



NEWSLETTER



LAY ASSOCIATES IRISH PROVINCE

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Welcome to the first edition of our newsletter for the MSC Lay Associates of the Irish Province. The idea for this form of communication germinated at the Provincial Conference in April 2008. As we shared with one another our experiences as Lay Associates, we realized that we could support and help one another, despite the distance that separates us.

The purpose of the Newsletter is to bring us together and share information with each other about our groups. I hope that this will prove to be an excellent educational tool for each of us to learn from one another.

This newsletter is being published from Harker Heights, TX and we hope to have an edition quarterly. It does not belong to us, but to every Lay Associate, no matter where you are in the world. We'll only be successful if everyone shares and contributes to it.

Please submit articles about your group and your activities, along with pictures when possible. We start this edition with reports from three widely diverse geographic areas, joined by our MSC spirit and love.

Please submit questions, comments and requests to Carol Allred: carolallred@hotmail.com or to Frank Cooney: FTCooney1@aol.com.

Remember, "Where two or more have gathered together in my name, I am there in their midst." *Matthew 18:20*

Let's join together through the spirit of this newsletter.

What Being an MSC Lay Associate Means to Me

Letting people know God's personal, faithful and unconditional love by accepting everyone, we meet, as they really are, living out the way of the Heart of Jesus in our daily lives.

Armando Tomez

San Antonio

Armando generously shared his thoughts about what being an MSC Lay associate means in his life. Please be generous and share your thoughts with others.

Questions:

Who can send in an article?

Anyone can and we hope everyone will contribute.

Who gets the Newsletter?

Our list starts with the Laity attending the Provincial Conference and we hope you will share other names & email addresses with us. Please print out the newsletter and share it with others. The Irish Province is posting a copy on their website for all to share.

Sara Nash from England shares the following article about their day of Spirituality of the Heart:

Our Lady of the Sacred Heart: Her place within a Spirituality of the Heart

What do you feel when you hear the word Mary? This was the first question posed by Sr Geradine OLSH, at a day of reflection and discussion held at Tamworth (Central England) at the Sacred Heart Church on 5th July 2008. Forty people gathered to hear Sr Gerardine OLSH who is Director of the Cor Novum team in Issodun, give an insight into Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. She led the participants through a journey exploring images of Mary both pictorially and through Scriptural references. But what do these images have to do with philosophy of Jules Chevalier?

When in 1854 Father Jules Chevalier was thinking of founding a society of men whose mission it would be to cure the evils of that time by leading people to the Heart of Christ as the healing source of life, he asked Our Lady for help. Having experienced her powerful intercession several times, he felt that, out of gratitude, his society should honour her in a special way. Eventually he invoked her with the title "Our Lady of the Sacred Heart" and the devotion to Mary with that title spread rapidly in all continents. The purpose of this devotion was to honour Mary "in her relationship of ineffable love which exists between her and the Sacred Heart of Jesus." This rich mystery has many aspects, for Mary was the Mother of Christ and also his partner in the work of redemption. On Calvary Our Lord gave her as Mother to the disciple he loved, that is, to all of us, and Mary saw how the Heart of her Son was pierced and how blood and water flowed from it.

Chevalier's was the only image of Mary to be based on scripture rather than apparition and one that was always in relation to her son. Our Lady was the mother who helped Jesus grow in wisdom and faith and as such Chevalier imagined her as the mother of a growing boy who pointed at his mother and to his own heart showing her link between

Comments:

I am not an MSC Lay Associate but I would like to get the Newsletter. Is that okay?

Of course. Our goal is to make the Sacred Heart of Jesus known everywhere.

Requests:

Please pray for our Chevalier Family around the world.

Please pray for the success of this Newsletter.

Please pray for contributions of articles by our Chevalier family, especially the professed, to aid us in our growth as MSC Lay Associates.

Sara Nash continued:

God and humanity, Mary's gestures to him and to us indicate her acquiescence of Jesus' final wish.

MSC missionaries have been astounded at finding images of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart throughout the world, affirming Jules Chevalier's conviction that the Jesus he found in the Gospels was a person of deep compassion and understanding. This open-hearted Jesus is the one who wants to bring hope and healing to all human beings wherever and however they are in suffering.

Mary Gagiano from South Africa wrote:

We are steadily making progress and have had some Spiritual input from Fr. Vincent Sello, which is helping us a great deal.

We have a good dedicated team in the Midrand Parish, but we are still floundering somewhat. We are trying to increase our membership, but this is no easy task. Anyway, we will keep praying to "The Sacred Heart of Jesus" and I am sure we will succeed.

Fr. Vincent's and Fr. Jonas's, groups are also trying to get started. We have decided that we would not have a Retreat at the present time, as it is always very difficult to get a Priest for a whole day, especially for a very small group, as they are overburdened in their Parishes.

We will be having a half day of Reflection and Prayer for our group in October/November, which will, I am sure, help us in many ways. We are concentrating on the Spirituality of the Heart of Christ, by praying at our Meetings. We say a very beautiful Prayer of Dedication to the Sacred Heart, and also recite the Litany to the Sacred Heart.

I want to wish you every success with the Newsletter, and I think it is a great idea.

The Spirit of MSC Lay Associates

DISCERN your personal call to become an authentic member in the Society of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. It is a vocation! It is NOT an apostolate, ministry or temporary involvement. It demands a commitment, as a Lay-member of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. Your membership is as valid and as intricate as the professed members of the Society – priests, brothers, sisters and daughters. This was always the intention and dream of Father Founder, identified from his earliest writings.

DISCERN if you are called to live the Spirituality of the Heart of Christ. This described through the writing of Fr. Chevalier, the MSC Constitutions and Statutes, in partnership with the by-laws of the Lay MSC Associates.

Discernment question: Are you convinced that the Heart of Christ *was* and *is* the remedy for the evils in our lives and in the world. e.g. Relativism, rationalism, culture of death, mass confusion, war, violence, etc.

From **Betsy Rockwood** of the San Antonio group:

We are excited about the newsletter and the mutual enrichment that comes from this connection. We share our news with you in the happy expectation of also reading yours.

Our group began in 1998. Responding to the invitation of our MSC priests, we began monthly associate meetings under their guidance. We are deeply grateful to the professed who give of their time and knowledge to help us grow in our understanding of the MSC charism, spirituality and mission and for the inspiration they are to us. As our Associate group developed we felt prayerfully led to write Lenten booklets for parish small group use. In the year 2000 we published *A Call to the Heart* which was used in parishes in the United States, England and Ireland as well as translated by one of our members and used in the Spanish language. If you are interested in obtaining the booklets for your parish please contact: armandotamez@grandecom.net.

We pray daily for each other and for the MSC professed, associates and benefactors world-wide. We try to do this at noon. Some of us have had the experience of finding that, no matter where we are or what we are doing, we suddenly know it's noon because we sense love and peace and realize we are being prayed for.

We seek to bring the loving heart of Our Lord into the varied circumstances of our lives and ministries.

We look forward to reading your news! May we learn and grow together as we seek, by Our Lord's grace, to be His heart in the world.

Frank Cooney from Harker Heights wrote:

A Retreat was held in San Antonio on Sept.14 thru Sept. 17, 2008 for MSC Missionaries and Lay Associates of the Central Texas area. The Retreat was hosted by Father Kevin Shanahan and the parishioners of Saint Anthony du Padua Parish in San Antonio, Texas. Father Kevin is the Pastor of Saint Anthony's and he and parishioners deserve

The Spirit of MSC Lay Associates

Continued:

PRAYER LIFE for each Missionary of the Sacred Heart is considered to be *normal, natural and necessary*, such efforts supported through the MSC international community. Our *shared focus* must always be founded and grounded in the Charism to which Father Chevalier and all MSC have given their fiat, These endeavors always under the protection and intercession of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, and St. Joseph, model and patron of those who love the Sacred Heart. The MSC Charism is the very foundation upon which we base our life's mission. It is never to be trivialized or thought to be a pious thought; a suggested attitude or prayer to move our spirits. The MSC Charism is our personal and communal identity. It is *who I am!*

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION is a must for each MSC Lay Associate. A companion "on the journey" toward holiness. A spiritual filling station, high test only!

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Frank Cooney continued:

our sincere thanks for the wonderful welcome they provided to all of us who attended the Retreat. The conference area where our meetings were held, the dining facility, and the meals provided to us were outstanding. We attended Mass at the end of each day, and I'm sure that Father Kevin and the parishioners of Saint Anthony du Padua must be proud of their beautiful church.

The Retreat was conducted by Father John Schweikert, MSC, US Province, Aurora, Illinois. He started us on Preparing for a Journey in which we received a good idea of what would be covered in our Retreat.

Three full days were spent, and we received information from Father John's knowledge of the following:

The Beatitudes, The Spiritual Journey-A Path To Peace, Sin and the Effects of Sin Limit Our Capacity to Love and be Loved, Spiritual Forgiveness, Human Forgiveness, and The Rite of Reconciliation.

Members of the three groups of Central Texas Lay Associate groups held a joint meeting during the Retreat. The delegates to the Irish Conference reported on the subjects covered at the conference, and we all shared news from our individual groups.

We completed the Retreat with a feeling of fulfillment and we thank Father John Schweikert for giving us that feeling.



Father John Schweikert

The Spirit of MSC Lay Associates

Continued:

DISPOSITION in our personal and communal lives allows us to know we are called and commanded to live the very same dispositions of Jesus in the gospels. We truly can become animated as model Christ behavior. Such a disposition is not found in theology, philosophy, etc., it is found in the lived experience of the Spirituality of Christ Heart.

WORKS are neither the goal nor the objective of the MSC. It is never *“what”* we do, but it is *“who”* we are, as we carry out the obedience given us by the Father. If we are living out the Charism in our daily lives, then we are already “doing something” for the Kingdom.

*Reprinted with permission of
Father John Schweikert, MSC
US Province, Aurora, Illinois*



Listening to Father John



Mass at the end of the day



Banquet on the last day

Carol Allred, Frank Cooney and the Harker Heights Lay Associate group share this newsletter with you, and ask for your feedback, articles and support. Until the next edition, we share the love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus with you.

The Irish Province has generously agreed to post a copy of this newsletter on their website: mscireland.com.