



Restoration Ministries

He Restores My Soul

Spring 2013

Dear Friends,

(Some thoughts after reflecting on Zacchaeus' encounter with Jesus and the resulting transformation)

Sometimes I wonder if some of the very valuable work that so many of us have been doing in this island in the whole field of reconciliation could be seen partly as a patch up job. This is not to discredit any of the heroic efforts or the long years of keeping on keeping on, working at building relationships and deepening understanding. Can you even begin to imagine where we might now find ourselves without these courageous, humble, hope-filled peacemakers? And there has been much change – thank God, but has there been transformation? It seems sometimes as if all our efforts have not gone deep enough to get right under the roots of the sectarianism that is fed by fear of the unknown and a negative sense of identity. The flag protests and also perhaps the dissident republican activity are the outer manifestations of something much deeper. In comparison with other anguished and traumatised areas of the world, we have been given so much. How many times over the last forty five years has Jesus stopped under the tree that is Northern Ireland and, in various ways, issued the invitation to come down – down to the place of forgiveness, of reconciliation, of mercy, justice, truth and peace? And how many times has our listening been selective, hearing only what we want to hear and demanding change/transformation from the other but not from us? Where is the courageous, faith-filled, prophetic leadership that might give others a voice and hope for the future? The tyranny of the normal seems to have not gone away but has seductively lured us back to the silence of saying nothing. We appear to be trapped again in the house of fear, at a loss as to what to do or how to be. Perhaps the Church as a whole needs to pray for an awareness for themselves that will lead to the sort of desire that consumed Zacchaeus, a desire that will not let us rest until we see Jesus – afresh – and this time see not the Jesus we have boxed tidily so that he fits neatly into our denominational way of

thinking and being but the Jesus we don't yet know who is on his way through this world and will, if we are in the right space, stop once again in his mercy and his love, under our tree where we may yet hear him say, "Church of God make haste and come down, down to that place of repentance, renewal, down to that place beyond all your heady arguments and rules and regulations where I am longing to reclaim you as my Beloved, down to where you consent to my presence and action within, to that sacrament of encounter that will lead to transformation."

This is the way of humility, openness and vulnerability, the way of letting go and it is the way that Jesus walks. When we can welcome him freely and without conditions attached into the house of the Church, into depths where we've never welcomed him before so that the process of transformation can begin, not on our terms but his – that is when we will have a different life-style, one that is attractive, open, inclusive, joyful, generous, one that will give hope and a whole new awareness to a community that has 'forgotten', often through our negligence, who he is. Is it too late to hope for a generosity of spirit, a compassion, a bent towards mercy, a walking together, a mutual letting go of ancient wrongs, real or imagined for the sake of this now, this God given moment which is all any of us has – all we have and yet enough; enough if we truly believe in this God-man who walks through our world longing for intimacy, who stops under the tree of our individual and collective life with his challenge of love, and is willing to go through passion and death that we might know that transformation is possible?

This Easter may you and the faith communities from which you come experience the liberating joy of transformation as you celebrate the resurrection. And may the risen Christ walk with you all your days.



Ruth

New Directors

Joining Michael Fitch, Anne Gibson and Kelvin McCracken.



Fr Eddie O'Donnell is parish priest of St Brigid's Derryvolgie Ave. His earliest association with Restoration Ministries was in the late nineties, an encounter initiated by Cardinal Daly. While in St Anne's Parish, Dunmurry, he was a close and very helpful neighbour. He has expressed his delight in having been able to provide a home for Restoration Ministries during our transition from Thornhill Road to Harmony Drive. For ten months we experienced his generosity and hospitality – and that of the Parish of St. Brigid's. He welcomes this opportunity of continuing cooperation and friendship, and we are so glad he said 'Yes'.



Raymond Reilly is an active member of Harmony Hill Presbyterian Church, Lisburn. He became associated with the local activities of Restoration Ministries about 3 years ago. By profession an accountant, we welcome his great gifts in this whole area. Just over a year ago he agreed to take over the bookkeeping when Beth Moore retired. His calming presence, and his supportive friendship blesses us all.



Eithne Agnew is a parishioner of St Brigid's, Derryvolgie, Belfast. For 12 years from 1996 she worked as Ruth's PA and then moved on to devote her energies to the vocation of grandmother and other activities. However, part of her heart has never left us, so this is like a homecoming for us and her. Not only do we appreciate and enjoy who she is, but we also value enormously her creativity and her administrative skills. Her return is a mutual delight.



Fr Des Corrigan is a Society of African Missions priest and former Director of the Retreat and Conference Centre at Dromantine, near Newry. After working for many years in Africa he came to Dromantine in 2001. Des and Ruth met in 2002. Throughout the years since then, with his quiet but passionate commitment to unity, he has been such a supportive and generous friend to Restoration Ministries. This has expressed itself in many ways, one of the most notable being to co- host with us a gathering of Church leaders from all over the island in 2008. We feel totally blessed to have him on board.



Web: www.restorationministries.co.uk **Restoration Ministries**
19 Harmony Drive
LISBURN
BT27 4ED

Email: office@restorationministries.co.uk

Tel No: 028 92675783