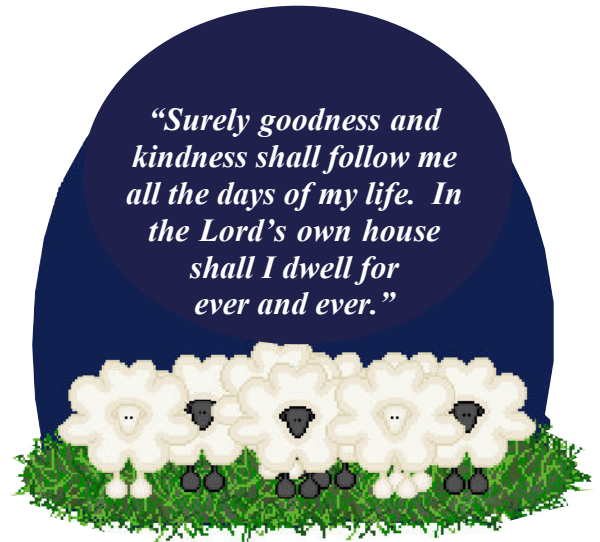


He restores my soul

Dear Friends,

Throughout this year we have travelled along this road of the twenty third psalm and perhaps understood a little bit more deeply why we were given the name we have, Restoration Ministries. It's a name that was revealed rather than chosen, and even if God decides that this road needs to be travelled for many more years yet, we will still be discovering more of what it means to have the vocation of restoring. This is a road with a destination. We are on our way to the house of the Lord. In the Old Testament there are many references to restoration, the most moving ones being about the hope for restoration when the people were in exile. You will find two especially touching, one in Jeremiah 31 and the other in Isaiah 35. Both talk about the people being in wilderness exile, but holding on to the promise of returning home. "A great company will return," says God through Jeremiah. "Tears of joy will stream down their faces, and I will lead them home with great care. They will walk beside quiet streams and not stumble." And he promises through Isaiah, "A main road will go through that once deserted land. It will be named the Highway of Holiness. Evil hearted people will never travel on it. It will only be for those who walk in God's ways; fools will never walk there. Lions will not lurk along its course and there will be no other dangers. Only the redeemed will follow it. Those who have been ransomed by the Lord will return to Jerusalem, singing songs of everlasting joy. Sorrow and mourning will disappear, and they will be overcome with joy and gladness." The way the psalmist puts it is this: ***"Surely your goodness and unfailing love will pursue me all the days of my life, and I will live in the house of the Lord forever."***

Over the last long years there is a sense in which we have been in the wilderness and still are. That, in essence, is why Restoration Ministries was called into being. We have desperately needed places to hold us in the hard times, to give us vision and courage, to provide space for rest, for reflection and for prayer, venues for story telling, houses of recovery and restoration, roadside inns that offer hospitality and healing, safe spaces to hear truth telling, gathering grounds for celebration, and tables of welcome that will offer food for the journey and wine for rejoicing to prepare the road for new things on the way. A new day is dawning for us after so many years of civil unrest and political instability, although that day often seems to be slow in coming. But I affirm today, in spite of all that is shadowy and dark in our community and in the world at large that we are in the season of the Spirit, the season of hope, the season of restoration. We are called, all of us, not to strive to hold back the dark, and sometimes it can be very, very dark, but rather to enter into the heart of it with the confidence of a Pentecost people whose hallmarks are hope, joy, peace, faith and love. God has been present in the wilderness, the faithful one, whose goodness and unfailing love has pursued us, whose kindness has followed us, whose mercy, new every morning, has embraced us, so that we have known, in a place beyond human knowing, that we are already in the house of the Lord while still, paradoxically, having to reach it. As we grow in relationship with him, then his house becomes our home even as we journey, eternal life begins right now and not at some vague point after death, and we also become a dwelling place for him as he seeks through such as we to restore a weary, broken, lost community and world to himself. And so, however inadequate and weak we feel and know ourselves to be, in all humility and with great gratitude, we make the affirmation of faith: ***"Surely goodness and kindness shall follow me all the days of my life. In the Lord's own house shall I dwell for ever and ever."***



Have a good summer, Ruth

Friends of Restoration Ministries

My name is Eustace McSweeney. I was born in Millstreet, (of Eurovision and international horse jumping fame) in North Cork. In those days there was only one Protestant in that extensive townland. He was a highly respected and much loved man, the local Bank Manager, married to a Catholic. They had a son who was a Capuchin Priest.

Ard Mhuire

I, too, am a Capuchin Priest. I belong to an Order begun by St. Francis of Assisi, patron saint of ecology. I now live at Ard Mhuire Capuchin Friary near Creeslough in beautiful Co. Donegal. From my bedroom window I can literally throw a stone into Sheephaven Bay. Ards, as it is called, is an oasis of peace. It is a retreat and conference centre, a wild life preserve, a quiet place conducive to prayer, reflection and contemplation, a centre of justice, peace and care for the integrity of creation, a much sought out place.

I spent 20 wonderful years in New Zealand. My abiding memory is the wholesome relationship, especially at a social level, that existed between Protestants and Catholics from the North of Ireland living in that far away country.

They frequented each other's clubs and social events. It was not uncommon to hear either or both of them say, "If only my folk at home knew where I am right now they would die!" One of the reasons for that healthy relationship has to be the absence in New Zealand of the cultural pressures and deep seated traditional attitudes of their native land. They were now free to be themselves, to act maturely and to make a fresh start.

I spent five happy years in Christ The Redeemer Parish, Lagmore, Belfast. It was during that time that I was fortunate enough to become acquainted with Ruth Patterson and later, with the lovely staff of Restoration House. Ruth's sincerity, integrity, creative searching, hospitality and genuine spirit of ecumenism touched me deeply. Restoration Ministries models concretely what the wider divided community has the potential to become. As with Protestants and Catholics from the North of Ireland living in New Zealand, Restoration House provides a safe, fraternal neutral space where people can meet, be themselves, be free from fears, pressures and the need to keep looking over their shoulder. There they can be ecumenical at whatever level they are comfortable with.

There is an admirable honesty about Restoration House. Differences are not whitewashed. There is no pretence or falsity. A deliberate attempt is made to acknowledge and accentuate what is held in common. The same effort is made to embrace, welcome and respect differences, yet to address them with sensitivity, honesty and courage. Thank God for Restoration Ministries, for Reverend Dr. Ruth Patterson, her staff and for all who frequent that holy place.



HOSPITALITY EVENING

Monday 26th June 2006

7.30 for 8.00 pm

After Dinner Speaker:

Damian Gorman

Playwright and Poet

Invitation Only -

Tickets still available 028 9062 1867.

NIGERIAN INFORMATION EVENING

(Rose's Well)

Thursday June 15th at 7.30 pm



We were all saddened to hear of the death of a dear friend of Restoration Ministries, Rev Jimmy Winning of Annaghanon Christian Ministries. Jimmy was a man of extraordinary faith, wisdom, integrity and compassion. We give thanks for his life and pray for comfort and peace for his wife Mary and his son Matthew.

Contact us

Restoration Ministries
4 Thornhill Road, Dunmurry
Northern Ireland BT17 9EJ

T 028 9062 1867
E office@restorationministries.co.uk
W www.restorationministries.co.uk

Open House
Every
Wednesday

12 - 2.00 p.m.
All welcome