Dear Sisters and Associates,

Once again we are in the beautiful Spring season - the season of new life, of Easter and Resurrection.

Much has changed in our Region in the last few months. As we say goodbye and express our heartfelt appreciation to Anne, Eithne, Maeve and Mary for their vision, inspiration and deep commitment we send a warm céad míle fáilte to the new Regional Leadership Team - the three Anne’s! May “the Lord lead you, guide you and show you the way”.

We ask you to pray for the Pre-Associates who will make their commitment on Pentecost Sunday in Carrickmacross. May the Holy Spirit empower them with courage and enthusiasm.

We wish our 2012 Jubilarians joy-filled celebrations. We offer our sincere sympathy and prayers to all families, communities and friends and to all our Sisters and Associates who have been recently bereaved. We send prayerful support to those whose lives have been touched by illness.

We send you God’s blessing and good wishes for a fruitful year ahead. May you experience something of the Resurrection in your life.

Risen One,
Come meet me
In the garden of my life
Risen One,
Send me forth as a disciple

Of your unwavering love,
A messenger
Of your unlimited joy.
Resurrected One,
May I become
Ever more convinced
That your presence lives on,
And on, and on and on.
Awaken me! (Awaken Me - Joyce Rupp)

Siblings, Maids, Mary and Barbara

Unity in Diversity
Sister Máire Cannon, the Deputy Principal of St Louis Primary School Monaghan, retired on the 29th February after 36 years of dedicated service to the school community. Her retirement is doubly significant as Maire is the last sister of the St Louis Order to retire from full-time teaching in Ireland.

On Thursday 1st March a special prayer service and concert were held in the school to provide the School Community with the opportunity to bid Máire a fond farewell. In attendance were local clergy, a very large and most welcome representation of the Sisters of St Louis, and many loyal people associated with the school during Máire's teaching life.

The theme of the proceedings was ‘Memories and New Beginnings’ and they began with a beautiful prayer service followed by an hour-long feast of entertainment provided by all the classes. Máire, a native of Donegal, is renowned for her great love of the Irish language and culture, and of local history and nature. The children and staff put their whole hearts into the show as a token of their great affection and respect for Sister Máire.

After the concert many glowing tributes were paid. Máire’s warm friendly personality and her great dedication to her profession over the past 36 years got frequent mention as did her vision for education in the St Louis tradition. She instilled a firm belief in the presence of God and goodness all around us. Sr Máire’s pastoral care of the children and families in the school and in the local community will always be fondly remembered and greatly appreciated.

Tributes were also paid to the community of the Sisters of St Louis, who for 152 years have contributed so much to the education of children in Monaghan Town and throughout the country. Máire sincerely thanked everyone in attendance and spoke fondly of her time in St Louis, her thorough enjoyment of teaching, her happy memories of the many staff members she worked with, the support of the children’s parents and the extended school community, and in particular, the privilege of having worked with the wonderful children whom she taught.  

(Taken from The Northern Standard)
A very heartfelt “Thank-you” for your wonderful support when my beloved sister, Grainne, died. I was really touched by all your letters, Masses offered, phone calls and visits and your presence at Grainne’s wake in her home and at her funeral Mass. All these expressions of love were a real comfort to me and all my family. In deep appreciation, Holy Mass has been offered for you all. Dymphna O’Daly

Thank you, Sisters, for your kind expressions of sympathy on the death of your dear brother Peter. I appreciated your attendance at Peter’s home and funeral Mass. A sincere ‘Thank you’ also for having Masses offered and for your letters and phone calls. They have been a great comfort to me and my family. Mass will be offered for your intentions. Maura Dempsey

Dear Sisters, It was really a great source of comfort and consolation to me, on the death of my sister, Joan, to receive your warm messages of sympathy, prayers and Masses offered. Many thanks. Holy Mass has been offered for all of you. Loreto Hickey

Thank you, Sisters, for your kind expressions of sympathy on the death of my sister Nellie Sheahan. My family and I are deeply grateful for all the Masses and prayers offered for the happy repose of her soul. This was a great source of comfort to all of us. Mass has been offered for your intentions.

Mary Hayes

Dear Sisters, On behalf of myself and my sisters, nieces and nephew, I wish to thank you all for such great kindness and support at the time of Joe’s death and since then. Our grateful thanks to all who attended the removal, funeral Mass and both, for sending individual or Community sympathy cards, letters, phone calls and messages. They were all a great consolation and will be for ever remembered with both affection and gratitude. Mass will be offered in Knock for all your intentions. Priscilla

Sisters Margaret and Mary Healy and their family wish to thank very sincerely all those who offered them sympathy and support when their dear brother Vincent died suddenly in December. So many sent lovely letters, cards, mass cards. While we would like to respond to each we don’t feel able to, and hope you will understand. Sisters and friends travelled to the funeral in Margate. Others travelled to the funeral mass and burial in Co Clare. We are deeply appreciative of and grateful to all. Mass has been offered for your intentions.

Gertie Remembered

Last December the three “singing priests” – Frs Eugene and Martin O’Hagan and David Delargy delighted a huge audience with their concert in the Waterfront Hall, Belfast. In the course of the concert they spoke of their happy days in Garron Tower and how a St Louis Sister, Marie Gertrude RIP, had a wonderful influence on their musical development. Their affection for her was very evident. Her birthday, they said, would have been the previous day and she would have been ninety-seven years old. It was very moving to hear these world renowned artists speak publicly and with genuine fondness of ‘Gertie’. Dymphna O’Daly

World Environment Day June 5th 2012

Dear Sisters, It was really a great source of comfort and consolation to me, on the death of my sister, Joan, to receive your warm messages of sympathy, prayers and Masses offered. Many thanks. Holy Mass has been offered for all of you.

Loreto Hickey
Some years ago we all derived great pleasure from Sister Gabrielle Mary’s very popular, publication – “LINK” Thank you Gabrielle.

In one of those issues of “Link”, Dympna O’Daly wrote about a day when about sixty St Louis Sisters converged on the poet Patrick Kavanagh’s home place of Inniskeen, in Co Monaghan. We print it now in Seo Agus Siud many years later, with the hope that it will reawaken some happy memories.

Patrick Kavanagh must have been smiling broad-ly on a Saturday in Febru-ary several years ago, when almost sixty St Louis Sisters descended upon Inniskeen. In his poem “God in Woman” he writes:

Surely my God is feminine …. He hides … behind a well bred convent girl’s eyes… among the women in a coffee shop

And it was into such a coffee shop, “Poets Rest”, that we squeezed companionably for a welcoming cuppa and a scones, served with a smile by some of the local ladies. Refreshed, we moved to the old Parish Church nearby, where Kavanagh attended Mass, now the very attractive Rural and Literary Resource Centre. We were given a very warm welcome by Oliver Keenan and Gene Carroll, who, along with the local community, are passionately involved in the Centre and its many activities.

Then it was time to listen to “one of our own”! (as dear Sr Thomas used to say). Una Agnew gave us a talk on “Spirituality in the work of P Kavanagh”. Her talk was inspiring, moving, amusing as she dealt with Kavanagh’s awakening spiritual consciousness, his dedication to the Incarnation:

Yet, sometimes when the sun comes through the gap
These men see God the Father in a tree
The Holy Spirit is the rising sap

Una spoke of Kavanagh’s love of the ordinary – “the bits and pieces” of everyday life. She referred to him as master of Epiphany – the glory and radiance of God breaking through the ordinary:

In the sow’s rooting where the hen scratches
We dipped our fingers in the pockets of God.

Una had greatly enthused and informed us for the literary bus tour to follow. With Paddy Cunningham at the wheel and local actor, Gene Carroll, as our guide, off we set around the townlands Kavanagh knew so well.

Brilliant sunshine lit up the Drumlin countryside. “The stony grey soil” still covered with ice from the hard night’s frost, glittered and sparkled in the sun. We were treated to a feast of prose and poetry from Gene as we crawled along, stopping at Kavanagh’s homestead in Mucker.

We looked towards the “black hills” which Kavanagh affectionately called “My Alps” at Shancoduff. Gene recaptured the liveliness of the local dances as we passed “Billy Brennan’s Barn”. We passed the school where Kavanagh was taught by Miss Cassidy and stopped outside the 200-year-old Church at Drumcatton.

Our pilgrimage was in the great outdoors, where all Creation was our text … where “nothing is by love debarred”, even the dandelions (Kavanagh called them “unloved hearts”) have their place. Gene was reminded that we were fifteen minutes late for lunch. “What’s 15 minutes in Inniskeen?”, was his reply That was the tone of the whole day. After lunch we strolled along the banks of the River Fane, with the Round Tower, Folk Museum, Norman look-out post behind us. No wonder Inniskeen (once a monastic site) was named “Pleasant Island”. We visited Kavanagh’s grave where part of his tombstone inscription reads: “For we must record...”
Fr Hugh O’Donnell’s *Eucharist and the Living Earth (New and Revised Edition)* was launched recently by Eco-Congregation Ireland chairperson, Sr Catherine Brennan.

In the book Fr Hugh, a member of the Salesian community based in inner city Dublin, explores how the cosmic dimension of the Eucharist draws us into communion not alone with Christ and with one another but with the whole creation.

Sr Catherine congratulated Fr Hugh on the book, which she said ought to be compulsory reading for seminary courses, training courses in spiritual guidance and courses for training religious education teachers etc. “I admire Hugh's courage in bringing together in this book the evolutionary story of Creation and the Christian story as expressed in the Eucharist - the source and summit of who we are and who we might be together,” she said. “To quote Hugh: ‘By being in communion with Christ, the human community is filled with the Holy Spirit and comes to rest within the created world’.”

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Marie Josephine, and Fiona with Gerry Renolds S.J. who was the speaker at the final talk in the series “A Renewed Church” in the Manresa Centre for Spirituality.
There are several versions of Finian's arrival in Monaghan but here is the definitive version in her own words recorded for Link in 1988

I had decided to join the Convent of Perpetual Adoration in Drumshanbo in Leitrim. I had never seen the convent as it was all fixed by letter. I arrived there with my brother Robert from Co Wexford to enter on the 24th September 1917. I was 23 I think. We met the nuns and had lunch in the parlour. Then they brought me into the convent and showed me my cell and my place in the chapel. Then we came back and had tea in the parlour. The sisters were there at the other side of the grille. Just then my trunk and all my luggage came in. Then in the chat someone asked about my Father who had died when I was only seven, and asked what had happened him, and I said he had cancer. Suddenly all changed. They all looked at one another and then they left us alone and went out and talked. When they came back, they said they couldn't take me on account of the cancer. I nearly died, but Robert was delighted! He couldn't stand the place. They told us the Middletown nuns down the road were looking for postulants and I said I'd try it! So we took the luggage and stayed in the Drumshanbo hotel again that night.

In the morning we set out by train for Middletown. The nuns there said they didn't think I had enough qualifications, but that the Monaghan nuns would be over at the end of the week, and perhaps they would take me. Middletown wasn't joined with Monaghan at that time. So they kept me for a week as a "parlour boarder". Then after the Monaghan nuns came, it was decided I could go to Monaghan.

The Middletown nuns got my luggage over to Monaghan some way during the week, and on the Saturday I set out to walk the few miles to the station at Tynan. A man on a horse and cart passed me and offered to take me to the station, so I got up beside him. Then I got the train for Monaghan, and walked in from the station to the convent. Mother Winefred and another nun met me. My hand was shaking, it was that way all my life. One of them noticed it but the other said 'Dont mind that, she's only nervous. The next day was Retreat Sunday and the Feast of the Holy Rosary. I had left home to enter in Drumshabo on the 24th September, the Feast of Our Lady of Mercy and here I was two weeks later entering St Louis Convent Monaghan on 7th October, the Feast of the Holy Rosary. 

Gabrielle O’Connell

Deirdre O’Connor sent the above photo from the archives. It was taken outside Middletown convent around the 1920. The car was likely a taxi used to take the sisters to the station. Perhaps this photo was taken on the occasion of a visit to Monaghan for a meeting or celebration.
2012 Jubilarians

Platinum Jubilarians
Clare Maguire
Ethna McCloskey
Margaret McGrath

Deceased
Dympna Clarke
Beatrice Hahesy
Aeda Higgins
MacNaosa McConville
Margaret McHugh
Ivan Toolan

Diamond Jubilarians
Sinead Beirne
Breda Broughton
Adrienne Byrne
Teresa Clancy
Mary Clerkin
Rosalie Corish (England)
Kitty Fitzsimons
Loreto Hickey
Patricia McGahan (California)
Helena Moss
Sheila O’Shea
Paulinus Woods

Deceased
Margaret Nolan
Lucy McAllister
Eilish Valkenburg

Golden Jubilarians
Zelie Campbell (England)
Fionnuala Cole
Pauline Johnson
Bríd Long (California)
Barbara Mc Ardle
Blathnaid McCauley (England)
Dorothy McMahon
Eithne Woulfe

Deceased
Miriam Thérèse O’Brien

Silver Jubilarians
Bridget Nwankwo (Nigeria)
Victoria Orifunmishe (Nigeria)

Memories of the Christmas Whist Drive at Rathmines