



Diocese of Raphoe

Issue No. 24

October 2013

## Come and join us for the Raphoe Faith Gathering

We are living the Year of Faith which was inaugurated by the then Pope Benedict XVI last year and will continue until the end of November this year. To mark this celebration and deepening of Faith throughout the Church, our Diocese has organised a Faith Gathering to take place on 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> October 2013. It will take place in Loreto Secondary School, Letterkenny.

On these two days (Saturday and Sunday) there will be many workshops with talks and presentations on many aspects of our Faith. The Papal Nuncio, Archbishop Charles J. Brown will give the opening keynote address on Saturday, 19<sup>th</sup> October, at 10.30am.

Do not miss this wonderful manifestation of faith. You can see the whole programme on the brochures which were sent to all parish churches.

Let us give thanks to the Lord for the gift of faith we have received, give witness to it, and celebrate it with joy. "This is the victory that overcomes the world, our faith" (1 Jn. 5:14).

+ Philip Boyce O.C.D  
Bishop of Raphoe



There is so much on offer at The Raphoe Faith Gathering. The event is happening over Mission Sunday weekend and so the themes throughout the two days will take us from baptism with the opening address by Archbishop Charles Brown, through Eucharist with the keynote address by Colette Furlong at 10.30 on Sunday to Mission with the closing Liturgy with Bishop Philip Boyce on Sunday at 5pm.

Our hope is that people will find an opportunity over these days to explore and deepen their faith. It is not only a question of attending talks, it is also about getting involved in workshops. The plan is that all the workshops—and there are many to choose from—will be engaging and stimulating. We want people to have the chance to explore together what faith means, to them, how they might pray more with scripture, the place of justice in our lives as Christians, what it means to say that Eucharist is the heart of our faith. We want people to have space and time to ask questions, to talk about their experience, to find others of like mind. We hope that people will take from this Gathering new possibilities for their own lives and for the life of their parishes.

You can book through your parish, by post with the registrations forms available in your parish, by phone—074 9121853 or on line on the diocesan website [www.raphoediocese.ie](http://www.raphoediocese.ie) Also follow us on Twitter #Raphoefaithgath

## Pope Francis is praying for the school children & teachers of Raphoe Diocese.

You may remember that in our last issue we mentioned that children from the diocese's schools had been invited to send prayers, pictures and letters to Pope Francis to welcome him as our new Pope. We got a good response and some wonderful contributions. The Papal Nuncio Archbishop Charles J Brown then took these to Rome to present to Pope Francis on our behalf. We were delighted when, a few months later a reply came from Rome, from one of the papal secretaries, saying

"His Holiness Pope Francis was pleased to receive the kind messages from the elementary school children of the Diocese of Raphoe. Please communicate to the children that he thanks them for writing to him, and he is grateful for their prayers. The Holy Father will pray for you, the children and all of their teachers, and he sends his blessing."



A copy of this letter was sent to all the National Schools in the diocese. It is wonderful to think that Pope Francis has us in his prayers!

**Workshops at The Raphoe Faith Gathering**—Would you like more experience of praying with scripture? Fr Silvester O'Flynn will be offering workshops on the type of prayer called Lectio Divina. This is simply about sitting with the Word of God, becoming aware of what word, line or image strikes you. It may be that a word gives you comfort and peace. It may be that it challenges you. Or it may be that a particular word, image or happening connects with your own life experience in a striking way. Therese Ferry will also be offering prayer workshops on the Saturday afternoon—focusing on imaginative ways to enter into Gospel scenes. Therese works in the Catechetical centre in Derry with adults and children, helping them to deepen their faith.

Do you live a very busy life and wonder how to find time for prayer in the midst of it all? Do you want to develop your awareness of God present and active right there in the middle of all the running and busyness and stress? Sr Rosemary Gallagher is a Loreto sister based in Coleraine who offers a workshop on “Finding God in everyday life”. Bairbre Cahill also offers a chance to explore “God, faith and family life” and Fr Kieran Shorten gently opens up a conversation about “Prayer in times of darkness”. Perhaps you would like to get involved in Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament but are unsure how to use your time. Dermot O'Hara and the diocesan Adoration Team will offer ideas and resources while Antoinette Moynihan introduces the idea of Adoration prayer for children in her workshop on Saturday. Mary Murphy from Derry suggests that sometimes the starting point for prayer can be a little different—and here she begins with the poetry of Patrick Kavanagh as a way into prayer.

Jesus stood up in the synagogue in his home town and announced, “I have been sent to bring good news to the poor, sight to the blind and liberty to captives.” (Luke 4). What implications does this have for us as followers of Jesus? Practically speaking how are we called to bring good news? Jim Farrell's workshop on Saturday explores this theme of “Whatever you did to the least of these.” Jim is the Chair of the newly established diocesan Peace and Justice group. Roisín O'Hara from Trócaire will also be offering a workshop as will the team from Mary's Meals.

Fr Paul Farren has written a beautiful book on the sacrament of reconciliation “Confession—looking into the eyes of God” and this beautiful image will be the starting point for his workshops on Saturday and Sunday. Gerry and Geraldine Burke will help you to look at how we prepare families for the baptism of a child. Rose, Kathleen and Sharon from Stranorlar parish will explore Children's Liturgy as a way of helping our children to hear and understand the Word of God offered to them in the Sunday Mass. All this and more—sign up now for the workshops you want.

## Calling all young people aged 15 –25!

Come along to the Youth Space event at The Raphoe Faith Gathering.

From 2-6 on Saturday 19th October Elation Ministries will be offering

an afternoon of activity, reflection, music and prayer on the theme “The search for meaning and happiness”. This workshop will give you the chance to explore where you look for meaning and happiness and the extent to which you are finding it. What role has faith to play in that search? Where do you find the support you need for the journey? Come and enjoy an excellent afternoon with the vibrant Elation Ministries group. This group is made up of young adults who feel strong in their faith and want to share it in a way that is life giving and joyful—hence the name, Elation Ministries. The group has a great reputation and has worked throughout Ireland. They are particularly talented in music and use this to bring energy to their workshops.

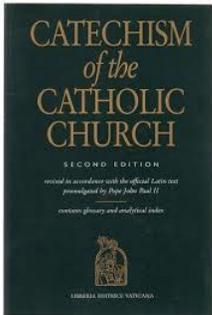
Maybe you have done the Pope John Paul II Award and enjoyed the Youth Days, maybe you have been to Lourdes with the Diocese and had the time of your life, maybe you have never done anything remotely like this ever before—whatever the reason, come along and enjoy!

You can use the registration form on brochures in your parish, phone the Pastoral Centre 074 9121853 or book on line through the Diocesan website [www.raphoediocese.ie](http://www.raphoediocese.ie) The cost for the Youth Space event is €5 and you are also welcome to register for other events over the weekend too. And why not join us for the Saturday evening 7.30pm mass in St Eunan's Cathedral where the Pope John Paul II awards will be presented by John McAreavey.



**Come and see**—there will be so much to look at in the Exhibition space at the Raphoe Faith Gathering if you are looking for ideas and resources for yourself or for your parish. Trócaire will be present talking about “Rediscovering Mercy” a parish based programme that involves prayer with

**TRÓCAIRE**  
Working for a Just World



scripture, personal reflection and insight into the work of Trócaire. Mariín O Sullivan will be present with information on the Maryvale Course for studying the catechism. This again is a parish or deanery based programme that offers deep insight into the riches of the catechism.—a great way to learn more about your faith. SPRED is also an organisation concerned with faith development. The focus for SPRED groups is on people with special needs. Here faith development is tailored to the particular needs of the group. Deborah — who is the in Down & Connor diocese will be available in the Exhibition Space to meet and talk with anyone who has an interest in the faith of those in our parishes who have special needs.

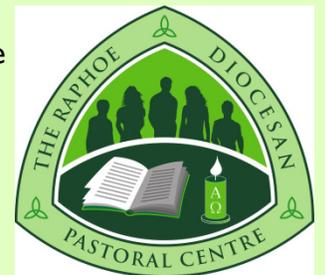


SPRED

If you want to know more about the work of the Pastoral Centre we will be there with a great collection of information and resources. Veritas will have a book stand where you will be able to purchase books relating to many of the workshops we have available.



We will also have an exhibition on the faith history of Raphoe Diocese with an opportunity to see the many Mass rocks, turas/pilgrimage paths, holy wells and grottos.



## MARYS MEALS—STEP BY STEP TO FEED A CHILD!

Mary's Meals was founded by Magnus McFarland Barrow, from Scotland, when he visited Malawi in 2002. He met 14-year-old Edward and asked him what his dream was for the future. Edward replied, “To go to school and to have enough to eat”. This simple request sparked the birth of Mary's Meals. A school feeding programme was started providing a meal per day in school, feeding just 200 children. This soon grew and today Mary's Meals feeds over 792,000 children every day in their place of education, costing on average only €12.40 per year per child!

### **THE WALK**

The Mary's Meals walk (called Step by Step to Feed a Child) from Malin town in County Donegal to Knock Shrine in County Mayo took place over nine days, starting on Wednesday, August 7<sup>th</sup> and finishing on August 15<sup>th</sup>, the feast of the Assumption of our Blessed Mother to Heaven”. The Letterkenny Mary's Meals support group set out from Malin with 22 walkers with more joining throughout the day. Numbers fluctuated day by day with 62 walking from Letterkenny to Ballybofey and over 100 on the final day from Kilkelly to Knock.

The walk was very well supported along the way, and people were more than good both in their generosity and hospitality. A function was held on each of the nine nights, in order to create awareness and raise funds. The main objective of the walk was to create awareness to help spread Mary's Meals throughout Ireland, thus with the help of other walkers from Derry, Enniskillen, Dublin, Cavan, Cork and Wexford, we achieved our goal in helping Mary's Meals become more of a household name in Ireland.

If you are interested in getting involved with Marys Meals as a volunteer or setting up a support group in your area, please call today on 0877080736, or email us at [marysmealsletterkenny@outlook.com](mailto:marysmealsletterkenny@outlook.com)

Finally Mary's Meals would like to extend their most sincere gratitude to all the walkers, supporters, volunteers and all who donated or helped in any way! Please remember Mary's Meals is all about feeding the next child, so if you can't feed 100 children feed one child!

Mary's Meals will be offering workshops on how you can become involved in the organisation and will also be present in the Exhibition Space during the Raphoe Faith Gathering.



Some of the Mary's Meals Walk to Knock Team in Donegal Town

## Diocesan Diary

Fr James Friel will begin a series of evenings on the Gospel of Matthew on Thursday 7th November at 8pm in the Pastoral Centre. The intention is to run these evenings weekly up until Easter.

A process for developing a Parish Pastoral Council has started in Fanad facilitated by Anne and Sine Friel and in the Rathmullen/Milford/Kerrykeel parish facilitated by Jack O'Herlihy. If you are interested in finding out more about how this process works and what is involved please contact Bairbre in the Pastoral Centre 074 9121853

***Rev Jonathon Flood was ordained priest in June and is now curate in Creeslough. Speaking to Embers about his hopes for priesthood he said:***

I think that the greatest hope is first that I would be a faithful priest all my life and live up to what Christ is asking of me. Personal holiness is the number one vocation of every Christian, so drawing ever closer to Christ and building on the foundations laid as a seminarian and deacon are top priority. Only if I am spiritually healthy, can I bring others to Christ, and this is the second major hope for Priesthood, to bring as many souls to Christ as I can. Pope Benedict said to Students in Twickenham last year, *'The key to it is very simple – true happiness is to be found in God. We need to have the courage to place our deepest hopes in God alone, not in money, in a career, in worldly success, or in our relationships with others, but in God. Only he can satisfy the deepest needs of our hearts.'*



## Pope John Paul II Award



What do students for the Pope John Paul II Award get involved in through their parish work? Well here is an insight from some

students from PCC Falcarragh.—pictured here

“As part of the parish involvement element of our Pope John Paul II Award, we decided to create a weekly youth reflection board which we hoped we could put up in the entrances of our local chapels. The board is a reflection of each week's gospel and contains quotes that relate to the gospel message and that would motivate us during the week ahead. We chose this particular project as we felt it was unique and felt this might make more of a difference rather than joining a choir or cleaning etc. We also felt that it



would help our peers understand the Gospel more.

We meet at lunchtime once a week and read that Sunday's readings, psalm and gospel. We reflect on the meaning / message and try to explain it on the first page. Then we find inspirational quotes that relate to the message of the readings and gospel. We find an inspiring image and add it to the first page to help make sense of our reflection. We decorate the pages to attract readers and make it more interesting by adding borders, candles etc. We try to apply our message to the time of the year e.g. on the first weekend of the new year we spoke about renewal and rebirth as it symbolises the time of a new year and a new you.



We have learnt a lot from doing the posters each week. We understand the gospel better and hope that other people in our communities do as well. We hope to reach out to our peers and help them develop their faith and take an interest in the message of the Gospels. In the process we believe that our faith has become stronger and will continue to grow as we get older as there is so clearly so much to be gained from what we are reading and in turn writing about.”



Eighty eight students from schools in this diocese will receive the Pope John Paul II Award on Saturday 19th October after the 7.30pm Mass in the Cathedral. Bishop Boyce will be the celebrant for the Mass and John McAreavey will present the awards. It was a very conscious decision on the part of the Raphoe Faith Gathering to place the Pope John Paul II presentations at the heart of the Faith Gathering. It is important to acknowledge and celebrate the place of young people in our church just as it is important for our young people to see that they are part of something bigger than just themselves. This is a celebration of church and of mission.

Contact Bairbre Cahill the Diocesan Resource Worker by phone 0860230157 / 074 9121853 or email [bairbre.raphoepastoralrenewal@gmail.com](mailto:bairbre.raphoepastoralrenewal@gmail.com) or at Raphoe Diocesan Pastoral Centre, Monastery Avenue, Letterkenny, Co Donegal Website: [www.raphoediocese.ie/diocese/pastoral-team](http://www.raphoediocese.ie/diocese/pastoral-team)

