pig's trotters. The Manager of the pub used to complain as pint glasses were returned full of grease. He used to threaten to ban the customers for bringing them in. At that time I was nine years of age and felt grown up as an assistant server in the shop. The late Tony Gregory was a customer all those years back, around 1971.

My mother, Eva Smith worked in Edges of Fairview and after work she would pick myself and my brother up from Edie's shop to take us home for dinner. My aunt Nan' as she was known in the community worked in Wiggins Teape on East Wall Road and when she was finished work she too helped out in Edie's shop. On match days in Croker both my aunts made and sold knitted hats, scarves and dolls on a stall outside the shop. All the people bought them and admired the work put into their wares. As a child I have great memories of Summerhill Parade being swarmed with match-goes, stalls and refreshment carts.

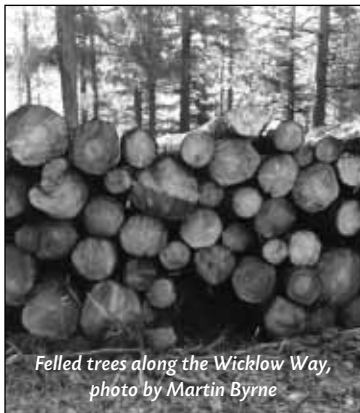
Every Wednesday my mother took a half day from Edges to bring me and my brother to Tara Street Baths to learn how to swim. My mam and dad were planning to move to Howth and it was a requirement to know how to swim if you lived by the sea. My next school was Mount Temple on the Malahide Road,

¹⁹ Valerie – revisits her memories of growing up in Dublin's inner city.

however we still headed for the Parade after school to continue helping my aunt in the shop. Her husband, Bill Morris died not long after Edie and he were married. They had a grand life from the stories Edie told me. Bill played the fiddle and the banjo to the customers in the shop. He also had a barber shop outfit band like the black and white minstrels, and they played many a performance in the Gresham Hotel in their day. The band wore striped outfits and painted their faces too.

In my later life I had many a job but my last job was working in Leinster House, firstly for one of the Parties for around ten years. Then an opportunity arose to get an interview with the late and great Tony Gregory. Tony hired me the following Monday. I was very excited because I knew Tony worked for the people. Having served Tony for many years behind the counter in my aunt Edie's shop on Summerhill Parade, I had then the pleasure of serving him again as his Dáil Secretary for the last nine years of his life. He was a firm, hardworking servant to the people of his constituency. His day was never done. There was always someone to call in to, calls to take, - no matter how late into the night. Tony worked hard to give his people a better quality of life, a home and a better education. It was an absolute honour to work with him.

Tony died on the second of January 2009. When I got the phone call that morning I was overcome with terrible sadness. It was a call I'll never forget. We will never see the likes of Tony Gregory in Leinster House again. A local band recorded a tribute to Tony aptly titled, "One of Our Own." How true this title was.



*Felled trees along the Wicklow Way,
photo by Martin Byrne*

Who Is Not At The Table?

Where is the theology in Ireland derived from the coalface of struggling people living in poverty? Where in places such as the North Wall is the Irish understanding of evangelisation, as expressed in the Puebla Document of 1980? Where is the liberating agency of poor communities recognised? Inculturation of the gospel happens with real people experiencing turmoil, distress, hope and faith in challenging encounters at the margins. What role if any is assigned to poor communities in Dublin to evangelise the Irish middle class church?

Inner City Spirit

Hugh O'Donnell

Matt Talbot: One Of Our Own - I have been thinking of the inner city man, Matt Talbot, since someone asked, 'do you think Matt will get a raise?' (a veiled reference to a possible promotion). 'I don't know', I reply. 'I kind of like him as he is – on the ladder carrying a hod.'

'I should be the last person to advise anyone about religion' he once said. 'When I was young I was very careless about all that because of drink and I broke my mother's heart'. And probably helped mend it too as he struggled free of his addiction.

'But wasn't he a bit weird?' continues my questioner, 'didn't he sometimes wear a chain?' I agree it does sound a bit kinky until we follow his logic. 'In a former life I was a slave to alcohol. Now I want to express that I am completely attached to what a surrendered life has to offer – relationship, nourishment, being free. The chains are a sign of that'. 'Well it may be the devil or it may be the Lord', sings Bob Dylan, 'but you're gonna have to serve somebody'.

We are natural addicts and easily manipulated by consumer logic – buy, buy, buy – and don't realise how in thrall we are. We consume too much, spend hours on social networks with little sense of not being at home with ourselves. Matt's legacy to our age is simply what he discovered in recovery; be who you are, ordinary as bread and a child of grace.



Statue of Matt Talbot on City Quay

Happy Ending

Why don't you make it a happy ending?
Have you never heard of a happy ending?
Everyone loves a happy ending
Who doesn't love a happy ending?
Tell me why you don't want a happy ending
You must have a happy ending

There is no happy ending
They don't go together happy - ending
It's not like happy birthday, happy hour
Think about it, 'happy ending to you'
Nobody I know does happy ending
Happy ending sucks

I'm not saying it has to be a 'happy' ending
But some happy has to happen
I just adore a happy ending, darling
Please let it be a happy ending
Make me cry with happy ending
Say yes. Kill me with a happy ending

Particulars

Hugh O'Donnell²⁰



They're looking for a lead, something to jump-start the investigation. They have reg. numbers from burned-out cars but need a word, a sign, a nod of the head to link them to the man with a bad eye and six cans of cheap beer who'll only answer 'yes' to the right question or 'maybe' if he needs to manoeuvre. Offer something. You can always go higher.

It was hardly its destination to end in a tail spin and made to screech, half terror, half delight, in front of small faces with big eyes watching a car showing off – spin , reverse, surge, brake, then blaze in a kind of metal music under tumbling smoke. When sirens and hoses arrive it has become something else - a rite of passage, release, an offering.

Bad news came fast, hit the airwaves and bounced, its desire to be first with the word of grief – 'a fee grief' as they say for the intended who never gets it first but comes to her broken, in small bites to be taken in more easily, 'Alone...3.30 am.' Headlines delight to make it sound inevitable, even right, deserving to be read from six feet away.

²⁰ **Hugh** – is a Salesian priest working in Lourdes parish, Sean McDermott Street where Matt Talbot's remains repose.

Wilton Terrace

William Cummings ²¹

I walked past Wilton Terrace many times as I enjoy walking along the banks of the canal and taking time out. I remember it was raining on the day and I stopped to shelter under a large tree. I closed my eyes and I could hear the soothing sounds of the water flowing through the lock gates. I love to stop along this stretch of the canal. So, standing on the banks of the canal safely under my tree I decided to take a picture and post it on my Instagram with my tagline taking some time out. When I got home I realised that many of my friends had reacted to the picture. I had lots of likes and comments asking where I was standing when the picture was taken.

I also noticed that while the canal looked amazing in the picture the wall across from where I was standing looked old and dirty and the brambles had taken over the space. I did not think much of this until I went and had a closer look at the space. I have to say I am glad that I was curious enough to take a closer look. This closer look revealed to me that hidden under all the overgrowth stood thirty-four stone pots and beautiful stone shelf.

It was then that the idea came into my mind. I had wanted to do something to represent my work in the mental health sector. I wanted to create an online presence and an actual physical space for people to feel and to express themselves, - something they can visit and touch and get involved in. I had looked for almost a year for space and enquired about some unused spaces in community centres in the surrounding areas but nothing had come out of this. I started to believe that the option we would have would be an online space and I started to dedicate my time to this.

That Feeling

As I said, I love to walk along the canal and every time I walked past this space, I got a good feeling and one hot summer's day I saw a mother and daughter sitting on the opposite side of the bank having lunch. I remember overhearing

²¹ **William with friends from the North Wall** – established an attractive art installation near Baggott St Bridge, which is a public space to promote mental health.

the daughter saying to her mum this could be a lovely place to sit and the mother just nodded and they left.

The Spark

That was it for me I went and had a coffee and I wrote the word 'mind' down and then I wrote 'my mind' and I started to reflect on the previous five years of my life and how I myself had dealt with my own issues. I believed that this space represented a mind. This space represented that a mind can become overgrown and that beauty can be hidden. This can be left unseen for years and it takes a spark to rejuvenate such beauty.

What Happened Next?

I had my idea and I had my inspiration. I would use this space to represent the mind. I would show people that yes, your mind can become overgrown and can fall into disarray. I wanted to show people that yes this can happen but do not lose faith as someone is out there looking to help, and willing to put-in the effort to help you come back, and you may come back different but you will be strong and beautiful.

I wrote to Waterways Ireland who own the space and I pitched the idea. It was amazing. Waterways were so positive from the start and between us, we agreed on a programme and now we have a wonderful space to relax and take some time out on the banks of the royal canal. Wilton Terrace to me was a dream and I never thought I would meet so many amazing people through this project. The artwork and the plants will be in place for two years and I will be down at the space every Wednesday from 6 pm to 8 pm and Saturday from 12 noon to 3 pm and I will be available to talk. People don't have to talk, but if you would like to chat or just want to sit, someone will be there for you.

Unspoken

We dial the numbers
The phone on the other end does not ring
We shout out aloud
Our voices like whispers fall on deaf ears
We are vulnerable and alone
Isolated by our thoughts and our fears

We feel we have no other options
We go through the list
Pull the trigger of the gun
Empty the contents of prescription bottle all in one
The slash of the wrist
To jump with a rope around our neck
So, we fall prey to the hangman's fatal twist
Maybe we will step out in front of a bus or car
Or the express train we see coming from afar

We dial the number but hands do not move
We shout out but we are alone so our words remain unspoken
We have carried this thought for so long
We believe we are broken

Now some one must find us
The news they must share
For ever haunted by the memories
Of the lifeless body, they found lying there

The clay on the coffin
The spark of the flame
This does nothing to stop our loved one's self-blame

We don't hear the cries
The whispered I love you
The wondering why
We don't see the impact on lives
How are loved ones this date, is now set to one side
On this date for the rest of their lives
They will always remember the suicide

The Choice

What will they say
What will they say
on judgement day
What will they say
with tear filled eyes
and handfuls of clay

What will they say
What will they think
What will they do as they walk away

What will they say as you hear the tapping of clay
Clay tapping on the wood as you lay inside and start to decay

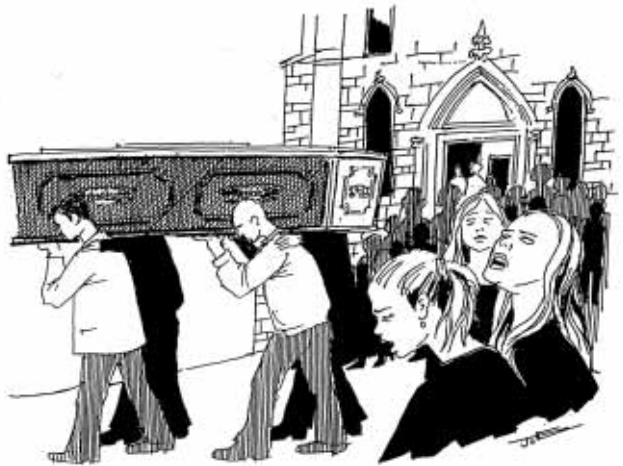
The last good bye to which you can't reply
Who will it be that lays a rose or will they be too embarrassed to stand
out from the rows
Or will they be alone to just to make sure they lay the final stone

What will they say
What will they think
What will they do as they walk away

So as you lay there on this final day
Your final representation is freshly turned clay
Will it be a field of regret or will they say you did your best
Will a single figure stand for you
To say good bye and whisper I loved you

What will they say
What will they think
What will they do as they walk away

So now as the party starts
Will they tell stories and laugh
Or will it be one person just raising a glass
As you fade away into the past



What will they say
What will they think
What will they do
as they walk away

Only you can tell
Only you can write
Only you can try to do
what is right

Feel what they say,
feel what they write and
hopefully your memory
will shine bright
on judgement day.



Family on the beach, photo by Liz Cotter

North Wall Development

When the poor person or community is displaced and the god of money comes, there is this inversion of values. Whole communities are disposed of and discarded. Today can we practice the culture of encounter rather than live the idolatrous worship rendered to money? People from the edges, who are protagonists, with the smell of struggling neighbourhoods on themselves, are often silenced. Too often poor people are reduced to passivity, tranquillised and domesticated into becoming inoffensive beings.

Adapted from Pope Francis address to Popular Movements,
Rome October 28th 2014

Ireland, I Have A Dream

Chloe Gavin²²

The Ireland, I Have a Dream project was started over a year ago by The Unity in the Community Youth Group which is affiliated to ATD Ireland. The goal of the project was to give the opportunity to other young people to have their voices and opinions heard. Martin Luther King was a big inspiration for the project hence the name. The group was inspired by his philosophy of inclusion and equality for all. In June 2018 the book was launched with over twenty speeches from different young people throughout Dublin included. Below I have attached my own which was shaped by helping to run the project.

Upon starting the Ireland, I Have a Dream project I thought I knew what my dreams were, I thought I had it all figured out and that my dreams for myself and my community were quite simple. Now nearly a year later I have come to realise through participating in this project that they are not as simple as I first thought. Let me explain. At the beginning my dream was to have a simple normal life with a relatively nice community where I could work and raise a family in the future, quite a generic dream for a lot of people and it seemed to be a common theme across a lot of the workshops that we ran for young people. However, once I really sat and thought about this I felt it was quite simple and no it's not my dream. It's actually far from it. I don't want a simple normal life. I want an adventurous, courageous, fun-filled life, one that I can look back at someday and think I've done everything that I hoped to do.

- * I have a dream that I will travel to a country and really help to change at least one person's life that is less fortunate than me.
- * I have a dream to have a career that fulfils my values and passions and not just be in it for the money.
- * I have a dream that Dublin's North Inner city will be a less stigmatised area in the future.
- * I have a dream that one day mental health and addiction will be more accepted in society.

²² **Chloe** – from the north inner city is Co-founder of Unity in the Community Youth Group who with ATD Fourth World, in June 2018, published the book, "Ireland, I Have a Dream".

The list could go on but I think this one explains my point. Dreams shouldn't be put into a box because you think they are too big or not achievable. All dreams are achievable with a little determination and a lot of hard work. It took me a while to realise this and once I did, my list of dreams changed dramatically. So, if you are reading this and you're not quite sure what your dreams are, I'd give this piece of advice. Don't limit how big your dreams can be. If you want to own a unicorn someday make that dream a reality. Who is going to stop you? I mean a unicorn is just a horse with a piece of plastic stuck to its head. Who is to say that you don't own a unicorn? Keep dreaming big and never let society or other people make your dreams smaller.



'Ireland, I have A Dream', book launch, Mountjoy Square.

The Parent Child Home Programme

Soaring through Play through Books and Toys

Linda McGrath and Michelle Moore²³

On any given week day in Dublin's inner city, you may see our Home Visitors in their pink and navy uniforms walking along the paths on their way to the families they visit. These experienced and professional Home Visitors are visiting families on the north and south side of the Liffey, modelling play and reading as a form of early learning. Engaging with parents and children around early education can help empower parents to unlock their child's potential and get them ready for learning, ready for school!

Originally, from the US, the Parent Child Home Programme (PCHP) is an innovative, home based literacy and parenting programme that strengthens families and prepares children to succeed academically. This evidence-based programme was established through The Early Learning Initiative (ELI) in the National College of Ireland (NCI) in 2007, to combat and address the specific problem of educational disadvantage in marginalised communities. Initially, 5 Home Visitors were employed by NCI with 15 families participating. 2018 has seen a rise to 30 Home Visitors and the participation of 180 families, which will continue to rise into 2019. We now deliver the programme in the Dublin areas of 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 10 and 12, as well as 2 pilot sites in Limerick and Galway. ELI prioritises helping parents to develop their children's social, language and thinking skills from an early age; thereby, ensuring that children enter school ready to learn, with the skills they need to be successful throughout their education.

ELI believes that the Parent Child Home Programme has the most influence on children's educational outcomes by encouraging and empowering parents as their child's first and best teacher. Families receive visits twice weekly for a half hour on the primary school year calendar. This allows one on one time with the

²³ **Linda and Michelle** – are PCHP Coordinator and PCHP Senior Specialist, Early Learning Initiative, National College of Ireland, Mayor Street.

child and parents but often there may be other siblings that are also accommodated in the sessions. In total, there are 92 visits, which can take up to a year and a half to complete. The family in the programme receive a developmentally appropriate book or toy each week as a tool to support the child's learning. PCHP encompass a non-didactic approach. The Home Visitor plays and models positive interactions for the parents. This supports and encourages the parents who in turn learn tips and ideas to extend the play and language development through the week. When engaging with the books and toys, Home Visitors encourage open-ended questions and learning through play experience with a child lead focus. This 30 minutes visit is enjoyable for everyone, as both Home Visitor and parent can see the child learning and development through play, including early numeracy, social skills, nursery rhymes and pre-writing skills. As the weeks grow, the Home Visitor and family get more confident with each other. They observe and get to know the child's interests, which provide opportunities for parents to see their child growing and developing within their home learning environment. The Home Visitor will always encourage, praise and support families using different strategies and ideas to get their child interested and involved in the play. All books and toys received by families are age appropriate, no battery operated toys and all have an educational purpose.

Thanks to our funders, there is no monetary cost to the families receiving the programme but it is expected that the family gets involved in the sessions and continues to use the books and toys afterwards to enhance their child's learning. On completion of the 92 visits, parents have acquired the skills and knowledge to continue supporting their child's educational journey. They also have a library of educational books and toys to carry on playing and using with subsequent children. Parents can see that their child has grown in confidence and is ready for the next stage in their education. At the end of the programme every child and every family graduate in the National College of Ireland. This is a very big celebration for all involved and it marks a significant milestone in their journey through education.

The Home Visitors are all local women, who receive on-going training and are employed by NCI to deliver the programme. They are the ambassadors for PCHP and early year's education on the city streets. Easily recognisable in their distinctive uniforms, they provide an accessible point of contact information and referrals for families interested in the programme. Children become



The Early Learning Initiative Team, 2018

eligible for the programme from age 16 months – 3 years. If you would like to find out more about the programme, or are interested in becoming a Home Visitor, please contact eli@ncirl.ie

PCHP Facts

What do parents say about the programme?

“It’s a winner, he takes out them books, the wife would read to him most nights. I have seen the improvement”.

“Watching my child reading and exploring, colours and shapes, looking so happy, she wants us to read more to her. I never had that as a child. I have actually learned myself from the books, I enjoy it too. I hope to get involved with the college when she goes to primary school”.

“My reading has come on better and I am calm. I am a lot more relaxed and my child is the same with me. I love reading to him and we enjoy playing together. My Home Visitor is great at giving me tips and looks at all different sides. I have said it to my family, friends and the intervention team”.

“I have developed the skills to listen, to interact, to make learning fun and to relax and enjoy time with my child”.

Outcomes for the Programme

The programme improves the educational outcomes in particular, language, literacy and numeracy for children and increases parental engagement in their child's learning.

Research Outcomes from PCHP America show;

PCHP children are 50% more likely to measure ready for school than their socio-economic peers. They enter school performing 10 months above their chronological age and have a 30% higher graduation rate.

The Gift of the North Wall

First of all I would like to speak about something which the language of exclusion often disregards or seems to ignore. It is the wisdom found in poor neighbourhoods. This wisdom which is born of the "stubborn resistance" to that which is authentic to Gospel values, - which an opulent society, anaesthetised by unbridled consumption would seem to have forgotten. You are able to weave bonds of belonging and togetherness which convert poverty into an experience of community in which walls of the ego are torn down and the barriers of selfishness overcome.

The culture of poor neighbourhoods, steeped in this particular wisdom, has very positive traits, which can offer to these times in which we live; it is expressed in values such as solidarity, giving ones life for others, preferring birth to death, providing Christian burial to ones dead, finding a place for the sick in ones home, sharing bread with the hungry, showing patience and strength when faced with great adversity, and so on. Such values are grounded in the fact that each human being is more important than the god of money. Thank you for reminding us that another type of culture is possible. The path of Jesus began on the peripheries. It goes from poor people and with poor people out towards others.

The situation of indifference and hostility experienced by poor neighbourhoods is aggravated when violence and criminal organisations, serving economic and political interests, use children and young people as "canon fodder" for their ruthless business affairs. I also appreciate the struggles of those women who fight heroically to protect their sons and daughters from these dangers.

Extracts from the address of Pope Francis on his visit to Kangemi in Nairobi 27th of November 2015

The Trauma of Poverty

Poverty

BRIO Group²⁴

It's the feeling in your stomach as your gut just drops
When you hear the alarm on the meter knowing the electricity's about to stop

It's the embarrassment and shame of asking someone else to do your washing
'Cos you've no access to a washing machine when your life is hostel hopping

It's no bank account or credit card and waiting in the post office all the time
Because unlike ordinary people you can't pay your bills on-line

It's the dread of opening their schoolbag and finding a note
that's looking for money
And the apology in the eyes of your young one and having to say,
'It's alright, honey'

It's not feeling safe; it's shame; it's just trying to survive
It's the jealousy as you watch others living like it's a joy to be alive

It's feeling guilty as a mother when you cannot buy the things they want
Or buying the cheapest nappies when you'd like to buy
the expensive ones just once

It's the promises with the disappointments and the
damned if you do or damned if you don't
It's the invisibility and the silence and feeling that you can no longer cope

But it's the strength that keeps you going and the fight that helps you fight
Against the policies and the red tape that makes inequality seem alright

Yes, it's the anger and the resilience that makes us shout for humankind
Demanding from those with all the power, that we leave no-one behind

²⁴ **BRIO Group at SAOL** recited this powerful poem at the October 17th Commemoration at the Human Rights and Poverty stone 2018. The poem which they devised together speaks of the reality and real experiences of poverty.

And I Did Not Move Until The Lights Came Back On

Gary Brodrick²⁵

There was a power cut on our street last night.
I sat in the dark and was not afraid.
I did not move.
I sat in the chair until the lights came back on.
But I was not afraid.
The alarms went off outside;
Cars drove quickly through our dark street.
And I sat in the chair, not afraid;
And I did not move until the lights came back on.

There was a power cut on our street last night.
I thought that I would be afraid; I am always afraid.
I did not move.
I breathed carefully and stayed still.
And I was not afraid.
The alarms went off inside;
Thoughts ran quickly behind my dark eyes.
And I sat in the chair, not afraid;
And I did not make a noise until the lights came back on.

There was a power surge in my head last night.
I sat in its naked glare, revealed and ashamed.
I did not move.
I sat in the chair until the light cooled down.
I was afraid.
My soothing thoughts were not loud enough to hear.
I drove quickly back to the safety of silence.
And I sat in the chair;
And I did not move until the lights came back on.

²⁵ **Gary** – is director of the SAOL Project on Amiens St and in this poem writes of the impact of trauma.

The Days Are Getting Harder

Jessica C²⁶

The days are getting harder
And the nights are dragging on
Wondering how this all went so wrong
My mind constantly racing on
Trying to push on and scared to go to sleep
Because the flashbacks are too strong
Not knowing how I will be feeling from one minute to the next
My head's a nervous wreck
And I just put a fake smile on
Not knowing how to express what I'm feeling or how I'm feeling
And it comes out in anger outbursts
And that's when people get there quick
And say I'm volatile
When if you really knew me
Or got the time to try
You would truly know I wouldn't harm anyone
Only myself
I would I might look strong
And come across as well capable to defend myself
But the perception you have of me is so wrong
Because the mask I have on
Underneath the mask and the outbursts
There is a soft caring person inside
Who has been broken inside
And is working thru my battles
That I'm constantly having to fight
And I would love to run from my head
But reality is there is nowhere to hide.

26 **Jessica C** – is the SAOL Poet Laureate and composed this poem in response to the careless treatment she received in her ‘supported housing.’ It is a powerful reflection on being unwell and on being misunderstood.

The North Wall Series

Paul Kelly²⁷

The North Wall Series began in early 2014. For years I had travelled to document life in various parts of the world from Guatemala to East Timor; - exciting trips where I met people and experienced things that I shall never forget. Then my son Luke arrived, after I married and later Alex came along. Suddenly travelling abroad for weeks on end became an impossible luxury. I fixed my sights on my own community in the North Wall where I had come to live and love in the early 2000's.

The North Wall offered up its images slowly and only after due respect was shown to the subject. Rather than appear in any way journalistic, I use the short (50mm) lens. Whenever I photographed someone it was always conducted at close quarters and with consent. The short lens meant that I was always within chatting distance of my subject. There was therefore no sense that I was taking or snatching a photograph – it was completed on a mutually-agreed basis and the agreement generally became that if I captured a good shot, that it would appear on the newly set up North Wall Series Facebook page. Nevertheless, photographing the people here, in some ways, proved much more difficult, and at times more dangerous, than when travelling as an official photographer with an NGO in a new nation.

On the morning after Halloween 2014 I went to the dock with my camera and an old door to help re-stoke the fire. There was a group of a dozen or so teenagers and young adults enjoying the last of the party from the night-before. I introduced myself and was given permission to take some pictures. After a little while two of the lads became agitated. I offered to leave, I was told I could stay but a couple of the boys still weren't happy. One of them took a glass bottle and broke it – he held it up to me and told me to go. Another of the boys offered to walk me out – he led me away and out of the dock. We leaned against the wall in the warm morning sunlight. I explained how I was aware that to come and take pictures after a party on the dock might be considered a

²⁷ **Paul** – local resident and photographer who celebrates the community with his North Wall Series exhibitions. Two photos from this series are gifted to you on page 6.

risky exercise. He explained that one of the lads had children and how it mightn't look good if pictures appeared of him at an all-night party on the dock. I responded that I understood. However I never posted images on Facebook without the permission of the subject. I expressed regret that I hadn't been able to capture any really good pictures of the scene. We continued to enjoy the sun.

Suddenly a red car driven at speed rounded the corner and crashed heavily into the bollards in front of us. Two lads leapt from the car and made a dash for the entrance to the dock – as they passed us – it was as though they were flying through the air. In pursuit, two uniformed gardaí emerged from the squad that had screeched to a halt behind them. They all disappeared into the dock and the young man next to me turned and said: 'That would have made a good photo.'



*Darkie, North Wall Series,
photographer Paul Kelly*

By 2016 the North Wall Series Facebook page had over 1,800 followers and I had been able to post pictures of many people in the community enjoying life at happy community events, such as the annual 'Luke Kelly Night', 'Stars In Their Eyes' and events in the sport's field. I always tried to send some photographs back to the people I had photographed and Mark & Gerry would often take these in at the K&A and they kindly ensured that the people pictured received the prints. I remember with great fondness events such as Darkie Scurry's second 80th birthday party when the Sheriff Hall was taken over and the lady who had been given 6 months to live over a year before celebrating and being celebrated in a unique manner. When Darkie took the microphone at the end of the night the whole hall joined arms and closed in on her in a scene of warm humanity, the like of which I hadn't experienced since attending an all-night rave in a Montreal nightclub in early 2000. The crowds were such, that taking a photograph of the queen bee was impossible and as I stood at the periphery and admired the scene a gent who had just arrived came up to me. He was obviously overcome by the emotion of the occasion. He also had the appearance of being overcome by narcotics. 'LOVE' he proclaimed loudly, 'This whole room is filled with love' and he was right.

Later when Darkie eventually departed I was given one the greatest honours I have ever had in my professional life when her son, Billy invited me to come and photograph her funeral.

The North Wall is unique – it's a place where people are strong and it's a place where a community can endure.

The Six Miracles of Lourdes, and One Cornerstone of the Parish

Ann Matthews²⁸

My mam, Ginny Byrne was born in 1909 in Dublin. She was the second child of Daniel Byrne and Julia Ellen May. Her father died ten days after the end of the lockout, which lasted into February 1914, and her baby sister died from meningitis in Temple Street six weeks later, on Ginny's fifth birthday. Ginny was the middle child of three siblings.

When her daddy died, her mammy, who was a box-maker by trade, went back to work in the Dublin Box Factory. Life was tough and when Ginny was fourteen years old she was sent off to be trained at High Park in Drumcondra as a nursery nurse maid. Then she worked as a nursery maid in Dublin and in London for various well-to-do families. Ginny was an intelligent, sensitive, and observant girl, and very gentle but she was no pushover. My uncle Dan said that when she returned home from London she introduced the Byrne family to serving apple sauce with their pork chop.

In the mid-1930s an amazing thing happened, when her aunt Josephine Jalland who was a bigamist, (that's another story) died in Eastbourne in England and she left her nieces and nephews a significant inheritance. My Nan then received the new widow's pension, and was able to give up work, because with their inheritance the family was now comfortable. They moved from a tenement in Mountjoy Place to Clonliffe Gardens in Ballybough.

My Nan had a lifelong dream to visit Lourdes and now she could afford to go. In 1938 she joined the Dublin Pilgrimage to Lourdes. In Lourdes, she met Mrs B and her daughter who were from a small fishing village in County Louth called Annagassan, (said to be the first place the Vikings landed in Ireland) Both

²⁸ **Ann** – originally from Coburg Place and is a published historian, author and playwright, web address is www.annmatthews.ie

women, got on like a house on fire, and when the pilgrimage was over promised to write to each other. By the following summer Mrs B visited Nan in Ballybough for a holiday, and the following summer Nan and Ginny visited Mrs B in Annagassan.

Ginny was thirty-one-year years old at this point, and was considered an 'old Maid (unmarried) and everyone thought she'd remain so. But Ginny never did conform to the expectations of others – a tough stand to take in the conservative 1930s. The turning point in her life took place that summer in Annagassan.

The norm for evening entertainment in rural Ireland at that time was to gather in various homes for musical evenings and card games. Ginny a city girl in all senses of the word was delighted with this. She didn't play cards, but did enjoy the gatherings and the conversations. Her family lived in Marlborough Street during 1910-1926, a heartbeat from the devastation and deaths in O'Connell Street, and she told her story. She also liked to listen to others' stories.

One evening they visited a house where a card game was in progress. There, Ginny saw a young man at the top of the table dealing out the cards. He was tall with black-brown, dark very curly hair, with startling blue eyes, and his name was John Matthews. He came from generations of fishermen and sailors in Annagassan since the 18th century. His grandfather Michael Matthews drowned with six other fishermen from Annagassan on St Patrick's Day, on Carlingford Lough. Most of them were related to each other.²⁹

My mam told years later that when she saw him at the top of the table dealing out the cards, she thought to herself, 'I'll have him.' Ginny plotted her course, and before the holiday was over they were officially courting. There was no public transport between Dublin and Annagassan and so they met once a week in Drogheda. She got the train from the Great Northern Railways Station at Amiens Street to Drogheda, while John cycled the ten miles from Annagassan to meet her. Sometimes he travelled to Ballybough, John being a fisherman, and because he worked outdoors fishing and mending nets he had a wonderful brown glow. Soon gossip went around the Cul de Sac in Clonliffe Gardens that Ginny Byrne was going out with a 'half caste'. My mam, who hated gossip, thought this was hilarious.

29 Tom Bellew, 'Annagassan Fishing Tragedy 17 March 1897', Tougher Topics, March 1995.

John and Ginny married in January 1942 and had their first child in November that year. They settled with my Nan in Ballybough. In Dublin, John could only find work as a labourer. Like many thousands of men and women, he travelled to England to find work. During the war years he worked on the building of runways for the RAF and the American Forces prior to D-Day. He never talked about the details of his work but, when he read the Irish Navy by Donal MacAmhlaigh he told me 'Ann that's exactly how it was'.

In 1944, while John was in England, Ginny used her inheritance to buy a house in Coburg Place. Not seeing a man, they assumed she was an unmarried mother, and she didn't enlighten them. The residents were very unhappy at this turn of events. After all, Coburg Place was 'a respectable street where 'since God was a boy' only respectable workers lived there - in particular, skilled railway workers who believed themselves to be working class aristocracy. They believed they were superior to the residents of the new flats on Sheriff and Mayor Street.

The ladies of the street met and gossiped that this woman, an outsider, and a former tenement dweller, now lived in their wonderful street and this lowered the tone of the neighbourhood. The ladies gathered in a sweet shop in Whitworth Row, from where all gossip arose, (it was known as the confession box). Ginny ignored them. She abhorred gossip, and she held her own with her innate polite and smiling manner. She simply pretended not to notice. Then in late 1944 John came home for a few months and in July 1945 their second child was born in the house in Coburg Place. This was John/Sean.

My mam was attending the ante-natal clinic at Holles Street Hospital due to her pregnancy, but Sean came early. Over the next eight years she had another four children, and Mrs W the most respectable senior older 'lady' on the street insulted my mam for her frequent pregnancies. The last four births took place at Holles Street, and Ginny travelled there via the Liffey Ferry.

We, remained outsiders in Coburg Place. In the wider parish we were not allowed call ourselves 'Dubs's because we were half culchie. In school my teacher who was from the West of Ireland told me constantly and in an insulting manner that my name being Matthews, I was not Irish. It meant that my name was Mahon and that my family must have taken the soup, ... so were not even proper Irish Catholics. My family name Matthews was in Ireland centuries before the Famine, but I ignored her, mostly because I thought she was dim-witted, and she even couldn't do long division, let alone teach it. So her insults meant nothing.

However, outside of the family our identity or sense of place was never allowed to settle - neither fish nor fowl. Anytime one of us came home and told mam about a particular incident she would laugh and say, don't worry, none of us will ever be 'a corner stone of the parish.' Then she'd pause and say EXCEPT Sean. Sean who had his fathers' startling blue and curly hair (Curly) was born at home, in Coburg Place. So out of six miracles of Lourdes just one was born in the Parish. He became my mam's cornerstone. Sean was baptised in St Laurence O'Toole's. He made his communion, and was confirmed there too. He went on to become the local postman. For many years his life was blighted by a life changing psychiatric illness. Sean (Curly) died in 2012, in Donegal Town. I brought him home to St Laurence O'Toole's for his funeral because it felt right.



*Sean*³⁰



Ginny Byrne

30 Everyone in the neighbourhood knew Sean by his nickname Curly. Ann's mam is Ginny Byrne.

What Is Career L.E.A.P.?

Marie O'Reilly³¹

L.E.A.P is an innovative, tried, and tested work readiness programme for young people aged 17-25 from marginalised backgrounds. It has been uniquely developed through the partnership of Community Groups, East Wall Youth and Swan Youth Service businesses, and Trinity College Dublin. We have come together to tackle youth unemployment in local communities in Dublin's North East Inner City. Career L.E.A.P provides evidence based, quality training, work experience and support to marginalised young people.

Participants complete a three-week personal and work readiness training. They then complete a three-week work placement, where they get one-to-one mentor support in one of our business partner's companies. They then get follow-on support to pursue their career journey.

Career LEAP was hosted for two years in the Dublin Dockland Development Building, CHQ, Dublin 1.

In November 2015, I was asked to make a presentation to some of the businesses in the Docklands around the disconnect between education and employment. Research showed that many companies were already investing resources into improving education and employability opportunities in the local community, but to create a systemic change a more collaborative approach with key local stakeholders was needed. A partnership model was proposed with East Wall Youth, Swan Youth Service, Trinity College and Businesses in the community to pilot a project to support a group of young people with multiple barriers to employment or training to become job ready. Research had been done in the past but not always fully evaluated. The significance of a gold standard approach to research was needed. The community were fortunate to have Trinity College as their neighbours and an approach was made to Carmel O' Sullivan and her colleagues in the School of Education to put a top team together to develop a Training Manual and the necessary modules for the Career Leap Programme

31 **Marie** – from Mayor Street is Chairperson of East Wall Youth.

The process was not an easy one. We had three groups, Trinity College doing the research, the community groups engaging the young people and businesses in the community linking with the business partners. We were speaking three different languages, community, academic and business which became difficult at times. Funding was also an issue but we were fortunate to have the support of the City of Dublin Education Training Board and the Dept of Children and Youth Affairs who recognised the innovation of the study. We also had some financial support from the businesses. We did not have a huge budget but we certainly got value for money.

Speaking from the Community Point of View

The need for joined-up thinking and joined-up practice when working with young people and the necessity of community-led initiatives and projects which involve communities as equal partners is essential. Their knowledge on the ground of the realities of young people's lives and the challenges that some of them face has to be incorporated into any successful initiatives, when targeting work readiness schemes for the people involved.

We need to recognise today the vital role that the Youth Services plays in the community. They are dedicated to providing a range of high quality services to young people and are proactive in responding to their needs. Outside of formal school the youth projects and services provide an informal education system. Because of its holistic approach individual young people can become involved in actively being part of their own development and in the development of society. By not using a one-size-fits-all approach we can support young people to realise their potential and to optimise their opportunities to contribute as active and valued participants in their community and society. The Youth Service helps the young person develop vital skills to help them in work environment that demands a level of critical thought, creativity and communication, which they cannot attain through the formal education system.

I cannot stress enough the relationship that needs to be built up between the youth worker and the young person. They must meet the young people where they are at not where we want them to be and the relationship must have at its core mutual respect. This in turn will help the young person to trust the worker they are dealing with and provide a much more beneficial engagement for both parties. This can take time and the Youth Services are in a unique position to track and engage young people from the age of 10 and re-engage right up to

adulthood. We need to help change the mind set in the Youth Services which we feel Career Leap achieved and which is badly needed in terms of supporting our young people in a changing world, where the nature of jobs and skills is very different to what it was a generation ago. Training in soft skills, relationships, networking and work readiness are keys to success. This whole process would not have happened without the hard work and enthusiasm of the young people who took part. They are our best ambassadors going forward. They have spoken about their experience and by word of mouth there is already great interest in the next phase. The wider community has also benefited from this programme and it has been a talking point for many different community groups.

When we promote our community activities we put on our flyer, “Together We Are Better.” If we continue to work together we can become better members of our community, better citizens, better educators, better employers and better employees because ‘together we will always be better.’

In the first phase of Career Leap eleven young people successfully completed the first programme and ten of them are now in employment or education (seven are working and three are in further education). We have just finished our third phase

Some quotes from the young people who took part:

“Everything, everything, I cannot just name one thing. If I name one, I will name the mentor who encouraged me a lot. Like the most important thing was the confidence that I lost in myself because every time I was hearing from people around me was, ‘you cannot find a job’, ‘you’re worthless’, ‘you’re like this and that’. I got my confidence back when they offered me a job.”

“It was very important because it got me ready for like if I was going for a job interview. It just gets you ready for the future like, - you can’t go in and just start messing around, throwing things and all, as if you’re going in with your mates. You have to go in and look good, act professional. Everything that’s happening on the outside of your life has to stay outside the store when you’re going to work. You have to be a different person. Time keeping, that’s very important and good manners.”

“It was the first thing I did that I liked. It was excellent. I really enjoyed it. If I were out of work again it is something I would do. See the thing is, they tell you,

you don't get a job out of it. That it's not designed for that. It's just designed to get you ready for work. It is very well designed to get you ready for work, but if you do go in there and show people you want to learn and work hard, there could be a job at the end of it for you. Just show them what you can do. Obviously they can't tell you at the start that you might get a job, because then you wouldn't try. It gives you so many opportunities."





Pope Francis Comes to Town

Paddy Pender³²

In late 2017, rumours abounded that Pope Francis might visit Ireland. For many of us, the rumours brought back memories of the last papal visit in 1979. Ireland was very different then. Things moved slowly but steadily. We recalled stories of getting up at the crack of dawn and walking miles for a glimpse of the then pope, Pope John Paul II – now Pope Saint John Paul II. Back in 1979, there was no social media, no instant messages and photographs were taken with cameras requiring rolls of film which needed to be processed and the images then printed. Some enthusiasts were very posh, and they had their films processed onto slides which could then be viewed on large screens. Thinking about it now, it all sounds very strange indeed, but there was something gratifying in enjoying the papal visit as it happened and the anticipation of opening the packets of processed photographs to relive the moments.

Many asked, why should Pope Francis visit us in Ireland? Well, the Pope asked Dublin to host the World Meeting of Families, an international gathering which

³² **Paddy** – an author on spirituality and on parish history who lives and works in the inner city and who is very committed to Halston St parish and the community groups in it.

takes place every three years. It is a showcase for the host country and helps the international church community to understand the struggles and successes across the globe. While it is not assumed that the Pope will attend this meeting, his attendance gives the Pope an opportunity to meet the bishops, priests, religious, State and civil leaders, so the rumours were well founded – as rumours go!

While the possible visit of Pope Francis was still being circulated as a rumour, many of us in the North Inner City were preparing for an announcement that would change the rumour into a reality. We started by offering to be part of the programme for the World Meeting of Families. In the case of seven of the churches in the Inner City, their offers were translated into the Pilgrim Walk – a pilgrim journey through the city visiting the seven churches and learning about the faith of our ancestors.

In the parish of St. Michan in Halston Street, the oldest parish in Dublin, we were not only part of the Pilgrim Walk, but we were also host to Pope Francis when he came on a private visit to the Capuchin Day Centre for Homeless Persons which is located inside the parish boundary. The Capuchin Franciscans who look after the Day Centre for Homeless Persons follow the rule of St. Francis of Assisi, the same saint who inspired the current pope so much that he chose the name Francis when he was elected on 13 March 2013 to lead 1.2 billion Catholics.

As the plans for the World Meeting of Families unfolded, it became clear that Pope Francis wanted significant time and opportunity to meet the poor and marginalised, and to hear their stories. We are often bombarded with images of the rich and famous, the celebrities of the sporting and showbiz world, but the Pope was clearly more interested in the realities on the ground. The Pope wasn't in any way dismissive of the Church and State leaders who were also interested in meeting with him, but he reserved a large portion of the visit to meet those who are on the margins. I was struck by the coverage of the papal cavalcade winding its way through the streets. The cameras often picked up the faces bursting with anticipation and the minute the pope came into view, the faces changed to joy. Even the most cynical were moved by his presence and many appeared to melt as he made eye contact with them. Just as St. Mark describes Jesus meeting the young rich man (Mk 10:21), Jesus looked straight at him with love, I could see Pope Francis looking at the people in the same way; he looked at them with love. Every man, woman and child beamed

unexpectedly. Even those who have issues with the Church and those who are not interested in Church matters were moved by the Pope and his raw compassion for them and for their concerns.

In the encounter with the homeless, Pope Francis met the Capuchin Franciscan community briefly on his arrival and immediately went to each of the homeless in turn, taking time to shake their hands and listen to them. To mark the visit, the Pope presented the Capuchins with an icon of St. Francis and the Pope in turn was presented with a 'homeless survival kit' which included a rucksack with the bare essentials including a sleeping bag and a small tent. Before leaving, he acknowledged the staff and volunteers who had gathered since no operation can survive without a wide variety of people giving of their time and efforts. Strangely enough it felt like Pope Francis was with us for hours but in fact his visit was quite short. It was as if we were suspended in time – as if the clocks had stopped so that we could hold the moment for longer.

The visits to the poorer parts of Dublin and in particular, the personal encounters with the poor, homeless, youth, elderly and all those in between imitated the journey Jesus made over two thousand years ago, and the similar journey which St. Francis undertook just over 800 years ago. Jesus, Francis of Assisi and so many saints in between, invited everyone to share what they have so that others don't go without or suffer undue hardship. Here in the Inner City, we are well accustomed to seeing how our parents and grandparents and their parents before them looked out for family, neighbours and friends. It is the way of our people and the papal visit to us in the city endorsed what it is we do naturally. We are not the politicians who seek election or endorsements, yet Pope Francis recognised our efforts and thanked us as he reached out to the vulnerable in our midst. The Papal Visit lifted the spirits of all those lucky enough to have been able to be part of it.

Some Quotes from Pope Francis on the Issues of Poverty

"We are all equal – all of us – but this truth is not recognized, this equality is not recognised, and for this reason some people are, we can say, happier than others. But this is not a right! We all have the same rights. When we do not see this, society is unjust. It does not follow the rule of justice, and where there is no justice, there cannot be peace. I would like to repeat this with you: where there is no justice, there is no peace!"

"If I repeated some passages from the homilies of the Church Fathers, in the second or third century, about how we must treat the poor, some would accuse me of giving a Marxist homily."

"Some people continue to defend trickle-down theories which assume that economic growth, encouraged by a free market, will inevitably succeed in bringing about greater justice and inclusiveness in the world. This opinion, which has never been confirmed by the facts, expresses a crude and naive trust in the goodness of those wielding economic power and in the sacralised workings of the prevailing economic system."

"We cannot become starched Christians, those overeducated Christians who speak of theological matters as they calmly sip their tea. No! We must become courageous Christians and go in search of the people who are the very flesh of Christ! ... This is the [issue]: the flesh of Christ, touching the flesh of Christ, taking upon ourselves this suffering for the poor."

"We need to let ourselves be evangelized by the poor. They have much to teach us."

"37. Works of love directed to one's neighbor are the most perfect external manifestation of the interior grace of the Spirit.... 48. We have to state, without mincing words, that there is an inseparable bond between our faith and the poor. May we never abandon them. 53. Just as the commandment "Thou shalt not kill" sets a clear limit in order to safeguard the value of human life, today we also have to say "thou shalt not" to an economy of exclusion and inequality. Such an economy kills. How can it be that it is not a news item when an elderly homeless person dies of exposure, but it is news when the stock market loses two points? This is a case of exclusion. Can we continue to stand by when food is thrown away while people are starving? This is a case of inequality. 54. Almost without being aware of it, we end up being incapable of feeling compassion at the outcry of the poor, weeping for other people's pain, and feeling a need to help them, as though all this were someone else's responsibility and not our own. The culture of prosperity deadens us; we are thrilled if the market offers us something new to purchase. In the meantime, all those lives stunted for lack of opportunity seem a mere spectacle; they fail to move us. 57. I encourage financial experts and political leaders to ponder the words of [Saint John Chrysostom], one of the sages of antiquity: "Not to share one's wealth with the poor is to steal from them and to take away their livelihood. It is not our own goods which we hold, but theirs."

(Numbered excerpts from Evangelii Gaudium)

Surrendering to Hope

ACRG Creative Writers Group³³

Cup In Hand

Sitting on the streets
cup in hand,
Begging for change,
Drugs are the plan,
Self esteem gone,
what is this life?
I wanted a house
I wanted a wife.
My family don't want me,
my friends are all gone,
I'm alone in this world,
I can't go on.



I was shattered and broken,
No hope just despair,
I nearly died but I just didn't care.
But I found a strength that I thought I had lost.
I needed recovery never mind the cost.
Now things are different, my thinking becomes clear,
Drugs are a scourge from which I need to steer clear.

A new way of life meetings and friends,
a recovery house and I'm on the mend.
ACRG everyday of the week,
Helping me to recover, to stand on my feet.

By J.H

³³ The authors are participants in a **Creative Writing Group at the ACRG** on Seville Place.

Savagery of my Mind

The savagery of my mind,
That ended up leaving me trapped and blind,
My family's heart's ended up broke,
Deep down they knew that I was a good bloke,

I ended up crippled with guilt and shame,
I didn't know anymore who to blame,
Not realising I got myself into this ball of pain,

I always claimed that I was a dope,
Until I got hit with a little bit of hope,
Now thank God I'm no longer on a downward slippery slope,

Here I sit with peace of mind,
No longer caught in addiction that left me trapped and blind.

By S.C

Here Today

I'm here today,
Nervous and confused,
But I'm happy too,
To be given a second chance,
At creating a new life,
For me and my son,
And to stop doubting myself,
I am who I am,
I can and I will,
I thank God every morning and night,
For showing me that there is a good life,
I've been taken from darkness into light.

By L.P

No Surrender

I fought a war that nobody saw
A trench to a cold park bench
The mind was going blind
The eyes were asleep
My life was a heap
The world looked bleak
With a dark streak
Away from the Sun
Life wasn't fun
My love was burnt
I looked to the stars
The world went one way
Life wasn't far away
My soul is here to stay
Surrender is the way
The universe has its say
Love is the way
The ocean of devotion had
set in motion of real emotion
Love is the way
What more is there to say?
No surrender is at bay

By Anonymous



Inner Critic – Trapped

Depressed but cannot weep,
Tired but cannot sleep,
Helpless but can't speak,
Feeling negative and weak.
Sad and frustrated,
Brain feels constipated,
Stuck in confusion,
Used to the exclusion.
Struggling to open my mouth,
Always full of self doubt,
Better off keeping quiet,
Don't want to start a riot.
Repeat, Repeat, Repeat,
Struggling to admit defeat,
Pride gets in the way,
You struggle on for another day.
Negative in the heart,
Brain feels torn apart,
Will I stay struggling and depart?
Or could I give recovery a solid start?

By C.K

Waking Up

As I wake,
I feel my chest rise,
Wiped my eyes and stretched,
Another deep breath,
I could see the ray of sunlight
shine through my curtain,
Now I want to take my first step
of my brand new day,
I want to get up,
I want to walk,
I want to start,
My first steps of my new day
take me down the stairs
and out to my balcony,
I feel the freshness
of this new morning,
The sun, no clouds,
but lots of blueness,
I sit and think,
All I have and
there is so much,
This morning
I loved waking up.

By J.C

Disease

I came into the world
When I seen a light
I opened my eyes,
my parents were there at first sight
I was cold and wet
but I cried with delight
Oh my God what a beautiful sight.
It's my time,
I started off in the light
I said to myself,
'Everything is gonna be alright.'
Little did I know
I was gonna get a fright
because a darkness would come
and shadow my light.
His name was disease
He'd whisper to you with ease
I'm here now, come and kneel,
take a bow, I'm your master
I have you now.
I was his servant from then until now
Now I am free no longer in chains
He has no power over me
Disease is gone but always lurking,
so I'm not stupid,
I'll keep going strong
Because life is better in the light
Go away darkness
you gave me a fright.

By D.E

The Curse of St. Laurence O'Toole

Jesse Harrington³⁴

This April (2018), in the choir-sung presence of the Archbishop of Dublin the Most Rev. Dr. Michael Jackson and Garda Assistant Commissioner Pat Leahy, the metal-encased heart of St. Laurence O'Toole was returned to Dublin's Christ Church Cathedral. The return followed a six-year investigation into the relic's theft in 2012, and was made possible by a tip-off which located the 800-year old relic in The Phoenix Park. Intriguingly, several media outlets, including The Irish Examiner, reported that the thieves 'returned it because they thought it was cursed' and feared the heart 'was responsible for the deaths of loved ones from apparent heart attacks.'

Whatever the thieves may have believed, Laurence is undoubtedly important as Dublin's principal patron saint. Along with St. Malachy of Armagh, St. Oliver Plunkett, and St. Charles of Mount Argus, he remains one of only four Irish saints to have been formally canonised by the Catholic Church. He was also the last saint of medieval Ireland: after his canonisation, it would be another 400 years, precisely, until the birth of Oliver Plunkett. Most notably, he was a pivotal figure in a great turning point of medieval Irish history – namely, the 1169 Anglo-Norman invasion of Ireland, led by another figure interred in Christ Church, the Earl Richard de Clare ('Strongbow'). To subsequent generations, Laurence became a political and spiritual touchstone imbued with miraculous power. Thus, the recovery of his heart (and its reputedly associated curse) represents a distinctly medieval turn to this modern tale.

The Life of Laurence

Laurence's biography has been pieced together from various contemporary or near-contemporary sources, not least being the thirteenth-century Latin Life of St. Laurence, prepared at Eu in Normandy for his canonisation.

³⁴ **Dr. Jesse Harrington** - has recently completed a doctorate at the University of Cambridge on the representation of divine vengeance and saints' curses in England and Ireland, 1060-1215.

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Laurence (c. 1128–1180) was one of four sons of Maurice O’Toole, a king who ruled in what is now part of Co. Kildare. At an early age, he served as hostage for his father with the overking of Leinster, Dermot MacMurrough, before becoming a monk at Glendalough. Glendalough was an important monastic city tracing its foundation to the reputedly sixth-century St. Kevin. In 1153, Laurence succeeded as abbot at the earliest possible canonical age of twenty-five. He had a difficult task ahead, having to lead his community through the hardships of famine and brigandage. In 1162, he was promoted archbishop of Dublin. Dublin was an important city whose trade networks extended throughout the Irish Sea and Atlantic Seaboard. Its surrounding kingdom had been fought over by around half a dozen rival Gaelic and Hiberno-Norse dynasties during Laurence’s lifetime alone, but was then (in 1162) under Dermot’s overlordship.

Laurence found himself in a complicated position after Dermot’s downfall in 1166. Rory O’Connor, king of Connaught and claimant to the high-kingship of Ireland, had invaded Dermot’s territory and forced the Leinster king into exile. In 1167, Laurence was apparently prepared to acknowledge Rory’s rule. Dermot however returned with Anglo-Norman allies, captured Waterford, and by 1170 had laid siege to Dublin. Laurence was active in attempting to mediate peace before the city’s capture, and the following year may have supported Rory in raising mercenaries for a counteroffensive. By 1171, King Henry II of England arrived in person to assert his authority over Dermot’s Anglo-Norman allies, and Laurence ultimately witnessed the Treaty of Windsor in 1175. The treaty granted Leinster, Meath, and part of Munster to Henry’s control, while ceding the rest of the island to Rory’s overlordship, provided he acknowledged Henry as his superior and maintain loyal tribute. The conquest had been solidified.

Laurence’s own thoughts and loyalties in this period are lost to us. Gerald of Wales, a contemporary who sympathised with the invasion, saw him as an Irish partisan. His supporters compared him with Thomas Becket, the archbishop of Canterbury whose conflict with Henry II over the Church’s independence had led to his murder in his own cathedral in 1170. Modern historians have alternatively noted that many of Laurence’s activities could simply have been typical of a churchman trying to broker and maintain peace. What is clear is he tried to steer himself and his people through a challenging and changing situation. In 1172, he was instructed by Pope Alexander III to cooperate with the new rulers of Dublin; in 1176, he presided over the burial of the Anglo-Norman Strongbow in his cathedral.

Whatever his views, Laurence's final years were busy ones. He engaged in church reform and introduced the new continental order of Arrouaisian canons to Christ Church. In 1179, he was appointed papal legate, convened a synod at Clonfert, and arranged the charitable relief of the Irish distressed by the harsh winter. He died of a fever at Eu in Normandy (then under King Henry's rule as Duke of Normandy) on 14th November, 1180, having been brought there by drawn-out negotiations over his installation of Rory's nephew, the bishop of Elphin, as archbishop of Armagh.

The Curse of Laurence

For all his eventful life, the theft of Laurence's relic in 2012 was not the first time the saint had encountered thieves. The first occasions came in the early years of his abbacy at Glendalough, and were reported in his medieval Life to have ended with no less miraculous effect than the curse this year alleged of him.

The first incident involved a local brigand of noble lineage, who murdered laymen, despoiled clerics, and defiled women without fear of retribution. When Laurence heard this, the Life tells, 'he was struck by great sorrow, and, ascending to the house of God, did not take food.' In solemn prayer and fasting, he petitioned God to mercifully liberate his people. Not long after, the brigand was captured by a group of men, blinded, and died in short succession.

The second incident involved 'three great princes of thieves' whose followers ravaged the area, and one day set upon a procession of priests and laity carrying consecrated Eucharistic hosts. The men whipped or killed whomever they found, and in further blasphemy, took the hosts and impiously ground them with their teeth. When this was related to Laurence, again he grieved, turned to prayer and fast from food or drink for an entire day, and brought his clerics into his church to beseech the Lord without ceasing. Once again, vengeance fell upon the brigands, when on the eighth day they were captured by servants of the king and hanged within sight of Laurence's church.

The Life is careful in framing these accounts. It tells that Laurence 'did not presume divine vengeance in proud temerity', but only sought in humble prayer the liberation of his people. His faithful watchword was: 'Yours is vengeance, Lord; you better know the time and the way of retribution.' Thus, the writer of the Life was sensitive to the appropriate Christian attitude of mercy and prayer for the salvation of one's persecutors. Laurence's actions

however sat within a more immediate cultural context. Fasting was long-established in early Irish law as a formal, regulated ritual – ‘troscad’ – which allowed laymen or clerics to protest the injustices inflicted by their social superiors and to compel them through social shame into making formal restitution.

Similar practices were well-established on the continent where the Life was written. In Normandy, the Benedictine monasteries had developed from around the ninth century a liturgical ritual known as the ‘clamor’, similarly designed to deal with theft or other injustices when no clear mechanism of legal recourse was readily available. The monks would engage in fasting and humble self-abasement on the floor of their church, beseeching God and their patron saint to provide restitution, while inviting the participation of local laity in the public ritual.

While the liturgy besought the transgressor to make amends and to receive forgiveness and reconciliation, it also held out the very clear threat, in biblical language, that those who failed to do so would inevitably be met with the physical and spiritual penalties of divine vengeance. This versatile and multi-layered ritual served both to shame its target and also, in a sense, to shame God and the saints themselves into providing justice.

It may be these rituals which Laurence and those who told these stories had had in mind. The Life not only clarifies that Laurence had the right intention (liberation, rather than retribution), but also notes, when describing the participation of his clergy, that they were following ‘the manner of a faithful patron’. The matter of right intention and customary precedent were both central to the practice’s legitimacy.

The Intercession of Laurence

Laurence was hardly the first Irish saint to invoke God against his opponents. St. Patrick famously issued a letter of excommunication threatening damnation against a chieftain who had killed and enslaved his followers, which later tradition reported as a terrifying curse that had transformed the wily offender into a fox. Many Irish saints had similar stories.

For Laurence’s biographer, there was also the more recent precedent of the saint’s English contemporary Thomas Becket: the martyred archbishop of Canterbury who had excommunicated his opponents, which contemporaries understood as akin to a formalised curse. Laurence resembled Becket, as the



Icon of St. Laurence O'Toole by Joe Connolly

Life saw it, as both had seen attempts on their lives (Laurence was attacked by a madman during a visit to England in 1175) and both had undergone exile in defence of those entrusted to them against an encroaching power. Given that Becket had been canonised within three years of his death, it would have usefully extended the comparison while arguing for Laurence's sainthood if he had excommunicated or cursed his opponents and persecutors too.

Laurence never excommunicated the Anglo-Norman invaders, but his earlier curse of the thieves of Glendalough offered a suitable alternative. The source of the story was most likely his contemporary Malachias O'Carroll, bishop of Clogher, who was responsible for a collection of miracles which had reached the canons of Eu who wrote the *Life*. Malachias had his own complex relationship with the new conquerors, but was not afraid to condemn them for perceived injustice. He publicly admonished one Anglo-Norman adventurer with threat of heavenly sanction, for example, whom the clergy of Armagh had formally cursed for stealing a cooking pot during a raid on that city.

The canons of Eu who received these stories lived in a region which was severed from English rule when the king of France took Normandy in 1204. They could therefore have openly sympathised with the Irish and the cause of their newfound patron when writing his *Life* in the 1220s. Laurence's alleged final words were for his people in Ireland: 'Alas, you poor, foolish people, what will you do now? Who will take care of you in your trouble? Who will help you?' A list of posthumous miracles included at the end of the *Life* implicitly answered the question, by reminding that the saint's power could continue in death. The retelling of Laurence's miracles at Glendalough meanwhile served a more specific reminder of the divine punishment which befalls those who take what is not theirs and, perhaps more importantly, those who oppress and persecute a people who can still cry to God for justice.

The Theft of Laurence

The medieval importance of a saint's relics cannot be overstated. Clerics and laity desired the saints' enduring spiritual presence and miraculous aid, as well as a means of honouring them and maintaining a tangible link with their forebears. In 1215, the Fourth Lateran Council urged that every church altar should contain a relic within it. Pilgrims flocked to shrines, and there was an obvious economic interest in maintaining and promoting the shrines of important saints.

With the importance of relics came the possibility of theft. Arguably the most famous incident involved the theft of the relics of St. Nicholas from Myra in 1087. That year, a group of Italian merchants from Bari decided to seize the relics for their city, against the wishes of the community who guarded them. When the winds dropped during the return voyage, it was taken as a sign of the saint's displeasure that a crewman had taken a finger of the saint for himself. The winds resumed when the finger was returned to Nicholas' body. This in

turn was taken to signal that he willed for his body to be brought to Bari, provided it was brought intact. The event was considered a celebrated instance of ‘sacra furta’, or ‘pious theft’ – a concept which hinged on the idea that even in death a saint was sufficiently powerful to protect himself, and that the success of the theft itself signified the saint’s favour for the endeavour. Other saints who did not wish their bones to be disturbed were remembered as taking stern, even fatal, measures against those who upset their wishes.

Until 2012, Laurence’s relics followed a far less contentious path. His body was buried at the Church of the Virgin Mary in Eu, where he had died. His heart was preserved in a reliquary at Christ Church from around the time of his canonisation. His skull was brought to England in 1442 and interred at the parish church of Chorley, rededicated in his honour, until they disappeared during the Reformation. Until 2012, the only miracles associated with Laurence after his death – at least, of those preserved in his Latin Life – were miracles of healing or even of raising the dead. The allegedly fatal curse on the family of the thieves of 2012 is a new addition to that tradition. But it is a tale which, following the reported events of the 1150s at Glendalough, is nonetheless after his own heart.

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A Tale of Two Worlds

Katie, Leigha, Ellie, Sophie, Bernie and Maura³⁵

We were born in this twenty-first century and my four month old nephew sits at home in front of the large smart television with his own Mickey Mouse channel on Netflix. Also, he has his own music channel and the piece he loves when taking a nap is a recording of his mother's heart beat. For hours on end every day he is engaging with and been entertained by that smart screen on the wall. By the time now that these young kids are three or four years old they are spending ages on their parent's smart phones. My own parents are quick to buy the latest gadgets and sometimes haven't a clue how to use them!

Look I'm seventeen and when I open my mouth people hear my inner city accent. I'm very much at home in the North Wall and can boast about my grandad, Eddie the docker, and of course I love my ma's coddle. Like most Larriers I have swam during summer days in the Liffey and visited Eu when I was in primary school. These streets are my home and the community around here is my tribe. But somehow I am also living in a very, very different world. There is another drum beating in my head. I'm very much at home with the world of my smart phone.

I know bits of the stories of Luke Kelly, Sean O Casey and Peter Sheridan. In my home the adults always watch the news on the television but I find that very depressing. Once I wake in the morning before I get out of bed I reach for my mobile and check in on life. I don't go to sleep without my phone alive near my pillow. It is my adult comforter. I stay in touch with friends, I know what's going on in the world and feel safer when out at night when my phone is in my pocket. I'm annoyed when my battery is shite or the phone downloads slowly or when my credit is nearly up. I can and I do steer clear of social media especially with the negative stuff like seeing someone being made a show of.

My culture has two legs; the inner city and my mobile phone. Inside in my life-story things are changing. I keep in touch with my friends and I keep in touch

³⁵ **Katie and friends** - are all participants in the Beauty Therapy class at the North Wall Community Training Centre.

with what is going on in the world, such as the refugee or homeless crisis through my phone. My phone has replaced my camera, computer, note book, alarm clock, airline ticket and bank card and maybe soon it will replace chunks of my culture. Connections in the inner city are real and costly. To remain outrageous and creative and revolutionary and caring and human and mad we can't have our eyes stuck 24/7 on our screens. Our phones are positive and it was great in August to see that young girl with the pope in Croker take a selfie.



The Ballybough Lord Mayor!

Nial Ring³⁶

I have the huge honour and privilege of being the first citizen of this great City i.e. Lord Mayor from July last until next June. I was elected from among my fellow councillors for this great honour at Dublin City Council's AGM on June 25th last.

Being from Ballybough, in the heart of the North Inner City, has always been a source of pride to me as I am the fourth generation of Rings to have lived in the area and I am very aware of how previous generations of family influences much of one's thinking, attitude, sense of pride etc. Ballybough is steeped in a rich history, culture and heritage, and you only have to look back to the fantastic 1916 Celebrations in the area to realise how this sense of history has shaped us and makes us so proud of our community.

When I think of my own family's involvement in the Easter Rising (my grandfather and his four brothers, all from Ballybough, fought at Annesley Bridge and in the GPO during the Rising, were interned in Frongoch and then fought in the war of independence). I sometimes wonder how they would have reacted knowing that their sacrifices for their country would result, just over a hundred years later, in one of their successors becoming Lord Mayor of Dublin. But happen it did, and I am the first Lord Mayor of Dublin from Ballybough. Not only that but I'm the 349th Lord Mayor of Dublin, joining an illustrious list which includes the great Liberator, Daniel O'Connell, the "shaking hand of Dublin", Alfie Byrne, our great former Taoiseach Bertie Ahern and my great friend and constituency colleague, Christy Burke. But I'm definitely the one who has gotten the most superb "gigs" during, what is now, only just half my term.

One of the first events I held in the Mansion House was a Mass, followed by an evening of entertainment for the parishioners of St. Agatha's Church, North William Street where I was baptised, made my communion and confirmation and where I also served as an Altar boy many (many) years ago.

³⁶ Nial – from Ballybough is Lord Mayor and first citizen of Dublin.

It was lovely to have my Mam and all my friends and neighbours over to my “Southside Gaff”.

I had only just about gotten my feet under the table when myself and the Lady Mayoress, (my beautiful and wonderful wife Joyce) were wheeled out to meet Harry and Megan during their visit. We walked with them from the Famine memorial on the quays to the CHQ building where I pointed out Spencer Dock to Harry, reminding him that it was named after his mother’s great great grandfather, the Second Earl Spencer.

A couple of weeks later and Pope Francis arrived in town and, much to the delight of the inner city community, he stopped outside Our Lady of Lourdes Church on Sean MacDermott Street, venerated a relic of Matt Talbot, and then walked over to us and shook hands with me, my Mam and many locals who had waited so long for this great moment (some since 1989 when Pope John Paul was due to stop here but could not do so!). It was a truly wonderful experience to meet and speak with such an obviously holy and humble man – a real highlight of my term of office.

If the Dubs hadn’t done the “four-in-a-row” I would have been under terrible pressure to resign my office. Of course, this scenario never looked likely as I was able to throw a civic reception for Jim Gavin and the lads in the Mansion House and Smithfield. A great achievement and now for the “drive for five”! Another well-deserved civic reception was thrown by me for the Hockey Ladies who were runners up in the world cup - we really are a great sporting nation.

Just in case there was a few bob left in the “civic reception” budget, along comes my friend and neighbour from Portland Row, Kellie Harrington, to win a gold medal in the world amateur boxing championships and give us our first ever World Champion in the Inner City. Kellie is an inspiration to the young boys and girls in the area and is proof positive of how we can achieve our goals and overcome obstacles.

I attended and hosted a huge number of events and one thing which was brought home to me is the amazing amount of people who do voluntary work in this city. I have met many many selfless individuals who just give to others of their time, expertise and love. It makes me so proud to be Lord Mayor of this great city. One of my objectives was and is to reach out to people who may feel marginalised or disconnected from the city and I have met many groups who



*Two Ballybough Legends,
photo courtesy of Chris Shelley and Dublin City Council*

look after such individuals such a Depaul, Brú na bhFiann, Simon, Brother Kevin etc etc. The list is endless!

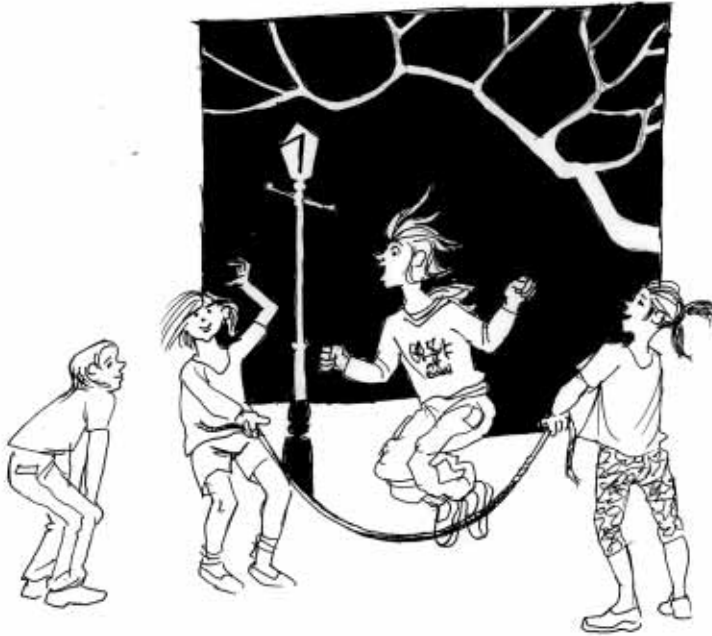
As I write this I am coming up to half way through my term and I'm getting into Christmas mode, turning on Christmas Lights, eating Christmas dinners, hosting a sensory Santa for children with autism and drinking far too much is all part of my Christmas as Lord Mayor and many people have asked me if I'll be having Christmas dinner in the Mansion House. I'm 60 next year (May 9th – send card plus pressie to Mansion House!) and I have had every Christmas dinner at the same table in the same room in the same house in Ballybough – I'm too old to change now!.

First half over - roll on the second half of this wonderful adventure I am having as First Citizen of the best City in the World. Baile Átha Cliath Abú!

Pope Paul VI said, "The Church must not seek to Christianise Africans but must instead Africanize Christianity." Today Pope Francis is calling for "a poor church of the poor." The cultural consciousness of the North Wall community is inescapably different to that of the leafy suburbs of Drumcondra, Foxrock or Blackrock.

The process of inculturating and liberating the Gospel locally begs for listening, engagement, dialogue and soul-searching, both within and across the community. Telling our stories together in a prophetic genre, decrying social suffering and injustice, invites us to explore themes of identity, survival, pride, spirituality and liberation.

This collection of narrative theological reflections in the language and the stories of the local North Wall community is the story of God living in Dublin's north inner city. It is our soul singing.



A Strong Woman Called Kelly

Chantelle Caffrey and Haley Preston³⁷

Kelly was a mother to five girls and grandmother to twin boys. She was well known in the North Wall for her confidence, madness, funniness, kindness and craziness. She was heard before she was seen and was a people person. She had no filter and said it how it was.

She loved her children and had a nickname for all of them and everyone in the area... but we won't get into that!!! Chantelle was her "Model", Ali was her "Kim Kardashian", Kianna was her "African Queen", Emmy was "Beyonce", Billie Jean was Princess B, even her newly born grandchildren Chester and Chase had nicknames, "Golden Balls"!!!

Kelly was a strong, confident woman who, without a doubt, was the life and soul of the party. But she was also a humble person who would actually give you her last fiver if you needed it. So, when Kelly was diagnosed with cancer in February 2018, the community came together to give back to Kelly what she had given to them. There were raffles, shave and dyes, street parties, barbecues and quizzes to name a few. Events were held all over Dublin. Even people outside of Dublin were supportive. Their support and help were very much appreciated by all the family.

She was well known for her Facebook statuses and her memorable "spelling and grammar"!!! Her mother, Jean, described her on the day of her funeral like "Peter Pan...she never grew up". She is the only person that we know that could laugh one minute and sob the next. Kelly had a soft heart and was deep and emotional. She was known for wearing her heart on her sleeve and was known for helping others.

When Kelly was making her First Communion she wanted to be blonde, not "strawberry blonde." So, she made her wish come true and she was blonde ever since.

³⁷ **Chantelle and Haley** - wrote this lovely tribute to Kelly and wish to thank the community for its amazing support.

Kelly loved music. Her favourite was R'n'B and she LOVED Michael Bolton. Another favourite was Boyz to Men. Her karaoke song was her "own rendition" of Madonna's 'Holiday'. She loved singing and spent loads of time singing and dancing in her kitchen, in between calling out the door for her pet dog, Oreo Caffrey.

And not forgetting the love of her life, Tutu, "Don't mess with my Tutu," she fondly called him.

Unfortunately, Kelly passed away on the 19th August 2018, surrounded by her loving family. She was strong, positive, loving and had a fighting spirit right up until the end. She has left her laughter, stories, memories and children as her legacy.

Kelly will never be forgotten.

She was a mother, sister, daughter and a friend.

"Here's to strong women,
may we know them,
may we be them,
may we raise them"
Kelly Caffrey was one of them.



On the front cover I have created a local landscape painting. I wished to portray the area in a colourful way placing emphasis on the history, (the old bridge) the homes of the people, (the residential housing) and the faith and hope (the church) of the community.

We see in the world what we carry in our heart. One face on the back cover is that of the media with its assumptions and attitudes which is detached from the outlook of the real, local view point, represented by the second face. The faces are looking in different directions.

TARA KEARNS *artist*