

CREATING COMMUNITY



CELEBRATING DIVERSITY

September, 2013

Newsletter No 32

Pentecost service in Irvinestown and Castle Archdale



Father Michael McGourty leading at one of the sculpture sites in the Garden of Celtic Saints

Eileen writes: FCF members participated in the annual Pentecost service, held on the afternoon of Sunday, 19th May. It was led, as is the custom, by both bishops of Clogher. This year it took place in the Garden of Celtic Saints, within the grounds of Sacred Heart Church in Irvinestown, and later in St Patrick's Parish Church, Castle Archdale. The Garden is a place of prayer and reflection that recalls the saints of the golden age of the Irish church, filled with beautiful sculptures carved from native Irish oak by Jonas Raikas, a native of Lithuania, between 2007 and 2011.

Bishop MacDaid led the opening prayers and Bishop McDowell reflected on the role of the Holy Spirit in the churches. During the service young people from the area led prayers and the Irvinestown Community Choir led singing. At St. Patrick's Church Castle Archdale Rev Glenn West gave a talk on the history and architecture of the church and Celtic heritage in the area. After the service, those attending enjoyed fellowship and refreshments at St. Patrick's.



A child leads prayer



Bishop McDowell, Jonas Raikas, Father McGourty & Bishop MacDaid at the cross



Rev. West

Faith and Friendship gathering in Enniskillen



Anne Gibson and Rev. Ruth Patterson leading the joint gathering of Faith and Friendship Groups

John writes: There was a most encouraging turnout of Faith and Friendship groups from across Northern Ireland on Saturday, 22nd June. The longer established groups from Belfast, Enniskillen, Lisnaskea and Omagh were all present and the relatively new group from Irvinestown and fledgling group from Moira were also represented. We gathered in St Michael's Parish Centre in Enniskillen and were led in our meeting by Anne Gibson from Lisnaskea and Rev. Ruth Patterson, who guided us through her June reflections on the beatitudes and stimulated us to share many different insights. We also shared in a brief act of remembrance of Ann Mulhern, a key person in the Omagh group whose death was such a sad blow to them and us all. Despite this sadness, we were all able to enjoy our sharing, friendship and fellowship together. We look forward to further monthly separate gatherings from September and our planned joint meeting next summer.

CONNECT Conference

Eileen writes: FCF representatives were among about 70 people from 15 inter-church groups from across Northern Ireland discussing the role of churches at a conference on "Churches in Exile: What Now, 15 years after the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement?" during Community Relations Week. This conference was held in the Skainos Centre, Belfast, on Wednesday, 22 May. It was one of almost 200 events taking place across Northern Ireland that week, co-ordinated by the Community Relations Council, with the theme "Expressing Identity – Addressing Division." The conference was part of an ongoing programme by CONNECT, which represents Church Fora and inter-church groups, and was organised by the Irish School of Ecumenics. Keynote speakers were Drs Cathy Higgins and Johnston McMaster from ISE's Education for Reconciliation programme and it concluded with the launch of Cathy Higgins' book "Churches in exile – alternative models for the Church in Ireland in the 21st century."

Fermanagh Churches Forum plans for this autumn

Please start by supporting the churches in Irvinestown on Sunday, 15th September!

Walk round the Irvinestown churches, starting at 2.30 p.m. on 15th September in Sacred Heart church. From there we shall walk to Derryvullen North Parish church, then Irvinestown Methodist and Presbyterian churches, finally returning for refreshments to Derryvullen North Parish.

Faith and Friendship:

Enniskillen: Meet from 12.30 to 2 p.m. on Wednesday, 18th September, in the new Presbyterian church halls. Please bring your own sandwiches, but tea/coffee will be provided.

Irvinestown: Meet at 8.00 p.m. on Tuesday, 17th September, in Mahon's Hotel.

Lisnaskea: Meet at 8.00 p.m. on Tuesday, 24th September, in the Presbyterian church.

FCF visit to Derry:

Leave the Ardhowen car park at 8.30 a.m. on Friday, 11th October to travel by coach for a guided tour of many interesting sites in Derry, and visit the City Mission with talks on their work and that of the Derry Peace and Reconciliation Group. The return will be by about 6 p.m. Refreshments and lunch will be provided. There will be a nominal charge of £10 per person for the trip, and places on the coach need to be booked ahead through Tanya Jones, FCF secretary and contact person (see below), who can also give you more details of the programme.