



News & Views – February 2008



Quote

*“The God we serve is looking for a people
Who will be knit as one community;
who will be glad to bear each other's burdens
and whose commitment fuels their unity.
In lives like these the spirit's gifts are nurtured;
by love and joy and peace their faith is known;
may we be found among the honoured number,
a holy people Christ is pleased to call his own”.*

Hymn (Anon)

Dates for your Diaries

Tue 12th **Visitors's Evening**, Scott & Megan's
58 Knock Eden Park, 7.30 p.m.

Fri 29th **Leap with L'Arche!!** Party evening
for Maria, Mary & Megan at
Belmont Tower, East Belfast.
Let's make it a gathering to remember
All are welcome – contact Gwen at
The Ark for more details.

Birthdays & Anniversaries-Feb 2008



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

- 2nd Debbie Abbott
- 3rd Rebecca Gower
- 18th Megan's L'Arche Anniversary
- 23rd Joseph Huffman
- 25th Scott's L'Arche Anniversary
- 25th Maria Garvey
- 25th Christine Shively
- 26th Henri Kotvrda

Welcomes & Farewells



With a real sense of loss we said goodbye to Hannah and James from The Ember last month. We welcomed Lynda to our office and she is getting her feet under the table these days! And the surprising news this month is that Gwen who is known to one and all through her 'big hospitable heart' will be leaving her role in the office at the end of this month. We are delighted though that she is open to continuing her relationship with us as a community member and that she excited about her new job.

Update: Looking back at the month of January it seems as if it was as long as a year and that we have been busy for every moment of it but if we ask ourselves what we have been up to there isn't much to report. I think that January often seems to be like that.

We are currently looking at how to broaden our friend and volunteer base. Because of so much transition lately we really need some practical support at the moment and we want to start considering how to regularly involve others in meeting that need. If you would like to be involved in this project and feel that you have time to offer (no matter how little) please contact the office at info@larchebelfast.org.uk or by phone at 028 90 221337.

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 L'Arche

Stone Houses

Some people live without anything and have everything.
The example that always comes to mind for me is in Africa. This little old black African man and I prayed together after a long session. He prayed with such tenderness, saying, "O Lord, help us never to move into stone houses." And everybody echoed, "Yes, Lord. Yes, Lord."

Afterward I asked the missionaries what he had meant. "Well," a priest said, "look at the villages. They're all door-less thatch huts. And so as long as you live a simple life in a thatch hut with no doors, you don't know where your family ends and where the next family begins. You move in and out of one another's lives, and it's all really one family. And there's no possessing, there's no mine and thine; it's ours. It's a world of community." "Once the first stone hut is built in a village," the missionary continued, "very quickly a door and locks are put on it. Immediately the world of mine and thine is created. The entire social worldview, the entire understanding of self, changes but . . . I'd say you can't see God very well if you spend too much time inside your stone house.

*Richard Rohr
A Spirituality of Subtraction*

Out of the blue the other day someone sent me on this article and it really spoke to my heart so I thought that I would share it with you. I love the idea of not knowing where your family ends and where the next family begins. It's what community has always meant for me – a community that is always bigger than the boundaries that we could ever put on it – a community that could eventually become the whole of the world.

In January we have been praying fervently for Robin's full recovery. Robin is one of Megan's closest friends from childhood who had to have very major surgery in January in an attempt to arrest and reverse a progressive closing of her arteries which caused Robin to have the first of many strokes 5 years ago when she was in her late twenties. Every day we prayed with all of our hearts. It was extraordinary to witness how we could love someone we have never met. It made my heart turn over because we have always had the notion of our tiny community being the possibility of a World Wide Web of Humanity and here it - stretching all the way from the Ormeau Road in Belfast to Bozeman, Montana and beyond. Our assistants leave and every one of them comes back, if only to visit – they are part of that web that is spreading to places that we don't even know but belong to us anyway.

We have never closed the circle when we pray in the community. It's so that there is a space in our community for all that we cannot see. Even though our houses are made of bricks and mortar with doors – maybe we are managing to keep the mud hut mentality alive!!!

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 Robin's slow sure recovery and for her place in the community of our hearts. Thinking about her makes our world bigger.
- That our lives are filled with possibilities that excite us and prayer that sustains us.

We ask:

- That we continue to live in a spirit of friendship, joy and abundance.
- That we are good friends to one another and to others.
- That our world grows bigger and bigger and that all those who are in our hearts for whom life is challenging because of ill health, despair, family problems and other suffering will be blessed by our prayers and our longing to support them.

Connection Points

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