

# Irish Trust Talk

March 2005 No 68





## Croatian IHCPT - DUH



The Croatia Group will be seen again in Lourdes this year under the watchful eye of Tomi Sebek (formerly of 175 ), thanks to the help of a new donor to add to those already assisting us in our fundraising.

Some years ago Blackrock College brought groups of students on the Trust Pilgrimage to assist groups. The Past Pupils Union of Blackrock College has now risen to the challenge again coming forward



Pictured top left is Paul O'Grady (DUH) receiving a donation from Tony Amoroso of *The Blackrock College Union* for the work of DUH. Pictured above is Tom Sebek and Ivan Naukovic after the meeting in Kilcuan with Bishop Dermot O'Mahony and members of the Board of IHCPT.

to offer their financial support to the Irish Trust's Croatian group.

Past pupil of Blackrock Paul O'Grady was invited in February to the school's past pupils European dinner in Rome to accept on behalf of the Croatian Group 2000 Euro towards this year's pilgrimage. On behalf of all the team working hard in Croatia for Lourdes 2005, Paul would like to express his sincerest thanks to the Blackrock College Past Pupils Union for its kind donation and a hope that this may become again a fruitful partnership for the future.

## How to travel to Lourdes with IHCPT or partake in a Kilcuan Friendship Week.

If you know a young person with special needs, who could travel to Lourdes with IHCPT or participate in one of our Friendship Weeks in Kilcuan, please ask one of our members or contact our office at Kilcuan for an application form.

Many ask about our Lourdes Pilgrimage. Most groups are for those aged 12 to 18, but there are also dedicated groups for young adults and very young children and their families. Forms are distributed during September to schools, care services and other contacts.

Completed forms should be returned by the end of October. They are processed and sent to the applicant's local region. The regional chairperson, nurse, secretary, and group leaders examine all forms, and make selections. The right balance for each group and the available expertise are considerations. Applicants who are not successful are deferred until the following year.

Invitations are issued in December. Group leaders then contact and visit the families to prepare for the pilgrimage.

## CONJOINT MEETING OF IHCPT AND HCPT TRUSTEES

Every second year there is a conjoint meeting of the boards of IHCPT and HCPT. This is an opportunity to discuss matters of common interest, to reflect and pray together and enjoy each other's company. The meeting is an important sign of the spirit of collaboration between our two organisations. It was decided to hold the meeting due in 2004 in Hosanna House on 26th to 28th November so that it would coincide with the First International Meeting of Hospitalities. Richard King, the HCPT pilgrimage Director, had been invited to speak at this. Richard was able to address this meeting in French and referred to both our organisations. We also were given space to mount an exhibition of the work of the Trusts. Our relationship with the Lourdes Hospitalité has been very good in recent years and this event enhanced that relationship.

The business section of our conjoint meeting considered international expansion, a common approach to behaviour and discipline particularly looking at the

IHCPT alcohol policy and the future of renewal activity for group leaders and young carers both of which will continue in the future.

A particular issue that the business meeting looked at was the probable changes in the school terms in England and Wales that may mean that not all schools will have a holiday during Easter week every year from 2006. It is likely that there may be considerable variation and it may be necessary to have two pilgrimages although the bigger of the two is always likely to be Easter week.

Outside of the business meeting there was a spiritual reflection

from Bishop John Rawsthorne and an exercise was led by Fr Perry Gildea to put together the material to produce an IHCPT/HCPT Charter in time for HCPT's golden jubilee year 2006.

A blessing of the new Bartres Villa was carried out by Bishop John and there was time for reflection at the Grotto. The next meeting will be in Ireland in 2006.



Rev Richard Scriven (Chairperson IHCPT), Ciaran Cannon (CEO IHCPT), Michael McGloin (HCPT Governor), Patrick Coyle (Chairperson HCPT) and Pat Jordan (Manager Kilcuan) stand at the entrance to The Bartres Villa, HCPT's house in Lourdes.

**IHCPT**  
**The Irish**  
**Pilgrimage**  
**Trust**



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### Apology

A sincere apology to those who did not receive a copy of the newsletter in Autumn 2004. The print run was underestimated when we prepared the magazine and this was only discovered at the distribution stage. This has now been rectified.

The spring edition of the newsletter is also later this year: anchored on the 25th March - the Feast of the Annunciation. The Autumn edition will be distributed in September.

Let us know what you think of the Newsletter. Contact the office at Kilcuan: hq@ihcpt.com or telephone 091 796622. We love to get your comments as we seek to provide you with a magazine that is full of news about IHCPT activities, Lourdes and the wider Church.

# Lourdes 2005

## MARY QUEEN OF PEACE

The theme for the IHCPT Pilgrimage to Lourdes in 2005 is MARY QUEEN OF PEACE. IHCPT have chosen this theme for this pilgrimage year and have asked all groups to pray for peace at all of our celebrations while in Lourdes.

For many years we prayed in Lourdes for the ending of violence in our country. This year we will pray with thanks for the progress that has been made in Ireland and we will pray for God's wisdom and grace for all who continue to search for a lasting peace. We will also be mindful of the many areas of conflict in the world and we will take the opportunity to pray at Mary's special place for peace in the world. It will be a chance for us to pray at the Grotto for all whose lives have been affected by violence. In a special way we will pray for the many young people with special needs who are often the forgotten ones in the midst of violence and struggles.

Each group has the opportunity to celebrate mass each day. Through the office of HCPT we book chapels and rooms around the basilica of St Bernadette. We also use some of the other lovely chapels that are available in Lourdes itself.

On Tuesday each region will have an active part in the IHCPT Benefactors' Mass. This is the annual mass when the whole family of IHCPT in Lourdes gathers in the Basilica of St Bernadette.

We are delighted to welcome back Bishop Murphy from Kerry. Bishop Murphy was last joined us for our Millennium pilgrimage in 2000. He will accompany Bishop Dermot O'Mahony and will be the principal celebrant at the IHCPT Benefactors' Mass in the Basilica of St Bernadette. We look forward again to meeting him in Lourdes.

We also welcome many other groups from HCPT and various other English speaking pilgrims who are in Lourdes during Easter week. It is great to see familiar faces who join us every year - in fact the young person on the IHCPT Postcard is one such pilgrim from HCPT.

All groups are invited to participate in the HCPT Benefactors' Mass on Thursday. This is held in the Underground Basilica of St Pius X. This year the liturgy and music will be co-ordinated by the West Indies. Generally we return to the Underground Basilica again on Thursday afternoon to participate in the Eucharistic Procession.

IHCPT participates in all of the liturgical celebrations of Lourdes while we are there. On Tuesday night we will attend the Marian Procession in the evening. This is always a great occasion and in recent years the Lourdes authorities have invited HCPT and IHCPT to provide some of the music and prayers. In this invitation the Lourdes authorities recognise the very special aspect of our pilgrimage and by allowing us to use prayers and songs familiar to our young people it has made the procession so much more special. This year Michael McGloin has prepared a display of slides which will be beamed onto a gigantic screen which will hang in front of the Rosary Basilica. These slides will help us as we pray the five luminous Mysteries: the five mysteries of the rosary which Pope John Paul offered to the church during the year of the Rosary three years ago. These slides will also include the words of the songs and prayers in the different languages thus enabling all of the other international groups to be part of our celebration.

On Wednesday night IHCPT have booked the Rosary Basilica for a celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. This is intended for the carers and is always very well attended. The Eastern Region will co-ordinate this liturgy and for many this is a special opportunity to celebrate the sacrament.

On Friday morning we have booked Mass at the Grotto. This has become an annual event over the past number of years. We are delighted to lead the liturgy at the altar which is beneath the statue of Our Lady. Bishop Murphy and Bishop O'Mahony will be joined by many of the chaplains from our groups to concelebrate this Mass. This Mass is a special Mass when we remember particularly our deceased helpers. We pray with gratitude for all that they did and we, the family of IHCPT, share with their families the pain of loss.

Each evening groups gather at the end of the day to pray Night Prayer. This is often a chance to think about all that has taken place during the day and is an opportunity for the young people to make their own prayers. The format for this varies from group to group. IHCPT is very lucky to have the expertise of many chaplains who have travelled several times to Lourdes with groups and we benefit from their talents and expertise. IHCPT has also published a resource book for the groups and this gives some simple ceremonies for the groups to use.



# IHCPT BOARD OF TRUSTEES

IHCPT was established in 1972 and was formally registered as a charity with the Irish Charity commissioners in 1974. The charity is administered by a Board of Trustees who are appointed from the membership of IHCPT. This board, whose members comprise various expertises, directs and oversees the running of the organisation. The membership of the board has reflected such areas as finance, nursing and medical care, special needs care and chaplaincy. Many of the members of the Board not only have specific talents from their professional and private backgrounds but also have been members of IHCPT groups for many years - many of them group leaders or regional officers at one time. In recent years Dr Patrick Coyle, Chairperson HCPT, has been a member and in turn IHCPT has been represented on the board of HCPT. Board meetings take place at least three times a year - generally more frequently. Bishop Dermot O'Mahony attends the meetings in his capacity as President of IHCPT.

The Trust is a very different organisation today from that began with the enthusiasm and dedication of a few in Dublin in the early 1970s. Over the 34 years it has grown and developed. From a beginning that was simply a group or two joining HCPT during Easter Week IHCPT is now a separate organisation, brings over 950 to Lourdes each Easter in 46 groups, has its own house here in Ireland, organises one of the largest sponsored cycling groups from Ireland on the Continent biennially. Its registered offices are now in Kilcuan, Clarenbridge, Co Galway. IHCPT employs three people. Mr Ciaran Cannon is the Chief Executive and is responsible for the day to day running of the Trust. Maureen O'Loan provides the Trust with secretarial services in our offices. Mr Pat Jordan is the Manager of Kilcuan. In reality their work and contribution to IHCPT far exceeds these briefs.

In our September edition of IRISH TRUST TALK we marked the contribution which Dr Michael McGloin, Angela Keane and Desmond Keane had made to the work of the Trust over many years. Their departure from the board has not concluded their relationship with IHCPT. Dr Michael continues as medical officer this year and is actively involved in the work of Kilcuan, our house in

Clarenbridge, Co Galway. Desmond Keane continues as co-editor of IRISH TRUST TALK and is co-ordinating the revision of The Group Leader's Manual. Angela Keane is still an active member of the Southern Region and is presently preparing a paper on the care of those with learning difficulties within IHCPT. All three will travel this year and contribute to the work of the pilgrimage in Lourdes.

Over the past number of years the Board has looked seriously at the management of the organisation and how best to plan for the future. In light of the vacancies that now exist the Board have decided to fill these positions. We are pleased to announce the appointment of Mr John O'Reilly, Mr James White and Dr Bridget Keane as members. John joined the board in December 2004 and James and Bridget became members at the Trustees' Meeting in February 2005. They have been invited to become members for two five year terms.

Two other vacancies have also been filled by election. Nominations were invited from Regional Chairperson and Board members at the end of 2004. Each nominee was then asked if they were willing to stand. The election took place at the Pre Pilgrimage Meeting in Kilcuan on February 26th. Each group leader, regional officer and trustee was entitled to vote. The successful candidates, Liam Ahern and Damien McNicholl will be invited to become members of the Board at the AGM in May for a period of two five year terms.



Returning officers and tallymen were delighted that our count was manual!

Above: Bishop Dermot, Michael McGloin and Patrick Coyle were responsible for the count at the end of the pre-pilgrimage meeting in Kilcuan.

## Board Members (March 2005)

Rev Richard Scriven  
*Chairperson*

Mr Dan Collins  
*Vice Chairperson*

Ms Lourda McGowan  
*Hon Secretary*

Mr John Lynch  
*Treasurer*

Ms Mary Walshe  
*Treasurer*

Ms Mary Wade  
Mr Bill Mulhern  
Mr Gerry Martin  
Mr John O'Reilly  
Mr John Henry  
Ms Gabriel Higgins  
Dr Patrick Coyle  
Dr Bridget Keane  
Mr James White



New Board Members with Rev Richard Scriven, Chairperson IHCPT, at the February Meeting Pre Pilgrimage Meeting (from left): James White (Group 69), Bridget Keane (Group 113 and Hosanna House) John O'Reilly (Group 64) and Rev Richard Scriven (Chairperson IHCPT The Irish Pilgrimage Trust)

# NEWS FROM LOURDES

## THE WAY OF THE CROSS AT LOURDES

Traditionally, doing the Way of the Cross has been a part of a pilgrimage to Lourdes. This ancient practice goes right back to the early Christians in Jerusalem who walked the actual way that Jesus carried his cross from the location of Pilate's house to the hill of Calvary. They stopped along the way and recalled the events that took place: where Jesus fell under the weight of the Cross, where Jesus met the weeping women of Jerusalem, where Veronica wiped his face. These places where they paused were called stations – we continue to use the term to refer to where a train stops along the line.

In each of the Churches in Lourdes it is possible to follow the Way of the Cross and contemplate the final journey of Jesus from Jerusalem to Calvary. There are also two out door locations: the traditional set that is situated on the hill behind the grotto and a Way of the Cross on the Prairie. For a number of years IHCPT has not used the first outdoor set because of the steep climb and descent involved. The other set, on the Prairie, have never been popular with our groups: they are very austere and also are located too close together. In recent years HCPT erected a Way of the Cross on the top end of the Prairie and a beautiful handbook and CD is available from HCPT giving a reflection for each station.

In September 2001 the idea of providing a new Way of the Cross for pilgrims was first considered. An artist, Maria-Zsuzsa de Faykod, was asked to produce the 17 statues that would make up this new Way of the Cross. In addition to the traditional 14 stations three new places of contemplation would be added: Mary standing at the foot of the Cross, the pilgrims on the road to Emmaus, and the Resurrection.

Commitment to finance each of these stations has been given by various pilgrimage groups and during Easter 2005 IHCPT pilgrims will have an opportunity to view the first group of stations. As yet, the exact location for the Way of the Cross in the Domaine has not been finalised.

## WORK AT THE SANCTUARY

The Lourdes authorities continue to use the quiet season (between October and Easter) to do some necessary repair work to the Sanctuary. Improvements on the Way of the Cross on the Hill of the Expéluques have been carried out during winter. Repair work to the 13th station has been done and re-surfacing of the walkway between the 7th and the 14th station has been carried out. A new welcome centre for receiving pilgrims has been created at St Michael's Gate. The surface area and the lighting at St Joseph's gate has also been renewed and will provide safer access for pilgrims, especially those in wheelchairs.

## THE POPE'S GIFT TO LOURDES

A display of photos - over 70 photos - recording the visit of Pope John Paul II's visit to Lourdes in August 2004 are on display in Lourdes.

Perhaps the most surprising aspect of the Pope's pilgrimage to Lourdes came at the very end. He had asked to go to the Grotto one last time, to pray alone, in silence, before leaving for the airport. To the astonishment of the authorities an estimated 100,000 pilgrims had stayed on in Lourdes after that morning's papal Mass to join the Pope in prayer. Not a sound was heard, as the pope and this enormous crowd prayed for several minutes in total silence. No one could remember the last time the Grotto had experienced this level of silence. The pope showed the thousands of pilgrims present the magnificence of silence immersed in prayer.

## THE GOLDEN ROSE

Pope John Paul's personal gift to the shrine was a specially commissioned golden rose. According to ancient Church tradition, popes would give a golden rose to pay tribute to a particular person. It could also be given to an important shrine. In 1876 Pius IX gave a golden rose to the shrine at Lourdes. John Paul II has now given another, making Lourdes the only shrine to have received this honour twice.

## HOSPITALITÉ

In the earliest days of pilgrimages to Lourdes, volunteer 'brancardiers' (stretcher bearers) carried sick pilgrims by stretcher from the station to the Grotto. The brancardiers wore specially designed 'bretelles' (braces). Like ordinary braces the straps went over each shoulder, but they were linked by another strap that went across the back of the neck and shoulders, creating a form of harness. At the bottom the straps tapered into a loop. The handles of a stretcher could be slipped into these loops, and in this way the the weight of the person on the stretcher was shared between the arms and the shoulders of the two brancardiers. This method of carrying pilgrims disappeared long ago, but male voluntary helpers in Lourdes are still known as brancardiers, and members of the Hospitalité of Notre Dame de Lourdes still wear the bretelles as a badge of office. Most wear canvas bretelles, with the senior members wearing leather ones.

Believing that the traditional bretelles worn by members of the Hospitalité no longer have any practical use or meaning for visitors and pilgrims to Lourdes the Bishop of Lourdes, Jacques Perrier, has spoken recently about the need for a distinctive sign for all who work as Volunteer Helpers in the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes. The president of the Hospitalité, Mr Antoine Tierny, has been asked to co-ordinate this project.





# 20TH WORLD YOUTH DAY - GERMANY - AUGUST 2005

Cologne in Germany is the venue for the 20th World Youth Day from 16 to the 21 August 2005. The theme for this Youth Day relates to the ancient tradition of the veneration of the relics of the Magi in Cologne Cathedral: "We have come to worship him" (Mt 2:2). It is a theme that allows for a deepening into the idea of pilgrimage. Just as The Wise Men (The Magi) set out on a long journey unknowing, searching, so the World Youth Day in Cologne will be an invitation for young people to travel with an open mind and heart – to be drawn into the presence of Christ.

## Preparation of WYD in Cologne

The official logo for the event was presented last June. It depicts the essence and characteristics of World Youth Day in Cologne.

The Cross represents Christ, around whom the event centres. It is red to represent love, passion and suffering. The moving star is in gold, and it is a reminder of the birth of Jesus and the pilgrimage of the Magi, but it is also a point of reference that seems to guide the youth of the world towards Cologne for World Youth Day. Cologne Cathedral, where the relics of the Magi have been venerated for centuries, is in red, a colour that associates the Church with the Cross. The elliptical arc that appears like the letter C, indicates Christ as well as *Communio* – universal communion of the Church. It also represents the protective arm of God that

embraces the Church and the entire world. The arc bends towards the Cross and opens up towards it. It is an invitation to face the Crucified and Risen Christ and to adore him, as it says in the theme for the 20th World Youth Day: "We have come to worship him" (Mt 2:2). The lower part of the arc recalls the Rhine river and also the Church that is represented as a boat, reminding us of Noah's saving ark. The colour blue symbolises water.

## THE WYD CROSS

Known as the "Holy Year Cross", the "Jubilee Cross", the "WYD Cross", the "Pilgrim Cross" it was given to young people by Pope John Paul II to take around the world to any place at any time.

This is the big wooden Cross that Pope John Paul II had placed near the main altar in Saint Peter's Basilica where it could be seen by everyone during the Jubilee of the Redemption in 1983. At the end of the Holy Year, the Pope entrusted the Cross – the symbol of our faith – to young people. His words on that occasion were: "My dear young people, at the conclusion of the Holy Year, I entrust to you the sign of this Jubilee Year: the Cross of Christ! Carry it throughout the world as a symbol of Christ's love for humanity, and announce to everyone that only in the death and resurrection of Christ can we find salvation and redemption" (Rome, 22nd April 1984). During the twenty years that



have passed, the Cross has travelled all over the world. Young people have carried it on their shoulders in many countries and cities, and it has always been present at World Youth Day. Since Palm Sunday 2003 when a delegation of young people from Canada passed the World Youth Day Cross on to young people from Germany, the Cross has been on pilgrimage around the countries of Europe. The pilgrimage is presently taking place throughout Europe, north, south, east and west. It will go to Berlin in Germany for Palm Sunday to mark twenty years since the Holy Father entrusted it to young people. Then it will commence its official pilgrimage around Germany. This will conclude with World Youth Day in Cologne in August 2005.

## THE YEAR OF THE EUCHARIST



On October 17, 2004, Pope John Paul II solemnly opened the *Year of the Eucharist* with a Mass celebrated at the 'altar of the confessor' in Saint Peter's Basilica, Rome. In his homily at his mass, the Holy Father asked that the year be used to foster and promote "a keener awareness of the Eucharist, with more deeply felt celebration, with prolonged and fervent adoration, with a greater commitment of fraternity and service to the neediest."

Pope John Paul II reminds us that through the Eucharist Christ is with us (Mt 28:20)

and the bread and wine that have become the Body and Blood of Christ, it is precisely he, the risen Lord, who opens minds and hearts and makes us recognize him, as he made the two disciples at Emmaus recognize him, in the "breaking of the bread" (cf. Lk 24: 35).

The pope linked the Eucharistic Year closely to the Marian Year that had just concluded. During the *Year of the Rosary*, Pope John Paul had called the Church to a Eucharistic spirituality and pointed to Mary, "woman of the Eucharist", as its model. Through Marian devotion we open ourselves to "being conformed to Christ with Mary" as Mary "enables us to enter naturally into Christ's life and as it were to share his deepest feelings." On the other hand – the Pope continues in *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* – in the Eucharistic Celebration, in a certain sense, we always receive, along with the memorial of the death of Christ, the gift of Mary, a gift made to us at the foot of the cross in the person of John (Behold your mother: Jn. 19:27):

"Experiencing the memorial of Christ's death in the Eucharist also means continually receiving this gift. It means accepting – like John – the one who is given to us anew as our Mother. It also means taking on a commitment to be conformed to Christ, putting ourselves at the school of his Mother and allowing her to accompany us. Mary is present, with the Church and as the Mother of the Church, at each of our celebrations of the Eucharist." (*Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 57).

In the document *Mane nobiscum Domine* formally opening the Year of the Eucharist Pope John Paul reminds us that the Rosary itself will prove a particularly fitting introduction to Eucharistic contemplation, a contemplation carried out with Mary as our companion and guide. This traditional prayer has a markedly biblical and evangelical character, focused on the name and the face of Jesus as contemplated in the mysteries and by the repetition of the "Hail Mary". In its flow of repetitions it evokes within our hearts the same love that Mary bore for her Son.

## CHRISTMAS CARDS

Thanks to everyone who bought or sold IHCPT Christmas Cards. A special word of thanks to all who co-ordinated their distribution at regional level. Christmas Cards are an important source of income but also are a great way to spread the news about IHCPT. If you or your business would like to have cards customised for your business please contact the IHCPT office at Kilcuan 091 796622 info@ihcpt.com

## Early Bird

Thanks to all who returned their application forms and fares to the office in time for the Early Bird Draw. This will take place in Lourdes at the end of the IHCPT Benefactors' Mass. The lucky winner will travel as a guest with IHCPT in 2006.

## INVITATIONS

Be a part of IHCPT by praying every day for all the work of IHCPT - young people, carers, benefactors, officers. Pray for us and we will pray for you

## CODE OF PRACTICE

IHCPT have updated their Code of Practice. This booklet outlines the policies and protocols of IHCPT and all members of our organisation are requested to be familiar with its contents. A copy can be obtained by contacting the office at Kilcuan.

IHCPT is presently preparing a revised edition of The Group Leader's Manual. This is the *bible* for all group leaders of IHCPT and contains information that is necessary for the running of a group. This manual will be available for next pilgrimage year. It will reflect the most up to date child protection policies.

# THE ACORN PAGE

## NEWS IN A NUTSHELL

Are you receiving more than one copy of our magazine, or are we sending the magazine to the correct address or would you like us to send this magazine to a friend?

Contact our office - details page 3

### IHCPT VIDEO

An informative video about the work of IHCPT here in Ireland and in France is available from Kilcuan. If you are having a meeting or a fund-raising gathering please contact the office to arrange to have a video mailed to you.

### FATIMA

Sister Lucia, the last survivor of the three children who saw the Virgin Mary in an apparition at Fatima, Portugal, in 1917, died on February 13th, aged 97.

John Paul II met Sister Lucia, a Carmelite nun, on three occasions: on May 13 in the years 1982, 1991 and 2000. The first encounter took place exactly a year after the attempt on the Pope's life in St Peter's Square in which he almost died. On that occasion, the Pope went to Fatima to give thanks to the Virgin Mary for saving him, and ordered that, as a sign of gratitude, the bullet found in his jeep after the assassination attempt be set in the crown of the image of the Virgin of Fatima.

The second meeting, in 1991, took place on the tenth anniversary of the assassination attempt. The last occasion was on May 13, 2000, when the Holy Father beatified her cousins, the shepherd children Francisco and Jacinta, who both died during the great flu epidemic of 1918-20. At this meeting Cardinal Secretary of State Angelo Sodano read a message concerning the third secret of Fatima.

### HOSANNA HOUSE 2005

IHCPT Hosanna House Group travel to Lourdes in June. This group stay in Hosanna House in Bartres and participate in all of the regular Lourdes activities. A relaxed pace, beautiful setting, wonderful facilities, a great way to enjoy a week in Lourdes. Contact HQ for details for this year's pilgrimage or next year.

## 2006 35 YEARS TRAVELLING

2006 will be the 35th anniversary of IHCPT and the golden jubilee of HCPT. HCPT are already beginning preparations for this celebration and no doubt we won't be too shy letting everybody know that we are 35 years in that year also!



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# HAPPY THE PEACEMAKERS THEY SHALL BE CALLED CHILDREN OF GOD

The world is a more dangerous place today to live in than ever before in history and hence a peace theme is so appropriate for Easter 2005.

Just think of the 9/11 horrific destruction of the Twin Towers in New York; the deadly continuing violence of the war in Iraq; the shameful massacre at Beslan in Russia of so many innocent children; the wanton often brutal incidence of violence on the streets of our towns and cities; the fear that the peace process negotiated with such skill and determination might now be unravelling. Happy the Peacemakers they shall be called Children of God should find an echo in all our hearts.

Pope John Paul in his 1985 World Day of Peace message said, "the future of peace lies in your heart – in your heart and mine. "My own peace", Jesus says, "I have given to you (Jn 14:17).

Peace begins with you and then becomes contagious. You become a creator of a special kind of peace, a maker of peace in conflict situations whether at home or at work or as a carer on our Easter Pilgrimage.

We have all met at some time in our lives a truly peace-filled person. You feel graced by his/her or their presence and brought closer to your own peace. It could be wonderful to meet you at Easter! But will it?

The making of a peace-maker can be summed up in three little words. Pray. Suffer. Give.

## PRAY

We must pray. This is the key to peace. Only God can bring peace. "Peace is not ours", Pope Paul VI once said "it comes down from the invisible Kingdom".

Praying at the Grotto in the quiet of the evening or night alone or in a small group is one of the lovely traditions of our Pilgrimage. Night prayers can often be a very beautiful moment at the end of the day.

Remember that we must pray not only for the victims of violence but also for the men and women of violence that their hearts may be changed.

Remember too that our prayers must come from a compassionate heart. Never forget as you pray those challenging words of Jesus, "Be compassionate as your Heavenly Father is compassionate" (Lk 6:56). The Father wants us to go on loving the torturer, the murderer, the dictator, the racist, the capitalist who starves his people. Jesus is silent. In silence he experiences what it is like being the victim of every kind of violence and injustice. And then He gives that most extraordinary cry of love – a cry of excuse for humanity's sickness of spirit, "Father forgive them. They do not know what they are doing" (Lk 23:34). The logic or illogicality of the Gospel demands that we must pray from compassionate forgiving hearts if our prayer is to be efficacious. That was Mary's kind of prayer as she stood at the foot of the cross and so in the fullness of time deserved to be crowned "Queen of Peace".

## SUFFER

When Jesus appeared to his disciples and said. "Peace be with you", He showed them His hands and His sides, scarred by the horrible sufferings of the Cross (Jn 20:20:21). Peace-making must scare us as it scared Him. It can really hurt to repeat the words of Jesus "Peace be with you" to someone who has hurt us, given us a 'stab in the back'! It can be very painful to "turn the other cheek, lend your coat as well as your shirt, walk the other mile (cf Mt 15:40-42) of forgiving not seven but seventy seven times" (cf Mt 18:21-22).

Cardinal Danneels once said that "we must be willing to pay as a high price for peace through non-violent means as soldiers are expected to pay for peace by means of war". I need hardly add how important it is to ensure that those who are suffering from sickness or various forms of disability offer their sufferings through the intercession of Mary for peace in our time. And we can add in our own too.!

## GIVE

Give all for peace – no matter how small and insignificant it may be. I've always been struck by the Gospel incident of the small boy with just five barley loaves and two fishes. And Andrew, Peter's brother, said, "what are they among so many?" (Jn 6:10). Yet Jesus was just waiting for that gesture, that insignificant offer, in order to exercise his power and feed all those who were hungry.

We must offer all that we can for peace in the world. A forgiving hand instead of a cold shoulder; a smile instead of a scowl; a sickness or disability cheerfully accepted; a prayer from a compassionate heart. Then through the power of Christ this becomes such an important instrument of peace in our world.

## PRAY. SUFFER. GIVE.

We pray that the special grace of our Easter Pilgrimage 2005 may be the making of Peacemakers. Mary Queen of Peace, pray for us. Amen.

