



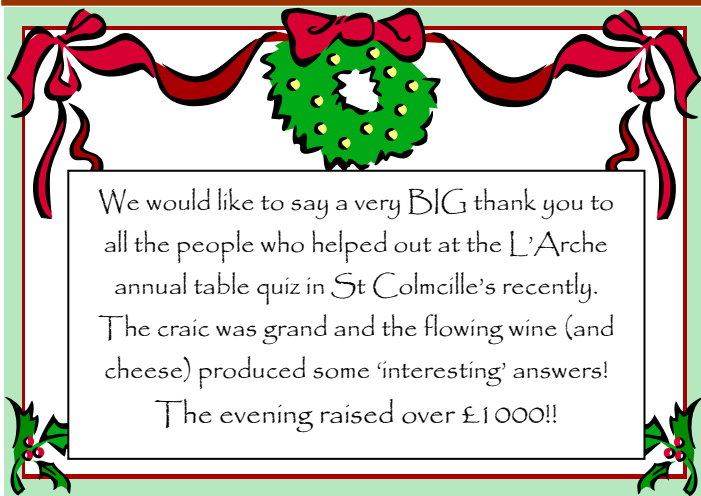
# L'Arche Belfast News & Views December 2007



## Quote

~ May Peace be your gift at Christmas  
and your blessing all year through! ~

Author Unknown



We would like to say a very BIG thank you to all the people who helped out at the L'Arche annual table quiz in St Colmcille's recently. The craic was grand and the flowing wine (and cheese) produced some 'interesting' answers! The evening raised over £1000!!

## Dates for your Diaries

- Fri. 7<sup>th</sup>** Carol Concert in St. Gall's Church, Carnalea. You are welcome to come along with us. It is normally a beautiful evening and a great way to touch into a real sense of Advent & Christmas.  
**Details from Gwen (028 90 221 337)**
- Tues 11<sup>th</sup>** 7.30 p.m. A.G.M. (with a festive flavour). St. John's Parish Hall, Ormeau Road. Supper provided. All are welcome!!!
- Mon. 24<sup>th</sup>** Christmas Eve - Kristkindle Celebration in the morning TBC. (Invitation Only) Family and Friends Gathering in The Ember 6 pm. - 8 pm. - All are welcome.
- Fri. 28<sup>th</sup> - Jan 2<sup>nd</sup>** Community Holidays and New Year Retreat and Reflection time in Galway.

**Happy Christmas & New Year everyone!**

## Birthdays & Anniversaries



We celebrate you, and the gifts you bring into our world - we give thanks that you are part of our lives

Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> - Megan

## Welcomes & Farewells



With a real sense of sadness we bid farewell to Gregor this month. We wish he could have stayed a little longer. We also welcome the Shively family - Jim, Amy and Beth who will be visiting over Christmas. Some of you already know Beth who was our office assistant a few years ago.

## Update:

The Table Quiz Night was a tremendous success. Thanks to all of you who came. Thanks too to Gwen for the beautiful painting she donated. WHAT TALENT & GENEROSITY !!!

Maureen and Malcolm are expecting a baby in June - how about that for news? They have timed its arrival to coincide with Fr. Joe's birthday!!! If it's a boy then apparently he will be named 'Wee Joey' and if it's a girl, well how about ... Wee 'Josie' !!!

There are lots of Christmas and Advent events coming up that we hope to be involved in, in one way or another. You can ring Gwen in the office for specifics if you want to join in. Apparently there will be a festive feel in Streamvale Open Farm for most of December so we will probably go along there one afternoon or evening. Finally, Please don't forget Noah's World when you are doing your Christmas shopping this year.

**The Dream:** Together in community we dream of "a world ... where people, whatever their race, religion, culture, abilities or disabilities can find a place and reveal their gifts" - Jean Vanier, Founder of

## Maria's Musings

There are 3 of us in the office right now. We have been drinking coffee, eating biscuits and chatting about how impossibly busy life has become. Funny thing is, at the launching of our Kristkindl/Advent tradition last Tuesday evening, Rebecca read us a children's Christmas story about a tiny wee boy, homeless and in rags looking for somewhere that would welcome him on Christmas Eve. Barefoot, he walked the streets, looking in through people's windows, waiting and hoping that someone, somewhere would see him and invite him to be part of their lives – but it didn't happen. Why? Well as old as the story is it is still 'the same old story'. As foreign as the story is, it is as familiar as this moment of time in this very office. No-one could see him because no-one had the time! Thinking about that makes me wonder how many of life's miracles pass us by every day, while we are frantically trying to keep up. You will recognise that this is a theme that has been present in so many of our reflections over the past 18 months or so – Time – the lack of it – the stress of it – the longing for it. And yet, even though it is so much part of our thinking, it is almost as if we are helpless to do something about it. It seems as if time has become an enemy somehow – something that we have to fight and wrestle with – and in all of that fighting we may well be losing the gifts that are available to us in the here and now.

In the German story, the little boy meandered through the town streets where people were consumed by their own consuming. He wandered through the avenues that housed the rich and powerful, but their doors were locked to protect all of their possessions. Finally, as all good Christmas tales go, he found himself in front of the house of a poor widow and her two children. A candle flickered in the window to announce the Christmas season. The widow and her children celebrated around the branch of a tree. It was there that he found his welcome. It was there that he found love. It was there that there was enough time to welcome the One who comes.

I guess my question is – how many times in this past year have I failed to recognise or welcome the living Jesus because I have been too busy. This Advent and Christmas we pray for the gift of slow living. We pray that we may become more and more conscious of the moment that we are in, and of the fact that it is all that we need.

We pray that we will learn to trust, that we have enough, that we are enough and that there always will be enough. We pray that we are made free from the longing to be perfect, the longing to have more, the longing to do more, the longing to be relevant in the world. Make us little Lord, so that we can see you when you come in your littleness. Make our door always open.

May each and everyone of you have a slow, soft and welcoming Christmas.

Maria

## *Together we Pray*

*Loving God*

*You call us into being  
and give us our mission,*

*Thank You*

*for the gift of one another,*

*Thank You for our journey*

*together in L'Arche.*

*Help us to grow*

*in our response to you,*

*Listening to your voice within us,*

*Seeing You around us,*

*Delighting in our gifts,*

*Forgiving one another*

*for our failings,*

*Welcoming tomorrow*

*in Faith, Hope and Love.*

*Amen*

### *We give thanks:*

- For the generosity of our friends, without whom we could not exist.
- For the new life that appears here and there every single month to remind us that all is well.
- For renewed vitality and hope in the community.
- That we have enough, that we are enough, and that we will always be enough.

### *We ask:*

- For the healing of Sister Aileen, from L'Arche Dublin, who is currently in hospital & others in the community who have been struggling with on-going illness'
- That each of us, and all of our friends are blessed during this Advent & Christmas.

## Connection Points

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