

CREATING COMMUNITY



CELEBRATING DIVERSITY

May, 2009

# Newsletter No 19



Clergy Enjoying Fellowship after the Unity Service

*Anne writes:* This year's service for the week of prayer for Christian unity was prepared by the churches in Korea who chose Ezekiel 37.15-28 to build on. The introduction told us Ezekiel's 'pain of division was palpable. But amidst his overwhelming grief over the plight of his nation, he received a vision of a future where God's people were united once more.'

To the Fermanagh service in St Macartin's Cathedral, Enniskillen there was a warm welcome as we entered the beautiful Cathedral. The Rev. Brian Courtney welcomed all to the service and thanked those who prepared and organised it. The service was beautifully inspiring, with voices raised in the songs of worship, encouraged by the dulcet tones of the choir and the display of words high on the screens in front of us.

Very Rev Raymond Thompson, Dean of Clogher, addressed us after the reading of the story of the Good Shepherd in John 10, 14-16. He told his own ecumenical journey and how his student enthusiasm dampened down over some years. But a sad personal event in his ministry some years ago helped him to see the ecumenical journey in a very different light. He found that Christian unity can happen in Christian communities wishing to celebrate, share, console and support each other in the tragedies and joys of life.

He distinguished between the ecumenical movement to bring Churches together and the unity of Christian communities working together. He reminded us of Jesus' last prayer when he prayed that his disciples would be one and urged us to pray this too. 'We each have a responsibility to pray and work for Church unity. To believe in God's creation is to see a universe tingling with difference. Freedom without order is chaos but within the difference of creation there is an astonishing order which unites.'

We looked out from ourselves and glimpsed the suffering in another country. We were led into a tragic reality by the prayers of the service:

*"We live in a broken world, where countries are divided,*

*Where tribe is at war with tribe, where the rich oppress the poor*

*And the poor fight each other for crumbs,*

*And even the Body of Christ is broken, Christian against Christian.*

*We are frustrated in brokenness."*

Dean Thompson's words challenged us: 'Obedience to the word of God is essential to Christian Unity'.

£378 was given in a collection for Christian Aid and Trócaire. After the blessing we were treated to tasty light refreshments.

## Lough Derg Service



### Rev. Ken Newell at Lough Derg

*John writes:* Rev. Ken Newell, past moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, was the speaker at the Ash Wednesday service in the basilica at Lough Derg this year, when several members of FCF were among the very large congregation and took part.

Coming from a tradition that does not celebrate Ash Wednesday, Ken had explored the spiritual understanding of the date and learned from his friend, Father Reynolds that the symbolism says “All we do is ashes if we have no love of Christ in our hearts.” Ken shared his personal story of coming to Christ through reading the gospels, when aiming to refute religion as a young man. He told us how his experience of the friendship he developed with Catholic clergy in Indonesia had helped him to be open to living an inclusive lifestyle on his return to Belfast.

A series of Lough Derg talks in the Autumn will include talks by Rev. Desi Maxwell (Belfast Bible College), C of I Bishop Ken Clarke and Fr. Paul Symonds, and Rev. Ken Newell and Fr. Gerry Reynolds. Information can be obtained from Lough Derg, Pettigo, Co. Donegal. Tel +353 71 9861518 E-mail: [info@loughderg.org](mailto:info@loughderg.org)

## Lenten Reflections



### Enjoying friendship before a Lenten Reflection

*Eileen writes:* One of the most encouraging and uplifting strands of FCF's programme this spring was the Lenten lunchtime scripture reflections on four Wednesdays in Lent, hosted by the larger churches in Enniskillen. Each Wednesday between 30 and 40 people took time, some from very busy schedules, to reflect on passages from scripture, pray and share friendship and fellowship. A light lunch was provided by the host church and donations were given to Trócaire and Concern, in all £270 being raised for these charities. A significant aspect of these reflections was the richness of the spiritual nourishment shared. Scriptural reflection is an invitation to listen deeply to God's Word, to make connections between it and our lives, and to

share insights about how God is calling us to respond. The first reflection in the Presbyterian Guildhall was led by Kate Doherty, and that in St. Michaels Parish Centre by Liz Sheridan and Thomas Maguire. In St. Macartin's Cathedral Hall Barbara Rivers and Jim Kerr led and in the Methodist Hall Ronnie Brown. Participants were encouraged that clergy from the churches also took time out to be present. At the start of Lent the opening reflection, very appropriately, was on Jesus' temptations in the desert. Through respectful listening and prayerful engagement those present explored the concept of temptation in a modern context and personal lives today. Later the Beatitudes provided a rich mine for exploring counter-cultural values. Peter's profession of Faith inspired a reflection on the nature of our faith. A scriptural experience of exile as punishment prompted further reflection on similarities today. It is hoped that Lenten reflection will be part of FCF's programme each year.

## For Your Diary

**Faith & Friendship** meet in **Lisnaskea** in the Enterprise Centre on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> May, at 8 p.m. and in **Enniskillen** in St Macartin's halls on Monday, 18<sup>th</sup> May, at 8 p.m.

On Saturday, 27<sup>th</sup> June the annual joint meeting of **all Faith and Friendship groups in Northern Ireland** will be held from 2 p.m. in St Macartin's Halls, led by Rev. Ruth Paterson. All are welcome.

### **Dublin inter-faith visit:**

Saturday, 23<sup>rd</sup> May, coach leaves from the Round O in Enniskillen at 7.45 a.m., to arrive at the Islamic Centre, Clonskeagh, Dublin for a guided tour of the Mosque. A stop for lunch at Ashton's Bistro will follow; then proceed to Saint Patrick's C of I Cathedral for a short guided tour. There will be some free time before departing from Dublin to reach Enniskillen at approximately 8 p.m. Places for this trip are still available. For full details contact Barbara Rivers. The charge will be £15.

### **Pentecost Service:**

Sunday, 31<sup>st</sup> May at 3 p.m. in Errigal Truagh Old Graveyard. Take the N2 (main Derry to Dublin road) from Aughnacloy towards Emyvale. Turn right for Errigal Truagh, Clara, Derrygorry Forest (brown signpost) about one and a half miles south of the border.

### **Walking Round Churches in Tempo:**

Sunday, 28<sup>th</sup> June, starting at 3 p.m. at the Methodist church. On the Enniskillen to Tempo road, after the road right to Lisbellaw & before the Maguiresbridge road, turn left. The Methodist church is immediately after a house being built on the corner. From there we shall drive to park at the Church of Ireland car parks, but walk to the Catholic church, then Presbyterian, and Church of Ireland, with tea in their hall to end.

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