The Traveller

Parish Newsletter

Autumn 2010



WELCOME

Recent months have seen the welcome publication of two particularly important studies relating to the Traveller community. Both are referenced in this edition, and hopefully will be further explored in future editions.

Among the recommendations in Fr. Mícheál MacGréil's ***'Emancipation of the Travelling People'***, he calls for an end to the culture of poverty and deprivation, the adoption of a policy of integrated pluralism, and the creation of occasions of favourable contact between Travellers and settled people. He feels that a main challenge for Irish society is to be open to experience positive and favourable contact with Travellers, so creating good relationships. In this regard he calls upon some initiative from Churches and voluntary organisations to draw on their commitment to social justice to change the negative dispositions in society towards Travellers. I would be hopeful that our work here in the Parish, particularly in our ***Travelling Towards Inclusion*** initiative, and indeed in the widespread distribution of ***The Traveller Parish Newsletter*** will be an ongoing agent for such positive change.

A major part of our commitment to ***Travelling Towards Inclusion*** was Martin Rowan's appointment last year as coordinator of our pilot parish project in Deansrath, and inside you'll find an update on the work, and also the latest from the project's independent evaluator. Martin recently shared an experience he had reflected on, which for him captured one of the most alarming findings of the recently launched ***'Our Geels – All Ireland Traveller Health Study'***: *'At the Cemetery Sunday Mass, in Esker Cemetery, Lucan, I was moved by the number of Traveller graves which hold very young children, and also the shortness of the lives of the adults who are buried there.'* The Study findings detailed in our article inside, indicate that the gap in the health status and life expectancy between the Traveller and the General Population has widened since the last study on Traveller's health was conducted in 1987.

Within the findings, particular emphasis is put on concern for Traveller men's health and generally low life expectancy. Highlighting and responding to this is seen as important priority for and by the community. With this in mind, our front cover features the first Grand Canal Men's Health Walk, promoted by ***Clondalkin Travellers Development Group***. As you can tell from seeing Bernard and Martin, it was a wet day! It couldn't really have been any wetter if we had done a canal swim rather than a canal walk to Clondalkin. Still, it was good, and more walks are planned. Inside we report also



Photo courtesy of **John McElroy**

on the men of ***FC Town*** who have been achieving not just fitness and healthy exercise, but also great sporting success and credit on the football field.

In closing, I know that it has been a sad time for many over recent months. So many families seem to have been touched by loss of loved ones, among them the type of tragic and often early deaths so clearly indicated in the recent Study findings. Can we hope that the type of response Missy Collins at the Health Study launch *(page 25)* asked for, can prevent the darkness of such tragic loss for others. Some more than others have a part to play in this, but we all have some part to play.

Meanwhile, we remember in prayer those who have died, and those recently bereaved. In the words of Blessed John Henry Newman, recently beatified by Pope Benedict on his visit to England:

Lead kindly light, amid the encircling gloom
Lead Thou me on, the night is dark and
I am far from home
Lead Thou me on, keep Thou my feet, I do not ask to see
The distant scene, one step enough for me



Fr. Derek.

Fr. Derek Farrell, P.P.


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WELCOME GEORGINA!



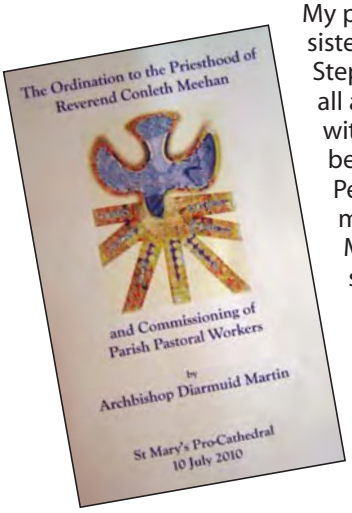
In February this year, we welcomed one of the Dublin Diocese's ten student Parish Pastoral Workers, Georgina Jameson, as she began her five month work placement with our Parish community. After those five months, having acquitted herself very well, having been well-received among the Travellers she met, worked, prayed *(and sang!)* with, we were delighted when Georgina, following her commissioning, was formally appointed full-time to the Parish of the Travelling People. For this we are grateful to Archbishop Diarmuid Martin, and to all those overseeing the Parish Pastoral Workers in the diocese.

We welcome Georgina and look forward to the valuable contribution Georgina will no doubt make among the community, in the life and work of the Parish, and in furthering the aims and desired outcomes of our diocese-wide initiative ***Travelling Towards Inclusion***.



GEORGINA'S REFLECTION ON HER COMMISSIONING

The commissioning of the Parish Pastoral Workers of 2010 took place on 10th July. For me this was a day of excitement and change. From here on, we were no longer in training or candidates of a programme, rather, we were now 'entrustees' of a particular role within the Church. All the hard work, assignment deadlines, endless meetings, parish placements etc finally made sense.



My parents, Mary and Brendan; my sisters, Marian, Brenda, Roisin and Stephanie and my good friend Ross all arrived to celebrate this moment with me. My sister Louise could not be there, because her baby boy, Peter was due to be born at any moment. Fr. Derek Farrell and Martin Rowan were also there to show their well wishes on this exciting day.

What I liked most about this celebration was that there was the commissioning of the ten Parish Pastoral Workers and the ordination of a Priest, Fr. Conleth Meehan. This was a real testament to our new vision of Church, one of collaboration and team playing. Indeed, the Church is about working together to build up the Body of Christ.



The commissioning and ordination on the same day reflects this new model of Church which is largely concerned with mutuality. This commissioning marked the beginning of my work in the Vineyard of the Lord and I can not think of a better place to begin than with the Parish of the Travelling People.



Congratulations to all those Recently Married

THE MARRIAGE PRAYER

God fill your marriage
With memories to treasure...
Of faith and love along the way,
Of love too deep to measure...
And bring to you as man and wife,
The happiness of knowing,
That God who fills your cup of life,
Will keep it overflowing.

Date	Names	Address
27th April	John Jason Maughan and Margarita McDonald	Clonsilla
4th May	Johnny Collins and Mary Brigid Collins	Coolock
28th June	Martin Ward and Kathleen Joyce	Balbriggan
1st July	Michael McDonagh and Annemarie Mongan	Inchicore
8th July	Tony Collins and Winnie Collins	Finglas
10th July	Christy McDonnell and Bernadette Lawrence	Maynooth
15th July	Patrick Brown and Charlene O'Leary	Dalkey
26th July	Brian Mongan and Bridget Lawrence	Donabate
28th July	Owen Maughan and Josephine Maughan	Ballymun
1st September	Tom Stokes and Bridget O'Donnell	Finglas
7th September	Kieran McDonagh and AnnMarie Donovan	Blessington
8th September	Patrick Doran and Helena O'Brien	Inchicore



Charlene O'Leary & Patrick Brown, Dalkey



Tom Stokes & Bridget O'Donnell, Finglas



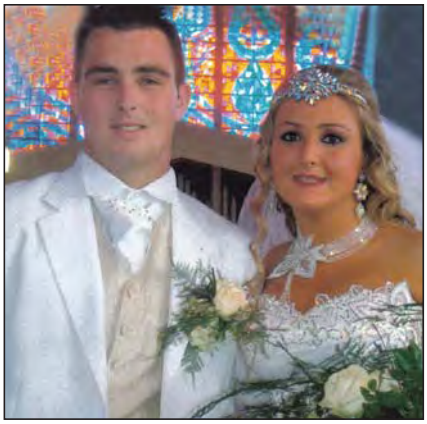
Winnie & Tony Collins, Finglas



John Jason Maughan & Margarita McDonald, Clonsilla



John Joyce & Mary Ellen Nevin, Navan



Owen & Josephine Maughan, Ballymun

For advice on and details of pre-Marriage preparation and requirements, please contact the Parish Office at 01-838 8874. Also if you would like to see your wedding featured in our Newsletter please forward photo and details to Geraldine/Pauline at Parish of the Travelling People, 6 New Cabra Road, Phibsborough, Dublin 7, or preferably by email to info@ptrav.ie



What you need to do when getting marrried

If you are planning to enter into Marriage we will be very happy help you in any way we can here in the Parish. The Church welcomes those planning to marry, but also has a duty of care in the preparation of couples, not just for their special day, but also in the support of the life-long commitment they give to each other in Marriage. It is for this reason of care that the following requirements apply for anyone planning to celebrate the Sacrament of Marriage:

- You must be a least 18 years old to be married in the Church.
- You must give a least three months notice to the Church.
- If you are first cousins, you need to give the Church at least six months notice, and you will need to apply for special Dispensation from the Bishop.
- Before making any wedding arrangements, check with the priest you want to marry you to see if he is free on the date you have chosen.
- Then you can book the church you want to be married in – preferably and if possible your own local parish church.
- For information on our own pre-Marriage Courses, or for any other information or advice, you can contact the Parish Office on 01-8388874.

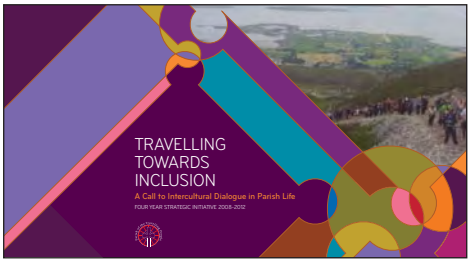
The State requirements are separate to the Church, and must also be followed:

- You must give a least three months notice to the Registrar's Office.
- Phone the Registrar's Office in Joyce House to make an appointment to get registered. Contact numbers for Joyce House: 01-8638220 or 01-8638200
- When you get your appointment date to register in the Registrar's Office, you will need to attend together, and you will need to bring the following:

  Information on the date, the place, and the priest for your wedding.

  Photographic identification (for example Drivers Licence, or passport).

  €150, your PPS numbers, and names and dates of birth of your two witnesses who will be signing the register.



DEANSRATH
October 2010 UPDATE

Report on Pilot Parish Initiative – Travelling Towards Inclusion

The famous Traveller banjo player, Pecker Dunne, offered some guidance on how an attempt by settled people to walk the walk along with the Travellers might turn out. The subject of his song 'Sullivan's John', is a settled young man who runs away with a Traveller's daughter. Pecker Dunne expects that:

"Sullivan's John, you won't stick it long,
Till your belly will soon get slack
As you roam the roads
With a heavy load
And your tool box on your back"

After nearly two years in this Pilot Traveller Inclusion Project in St. Ronan's Parish, Deansrath, I agree with Pecker Dunne that the nomad life is harsh. In the last few months, too, I have had some glimpse of the religious life that grows out of that harshness.

I recently attended the funerals of two men, within a week of each other, in Co Roscommon. One was a settled man and the other man was a Traveller. They lived, within five miles of each other as the crow flies, for the first twenty years of their lives. They both obviously liked the same kind of music judging by the music selected for their funerals. And the music started up in earnest, again, within minutes of each man's grave being closed. In the case of my settled neighbour the music started within twenty five minutes of us leaving the graveyard, and long before we got started on the soup and sandwiches in the hotel. In the case of the Traveller man his burial was followed quickly by a long session of music, but in the graveyard, and in the rain. Of course it is a Traveller tradition to sing around the grave. However, if the family had chosen to have such a session in a hotel I wondered in which local hotel they would be welcome. I had seen the securely locked premises from the funeral cortége that morning. Without the props of comfort and good acoustics, the graveyard singing was still the most moving liturgy I have ever shared in. It was a glimpse of

Of course it is a Traveller tradition to sing around the grave.

I was reminded of the end of a recent Prime Time programme in which a Traveller woman pointed out very forcefully to a local councillor, that he seemed to think that moving into a house was the answer to every issue which concerned Travellers.

what this project dreams of, a Traveller led liturgy with maximum participation and emotional engagement.

The second reading at Mass on the 19th Sunday of Ordinary Time recounted how God preferred the offering of the nomad, Abel, to that of the settled person Cain. And when God made that decision it was the settled person who flew into the towering rage and attacked violently. The reading was read beautifully by a Traveller boy in St. Ronan's.

The writer of the letter to the Hebrews, however, lost our goodwill later in the same reading when he moaned that Abraham had " no more home than the tents which he shared with Isaac and Jacob" but looked forward" to that city with solid foundations…". I was reminded of the end of a recent Prime Time programme in which a Traveller woman pointed out very forcefully to Brian Cowan's brother , a local councillor, that he seemed to think that moving into a house was the answer to every issue which concerned Travellers.

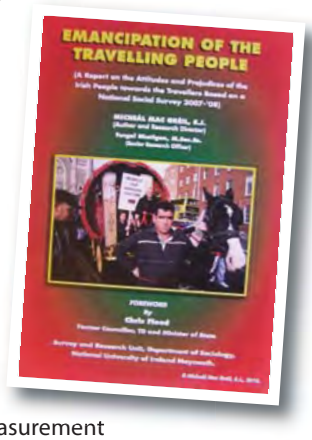
If this project was a football team I would have to admit that we lost the last three matches. The proposed inclusive parish pilgrimage to Knock did not work out. Some planned First Communions did not happen and the weekly walk on the Grand Canal did not work out as an exercise inclusive of settled and Traveller parishioners. Each event needs to be reflected on separately but a run of bad results cannot be called anything else and needs to be examined carefully for the learning to be gained from them. On the



On the positive side this project organised a successful and inclusive walk earlier in the Summer as part of the Deansrath Family Festival.

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The Festival was the first community festival in this parish and was the high point of the Summer months. It involved Travellers at the levels of planning, performance and participation. The festival was an answer to a question posed by a visitor to the parish who asked "what can we do together as a community other than liturgy?" But it did include some liturgy. The liturgical part was a May procession to the ruins of the 12th century monastery of St. Cuthbert of Kilmahudderick here in the parish. We offered the first prayers there for possibly five hundred years, as the church was closed in 1540.



Fr Micheál MacGréil's report *'Emancipation of the Travelling People'* provides a framework for a measurement of the success or failure of this pilot inclusion project and the report is

supportive of this project's ambitions. The core of the work involves the concept of 'social distance' as a measure of social attitudes. He defines social distance as "the level of closeness to which we are prepared to admit members of different groups or categories into our lives i.e. as members of our family, or as friends, or neighbours, or fellow-workers." The lowest end of the scale would involve us wanting the members of the other group to be denied citizenship or deported.

So in the language of sociology this project in St. Ronan's, Deansrath, is about decreasing the social distance between Travellers and other parishioners. According to MacGréil " favourable contact is the best known way of challenging social prejudice. The difficulty at present is the facilitation of such favourable contact". He suggests that church and local community leaders are in the best position to provide such occasions of favourable contact. The informal social contacts, which take place here during and after Mass, offer such favourable occasions as the commitment of Travellers to faith and devotion draws respect from the rest of the community. The challenge is to create similar openings outside of liturgy, as well.

I would estimate that one in every three of the pilgrims on Croagh Patrick on the last Sunday in July were Travellers. This parish was very well represented there, in the mist and mud on that day. Climbing Croagh Patrick feels like a physical act of prayer and seems part of religious life which thrives on harsh conditions. It does not require the comfort and acoustics referred to above or reading a text or following a word filled ritual. Reek Sunday is an occasion of "favourable contact", between Travellers and settled people, leading to challenging social prejudice as Micheál MacGréil's report recommends.

RECENT FIRST HOLY COMMUNIONS & CONFIRMATIONS















If you would like to see your First Holy Communion or Confirmation in our Newsletter, please send a photograph and details to the Parish Office, 6 New Cabra Road, Phibsborough, Dublin 7, or preferably by email to info@ptrav.ie



PILGRIMAGE TO ST. WINIFRED'S WELL

Georgina's reflection on the experience

6 a.m., the alarm went off and our trip to St. Winifred's Well began. The excitement was evident among the 32 participants of the pilgrimage, as we set sail for Wales.

Many of the women had been to the Well before and so the journey there was filled with stories of past experiences, which in turn, fed my excitement all the more.

When we arrived at the Well everyone gathered round to celebrate a reconciliation service together. Following this many from the group dipped themselves in the Well, for the healing of mind, body and soul. This was truly an honour to be part of. When we finished at the Well, we then all flocked to Padre Pio's Peace Garden, where Mass was celebrated by Fr. Derek.

We spent almost two days on this pilgrimage and, for me, to be able to pray, eat and socialise with this group of Traveller women was a great privilege. Jesus said, 'where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there', and certainly this could not have been more evident with this gathering of faithful Christians. Indeed, St. Winifred's Well was the perfect place to facilitate this. It is a place of great peace and serenity, healing and prayer and those who attend, experience a genuine growth in their faith.



Prayer to St. Winifred

Saint Winifred
Glorious Virgin and Martyr
Faithful spouse of Christ
Kind and loving virgin
Sweet comforter of the afflicted
Bright example of chastity
Shining star
Fair flower of ancient Wales
Chosen vessel of grace
Mirror of purity
Mirror of devotion
Mirror of piety
Shining lamp of sanctity
Hope of distressed pilgrims
Patron Saint of Holywell
Saint Winifred, pray for us

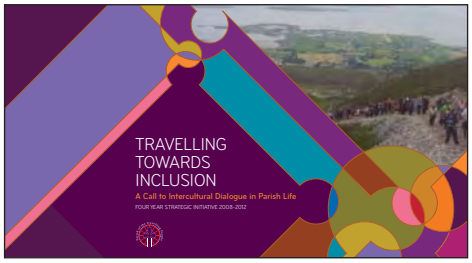


One of my favourite moments of the entire pilgrimage was the actual Well itself. As I watched people immerse themselves in the water I was filled with overwhelming emotion. There was a great sense of longing for healing among the pilgrims; and indeed, relief and peace once the ritual was complete. The water was extremely cold. It was difficult for people to get in and, indeed, remain in the water. But support was always at the ready. Everyone was there to support those in need as they encouraged and accompanied each other into the Well. The extraordinary sense of service among the people was a powerful reminder of the living Christ among us. To echo the words of St. Theresa of Avila, which couldn't be more applicable, "Christ has no body now on earth, no hands, no feet on earth but yours". Indeed, it is without question that theirs are the feet with which Christ walks to do good, and theirs are the hands with which Christ blesses all the world.



The evening before we returned home ended with stories, songs and lots of fun. Everyone sat up until the early hours of the morning exchanging stories of long ago. I loved this part of the evening because I got to hear many tales of the Traveller tradition. The entire trip was filled with deep prayer, friendship building and many laughs. St. Winifred's Well truly is a place of peace and healing, and those who made this journey embraced that wholeheartedly, which greatly enhanced my experience of this pilgrimage. This was a trip I will not forget in a hurry!

TRAVELLING TOWARDS INCLUSION



The Pilot Parish Initiative

The Journey So Far

The Pilot Parish Project is now coming towards the end its second year in St. Ronan's Parish, Deansrath. When the Pilot Project began in Deansrath, the perception for some was that it was difficult to get things going in Deansrath. In view of this perception, locating the Pilot Project in Deansrath could have been seen as a considerable risk or as swimming against prevailing perceptions. However, the Parish Priest in Deansrath was prepared to do just that when he agreed to host the Project in the area because he *"wanted to get to know Travellers and their culture and do so in a structured way".*

This open, positive and flexible attitude has played a key role in helping create the conditions necessary for the Project to work towards achieving the dialogue, understanding and mutual respect that are its core aims.

Achievements – What Has Worked

- **Being Heard**

The Pilot Project was launched with a mixture of hope, fear and uncertainly. From the outset the approach used was one of reaching out, making contact and getting to know local Travellers and working to build relationships with them.

Travellers have shown a great degree of openness and a willingness to engage. They are slowly becoming involved and they greatly appreciate the welcome and understanding being shown to them in the parish.

Their growing sense of ease is being affirmed through the work of relationship building and through positive responses to their requests for services such as Baptism outside established schedules or requests for blessings and other rituals that are of special cultural significance.

- ***Making Links and Connections***

While the main activities of the Pilot Project take place in Deansrath, connections have also been made with other relevant structures and organisations.

These include the Deanery where the Project has an active presence at deanery meetings and where details of project activities are being shared with other pastoral workers. Links have also been established with local organisations working with Travellers and through these links the Project is now involved in a number of joint initiatives designed to promote dialogue and greater understanding between the Traveller and settled communities.

- ***Openness and Resources***

Overall the achievements of the Pilot Project are clearly related to the spirit of openness in the Saint Ronan's Parish and to the considerable effort that the Parish has invested in creating an atmosphere of understanding and welcome.

This atmosphere is appreciated by all parishioners especially Travellers. From the outset the Co-ordinator has used an approach of reaching out to Travellers, being there for them in times of joy and sorrow, spending time on home visits and generally getting to know people as individuals and as families. This approach works and it continues to underpin the ongoing work.

The Challenges

This Project has presented many challenges, a few disappointments and at least some of the original ideas have proved either over-ambitious or inappropriate. From the beginning the aim was to encourage involvement by local Travellers in the structures of the Project as a way of ensuring that they would have a say in its development. This has proved difficult but it has not interfered with the relationship they have with the Co-ordinator.

This Project has created conditions for greater contact and interaction between Traveller and settled parishioners, there is progress but much remains to be done if entrenched attitudes towards Travellers are to change. Changing such attitudes takes time, patience and the creation of safe spaces where people can come together to begin exploring their beliefs and fears.

The Pilot Project has extended an invitation to begin this exploration and the journey has started.

Where To Next – Continuing the Journey

In term of outcomes, this Project has had a very positive impact on the St. Ronan's Parish and there is more involvement by all parishioners in Mass and other liturgies. There is now a new vibrancy around the parish and a sense that the Project is contributing to the building of the faith community.

This Pilot Project was about identifying what would and would not work in Deansrath and gathering this information to contribute to the development of a best practice model for other parishes. There is now strong level of trust and understanding between Travellers and the Parish and there are some connections between settled and Traveller parishioners but much work needs to be done in this area in order to break down the barriers that that exist between Travellers and settled people.

Serious consideration also needs to be given to putting in place structures to ensure the continuation of the work after the pilot phase.

Kate O'Brien, *(Phagos)*

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RECENT CHRISTENINGS

Welcome, precious little child,
So fresh from God above,
Baptised today in Jesus' name,
Held in His arms of love.
May angels guide your tiny feet
And bring you smiles to wear,
And may our Heavenly father
Always keep you in His care.



Peter & Phyllis McDonagh & Baby Michael Liam, Ballymun.



Michael & Geraldine McDonagh, and Baby Teresa Samantha, Ballymun.



Joe & Julie McDonnell and Baby Joe, Navan.



Martin & Bridget Stokes & Baby Chloe Marie, Ballymun.



Baby John O'Brien and family, Clondalkin.

If you would like to see your Christening in our Newsletter, please send a photograph and details to the Parish Office, 6 New Cabra Road, Phibsborough, Dublin 7, or preferably by email to info@ptrav.ie

OUT & ABOUT

Ballyroan Parish Country Fair, including James Collins (*Tinsmith)* & Paddy Collins...
RTÉ's *Frontline* Programme Studio... Brookfield's St. Aidan's including Margaret Casey & family.












The Traveller Parish Newsletter assumes that the full permission of anyone featured in a photograph has been secured prior to being submitted. As part of our Parish Child Protection Procedures names are not assigned to individual photos of children. Rare exceptions to this are only at the express request of the parents involved, and then at the discretion of the editorial team. Views expressed in *The Traveller Parish Newsletter* do not necessarily reflect views and policies of the Parish. Some photos submitted to the Newsletter may be used on our website. Thanks to all our contributors. Your views, comments and local news are always welcome at (01) 838 8874 or Email: info@ptrav.ie. Parish Website: www.ptrav.ie

National Traveller Suicide Awareness Project

Minister Moloney launches Mental Health Materials for National Traveller Suicide Awareness Project

cross care social care agency catholic archdiocese of dublin
innovation and action for social justice



"Its important that we work together to break the stigma of mental health" so said Minister John Moloney when he launched the ***Let Someone Know*** youth mental health resources for the National Traveller Suicide Awareness Project. The resources which were developed by the project include a training pack for youth workers which is hoped will help open up conversations with young Travellers about Mental Health and how to look after it. Also launched on the day were posters which were designed by young people from around the country which highlight the ***Let Someone Know*** website which has lots of information on how to look after your mental health. A poster on managing stress developed by the Blackpool women's group in Cork really shows how easy it is to become stressed trying to manage daily life.

All of these resources are now available from the National Traveller Suicide Awareness Project free of charge.

To obtain the training pack for youth workers you will have to participate in a training day which will show groups how to use the pack.





If you or your group are interested in obtaining any of the posters or in organising training for your group please get in touch as training is provided free of charge and is available nationally.

Further information is available from Petra on Email: pdaly@crosscare.ie or Telephone: 086-1729168



F.C. TOWN FOOTBALL CLUB

UPDATE



CONGRATULATIONS CHAMPION-ES!





F.C. Town Football Club were crowned League and Cup Double Champions as the 2009-2010 season ended in June. This is a marvellous achievement for a club founded just three years ago, particularly bearing in mind that the club also gained promotion in each of the previous two years. Having completed the third season so successfully, F.C. Town were again promoted, this time to the Amateur Football League (AFL) Premier Division for the 2010-2011 season.

Football, like life, is among other things a mixture of success and failure, joy and disappointment. Congratulations and great credit are due to the players and management of F.C. Town, not just for their success, but also for their determination and maturity in working through and learning from the thankfully rare experiences of failure and disappointment.

There were other factors though on which the club's particular success last season was built – the commitment to the team, from





pre-season training and on through the depths of winter training and matches, the quality and skills of the group of players, the dedication and leadership of the manager, the platform provided by the Amateur Football League and its officials, and the backup and encouragement received from many – family members, supporters and benefactors. All have been part of the good news story of F.C. Town.

Hopefully that good news story may continue despite unforeseen difficulties and challenges the club has faced as the new season begins. The winds of change have blown, and the team is suddenly in a period of major and unexpected transition. While some player transfers and retirements took place, as can happen, the additional effects of the recession in emigration for some, and increased clashing work commitments for others, has meant a major personnel change at management and player level.

F.C. Town has proved to everyone it can succeed in terms of winning promotion, medals, cups, and leagues, while at the same time winning the respect of many along the way. The challenge now is survival, and survival itself is success. The prize of survival may not be in measurements of medal success, but rather in levels of participation, enjoyment, healthy lifestyles and health outcomes of the men involved now, and hopefully many other young men into the future.

Hopefully then the efforts of those who have stepped forward to help out will be rewarded. All who quite rightly rejoiced in last season's squad's success will no doubt also join in wishing this season's new squad and management every good wish.







WOULD YOU LIKE TO SPONSOR F. C. TOWN?

The cost of the league each year is very expensive.
If you would like to make a contribution to F. C. Town
it would be very much appreciated.
You can contact the Club through
the Parish Office on (01) 838 8874



TRAVELLERS REACH OUT IN ETHIOPIA

Last year Anne Garvey who is a development worker with Ballyfermot Travellers Action Project, was asked to deliver a programme about diversity and people living in different cultures and societies and helped us to understand the difficulties of developing countries. During the course, Fr. Stephen from the Vincentian Lay Missionaries *(VLM)* came to speak to us about the volunteering project he runs. After he had spoken to us, Ann Garvey and a group of women asked if maybe they could go to Africa to experience first hand the issues people are facing.

Fr. Stephen had been the Parish Priest to the Travelling Community and so he was more than happy to facilitate such a visit. Immediately the group began to plan and organise themselves for this once in a life time experience. One of the group Margaret Anne O'Brien had already been involved in fundraising for Ethiopia. Her efforts had helped to build houses in Mekele for some of the poorest people there, she had also given enough funds to put a concrete floor in a school in Ambo, this allowed 250 children to attend school 5 days a week in a sheltered space. Up to that they had been educated under a tree outside. She also gave funds for the feeding programme which guarantees the children do not go hungry. While she had hoped some day she might go to Ethiopia to see the difference her fundraising had made, the idea of such a journey was really only ever a dream. Now it was going to become a reality.

While Margaret Anne had hoped some day she might go to Ethiopia to see the difference her fundraising had made, the idea of such a journey was really only ever a dream.



The group met regularly and planned the visit for about one year. We covered all sorts of things, health issues, culture and tradition, the reasons the global south was kept poor. We also looked at our own lives and the things which have effected us over the years, our opportunities for employment, access to health and education etc. We were well prepared for our visit, yet when we got there we realised that no amount of preparation can fully prepare you for the reality of life in Ethiopia. A journalist named Colin Murphy worked with us and helped us prepare for a



radio programme on our local station. It was the first time many of us had talked into a microphone and it was nerve wracking, however we soon realised that there is nothing to worry about and you just have to be yourself and tell your story.

Eight people travelled to Ethiopia. Marie Cash, Margaret Anne O'Brien, Eileen Berry, Lily Cash, Elizabeth Moorhouse, Anne Garvey, Fr. Stephen Monaghan and a documentary maker from RTÉ Ronan Kelly. He made a short documentary for a series called the Curious Ear.

When we got to Ethiopia we went to Addis Ababa, Jimma and Ambo. In Ambo we saw the school that Margaret Anne had helped build, it gave us all a great sense of pride to think that one of our own had helped to make such a difference. Margaret Anne was so inspired by what she saw that she immediately committed herself to fundraising to help put a ceiling in the school and to fund the purchase of a stove and chimney for the kitchen to allow them prepare food for the children.

In Jimma we visited people who are living with leprosy. We were welcomed into their village and given a traditional Ethiopian coffee ceremony. They sang and clapped and made us feel so welcome. After coffee we sat down and talked to each other. We all shared our stories and we got a really good understanding of their lives, their hopes and their dreams. While life had been very difficult for them in the past, now they were focused on the future. They were women of great dignity and strength and we were very touched by their sharing. We were especially touched when we heard one woman describe her life in the cemetery where many of the people in the village used to live. She described their life as "living above the dead and below the living".

When we told them about our lives they were a little shocked to think that some of our group had experienced some of the same things as them, discrimination and exclusion, rejection and isolation. The fact that a few of us were not able to read and write due to not having access to education in the past was hard for them to believe. They thought all western people would have such things as a matter of course. One woman said her heart opened up and flooded with love when she heard our story. We felt very close to each other.

We visited the women's workshop where they make bags from banana leaves etc. This gives them access to income, so now they don't have to go to the town and beg. It has increased their sense of esteem and given them back their dignity. The women said that they don't want their children to have the same lives as them, they said that they want their children to have an education and have a better future.

We will never forget the experience we had in Ethiopia. It will always be in our minds and in our hearts. It was a different world yet we were the same people. We experienced a very different culture to our own. Although we saw great poverty, we also saw people working to ensure that their children would have a different life. It made us think about how we worry so much about the recession and how we don't seem at all grateful for all that we have.

When we were leaving the women organised a farewell coffee ceremony. At this we sang and danced and laughed and hugged each other and while we said goodbye we carried away more than a few of the bags the women had made, we carried away a very special memory of a very special people.

If you would like to listen to the radio programme about our visit please follow this link.

http://www.rte.ie/radio1/doconone/curious-ear-doconone-travellers-ethiopia.html

Vincentian Lay Missionaries.
Email: info@ vlm.ie
Website: ww.vlm.ie

Marie Cash



'THE TRAILER OF BRIDGET DINNIGAN'



After a two-year period of development, *The Trailer of Bridget Dinnigan* played for four sell-out performances at the Project Arts Centre Dublin on the 16th-19th of June 2010. The play was written by Catherine Joyce and Dylan Tighe in collaboration with 11 women from Blanchardstown Traveller Development Group produced by BTDG in association with Dylan Tighe and the Irish Traveller Movement and funded by the Arts Council of Ireland. The first night of the show was attended by over 150 delegates from the Irish Traveller Movement AGM, receiving a rapturous reception and standing ovation. The four performances were attended by a capacity crowd of 200 people per-night and the audience response was overwhelming. The play was an historic event which was unforgettable to all who attended and participated in the project. The talent and commitment shown by each of the women in the cast was extraordinary – Bridget Dinnigan, Imelda Collins, Winnie Collins, Annmarie McDonnell, Christine Collins, Catherine Kerrigan, Louise Connors, Brigid Collins, Missy Ann Collins, Winnie Keenan and Brigid Collins. Critical responses were also very positive – *The Irish Times* wrote that the performance was "profound" while *The Irish Theatre Magazine* wrote that "the non-professional actors take to the stage with confidence" saying that "In its focus on tensions surrounding social mores, tradition, gender conventions and especially female experience, the piece manages to illuminate real issues affecting Traveller culture [and] legitimates Traveller culture as an important aspect of Irish society whose relevance extends well beyond the Blanchardstown Traveller Development Group and this initiative". The play also featured on RTÉ Radio, The Irish Independent and Phoenix FM. It is hoped that the play can now secure further funding to undertake more performances in the New Year. I would like to thank everyone who contributed to the success of this project, especially BTDG and the Irish Traveller Movement for all their work in making the project happen. Most of all I would like to thank the women involved for their brilliant contribution to making the project such a success and for all their support, ideas, friendship and talent over the last two years.

Dylan Tighe *(Director)*



Photos: Hugh O'Conor.



A DAY OF CELEBRATION

A great day of celebration took place in St. Joseph's Girls Primary School in Finglas West as they finished off a wonderful year with their Green Flag Day. The school was delighted to welcome An Taoiseach Brian Cowan to raise the flag.

The girls and their teachers have been working tirelessly over the past 18 months to reduce Energy consumption in the school and to create awareness in the local community. They were awarded their first green flag two years ago for their efforts in litter and waste management and have now achieved their second green flag for energy. They marked the achievement with a special day. New Irish band Frantic Jack performed in the school hall and Glanmore foods provided some tasty treats for the party.

An Taoiseach congratulated the girls on their wonderful achievement and praised the good and positive atmosphere in the school. He also wished the girls well for the next flag for Water.





The girls and their teachers have been working tirelessly over the past 18 months to reduce Energy consumption in the school and to create awareness in the local community.



The staff , pupils and parents of St Joseph's are also very proud to announce that they have been considered by the Irish Traveller Movement to participate in is the Yellow Flag award for the coming school year. The Yellow flag programme has been set up to mark excellence in a multicultural context. Staff, parents and Board of Management members will undergo anti-racist training and undertake several exciting projects throughout the year. It has a whole school approach and a Diversity Committee made up of pupils, staff parents and local community members will oversee the work for the achievement. We look forward to a very exciting year and the achievement of yet another important flag… the Yellow Flag.

THE T-FACTOR TALENT SHOW

(showcasing Traveller Culture)

South Dublin County Council is showcasing Traveller Culture in once again organising The T-Factor Talent Show, following its great success last year. The Grand Finale will take place in the Civic Theatre Tallaght on 14th November 2010. All proceeds will go the National Children's Hospital, Tallaght.

For further information please contact
Melissa Connors,
Clerical Officer,
Housing Department.
Tel: (01) 414 9000 ext 2786 or
Email: mconnors@sdublincoco.ie
or
Maria Finn, Social Inclusion Officer,
Tel: 086 3803060 or
Email: mfinn@sdublincoco.ie

Tessa Collins elected to the Board of the National Women's Council Ireland (NWCI)



Tessa Collins & Susan McKay, CEO of the NWCI after her election.

Pavee Point's Joint Co-ordinator of the VAW Programme, Tessa Collins, has been elected to the Board of the National Women's Council Ireland (NWCI). Tessa became the first Traveller woman to be elected to the Board of the NWCI with her election in June 2010. We join in wishing her well in her new role.

Dear Reader,

We'd like to get your feedback on ***The Traveller Parish Newsletter***, so..

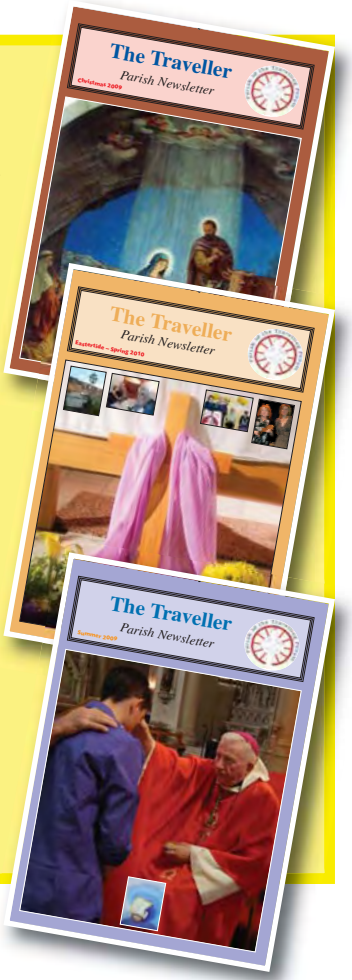
What do you think?

For example..

- Is it making a difference.. to you?.. to others?.. in general?
- Is there anything you'd like to see covered more?.. better?
- Is it interesting?.. informative?.. both or neither?
- Is there anything you think should change?.. or that you don't like?
- Is there anything in particular you like about it?

Your opinions and ideas would be much appreciated and very welcome.
You can contact us at:

Tel: 01 838 8874
Email: info@ptrav.ie
Post: Parish of the Travelling People
St. Laurence House, 6 New Cabra Road, Phibsborough, Dublin 7.



The Child Protection Policy Statement of the Parish of the Travelling People

The Parish values and encourages the participation of children and young people in all Church liturgies and parish activities and all that enhances their spiritual, physical, emotional and social development. It appreciates the generous service of the adults who facilitate such participation and respects their integrity.

The Parish recognises the dignity and rights of all children and young people and is committed to ensuring their safety and well being in a way that promotes their human dignity, integrity and worth as children of God.

The Parish recognises that all who work with children and young people have a special duty of care towards them. Leaders must create a safe environment for children and young people to secure their protection and enable their full participation in the life of the Church.

The Parish recognises the responsibility that each child/young person has to respect the dignity, rights and reputation of all who facilitate their participation in Church liturgies, diocesan events and parish activities.

The Parish has committed itself to putting best practice procedures in place to ensure the welfare and protection of children and young people together with the welfare of those who work with them.

Each child/young person is a gift of God and has a right to dignity of life and bodily integrity, which must be respected, nurtured and protected.

The Parish Child Protection Representative is Mr. Colin Thomson: **087-913 7888.**
The Diocesan Designated Person is Mr. Andrew Fagan: **01-836 0314.**

If you wish to talk to a HSE duty social worker about the safety and/or protection of children or young people:
Local Duty Social Worker HSE: **(01) 836 0314** (Office hours).

Outside of HSE hours, or in the case of an emergency, please contact **(01) 666 8600**, or your local Garda Station.

For access to counselling and support, please contact:
FAOISEAMH: **1800 33 1234** (Monday & Wednesday 11am to 8pm and Friday 11am to 4pm)
The Samaritans: **1850 60 90 90** (anytime).

THE WELFARE OF THE CHILD IS ALWAYS PARAMOUNT



Grand Canal Men's Health Walk

Like many Traveller organisations around the country Clondalkin Travellers Development Group Primary Health Care Team identified a gap in their service provision to Traveller men and this year have piloted a primary health care approach that would identify the health issues and barriers affecting Traveller men's health in Clondalkin and the support structures that are needed to help Traveller men to be more proactive around their health and well being.



Part of this project was to host a Traveller men's health screening day and to organise a men's health walk to raise awareness in the community about men's health issues. The Men's Health Walk was a joint initiative between Clondalkin Travellers Primary Health Care Team and staff team,The Travelling towards Inclusion Project, Parish of the Travelling People and Doreen Carpenter the Active Citizenship Coordinator in Clondalkin Travellers Development Group.

The Men's Health Walk took place on Saturday the 4th of September when a few brave souls braved the wet and windy weather to undertake the ten mile walk from the Dublin Docklands along the canal to Clondalkin and then back to the office for a few well deserved sandwiches. This walk marks the start of many more initiatives to come which aim at breaking down the barriers and raising awareness of a very important issue.




Clondalkin
Travellers
Development
Group
TRAVELLER RIGHTS ARE HUMAN







THE '*OUR GEELS* ALL IRELAND TRAVELLER HEALTH STUDY'



"We've waited 8 long years for this study and I'm delighted that it finally happened and we are getting up to date information on our health today – it's over 23 years since the last studies on our health status were undertaken. I'm delighted to see the pride that Travellers have shown in our culture and identity which is reflected in the study. However some of the findings are frightening and it shows that a lot more work has to be done if Travellers are to live as long as settled people" –

Missy Collins (*Primary Health Care Worker*)

The All Ireland Traveller Health Study findings were launched on the 2nd September 2010 by the Minister of Health and Children, Mary Harney, T.D., in Dublin Castle. This is the first all Ireland comprehensive study of the Health Needs and Health Status of the Traveller community. In a major collaborative effort between Travellers and University College Dublin, a 'social determinants of health' approach was used to ensure that socio-demographic information was also collected in relation to experience and outcomes in health, education, employment, accommodation, and challenges in relation to income and discrimination.



It took 3 years to complete this study. The methodology was innovative in that it used an audio-visual computer programme which facilitated the participation of Travellers with all levels of literacy in the research (using 180 adapted laptop computers).

80 study co-ordinators from Traveller projects were trained by UCD staff. The study coordinators then trained **400 Traveller peer researchers** from over **50 Traveller organisations and Primary Health Care for Traveller projects** around the country.

Because of the engagement of Travellers themselves in conducting the research, the response rate was 80% which is unprecedented for a study of this kind. The Traveller organisations and Primary Heath Care for Traveller projects were fully engaged in the process and they collected the mapping information on the numbers and location of Traveller families around the country, which provide the denominator information for the study.

"The study has created a great interest in Travellers' own health and we need to build on this enthusiasm and not let them down."

Traveller Peer Researcher



Some Key Findings from the 'Our Geels All Ireland Traveller Health Study'

(Republic of Ireland(ROI)/Northern Ireland(NI) /Island of Ireland(IOI))

POPULATION

- **Families** enumerated/mapped: **10,618** (**9,056 in ROI and 1,562 in NI**)
- **Participation rate: 80% –** a phenomenal response rate as a result of the extensive contribution of Travellers, Traveller organisations and networks
- Estimated total **Traveller population: 40,129 on IOI**
- **Average Family Size: 4 in ROI, and 2.5 in NI**

AGE STRUCTURE

- **42% of Travellers aged under 15 yrs** compared with **21% of general population**
- **63% of Travellers aged under 25 yrs** compared with **35% of general population**
- **3% of Travellers are 65 yrs and over** compared with **13% of general population**
- Only **8 Travellers were found over 85 years of age**

LIFE EXPECTANCY

- In 1987 the life expectancy for **Traveller women** was 12 years less than for settled women. **The gap in 2008 is 11 years.**
- In 1987 the life expectancy for **Traveller men** was 10 years less than for settled men. **The gap in 2008 is 15 years.**

MORTALITY/DEATHS

- **Traveller men have four times the mortality rate of the general population**
- **Traveller women have three times the mortality rate** of the general population.
- **Suicide is 6 times the rate of general population** and accounts for approx **11% of all Traveller deaths**
- The **infant mortality rate for Travellers is 3.5 times the rate of the general population (4 infant deaths per 1,000 in the national population** compared to **14 infant deaths per 1,000 in the Traveller population)**



Causes of gap in levels of morbidity and mortality among Travellers

- Both Travellers and health service providers interviewed acknowledged that **Social Determinants** were the main cause of the poor health status of Travellers
- Accommodation, education, employment, poverty, discrimination, lifestyle and access and utilisation of services.

Value of Primary Health Care for Traveller Projects

- **83% of the Travellers** interviewed said they got their health information and advice from Primary Health Care for Traveller Projects and Traveller organisations.

Social Capital as positive Social Determinant

- Importance and pride in Traveller identity and culture
- Very good support within family and community
- Extended family networks
- Strong sense of community
- Empowerment of Traveller women
- A community open to adapting to change
- High level of trust within the Traveller community relative to the settled

Missy Collins, speaking at the launch, called on the Department of Health and the HSE to ensure that money allocated to Travellers' health gets spent in that area of work:

"I'm very frustrated when I hear some of the findings from this Study and I know of the health needs of my people, and that many of us are dying too young. We all need to work together to improve Travellers' situation in Ireland. This study shows that there has been much done in addressing Travellers health but that there is much more to do and that the funding that should be there is made available to address the new issues emerging from the study as well as the important work we have already been doing..

The study clearly shows that health is too important an issue to be left to the medical profession, neither can Traveller Primary health projects be seen as a panacea for addressing all Traveller health needs..

We urgently need a time limited action plan to prioritize the findings of this study. Traveller organizations are ready, willing and able to do our part, and we have already established trust and good working relationships with the HSE; we look forward to working in collaboration with all other stakeholders."

If you want to get additional information, please check out the www.pavee.ie/ourgeels study site on Pavee Point's website, where you will be able to watch a **DVD on the key findings** and **download** the complete study reports.

May these few words of sympathy help ease the grief you bear,
and may it comfort you to know, that others really care.

Recently Deceased

May 2010		
27th	Baby Brigid Collins	Navan
June 2010		
4th	Margaret (Hoy) Maughan	Finglas
18th	Daniel Connors	Maynooth
18th	Margaret O'Donnell	Finglas
30th	Baby Paddy Noel Walsh	Tallaght
July 2010		
6th	Michael James Mongan (age 2 1/2yrs)	Dunsink
13th	Mary (Henny) Connors	Knocklyon
29th	John Maughan	Glasthule
August 2010		
6th	Mary McDonagh	Sandyford
10th	John Maughan	Cabra
11th	John McDonagh (age 14yrs)	Clondalkin
15th	Winnie McDonagh	Donabate
20th	William O'Donnell	Balagaddy
25th	Baby Winifred Katelyn Collins	Cherry Orchard
September 2010		
6th	Michael John Joyce	Dunsink
10th	Brigid Duke	Kells

First Year Anniversary

May 2010		
2nd	James Connors	Tallaght
10th	John Paul Mongan	Newcastle
19th	Conor Conroy	Deansrath
June 2010		
2nd	Baby Sarah McDonagh	Meekstown
7th	Brian Maughan	Moyne Park
9th	Michael (Mick) Connors	Tallaght
10th	Baby Marie Antoinette Maughan	Clones
10th	Jimmy Moorehouse	Shankill
15th	Ann (Dolly) O'Brien	Gorey
17th	Tommy Joyce	Grove Lane
30th	Michael James McDonagh	Navan
July 2010		
12th	Mary O' Rourke	Coolock
August 2010		
14th	Baby Angel McDonnell	Finglas West
27th	Margaret (Bob) McDonagh	Dunsink
September 2010		
24th	Owen Maughan	St. Margaret's, Ballymun

If we have missed out on any Recently Deceased, or First Year Anniversaries please forward them to us and we will add them in our next issue. Also if you would like to send us a photo of your loved one and a poem, we will try to include it in our First Year Anniversary section.

We pray for all those recently deceased.
May they rest in peace.
Amen



St. Anthony's Prayer

St. Anthony, help me find ways to honour God's blessings by showing my love for all of God's creatures. Share your strength that I may cope with the trials and troubles of daily life. You, through whose voice the Word of God was preached, intercede for my need (*mention your special request here*). Powerful Patron, be with me always and teach me to reach out in love and support to others.

Amen.

YOUTH ZONE



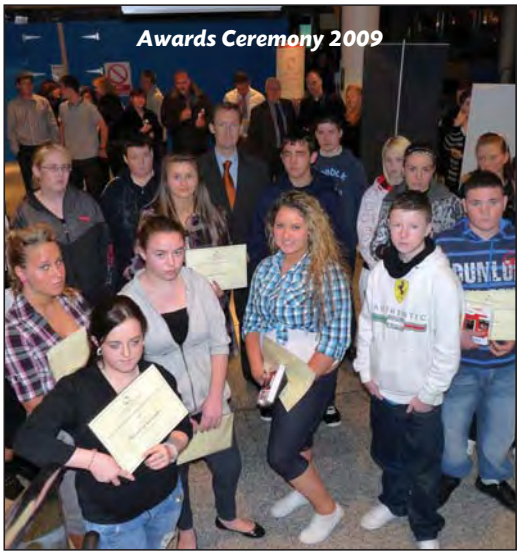
PRAYER FOR STUDENTS

God of Light and Truth, thank you for giving me
a mind that can know and a heart that can love.
Help me to keep learning every day of my life, for all knowledge leads to you.
Let me be aware of your presence in all things and at all times.
Encourage me when work is difficult and when I am tempted to give up;
encourage me when my brain seems slow and the way forward is difficult.
Grant me the grace to put my mind to use exploring the world you have created,
confident that in you there is a wisdom that is real. Amen.





The National Education Achievement Award for Travellers 2010

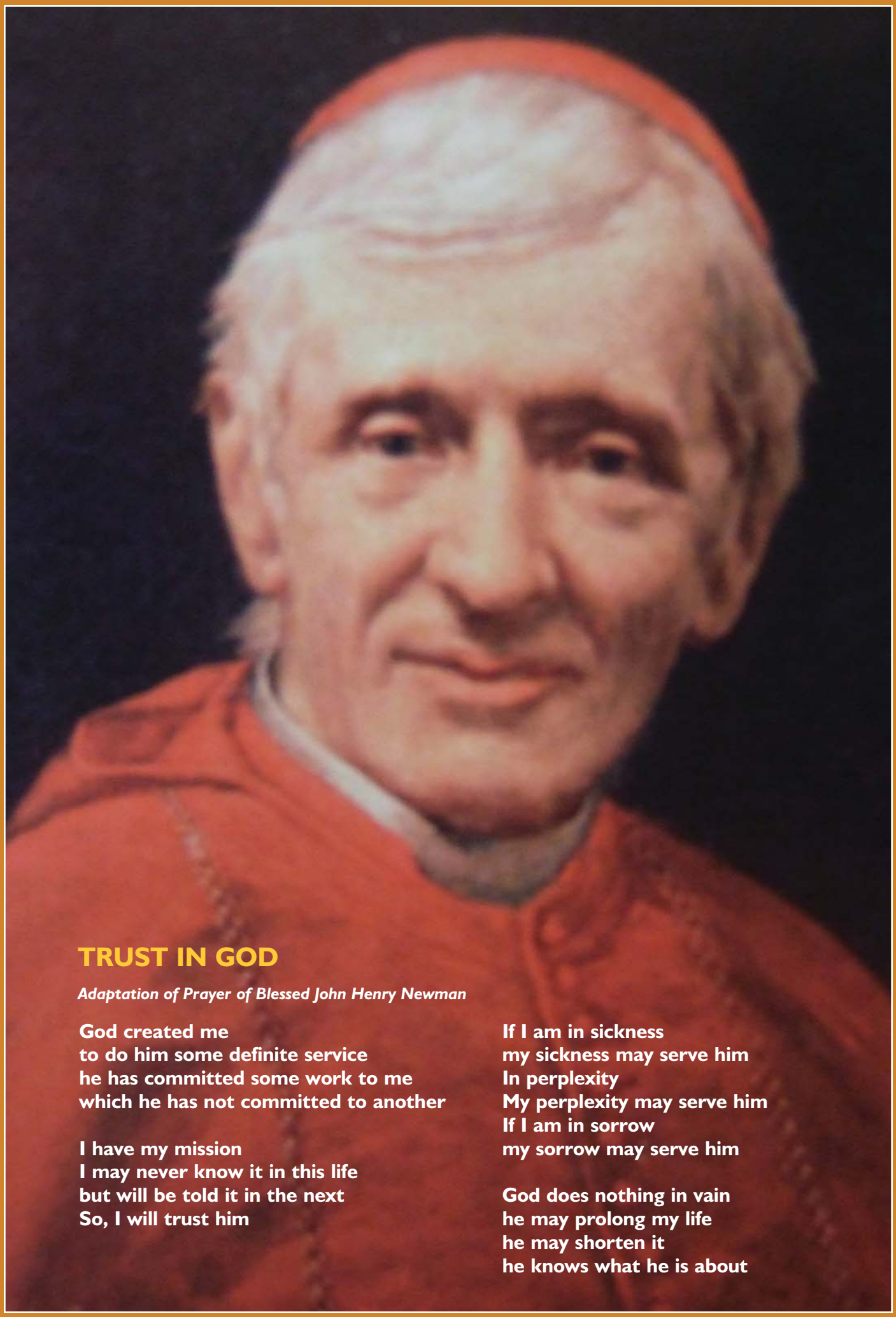


As we went to print, the annual Exchange House National Educational Achievement Award was taking place on 22nd October in the Civic Offices, Wood Quay, officiated by Mr. Barry Andrews TD, Minister of State for Children and Youth Affairs.

The Award is presented to all nominees from the 32 counties who are members of the Traveller community and have completed State exams in 2010. The exam achievements recognised include Junior and Leaving Certificates, GCSE and A-Levels, and this year for the first time, 3rd Level achievements are being honoured also.

Look out for a full report on the 2010 awards in our next edition!





TRUST IN GOD

Adaptation of Prayer of Blessed John Henry Newman

God created me
to do him some definite service
he has committed some work to me
which he has not committed to another

I have my mission
I may never know it in this life
but will be told it in the next
So, I will trust him

If I am in sickness
my sickness may serve him
In perplexity
My perplexity may serve him
If I am in sorrow
my sorrow may serve him

God does nothing in vain
he may prolong my life
he may shorten it
he knows what he is about

The Traveller Parish Newsletter is published by The Parish of the Travelling People, St. Laurence House, 6 New Cabra Road, Phibsborough, Dublin 7.
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