



# NEWSLETTER

## MSC Lay Associates Irish Province



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Welcome to the second edition of our newsletter for the MSC Lay Associates of the Irish Province. We had a wonderful response to our first newsletter. With updates in this newsletter from Russia, South Africa and Venezuela, we can truly support and help each other, despite the distance that separates us.

Our newsletter has also been shared with the Lay Associates of the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the United States and in Mexico. As requested, it has been sent to lay associates in Europe and in South America. In so many ways, we can come together and learn from one another.

This newsletter is published from Harker Heights, TX and we plan 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 will only be successful if everyone shares and contributes to it and we are blessed to see that happening.

Please submit articles about your group and your activities, along with pictures when possible. Since the photographs make it difficult for many of you to receive the newsletter, we will note when they are available if you can receive them and we will post them on the Irish website.

We are pleased to have two outstanding articles from MSC priests published in this edition with others for the future.

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

*May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be everywhere known and loved.*

## **What Being an MSC Lay Associate Means to Me**

To me, being a Lay Associate is not “another” ministry, but the spirituality affects how I carry out all my other ministries. I try, in everything I do, to spread an awareness of, and gratitude for the love that the Sacred Heart of Jesus has for each of us.

*Katie Fitzpatrick*

*Harker Heights, Texas*

***Katie generously shared her thoughts about what being an MSC Lay associate means in her 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 started with the Laity attending the Provincial Conference in Ireland in April, 2008. Since then, we have added other names & email addresses shared 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.*

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**Erkin Aymurzaev** from **Russia** shares with us what is happening in his part of the world. Erkin, you are in our prayers as you continue to build a Lay Associate community in Pyatigorsk.

I got first edition of Lay Associate newsletter. It is very interesting.

Through the objective reasons, I will begin to help to MSCs community in Pyatigorsk from January of 2009.

Therefore I can write shortly only about the lay activities from the KBR (its neighbour region of Pyatigorsk).

Below you can read.

On May of 2007, the church in KBR decided to build the small chapel in the small town Prokhladny (60<sup>ty</sup> km from Nalchik).

Some of the parishioners of KBR made a decision to give support to the construction a chapel free of charge.

So construction began. There were many difficulties during the process.

Anyway, on January of 2009 on the feast day of Twelfth Day our bishop Clemens came and dedicated a new chapel!

In the sequel, I'll try to share something about the lay activities from Russia.

God bless you!

With kind regard,

Erkin

*Erkin attached photographs of the construction and dedication of the chapel in Prokhladny.*

### **Mary Gagiano** sends us the following update from **South Africa:**

I would just like to give you some news on our group. We started with only three people and we have managed to increase this number to ten. We have had monthly meetings and on the 25th October, we had a half day of prayer and reflection. This was a really spiritual and

## Requests:

Please pray for our Chevalier Family around the world.

Please pray for Erkin Aymurzaev as he continues to establish an MSC Lay Associate group in Pyatigorsk.

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.

## Comments:

I am not an MSC Lay Associate of the Irish Province, but I would like to get the Newsletter. Is that okay? Can I contribute articles to the newsletter?

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

**Carol Allred, Frank Cooney** and the Harker Heights Lay Associate group share this newsletter with you, and ask for your feedback, articles and support.

*The Irish Province has generously agreed to post a copy of this newsletter on their website: [www.MSCireland.com](http://www.MSCireland.com).*

## Mary Gagiano (continued)

memorable experience. We started with Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament and this really was very beautifully done by Fr. Vincent Sello. He also gave the group a very good spiritual talk on the "Spirituality of the Heart is about Love" (*Talk included in this newsletter*) which set the theme for the rest of the morning. We prayed together and reflected on the Love of The Sacred Heart of Jesus, and ended with a discussion, in which everyone joined. We had six visitors from St. Matthews and St. Vincent's Parishes in Tembisa, and the morning was really a great success.

Late last year, small groups of parishioners coming from different MSC parishes throughout Southern Africa showed an interest to attend the Initial Formation Process to become Lay MSC Associates. These groups have been meeting on a regular basis in their respective Parishes.

On the weekend of 17 January 2009, 35 members from MSC Parishes got together at the Mater Dei Pastoral Centre in Mokopane. Groups from Midrand and Tembisa Parishes in Gauteng met the different Limpopo groups. The meeting co-ordinated by Fr. Frank Gallagher was a great success.

It was also a great opportunity for sharing and getting to know each other. It was decided to start the Initial Formation Process (1<sup>st</sup> year) in each group in 2009.

*Mary sends us a picture of the MSC Lay Associates at their January joint gathering.*

**Antonia Garcia** shares some of the activities the laity in **Venezuela** are participating in:

I am very pleased that we are in touch; Here in Maracaibo we are doing very well in teaching first communion, in our last reunion with Father Vincent we talk about some activities during Christmas, one of them will be a Party for the children and another one for elderly people that live in an assisting living facility.

*Antonio has more information and possibly photographs to share in the future. Many blessings for our associates in Venezuela.*

## **Spirituality of the Heart is about Love**

*By Fr. Vincent Sello MSC*

A mission of love; manifesting the Kindness of God.

The mission is carried out in the work of service, and by the way of serving; in love and kindness.

The service is to be Missionaries of the Love of Christ, to work to deliver people from the evils of their time.

Fr. Chevalier proposed a double motive.

On the one hand the excellence (of devotion to the Sacred Heart) and on the other the extent and depth of the evil of which it is the remedy.

This double motive, he believed, demonstrated – the foundation of a special society, whose members, by taste and attraction and particular vocation consecrate themselves especially to the service of the Sacred Heart, becoming its apostles in order to apply the remedy and propagate its benefits. This can be regarded as a double aim; or more truly, it can be seen as seeking to incarnate the total Christian message of saving love in the whole life of people, personal and social.

In his book on the Sacred Heart, Fr. Chevalier gives some indication as to how devotion to the Sacred Heart is the remedy for the ills of his time. He quotes Mgs. Bandry.

**Father Ciarán Mac Cárthaigh MSC** was Provincial Leader from 1993-2005. He was enthusiastic, zealous, encouraging and persistent in promoting mutual collaboration of laity and MSCs in the various ministries throughout the Province. It was mainly due to his thrust and drive that laity are now mutual participants in all the Assemblies, Conferences and Chapters of the Province.

**Father Ciarán sent us the following letter and article on Forgiveness. We publish Part I in this newsletter.**

### **Forgiveness:**

At the outset, before I begin my short input on forgiveness, which I have divided into two parts, I wish to congratulate Carol Allred and Frank Cooney for their initiative in producing the ***Newsletter: MSC Lay Associates Irish Province***. I had the pleasure of getting to know them this summer (2008) when supplying for Fr. Richard O'Rourke MSC at Harker Heights. I also noticed that they requested contributors for the ***Newsletter***. Thus, my effort to contribute. I also take this opportunity to greet all those Lay Associates and Laity that I got to know over the years in USA, Venezuela, South Africa, Russia, Ireland and England.

### **Forgiveness:**

#### **Part One:**

The ***Constitutions and Statutes of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (MSC)***, number 32 states:

*“Ours is as spirit of family and a spirit of brotherhood (sisterhood), formed by kindness and understanding, by compassion and mutual **forgiveness**, by gentleness, humility and simplicity, by hospitality and a sense of humour”.*

The above quotation captures well the spirit of our founder, Jules Chevalier. While it was written for the professed members, it is easy to see that it equally and aptly applies to Lay Associates and all who are engaged with us in our works throughout the world. There are many challenges in that one number, none more so than the call to forgiveness – which of course is a constituent part of the great prayer ‘*Our Father*’.

***“To err is human, to forgive is divine”*** (Alexander Pope). This is an old adage and a sound one. However, what are we to make of the ‘*Our Father*’ which seems to indicate that God will only forgive our sins if we forgive the sins of others, or Jesus’ response to Peter’s question about how to forgive a brother or sister, ***“seventy times seven”*** (Mt.18:22). Apparently, to forgive is expected of us humans as well as to err. Many admired Pope John Paul II forgiveness of the man who tried to assassinate him, Mehmet Ali Agca, but few seem willing to go the same route themselves.

## Spirituality of the Heart is about Love

By Fr. Vincent Sello MSC

(Continued)

“To the egoism of our epoch and to the sensual tendencies, to its religious indifference, it opposes the cult which is the most dedicated, the purest, the most disinterested, the most tender and compassionate”.

Fr. Chevalier indicates how its presentation of the humble Christ helps overcome pride, the obedience of Christ, totally submitted to his Father’s will, challenges men’s spirit of total independence; Christ’s immense charity and his desire for unity overcomes the spirit of division and finally – the noble and generous strength – of Christ delivers us from a servile spirit towards the state in its unjust demands. While they must render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, Christians must have the courage to stand up for the demands of Truth and Justice.

The way of serving – is love and kindness.

The first response to our vision of Christ in his love will naturally be a love given to him in return and a sharing in his love for others.

We will serve him, practicing his virtues, his zeal for the glory of God, his patience, his charity towards others, his kindness, his humility, his spirit of poverty.

## Forgiveness: Part I

By Father Ciarán Mac Cárthaigh MSC

(continued)

**The need to forgive and be forgiven is present throughout our lives.** We hurt, and are hurt by those we love on many occasions during the course of our relationships. Old angers may have turned into sourness and resentment. Brooding on injuries may have hardened our hearts. A lack of acceptance and support in life’s more painful moments may have led to our feeling unwanted, unloved and unvalued. Pride, self-centeredness, and injured self-esteem may have left us in a far country, distanced from those we once loved. Awareness of time passing far too quickly and opportunities for reconciliation lost may bring a sense of urgency to issues related to forgiveness. Perhaps, especially those who are entering the latter stages of life, there is a felt need to put not only our financial affairs in order, but also our relationships in order. Often enough though, we find ourselves reluctant to extend the olive branch of peace and forgiveness to those who hurt us.

**Genuine forgiveness does require that we acknowledge that an injury has been done.** Forgiveness is not to be confused with denying the severity of the offence or the consequences of the injury. To practice forgiveness is to play a part in breaking out of the cycle of pain and retaliation that inflicts more pain and requires further acts of revenge in a futile effort to even the score, be it at a personal, communal, national, or global level.

**Forgiveness is the stage of choice.** It is a stage of letting go of my need to blame and get even. The choice, the decision to forgive must be made over and over again until it takes root in me – “*Ours is a spirit of ... forgiveness*” (No.32). Let us realize that **forgiveness is the heartbeat of healing.** It is the challenge to **choose to let go ... and let God.**

**“Forgive and forget”.** Many of us learned that maxim both in our families and in our Churches. Perhaps, we were taught, in one way or another, that true forgiveness occurs when we forget the anger consequent to particular words and/or actions of others or oneself. The reality for many of us, however, is that we have never been able to forget certain experiences in our lives. Some authors call these critical incidents because they may have changed our lives irrevocably. The nature of such experiences vary from person to person. They may have occurred in childhood, adolescence, adulthood, in family, community, relationships and work. If a critical incident involved(s) pain and suffering, with concomitant hurt and anger, **our challenge is to forgive and remember.** In other words, we must eventually let go of our desire to punish and get even with the other(s) or oneself. In doing so we remember the incident in order to heal ourselves and get on with our lives.

## Spirituality of the Heart is about Love

By Fr. Vincent Sello

(Continued)

God, who is goodness itself  
(Dues Charitas est) whose heart  
is full of love for all who weep,  
groan and suffer, love to see in  
his children a likeness to  
himself. And when he meets a  
truly compassionate soul, he  
gives it abundant grace.

The image of Christ the Good  
Shepherd was one, which Fr.  
Chevalier loved.

**From: “Man with a Mission”:  
EJ Cuskelly**

### Love

(compassion, care  
acceptance,  
acknowledgment, inclusion,  
mutual trust, non-judgment)

“Love sums up the whole person;

it is the whole person  
concentrated at one point.

All the rays converge on this one  
centre;

everything harmonises:  
attraction, feeling, instinct,  
intelligence, will;

and all of it echoes together at  
the same time in the heart.”

*Jules Chevalier MSC,*

*Le Sacre-Coeur de Jesus, 103*

## Forgiveness: Part I

By Father Ciarán Mac Cárthaigh MSC

(continued)

However, if we are repeatedly recounting the same hurt to anyone who will give us a listening ear, or whom we impose our story over and over again, then we have not forgiven.

Critical incidents do change us. Things are never the same afterwards, but we can and must move on in order to lead a healthier psychological and spiritual life. In a process, both psychological and spiritual, we call on our own resources and at the same time, call on God to assist us in our journey. Both **psychological research and theological reflection** point to the truth that only by our willingness to absorb and extinguish within us the fire of anger and hatred, refusing it the fuel of negative thoughts, and replacing it with loving compassion for the other, can we ever reach genuine peace within our individual lives and our world, “*Ours is a spirit of ... compassion*” (No.32).

Research reported in *USA Today* has hailed forgiveness as the single most important ingredient in producing happiness. Robert Enright, director of the International Forgiveness Institute, who has been engaged for decades in the study of forgiveness, concludes: “**People who are deeply and unjustly hurt by others can heal emotionally by forgiving the offender**”. Forgiveness provides both peace and personal freedom as indicated by Nelson Mandela, the President of South Africa in his 1994 inaugural speech: “**If I did not forgive I would still be in prison**”. Let us clearly state that **forgiveness is a personal decision to pardon another. It does NOT require the other’s permission, approval or knowledge.**

Forgiveness is both a decision and a process. It is a **decision** that I want to heal myself. It is a **process** that entails being realistic with myself as I go through the journey of letting go of my desire for punishment and revenge. Forgiveness **does not mean** that in the decision and process, I eventually come to condone and forget what happened – not at all. In some ways, that notion of forgiving and forgetting is precisely what has **blocked** many of us from achieving forgiveness. Rather, forgiveness means that while I do not condone what happened to me, I eventually pardon the person involved. In doing so, as the ‘*Our Father*’ says, I forgive each one that is in debt to me.

We recall again, that when Peter asked Jesus how many times he had to forgive another, Jesus gave a startling answer: “*I say to you, not seven times, but seventy times seven*”(Mt.18: 21-23). What Jesus was telling us through that response, using the variable of the biblical number seven, is that **forgiveness is a limitless and ongoing part of our lives.** “*Ours is a spirit of ... forgiveness*” (No.32).

**Ciarán Mac Cárthaigh MSC**