



*Dear Friends,*

## *Prayer of St Francis*

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace;  
where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
where there is injury, pardon;  
where there is doubt, faith;  
where there is despair, hope;  
where there is darkness, light;  
and where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;  
to be understood, as to understand;  
to be loved, as to love;

for it is in giving that we receive,  
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
and it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life.

Amen.



On March 7<sup>th</sup> we held a Lenten Reflection day here in Restoration House. The theme was “Lord, make me.” This is the opening phrase of the very lovely and very well known prayer of St. Francis printed opposite. It’s a prayer that we know almost as well as the Lord’s Prayer and, because we do, we can often rhyme it off without really thinking what we’re asking and without realizing what a risky prayer it is to pray, especially if we believe God takes us at our word when we talk with him! This prayer of Francis is a progression. We move from the main petition that we be made, by the Lord, into instruments of his peace through the work, the transforming that needs to take place within ourselves in order that we may sow the seeds of peace in all areas of discord or disharmony. We then find ourselves in the upside down kingdom of God where things as we have known them or expected them to operate are somehow turned on their head. God’s agenda begins to take over from the world’s agenda and it leads us to some surprising places and encounters and demands a different way of reacting. We have made the decision to follow, to walk this particular road that at times will be a costly one to travel. And then, at the end, we reach the blessing or the reward.

To be an instrument of God’s peace is the greatest calling on any person of faith. It is not for the faint-hearted. In the end it will cost everything but that need not be a negative or a terrifying prospect. The process of being made or moulded into such an instrument will last a lifetime, and even then there’s more! But God takes us at a pace that he knows we can cope with even if we think it’s too much. We are not ‘made’ or transformed all at once. St. Francis warned his followers: “While you are proclaiming peace with your lips, be careful to have it even more fully in your heart. Nobody should be roused to wrath or insult on your account. Everyone should rather be moved to peace, goodwill and mercy as a result of your self-restraint. For we have been called for the purpose of healing the wounded, binding up those who are bruised, and reclaiming the erring.”

In a sense that is what we have been called to in Restoration Ministries. As the years progress, the outer circumstances may change. The essential calling doesn't. It's just that, for those with a deep commitment to follow – that is, not only to believe but to follow – we are being taken deeper. The challenge to be instruments of his peace is more profound, more all-embracing and has consequences that we might never have imagined when we started out - for our own lives and the lives of those around us. One of the best known quotations from St. Francis comes as he is nearing the end of his earthly journey. He says to his brothers – and sisters – “Let us begin again, for up to now we have done nothing.” That's a good place to be. I pray that in Restoration Ministries, for as long as God keeps us in being, we will always find ourselves in that space. It's the place of humility, of grace, of love, of hope. It is the place of resurrection and open doors and new opportunities, a place where we can pray with ever increasing desire and conviction, “Lord, make me...”

We are praying this prayer these days with deep trust, conscious that the God who has brought us this far will continue his good work, not only in this island, but in our own lives as well where the biggest work of peace still remains to be done. Can we ask you to join with us over these next months? And – peace to you this Easter!

*Ruth*

# Listening with the Heart...



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INTERVIEWS HELD SUMMER 2009.  
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Trainers:  
Andrea Wigglesworth and  
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## *Please Note*

Belfast Listening with the Heart  
Course will be held in Restoration  
House and the cost is £350

**Monthly Meeting**  
**Monday 30th March**  
**at 8.00pm**  
**Title: They Don't Know**  
**Facilitator: Ruth Patterson**

**We are saddened to learn of the death of our dear 'friend' Foster Johnston. Foster was a regular attendee at our Monthly Meetings.**