

# Clergy Newsletter

Autumn/Winter 2019



We have arrived at the season of Advent and the start of the Church's calendar. During November all of our Dioceses supported the gender-based violence initiative, "16 Days of Activism", with a service and prayer vigil. This year we are also embarking on a new project – "Thursdays in Black."

This campaign was set up by the World Council of Churches in the 20th Century and relaunched in 2018 with the aim of encouraging people worldwide to wear black clothing on Thursdays as a reminder of the need to act against sexual violence in all its forms.

Every Thursday, Mothers' Union invites members and friends to call for an end to rape, violence and domestic abuse as they re-energise and commit as Godly people of faith to "Thursdays in Black."



It has been a busy year for Mothers' Union here in Ireland as we welcomed our New All Ireland President, Mrs June Butler, and also our New All Ireland Chaplain, Canon Robert Deane. We wish them both God's richest blessing as they lead us practically and spiritually in the years ahead.

In June our new President, June Butler, and Vice President, Iris Suitor, attended the triennial Mothers' Union Worldwide Council held on this occasion in Rwanda.

This proved to be a very interesting experience, especially as both ladies were able to visit some of the projects supported there by Mothers' Union. They were also able to talk to members from Africa, North and South America, Australia, Asia, India, West Indies, and Far East. It was there that the Theme for 2020 was launched: "Building Hope and Confidence"

Events from around the Dioceses:-

- In the Diocese of Cashel, Ferns & Ossory, the National Ploughing Championships were supported by Baby Changing and Feeding facilities. This was manned by the members of Mothers' Union from several dioceses.

- Armagh members braved a wet day to facilitate the Baby Changing Tent at their County Show. One Comment read "Fantastic area to feed and change my baby, why can all shows not have this leading by example – great work- thank you"



- The trustees in Armagh Diocese held a Fashion Show in Killyman Parish Hall – a significant amount was raised for Mothers' Union projects.

- Read Together Project – On World Book Day three members of Down & Dromore Diocese presented 200 books to the library at Hydebank Wood College, the women's prison. These books were duplicate sets of children's books, one copy of which will be lent to a child to take home and the same book will be read by the person in Hydebank Wood – be that the child's mother, grandmother, sister or even young father.



- This being our triennial year, Services were held around Ireland for the Commissioning of the new Diocesan Presidents in Connor; Tuam; Cashel, Ferns and Ossory and in Cork Cloyne & Ross.

- AFIA (Away from it all) This project has been very worthwhile this year and many families have been able to avail of the opportunity of having time away from on short holiday breaks.

- Congratulations to Dublin & Glenalough Mothers' Union for winning first prize in the Diocesan Media Competition at General Synod



- Prayer Walks were organised around the dioceses on Mary Summer Day - 9 August.

- The usual weekly and monthly projects continue as Play Days, After Schools Clubs, Messy Church, visiting Nursing Homes, Womens' Aid and Contact Centres.

So, as we move forward may we take this opportunity of thanking you, the Clergy, for all your support over the past year and look forward to the year ahead with "Building hope and confidence"

Dates for your Diary can be found on the Mothers' Union website. [www.mothersunion.ie](http://www.mothersunion.ie)

Please note particularly the Mothers' Union All-Ireland Service in St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin at 3.15pm on Sunday 29th March 2020. The preacher at this special service will be our new Worldwide President – Sheran Harper. Please join us if you can as we look forward to Sheran sharing time with us in Ireland.

Also a new Mothers' Union Cookery Book will be published in March 2020.

Wishing you all a very happy and blessed Christmas.

I simply cannot believe that we have already reached December - they do say that time passes more quickly as you get older but it is ridiculous how this year seems to have galloped by - mostly, for me, in a flurry of Mothers' Union activity.

As a Worldwide Trustee of Mothers' Union, as well as being the All Ireland President, I have attended many, many meetings where we work to ensure proper governance of our charity across the 84 countries where we have members. Thirty of these were represented at the triennial Worldwide Council of Mothers' Union which I was privileged to attend in Rwanda in June - the first such to be held outside Britain and Ireland. I have written about that several times, in the Church of Ireland Gazette, on the MU website and in our Ireland magazine "Focus". I hope you have had or will have an opportunity to read some of those - for me it was such an informative but humbling experience.

However, the main things I take from all our meetings, gatherings and services whether they be at Worldwide, All-Ireland, Diocesan or Deanery level, or at my own "home" branch in Saintfield, is the fellowship of our members and the fact that we are all working in our own way to restore and strengthen relationships in families and communities and to support the vulnerable in society. We work in practical ways and, of course, underpin all our activity with prayer. We remember the words of Paul writing to the Philippians: "Don't worry about anything; instead pray about everything. Tell God what you need and thank Him for all he has done."

In my previous letter to you I outlined some of the areas we in Ireland have tackled in the past and this continued throughout 2019 : advocating for gender justice, working in prisons, collecting for women's aid shelters and others in need, visiting the elderly, lonely and sick, helping at contact centres and food banks, preparing baptism packs, knitting and sewing to supply all types of necessary items from "fiddle blankets" for those with dementia to tiny garments for neo-natal units and still born babies. We also of course help in our parishes, organise services for members and raise funds for our work at home and also for MU projects worldwide.

We also want to actively support you, our clergy, in whatever capacity you may wish to use us but, as can be seen from the previous paragraph, we don't just want to make tea or provide traybakes at parish functions, although we can also do that - to the highest standard!! We are constantly endeavouring to develop new projects, particularly in outreach to the needy and vulnerable in our communities, and to do so we seek your help. You work "on the ground" and if you have an idea or can identify a need with which you think falls within our wide-ranging aims and objectives, please let us know. Please speak first to your MU branch leader or, if you don't have a Mothers' Union branch in your parish, either contact your MU Diocesan President or me through the MU office at St Michan's in Dublin (the details are on our website [www.mothersunion.ie](http://www.mothersunion.ie)) Our members have wide-ranging skills and talents which we want to utilise in order to improve the lives of the less fortunate in our society.

The Worldwide Trustees were invited by the Dean of Canterbury Cathedral to attend a service of Holy Communion on the Sunday prior to our recent November week of meetings. The Very Revd Robert Willis proved to be great fan of Mothers' Union and in his welcome to us at the service in the Cathedral, he referred to Mothers' Union members worldwide as courageous social evangelists. Please help us to live up to that awesome reputation in your area.

Next year will be an exciting - and busy - one for our members in Ireland. Firstly, the new Worldwide President, Sheran Harper from Guyana, will be with us in March to attend a conference organised for All Ireland Diocesan Trustees. The day the conference ends, Sunday 29 March, Sheran will be the speaker at a very special choral evensong service to be held in St Patrick's Cathedral Dublin, when we will welcome her to Ireland and celebrate the work and witness of Mothers' Union across the globe. Please do join us for that afternoon service if you can. In September the General Meeting for members in Britain and Ireland will be held in Belfast, with services of Holy Communion in St Anne's Cathedral on the previous evening - Friday 25th September. Again, you would be most welcome to attend any of the services or events.

All the clergy in Ireland will be in our prayers over this Advent season and I would also take this opportunity to wish you God's richest blessings for Christmas and for your ministry in 2020.

June

June Butler

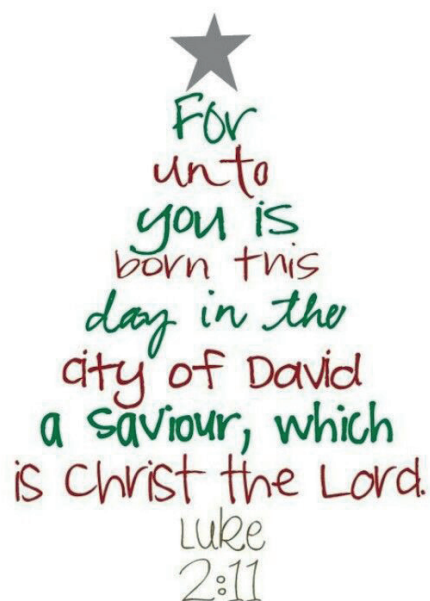
All Ireland President

New Mother's Union Cookery Book 2020  
to be launched at  
The Triennial Training in March 2020

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29th of March 2020  
Mothers' Union All-Ireland

St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin at 3.15pm  
Evensong service with guest speaker  
Worldwide President: Sheran Harper



For  
unto  
you is  
born this  
day in the  
city of David  
a saviour, which  
is Christ the Lord.  
Luke  
2:11