

Mothers' UNION
Christian care for families

Diocese of Edinburgh

Mothers' Union Newsletter



April 2014

Letter from the Diocesan President: April 2014

Dear Friends

As I write this the sun is shining and the Spring bulbs are flowering and the gardens are looking so colourful. After blank, brown earth, this really cheers us up. A vase of daffodils/flowers indoors lifts our spirits.

Although Easter is late this year, it seems to arrived in a rush. April already – next month I have to order next year's Diaries etc - “What!! I hear you say, “Already?”

In May, we have the Provincial Training Day – it is May 27th, 10.30 -3.00pm in St Ninian's Cathedral, Perth. It is for **ALL** of us. Staff from Mary Sumner House are coming to help us explore how we can impact social policy through faith in action. It is for members, non-members and clergy, in fact anyone. So far there are 2 of us from Edinburgh – not really very good.

Please e-mail Jean Richardson at : richardson147@btinternet.com or lindabrownlie@talktalk.net as soon as possible (*should have been by 25th April*). This information was sent out a few months ago, so hope it is not news to you.

Sadly, our numbers are decreasing but I know that you will continue with the projects and work that you do in your community. Also, your prayers are really needed to uphold the work, not only in Edinburgh, but throughout the world. So many of our members are working in very difficult and stressful situations.

Looking forward to seeing you sometime in the coming year. Perhaps at the Mary Sumner Day, venue to be decided at Council, 28th April to which everyone is invited.

Thank you for all that you are doing to help your communities and service to your Church,

With love and prayers,
Angela



Reflection from Revd Frances Burberry Edinburgh MU Chaplain

In the winter of 1992, the Church of England voted to allow the ordination of women. After a five-and-a-half hour debate the General Synod passed the controversial legislation by a margin of only two votes. And the then Archbishop of Canterbury – Dr George Carey, who had backed the proposal – said he recognised the result would not please everyone;

"What binds us together in God's love as a Church", he said, "is vastly more important than a disagreement about women's ordination."



In the spring of 1993, I stood outside the gates of the Franciscan Chapel at Bethphage – on the eastern slopes of the Mount of Olives – a Scot with a group of pilgrims from the Diocese of Portsmouth, and witnessed a heated argument about Eucharistic hospitality between our priests and the Franciscan gate keeper. The Franciscans have for centuries been the official guardians of the Holy Land's principal Holy Places. The Chapel at Bethphage has little to commend it but there is – within the compound – a beautiful vine arbour with a well, and an altar in the centre of the arbour around which we hoped to celebrate the Eucharist. But we were not welcome; as the Franciscan at the gate made very clear to us – for despite having the proper authorisation from the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem to celebrate Mass at the site, there was no place, he said, in his compound or at his altar for representatives of a Church that had voted for the ordination of women.

And so we were turned away and made our way – somewhat disappointed, I have to say – across the Mount of Olives to the Pater Noster Church, the monastic church of the French Carmelite nuns.

The modern church of the Pater Noster stands on the traditional site of Jesus' teaching of the Lord's Prayer, the Our Father; hence Pater Noster. And one of the nuns, appalled on hearing of our encounter at Bethphage most graciously and generously allowed us to celebrate our Eucharist in what's known as the 'Cave of the Teaching'; the little grotto beneath the church where Jesus taught his own prayer to his disciples; a place revered since the first days of Christianity; a place where one can, without any difficulty, imagine Jesus and his friends sitting in the cool of the cave, looking towards Jerusalem.

Turned away at one church, and welcomed at another. I wonder.
how would you have felt?

In his book, *What is the Point of Being a Christian?*, Timothy Radcliffe writes,
The challenge for the Church is to become...a place of mutual delight, of joy and freedom...We need not fret as to whether the Church is going to come tumbling down because of the rigidity of those considered too conservative or through the chaotic aspirations of those considered too liberal. We can resist the compulsion to evict those who disagree with us. During the Napoleonic era, someone came to see the Vatican Secretary of State, Cardinal Consalvi, and said, 'Your Eminence, the situation is very serious. Napoleon wishes to destroy the Church.' To which the Cardinal replied, 'Not even we have succeeded in doing that!'

Bishop John has drawn attention to the fact that December marks the 20th Anniversary of the Ordination of women to the priesthood in the Scottish Episcopal Church. The SEC has come a long way; there is a long way still to go; and it would be good to celebrate being Church in 2014 - not only appreciating our differences but believing that we can make a difference.

It seems to me that the power of the resurrection is the power to plant the seeds of transformation. Jesus' post-resurrection appearances assure us that God is alive and working on behalf of wholeness and community, and often in surprising ways. The power of Easter lies not just in the new life it offers us, but also in the way we are recruited to be life-bringers. Blessings, *Frances*

Annual Scottish Provincial Retreat

Thank you to Barbara Jeffries of Wigton for this report on the MU Scotland web site

Our annual silent retreat provides an opportunity to be quiet and feel God's presence. It is held at the welcoming and comfortable setting of St. Mary's Monastery, Kinnoull beside Perth.



Picture above taken by Paul Hindle

In 2014, the Retreat was held from Tues 25th to Thurs 27th March and was led by the Revd. Celia Matthews, who is a member of the team at Perth Cathedral. She leads their Spirituality group. Her theme was Praying Through Our Senses which offered a number of ways of praying using our whole bodies. It was very interesting and inspiring. The first sense considered was that of the **EYES & SEEING** –

God be in my eyes and in my looking.

Each retreatant was given two postcards showing different scenes. We were asked to choose one of the cards and contemplate what we felt God was saying to us in that picture. One of my cards showed a tempestuous sea under a very dark angry sky; it was a beautiful day outside, so in preference to this stormy scene I chose the other card. This showed a reproduction of a painting of what appeared to be the sunny corner of a room, where there was a large vase of flowers on the table and beside it a simple wooden chair with a comfortable-looking cushion on it. An opened book had been left on the cushion. The carpet was colourful with what looked like a puppy in its cheerful unstructured design. It looked relaxed and friendly except for one strange feature – a thick black vertical line at the extreme right of the work, which jarred with the colourful brightness of the main part of the work; this effect was heightened by the fact that the black line was straight whereas the main part of the painting was full of curved lines and the composition was informal in style. The work raised other questions too – What was the book that was being read? Why had the reader left? Where had the reader gone?, and so on.

In the card one could see the glorious abandon in creation, its colours and shapes – marred by the ‘black line’ evil sin has introduced, but also there came across the knowledge that the darkness was to be overcome; though we are aware of the ‘blackness’ it is not to be feared. Looking at the work reminded us how valuable looking at something really properly, rather than casually, can be – similar perhaps to what Jesus meant when He said ‘consider the lilies of the field’.

The second sense discussed was that of **FEELING** –

God be in my hands and in my feeling.

We were told to close our eyes, to sit with open hands on our laps; a different object was gently placed into each pair of waiting hands. Having been told that handling would not spoil our object, we were asked to examine it, eyes still closed, and then, again, to listen to what God was saying to us through it. To the many who respond to symbolism, there was a sense of peace in this quiet sitting and waiting, reminding us of so many familiar references – ‘my soul waiteth upon God’ [Psalm 62 KJV], ‘I waited patiently for the Lord’ [Ps.40:1] and so many similar words in both O.T. and N.T. How hard it often is to do this in the busy-ness of our daily life!

My object was a box of matches: I was vividly reminded of a hymn of dedication sung first some fifty or so years ago, where the Holy Spirit is asked to:

‘Kindle a flame of sacred love On the mean altar of my heart.

There let it for thy glory burn with inextinguishable blaze. . . *Charles Wesley*

This came as a very real challenge to me and stressed the need to spend more time listening to God. I felt the need for the flame to be stirred to new life within me. Many had the opportunity to describe how God had indeed spoken to them too as they felt the object in their hands; these and our earlier conversations made it an unusual ‘silent’ retreat for many of us — but one which demanded our commitment to its themes.

THE EARS & HEARING — God be in my ears and in my listening.

We were asked to sit with our eyes closed and to listen. Various recorded sounds were played to us, and these included birds’ song, some beautiful Russian orthodox choral music, some Mozart — and ended with the insistent discordant ringing of an alarm clock! It is probably true to say that God had spoken to most of us in music — perhaps the words in a hymn, an oratorio or any other part of the rich heritage we have in music from so many parts of the world. The alarm clock recalled for me the beautiful morning collect where say to God ‘... we ask you for the joy of spending this day in your service’.

There was only a very short time to do little more than mention the prayers ‘God be in my head’, ‘God be in my mouth and in my speaking’, and [God be] ‘in my understanding’. These were themes for us to think prayerfully about as we returned to our normal pattern of life.

A most stimulating, encouraging, challenging and inspiring retreat!

See the back page for more photos.

There are more details and photos on the 2014 Retreat web page.

The monastery is accessed from Hatton Road on the side of Kinnoull Hill where there are extensive walks and beautiful views over Perth, the River Tay and the surrounding countryside.

The retreat is run mid-week from Tuesday afternoon to Thursday lunchtime in the Spring of each year.

The next retreat will be held from Tuesday 14th to Thursday 16th April 2015. This is in the week following Easter Week. The retreat leader has not yet been appointed.

Such is the popularity of the venue, we have also booked up for the following years, so you have plenty of notice of when they will be held. The 2016 retreat will be from Tuesday 12th to Thursday 14th April and in 2017 it will be from Tuesday 25th to Thursday 27th April.



Lady Day March 25th held in Christ Church, Morningside:



Jessica, the wife of Bishop Nathan from Papua New Guinea (PNG), spoke to us at the Lady Day Service at Christ Church, Morningside. She knows Susan Tonin, a member of St James, Penicuik. Susan worked in Papua New Guinea for some time. Della and John Rae from Dunbar, who were in PNG when Susan was there, brought the two PNG ladies who were staying with them. Jessica told us that there are 13,000 MU members in PNG and 3,200 in her Diocese. She spoke about life in her country. She was accompanied by Mercinta. The service booklet contained the MU Prayer, and the Lord's Prayer in PNG language: *'Papa bilong mipela, yu i stap long heven, nem bilong yu i mas i stap holi. Kingdom bilong yu I mas i kam. Laik bilong yu ol i bihainim long heven, olsem tasol mipela i mas bihainim long graun tu. Nau yu givim*

mipela kaikai inap long dispela de. Na yu lusim ol sin bilong mipela. Olsem mipela tu i lusim pinis sin bilong ol man i bin rongim mipela. Na yu no bringim mipela long samting bilong traim mipela tasol tekewe mipela long samting nogut. Kingdom na strong na glori, em I bilong yu tasol oltaim oltaim. Amen'

CALENDAR

MU GENERAL MEETING 21st June 2014 in Belfast

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Mothers' UNION
Christian care for families



REACHING OUT....

Explore with us how we can impact social policy through faith in action.

For: Clergy, congregation and Mothers' Union.

Led by: Mothers' Union Faith and Policy Team.

Where: St Ninian's Cathedral, Perth.

When: Tuesday 27th May, 10.30 am – 3.00pm.

Tea and coffee provided, bring your own lunch.

Book your place, by 25th April please, from;

Jean Richardson – richardson147@btinternet.com

Angela Sibley – angelasibley@talktalk.net

Editorial: Contributions should be sent to: Email:

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Thank you to all who have contributed. Since this Newsletter goes to every member as well as past members who have left the Diocese, it is a golden opportunity to show what activities members are taking part in.

Items for the **next Newsletter** should be with me by early September 2014 to enable distribution at Diocesan Council in order to save on postage. News of branch activities, special birthdays, anniversaries etc. plus photos would be welcome. If you can receive Newsletters, Intercession Leaflets by email please let me know since this would save on postage for Edinburgh MU. Those of you with access to the web can view this Newsletter in colour and read a fuller report of the General Meeting, at: www.muscotland.org.uk *Jean Hindle*

Photos below taken by Paul Hindle at Kinnoull.

