



Restoration
MINISTRIES

He Restores My Soul - SUMMER 2014

Dear Friends,

It is hard to believe that we have been in Harmony Drive for nearly two years now. How quickly the weeks – and years go by! It has been and continues to be a place of harmony. It is so encouraging to Rose and myself to hear people remark, as they visit, on the sense of peace they feel. In fact, some say, “Why – it’s just like a mini Restoration House!” We are totally convinced that this is because prayer continues to be the heartbeat of all that we seek to do.

We usually think of harmony in relation to music where it refers to the blending of sounds of different pitch or quality producing chords that are pleasing to the ear. But it can also refer to situations in which people live and work well with other people, or in a way that does not damage things around them. Such definitions call up all sorts of thoughts and images for me. It is all too easy to start with the negative, to list all the areas of discord, both in Northern Ireland and in nearly every country in the world. There are so many areas where people do not live and work well with others, where they damage things around them rather than restore and build up. From the hate crimes reported locally on almost a daily basis to the warring, separatist factions in every continent, disharmony seems to be the order of the day. It is so easy to become overwhelmed by a sense of powerlessness or frustration. The discordant notes can sound so loud that they threaten to drown out the sweetness of another melody which, while appearing to be much fainter, is unmistakably there for those with hearts that are attuned to listen and ears that are willing to hear. It’s a melody whose notes are compassion, mercy, tenderness, integrity, courage, hope, forgiveness, generosity, openness, peace. They produce that harmonious chord whose name is love. We have heard it unmistakably in recent weeks from unlikely places. It has come from the Syrian city of Homs in the life and death of a 75 year-old Jesuit priest Fr Frans van der Lugt, who had been in Syria since 1966. He helped found L’Arche in Syria and worked among the poor, both Muslim and Christian, saying once, “I don’t see people as Muslim or Christian. I see a human being first and foremost.” During the United Nations’ operation he refused to leave the embattled city of Homs, wanting to remain faithful to the people who had suffered so much. At the time of his death, there were only 66 members of a Christian community once numbering tens of thousands left in Homs. His commitment was to these and to his Moslem sisters and brothers to whom he had dedicated so much of his life. On April 7 a lone gunman entered the monastery where Fr Frans lived, took him outside and shot this man of peace twice in the head. He died as he had lived, with faith, integrity and courage. Or you may have read of the 19 year old, Stephen Sutton, diagnosed with terminal cancer who decided to make the last stage of his journey into something positive and hope filled. He raised well over four million pounds for a teenage cancer charity and posted a final thumbs-up message to those who had supported him, saying that life had been very good and that he had wanted to try to put more good in the world. And as I write Pope Francis has just returned from a visit to the Holy Land – such an iconic trip. His gestures spoke louder than words as was shown so clearly by those he chose to accompany him – his friends from Buenos Aires, Rabbi Abraham Skorka, rector of the Latin American Rabbinical Seminary and Omar Abboud, the Muslim director of the Institute for Interreligious Dialogue.



These three and countless others bear witness to the words of St Francis who is reputed to have said, "Preach the Gospel at all times and when necessary use words." So often we have been reminded that attitudes are about hearts and minds and hearts and minds are changed through the building of relationships. With attitudes towards difference and inclusion hardening and narrowing with what seems to be a frightening rapidity, there is a huge onus on those of us who have been given to see the wonderful riches that diversity brings to 'preach the Gospel' by building relationships across the increasing number of divides that constitute today's society. If each one of us could commit ourselves throughout these months of summer to becoming a bridge over the troubled waters of some area of division or separation known to us, then that chord of harmony that delights the heart of God would begin to drown out the discord. Remember that God rejoices in using the little and seemingly weak to confound the powerful. Have an iconic summer!

Ruth

Death of James Quinn

We are so sad to have to report the death of James Quinn of Enniscrone, Co Sligo, brother of our dear Sr Jo and of Frs Peter and Des, all of whom have been and are so encouraging and supportive of Restoration Ministries. James was a man of deep faith, integrity, wisdom and humour, widely respected and loved, not only in the local community but much further afield. He was always so interested in what we were doing. We know that the communion of saints is greatly enriched by his presence, but we shall miss him. Our sympathy and prayers go out to Jo, Peter and Des and all those for whom his passing leaves a big gap.

If you have visited our website recently you will see that our 'myDonate' button is now live and donations may be made through this avenue. We appreciate your continuing generosity towards our work and are always grateful for every donation, no matter how small. Such gifts



enable us to keep on keeping on that little bit longer. Thank you!

OPEN HOUSE AT 19 HARMONY DRIVE

In order to give thanks for the year that has passed, to be in communion with the annual Day of Reflection

(see below) and simply to give our friends an excuse/opportunity to visit, we will be 'at home' here on Wednesday June 18th between 10.30 am and 3.00 pm. We look forward to seeing you.



Every year on the 21st June the Healing Through Remembering organisation encourages individuals & groups to take time to acknowledge the deep hurt and pain caused by the conflict, to reflect on our own attitudes, on what more we might have done or might still do, and to make a personal commitment that such loss should never be allowed to happen again.

The Day of Reflection is offered as an inclusive and positive experience that emphasises a commitment to a peaceful new society.

healingthroughremembering.org