



Loreto Education Trust

Annual Report 2021



MARCH 2021

ROOTED RESPONSIVE RELEVANT





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Welcome to the Annual Report 2021

An Annual Report is an opportunity to reflect on the events of a year, to celebrate highpoints and achievements, and to acknowledge areas in which we are working to improve the realisation of the Mary Ward vision. Rarely have we experienced years when events have impacted so dramatically on our schools and school communities.

The Covid 19 pandemic caused immediate and major disruption to the life and work of schools, like all other aspects of society. The resilience and imagination of school leaders and staff were tested in equal measure. Their capacity to adapt to provide opportunities for remote learning, to engage and support students and their families, and to encourage one another in these testing times was demonstrated with great distinction. Again, as for other parts of society, the relaxation of restrictions and the transition to reopening created fresh challenges and stress. These continue, and, while the prospect of mass vaccination gives us all hope, it will certainly be some time before normal life resumes.

The stress and anxiety experienced by students, especially those preparing for the Leaving Certificate, were an all too

evident example of the difficulties which had to be navigated. Sadly, serious illness and death also visited our school communities and grieving for loved ones became an all-too-familiar reality.

In the cooperation between school staff teams, in the sharing of experience and insights across the school network, in shared prayer and reflection, and in the close and supportive engagement between the Education Office and School Boards and Principals, the values and strengths of the Loreto family were manifested and reinforced.

Our heartfelt thanks, therefore, go to all of those who lead our school communities, to our dedicated teachers and staff, and to the team of the Education Office for their extraordinary efforts and deeply appreciated achievements during this extraordinary time.

Dermot McCarthy

Chairperson

Loreto Education Trust



About Us

Loreto schools seek to provide an education that affirms the innate dignity of every human being created in God's image, and fosters the full and harmonious development of each student, encompassing the intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual aspects in an environment of justice, freedom, sincerity, truth and joy.



Both Mary Ward and Teresa Ball responded to the needs of their time by establishing schools and using the work of education to spread the message of the Gospel. These schools flourished and by the middle of the 20th Century, there were almost thirty schools in Ireland which drew their defining ethos from the spirit of the Loreto Congregation.

Over time lay colleagues shared in the delivery of education, the leadership and management of the schools. The final link in that chain was sharing the Trusteeship

of our schools. In 2003 the Congregational Leader and her council established the Loreto Education Trust with responsibility for this Trusteeship. Both Sisters and lay persons are appointed as Directors of the Trust. Loreto Education Trust serves the schools through the Loreto Education Centre.

Mission Statement of the Trust:

Holding in trust the gift of Mary Ward's distinctive vision, we undertake trusteeship of the Loreto enterprise of education now and into the future.

Working out of IBVM (Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary) core values and facilitating their contemporary expression within Loreto Schools, we exercise the function of trusteeship through:

- On-going dialogue with the wider Loreto Community
- Two-way communication with the schools
- Support of the Loreto Network of Schools
- Leadership development





Introduction

Introduction to the Annual Report

The cover picture on our annual report this year says it all. The year 2020 has been like none other. The sudden closure of schools on March 13th propelled us all into a new world of social distancing, heightened hygiene demands and, most significantly for our schools, on-line teaching and learning. As we begin this report, I salute all the stakeholders in our schools, our boards of management, our principals, teachers and staffs in our schools, students and parents. So much has been asked of each one – creativity, ingenuity, flexibility, resilience, generosity. To each one we say a heartfelt thanks. Unfortunately, as we write, the situation remains uncertain. After a difficult term from August to Christmas, when schools were open but adhering to unfamiliar and constraining restrictions, schools are closed again and there is insecurity about the time ahead.

The work of the Loreto Education Trust in supporting our schools was never more needed. As you read in the following pages, I think you will be struck by the innovation and resourcefulness shown by the team in the Education Centre not just to continue but to enhance that support throughout these strange times. We owe them a great debt of gratitude.

Our schools value greatly, not just their Loreto/Mary Ward identity but also the community that emerges where this identity is shared. In a time when community everywhere is under threat, our school personnel have profited significantly from the support and encouragement they receive. It is in communities such as these that our Loreto tradition is treasured, enhanced and developed. When we eventually emerge from the Covid 19 pandemic to create a different world, our Loreto tradition will persist enhanced yet vibrant and strong.

Trust Board

Due to Government restrictions, it was not possible to hold last year's annual general meeting. It was scheduled for 27th April, 2020. However it was replaced by a unanimous resolution of all the Company members who agreed that:

1. The minutes of the 2019 AGM be formally adopted.
2. Having received and reviewed the financial statements of the Company together with the Directors' and Auditor's reports that these be approved.
3. Auditors Walsh, O'Brien, Harnett be appointed as auditors for the coming year in accordance with section 160 (2) of the Companies Act, 1963.



The Directors' annual report on its activities for 2018-2019 year was received and noted. However, as might happen usually, there was no response to that report.

The final business of the AGM is to appoint directors. Martin Boyd and Sr Gerardine Mullen IBVM had completed three-year terms of office and were re-appointed for a further term of three years. There were no other changes to the Board of Directors.

Company regulations have now changed and it will be possible to hold the AGM this year on a virtual on-line platform.



Activities of the Board

The Trust Board has met on six occasions since last April, all of which have been on-line. Despite changed circumstances, normal business has continued such as appointments of new boards of management for schools, financial and property matters, nominations for selection committees for senior

management positions – of which there have been many. In February 2020, a new education bill came into force requiring schools to revise in detail their admissions policy. It was necessary for the Trust Board to approve each of these. The issue of non-academic selection in Northern Ireland also took much time and attention. The Management Team, which is the operational wing of the Trust Board, has met on three occasions. Their work is addressed throughout this report where you will see references to these and other matters.

Kevin Murray, who has been the Finance Officer of the Trust Board for the past thirteen years, retired in January 2021. Kevin has been an outstanding officer of the Trust. This role includes supervision of the finances of the Trust as well as oversight of the finances of each of the schools and advice to boards of management. Kevin has brought wisdom, insight and realism to this role. He has been most generous in sharing his expertise. His sound judgement has ensured that the financial resources of the Trust remain strong. We are indebted to him for all he has given Loreto education over these years. He will be greatly missed in this role.

Ms Bernie Weir, who, as a Director of the Trust has also retired. Bernie was appointed to the Trust in September 2018.



We thank Bernie for her contribution to the Trust and also as a member of the Audit and Investment Committee

Loreto Network Education Committee (LNEC)

A number of scheduled meetings of the Loreto Education Network Committee were cancelled during the last academic year because of the coronavirus. The intention was to hold a Network Day in November 2020. Due to restrictions established by the Government this gathering did not take place.

It was agreed with Robert Dunne the Chairperson and the Committee that with no existing projects or conference days to prepare, there was no immediate need to meet.

It is not prudent at this time to plan for future events until public health advice is more favourable.

We are grateful to those on the Network Committee for making themselves available.

Association of Trustees of Catholic Schools (ATCS)

Trusteeship on a National Level

Association of Patrons and Trustees of Catholic Schools (APTCS)

In keeping with the agreement reached last year, the process of unifying and rationalising the various bodies responsible for Catholic education, including the Bishops, Religious and the independent Trusts, has continued. During the past year ATCS became a company limited by guarantee and added Patron to its name, hence the Association of Patrons and Trustees of Catholic Schools.

The Members of the Board are representative of all the Trusts, the Catholic Education Partnership and the Secretariat of Secondary Schools. Responsibility for funding the association rests with the Patrons /Trustees. The new company in consultation with its members has revised its Constitution and Memorandum of Association and is now a registered charity.



The Principal Objectives of APTCS are the following:

- To promote Catholic Education and the contemporary expression of the founding intention and ethos of their respective schools
- To promote Catholic faith formation and dialogue with other faiths in Catholic schools
- To enable Patrons and Trustees to exercise their statutory obligations in relation to the Catholic ethos
- To provide support to Trusts in areas concerning governance and compliance, policies, property, ethos, financial matters and the obligations and duties of Patrons/Trustees
- To enable Co-Patrons and Patron partners exercise their respective roles in Community and Comprehensive Schools and designated Community Colleges
- To provide guidance and support regarding legal and educational obligations
- To work with the Secretariat of Secondary Schools, the Catholic Education Partnership and promote co-

operation between APTCS and these bodies

The Company hopes to appoint a CEO over the coming weeks. This will ensure the delivery of these objectives. All the Trusts, including the Loreto Education Trust, and all those involved in Catholic education have agreed to finance the work of the CEO and the establishment of an office.

The Board of APTCS, together with the CEO, will prioritise the trusteeship of Catholic education and its place in Irish society. This new body will enable the trustees and patrons of Catholic schools to speak with a single voice in dialogue with all the relevant stakeholders and also to represent Catholic education more robustly in the public arena.



Education Development Officer Report

There is no necessity, nor is it possible to articulate the rollercoaster of events that have taken place in education over the last year-Calculated Grades, the cancelled Junior and Leaving Certificate exams, the stressful reopening of schools, contact tracing, the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) fiasco, the Friday evening Department of Education and Skills Circulars, the challenges of home schooling, the list goes on. All of these challenges have been well documented by the media and in the Board of Management Meeting Minutes of every school in the country. In this short report, there is so much that cannot be recorded or referenced. In one year, we have lived through a lifetime of educational change and challenge. Despite this we have continued to thrive!



On the morning of 12th March 2020, we were in Cavan at the Principals' Annual Conference, gathered around a laptop listening to the Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar, make the announcement that schools were to close that evening. Within minutes, the conference room cleared as Principals hastily made their way back to their schools to put in place a contingency plan to keep learning and teaching on task. We could not have imagined that they would not open the school gates again for six months, and that the world would take on the biggest challenge in the history of humanity-a global pandemic that would close the school gates for 1.6 billion students world-wide.



The rapid onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and the closure of schools on that auspicious day upended the education system and propelled schools into an unprecedented landscape. Among the questions facing educational leaders in the days that followed were, how teachers can keep students engaged in remote learning, how to support the vulnerable and disadvantaged students, how to reach those who had limited technology and upskill those who had limited IT knowledge, and how to maintain



a sense of community in what was to become an uncertain future.

That day, we were on the cusp of a crisis which would unfold in all its anxiety, confusion and tragedy over the subsequent months. Almost a year later, we are still in the grip of this deadly pandemic that has fundamentally and irrevocably changed how we live, communicate and relate to each other. Having said that, while we have suffered loss and grief, this year of extraordinary ways has opened our eyes and hearts to many forgotten joys. It has reacquainted us with what is precious and meaningful in life. We hold dear those we have lost and pray for those who grieve.



A crisis of this magnitude heightens the need for great leadership and underscores critical leadership competencies like modelling the way, realism lightened by optimism, deliberate calm, confident competence, and excellent communication skills. Leaders also need to be compassionate, reflective and caring because our communities are anxious and living with prolonged uncertainty. We have been unanchored by the unknown and

many students are struggling with social isolation, the loss of support and the safety provided by school life. Our Leaving Certificate students have had many challenges and uncertainties, but they have come through these difficulties and moved on to the next phase of their lives.



Our education leaders have been tested every day to lead in extraordinary circumstances and to manage the multitude of challenges and issues that emerged from a dispersed school community struggling to adapt to an unprecedented reality. They have been incredible in how they have led their schools through each phase of this crisis. Each iteration of this new reality brought with it different and more complex challenges which required not only a unique response and 'outside of the box thinking', but also selflessness, hard work, resilience and empathy. School leaders have been pushed to their limit and, at times, the relentless nature of the responsibility weighed heavily on their weary shoulders. Their dedication to their schools has been colossal and inspiring. I



have witnessed it every day over the past year.



Spirit of Loreto Award, Loreto Crumlin

As a community, we supported each other, shared worries and problems in the knowledge that there was no judgement. The sheer unpredictability, uncertainty and unfamiliarity of living through a global pandemic means that there are no fixed compass points or signposts. There were no answers to questions, no templates, no precedence to guide us. This was a new leadership arena that none of us recognised. One of our Loreto Principals, Grainne O' Hanlon, who kindly stayed on after her scheduled retirement date, observed 'I'm glad I stayed on to lead the school through this time, because I could not have imagined how challenging, how difficult it is, had I not been part of it'.

We shared our wisdom, resources and solutions. The virtual world of Loreto Principals' meetings provided a safe place to be, without any demands or obligations. It was the place where you could be tired, frustrated, relieved, but most importantly, our meetings were spaces where you were heard and understood. It was a boat

filled to the brim with fellow travellers on the same journey!

We had no conferences, instead we had conversations. We had no in-service, instead we had personal wellness sessions. We had no strategic planning, instead we had rapid response meetings.

Our Principals and Deputies worked tirelessly, ably supported by staff and Board of Management, to keep our schools alive as virtual communities of learning and belonging.



Loreto staff have been remarkable too in how they collaborated in order to learn new skills and in the many ways they reached out the invisible hands of care and support to our students. A new found imagination and innovation infused every activity with spectacular results across the extracurricular and pastoral areas. There was a notable collegiality that grew deeper as the months unfolded. We all became more aware of the personal challenges that others carried behind the veneer of 'coping'. Many staff reported a new found appreciation of the life story behind each student. Everyone was coming to terms with the pandemic in their own way and



the question 'how are you?' increasingly carried a genuine care and concern for the other person.

The hard work and dedication of our schools' support staff was never before more evident or more important. Our school communities are deeply grateful for, and appreciative of, the Trojan work carried out by staff who sometimes work in the background, but were the oil that kept the wheels turning.



During this incredibly challenging time every school had the support, guidance and wisdom of an extremely dedicated Board of Management led by our steadfast Chairpersons. We are, as always, indebted to them for their time, their generosity of spirit and their leadership, particularly over this last year. A special word of gratitude to the Chairpersons who worked with the

Education Office in making the many senior management appointments over the course of the last year. May you all continue to be blessed in your stewardship of our schools and your support of the Principals.

Most importantly, the changes to our students' lives and formative experiences have been the most profound. All the normal rites of passage, the familiarity of routines, the fun with friends, the extracurricular endeavours, the support and guidance, and so much more, were all taken from them overnight. However, thanks to staff, these were replaced by virtual, imaginative and innovative activities that brought much joy throughout the school year.

The schools excelled in providing opportunities for fun, celebration and the building of the community

Through this crisis, Bloom's Taxonomy has become secondary to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. What became paramount in the months after the 12th March 2020 was students' wellbeing, emotional connectedness and bridging the gap of inequality of access to quality learning, that the pandemic had highlighted. Some of our most basic human needs became the priority for many educators charged with the care of





vulnerable students. Some students, at both primary and post-primary, experienced an untimely separation from their source of nourishment, safety, kindness and care. This presented some schools with the mammoth challenge of large-scale distribution of food, supplies and resources.

Loreto schools rose to this challenge and were remarkable and exemplary in how they responded to the complex and unprecedented needs that were presented. Our Pastoral teams, Chaplains, Guidance Counsellors and Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) adapted in order to embrace new ways of reaching out to, and supporting our most vulnerable students. It wasn't just those who needed food and resources that schools reached out to, but also those who were emotionally disadvantaged and living in volatile situations.



Our students were extraordinary in adapting to the new way of learning and living, particularly when they returned in September to an unrecognisable school

building and restrictions on every aspect of their day. The student leaders led with confidence, consideration and creativity. They role modelled how we needed all our students to be. We looked to them for guidance and advice. We looked to our students for inspiration and we got it in abundance!



Leading through an extended crisis is inherently chaotic, poor decisions will be made, we will inevitably lose our way at times, but it is the belief in our values and the commitment to our ethos that is critically important, and the key to getting through the most challenging of times. This is the time when we call upon that deeply held and often quoted 'moral purpose' that leaders and teachers have, to do their very best for all our students. This is when we look to the 'Compass' document and our Christian values to anchor us in the storm and calm the turbulence of a world upended.

What is worth recording is that education has been re-crafted, re-calibrated and re-imagined in ways we could never have conceived a year ago. Teaching and learning practices have dramatically



altered and are unrecognisable. The well-planned and ordered functioning of schools has shifted and we have been forced to be creative, innovative and collaborative in order to maintain a sense of community and fulfil our function as educators. We have so many gifts from this year, from breaking boundaries to kaleidoscopic imagining of new ways to be.

The lessons of COVID-19 compel us to imagine an education system in which students of all abilities and backgrounds can thrive and where inclusion is a way of being.



These are surreal, complex and unpredictable times for school communities. The dismantling of normal school life is personally difficult for students, staff, parents and leaders. We are challenged to critically reflect on the last year and imagine a future shaped by the new learning, new knowledge and deeper wisdom, that we have taken from this profound experience.

How can we redefine the relationships we have with our students to create a

community where all can flourish? How can we build a culture that is moulded by the best of what this year has taught us?

How do we make the most of the opportunity to build a momentum forward into a more meaningful, more inclusive and more daring education system?

How can we halt the deepening of the already existing educational inequities?

We also need to be acutely conscious of the history of our time in terms of the unmanageable, overwhelming reality of the COVID-19 pandemic. Without collective action, the COVID-19 crisis could push half a billion more people into poverty globally (Oxfam 2020).



Therefore, as we navigate our way back to our new reality, we must continue to look outside of our immediate locality to address a wider crisis of poverty, social injustice and environmental devastation. This has always been core to a Loreto education and we must ensure that it is to the fore of its future.



What is consistent across all cultures during this period of living history, however, is how globally universal the emphasis on personal reflection and a return to simple joy, seems to be. This pandemic is changing all our lives and forcing us to look at what is important and meaningful.

In Loreto Education, we need to start a discourse among our school leaders and with our stakeholders so that their collective experience is woven into a vision for the future of our schools.

We need to restore hope to young people and give them hope that their futures are filled with endless possibility.



Amanda Gorman's epic poem reminds us:

' that even as we
grieved, we grew, that even as we hurt we
hoped, even as we tired we tried....when
day comes we step out of the shade,
aflame and unafraid, the new day dawns
as we free it. For there is always light, if
only we're brave enough to see it. If only
we we're brave enough to be it'

We, as educators will find hope in our students.

I think of the profound meaning of the word Ubuntu- '*I am because you are*'

Maybe this is a good place to begin our reflections.

While this year has been difficult and challenging at so many levels, I am privileged to have walked this unforgettable road with so many wonderfully inspiring school leaders and to have witnessed first-hand the resilience, creativity and courage of Loreto staff, students, Boards of Management and families. We have been together, while apart and we have witnessed the very best of who we are as a Loreto community.



Retirements

Congratulations to Sr Phil Murphy on her retirement from Loreto Secondary School, Bray

In 1986 Sr Ríonach Donlon who was Principal in Loreto College, St. Stephen's Green wished to provide pastoral support for staff and students. The Province Leader, Sr Margaret Ryan appointed Sr Phil Murphy to the school and Sr Ríonach had the vision to appoint Sr Phil as Chaplain in the school.



At that time, this was a most unique appointment to Loreto schools, as Voluntary Secondary Schools, as is still the case, didn't receive resources from the Department of Education and Skills to appoint a school Chaplain. This was the beginning of a wonderful career in Chaplaincy for Sr Phil in four Loreto schools, over 26 years.

Sr Phil was subsequently Chaplain in Loreto College, Swords, Loreto Secondary School, Balbriggan and finished her career in Loreto Secondary School, Bray

where she carried out her ministry for 13 years, retiring in September 2020.

Sr Phil has been a kind, compassionate and joyful presence in the lives of thousands of Loreto students and staff. Her gentle, humble and authentic personality endeared her to those who encountered her warm heart, when they needed support or a listening ear. Like so many who spend their lives in schools, it is impossible to capture the influence and legacy that Sr Phil had on all those school communities.

All we can do in this short piece is acknowledge the immense contribution she has made to Loreto Education and thank her most sincerely for the care, kindness and compassion she has shown to so many over those 26 years. They were privileged to have her as their Chaplain.

Sr Phil is still a Director of the Loreto Education Trust Board and has several new opportunities awaiting her when this pandemic eases. We wish her health, happiness and much joy in her retirement from school life. Best wishes on the next phase of your ministry, Phil!



Voluntary Secondary Schools

Congratulations to Grainne O'Hanlon and Marése Bell on their recent retirements as Principals. We are deeply indebted to both of them for extending their retirement date in order to lead their schools through this Pandemic crisis. In December 2020 the Principals, Education Office and colleagues bid a virtual and emotional farewell to Gráinne and Marése. They have been part of the Loreto Principals community for so long and we will miss their great sense of humour, their positivity and their wisdom. We wish them both a well-deserved retirement and thank them for being true Mary Ward women "who in their time, have done great things".



Grainne O'Hanlon
Loreto Grammar School, Omagh
Principal 2000-2020



Marése Bell
Loreto College, Mullingar
Principal 2011-2020

Community Schools Retirements

Frank Duke, Deputy Principal, Gorey Community School

Bernie Heffernan, Deputy Principal, Pobalscoil na Tríonoide

School Anniversaries

Congratulations to the following schools, who are celebrating anniversaries over the year:

Loreto Secondary School, Clonmel – 140 Years

Loreto College, Mullingar – 140 years

Loreto College, Crumlin – 90years

Loreto College, Cavan – 90 years

Loreto College, Foxrock – 80 years

Loreto Secondary School, Clonmel undertook the challenge of completing 14,000 km over 14 days to celebrate 14 decades of love, laughter and learning.





Loreto College Cavan plant a tree to begin their Anniversary Celebrations

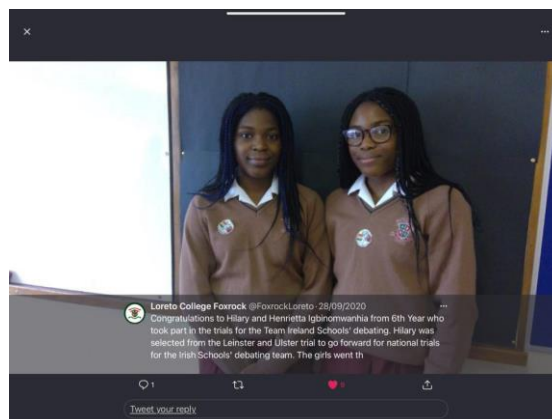


Senior Management Appointments

Congratulations to all our newly appointed Senior Leaders

May 2020-February 2021

- Niamh McNally as Deputy Principal, Loreto High School, Beaufort
- Frances Ward as Deputy Principal in Loreto Secondary School, Bray
- Belinda Toner as Acting Principal in Loreto College Coleraine
- Frances Pepin as Acting Deputy Principal in Loreto College Coleraine
- Sinead Lawlor as Principal, Loreto College, Mullingar
- Olivia Callaghan as Deputy Principal in Loreto College, Mullingar (Acting Principal)
- Audrey Hannon as Acting Deputy Principal, Loreto College, Mullingar
- Sinead Hyland as Acting Deputy Principal, Loreto College, Mullingar
- Maria Harney as Acting Principal in Loreto Secondary School, St Michael's, Navan
- John Fitzpatrick as Acting Deputy Principal in Loreto Secondary School, St Michael's Navan
- Susan Cullinan as Principal, Loreto Grammar School, Omagh
- Mary Gavin as Vice Principal in Loreto Grammar School, Omagh
- Louise Phelan as Deputy Principal in Pobalscoil na Tríonóide, Youghal
- Elma Kent as Acting Deputy Principal in Pobalscoil na Tríonóide, Youghal
- Rory McCarthy as Deputy Principal, Gorey Community School





We would like to pass on our best wishes to Frances Carolan, former Deputy Principal, Loreto High School, Beaufort. Frances has been appointed to St Wolstan's Community School in Kildare.

Best wishes also to John McHugh, former Deputy Principal to Loreto Secondary School, Bray, who has been appointed Principal in Ardscoil Rís, Griffith Avenue, Dublin.

Seminars

Guidance Counsellors' Webinar

On Wednesday 27th January, 28 Loreto Guidance Counsellors came together for an in-service webinar hosted by Dr Carol Guildea, Guidance Programme Coordinator for Post Primary Schools in the National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE).

The webinar, entitled Quality Guidance Provision: Two areas of consistency within a Diverse Role focused on Psychometric Assessment and the role of the Guidance Counsellor in providing social and personal supports for students.



With two further webinars scheduled for later in the academic year, the series of seminars will hopefully create a Loreto Guidance Counsellor Learning Community where best practice and resources can be shared among practitioners. The next webinar will see Guidance Counsellors giving input on areas in which they have a particular interest or experience. The NCGE Director commended us on this 'cutting edge and innovative initiative'.



Leadership Development

Due to the Government restrictions and public health guidelines in relation to COVID-19, our traditional Middle Leaders course was unable to take place this year (2020/2021). However, the Loreto Education Trust believes, more than ever, that a leadership course is essential to the teachers and staff in our Loreto Community. Therefore, the Education Offices of the four Trusts (Loreto Education Trust, Le Chéile Schools Trust, the Spiritan Education Trust and the Jesuits) have collaborated to facilitate a leadership course for all staff in development of their leadership. The programme is open to senior



management, teachers and all members of the Loreto Schools Network. The course, which covers six modules, is being held over 3 evenings via an online forum. We are delighted that Loreto has 87 delegates attending the programme.



The aims of the course are:

- To give an introduction to the basics of leadership development
- To offer the opportunity for participation in learning networks
- To encourage continuing professional development

The modules include Educational Leadership in a Faith School, Leadership and Management and Leadership perspective in a school crisis.

Personal Wellness

Since the start of the pandemic and more so in recent months, the wellbeing of the senior leadership teams within the schools and in fact, all staff has emerged as a key

priority. The Loreto Education Trust Board has agreed a number of wellbeing initiatives to support the schools, one being a self care/wellness webinar for Principals, Deputy Principals and Chairpersons of all the schools. The events were hosted by Genevieve Tracy an experienced Executive Coach and Learning and Development Consultant.

Student Council

The impact of COVID-19 on the Education Centre's programme of conferences has been significant. Some events have had to move on line whilst others have seen the sharing of resources on line. In the absence of a Student Council Day this year, Sinead Giblin, Loreto College Foxrock and the designated Student Council Coordinator for the Trust, kindly prepared resources which were shared with all the Loreto schools.





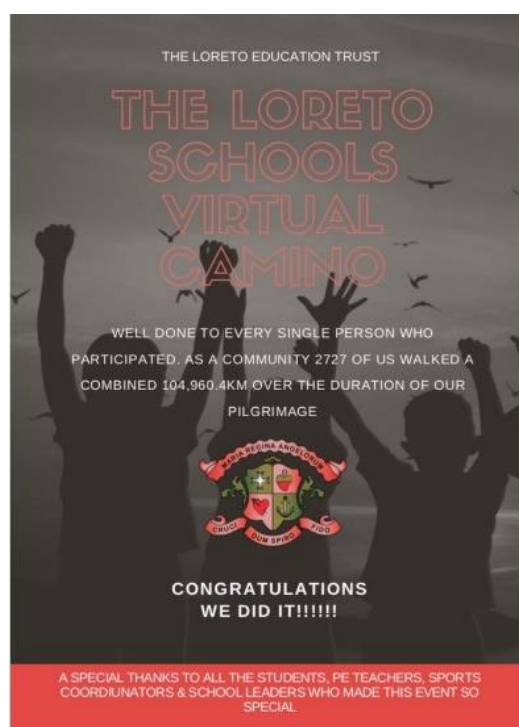
being added to the participant's class/team total distance. Participants could track their progress on the My Virtual Mission App seeing where they would be on the interactive map. The App also allowed participants to see how others were doing and also provided the opportunity for participants to share their virtual Camino stories.

Milestones were created along the journey and when a participant reached that milestone they would receive a message containing some reflective and encouraging words.

Loreto Schools' Virtual Camino Challenge

On Friday, 9th October 2020 the Loreto Education Trust sponsored the launch of the Loreto Schools Virtual Camino de Santiago Challenge.

All students, parents, guardians, teachers, school leaders and members of the Boards of Governors and Boards of Management of the Voluntary Secondary Schools were invited to take part in the virtual Camino de Santiago Challenge collectively walking (or running!) the 770km from St. Jean Pied de Port to the Cathedral de Santiago.



The event ran until early November with participants encouraged to continue walking/running with their families over the mid-term break.

Over 275 teams took part (over 2,700 participants) with each km completed

Prizes were distributed to the schools which were awarded to participants for noted achievements whilst every person who took part received a personalised certificate of participation.



I would like to take the opportunity to thank Adam Douglas, Loreto Sports Co-Ordinator, for all his hard work taking the initiative forward – his energy, his organisation and administration skills made it run very smoothly. I would also like to thank the PE teachers and Sports Coordinators who co-ordinated the Camino in their schools and Sr Kathleen for preparing the milestone messages. Thank you to Melissa and Eliza for their hard work supporting this huge initiative.

Last but by no means least, I would like to thank all those who participated. The Camino was a fantastic success with so many of our schools participating - the schools came together in exercise, competition and camaraderie! We walked the circumference of the world, together while apart!



Celebrations

Congratulations to Sr Pat Murray

We congratulate Pat Murray IBVM Irish Province. Sr Pat has been appointed by Pope Francis as a Consultor to the *Pontifical Council for Culture*. This Council traces its origins back to the Second Vatican Council and is a response to the need for the Church to continually engage with the cultures of the world.

Sr Pat has been nominated for a five-year term. We wish her every blessing as she takes up this new role.

appointed as the first Education Officer in the late 1980's.

Sr Pat continues to be a powerful voice for religious congregations world-wide. She is also an inspiration for many of us in education and leadership.

We wish her continued success and many blessings in her work and ministry.



We were also delighted to be informed that Sr Pat has been awarded the Presidential Distinguished Service Award 2020. This reward is reserved for those who have made a remarkable contribution to Ireland and our international reputation.

Sr Pat has a long standing association with Loreto Education as she was



Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018

School Admission Policies in every school in the country had to be reviewed in response to the statutory regulations contained in the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018.

The Loreto Trust engaged the professional expertise of Sr Marie Céline Clegg IBVM to assist the Trust, the Boards of Management and Principals with the complex task of guiding all our Voluntary Secondary Schools through this arduous process.

Marie Céline, has significant legal expertise and qualifications.

Over a period of months, Marie Céline reviewed all sixteen Admission Policies and made recommendations for amendments. She met with Principals and Chairs to finalise the draft Admission Policies.

The sixteen policies were brought to the Trust Board on August 2020 for approval to publish.

Thanks to Sr Kathleen who provided a very comprehensive characteristic spirit statement for all Loreto schools.

Sincere thanks to Marie Céline for the vitally important work she carried out on behalf of the Patron and Loreto schools. It was my pleasure and privilege to work alongside her ensuring that our schools

were supported and fulfilled their statutory obligation under the Education Act 2018.

As always, in working with Marie Céline, one learns so much!

In relation to the Community Schools, Sr Ann O'Donoghue liaised with the Education and Training Boards (ETB) and other Patrons in the relevant regions to process the Admission Policies for the five Community Schools.

Our Primary Schools received approval of their Admission Policies from the Bishops and the Diocesan offices. Our Junior School St Stephen's Green will have their new Admission Policy approved for publication by the Loreto Trust Board in the coming weeks.



Sr Marie Céline Clegg



Supporting the Safe Provision of Schooling

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, the continued safe opening of schools has been a key priority for not only the Irish Government and the Department of Education but school leaders and the school community. In June 2020, to support this key policy the Department of Education and Skills introduced a number of Circulars detailing how the Department and their Inspectorate would engage with schools to support teaching, learning and the safe operation of schools in the 2020/21 school year.

This engagement includes initial advisory meetings with schools and also a programme of inspection visits. The purpose of the school inspection visits is to provide advice and support to the school's management team as they implement their COVID Policy and Response Plan, following the Department's guidelines for a safe learning and work environment. The visits also allow school leaders to share

with the Inspector the challenges and accomplishments being experienced. This important feedback, together with feedback from a number of focus groups, in turn contributes to the ongoing development/review of the Department of Education and Skills policies and guidelines.

The Department prepared a framework of checks to monitor a school's implementation of the COVID Response Plan and the key areas of focus by the Inspectors on a visit are, as follows:

Planning, to include a focus on ensuring the school has a COVID-19 Policy in place to include a COVID Response Plan and also to ensure the school has reviewed its Health & Safety Risk Assessments to reflect the risks associated with COVID-19.

Appointment of a Lead Worker Representative(s), with appropriate training. Ensure that all staff are aware of the nominated representative(s).





Provision for Staff Training ensuring that staff have reviewed the training materials provided by the Department of Education and also that staff have completed a Return to Work Form.

Controls ensuring enhanced cleaning is in place, that the school has a procedure on how to deal with a suspected case of COVID-19 and also that the school has appropriate signage/posters on how to avoid the introduction and spread of COVID-19. Inspectors also ensure that physical distancing is being maintained including changes to school and classroom layouts.

A number of our schools have undergone advisory meetings and/or inspection visits and we are delighted to advise that favourable reports/feedback have been received.



Thanks to Sr Ann and the Trust Board for their support of my work over the last year. A sincere thank you to Melissa and Eliza for their professionalism, hard work, and collaboration on the many aspects of our work in the Education Office. I wish to particularly acknowledge the support that they gave me and the Boards of Management in making the many senior management appointments over the course of the year. I am blessed to have them by my side.

I wish all members of our school communities a safe and healthy final term.

Loreto Education Trust Twitter Account



Twitter Account: @ire_edu

Caroline Clarke

Education Officer



Reflections

A wonderful collection of quotations, reflections, and thoughts from our Principals and Deputy Principals from around the Country.

"The Education Office was a bedrock that offered us calm and wise advice and looked out

Our staff have rallied, our students have cooperated and our challenges have been overcome by pulling together as a school community. We often pause to re-prioritise and to ask ourselves if we can't do something one way, what other way can we do it? We invite ideas from others, we listen, we absorb, we consult....

I saw some staff in a different light in terms of how they were able within the context of their lives to adapt and change. Some of our staff's compassion and leadership capacity came to light during this time.

Among the greatest of challenges, as any student will readily testify, was the cold. In-between socially distant classes held in breezy rooms they socialised and ate on plastic chairs meant for summer barbecues, in every corner of the school grounds. Harsh and difficult as it may have been, it has undoubtedly raised awareness of the beauty and immediacy of the natural world and our environment. We appreciate the surroundings, the changing sunlight, the limited rainfall and all the while the empty school is gleaming.

Remembering to do all our work with a sense of Joy!

I learned to understand that how people digested the reality outside our doors was individual and personal and I learned not to presume we were content with the same reality in the same way.

The crucial role of our cleaners, caretakers and support staff was particularly apparent during this time. Without them, we would have no school.

Support from other Loreto principals, the Loreto Office and the school Board of Management was essential to our wellbeing.

Covid 19 has had a profound impact on our school community over the past year. The original shock sent reverberations which we are still feeling every day. However, much has settled, much has been learned and while we will always remember it as a time of loss and of great sadness, there are alternate pastimes, fresh experiences and unexpected joys that have surprised along the way.

I was full of admiration for the pupils, who consistently wore their masks, adhered to social distancing and rarely complained about open doors and windows

I found wearing a mask and social distancing from colleagues and students especially difficult. What is wonderful is that we got used to the situation and were able to accommodate ourselves to the new norm. Once again, collegiality and friendship made everything easier.



Adversity drove us towards one another in order to share, to learn, to support and what happened was a flourishing of learning, a natural collaboration borne out of a warm collegiality all based on a new awareness that in actual fact – we need each other. We have found a sense of togetherness in adversity, an understanding for one another, time to take stock and realise just how significant the fact of being a part of our school community plays in our lives.

What was hugely uplifting for us all, was the unadulterated joy of the children returning to school at the end of August. They were so happy to be back and immediately settled into the new routines and accepted the new procedures willingly. To see and hear the building full of children was worth the busy summer that we had. The school had become a community again and everyone was elated. There was an energy and an appreciation for the simple things....being able to do what we do best and to teach in a classroom.

Our online platforms have enabled us to do things we could never have dreamt possible and to make great successes of them. In May we held our graduation for the class of 2020 online. It broke the mould, challenging us to be innovative, creative and ground-breaking.

I feel that the Mary Ward Compass and the imperative to adapt to changes and be responsive in a changing world steers our schools through these times and reminds us that this is a responsibility we have at all times – in any global context.

I learned in real terms the real value of all that we do that is not examined, not on any course or state exams. Our students wanted assemblies which we started to run through lockdown and we met to pray and pause and sustain ourselves and our community which was important

Wonders to behold continued on a daily basis as the students poured into school every day, compliant to a person in wearing masks, social distancing, cleaning, spraying, wiping and sanitizing over and over without complaint. While joy and freedom may have been stifled by the strength of contagion, truth, sincerity and justice were evident daily in the respect the students showed for their peers and their teachers in the face of these daily tasks.

This pandemic has rallied our school community to work together to keep each other safe. It has made us think of others and their sacrifices. It has illuminated the great workers of our essential services. The essential workers of the future are our students

Ethos led everything that we did - during and after lockdown. Relationships and communication were key to survival.

Ethos led on line learning - teachers, Year Heads, Care Team, SNA team and leaders worked together to support students who were struggling.

Our students have been inspiring. They have persevered. They do not take for granted being in school and want to be here. Any bit of fun together was valued more I think as school became more important both in terms of education and for social purposes too.

Staff collegiality and support for one another. Departmental and interdepartmental cooperation enabled us all to feel that we were not in this alone. It is impossible to overstate the importance of this support and collaboration.

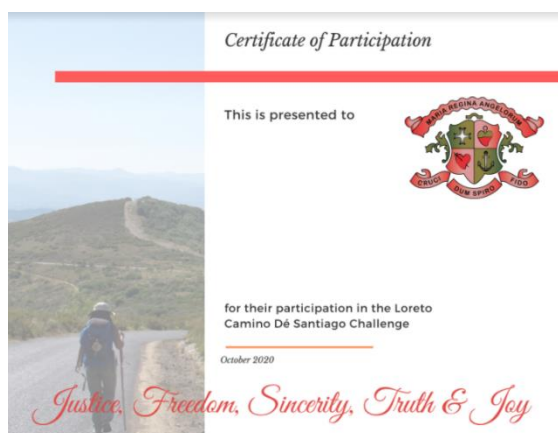
I was so happy to be able to be there with the school community during this difficult time, the staff and students have been fabulous.
(Marése Bell)



The Certificates below were awarded to the Graduates of 2020 at Primary and Post-Primary level to acknowledge their hard work and dedication throughout their school careers to date.



The Certificate of Participation awarded by Loreto Trust Board to the students, staff and school communities who participated in the Camino and the Certificate of Appreciation given to those teachers who went beyond the call of duty to assist in the Loreto Camino challenge.





Faith Development Co- ordinator Report

Introduction

This year, we tried to support our schools as they lived and worked in new ways of teaching and learning and taking care of their school communities in this challenging time of pandemic. Instead of the usual school visits, from 12 March 2020, our communication was by letter, email, phone, over Zoom and other online platforms. So much of school life was dramatically changed and therefore, initiatives planned for this year were modified to fit in with this new way of living.

The following gives a sense of some of the activities and events under the umbrella of Faith Development which have taken place this year:



Middle Leaders Programme

(Jesuit, Le Cheile, Loreto and Spiritan Education Trusts)

The Virtual Graduation of the teachers who completed the Middle Leaders' Course took place in June 2020. This online ceremony included a short Prayer Service and an input on "A Faith that does Justice."

This year, the programme was modified to be more supportive of teachers in the current climate of pandemic. One of these changes involved a new module on the theme of Christian Hope which was prefaced by a presentation on the ethos of our school trusts.



Ember

We were delighted to begin Ember Ignite in Loreto schools this year. Ember Ignite Teams are Faith Leadership groups in schools whose membership is drawn from fifth year pupils. Many thanks to our Ember Teams who, in the middle of the coronavirus pandemic, creativity adapted their roles of service to contribute much to



their schools in a spirit of faith, hope and love.

Thanks to the generosity of principals, teachers and students, we were able to visit each school virtually over Zoom for training days for the Ember Ignite groups in October.

Since then, the Ember Teams have contributed much to the life of the school, helping first years settle into their new environment, informing the school community about the Ember Team, organising and developing the school prayer space, designing the religion notice board, preparing and taking part in Remembrance services in November, organising celebrations for Advent, Christmas Hampers, preparations for Carol Services, most recently Mary Ward Week and Catholic Schools' Week. Our Christmas Loreto Ember Newsletter gives an overview of activities undertaken in the schools in the first term.



It has been a delight to virtually meet the teachers and students involved in the programme and inspiring to see all sharing their talents, vision and creativity for the good of their school communities.

They are certainly living out the values expressed in the Commissioning Ceremony we had in October:

“You are part of a Loreto tradition whose founder Mary Ward used her gifts and talents generously and creatively wherever she saw that they were needed.

Today we ask God to bless abundantly, these young women, as they begin their year of ministry as Ember Leaders.”



Special thanks to Lily Barry, Diocesan Advisor who oversees and supports the Ember Programme in Dublin Diocese and is always a joy to work with. Our Ember Ignite Teams collaborate closely with the Ember Teams in Dublin Diocese and also include a particular focus on our Loreto ethos. This is expressed in their exploration of the Compass Document (Currently focusing on Celebration of Diversity) and engaging in creative presentations of the *Examen: Reflection on My Day* through a variety of media.



Music and Faith

Virtual Music Project

Many of our schools are currently preparing for a Virtual Music Project involving hundreds of young singers, musicians and dancers from 7 Dioceses - Waterford & Lismore, Kildare, Dublin, Ferns, Kerry, Limerick, Ossory. This virtual musical performance will be recorded next month and launched in Holy Week.



Faith Seeking Understanding and Music

This year, the Faith Seeking Understanding series of lectures organised by the Loyola Institute in conjunction with four School Trusts (Jesuit, Spiritan, Le Cheile and Loreto) has an added feature of a musical interlude between talks in its online form.

We had responsibility for providing the music for one of the evenings and the two pre-recorded pieces we played and which were enjoyed by all were by Loreto College, St Stephen's Green and Loreto Grammar School, Omagh.

The inclusion of an artistic element in this programme in various ways over the years that it has been offered affirms the fact noted by many theologians that in our time, our care of faith must attend to artistic expressions of spirituality, faith and themes of theologian concern.



Music and Theology

A series of short inputs on Music and Theology are planned for the second and third terms:

Spirituality and Popular Music

Music and the Trinity

Laudato Si and Music

Music and Justice



RE Conference and online courses

The Conference for Chaplains and RE Teachers took a new form this year with videos of the presentations and other material circulated by email to the RE Departments in our schools. Such resources include:



- The Season of Creation and *Laudato Si*
- Justice and Faith
- Scripture and Art
- Mary Ward
- Teresa Ball
- Prayers and Reflections in Loreto Schools



Moreover, teachers have engaged with events and courses hosted by the Centre for Chaplaincy in Education, UK, the School Chaplains' Association of Ireland and the five-night online Certificate in School Ministry and Liturgy Preparation offered by the Edmund Rice School Trust in partnership with Mary Immaculate College Limerick. We are also taking part in the 'Personal Development Training for Chaplains and Religious Education Teachers' on 'Stress Management during Covid' and 'Balance in Life Strategies' organised by the Waterford/Lismore Diocese.

Our next online conference for Chaplains in Loreto schools, 'Caring for Self and others in Challenging Times.' will take place on 2nd March 2021.

A Faith that does Justice

We have begun a new Faith and Justice project: 'Sharing our culture; Sharing our Skills.' It is a collaboration between GMIT, DCU, Loreto Faith Development and Loreto College, St Stephen's Green with a school in India. The theme chosen reflects our values expressed in the Mary Ward Schools' Compass Document, notably:

- Embracing and affirming diversity

A Mary Ward school today embraces diversity as a mirroring of the wonder of Creation. Seeing the image of God in human diversity, we encourage the young to discover their interdependence so they each find their own dignity – "I am because you are" – and feel truly affirmed and included.

- Thinking and acting justly

A Mary Ward school today is aware of inequalities and oppression in the world of which it is part, and strives to be part of the solution, building peace by helping the young to think and act justly in response to injustice – whether in the school community, the broader community, or the environment.

The **CHANGE Project**, an educational project on migration and diversity, launched by the Jesuit Refugee Service in September 2019, and currently being delivered in Ireland and 7 other European countries has been adapted to be delivered remotely. One of our presentations for our RE Conference was



about this project and schools have received the new updated material.



Prayer and Reflection at a time of Pandemic

Since March 2020, we have gathered to pray for each other and have had reflections and prayer services in a variety of media in the schools, including slide, audio and video presentations. We have reflected on scripture together and followed the liturgical seasons of the year.

Our prayer on St Patrick's Day, written specially for this time was *Loreto Prayer for Healing During Covid-19* and we have used it throughout the year at different prayer times and on our social media and websites. We have been especially aware of the children in our schools who have been preparing for First Holy Communion and for Confirmation as the celebrations of the sacraments were postponed due to the pandemic. We sent a bookmark with prayers for Confirmation and First Holy Communion and reflections from Mary



Ward and Teresa Ball to each child as an expression of our thoughts and prayers for them.

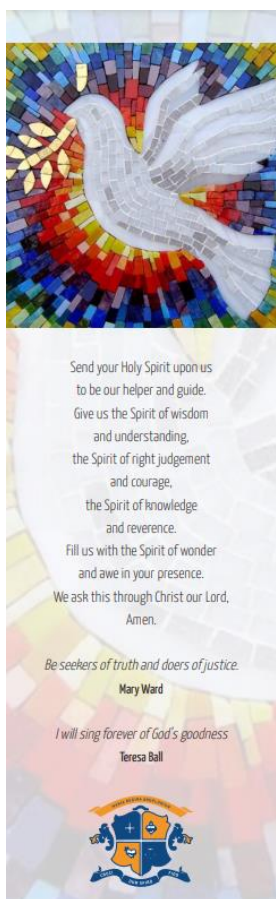
Our online prayer has been attended by the wider Loreto schools community, including Loreto Sisters, members of the Loreto Education Trust Board and Boards of Management. In some cases, the online prayer times have been prepared in collaboration with other groups such as the Education Secretariat, Dublin Diocese, the Spiritan Trust and The Chaplaincy Association.



In addition to online prayer organised by the Loreto Education Centre, we have attended virtually school Masses and Prayer Services organised by the schools to mark significant points in the school year and liturgical calendar. Our prayer has reflected our experience, the light and shade, from joy and gratitude to the deep sadness of loss and bereavement.

As a Loreto family, such times for prayer and conversation also provided opportunities for us to reflect on what nurtures our spirituality and the impact the Covid pandemic may have on faith. How

can our trust in God truly build wellbeing and resilience in our students and in ourselves? How is our own faith supported by our Loreto spirituality and practice of reflection? Where do we find faith, hope, love and joy in our lives?



Dialogue of Science and Faith

Our Science and Religion Group is composed of Chaplains and teachers from both Religious Education and Science departments.

Due to Covid-19 we did not have the proposed input to our schools by the organisation *God and the Big Bang* which deals with the dialogue between Science and Faith.

While they have suspended their school visits at this time, they are now offering an online CPD for teachers. This term we will avail of this informative and interactive course which equips teachers to tackle challenging areas of learning where science and faith collide.

Another area of interest to our group is considering subject matter regarding this dialogue which may be suitable for the BT Young Scientist competition. Many conferences on the partnership between science and faith are beginning to emerge in UK and further afield.

Continuing the Journey in the Footsteps of Mary Ward and Teresa Ball

Our Mary Ward Week in January, for the last three years, has included a focus on Teresa Ball and updated resources which help to inform and deepen familiarity with both inspirational figures, have been sent to the schools. August 2021 will mark the beginning of the celebration of our bicentenary as we recall the young Dublin woman Teresa Ball who brought Mary Ward's vision of religious life and education to Ireland in the foundation of Loreto two hundred years ago.



Teresa Ball Celebrations

In September 2019, we had our first Conference for Music Teachers at which we considered and had input on the composition of a Loreto Anthem to mark the Teresa Ball Year. The due date for this piece is Friday 29 May 2021.

We are also producing a booklet with artwork from the schools of portraits of Teresa Ball and pictures illustrating scenes from her life. In September 2020, we revisited our pilgrimage of well-known routes taken by Mary Ward and Teresa Ball. For our celebrations beginning in August 2021, familiar routes taken by Teresa Ball in the 19th century have been mapped out with a view to these distances being walked in our own locality. This camino will be interspersed with virtual visits to interesting landmarks along these routes, with prayer, music, and reflections on our experience, together with thought-provoking insights into the life of Teresa Ball. Many thanks to the creativity and work of the Teresa Ball Committee, the Art and Music Departments and the Loreto Education Network who join us in these preparations. Further activities include inputs and podcasts by invited academics (Deirdre Raftery, Ruth Ferris, and Elaine McDonald) who have completed excellent research into Loreto Education and Teresa Ball in particular. Our liturgy together will be central to our bicentennial celebrations and, in these uncertain times of pandemic, the form which it will take will

be decided in consultation with the schools and the groups referenced above.

Mary Ward Week

Our Mary Ward Week was enhanced this year by availability of the Mary Ward App which was launched in October 2020. Despite the limitations of the pandemic, schools engaged in a wide range of activities including special morning prayers and reflections, remembering past pupils who embodied Mary Ward's qualities, as well as music, art, poetry, and pilgrimage to mark the week. One school (Loreto Secondary School, Fermoy) literally 'ran with' the idea suggested in the September brochure to follow "In the footsteps of Mary Ward and Teresa Ball" and plotted and virtually walked many of Mary Ward's routes throughout Europe.



Further Resources and Projects:

- Dialogue of Faith and Life Newsletters
- Wellbeing and Spirituality



- Christian Mindfulness
- Bereavement
- Parents' Association
- We attended the online School of Sanctuary Mentoring Day at Bunscoil Loreto, Gorey, the first primary school in the Republic of Ireland to be granted School of Sanctuary status.
- Module on "Mission in Rumbek" for Senior RE Classes
- Collaboration with Scripture Union – Faith and Film
- Resources for Prayer and the Liturgical Seasons
- Admission Policy – Characteristic Spirit of Loreto Schools
- The National Centre for Liturgy: Conversation on Liturgy in a Time of Pandemic: Taking Stock: What have we learned and what will we bring with us?

Conclusion

Throughout this year, the line from Antonio Machado's poem, "We make the path by walking it" recurred in many of our reflections. There was no blueprint, no tried and tested way of proceeding for this extraordinary and challenging time but school personnel creatively imagined and embodied new ways of teaching, learning, and taking care of their school communities and continue to do so with vision, hard work, goodness and generosity. This theme has continued in the countless pilgrimages we have had

across the country in Loreto schools beginning with the *Camino de Santiago* in which we all took part, as followers of Mary Ward who spent a lifetime discerning and fashioning new ways in faith, hope, and love.



The difficulties of our year have been tempered by the *leitmotif* of Hope. Perhaps a most timely quotation is found in the writing of poet Ana Lisa de Jong:

Hope is made for such a day as this.

It is not made for when all is sweet and light.

Because hope was made for when the darkness is most apparent.

Hope is made for when the future takes on a shape undefined.





Similarly, Joy has permeated this time not as a disposition reserved for the positive times in our lives, but as a quality that also courageously thrives in adversity and is profoundly linked to inner strength. Of all our core values, joy is particularly referenced by Mary Ward as linked to resilience. At a most difficult time in her life, she said, "Mirth, at this time of trial, is next to grace."

Sr Kathleen Fitzpatrick IBVM
Faith Development Co-ordinator



Finance Officer Report

For the year ended 31st August 2020 the Loreto Education Trust incurred an operating deficit of €18,000 compared to the deficit of €38,000 in the previous year. The reduction principally reflects not repeating, in 2020, the Wellbeing Grant of €41,000 given to schools in 2019.

The Trust generated its first year of negative investment returns for some time, with the investment portfolio reducing modestly by €76,000. Our investments together with the cash reserves on hand at 31st August 2020 total €6.9m.

A combination of the investment return and the operating deficit meant that at 31st August 2020 the Loreto Education Trust's reserves had reduced modestly to €3.7m.

We continued, during the financial year, to position our investment portfolio extremely conservatively. The Audit and Investment Committee of the Trust Board did not meet in 2020 due to the impact of Covid-19 and the subsequent retirement of the Committee's Chairperson, Bernadette Weir. Information and reports were presented directly to the Board of Directors, as required.

A post year-end review of investment possibilities was undertaken to seek investments which would generate a

modest positive return given that interest rates are currently zero or indeed slightly negative. A number of options were identified and progressed.

Loreto Education Trust is budgeting for an operating deficit of €53,000 for the coming year. Licence fees will be maintained at unchanged levels while our costs are increasing modestly.

Governance

The outbreak of COVID-19 saw the Trust prepare, in conjunction with staff and in line with Government guidance, a COVID-19 Response Plan. The Response Plan together with the detailed Return to Work Guidance included a review of the Health & Safety Statement and Trust's Risk Assessments, preparation of safety/compliance checklists and a Return to Work Form. The Response Plan, Guidance, relevant checklists and risk assessments were reviewed following the release of the Government's Work Safely Protocol published in November 2020.

Over the course of the year work continued on compliance with the Charities Governance Code which included a review of a number of Policies and Procedures and a review of the Board of Director's Handbook and Financial Procedures Manual.

Kevin Murray, Finance Officer

Melissa Steele, Officer Manager



Northern Ireland Report

It is remarkable that in writing the Northern Ireland Report for the Annual Report 2020 last February, no mention was made of Covid-19. Little was it known then what a tumultuous year lay ahead. Every ounce of energy at every level in our schools, the Department of Education, and the Education Authority, has been consumed in dealing with the consequences of the pandemic.



Consequently, there has been little progress in the areas of educational development, schools' estates, inequality, under-achievement, mental health for young people, school funding, school improvement, some of the issues highlighted in last year's report.

In the midst of this, Loreto College, Coleraine appointed Belinda Toner as

Acting Principal for this academic year and Loreto Grammar School, Omagh appointed Susan Cullinan as Principal, replacing Michael James and Grainne O' Hanlon respectively. The Principals and Senior Leadership Teams in particular are deserving of the highest praise for the manner in which they have dealt with and continue to deal with this crisis; so too are the Boards of Governors, teachers, staff, pupils and parents.



There have been two extended periods of school closures, the first in the Spring and Summer terms of 2020 and the second in the Spring term of this year. This year, once again the public examinations have been cancelled. Anxious to avoid some of the controversies around the awarding of grades last summer, pupils' grades will be awarded on the basis of teacher/school assessment.

The private academic selection tests run by the Association for Quality Education and the Post- Primary Transfer Consortium for pupils wishing to transfer to grammar schools in September 2021 were eventually cancelled. The prospect of proceeding with these tests precipitated



heated debate and opened up the wider debate around academic selection once again. Loreto Grammar School, Omagh was among the first group of schools in the Summer term last year to say it would not use academic selection for its September 2021 intake.



In relation to Loreto Grammar School Omagh's Development Proposal No 459, no further progress has been made in advancing its implementation.

Work on the Strule Shared Education Campus in Omagh has continued, albeit at a significantly slower pace. The two key areas for advancing the project have been securing the finance and the procurement of the Main Works contract. Regarding finance, agreement has been reached with Her Majesty's Treasury securing funding "through to completion". Regarding the procurement of the Main Works contract it is in "the final stage to restart the Main Works procurement".

September 2025 remains the earliest anticipated date for the opening of the Campus.

The Members of the Trust Board sub-committee for Northern Ireland Schools are Brian Lenehan and Eddie Fynes.

Report by Brian Lenehan

Loreto Secondary School for Girls, Rumbek, South Sudan



Above: Primary school students during a meal time

This year we are delighted to incorporate the first Annual Report from Loreto Rumbek into our Annual Report. To view the full Rumbek Annual Report 2020, please click the following link.

<http://bit.ly/2O8ytzm>



Property Adviser Report



Property Development Report

February 2021

SECONDARY SCHOOLS

School	Development	Funding
Loreto Secondary School, Balbriggan	COVID prevention measures	DES funded
Loreto High School, Beaufort	Sports Hall, roof replacement	€230,000 school funded
Loreto Secondary School, Bray	Progress on major extension Covid prevention measures	DES Funded
Loreto College, Cavan	Roof repairs Ongoing maintenance Covid prevention measures	€14,505 – insurance funded €60,000 school funded DES Funded
Loreto Secondary School, Clonmel	Wide range of Universal access and egress projects CCTV Fire and Security systems Covid prevention measures	€60,950 – DES funded Insurance funded DES Funded
Loreto College, Crumlin	Upgrade of Fire system and Emergency Lighting Replacement of boundary wall Replacement of burners on four boilers Covid prevention measures	€349,580 – DES Funded €196,263 - DES Funded €24, 975 – DES Funded DES Funded



School	Development	Funding
Loreto Abbey Secondary School, Dalkey	Replacement of lighting throughout the school Replacement of tiled floor Conversion of store room to changing room Covid prevention measures	€74,162, school funded €6,000, school funded €12,154 school funded School funded
Loreto Secondary School, Fermoy	Continuing progress on major capital programme Fire/Safety emergency work over two years Covid prevention measures	€508,075 DES Funded
Loreto College, Foxrock	Roof repairs Covid prevention measures	€212,848 – school funded School funded
Loreto Secondary School, Kilkenny	New windows, insulation and solar panels Covid prevention measures	€313,615 – SEAI grant DES funded
Loreto Secondary School, Letterkenny	Covid prevention measures	DES Funded
Loreto College, Mullingar	Covid prevention measures	DES funded
Loreto Secondary School, St Michael's, Navan	Conversion of heating system in Loreto House New classrooms and offices in Loreto House Covid prevention measures	€17,842 – School funded €55,365 – School funded DES Funded
Loreto Grammar School, Omagh	Continuing involvement with the Strule Shared Education Campus Minor works applications re a range of projects	
Loreto College, St	Repair to roof and front façade Covid prevention measures	€699,000 School funded School funded



Stephen's Green		
Loreto College, Swords	Approval for 4 new prefab classrooms Covid prevention measures	DES Funded – costings pending DES Funded
Loreto Secondary School, Wexford	Covid prevention measures	DES Funded
PRIMARY SCHOOL		
School	Development	Funding
St Patrick's, Loreto Primary School, Bray	Installation of a lift Covid prevention measure	€89,548 – DES Funded DES Funded
Loreto Primary School, Grange Road	Advanced planning for new school – 24 classrooms and 2 A.S.D units	DES Funded
Loreto College Junior School, St Stephen's Green	Replacement of windows and Covid prevention measures. Planning advanced for major roof repair	School Funded

Eddie Fynes, Property Adviser





Conclusion

We are approaching important dates in the life of the Loreto family. In August 1821, Teresa Ball left York to travel to Dublin, bringing Mary Ward's Institute to Ireland. With just two young companions, they began a fledgling school in Harold's Cross in May 1822, moving to Rathfarnham on 5th November that year. These are important bicentenaries and we look forward to celebrating them appropriately in the new academic year.

What might Teresa Ball think as she looks at the vibrant network of schools that we now enjoy? So much would be strange to her. Some changes in locations, magnificent modern facilities, far greater numbers of students and certainly diverse areas of learning unheard of 200 years ago. However, she would be heartened greatly by what would be familiar to her – young people learning to explore, to discover new possibilities, learning to love and relate, to become socially and globally aware, to reflect, to discover something of who they are. Most especially she would be gladdened to know that the Mary Ward whom she loved and admired is known and loved in our schools.

We remarked at the beginning of this report that Covid 19 and its attendant

restrictions has called for renewed commitment and creativity among our school personnel to continue to deliver quality education to our young people. Those who work in the Education Centre, Caroline Clarke, Education Development Officer, Sr Kathleen Fitzpatrick Faith Development Coordinator, Melissa Steele Office Manager, Eliza Connolly Administrative Assistant and Eddie Fynes, Property Adviser, have shown no less creativity and commitment. We owe them, not just our gratitude, but also our admiration and respect for the innovative ways they have found to support and guide all those in our school communities. May each one be blessed for their tireless enthusiasm and dedication.

Sr. Ann O'Donoghue IBVM

Secretary to the Loreto Education Trust

8th March 2021



Appendices

Loreto Education Trust

COMPANY MEMBERS

Ita Moynihan IBVM

Carmel Swords IBVM

Brede Quirke IBVM

Elaine Troy IBVM

Helen O'Riordan IBVM

Brigid Tunney IBVM

Mary Jo Corcoran IBVM

BOARD OF DIRECTORS (Loreto Education Trust Board)

Dermot McCarthy

Conor Bowman

Martin Boyd

Jennifer Edwards

Maria Hyland IBVM

Brian Lenehan

Sheila McManamly

Gerardine Mullen IBVM

Phil Murphy IBVM

Bernadette Ryan

Eileen Salmon

Bernadette Weir (to September 2020)



OFFICERS

Ann O'Donoghue, IBVM – Director Loreto Education Centre & Company Secretary

Caroline Clarke – Education Development Officer

Kathleen Fitzpatrick IBVM – Faith Development Co-ordinator

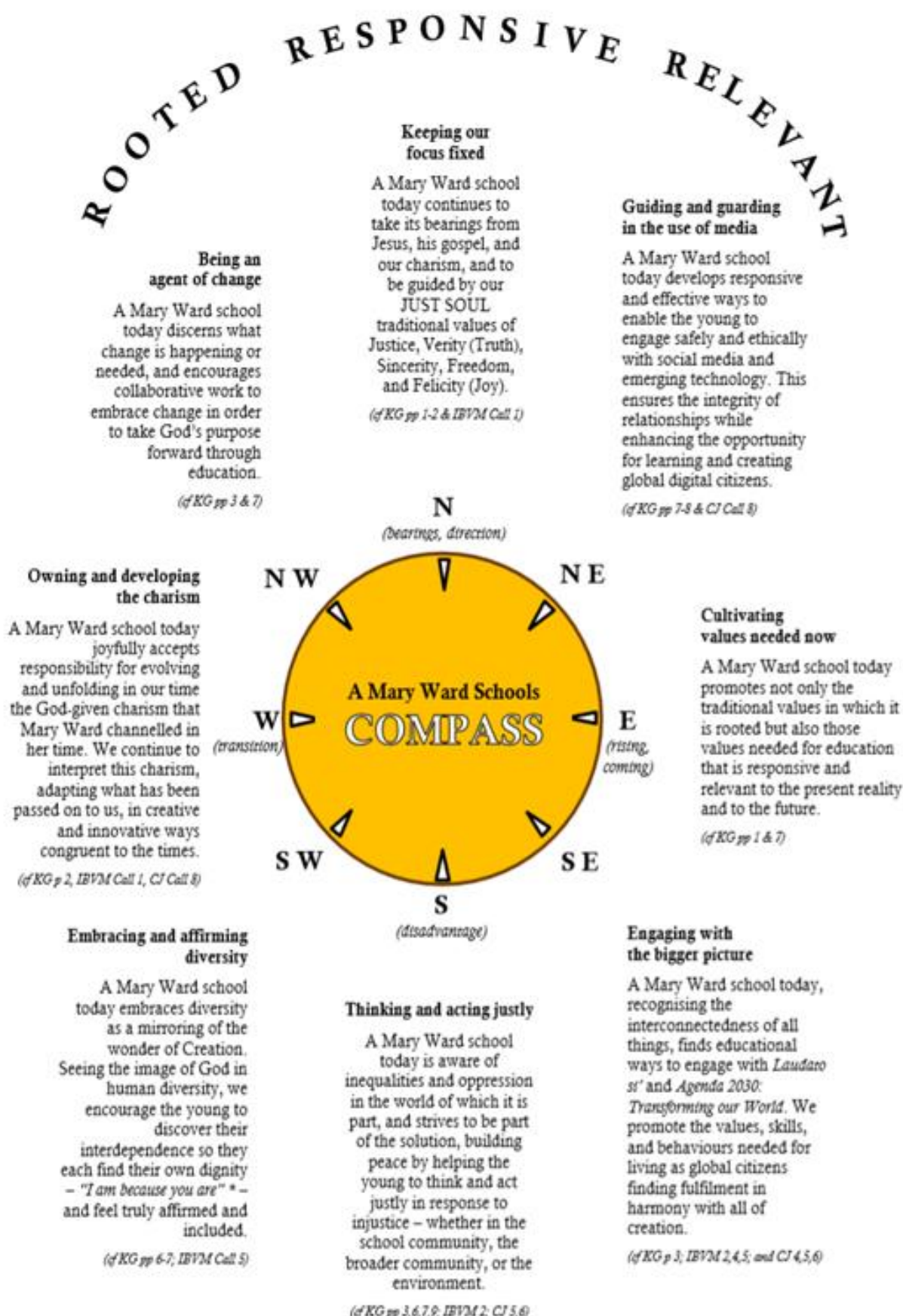
Edward Fynes – Schools Property Advisor

Melissa Steele – Office Manager

SUPPORT PERSONNEL

Kevin Murray – School and Trust Board Finances (to February 2021)

Eliza Connolly – Administrative Assistant p/t





Reference Documents

- *Kolkata Loreto Education Guidelines of 2003 (KG).*
- *Calls of the 2014 General Congregation of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary (IBVM).*
- *Calls of the 2011 General Congregation of Congregatio Jesu (CJ).*
- *Laudato si* – Pope Francis's encyclical on care for our common home.
- *Agenda 2030: Transforming our World* – the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Note

* *"I am because you are"* – a distillation of the African value of 'ubuntu'.



A Mary Ward school today affirms the centrality of the person of Jesus. His gospel and our particular charism offer to education a profound way of being, acting as a positive force for transformation of lives.


Building on the foundation of our God-given charism, we seek to invest in the holistic growth of our school community in a deeper understanding and living of the gospel.



Membership of Boards of Management

2020-2023

Schools	Teacher Nominees 2020-2023	Parent Nominees 2020-2023	Trustee Nominees 2020-2023
Bray	Mary Dignam Margaret Scott	Joanna Lenehan Neal O'Doherty	Michael Denny (Chair) Carol Buckley Eamonn Burgess Laura Cuddihy
Cavan	Cliona Hyland Siobhan Creamer	Edel Morrisson Antoinette Burke	Padraig Kelleher (Chair) Breege Flynn Jacqueline Maloney Mary Ann Smith
Crumlin	Suzanne Byrne Gareth Lenehan	Yvonne Keating Thomas O'Connor	Nuala Mannion (Chair) Ruth Ferris Séamus Given

			Michael Sheridan
Dalkey	Aisling Mooney Will Flanagan	Sharon Foley Anthony Pryce	Dr Eilis Humphreys (Chair) Geraldine Bracken Colm Moore Jim Wade
Foxrock	Siobhan Byron-Smith Carmel McGettrick	Gleb Reys Garvan Gallagher	Geraldine Ryan (Acting Chair) Raomal Perera Donal Walsh
Navan	Brian Heraty Breda Deegan	Mary Fox Ciaran Mellett	Liz Cogan Ken Davis Paschal Marry Kevin Murray

Vacancies filled in course of term of office in Loreto Post-Primary Schools
(appointments for remainder of term of office)

Loreto High School Beaufort

Annie Donnelly in place of Orlaith Cagney (Teacher Nominee)



Loreto College, Mullingar

Gráinne O’Kennedy in place of Olivia Callaghan (Teacher Nominee)

Loreto Grammar School, Omagh

Elma Rushe in place of Brian Lenehan (Trustee Nominee)

Loreto College, St Stephens Green

Louise Kerr in place of Ian Grace (Teacher Nominee)



COMMUNITY SCHOOLS BOARDS OF MANAGEMENT

2020-2023

Schools	St Aidan's Community School, Brookfield	Loreto Community School, Milford
Religious Trustee Nominees	Andrew Cody Sr Elizabeth Cotter IBVM Sr Kathleen Fitzpatrick	Fr. Michael Carney Sharon Cannon Andrew Kelly
ETB Nominees	Keith O'Connor Martina Genockey Roísín McLindon	Jane McGettigan Patsy McVicar TBA
Teacher Nominees	Stephen O'Brien Stephen Dooley	Margaret Bonner Keith Harmon
Parent Nominees	Caroline Shortt Annmarie Currivan	Lorna Kemp Jerry Gallagher



Loreto Network Education Committee (LNEC)

2020-2021

Trustee Representatives:

Bernard O'Boyle – Dalkey
Louise Ryan – Foxrock

Post-Primary Teacher Representatives:

Robert Dunne – Dalkey
Stuart O'Brien – Balbriggan
Lucy O Mordha – Cavan (Retired)
Sinead Hyland – Mullingar

Primary Teacher Representatives:

Angela Mitchell – Crumlin Senior Primary
Niamh Morrogh – St Patrick's Bray
Nicola Condon – Grange Road, Rathfarnham

Parent Representatives:

Vacant

Ex-Officio Members:

Caroline Clarke – Education Development Officer
Kathleen Fitzpatrick IBVM – Faith Development Co-ordinator

Chairperson:

Robert Dunne



Loreto Schools Student Numbers

(1st January 2021)

POST-PRIMARY	STUDENTS
Balbriggan	1,277
Beaufort	646
Bray	761
Cavan	730
Clonmel	500
Coleraine	961
Crumlin Road	391
Dalkey	691
Fermoy	639
Foxrock	516
Kilkenny	1,038
Letterkenny	908
Mullingar	876
Navan	807
Omagh	874
53 St Stephen's Green	546
Swords	630
Wexford	840



PRIMARY

Bray	762
Crumlin (Junior)	199
Dalkey	325
Grange Road	492
Loreto College, Junior School	205
Schools with historical links with Loreto:	
Crumlin Senior Primary	244
Bunscoil Loreto, Gorey	700
Scoil Mhuire Gan Smal, Letterkenny	430
St Anne's, Navan	307
COMMUNITY	
St Aidan's Community School, Brookfield	381
Gorey Community School	1,649
Loreto Community School, Milford	816
Portmarnock Community School	931
Pobalscoil na Tríonóide, Youghal	985

Total Number of Students (1 Jan 2021): 22,057