

# St Patrick's



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March Newsletter 2005

## *Dear Friend of Saint Patrick's,*



Some two years ago a small group of us travelled to Saluzzo in Northern Italy to the home community of the Cenacolo Community set up by Sister Elvira circa twenty five years ago. It was a challenging but beautiful weekend in which we were able to witness at first

hand the miracle of the Resurrection.

Young men and woman burdened by addiction choose to enter Cenacolo on a journey of spiritual death and resurrection which lasts at least two years. Their previous addiction, mostly to drugs, has been dragging them ever nearer to the grave. Spiritually they are broken and have little hope. Through the grace of God they ask to enter Cenacolo (meaning Cenacle or upper room) and start on a journey that unites them to Christ and the reality of his Resurrection, and into new life.

As a result of that visit a Cenacolo prayer group started here in St Patrick's every Monday at 7:30 pm and it has now been responsible for meeting young addicts on the street, befriending and praying with them and leading them into a Cenacolo Community. They are now on the way to a life that God intended for all of us at the first moment of creation. At the heart of that journey is the Holy Eucharist for in the Eucharist one meets Jesus in love for us and giving out his love as if from Calvary. It is that which raises and restores these young people burdened by addiction to new life.

I hope that from reading this edition of St Patrick's Journal, you will meet something of the Cenacolo story but also taste how Jesus Christ in the Eucharist brings us new life. The Pope, John Paul II, has asked us to dedicate ourselves to the Eucharist in a particular way in this special year. The Eucharist comes at the heart of all that happens here not least in the beautiful work of Cenacolo. Please pray for it and if you can come and find out more every Monday in the Parish Room (Upper Room) at 7:30pm.

God bless,

**Father Alexander**

Telephone 0207 437 2010

We would like to wish all Friends of St Patrick's a Happy Feast Day! Come and celebrate St Patrick's day with us.

**16th March 6pm**

Holy Mass celebrated by  
Bishop Alan Hopes  
**17th March**

**Holy Mass times**

8am, 12:45pm and 6pm—at all masses  
Shamrock will be blest and distributed.

**St Patrick's Day Concert**  
**7:15pm**

Tickets will be available at £25 from Kerrin Wauton  
on 07779 657 710 or E-mail: [kerrin.wauton@btopenworld.com](mailto:kerrin.wauton@btopenworld.com)

### **Prayer of St Patrick**

Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me,  
Christ in me,  
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,  
Christ on my right, Christ on my left,  
Christ when I lie down,  
Christ when I sit down,  
Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me,  
Christ in the mouth of every man who speaks of me,  
Christ in the eye that sees me,  
Christ in the ear  
that hears me.



## Cenacolo Group see positive results in the community

The community of Cenacolo began in July 1983 in response to a desire, placed in the heart of Sister Elvira Petrozzi, to dedicate her life to the youth who feel alone and excluded in our modern world. With the help of another sister (Sister Aurelia) and a teacher (Nives), Sister Elvira began in a run down and abandoned house on the hills of Saluzzo, Italy. This adventure did not begin with financial security but with a lot of sacrifice, prayer and with complete faith in the providence of God. When the first young people began to knock on the door so did the first help begin to arrive. This obvious act of Providence was a real sign that God was with them. This community is our Loving Father's response to the desperate cry of many young people who are weary, disheartened and without hope. The family of Cenacolo includes both those burdened with addiction and non-addicts alike, who are searching for joy and the true meaning of life.

Paula Tolhurst who, alongside Philipp Habsburg leads a Cenacolo prayer group here at St Patrick's and shares with us her experience and work for the community.

**Paula writes;** Since Father has asked us to have this special prayer group in his parish we have all felt that this hour of prayer is very special. People travel a long distance, drug addicts and their families, to pray. It can be the first starting point for addicts. We ask them to commit to coming once a week so we can get to know and help them with their journey into the community. Since the prayer group started we have been able to help over 10 people- in different directions- to come off their addiction and begin a new life.

Father Alex asked me to go to the streets, meet those who suffer with addiction and invite them to the Cenacolo prayer meeting. I really enjoyed this! I would walk from 4 to 7 just quietly talking, giving sweets; prayers cards, and rosaries. Through this I got to know a lot of the kids on the street. Not many came to the prayer group, not more than five or six. In the beginning two people walked for two hours and handed out invitation cards to the prayer group. Today there isn't much point street walking as the police have a policy of moving people on and if begging, into prison. So we started to go into prison. This is a great joy and we were thrilled when one Italian boy, on leaving the prison and being deported, entered the community in Saluzzo. Thanks to the help of friends, he is doing well and is happy. This is a great grace, please pray we can do more in the prisons!

There are many rewards; one of which was recently seeing 'Mark', whom we met in Walsingham where he had de-toxed, enter into the community. Last week I saw him for the first time laughing and smiling, it was wonderful! It's incredible to see this change, all through prayer; everything happens through prayer!

We have, as a result of this prayer group, helped over 10 young people change their lives. Not all have gone to the community but all have started or are in the process of starting a new life. There is a lot we could do if we had more help. We are praying for a group who will walk the streets and we urgently need a house to help detox those most vulnerable, before they can

take the next step in their journey and enter the community. Wagner Gonsalves, who lives here in the parish house recently visited the community in Saluzzo along with Paula and other members of the prayer group. Here is his account: Yahweh my God I cry to you for help and you heard me. Yahweh you have lifted me out of Sheol.

From among those who sink into oblivion You have given me life.

(Ps 30)

Yes! I give thanks and praise to the Lord, for His merciful love that's changing lives and giving new life for many young people around the world! This was what I witnessed, when recently I had the opportunity to visit the Cenacolo Community in Italy. This community is a real blessing for the Church in our time - when so many people are feeling empty, unhappy and living in darkness coming to drugs to escape. In the words of a consecrated sister of the community:

"The Cenacolo Community is a never-ending School of Life and it teaches us how to live a Gospel-based, concrete, Christian life. It helps one rediscover life in all of its facets: prayer, work, the dignity of the human person, truthful dialogue, constructive friendships and making sacrifices."

What I experienced there, what really touched my heart and made me intercede more for all those young people, was the hope and the joy that they found in Jesus' love present in the Community. May God's grace give them perseverance so that His plan of love can be fulfilled in their lives. For those who are living in darkness and do not have the courage yet to say yes, may they receive the grace needed so that they may truly believe these words of Jesus: "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."

**John 10:10.**



## St Patrick's and the Annunciation

As we approach two great feasts; St Patrick's (17th March) and the Annunciation (25th March), we reflect on how we can be inspired and guided by two great people, St Patrick and Mary, Mother of God. St Patrick, kidnapped and enslaved found freedom in Christ and desired to share his faith in order to liberate others. Mary, Mother of God, in her "Yes" to God, gave birth to the Messiah and brought Christ to the world!

"God inspired me with fear, reverence and patience to be the one who would if possible serve the people faithfully to whom the love of Christ brought me." (St Patrick: Confession)

This sentence from St. Patrick could be the motto of Tuesday night's Open House. An evening to serve, open up and most of all to love with Christ's self-giving love those who turn up for a meal. Our inspiration comes from St Patrick. As he was happy to accept the calling, leave his homeland and be a channel of God's salvation to the people he met. In a similar way we would also leave our secure life behind and open ourselves completely to everybody who comes for food on Tuesday night.

It is easy to give when we have plenty, listen to someone who struggles with problems and "forget" about it when we return to our comfortable life. This can work only for a while, until I truly meet Jesus, as he looks at me from the eyes of the person I try to serve. Then I cannot hide away any more in my ivory tower, because I recognize that I need to share that which was given to me, in order to receive LIFE.

St Patrick, pray for us, that we could also follow the inspiration which is planted into our hearts by God and don't be afraid to step out to the unknown, reach our hands to those whom the love of Christ brings us. (Anne Marie Salgo)

On being asked to write an article for this issue of St. Patrick's Journal, I immediately thought about the forthcoming feast of the Incarnation/Annunciation on the 25th March. This feast was the source of inspiration to Frances Taylor in her vocation as Foundress of the Poor Servants of the Mother of God (S.M.G.). The 25th March is also the anniversary of my religious profession as S.M.G! Mary, Mother of God, and Frances Taylor were very courageous, great risk-takers and faith-filled women, who give us examples of what we can achieve if we dare to take risks in faith. To reach out is to risk becoming involved.

To love is to risk rejection - of not being loved in return.

To try anything new is to risk failure. To live is to risk death.

"The one who risks nothing does nothing tries nothing, learns nothing, does not grow, change or live. Only the one who risks is free - the "non-risking" one is enslaved by ones securities and certitudes."

Paraphrase from "Orientations" by J Veltri S.J.



Mary, Mother of God was a woman who took immense risks because of her intense love.

Frances Taylor, foundress of the S.M.G. Congregation was a woman who followed Mary's example and was not afraid to launch out into the unknown and risk in faith.

Mary risked losing her reputation and her beloved Joseph after her immediate response to Gabriel's announcement that she would bear a Son, when she said "Let it be done to me according to Thy Word".

She risked being ignored or rejected every time she appeared in public as mother of a "mysterious" Son. She followed her Son to Calvary and risked standing by His Cross - a mother's love involved a mother's risk.

Frances Taylor - a teenager from Lincolnshire, risked health in order to nurse the cholera victims in Bristol.

In her twenties she risked her life as she volunteered to nurse in the Crimea. On becoming a Catholic convert while in the Crimea, Frances definitely risked the loss of many good friends as well as a father - a renowned Anglican vicar - whom she adored.

As a shrewd business -woman, Frances risked financial ruin when she became full-time servant of the poor. "Poor Fanny Taylor" was the comment on many lips.

She risked all the way and trusted in Divine Providence when she opened the first S.M.G. community house in Tower Hill with three young companions. Later - at the end of her life, returning from journeys on the continent - she risked dying en route, because she wanted to be HOME with the small community in Soho Square where she died in 1900.

Our call as followers of Christ, of Mary, and of Frances Taylor is also a call to risk in faith. Jesus says "Follow Me" "Launch Out" "Do not be afraid for I am with you" Am I willing to take the risk? Are you willing to take the risk?

What is your experience and what will be your response?

(Sister Dympna SMG)



# St. Patrick's Evangelisation School

## “Always be ready to give an account of the HOPE that is in you”



Looking back so far, there are two events that stand out: the Christmas mission and the re-naming of the School.

The Christmas mission brought together several groups whose sole purpose was to bring the Christmas message to the streets of London. From carol singing on the corner of Tottenham Court Road to praying in front of the Blessed Sacrament, many worked tirelessly to allow others to experience the joy of Christmas.

During this time we re-named the School. Given the history of the evangelisation of Ireland by St. Patrick we realised that it was not a coincidence that the School was here. Like St. Patrick who was called to study to become a true servant of God, taking the message of Christianity to Ireland, the young adults in the School also study so that they too can spread the Gospel not just to Ireland but to the whole world. They are bringing the message of hope to others and that is why the School is called St. Patrick's Evangelisation School SPES for short, which in Latin means hope. (Bobbie Sidhu, Director)



Emily Towner, a graduate of the first year of the school answers the question: Where are you now?

In reply to the question I can say, physically, not so very far from St. Patrick's, training to be a lawyer at the College of Law (Store Street). Spiritually, I hope that I am close to St. Patrick's or, more to the point, Our Lord and His Church. Instead of being part of a quasi religious community at St. Pats, I am now part of the laity, the interface betwixt church and world.

At some level the time spent with the School of Mission helped to strengthen my Catholic identity (I'm a convert) through community and shared vision. More specifically, I found this was a place where one could speak freely of faith experience and beliefs. So often I find that our culture discourages us from framing our understanding of reality using language of faith, mentioning Our Lord's name, or expressing our praise of God. And yet this silent repression can be detrimental to our ability to live in faith, hope and love. Language is our castle, building and validating vision and our experience, so I greatly appreciated the freedom to speak of the faith and to couch everyday experience in those terms.

This gave the strength to build a Catholic castle which I can joyfully let permeate my life, even if I am amongst mostly irreligious lawyers. Smiling, I think to myself, what society doesn't realise is that all the world is Catholic, it just don't know it yet.' (Chesterton misquoted) (Emily Towner)

How do people in the USA celebrate St. Patrick's Day?

Steve White, a graduate of St. Patrick's Evangelisation School 2004, tells us of his experience....

As a child, the morning of March 17th always meant green milk in my Cheerios. My mother would bake Irish Soda bread and I would take it to school to share with the class. Mom is of Bavarian stock. The red in my beard and pasty skin comes from my father's side. But in America we celebrate St. Patrick's Day, even if it is at school named for a German Patron Saint, in Germantown, Wisconsin in the classrooms of teachers with names like Schmidt, Albrecht, and Schaeffer. When I was in college in Texas, St. Pat's meant green eggs and ham for breakfast and cheap green beer at night (Guinness for those with dignity.) I even had a pair of shamrock suspenders to wear when I went out... though I am told that around Brits I should call them "braces" to keep from embarrassing myself.

It's not just Catholics that celebrate, and it certainly is not just the Irish. In Chicago the river is dyed green with food coloring every March 17th. Boston has been publicly celebrating St. Patrick's Day since 1737, almost 40 years before the Declaration of Independence. There are massive public parades in virtually every major city in the country, from L.A. to D.C. New York City's annual parade, begun in 1762, draws over 1 million spectators a year. In Savannah Georgia, every fountain in the city is dyed green, a tradition going back more than 100 years. The city's population can triple around St. Patrick's Day as up to 500,000 visitors arrive for the celebration. Mostly St. Patrick's Day is a cultural celebration - virtually everyone claims Irish heritage at least for one day - though it is far from forgotten that the Shamrock tells the story of the Trinity. All around the country people cram into pubs, Irish pubs and lift a pint of Guinness to celebrate the man who drove the snakes from the Emerald Isle and converted the whole of Ireland.

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