

Towards a Spirituality of Social Concern

By Bernadette Flanagan

Society is not a mechanism, an assembly of various sections. And it is not because the mechanism is working wrongly, that society is ill.

It is ill because of wounds to the soul, to the deep emotional self. And wounds to the soul take a long, long time, to heal. Only time can help and patience, and a certain difficult repentance,

Long difficult repentance, a realization of life's mistake. And the freeing of the self from the endless repetition of the mistake,

Which religion at large has chosen to sanctify.

Adapted from 'Healing' by D. H. Lawrence

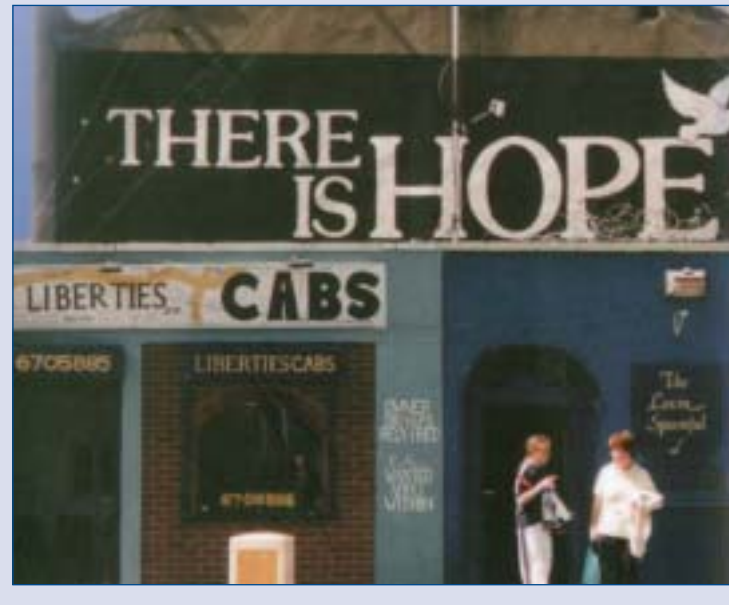
Why does so much injustice persist in our world? Who is responsible for creating the sickness of injustice, and how can it be remedied? What needs healing? Is it realistic to dream of a society where each one experiences joy and fulfillment, where each one is nourished in body, mind, soul, and spirit, where the Reign of God is tangible? What does it require of us?

DH Lawrence's poem entitled 'Healing' opens up a new vista for future trends in socially-engaged spirituality. We have, it suggests, become accustomed to addressing issues of injustice in a mechanistic fashion. 'I am for the abolition of international debt', 'I am for the elimination of discrimination against women', 'I am for making peace, not war' we chant in our rallies and marches. Do we throw ourselves into relentless activism and campaigning because we have lost our capacity to imagine another way?

... the work of connecting spirituality, social transformation and education is only just beginning

And yet we must face the futility of the ways that have been tried for so long. Eight years after the final bastions of the apartheid regime in Pretoria were formally dismantled, South African President Thabo Mbeki warned of the spectre of another "global apartheid" looming over the earth as the most concerted effort yet by world leaders to place the planet on a sustainable path for the future got underway in Johannesburg.

Addressing the opening session of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Aug/Sept 2002), Mbeki detailed "tragic" but avoidable indices of the increase



in human misery, the continuing ecological degradation and the growth of the gap between North and South. "It is as though we are determined to regress to the most primitive of conditions of existence in the animal world, of the survival of the fittest".

Mbeki echoes a view that goes back as far as Aristotle whereby the human being has been defined as a rational animal. The products of that reason are democracy, charters of rights, social analysis, declarations of ethical action, and much logical argument. But these are failing to move the soul of humanity to compassion. Developing a new spirituality of social concern must take account of the alienation from a creation mysticism by uncritical immersion in rapid urban expansion, and alienation from mystery by reductionist scientific thinking.

I concur with the view expressed by Philip Wexler in his book *Mystical Society: An Emerging Social Vision* (2001) that the work of connecting spirituality, social transformation and education is only just beginning. Behind this challenge is a paradigm shift in the understanding of success and the achievement of targets. Danah Zohar tells a story in her book *Spiritual Intelligence* (282-283) that illustrates how much of what drives the current economic model of development originates from a misplaced understanding of progress:

The American businessman was at the pier of a small coastal Mexican village when a small boat with just one fisherman docked. Inside the small boat were several large yellow fin tuna. The American complimented the Mexican on the quality of his fish and asked how long it took to catch them.

The Mexican replied only a little while. The American then asked why didn't he stay out longer and catch more fish? The Mexican said he had enough to support his family's immediate needs. The American then asked, but what do you do with the rest of your time?

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'New Learning Spaces' to Target Educational Disadvantage



Growing in learning at Ballygriffin Organic Farm, see page 3

The Presentation Centre is calling for an integrated approach to tackle educational disadvantage with the creation of a new type of integrated learning space as a radical response to the problem.

"We need to consider the untapped potential that is present in many of the existing learning spaces. Has the full potential of the school for instance, been recognised? It is arguably the most significant of all learning spaces, particularly at the beginning of the lifelong learning journey. The wider community is another significant learning space where much more could be happening, not least of these a multi-agency approach to tackling the problems associated with educational disadvantage. In that regard, it is the space wherein a wealth of human and professional expertise could co-exist.

"The potential to eliminate, educational disadvantage is within our grasp. It exists in people and it exists in a variety of places. The overall challenge is to reconfigure the existing resources, network all of the people involved (those who target and those who are targeted) and create, through this type of integration, the cohesive and holistic response that could seriously tackle the problem of educational disadvantage", said Aileen Walsh, researcher with the Presentation Centre.

In a policy paper to be published later this year, the Presentation Centre argues that the current education system continues to fail a significant number of people. New approaches to education and new ways of thinking about learning are required. It stresses that the fundamental basis of change must be a placing of the person at the centre of the learning process. The person is multi-dimensional and thus has multi-dimensional needs. A one-size fits all approach will not succeed in addressing educational disadvantage.

"The unequal distribution of educational benefits is an unacceptable outcome of a system that purports to be for everyone", stated Aileen Walsh. "Statistical and other evidence testifies to the fact that educational disadvantage persists. A fundamental cause is the unequal distribution of the outcomes of education. Whilst the majority of people engage with what the system offers and benefits accordingly, a significant minority persistently fails to benefit in an equal way.

The related issue, as highlighted by many commentators, is the paradoxical power of education. By empowering those who benefit from its processes, the education system dis-empowers those who do not. For instance, relative to people with educational qualifications those without them are disadvantaged in terms of their life chances", said Ms Walsh.

The paper argues that the philosophical rationale that underpins the system must incorporate explicit thinking in relation to educational disadvantage. The thinking process needs to be an inclusive one that involves those who are disadvantaged rather than one that is simply about them. Their voices and the voices of their advocates need to be taken seriously and placed central to any debate about educational reform. In the interest of education in general and, the eradication of educational disadvantage in particular, there needs to be serious thinking about the fundamental purposes of education. An unequivocal purpose must be to ensure that what the education system offers, benefits everyone in an equal way, relative to their abilities.

The policy paper is influenced by the work of Paolo Freire. "Essentially, educational power needs to be transformed in the manner advocated by educationalist Paolo Freire. In this ideology education's power is emancipation from disadvantage and its negative effects. Creating the

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From the Chair

By Nano Brennan

As I reflect on my involvement as Chairperson of the Presentation Policy Centre over the last few months, a few lines of T.S Eliot's Four Quartets come to mind:

We will not cease our exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.
Little Gidding, 5.

Exploration has indeed been ceaseless in our Congregation. It has been particularly urgent over the last few years due to the momentum of change globally, nationally and in religious life. This urgency comes from the question: how can the passion at the heart of our Congregation for justice and peace which are central to God's Kingdom (Lk.4: 18-19), continue to live and be nurtured at a time:

- When unjust policies and structures often negate the impact of local ministries with and for people who are disadvantaged;
- When our Congregation still has personnel, influence, resources and credibility but is limited in its capacity to contribute to policy and structural change.

The Presentation Centre for Policy and Systemic Change has come about through reflection on our mission and work in Ireland in this troubled time of its history. This is a call to working for 'justice, liberation and social transformation' through a 'collaborative process', as stated in our constitutions. The Centre provides us with additional personnel, capacity and skill to invigorate our traditional ministries: education, justice promotion, and pastoral and community development. Nano Nagle expressed her passion for God's Kingdom on earth in the most appropriate way for her time through her 'little schools'. She needed others to help implement her vision. Our complex time needs other expressions. The Policy Centre has begun and will continue to help us find these expressions and put them in place. The pilot projects, for example, are already charting possibilities for innovative initiatives and approaches, which build on old and precious foundations. The first edition of Centrepoint gave us a brief glimpse of these initiatives and approaches e.g. a 'learning neighbourhood', 'intergenerational learning', learning through 'multiple intelligences', through story-telling, through awareness of the environment, education in lobbying and advocacy to bring about change in a local situation.

The close relationship between existing Presentation ministries and the Centre is exemplified in the recent

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actions and arrangements to facilitate this emancipatory capacity of education becomes the challenge", said Ms Walsh.

An overall conclusion in the policy paper is that the arrangements for learning need to be broadened out from current limiting and restrictive mindsets and boundaries. Learning essentially occurs on a lifelong and lifewide basis – all people learn all the time, about all kinds of things, in all kinds of ways and in all kinds of places. This innate pure desire to learn, that is an essential part of being human, needs

submission to the Government Committee on Educational Disadvantage. The Centre based its submission on 'a long and wide ranging involvement of Presentation Sisters in Traveller Education' in Ireland. However, it adds value to that involvement by developing policy recommendations and submitting them to a national policy forum. I congratulate the staff of the Centre on this excellent piece of work.

I am extremely pleased to be working with two groups who bring commitment, energy and skill to the work of the Centre: the staff of the Centre (David, Marie, Aileen, Anne, Ann Marie and Imelda) and the Management Committee (Joan, Regina, Trinita and David). I also wish to express my admiration for the far-seeing vision and practical courage of the three former Provincial Leadership Teams and of Sr Teresa McCormack. In particular, I would like to thank Sr Pius McHugh and the outgoing committee who steered the Centre since its inception and nurtured it to its current vibrant state. I am extremely confident that the Centre will continue to grow strong due to the unambiguous and practical recognition of the present Leadership Teams that the work of the Centre is integral to Presentation life and ministry in Ireland.

We were very pleased with the co-operation and assistance of so many of our sisters and colleagues in developing the submission on Traveller education. We were also pleased and surprised at the number of e-mails and cards we received from around the world commending our first edition of Centrepoint. Our hope is that Centrepoint will become a resource for communities and group reflections on the 'Word who is life' (1 Jn1:1) so that we are strong enough to give future generations reasons for living and hoping, (Gaudium et Spes, 31).

Nano Brennan PBVM is chairperson of the Presentation Centre

Your Say

Let us know what you think.
We welcome your views on
this newsletter.
Write to:

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to be recognised and capitalised on. In the context of educational and social disadvantage, this human capacity needs to be targeted and catered for in a way that people will seek and gain the type of learning that will enable them to liberate themselves from their disadvantaged state.

The forthcoming paper will make a proposal for a pilot model of an integrated learning centre. It is made in the belief that, for those whom current educational arrangements are failing, need and deserve more than the education system offers.

Widening Learning Experiences in Churchfield, Cork

By Renee Breslin



Down on the farm - young participants in pilot learning initiative

The setting in which our pilot scheme happens is the Family Centre in Churchfield, Cork. The pilot aims to broaden the learning experiences of parents and children through exposure to new environments. The Family Centre was opened in 1974 as a Montessori Preschool. At present, eighty children attend the preschool. Other services for children include; a crèche and parent and toddler groups and a homework club. Over a hundred local adults attend courses weekly at the Centre, so we had ready access to participants for the pilot.

The homework club began in 1997 in response to local needs. Funding was sourced initially through Cork City Partnership. At present over sixty children are enrolled and attend four days a week. From the beginning the coordinator of the club visited the families one day a week. She has built up very good relationships with the parents over seven years. Through these contacts and in conversation with other parents we became aware that:

- Life experiences for many of the parents and children can be limited;
- Parents would welcome a chance to get away overnight and have time apart for themselves. A need for some kind of spiritual input and time for reflection on life was voiced.
- Parents had never visited the places of local interest to which children were being brought on school trip so when children came home there was no awareness of what their experience had been.
- Many of the parents were early school leavers and while they want the best for their children they often lacked the skills necessary to involve their children in educational pursuits and there were few books or educational toys in the homes.
- Parents voiced concerns about their lack of confidence when dealing with matters educational.

The pilot aimed to provide wider educational experiences for children and parents so that their lives together would be broadened and enriched. To achieve this aim parents were invited to come as helpers in the homework club. There was an initial meeting to allay fears and to reassure them. Four parents got involved initially. This

year there are fourteen who have signaled their involvement.

Contact was made with Sr. Mary Kelliher in the Nano Nagle Centre in Ballygriffin, which has a small organic farm. We initially worked out a programme of visits for the children. The junior group of five and six year-olds went one day and the 7 -11 year olds the following day. During these visits they have seen cows, calves and sheep at close range; fed the chickens, gathered eggs and put them in cartons; planted pumpkin seeds in April last year, saw them growing in September, brought them back to the Centre in October and each family got one for Hallowe'en. They have seen potatoes growing and being dug out, picked strawberries in the greenhouse and had numerous linked experiences. At the June visit they heard the story of Creation and were involved in the telling. We are now in the process of painting the creation story on the walls of our play area.

At the October visit they planted bulbs and are now waiting for the Spring flowers. There was one very special moment when they spied an earthworm. Mary took it up and several children held it with great care before finally returning it to the earth.

A group of parents went to Ballygriffin overnight on two occasions. They had heard all about it from the children and now it was their turn to see the animals, feed the chickens, see the pumpkins growing and visit the greenhouse. During each visit we had some quiet time for reflection and relaxation. A short prayer service using lights focussed their needs and hopes for themselves their families and friends. Over the two days the group shared a lot, relaxed, laughed and generally enjoyed themselves. Before leaving they were planning the next visit. On each occasion we had expected a bigger group but for various family reasons we had only five each time. On talking with the parents we realised that many more were interested if we could go during school time so the next time another five went from 9.30 am - 2.30pm. Being near Christmas the group was small but we were aware again of the need for space for the parents. This visit was quite informal but the general verdict was that it was very relaxing and that three of the group would be on the overnight visit next time.

We plan in the coming year to have art sessions and story telling sessions with both parents and children. We did one art session at a local Art Centre with five parents and ten children on the theme of feelings. Some parents were a bit inhibited at first but they enjoyed it and will go again.

Overall, we feel, the pilot is achieving its aim of exposure to new learning experiences.

Renee Breslin PBVM is manager of the Before Five Family Centre.

Local Learning Networks

By Liam Kilbride



My involvement in the establishment of local learning networks grew out of a realisation that in many communities various agencies – including schools – are working hard to meet the needs of their target groups. Unfortunately, much of this work, and many worthwhile initiatives,

are running parallel to one another, with obvious implications in relation to duplication. The merits of a collaborative, cooperative sharing approach are obvious.

Of course, the notion of an integrated approach at community level is not new. Illich, writing in 1973, called for the throwing up of the traces completely and the replacement of schools with "convivial networks" of learning in the community (Illich 1973). In equally radical – though not quite as subversive – terms, Freire advocated education for liberation and transformation.

Why networks?

When one speaks of education provision in a town one immediately thinks of primary and post-primary schools. This, however, is only a small part of the picture. Schools do not operate in a vacuum, nor do they hold a monopoly on knowledge and learning. Many factors outside school impinge on the learning process and on the development of well-rounded young adults.

In order to optimise the life chances of the young people in our schools the forging of mutually beneficial and collaborative contacts between home, school and community is a strategy which must be adopted. The Department of Education and Science alludes to the benefits to be gained from such a collaborative effort in a circular on Home-School-Community Liaison in 1999: *Networking with and promoting the coordination of the work of voluntary and statutory agencies increases effectiveness and obviates duplication.*

Likewise, schools play a key role in the development of young people, academically and socially. This is not always acknowledged. The harnessing of the complementary skills and resources of all stakeholders is central to any area-based, integrated initiative. A CORI discussion paper, co-authored by Sr. Teresa McCormack and researcher Dr. Peter Archer flagged that: *The task of transforming children into competent, responsible adults is no longer capable of being executed by schools and family alone.*

To view education as the sole preserve of schools is too narrow and stifling. One must approach learning from a lifelong and lifewide perspective. Much learning takes place in the community and many community-based initiatives complement and support the work of schools. It was with this thought in mind that I approached the setting up of the first local learning network in Carrick-on-Suir.



The Carrick-on-Suir Education Network

In conversation with various key personnel in Carrick-on-Suir, it soon became apparent that while many agencies worked hard there was not enough communication, interaction or sharing. Much of the effort at formal and non-formal level was not valued nor named. The vision, which I placed before me in relation to Carrick-on-Suir, was the promotion and embracing of:

- An awareness of education in its broadest, most inclusive, sense
- An awareness of education as a vehicle of social transformation
- The concept of intergenerational learning
- An integrated local delivery of services
- An atmosphere of openness, sharing and respectful relationships

All stakeholders in education, formal and non-formal, as well as representatives of agencies, whose work complemented or impinged on education in its broadest sense, were invited to an initial meeting. The hoped-for outcomes of this meeting were outlined as follows:

- To establish efficient networking arrangements
- To facilitate the open sharing of ideas, good practice and resources
- To identify unmet needs/gaps in provision (especially needs in common)
- To prioritise those needs and to explore ways of addressing them together.

The merits of an integrated approach were emphasised and discussed. It was stressed that the presence of such a network would not mean that members would work harder but

rather work more efficiently. Responses to identified needs would be streamlined and dovetailed. The approach was to be wide-ranging and inclusive – embracing adult education, lifelong learning, formal schooling, capacity-building programmes, support programmes, work with early school leavers, lone parents and other agencies. Links to be forged were both vertical – from cradle to grave, and horizontal – embracing the formal and non-formal sectors. The model to be adopted was that of the *jig-saw of provision*:

- The chance to get an overview of the whole picture
- What piece can I offer?
- What piece can someone offer me?
- The missing pieces – gaps in provision

The task of transforming children into competent, responsible adults is no longer capable of being executed by schools and family alone.

- Pieces we both need – needs in common
- Working to put the pieces together – matching of services to needs.

Relationship-building and the networking, which follows on from it, are at the core of the learning network. Adler and Gardner make the point that *it is people, and not organisations, who link* (Adler and Gardner 1994). In a word, true linking can only take place when you know and respect your colleague as a person.

At meetings of the group, networking takes place at two levels. During the formal part of the meeting networking takes place at a plenary and whole-meeting context as group members discuss various issues from their own particular perspective. In the less formal part of the meeting (before, after and during coffee) a bilateral, and sometimes trilateral, form of networking takes place as members seek out others to engage with them on tasks and arrangements which are mutually beneficial.

The Process/Task Dilemma

While the process of trust-building, relationship-building and information-sharing acted as a gelling agent for the network it was felt that manageable and 'do-able' tasks should be tackled. This, it was felt, would allow the group to experience success in small tasks and this, in turn, would raise the energy of the group. Typical tasks undertaken include the compilation of a

directory of local skills, the setting up of a student mothers group, preparation of submissions on childcare, home-school-community liaison and an integrated educational support network.

Building on the Model - Other Local Learning Networks

Other networks have been initiated on the lines of the Carrick-on-Suir model. The network in *Thurles* has been running since February 2003. The inaugural meeting of a network in *Tipperary town* has taken place at which the concept of networking was discussed and needs where identified.

In Conclusion

The members of any community bring with them a wealth of expertise, gifts, hopes, aspirations and prejudices. The challenge in setting up a network is to harness, marry, blend and reconcile all of the above attributes around a shared sense of purpose. The underpinning vision must be to create and nurture a mutually supportive climate of collaborative collegiality. One must not view the final outcome as something fixed and static. Rather the enrichment and fulfilment of all involved is to be found in the process itself, which by its very nature is ever-changing and dynamic.

Liam Kilbride is the Presentation education development officer for South East region.

International Assembly strengthens the work for global justice

By Joan O'Reilly

The fourth Assembly of the International Presentation Association met in Coolangatta, Queensland, Australia. Seventy five representatives of sisters from over 20 countries throughout the world came together to consider 'A New Dreaming – Seeking Wholeness of Creation'.



Logo of the Assembly combines Irish and Aboriginal designs

It is the mission of the International Presentation Association to channel resources so that Presentation women speak and act in partnership with others for global justice. A part of its direction is to strengthen and use its worldwide network so as to work for structural change especially on issues related to:

- Women & Children
- Indigenous peoples
- Environment and sustainable living
- Human rights

The meeting created the opportunity for the leadership and those responsible as contacts for issues of justice, in each of the areas of the world, to connect with one another and to develop strategies for greater cooperation. Practical recommendations were developed in relation to the research and compilation of position papers on issues related to the direction of the Association. It is hoped that by this means a strong and focused approach will assist the work of advocacy at the United Nations and in other fora, particularly peoples movements, in both the two thirds world and the one third world.



The effectiveness of the Association's Non-Governmental Organisation status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations will be further developed with the taking up of internship positions to assist the fulltime Presentation representative.

An international renewal team will explore intercultural sharing in relation to spirituality, immersion experiences and theological reflection. This will ground the work of justice in the spirit of Nano Nagle and the reality of those made poor. It will call the members of the Association, both lay and religious, to bring forth a sustainable society founded on respect for earth, universal human rights, economic justice and a culture of peace.

Joan O'Reilly PBN is a member of the Presentation Centre's management committee



Working for Social Transformation



Good Practice in Traveller Education

A call for greater recognition of Traveller culture and increased integration of Traveller children and parents within the education system is made by the Presentation Centre for Policy and Systemic Change.

In a submission to the Educational Disadvantage Committee to assist development of a Traveller Education Strategy; the Centre also calls for increased parental involvement in Traveller children's education; and investment in adult and community education for Travellers.

The Presentation Sisters have a long and wide ranging involvement in Traveller Education in the primary, secondary and community sectors across the country.

Traveller organisations, including Traveller women's and men's groups and individuals with experience of working with Travellers were asked about good practice. Twenty-six individuals and groups were contacted with twenty-three replies received.

The submission also draws on a survey to key Presentation schools and community based initiatives that have developed good practice in Traveller Education. Thirty Presentation primary and secondary schools were asked to respond to a questionnaire, with twenty-one replies received.

The submission connects the anecdotal evidence from the survey with some wider policy issues in attempting to frame

recommendations to assist the Traveller Education Strategy. The recommendations come under four main strategies:

- Integration of Traveller Education within the Education System;
- Greater Recognition of Traveller Culture with the Education System;
- Increased Parental Involvement in Children's Education;
- Investment in Adult and Community Education for Travellers.

We are indebted to the Travellers who took part in our survey and to the Traveller organisations that provided expert opinion. We thank the schools and centres that returned completed questionnaires. We hope the submission will be of some assistance in developing the Traveller Education Strategy.

Copies of the submission are available tel: 01 4927097 or email presirl@iol.ie

By David Rose, director of the Presentation Centre.

Good Practice in Traveller Education

Here is a flavour of what was said in the survey:

On a Vision for Education

Travellers taking their place in all levels of public life.....protected by their education from the type of laws and practices that now oppress them, in relation to accommodation, social life and prejudice..... Travellers (living) as respected members of society, honoured for their family values, language and way of life in a multi-cultural society..... (Travellers) enabled to look within their own society to develop its strengths and confront its weak points. (A Presentation Sister).

On Integration

Traveller children should be treated in every way with other children... (Traveller men's group)

Traveller children should learn all primary subjects... do not separate Travellers from 'settled'. (Traveller women's group)

In our school Traveller children tend to be very practical and dependable, which is a good example to others. Traveller children are very kind and caring and have a great interest in relations, which the other children pick up on. (Primary school principal)

On parental involvement

...a positive factor is the ability of younger Traveller parents... to help their children with schoolwork and homework. (Primary school principal)

Parents have no difficulty or inhibition in coming to the school to investigate entitlements, subject choices, available programmes and parent/teacher meetings. They have expectations of behaviour and will take immediate action if their daughters are reported for misconduct. Their daughters are usually the models of decorum and respect. (Secondary school principal)

New Appointments at Presentation Centre



Anne Coffey

Anne Coffey

Anne Coffey PBVM is programme leader for social inclusion. Anne has been involved with the Presentation Centre as a founding member of the management committee and has been closely involved in the development of the strategic plan. "I believe in the strategic plan, Towards A New and Radical Agenda, and am willing to be involved in its implementation. It is radical in the sense of addressing root causes and many organizations like ours are moving energy into working to change systems. It is an exercise in hope, knowing that society is unbalanced to the detriment of the excluded and doing what we can to add weight to the lighter scale", said Anne. She has been a primary teacher, school principal and a parish sister. She has also been a member of the leadership team for the South West.



Imelda Carew

Imelda Carew

Imelda Carew PBVM is programme leader for human rights and ecology. Imelda is a member of the Nagle Community, set up to advance the Congregation's work in the areas of social justice and human rights. As a member of this community, she has been involved in co-ordinating justice ministry, developing submissions, networking and collaborating with groups campaigning for social inclusion, environmental and equality issues. "This post will advance the work for human rights in a more strategic manner", said Imelda. Prior to being appointed to the Nagle Community, Imelda has worked in secondary and adult education and in leadership for the South East province.



Anne Marie Quinn

Anne Marie Quinn

Ann Marie Quinn PBVM is programme leader for learning innovation. Prior to taking up this post, she has been involved in a wide range of initiatives at local and national level to combat educational disadvantage. "I believe passionately in the power of education to bring about social transformation. The challenge in this post is to work systemically to bring about a new vision of education that can make a real difference in people's lives", said Ann Marie. Ann Marie has been a national school teacher, community worker and most recently principal of a large Dublin inner city primary school.

We wish Imelda, Ann Marie and Anne well as they take up their new posts. They bring new energy and expertise to the existing team at the Centre: David Rose, director, Aileen Walsh, researcher and Marie O'Driscoll, in admin.

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The Mexican fisherman said, "I sleep late, fish a little, play with my children, take siesta with my wife, Maria, stroll into the village each evening where I sip wine and play guitar with my amigos, I have a full and busy life, senior."

The American scoffed, "I am a Harvard MBA and could help you. You should spend more time fishing and with the proceeds buy a bigger boat with the proceeds from the bigger boat you could buy several boats, eventually you would have a fleet of fishing boats. Instead of selling your catch to a middleman you would sell directly to the processor, eventually opening your own cannery. You would control the product, processing and distribution. You would need to leave this small coastal fishing village and move to Mexico City, then LA

and eventually NYC where you will run your expanding enterprise."

The Mexican fisherman asked, "But senior, how long will this all take?"

To which the American replied, "15-20 years."

"But what then, senior?"

The American said, "Then you would retire. Move to a small coastal fishing village where you would sleep late, fish a little, play with your kids, take siesta with your wife, stroll to the village in the evenings where you could sip wine and play your guitar with your amigos."

Bernadette Flanagan PBVM, is Head of the Spirituality Department at the Milltown Institute of Theology and Philosophy, Dublin.