



# MARIST LINKS

Middle Killeavy, Newry; Notre Dame de France, London; St. Brendan's, Coolock; Holy Family, Dundalk; Our Lady's Oratory, Leeson St.; St. Teresa's, Donore Ave.; St. Mary's, Dundalk.

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Issue 3

## INTRODUCTION



Welcome to the third edition of Marist Links. In this edition Denis Green s.m. introduces us to the foundress of the Marist Sisters Jeanne-Marie Chavoin. In previous editions Denis has introduced us to Sts. Peter Chanel and Marcellin Champagnat. On page eight there is a pictorial presentation of the visit of President Mary McAleese to Chanel College Coolock. 'Pay Attention' is an interesting reflection by Christopher Loetscher which explores how God is revealed in the humble circumstances of daily life. We also include a reflection on 'The Well' by Sr. Hilary Lyons MSHR author of Old Watering Holes. We hope you enjoy these and the other interesting pieces in this edition. If you feel so inclined to 'pen' a short piece yourself for the next edition in September, it would be very welcome. Just give it to any Marist and they will pass it on to us. Enjoy the summer!

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Nowhere and nothing could seem less connected than France in the times of the famous Revolution and Jesus in Palestine eighteen hundred years before. Yet, God's choices are surprising. For example, just look at Jesus in spare outline. God chose for him such a simple life-setting. He was to spend most of his life in a village among ordinary Jewish people, known as the child of a local carpenter and his wife. When he began teaching as an itinerant preacher and collecting followers, he emphasised human openness, forgiveness, generosity, love to all and particularly to the poor or outcast, the high ideals of the beatitudes. He had no time for pushing the Jewish Law to a burdensome extreme. It was a dicey time in Palestine: political tension, risings and bloody suppressions. Jesus carefully avoided aligning himself with any religious or political movement. He was executed on a phoney charge of treason.

It is really extraordinary then, how close this is in its main lines to the origins and spirit of the Marist founders and many of their companions. Take, for example, Jeanne-Marie Chavoin, who with Jean-Claude Colin established the Marist Sisters.

Jeanne-Marie was born in 1786 in a rather out of the way village called Coutouvre to the north of Lyons in the Beaujolais (famous to us for its wine). Her dad was a tailor but he also worked a small parcel of land. The whole setting was quite traditional, but a restless spirit was abroad. In 1789 the King had to summon a special parliament, the situation exploded and in no time massive changes were underway in daily life, state and church.

Village life had circulated around the church and its feasts. Now the church was closed, the calendar changed, the priests on the run, celebrating sacraments secretly, the village school closed. All this made a deep impression on children. Such education as Jeanne-Marie got was at home.



Jeanne-Marie Chavoin  
Foundress of the Marist  
Sisters

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(Continued from page 1)

When Jeanne-Marie was a teenager and in her twenties, Napoleon had come to power. Public worship and the Christian calendar were restored, but the freedom of the church was strictly regulated by the government. Pastoral renewal was urgent. Lyons diocese became the centre of a vigorous spiritual renewal. The parish priest at Coutouvre eagerly set about restoring parish life.



Jeanne-Marie joined enthusiastically in this revival of faith. She went for retreats in one of the few convents that were reopened, joined a pious association, found a spiritual director, developed a good friendship with another girl, Marie Jotillon, looked after her now widowed mother and busied herself in all kinds of help to the poor or needy. Finally Jeanne-Marie actually made a decision not to get married: she would devote herself to God and his people.

Had she a *religious* vocation? She does not tell us what she was thinking. We can only follow the course of events. The Abbess of the convent where she went for retreats first invited her to join the community there. Though attached to the Abbess she turned this invitation down. Next, the formidable Archbishop of Lyons, Cardinal Fesch, Napoleon's uncle, wanted her to found a convent. She dared to refuse. Then came another invitation, and another refusal, and again the Cardinal returned to the charge with just the thing for her, a foundation in Lyons. Once again she turned the invitation down.

Meantime, Jean-Claude Colin, the future founder of the Marist Fathers, was a young priest, a curate in his brother Pierre's parish at the large village of Cerdon. Pierre had been a curate at Coutouvre, knew and esteemed the excellent Mademoiselle Chavoin, and arranged a meeting between her and Jean-Claude. It was 1817: Jeanne-Marie was now 31. Father Colin explained the Marist project, its purpose and spirit, and suggested she join.

We have no account of what took place at that meeting, at what made Jeanne-Marie, who had refused so many pressing and attractive invitations, accept this one.

In 1823, she, her friend Marie Jotillon, and another woman, also called Jeanne-Marie, established the first community of Marist sisters. Jeanne-Marie would eventually be known as Mother St. Joseph, become Superior General, rule the congregation until 1854, and die in 1858.

What kind of woman was Jeanne-Marie Chavoin? How did her ministry and spirituality fit into the Marist project? How did those years go for her between 1817, when she joined the Colins, and her death forty-one years later?

That is for another day!

Denis Green s.m.

## Milltown Prayer Group

In the summer of 1979 a prayer group was formed as part of the summer project in the area, in a local house called 'Lilac Cottage' which has since been demolished.

It was resumed a few months later in Mt. St Mary's Milltown because the people involved wanted to continue this type of prayer. In the early days, the group numbered about twenty people of all ages, this group grew to about fifty people during the early eighties when the Charismatic Renewal was at its height. Over the following years the numbers dwindled to its current group of seven faithful supporters who meet on Tuesday nights to pray together throughout the year.

We have received excellent support from many Marist priests and students over the years, too numerous to mention, and we appreciate the significant part they played in our spiritual formation.

## Pay Attention by Christopher Loetscher

### “God is revealed in the humble circumstances of daily life”

I have never witnessed an instant cure or a sudden transformation. I've never been to Lourdes or Medjugorje; and I have no desire to go there. I've never seen a statue or an icon weep. The Holy Shroud of Turin is of no consolation to me. I've never heard secret voices urging me to do this or that. Neither sea nor sky has ever parted for me. I do not have any strange powers. I have no awareness of being touched by an angel. I have never smelled sulphur or smoke where there was no fire.

**“Tell me what you pay attention to, and I'll tell you who you are.”**  
- Ortega y Gasset

I've eaten around 50,000 meals. I've slept—not always peacefully—through 19,000 nights, and I've awakened—not always gratefully—to 19,000 mornings. I've known the comforts and sorrows of home—the one I was born to, the one I help to make. I know the havoc that an addiction can cause. I have frightened those closest to me with my anger. I have known the pleasures and responsibilities of friendship. I've lived in community with Jesuits and Dominicans. I have fallen in love. I have made love with one woman only. I have witnessed the births of five children. I have kept watch with the dying. I have wept.

I have mowed lawns, tended gardens, bagged groceries, trimmed trees, moved furniture, sold nuts and bolts, painted houses, stripped and waxed floors, cleaned rest rooms and locker rooms, tutored teenagers, worked at a summer camp for inner-city children, taught in high schools, worked in parishes, sought justice, served on committees and boards, made repairs, kept things moving along, and puttered around the edges.

I have slept under the stars in the Rocky Mountains. I have fallen from a cliff and feared, before losing consciousness, that I would die. I have taken delight in music and poetry. I have studied hard. I have wasted lots of time. I have sung the Exultet at the Easter Vigil. I have made an impression. I have been a big disappointment. I have risen to the occasion. I have fallen short.

Through all the hours of my life, God is the one who is always present: the witness, the creator of all that is good, the maker of possibilities, the one who sets life and death before me, companion, beggar, stranger, fire, light and shadow, morning, noon and night, breath, fragrance, hunger, salt, the cup of cold water—slaking my thirst, or in my face suddenly like a slap! - common and uncommon bread, the hidden singer, the cry and whisper, the silence, rain, desire, dread, the Christ, abiding mercy.

The poet Karl Shapiro addresses our “immigrant God.” “You follow me,” he says. “You go with me; You are a distant tree; You are the beast that lows in my heart's gates; You are the dog that follows at my heel; You are the table on which I lean; You are the plate from which I eat.”

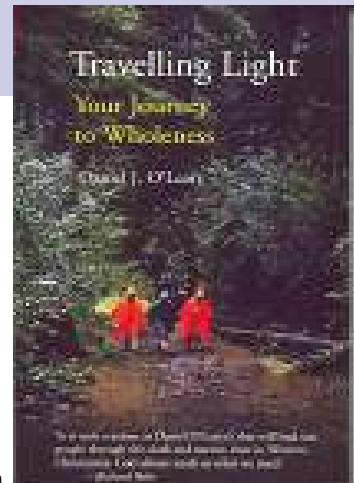
“Lord, when did we see Thee and fail to respond to Thee?” Pay attention! In the Eucharist, under the humble appearances of ordinary bread and wine, the Lord of Creation is really presented to us, as food and drink, uniting us with God and one another, making us one body. The Eucharist constantly reminds us that in the humble circumstances of daily life—in marriage and family living, work, leisure, community life—God is present. Take heed. Live in gratitude and wonder.

Tell me. What do you pay attention to? I'll tell you who you are.

*Christopher Loetscher is the director of the Office of Social Concerns and Family Life for the New Ulm, Minn., diocese.*



## BOOK CORNER



### Travelling Light (A Journey into Wholeness)

This is a very refreshing and inspirational book. It is simply and carefully written and drawn from a theology of creation and a spirituality of the heart. The author, Daniel O'Leary, is a priest from the Diocese of Leeds, England who writes from his own lived experience during a time of renewal

'Travelling Light' is designed to be a guide for you as you decide to set out on your inner journey—a journey home to God. Part I is a preparation for this journey, encouraging you to take those tentative steps and offering easy and simple ways to breathe life into yourself. Part II offers 31 meditations (Breathers) one for every day of the month. They can be read over and over again, offering deeper levels of understanding on each reflection and nourishment for the soul.

The outstanding feature of this book is the emphasis on awareness and living in the present moment. This is an invitation to take the incarnation seriously. God 'took on skin' to be with us on this planet and continues to work through us and in us.

Fr. O'Leary offers practical suggestions at the end of each meditation e.g. practice good breathing; create space in our lives for quietness; cultivate an attitude of receptivity; restrain the desire to be in control all the time. In these days when the world seems to be in so many ways a wilderness I feel this book is very welcome reading. It is written in a style which will appeal to people who are disillusioned, those on the margins of the church as well as those wishing to deepen their relationship with an incarnate God.

I like his down to earth style....he has a way of letting his reader know she or he is o.k. and that God is part and parcel of every inch of our lives and in the 'bits and pieces'.

Each meditation is like unwrapping a present. I hope you too may find it so.

Vera Magee.

## Do you know your Dublin?

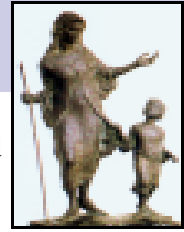
Test yourself on these clues. All are place/districts in the Dublin area.

For example: Dark mines = Black Pits.

1. Church reptile
2. Sea creature's outhouse
3. A very dark boulder
4. A breed of sheep
5. A gravelly paste
6. Get out of the way
7. Dispose of this woman
8. Single men don't run
9. Chime's demise
10. Big cat's villas
11. Tell professor to ease off
12. Mr Seacombe is angry
13. Not a warm explosive
14. Spheres cross over here
15. Is it falling down?

(answers on page 7)

## Novena of Grace 2003 – St. Brendan’s, Coolock



Our Novena started this year with Fr. Fergus O’Donoghue s.j. who went through the life and work done by St. Francis Xavier. Parishioners felt this was an excellent start. Each night we had a different speaker, nine in all, speaking on a different theme. These nine speakers included five priests, lay persons, two sisters and Derek Pool, a Methodist minister, whose presentation on his theme was different but very interesting.

Our church was packed, and even though we had extra seats we still had people standing. In our congregation were young, middle-aged and elderly. Each night we were joined by our own choirs, both local and visiting groups, which made our Novena very joyful and encouraged us all to join in. A wonderful spirit of peace, happiness and spirituality was present during the Novena and St. Francis’ spirit was very evident.

We were very pleased to have had our previous parish priest Fr. Gerry Kane present. Fr. Dick Corry, a curate in our parish some years ago, also joined us one night, it was great to have these men back again! We were able to meet all the speakers as we left the church each night.

Sadly our last night arrived, and we were blessed to have Fr. Terence Harrington o.f.m. cap. who was so funny and also spoke with such holiness. The benediction of the Blessed Eucharist concluded our Novena.

Contributed by Therese Brady, parishioner.

## Quiet Time: Reflections with questions

In the Africa that I know priorities are stark and unequivocal. Water is Life. It is an unspoken priority. In many communities wells are constructed as a method of providing water. Even with a good well constant vigilance is necessary: a well may be poisoned by an enemy so it must be guarded, it may become contaminated by the use of an unclean vessel to draw the water, therefore ongoing “well catechesis” is essential; it may run dry and has to be dug deeper to reach the aquifer or the walls may crumble a little and a new structure be indicated.

I think it is Etty Hillesum who says that the well of her inner life became, repeatedly, cluttered up with stones, gravel, and debris. Repeatedly she dug it out, and found that clear, cool water rose up from the deeps and refreshed her. Endless resources of life-giving water remain deep within us but our “well” needs constant vigilant cherishing.

Sr. Hilary Lyons, MSHR  
Author of Old Watering Holes

## ‘Changing of the Guard’



Brian Keenan



John Hannan

In July 2003 the Marist Fathers change Provincial.

Brian Keenan has been provincial for the past six years and is now finished his term of office.

John Hannan will be the new provincial of the Marist Fathers beginning on the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2003. Let us pray in gratitude and intercession for both of them as they take up new tasks in their lives.

# Marist Laity Development

Over the past two years meetings have been held in Longford, Coolock and Athlone. One of the issues to emerge from these meetings is the development of the laity branch of the Marist Family. One of the needs identified is that of a central core group, of representatives from each group or area to develop:

- An inventory of all Lay Groups in Ireland
- A communication system i.e. a news letter or web page.
- A clear Vision and Mission Statement for the Lay Branch of the Marist Family.

In the meantime three members of the Laity:

Nuala Fox (Sundrive Rd), Eileen McCann (Dundalk) and Sile O'Reilly (Milltown) and Brother John Hyland fms will act as an ad-hoc working group, until a core group of representatives from the other groups can be formed.

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## An Irish Blessing

*(Irish prayer adapted by Phil Coulter)*

May the blessing of light be upon you,  
Light on the outside,  
Light on the inside.

With God's sunlight shining on you,  
May your heart glow with warmth,  
Like a turf fire that welcomes friends  
And strangers alike.

May the light of the Lord shine from your eyes  
Like a candle in the window  
Welcoming the weary traveller.

May the blessing of God's soft rain be on you  
Falling gently on your head, refreshing your soul  
With the sweetness of little flowers newly blooming.  
May the strength of the winds of Heaven bless you  
Carrying the rain to wash your spirit clean,  
Sparkling after in the sunlight.

May the blessing of God's earth be on you,  
And as you walk the roads  
May you always have a kind word  
For those you meet.  
May he watch over you and keep you  
Safe from harm.

May you understand the strength  
And power of God  
In a thunderstorm in Winter.  
And the quiet beauty of creation  
In the calm of a Summer sunset,  
And may you come to realise that,  
Insignificant as you may seem  
In this great Universe,  
You are an important part of God's plan.

## Pilgrimage to Lourdes 2002



## Do you know your Dublin? Answers!

- |                    |                    |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Chapelizod      | 9. Ringsend        |
| 2. Dolphin's Barn  | 10. Leopardstown   |
| 3. Blackrock       | 11. Donabate       |
| 4. Marino          | 12. Harold's Cross |
| 5. Stoneybatter    | 13. Coolmine       |
| 6. Stepside        | 14. Ballsbridge    |
| 7. Killester       | 15. Crumlin        |
| 8. Bachelor's Walk |                    |

### Marist Links

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# Visit of President Mary McAleese to Chanel College, Coolock on the 28th February 2003



## Ministry of Welcome

The **Ministry of Welcome** has been established in some parishes to

- ☺ greet the people
- ☺ Hand out the Mass sheets, bulletins, hymnals and leaflets
- ☺ Assist the elderly and those with children (when required)
- ☺ And most important— smile while offering a friendly greeting!

*“I was a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you gave me clothing, sick and in prison and you visited me.”*

*Matthew 25:43*

Let me introduce you to some members of our community.

All of them share the same surname—**Tate**. First there is old Fr. **Dictate** who wants to run everything, while Fr. **Rotate** tries to change everything. Fr. **Irritate** stirs up plenty of trouble with the help of his friend Fr. **Agitate**. Whenever there are new projects suggested, Fr. **Hesitate** and Fr. **Vegetate** want to put things off until we discuss it again at the next community meeting.

Then there is Fr. **Imitate** who wants our community to be like the one he visited in America. Fr. **Devastate** provides the voice of doom, while Fr. **Potentate** just wants to be a big shot. Then there is Fr. **Facilitate** who is most helpful when there is work to be done. Fr. **Cogitate** and Fr. **Meditate** always think things over and are usually very positive in their ideas.

And finally there is the black sheep of the family, Fr. **Amputate**, who has cut himself off completely from the rest of the community.

The trouble we find ourselves in is this: which of the Tates are we? Communicate!