



*It is with great sadness and, at the same time, with deep gratitude that we announce the deaths of two dear friends of Restoration Ministries. The light of heaven to them both. At this Advent season we pray for all who loved them, including ourselves, the comfort and hope that come from the heart of God.*

*Monsignor Tom Toner died on Sunday November 11 after battling with cancer for some time. Tom has been a friend of the ministry for many years and was currently on our Board of Directors. He was everybody's favourite priest, a wonderful pastor, a peacemaker, a man of great courage and commitment with a vision for unity. We already miss him greatly. There is a void left with his going. We thank God for a life lived to the full and for an unforgettable friend.*

*Blanche Houston died on Wednesday November 21 having undergone a similar battle. 'A beautiful person' was the phrase on everyone's lips on hearing of her death. She and her husband Roy were on our ministry team in the earlier years. She will be remembered for her generosity, her smile, her empathy, her sense of humour, her spirit of welcome and hospitality and her deep faith. She blessed all who knew her, not least her friends in Restoration Ministries.*



## CHRISTMAS 2012



Advent is a time for keeping watch, a time, not of passivity but of passionate waiting, as once again the hopes and fears of all the years are gathered up into one simple prayer, "Maranatha! Come Lord Jesus!"

Advent is a time for pilgrims. As we wait in wakefulness, we become aware that something or someone is waiting for us, beckoning to us. We leave behind some of the old certainties, journeying from the familiar deeper into mystery, towards an unknown destination that, paradoxically, at the same time is profoundly knowable. "Let us go" is the collective response from those who bear the mark of Advent.

Advent is a time of encounter. The journey's end is the beginning. The meeting with the Beloved in the secret depths of our beings becomes the catalyst that sends us 'home' by another way – a way as yet known only to God, but one to which, in faith, we give our "Fiat."

Sisters and brothers, dear Restoration Ministries' friends, Advent pilgrims, may this Christmas be a time of fulfilment and joy for us all.



*This seems to be the season of farewells. At our last Board of Directors meeting we accepted with huge reluctance and much sadness the resignation of our Chairman Mr Jay Russell and also those of Fr Miceal O'Neill, O. Carm and Sr Jo Quinn, FMM. A few days later Mrs Phyllis Ritchie felt that, for health reasons, she also should stand down. All of these dear friends have pledged themselves to a continuing interest and support. They will, unofficially, be for us like 'Directors Emeritus' ready to share with us at any time the wisdom of the years and of their life experience.*

*Thank-you seems to be too small a word for all they have contributed as Directors and for who they are, each one so gifted and so committed to the vision of Restoration Ministries.*



*Jay has been our chairman for about sixteen years. Always so gracious, always 'on the ball', generous in the extreme with his legal expertise, his listening ear, his wisdom, integrity and friendship, he leaves a huge gap. We wish Peggy and himself all that is good for this season of their lives and, in saying thank-you, look forward to a continuing blessed friendship.*



*Miceal has been with us since we started in 1988. Throughout the years he has often been a pilgrim as his vocation has taken him around the world. Even from the distance of Rome, his interest was and continues to be vibrant and relevant. We have appreciated so much his many gifts of wisdom, insight, creativity, language and music and rejoice in his desire to still walk alongside us in these changing times.*



*Jo turned up on our doorstep one day in 1996 with Sr Mary Teresa wanting to be involved in something that crossed the 'divide.' What a gift she has been and continues to be to us. No task was ever too trivial for Jo to undertake. Her deep humility (the chief mark of greatness), her kindness and generosity – and that of her entire family, her interest in people, her ability to make them so welcome, but above all her life of prayer are treasures that we will always hold very dear. She is truly our 'sister' whom we hope will bless us for many years to come.*



*Phyllis did not want anything noted here about her time as Director. At the risk of incurring her displeasure, we cannot not say what a tower of strength and loving support she has been since the very beginning. Her professional expertise, accompanied by her love for God and others have made her an invaluable gift to all of us. Many of us have cause to thank God for her care, concern and thoughtfulness. What a lady! And her interest in and support for us increases with the years. Thanks be to God!*

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