

# corrymeela<sup>✦</sup>



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## Miracles

Miracles are needed  
Miracles of nourishment  
Miracles of sharing  
Miracles of healing  
But as we may suppose that  
the age of miracles is past,  
though sudden miracles  
surround us like blackberries  
in the bushes in autumn!

**James K Baxter**

**MANY YEARS AGO** ago the wonderful New Zealand writer Mike Riddell introduced me to James K Baxter's poetry. This lesser known poem hidden in a commentary on the apostle Paul has always been my favourite.

As we reflect on fifty years of peacemaking it's often the small things that have made the difference - the nourishment of welcome, sharing of meals and sometimes the healing that telling your story can bring. Corrymeela is all those things and you are always welcome.

**Mark McCleary**

Thoughts About the Holy Spirit, a commentary on the prison letters of Paul by James K Baxter

# Coming Up - Open Events

## December 2015

5th Advent Reflection Day 10am - 3pm \*  
12th Christmas Open Day, 2 - 6pm.

## January 2016

29th-31st Blessed are the Brave \*

A Retreat for people who read the Bible in a way that affirms the lives, stories and gifts of LGBT people in faith and society. This event is for anyone involved in faith leadership who wishes to deepen their conviction and commitment to LGBT inclusion.

## February 2016

12th-14th Silent Retreat \*

Using gentle liturgy, Ignatian reflection and rest to create a community of silence and calm for a weekend.

Lenten retreat walks - dates to be confirmed

## March 2016

5th Slowing Down to Meet Yourself \*

A Retreat rooted in the Celtic tradition and designed to create breathing space to reframe, restore and reconfigure.

25th-28th Youth Conference \*

A conference for young adults looking ahead to the future through exploring faith, community, and sustainability.

## April 2016

4th-8th Making language visible \*

Painting letters and words. Exploring the place of language as a visual sign and inspiration in our lives with Stephen Raw.

## May 2016

27th-29th Connections Weekend (formerly known as the Friends Weekend) \*

\* Further details on all these events will be available on the Corrymeela website in the coming months or contact [belfast@corrymeela.org](mailto:belfast@corrymeela.org)

[www.corrymeela.org](http://www.corrymeela.org)



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## Dear Friend

**IT'S BEEN A WONDERFUL YEAR** of thanksgiving and celebration. Our members and friends have hosted movie nights and barbeques, choirs, coffee mornings and a summer festival. We welcomed the Prince of Wales to Ballycastle where he paid tribute to our founder Ray Davey and the work of Corrymeela. It was a poignant visit as he had earlier visited the place where his Great Uncle Lord Mountbatten was killed. He told us that he personally understood, "in a profound way, the agony borne by so many others in these islands of whatever faith, denomination or political tradition."

The celebrations culminated in our anniversary weekend which you can read all about inside. It was a wonderful series of events with contributions from world renowned leaders within the arts, politics and Church. The highlight for me though was when a founder member who had left the country in 1970 for work reasons came back to our 50 years, 50 Stories event in Ballycastle. He remembered helping to plant trees on the empty clifftop around the bell tower but said that even though the site had changed beyond recognition the spirit of welcome and hope was still the same.

Amongst all the celebrations the daily work of helping groups learn to live well together has continued and this is the best way we can honour the memory of those who have given so much to Corrymeela over the last five decades. Inside you can read about this year's summer programme as well as an overview of all our current work.

Before leaving the 50th Anniversary behind us though I found it fascinating that the same themes kept coming up through the year. Our Easter gathering brought hundred of former volunteers to Ballycastle and the site did feel like the open village of Ray's vision. Prince Charles talked of our work as being "a lit window on the hills at night." Former President Mary Robinson told us how Desmond Tutu described himself as "a prisoner of hope" and indeed all of our guests this year encouraged us to look to the future. At the end of our 50th Anniversary we honour the past but clearly hear the call to keep moving forward - to engage with refugees and asylum seekers and Climate Justice. The Irish writer Sean O'Casey captures it well when he says - "When it was dark, you always carried the sun in your hand for me." As we move into the next 50 years off Corrymeela I pray that we can carry hope to all those we encounter.

**Mark McCleary** Head of Communications, Corrymeela

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[www.facebook.com/Corrymeela](https://www.facebook.com/Corrymeela)  
Follow us on twitter @Corrymeela

Corrymeela magazine  
129 Ormeau Road, Belfast  
Northern Ireland BT7 1SH

**Tel:** +44 (0) 28 9050 8080  
**Fax:** +44 (0) 28 9050 8070  
**Email:** [belfast@corrymeela.org](mailto:belfast@corrymeela.org)

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**Corrymeela Belfast**  
129 Ormeau Road, Belfast  
Northern Ireland BT7 1SH  
**Tel:** +44 (0) 28 9050 8080  
**Fax:** +44 (0) 28 9050 8070  
**Email:** [belfast@corrymeela.org](mailto:belfast@corrymeela.org)  
**Web site:** [www.corrymeela.org](http://www.corrymeela.org)

**Corrymeela Ballycastle**  
5 Drummaroan Road, Ballycastle  
Northern Ireland BT54 6QU  
**Tel:** +44 (0) 28 2076 2626  
**Fax:** +44 (0) 28 2076 2770  
**Email:** [ballycastle@corrymeela.org](mailto:ballycastle@corrymeela.org)

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# Thoughts from the Leader

**A JEWISH PHILOSOPHER** of the 17th century said that “We come to know God not through contemplating the universe, but through contemplating the history of the human race.”

I’ve been thinking about this phrase a lot throughout our own small contemplations of the history of Corrymeela in 2015. We are nearing the end of the 50th anniversary, and we have had celebrations and commemorations as a community – pilgrimage walks; gatherings of former volunteers; a magnificent festival; cinema nights; fundraisers; public lectures; prayer events; political analyses; storytelling events.

In the narrative of the great flood in the book of Genesis, the writers have God promising to “remember” - the word used is *zakhar*. It means to call to mind in such a way as to affect current thought, or feeling, or action. So to remember is not merely to recount the facts, but to recount the past in such a way as guides the present and contributes to a future.

The experiences of remembering the past history of Corrymeela’s 50 years has been told and retold so often this year that I have begun to feel like I witnessed some of the events that I did not witness. And that is, I think,

part of one of the functions of remembering – to be swept into a story of belonging and a story of identity, filled with hope and love.

The past is complicated. Remembering the past can sometimes be done in such a way as to create scapegoats – we can hinge history on individuals whose circumstances were far from straightforward. We can also tell the past in such a way as to create barriers in the present, and we can use the past to create a sense of belonging for many at the expense of the few.

Corrymeela has small home groups – or cell groups – of people who meet monthly to discuss their faith, their commitment, their circumstances, their learning,

the news, their concerns and their lives. During a storytelling evening organised by the Ormeau cell group this year, I was struck by the complexity of remembering. We heard stories that remembered the early days of Corrymeela, when there was a sense of being on the edge of Ireland, repurposing a building for the benefit of peace. The telling of the early days of Corrymeela often has me filled with memories – memories I share now, even though I wasn’t there – of purpose, and drive and clarity. Yet that night we heard stories of what might be more properly called a pilgrimage.

We heard stories of people who came with their own burdens. We heard stories of people who weren’t sure if they were doing the right thing, and we

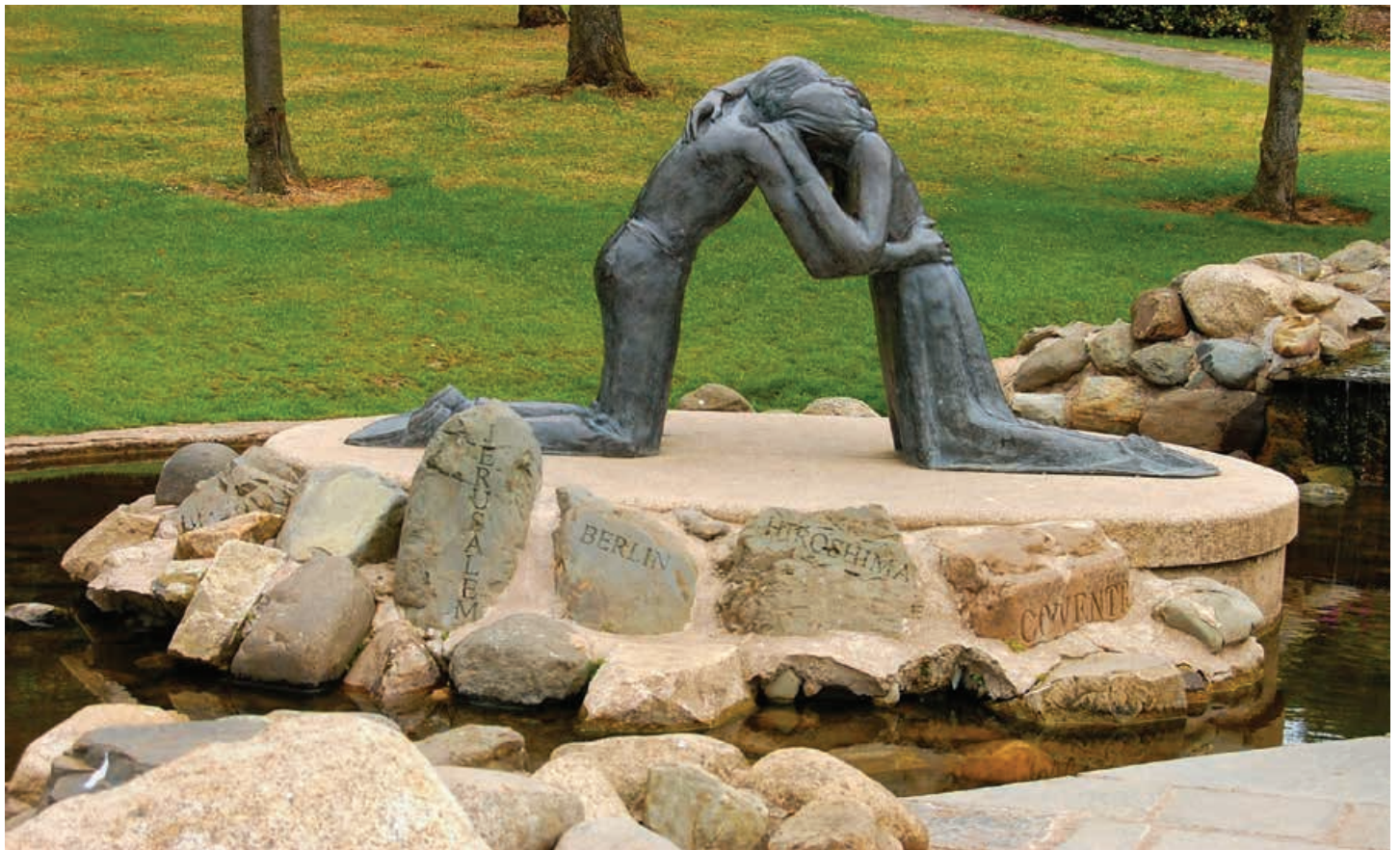
heard stories of people who weren’t sure if they fitted in. We heard stories of belonging and we heard stories of the borders of belonging, and the telling was at one hilarious and human. It was celebratory and sombre. The telling was of great community and great complexity. To gather people together for a great endeavour will always inevitably inform us that all great endeavours can hurt and heal. And we have been mindful of this this year - that in the pathway of peace we have sometimes stumbled and we have been a place that has provided shelter for many, but we would neglect our history if we were to deny the people for whom we have been a shadow.

I say all of this because our small remembering of our 50th year in 2015 can, in a sense, be considered a preparation for the larger rememberings of what will come in 2016. 2016 will mark the memory of the Easter Uprising in Dublin, that failed revolution that succeeded in kickstarting the process that led to the partition of the island, contributing to the seeds of civil war and the border that is still a gathering point for identity.

To tell the past is to tell a version of the present, and so the past is always changing depending on the present we are narrating. This is both







sombre and playful. To tell the past well we need historians, we also need artists, we need the stories from the street today, we need to unearth the stories that have been ignored, and we need to understand the impact of the story of the past on the today of telling. Emily Dickinson captured the weight of words about history well when she said, in the poem simply known as #128:

The past is such a curious creature

To look her in the face  
A transport may reward us  
Or a disgrace.

How can we, approaching 2016, learn from our small efforts of remembering in 2015? To remember is contentious, and acts of remembering can create both belonging and borders. Inasmuch as we recognise that biblical fundamentalism is both unfaithful to the original

text and to the endeavour of faith, we can also recognise that historical fundamentalism is unfaithful to the original events and the endeavour of being a people on this island of Ireland today.

So often we may wish to say “This is exactly what happened...” and in so doing, create a justification for what ensued. Our remembering of the last 100 years on this island must be guided by ethics for all,

not for few. . As we share some of our delight in remembering 50 years of Corrymeela this year we want to honour those communities, neighbourhoods and organisations of good will who are working hard to hone and hold the telling of the past in such a way as to contribute to a peaceful present and a future for all, not just for some.

**Pádraig Ó Tuama**

*Corrymeela Community Leader*



# Go and see what needs to be done:

An interview with our first Volunteer  
Desney Cromey.

## What can you remember about your first journey to Corrymeela?

**RAY CALLED ME INTO HIS OFFICE** at Queen's chaplaincy one day – I was working as his assistant – and he said that he had the keys to this house on the north Antrim coast. He said "It's currently called Corrymeela, we might keep that name or not." He said "Can you go up, see what needs to be done, and gather some students who can help?" I asked him to help me understand what kinds of things would need to be done. He looked at me again and said "Go and see what needs to be done!"

I think it was June 6, 1965. In those days, a trip up the Antrim Coast was a treat, and so there was a feeling of stepping into the unknown, of excitement and adventure. It felt like going to the edge of the world. It was a lovely summer's day.

Recently, my husband Roger and I were at a reunion of friends



from those days. We met a friend who has lived in Canada for most of the last 50 years and when he recollected our early days at Corrymeela his face was shining with memory.

Many of my memories of those years are of the walks we took. We started a tradition of, after evening worship, staying up late, taking walks to Marconi's cottage in the dark. Many's a romance started on those nightwalks.

There was no plumbing, no beds, no sheets, none of us knew how to cook for large numbers. At times we were freezing, so many of us took to sleeping in our overcoats. Once we got a working oven installed we used to sit in the kitchen at night with the gas lit and our feet in the oven.

We had a great hope of what we could be if we worked hard, so we worked hard. We sang a lot, and our times were influenced by the practice of the Presbyterian Centre at Queens - the simple rhythm of worship in the morning and evening and filling the time in between with hard work and a lot of fun. Of course there were the older people then who had the lists and the ideas of what needed to be done. Us younger ones were happy to work and happier to play.

I think that still continues - the worship, the work and the play.

The worship informed what we were doing, because sometimes in those early days we weren't exactly sure what exactly the way ahead would be, in the times of conflict and tension and the early hope of a place of peace like Corrymeela. But the worship informed us in what to do. Just as now.





# APERTURE Summer Festival



**AS JULY SLIPPED INTO AUGUST** this year hundreds gathered at our Ballycastle centre for a festival like no other. There was music, arts, theology, politics, faith and much more. Aperture very quickly became what we hoped it would be - a temporary community that engaged both heart and soul. A community where we asked questions about reconciliation, faith and justice, where we danced, we thought and we caught up with friends over coffee. Brother Roger of Taizé describes heaven as “Ta fête soit sans fin,” which roughly translates as festival without end. This festival brought together the storytelling of Sef Townsend, literary nuggets from Glenn Patterson, choirs, dance, BBC Radio 4 Morning Service and musical treats - everything from rapper Jun Tzu, to Duke Special closing the festival on an outdoor stage with Rathlin Island as the backdrop. For me it was a glimpse of heaven and made the hard work of dozens of volunteers and supporters well worth it. Look at the photos to see what you missed and hear what Jayne McConkey, Chair of the Aperture Festival Committee and Community Leader Pádraig Ó Tuama saw as the highlights of the weekend.

**Mark McCleary**

*Head of Communications, Corrymeela*





**THE WORD “APERTURE”** in English comes from the word *aperire*, meaning “to open”. In a camera, it’s the bit that opens the lens enough to let in light. For our festival, it was opening up conversations and experiences to let in light.

Most of my time was spent in the literature stream of our festival, so that’s what I can speak to most. We opened with words of insight from the magnificent biblical scholar Mark Grey. Taking texts from Isaiah, he opened up conversations about contemporary politics, contemporary church culture, language and meaning. Mark’s presentation was erudite and rich, and so very rewarding.

Other local writers also made the literature venue so very engaging. Paul McVeigh read from his utterly entertaining book “The Good Son” (recently shortlisted

for the Guardian’s “Not the Booker Prize”). A fictional tale of growing up in Catholic North Belfast, set during the summer between ending primary and entering post primary school, it’s a coming of age story that carries so much truth in its fictional plot. Paul’s reading is a thing to be experienced and it’s wonderful to hear that he’s got an audio version coming out. Tony Macaulay’s reading

of his was similarly engaging - drawing huge crowds and huge laughs as he described a visit to Corrymeela in 1975 - accompanied by video footage of him and his mates breaking the seesaw and being entertained by “men in cardigans and jumpers and beards all of whom seemed to be called Brendan”.

We had Sarah Perry, author of “After Me Comes the Flood”, a

gothic novel of extraordinary power read for us too. Sarah’s presence in the room brought linguistic flair, drama and immense engagement. Sarah’s understanding of the role of language in fiction, the role of strong language in biblical text, and her love and appreciation for the Revised version of the Bible has influenced her writing in ways that enthralled and entertained the crowd at Aperture.

Marian Partington held the room in an exquisite experience of silence, horror and healing as she read from and spoke about her book “If you sit very still”. Marian’s sister Lucy was one of the victims of Fred and Rosemary West and the book explores the 20 years between Lucy’s disappearance and her unearthing, and then subsequently, explores the 20 years since that







unearthing. Marian's study had been poetry and it was overwhelming to hear such beautiful language being used to describe such devastating experiences. Marian's practice in Quaker meetings influenced her reading as she held the room in rich silence during her time.

Other highlights included seeing a room crammed full of individuals to hear Sigi Riewerts' presentation on poetry, culture, Dietrich Bonhoeffer and language.

TS Elliot said that good poets borrow, great poets steal, and so with joy, we stole the format of "Book Doctors" from Katherine Venn, former literature coordinator for the Greenbelt festival. People flooded the main lounge for an hour and there poured forth their literary ailments "I need a book to help me face reality" one said, and "I need

a book to help me face the truth of ageing" another said. In response to these ailments, we had Book Doctors who prescribed steady diets of poetry, literature, theology, fiction and non-fiction. It was wonderful, and so worthwhile.

**Pádraig Ó Tuama**  
*Corrymeela Community Leader*

## APERTURE Summer Festival



**WHEN THE FIRST PANEL DISCUSSION** started in the Croí, on the Friday afternoon I was able to breathe a sigh of relief. Not only were the stages set up, bunting hung, wristbands delivered, coffee brewing and a myriad other details in place, but the venue was packed and we had more people arriving. While we were able to put the skeleton of the festival in place, it is the people who bring it to life - so thank you for trusting us and coming and celebrating and making the festival yours.

It was a real pleasure to welcome old and new people to Aperture and Corrymeela. For those to whom it is as familiar as home, we hoped to bring something new - a conversation, a thought, an encounter beyond the usual. For those for whom this was their first encounter with us we hoped to offer challenge and welcome, conversation,







creativity and celebration. The polaroid gallery (by mak9) which grew over the festival beautifully gathered this range of story from the first timer to those who have journeyed alongside for decades.

I have loved hearing the stories that emerge after such an event. It was also our hope that this temporary lived community could be a space

where we could engage with questions of how to live well together.

I would like in summary to share one contributor's feedback he emailed in:

*"Congratulations on an exceptional Festival.*

*I was delighted at the range and depth of the discussions across a number*

*of the panels. Indeed I was struck by the connections across the discussions.... from neoliberalism and consumerism, to human rights, to building civil society with new narratives and horizons.*

*What really struck me was the courage of Corrymeela in ensuring that the debates and conversations were not 'the community speaking to itself' but opening out to mine the creativity and challenges 'on the edge'. The presence of the LGBT community, in particular, lifted the insights around power, identity and transformation, with so much learning that crosses over to the rather settled and at times staid 'community relations' narrative.*

*Corrymeela will have an exceptional contribution to make during the next 10....50 years if some of the*

*'edgy' discussions can inform your new practices and interventions.*

*It is indeed time for a more 'mindful', 'artful' and 'emergent' politics as part of a new civil society narrative (or set of narratives)".*

**Jayne McConkey**  
Corrymeela Community Member







# Remembering Well Together

**ON THE 30TH OCTOBER 1965** Tulio Vinay spoke at the opening ceremony and challenged Corrymeela to become “a place of dialogue and encounter with all people.” Ray Davey prayed that Corrymeela would become “the open village open to all of goodwill.” On the 30th October 2015 we gathered in Belfast City Hall to celebrate the thousands of lives that have been transformed by those visions. From a gala reception with a former Irish President through to a church service with the Archbishop of Canterbury and Irish church leaders we looked at what it means to live well together. In between we reflected on the stories of Corrymeela - a mingling of joy, sadness, laughter and tears over the last five decades. More than a thousand people took part in the three events which although they were celebrating the past kept reminding us to look to the future. Corrymeela begins when you leave.

*The three articles  
on the pages 12-21  
were written by  
**Alan Meban***







FRIDAY

# the poet & the president the peacemaker

Addressing the three hundred people who had gathered in Belfast City Hall to celebrate Corrymeela's 50th anniversary, guest of honour and former Irish President Mary Robinson praised the work of the peace and reconciliation organisation:

"You give hope to people who need to see it ... Continue to build bridges. I honour the last fifty years and wish you well for the next fifty years."

The hubbub in the upstairs Rotunda rose in volume as people climbed the grand

staircase and mingled before the formal programme began. Old friendships were rekindled and new connections made. When the bell was rung the crowd reluctantly tore themselves away to move into the Great Hall.

Hosted by Pádraig Ó Tuama, the gala didn't dwell on past achievements but instead looked forward at issues of fracture around the world.

Kathleen Kuehnast spent the summer of 1980 as a Corrymeela volunteer. She now works as the Director for Gender and

Peacebuilding at the US Institute of Peace studying the impact of war and violent extremism on the lives of women and men.

"War is another example of human society going through very rapid change, a change of social and proscribed roles for both men and women. But we rarely leverage these changes to transform the social contract and ensure that women and men's roles are more equal, inside and outside of the home."

Highlighting the UN Security Council's



Resolution 1325, Kuehnast explained:

“Gender equality issues can’t wait until peace is found in order to be resolved. Sexual violence during conflict requires the protection of women. Women must have key roles around the peace table.”

If violence isn’t hardwired to gender, a peaceful society requires “taking the guns out of the minds of young men as well as out of their hands.”

Lyrical poet Michael Longley admitted “poets were as dumbfounded as most people with the violence” during the Troubles.

“Poets would be inhuman if they did not respond to tragic events in their own community, and poor artists if they did not seek to endorse that response imaginatively.”

He gently recited a number of his poems including *The Ice-Cream Man* (reprinted in the Summer edition of *Corrymeela*



magazine) that poignantly remember people who were murdered, declaring “we’re all haunted, we must all engage with ghosts”.

A short set by performer Duke Special added an extra P into the proceedings with three songs exploring the human condition: *Always been there*, *In a dive* and *Condition*.

Former Irish President Mary Robinson was “really honoured to join in the fiftieth celebration of *Corrymeela*”. She paid tribute to the founders “who anticipated that there needed to be a safe space

to carry out incredibly important and dedicated work”.

As president she chose to use her office to support human rights and peace. In her inaugural address twenty five years ago she said:

“I turn now to another place close to my heart, Northern Ireland. As the elected choice of the people of this part of our island I want to extend the hand of friendship and of love to both communities in the other part. And I want to do this with no hidden agenda, no strings attached ... I will seek to encourage mutual understanding and tolerance between all the different communities sharing this island ...

“Symbols give us our identity, our self image, our way of explaining ourselves to ourselves and to others. Symbols in turn determine the kinds of stories we tell and the stories we tell determine the kind of history we make and remake ... I want this Presidency to promote the telling of





stories – stories of celebration through the arts and stories of conscience and of social justice.”

Climate Justice is the focus of Mary Robinson’s foundation. She quoted Pope Francis’ recent encyclical *Laudato Si* with its call to “protect our common home”.

“We have a duty of care to the Earth as our shared inheritance ... shared with those on it today as well as those who come after us.”

Disrespect for our common home is polluting the atmosphere and contributing to rising sea levels.

“The human rights of men and women and children living in the most vulnerable places are undermined. The pollution that causes the problem isn’t caused by those who suffer the worst impact. Instead it is caused by the most wealthy in the world.”

Climate justice boosts the voices of those least responsible yet most affected by



climate change.

“This isn’t just an issue of responsibility of governments: we need to change our habits, to consume differently, to waste far less, and to rekindle a sense of wonder at the ecosystems of our world that we must cherish.”

She chose a locally resonant maritime disaster as a metaphor for the fate of the world’s population if climate justice is not taken seriously:

“When the Titanic hit the iceberg, it wasn’t just those in steerage that went down, it was everyone bar the very few who managed to escape in boats.”

The former President’s address finished by recalling Archbishop Tutu in front of an audience being asked why he was so optimistic. The South African cleric answered: “I’m not optimistic. I’m a prisoner of hope.”

Perhaps the challenge for Corrymeela now echoes the one Ray Davey issued when he handed over the keys to Desney Cromie for the newly bought Ballycastle property and said: “Go and see what needs to be done.”







SATURDAY

# 50 Years 50 Stories

Friends were reunited and memories rekindled as members and friends - old and new - gathered in the Ballycastle centre on Saturday 31 October to celebrate the first fifty years of Corrymeela's life. The corridors and paths buzzed with the sound of founders mingling with newer members and volunteers.

Angela Breakey made the trip back from Baltimore especially for the birthday celebrations. Standing in the lunch queue she looked over at the people eating and remembered making the centre's first six dining room tables from old doors.

Her husband Bill pointed towards a

clump of tall fir trees that surround the bell tower. Fifty years ago the exposed landscape was treeless, but the fruits of early planting and nurturing was now clear to see. His contribution was in the initial building phase - "getting it up and going" - before leaving to pursue work opportunities abroad in 1969.

"Pride isn't quite the right word, but it's very gratifying to feel that what we were involved in back then has produced all of this and has continued and grown and developed and moved in new directions."

While she has kept in touch with developments through the Corrymeela magazine, Angela still noticed many

physical changes on her visit back to the centre.

"But the essence of Corrymeela has been preserved: the warmth, the welcome, the cups of tea, the fire, the freedom to talk about anything in an accepting environment. The physical changes aren't what is important in life. The original reasons for Corrymeela being continue even though the external has changed. And of course the view and the situation never changes."

At three points during the afternoon the focus switched to the Croí. The first short liturgy remembered staff, members and volunteers who had died. Their names





and contributions were remembered as those present picked up seeds that will be planted in the spring to revive “the colour and vibrancy they brought to the site”.

Time and space was made to remember victims and acknowledge the community’s own “complicity in the fractures of our world”. In the final act of worship, the lights of the Croí were dimmed as a voice asked: “50 years! Still

no peace. Why do you keep going?”

Waiting in darkness, situations in need of light in local communities and across the world were named. As candles were lit, those assembled responded to each petition crying out “Let Light Shine” in a sign of hope.

Across in the Davey Village, black and white photographs, pamphlets and plans

were set out on tables, documenting the evolution of the community and its centre. Members recognised faces and reminisced about work camps spent together. The interest and practical help shown by Coventry Cathedral was evident amongst the archive of magazines and a timeline which acknowledged their support for the building of volunteer accommodation.

One poster explained that “the old was replaced by the new” while noting “what remained unchanged was the welcome which extends to all”. Memories were shared of turning up to stay and being given instructions to “make a bed” with a hammer and nails; teenage summers spent on site away from parents; hugs from the Dalai Lama. The early Corrymeela years of “hippies and students” were recollected, but no one referred to them as “the good old days”. Change was welcomed and expected.

Long time members like Maureen Bergin reached back in time and told stories. Chris Camerson remembered the Holiday





Fellowship which ran on the Corrymeela site before the community jumped at the chance to purchase it. Legends such as maintenance man Billy McAllister were honoured along with long-time cook Anna Glass.

Marian Loftus started working in the Corrymeela kitchen in 1984 and remembered Anna “who lives on through her recipe book”. No longer can residents tell the day of the week by the food on the menu: there’s much greater variety and choice. The kitchen remains at the heart of the community: “the meeting point of staff, volunteers and the users of the centre”.

Towards the end of the afternoon, long-term volunteer Mehak Ameer reflected on the 50 Years 50 Stories event. She had witnessed “so many special bonds” between people over the weekend of celebrations.

“I feel honoured and privileged to be a small part of the journey for the past 50



years. They’ve shared their stories and we have a lot to learn from that.”

Mehak felt encouraged by the event.

Would she ever return for such a celebration? “I’d love to be part of it again in 50 years time.”

“I’ve always believed in the power of stories and how it can change your understanding of anything in the world. When people talk about Corrymeela you share that moment together with them and you feel it. And when you feel it, that’s Corrymeela.”

As dusk fell over Ballycastle, fires were lit and visitors started to depart, taking with them new memories, new friendships and new stories. As it says above the door, “Corrymeela begins when you leave”.











SUNDAY

# And Jesus said no

More than seven hundred people packed into St Anne's Cathedral for the last event in Corrymeela's 50th anniversary weekend of celebration and storytelling. The sound of the prayer bowl rang out to signify the start of the service of thanksgiving.

After the introductions, Roman Catholic Primate Archbishop Eamon Martin led the opening prayer using the symbols of the open Bible, a lit candle and a turf cross. Pádraig Ó Tuama honoured Corrymeela's first leader Ray Davey, Kathleen and their family as well as John Morrow, Trevor Williams, David Stevens, Kate Pettis and Inderjit Bhogal. Founders,

members, countless volunteers and staff were included in the prayer.

Voices Together blended with the Cathedral Choir and their beautiful music soared throughout the vaulted space.

An extended liturgy written specially for the service by John Bell from The Iona Community followed the reading from chapter 4 of the Gospel of John.

Through music, song, narration and a dramatic glimpse into the mind of the Samaritan woman at the well, the congregation explored the disciples' journey with Jesus through Samaria. At

the point a village refused to receive Jesus because he was on his way to Jerusalem, James and John questioned "Lord, do you want us to call down fire from heaven to consume them?"

The narrator's reply? "And Jesus said No"

In a challenging epilogue, the liturgy asked the congregation whether Jesus would give us the go ahead if we wanted permission to annihilate any number of potential targets.

if we asked permission to call down fire on a Boko Haram regiment or the North Korean nuclear silo





on Sunnis or Shiites  
on the offices of Charlie Hebdo or the  
headquarters of Isis  
or on any people whose behaviour we  
presume to understand,  
would Jesus give us the go ahead  
.....especially if, while we were listening  
to the sound of our own voices, he was  
hearing their side of the story.

The Archbishop of Canterbury began his  
sermon by acknowledging “the vision

and passion of Ray Davey [that] caught  
the imagination of a group of young  
volunteers”.

“Born out of the scars of his wartime  
experience in Dresden, his passion and  
vision brought into being a community  
of faith that has held with great courage  
and hope the stories, trauma and legacy  
of forty years of conflict in these islands.  
This is an immense gift the Corrymeela  
Community now offer to the world and

to the church, which in so many places,  
is faced with unspeakable horror and  
violence.”

Describing the liturgy as “beautiful,  
extraordinarily powerful, deeply  
convicting” he developed the theme of  
being “a place of welcome or a person  
of welcome”. The encounter at the well  
“started with the routine welcome of  
basic and limited hospitality” but was  
“swiftly transformed by Jesus to the  
welcome of hope and expectation”.

“The welcome of reconciliation confronts  
us with our own differences and our own  
failures, and confronts the Other with  
the gap between us; and at the same time  
offers us a way of beginning to narrow  
that gap and of going forward together.”

He referred to a recent phone call with a  
colleague in Burundi. The civil war ended  
ten years ago, but there has been very  
limited reconciliation. Since this year’s  
disputed election process, many of the  
tensions have re-emerged.







“There is perhaps something of this dynamic in the ongoing challenges you face here in Northern Ireland. The moment there is new pressure or new suspicions, the gaps re-emerge. Let us hold onto this: Jesus does not permit these gaps.”

He added:

“The welcome of reconciliation is not a soft or an easy option ... It is the hard choice, which is a necessary part of moving beyond the politics of a peace process ... When you bring together these dangerous materials, that when combined become explosive, the danger of explosion is mitigated and dissolved through the essence of hope that Jesus pours into their combination.”

Ultimately “the villagers open their homes and their lives to the Other, to Jesus, and are transformed thereby”.

“We need to move beyond the hospitality of welcome to the hospitality of

reconciliation. That means a genuine and not merely polite engagement with the Other - and for many of us, such confrontation is awkward.”

In practice that involves encounter and listening and “is best done through communities like Corrymeela, which offer an element of safety in the space”.

“Please, keep going as a community, whatever happens around you. Let the welcome of reconciliation, with all its discomfort, hold you to the path of the Cross.”

Justin Welby finished by saying: “As disciples of Jesus we are called irrevocably to be part of reconciliation: to make it happen, to bear the burden, and demonstrate the hope that none but he can bring.”

Methodist President Rev Brian Anderson introduced the choir’s rendition of the Lord’s Prayer noting the different version but saying: “The heart of the prayer is

always the same ... today with all our differences, both serious and slight let us join our hearts in this prayer.”

Former Presbyterian Moderator Very Rev Dr Ken Newell commented: “Ray Davey described the Christian message of peace as much more than a permanent ceasefire”. What was necessary was an understanding of “the total health and wellbeing of our society, especially the recognition of the dignity and worth of every person”.

The service concluded with the singing of Christ, be our light! and a spontaneous, heart-warming and sustained round of applause.





# After Dresden

## JOURNEYS THROUGH

**TIME** offer as many changing viewpoints as walks through the mountains. But fifty years is a way-station: a special arrival almost demanding that we look again and see what we can see. In my fifties too now, it seems more important to me than ever to recognize that Ray Davey was fifty as Corrymeela began. Corrymeela was not only a beginning but a way-station in another walk through time.

In 1965, Northern Ireland must have seemed to many like a strange backwater, where little of wider importance broke the surface. True, institutional sectarianism remained the order of the day, but the Unionist Prime Minister was promising to build motorways, to enter a Catholic School and would even meet the Taoiseach. And anyway, it was very small beer compared to Civil Rights in Alabama, Vietnam, Vatican II and the Beatles.

As now, the future could only be dimly anticipated: but clearly Ray had seen enough to know that some old things had to be proclaimed and done in a different way to meet the demands of Northern Ireland in the 1960s. Like all of his generation, Ray spent decades limping back to life after World War II. Philip Orr's recent dramatization of part of Ray's War Diaries, shows unmistakably, that his whole life, and with it

Corrymeela's, was to be lived 'After Dresden'. As a British religious worker behind enemy lines, Ray's point of view on the events of February 1945 was almost unique. Not only was he a British soldier as allied bombers pounded a defenceless enemy city, but he was a minister whose ability to move between camps brought him right up close - closer to the almost unimaginable consequences. As relayed by the play, he could not forget that one of his congregation was lying in a Dresden Hospital as the cataclysm struck. But even more, he had a front seat for a human apocalypse. All the categories of friend and foe, of good and evil seemed to swim on that night. Because the Dresden firestorm, even before Hiroshima, showed that war makes killers even of the best of us, and that war


as a way to resolve human struggles with evil was coming to an end. What is left of humanity after Auschwitz? Whither humanity after Dresden?

In the play, Ray's salvation depended almost entirely on a chance and fleeting meeting with one elderly German woman, Frau Klein. In her, and in their meetings, Ray met definitive evidence both

of the impossible possibility of hope and, even in Dresden, of a future. The heartbreaking fragility of human possibility in the face of the catastrophe of mass slaughter, only makes it more poignant. But, it seems clear to me, that in this meeting, Ray glimpsed a revolutionary, if terrible, proclamation of light in the middle of darkness that is the heart of the gospel.







At its core, Corrymeela, my community, looks to me like a struggle to witness to two connected realities; to the 'one small candle' of love against the brute and disastrous realities of violence, and to the possibility of communion and community. Ray knew that human meeting in a place of weakness and helplessness is the cradle of rebirth, both personal and social, and—maybe—even for politics. After

Dresden, there is nothing else except choice: forgiveness, love, and renewal or the apocalypse. As the Hebrew Scriptures said: Choose Life.

I am not sure all of this was clear to anyone in 1965. Nor was it obvious how quickly Northern Ireland would descend into its own mini-apocalypse in which Christian denomination and tradition would define enemies and

friends rather than light a way to new possibility. But Ray and the community founder's word was different: the possibility of faith is our possibility of freedom from fear, of relationship beyond violence, of hope for a real future in a community who knew welcome and mutual belonging. After Dresden, there could be no romantics, but after Dresden there was no choice.

Over fifty years, in Northern Ireland's darkest days, Corrymeela was many things. But above all it was appeared like a word of difference and a place for difference in a society in despair. Reconciliation was our name: not because we always knew what it meant, but because it was a continuing, miraculous promise in the middle of a political desert. It has been a remarkable walk with life and

with others with meeting with and learning from others at its heart. We know the truth of Jonathan Sacks' words that "Only a being with freedom is a true other, and the freedom and dignity of true otherness is central to the divine project." Our journey has left me with a conviction that our experience of the possibility of human flourishing in the middle of hatred is the essence of hope. And it has left a scepticism about ceasefires and surface calm which we can surely say with certainty, have only a fleeting resemblance to peace.

I have no idea what comes next. But the revolution that is the gospel of love against hate, life against death, light against darkness gives meaning and direction to every step: not as a declaration of war but as a possibility and a well-spring and a knowledge which gives constant hope for a new society and a new world. In a place where remembrance and commemoration seem tied up with suffering and death, some things cannot and must not be forgotten. And fifty years into Corrymeela's journey it is wonderful to be given a year to remember why we hope, (and why Ray hoped) - for the sake of the future.

**Duncan Morrow**  
*Corrymeela Community  
Member*





# *More than a ce*

*"I should add that when we speak of the Christian message of liberation and hope, we also imply that great word "Peace", which means far more than a permanent "cease-fire". It means all that makes for the total health and well being of society. Social justice, recognition of the dignity and worth of each person and total consensus. In a word it means that we all must work for a new society based not on privilege or power but on the quality of people."*

Ray Davey 1975



**IT'S FUNNY HOW THE SAME WORDS**, or the same call, can echo differently in different spaces. In Northern Ireland, Ray's call serves as a mirror - a stark mirror, perhaps, but one in which a reflection is recognizable nonetheless; even the most pessimistic reading of the present would grudgingly accept that there exists, at the very least, the "cold peace" Ray wanted to transcend. In Israel-Palestine, the call serves as a negative: in almost every conceivable aspect, in almost every walk of life, the state of affairs here could pose no blunter contrast to the situation and the prospects described by Ray.

Over twenty years after the beginning of our peace process, Israel-Palestine is gridlocked in a stalemate that neither negotiations nor violence seem to be able to dislodge. On the larger political level, Israel maintains complete and unilateral control of Palestinian life - every facet of it, from freedom of movement, to security, to borders and to tax collection. This control is exercised differently in different areas - in Gaza, in the West Bank, and in Israel proper - but it is unequivocal:

# Peacefire

there is only one sovereign state between the Jordan river and the Mediterranean sea. The perpetually nascent Palestinian state, in the shape of the Palestinian Authority, exercises less power in the territory under its control than the average American city. The population of Israeli settlers in the occupied territories has more than doubled since the peace process begun - not a coincidence and something not likely to escape any Palestinian observer. The same can be true of the scale, number and violence of attacks by Palestinian paramilitaries on Israelis, usually civilians; most Israelis associate negotiations with a very palpable decrease in the security of their own community, a decrease that stands in stark contrast to lofty talk about peace.

On the grass roots level, the majority of people on either side of the divide have not met members of the opposing community in any context other than that of threat or violence; in many cases, they will have not even heard of each other in any other context. Testimonies and footage from this autumn's escalation of violence tended to dwell on the lack of empathy that Israelis and Palestinians had to spare for each other even when one of them was clearly suffering and not posing an immediate threat. But this approach is anything but surprising: after over two decades of virtual separation, there

is simply no way to see each other other than as threat. Even if an individual Palestinian or Israeli does not threaten you in the present moment, they represent, or even embody, the threat their entire community poses to your own. This is the default, instinctual approach, and it precludes empathy.

There are many reasons for the peace process turning out as miserably as it did - from lack of good faith between the parties to their determination to keep the negotiating table as small as it could be; in contrast to Northern Ireland, where an attempt was made to bring all parties and movements on board, Israel was effectively negotiating with one Palestinian faction the terms on which it would agree to police and suppress the rest - a set up that faction accepted readily enough. Unsurprisingly, this gave all other Palestinian factions every interest in undermining the peace process. But the key flaw of the process is embedded in its very core: separation. In Northern Ireland, despite the peace walls and despite continuing alienation between many communities, the notion of interdependence seems to be accepted by most, however grudgingly. In Israel-Palestine, the aim was to separate from each other as completely as possible, whether peacefully or not. That separation is an ideal for the mainstream Left as well as for the Right precludes any possibility for a vision even remotely akin to Ray's vision of peace ever becoming a reality.

But history is not static. Sooner or later, every stalemate cracks. The way things are going now, such cracks usually expressed in tit-for-tat violence (wildly disproportionate in terms of force and casualties), which actually makes the gridlock look appealing. But if deeper fissures emerged, if the status quo was irreversibly to collapse, we can at least imagine an outline of what a constructive post-violence approach might look like. This approach would need to hinge on interdependence rather than on attempting to settle a heavily imbalanced conflict. Thus, the old dichotomy of rights and justice for Palestinians vs security for Israelis would need to give way to the parity of rights for all, justice for all and security for all - with each community's security and rights depending on the other community's security and rights. A constitutional mechanism will need to be built to enshrine the rights of Israelis as well as the rights of the Palestinians. The lifelong instrument of liberation and security espoused by the two national movements is independence; they will need to choose interdependence as an alternate route to the same goals. This would be a tremendous shift in the dynamic of our conflict, and most of us do not appear to be remotely ready to begin to contemplate it. But there does not appear to be another route to get to Ray's peace - or any peace, for that matter.

## Dimi Reider

*Dimi Reider is an Israeli journalist and an Associate Fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR). He is also a long-term friend and regular visitor to Corrymeela. We ask him to update us on the prospects for peace in Israel-Palestine in the context of Ray Davey's definition of peace.*



# Living well Together

## **FOR MANY YEARS THE CORE OF OUR WORK**

in Corrymeela has had particular programme areas - working with youth, or faith, or political or community groups. As we celebrate our 50th Anniversary we asked Head of Programmes Susan McEwen to give us an overview of our current work.

The foundation of all our programme work is the belief that we can learn to 'Live Well Together' and with all groups we are now incorporating six themes:

**faith, understanding peace and conflict, education and learning, leadership, health and wellbeing civic engagement**

Whether we're working with a faith group, a youth

group and political or community group, a group of women, or a group of people seeking asylum we bring these themes in. All of these themes help us to aspire to 'Live Well Together'. Over the course of a year the Corrymeela Programme team will work with up to 100 groups. The majority of these groups are in the context of the residential centre but not exclusively. In some cases, the group bring their own design and programme and we support in the ways that they request.

We believe in welcome and shared learning and the majority of Corrymeela's current programme development is through strategic partnership. **Get Together: bereaved families discovering**, is a great example of one of these projects (see page 26).

Good collaboration increases the impact of projects as partners can bring in additional skills that we don't have, and the example of different groups working together is a powerful modelling of the values of dialogue, peace and reconciliation.

**Contact Culture and Conflict Around the Causeway** is a project that brings together a very diverse bunch of people from Belfast City Council, Causeway Museum Services, University of Ulster, Queens University and Corrymeela, supported by funding from Heritage Lottery. The project looks at history through the story of the land and the ruins upon it. It takes groups to archaeological sites around the Causeway and challenges our partial understanding of our community's contested history.

**Project GRL: Resilience** is a key element of our health and wellbeing theme and Project GRL - growing resilient leaders is just at a pilot stage and focuses on working with young women. It is a collaborative between the To Be Beautiful Project, Flow Yoga Studio and Corrymeela. It is an exciting new project using creativity, mindfulness and practical tools that look at dealing with interpersonal conflict, problem solving and areas of influence.

**Waste No Time #dontbinyourvoice** is a project that seeks to place quality of relationships at the heart of how the new Causeway Coast and Glens Council does business. We are working on this with Beyond Skin, Rural Community Network, Ballymoney Resource Centre and an independent facilitator Charo Lanao with





funding from the Building Change Trust.

Some of our projects are designed and led by Corrymeela.

**Seed** is a young person led programme that touches on our all of our key themes. It has a personal development approach that is both residential and community based. The young people aged 18-25 come from very different backgrounds and over the course of the project explore the challenges facing them and look to ways that they can grow into their potential. The wider Corrymeela Community play an important role in this project by being mentors and encouraging the young people in reaching for their dreams.

**Invited Families** is a programme close to the heart of Corrymeela and works with a small number of families over the course of a residential. The families have been personally referred as in need of some support and respite. The residential is an opportunity for the families just to enjoy being together in a supportive nurturing space. Through play, creativity and relaxation the families ease into the idea of what living well together means for them. Families from the Corrymeela Community are part of these residentials coming alongside the families sharing their own struggles and stories.

### Inspiring Women Together

is a new project that sits within our relationship as a strategic partner to the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. This leadership project brings together a network of women working in the third sector for support and learning. Some of the network will complete an intensive 6 month leadership course that explores power within, power with and power to do as well as skills development. Others will support and nurture them.

The common theme in these last two projects sees

a small number of people go through the formal project while being supported by a wider network; a network of people committed to being there and contributing to and participating in the learning. In the big picture this model reflects how the Corrymeela Programme Team and the Corrymeela Community are. We may be the ones leading out the projects but supporting us, shaping our thinking, challenging our work is the Corrymeela Community, out of whose passion these programmes take life.

This is by no means an exhaustive list of the work in

which we are involved; there is **20/20 Visions, Living Well Beyond 2016** - a major political conference next year, **Facing our History Shaping the Future, Upstanding, Bystanding** and more. As a Programme team we have inherited a beautiful and challenging legacy. We are mindful of everything that has come before, we are grateful for the thinking and deep learning that informs our praxis, for the support of the community, and the vision of this work.

**Susan McEwen**

*Head of Programmes,  
Corrymeela*





# Get Together

## Bereaved Families Discovering

**TONY'S HANDS PLAY EXCITEDLY WITH THE BALL OF WOOL.** Bright green thread runs through his little fingers as a smile brightens his face. His mum, like all the other families, has had a chance to find their rooms and settle into the Davey Village in Corrymeela. The volunteer team has welcomed them and they are now in the large Kenbane room, surrounded by many new faces. The group of six families appears a little unsure of what the Get Together weekend will hold, but they still listen expectantly for what Tony wants to do

at his first weekend. 'I want to go to the beach. And I want to play football!' Now he picks a face across the room, clutches the thread tight and with his other hand throws the wool towards them. He is holding now his own corner of the net in Corrymeela.

As everyone gets a turn to reach out and grab the ball of wool, they share their hopes for the weekend. The green net expands, tenses and loosens, connected now by all the wishes and questions floating in the air. The July evening sun

is coming in across Rathlin, and the web glistens in the golden light. It is Friday evening, the beginning of the first ever Get Together residential.

Like all the other families here, Tony and his mother are coping with a parental bereavement, and have decided to take up the opportunity of meeting with other families for support, to increase their confidence and make new discoveries together. Tony and his mum had been visited at home a few weeks before by a Get Together volunteer, enabling the



team to learn from the families and tailor the residential according to their needs.

Each Get Together volunteer became a designated host to a specific family throughout their stay at Corrymeela. Since November 2014, seven volunteers from Cruse Bereavement Care and three long-term volunteers from Corrymeela have been recruited and trained to work as a team within the project. A further six Corrymeela volunteers joined the FLT team to facilitate the weekend.

Through the Activity Day and Home Visits, held between March and June 2015, we saw that each family had many different ways of responding to their grief. Because of this, we wanted to ensure that the first residential began with an acceptance that there is no 'one' way to grieve.

*"I felt comfortable and no one was judging me - I could be myself throughout the weekend,"* commented David, the father of three young people on the residential. It was important that we created a welcoming space that allowed families to find their own ways to make a connection.

One mother commented: *"It felt like it was the right balance, which made me feel I could at times join in, chat or just take time out."*

Over the last year, the learning gained by the Get Together team, in each contact with each family, affirmed how important it is to share time together through play, laughter, conversation, contemplative moments, art-making, tears, hugs or meal times. In essence, we have been creating opportunities to meet each other fully, where the conversation naturally includes memories of the loved ones who have died, and also makes room for new memories to be made.

### A Common Ground

*"My dad passed away when I was about seven, and I felt like I was the only one. But I started coming here and now I feel like I may not be the only one. I feel happy, I feel like it's nothing I can just tell you - it's something great!"* (Murphy, aged 12)  
*"I felt a real sense of belonging and appreciated the chance to talk to others."* (Avril, whose husband died)

These comments reflect a common

feeling on the residential: By having a chance to meet others coping with similar losses, they gained a new sense of understanding and belonging. Catherine spoke about the moment on the weekend when her daughter realised that the other young people had lost a parent too and that they too had to deal with situations now."

This sense of reduced isolation also had the effect of increasing individuals' confidence and resilience. Some talked about being ready for bereavement counselling now, and one mother spoke of improved communication between her child and herself, *"[he/she] doesn't appear to be so angry with me any more, and is less confrontational."*

Another mother spoke about how, two months on from the residential, she finds she is mirroring the creative play that she witnessed by Ruth, an FLT volunteer who had engaged with her son throughout the residential. She stated that this has helped her seven year old son to *"talk positively about his dad a lot and this is something that he had not been able to do before the weekend."*

The Get Together project now began its second year with a roadshow in September, where people working within the professional and voluntary sector heard directly from bereaved families about what they really need and what helps and hinders most in the midst of their grief.

As the next four years of the project develop, many more family residencies will be offered in joint partnership with Cruse Bereavement Care and Corrymeela. If you would like to play a role as a Get Together volunteer, or for further information on the project, please contact either [davidcunningham@corrymeela.org](mailto:davidcunningham@corrymeela.org) or [elaine.roub@cruse.org.uk](mailto:elaine.roub@cruse.org.uk).

**David Cunningham**  
Play Therapist, Corrymeela

**Elaine Roub**  
Young Cruse, Co-ordinator



# SUMMER

## PROGRAMME

**EACH YEAR, HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE** travel from around the world to participate in and experience a summer at Corrymeela. Between June and September around 1000 people are welcomed into the Centre to share cups of tea, stories, and community life. The summer is a cherished time, where the energy of Corrymeela has a slightly different rhythm.

Admittedly, this rhythm is likely to the tune of the beloved Moose Song and is sung throughout the site by people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds. Leading the songs and energy level are the volunteers, community members, and staff that worked tirelessly to make this year's Summer Programme special and memorable for all who participated.

This year, 1,252 participated in residential summer programmes and were supported by 55 volunteers and at least 50 community members. When asked what makes Corrymeela special, one group participant stated, "*Corrymeela is such*

*a welcoming and accepting place. It affirms faith in all that is good and lets us see love, faith, and friendship in action.*"

Programmes offered are for people of various backgrounds - some are refugees, people with learning disabilities, university students, businesspeople, youths, and adults and families living with limited choices. Regardless of the differences people may have, Corrymeela is a haven of community in our fractured world - a place where similarities connect us and differences strengthen us. After a three night stay, one mother, reflecting on her

### VOLUNTEER STATS

LONG TERM VOLUNTEERS: 19

SUMMER VOLUNTEERS: 6

SHORT TERM VOLUNTEERS: 30

COMMUNITY MEMBERS: 50  
(7 WITH FAMILIES)

time, echoed this sentiment and said, "*Corrymeela gives our child a chance to meet other religions or nationalities and learn they are okay before the society we live in teaches them they are not.*"

***"Corrymeela helps us to refocus on what is important - life, faith, family, friendships, and health."***

Often times, connections and friendships are formed during activities that are part of the daily rhythm and hum of the Centre - stories are told while doing dishes, worshipping in the Croí, and playing on the playground. When asked what they learned during their stay, one youth programme participant stated, "*When we discuss our differences, we realise and recognise we are more similar than different.*"





**“I have taken groups to Corrymeela over the past three years and each time it gets better! No other place I have visited can compare to the experience the young people get from a Corrymeela visit. It is a home from home (only better).”**

***“To learn new things about people from different parts of Ireland and meet new friends that I wouldn’t get the chance to meet because of where I live.”***

Another youth chimed in and stated, *“I learned new things about people from different parts of Ireland and met new friends that I wouldn’t get the chance to meet because of where I live.”*

NICRAS (Northern Ireland Refugee and Asylum Seekers) is an organisation that has been coming to Corrymeela for many summers.

Community Member Dougie Tyler is the group leader and has been involved in the program for 3 years. We contacted Dougie to hear about NICRAS’s experience at Corrymeela over the summer.

**What keeps NICRAS coming back to Corrymeela each year?**

Dougie: *I Think the answer is two fold. First, Corrymeela has*



*a commitment to welcoming NICRAS because they see refugees and asylum seekers as a significant part of society; that we should be welcoming to people in situations that NICRAS members find themselves in. Second, NICRAS comes back because they have such an immense experience of “welcome” from Corrymeela so they are then better to pass onto members - the week’s programme is tied back into daily life and reality for NICRAS persons, which creates*

*meaning, care, and purpose.*

**What was the most exciting moment of the week?**

Dougie: *All members of the week - programme leaders, participants, adults, children - standing in a line on the beach, hand in hand, and running into the waves and back out again over and over. When doing this, a Ballycastle local was fishing. He had landed a fish when he came back to shore, he realised he was surrounded by great*

*diversity with persons of “every color under the sun” sharing the beach with him. A great conversation then occurred between him and the NICRAS community.*

**What does the week at Corrymeela mean to NICRAS members?**

Dougie: *It’s an opportunity to valued, to have space, an opportunity to be taken by surprise in terms of being looked after - one example of this is the volunteers arranging*

“Corrymeela is such a welcoming and accepting place. It affirms faith in all that is good and lets us see love, faith, and friendship in action.”

THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS:  
Corrymeela greatly appreciates and welcomes the support from all our Summer Programme funders:

- ABERDEEN CELL GROUP
- BBC CHILDREN IN NEED
- IRELAND FUNDS
- NSPCC NICHOLAS KNATCHBULL
- BEATRICE HANKEY
- JOHN MANN, DEAN OF ST. ANNE'S CATHEDRAL, BELFAST

*all the tables into one big table for the final meal with candles and flowers - it is a touching and meaningful moment.*

These are a few memories from one of the 26 residential groups we hosted this summer and there are countless more! One guest reflected on time here and said, “Corrymeela helps us to refocus on what is important - life, faith, family, friendships, and health.”

***“I have learned that nothing is impossible.”***

- 11 year old youth

Another summed up the sentiments of many and stated, “I will have these memories forever.” People may come to Corrymeela for a lot of reasons, but as the



years and people change, the sentiments stay the same. The values that keep the centre full of warmth and love come from the early days of Corrymeela - now 50 years ago - allowing us come with open minds and hearts ready for the journey that lies ahead.

As we don our warm coats for winter, we fondly think back to our memories from the summer at Corrymeela - a time when volunteers become pirates, fun is endless, and bedtimes don't exist. We think of the shared stories and learning from one another, the challenges and hope we have, and - most

importantly - the next time we will make it back to the big house on Drumaroan Road to experience it all again.

**Rosie DeFilippo**  
Assistant to the Executive  
Director Department,  
Corrymeela



# *faithful dialogue*



Corrymeela are delighted to announce the launch of a new gospel reading project.

**WE ARE IN A TIME** when some of the loudest voices of religion are also the most strident and the least representative of the values of neighbourliness that are at the heart of the gospel text. The Christian texts can be a pathway towards civic participation and peace for those who engage with the stories and spirituality of New Testament. The letter to the Romans commends its readers to “if possible, as much as it depends on you, be at peace with everyone”. However, the Christian witness is often known more for its fractures than for its witness to peace. In the name of avoiding argument, many underlying arguments remain unexamined. Divisions between conservative and liberal believers are worked out in the public square with hostility. There is a need for a spirituality of argument.

Corrymeela are delighted to announce the launch of a new gospel reading project that links devotion to the gospel with practice of peace in the home, congregation, workplace and the public square. This project - currently named Faithful Dialogue - will develop an online resource for the 3 year cycle of the lectionary, linking the texts of the gospel readings with contemporary reflections, scholarship, ideas for dialogue, theological resources for practical application and prayers and suggestions for personal devotion and congregational worship.

We are honoured and delighted to partner with The Iona Community, Place for Hope, Coventry Cathedral, The Irish Jesuits, Loyola Institute (TCU) and The Irish School of Ecumenics in this project. For the next year we will gather with our partners in this project and develop the resources - prayers, suggestions for reflections, preaching and personal devotions for each Sunday's gospel reading. The resource will be ready for use in early January 2017.

We are in a time when some of the loudest voices of religion are also the most strident and the least representative of the values of neighbourliness that are at the heart of the gospel text. By reading the text – using the best of linguistic, analysis, liturgical and theological lenses – in partnership with reading the world, the contemporary experiences of division, dominance and distortion can shed light on the complexities at the heart of the gospel texts. We will prepare a series of questions that speak the truth of our contemporary lives and ask these questions of the lectionary texts.

This project is designed and led by Pádraig Ó Tuama, and we are grateful to JVM Trench Trust for their funding of our initial pilot year.

## Site update

The Ballycastle Centre welcomes thousands of participants every year and is always changing to meet their needs. Here is the latest update from Matt Scrimgeour.

The comings and goings that are part of the weekly rituals at Corrymeela are being reflected unusually in the facilities infrastructure at this time. By now many of you will know that due to safety regulations the deeply loved 'green slide' is leaving us and the space where it once watched over us from will remain vacant

for a season. We are looking at how to secure funding for a replacement. Our biggest current project which we hope will be complete by the end of the year is the installation of three 99Kwh biomass, wood pellet, systems which will replace our dependence on the oil boilers that have served us well for over a decade. Our

project is currently with the local planners and how things progress there will dictate the timeline for project completion. The highly efficient biomass system has the long term potential to save us around £50K per year in heating bills.

Our other major project is related to whether we need to replace or whether we can refurbish our current Waste water Treatment Works. This is an issue that we are working through with the relevant statutory structures and we hope will be resolved before we reach 2016. Our recent wild flower meadows have reached the first stage of

cutting and we've harvested seeds which are already planted and growing in the recently installed Polytunnel. We're now growing food onsite that goes from fork-fork and we hope to continue to develop local growing and harvesting practice over the coming seasons. All in all alongside the usual day-to-day work of Hospitality and Facilities we've had a busy year and we look forward to further refining Corrymeela Ballycastle as a place where living well together is both practiced and preached.

**Matt Scrimgeour**  
*Head of Hospitality and Facilities, Corrymeela*



## Congratulations

Corrymeela send warmest congratulations to Aileen and Jack Farrell on the birth of their beautiful baby daughter, Abigail Aoife. Aileen is Corrymeela's Volunteer Programme Manager and was also a long-term volunteer.

## Christmas Open Day 12th December 2 - 6pm



Corrymeela Christmas Open Day 2015 is full of magic and mystery for families and children.

Santa will make Corrymeela one of his stops on the way to the North Pole, so please call and say hello to Santa and his elves. There will be storytelling, arts and crafts, puppets shows, the Christmas Pantomime and lots of goodies to get the Christmas spirit aglow!



## Meet Our New Volunteers



**Carole Connelly**  
(Northern Ireland)



**Craig Cameron**  
(originally from Northern Ireland  
now living in Scotland)



**Ernie Fraser**  
(Canada)



**Jemima Higgins**  
(Northern Ireland)



**Judith Nelson**  
(England)



**Kimberly Bellows**  
(USA)



**Lina Alsterlund**  
(Sweden)



**Mark Mullan**  
(Northern Ireland)



**Mia Kaluza**  
(Germany)



**Rosie DeFilippo**  
(USA)



**Stefan Becker**  
Germany)

**PUT YOUR  
PICTURE HERE  
BECOME A  
VOLUNTEER**

Find out more at  
[www.corrymeela.org/  
volunteer](http://www.corrymeela.org/volunteer)

## Au Revoir Dessie

**FOR MANY OF US** Corrymeela is epitomised in the people we encounter when we visit here - whether for the day or over decades. Dessie Smyth volunteered for a year and then served on the kitchen team for almost four years. His next adventure is in Boston where he has been since the end of the summer just past and we caught up with him recently to reflect on his unique experience of Corrymeela. Here is a flavour of our conversation shared in deep gratitude for Dessie, his courage and the colour he brought to life lived well together at Corrymeela.

### **What was your first experience of Corrymeela?**

My first experience of Corrymeela was five years ago when I came for a week-long residential Wider Horizons programme run by Springboard (Wider Horizons brought together unemployed young Protestants and Catholics from areas that suffered through ongoing economic deprivation and levels of inter-cultural conflict. Read more about Springboard online: [springboard-ops.org](http://springboard-ops.org)). I fell in love with the place as soon as I arrived. When our bus pulled up we were all so nervous and shy (hard to believe, I know...) but we were met with friendly words and warm smiles from Rita Lane and Owen Egan - I had never experienced a welcome like it before. I loved that no one asked questions about things like your religion or sexuality. It was the first moment in a very long time that I experienced

a sense of love and real acceptance, which took my breath away. When the programme with Springboard finished I knew I wanted to come back; my Corrymeela journey had begun.

### **Tell us a story about your experience of working in the kitchen at Corrymeela Ballycastle?**

One of the joys of working in the kitchen was having the



opportunity to create space for individuals or a family to be together in a different way by providing hassle-free food and letting people enjoy one another's company over a meal. Creating that space for people is so important and made working in the kitchen very special for me.

### **What frustrated you about your experience of being on staff / where could we do better for staff?**

Being very honest here - which is hard for me - one of things that frustrated me about being on staff was feeling like we were often the last to know things. Corrymeela always speaks of the importance of being a team and sharing a sense of community but I didn't always feel that. It's so important to take time to talk to the people you work with even when you don't need something from them; we all have busy days at work but saying hello to someone costs nothing.

### **What three words summarise your experience of Corrymeela?**

My three words to sum up my Corrymeela experience would be life changing, emotional, challenging. Is that four?!

### **What are you doing now in the US?**

I have chosen a totally different career path but one, which I have always wanted to pursue, and the Corrymeela connections I have made around the world helped make it happen. I am an Au Pair in Boston for a year working for a family I know really well through Corrymeela. The

thing that drew me to the new job was Boston itself of course, but also the chance to explore working with a family in their home, as well as the opportunity to study and work abroad.

### **What is your growing sense of the kind of work you would like to do in the future?**

The work I would like to do in the future is all down to my time at Corrymeela. When I first arrived as a Long-term Volunteer I thought I wanted to change the world of youth but I soon figured out that that was not my path. My years of kitchen background work and my passion for programme and family work - plus a general love for people and listening and helping - has made me want to pursue a career in family work / social work / counselling alongside exploring the importance of food in our lives and families. In years to come I hope to develop my skills and knowledge so that I can create a family / food / counselling / life programme for people in need - maybe even back at Corrymeela.

### **Tell us a story about why Corrymeela makes you smile?**

Not many people at Corrymeela are aware that before I became a volunteer I was homeless and on the streets for a long time. I was on anti-depressants and at the lowest point in my life. Corrymeela makes me smile because - thanks to the love of Springboard and a life-changing journey alongside the people that make Corrymeela so special - I could get up and go to



a place that loves me for being me. It makes me smile that I can love Tina Turner and sometimes go to parties dressed like her and everyone loves it. I can live my life by my choices and people support whatever life decisions I make. The fact that I can pray and worship in my way and how I believe makes my heart and soul shine with happiness. As corny as that may sound, it's true.

### **Is there anything else you'd like to communicate back to members, staff and volunteers?**

Many people say and believe that Corrymeela begins when you leave. As true as that may be for others, to me Corrymeela began when I arrived. I am overjoyed to have spent almost five wonderful and challenging years both working at the centre and being part of the relationships that make Corrymeela the special place it is. I'm so delighted to be a Community Member and to have opportunities now and in the future to give back to a place that has given me so much.

## **SAD NEWS**

### **Legacy Gifts**

Mrs K. I. Hunt  
Ivan and Dorothy Wheeler  
Charitable Trust  
Dr W. T. Orton

### **Gifts in Memoriam**

Mrs Elizabeth Conacher  
Professor Amyan Macfadyen

## **Corrymeela FC celebrates 50th with a Trophy!**

**SHORTLY AFTER THE TURN OF THE YEAR** staff member and fellow footballer Sean Pettis and I started chatting about the best way for the club to celebrate Corrymeela's 50th anniversary. The perfect way, which never occurred to either of us (probably because we were playing for the 2nd team) would be to win a trophy.

The club was formed back in 1988 as a means for young (and not so young) men who were interested in the Cross Community message of Corrymeela to engage in competitive sporting activity. Ray Davey was a regular supporter of the team turning up in all weathers to cheer us on. In 1996 there were enough members to warrant creating a 2nd team, with the primary purpose of strengthening the first team. Both sides compete in the Down Area Winter Football League.

It took time but since the late 2000's the benefits have been evident, with the 1st team regular contenders for titles. This season was no different as they reached two cup semi-finals and were at the top end of the league table all season. Meanwhile, despite some good performances and possessing a strong defensive unit the 2nd team found themselves in a relegation battle. They were missing the key ingredient all successful teams need, goals!

Since the end of November the team only suffered three defeats. In mid February the team began a 12 game unbeaten run to the end of the season, which saw them pull away from the threat of relegation, finishing a respectable 7th. The run of good form was well timed, coinciding with the early

rounds of the two cup competitions. Since 1996 the 2nds had only ever reached one semi-final but this season they joined the 1sts in reaching two. They were unlucky not to reach the final of the Mervyn Bassett Cup, losing out to Comber Star II in a penalty shootout lottery. However they reached their 1st ever final when defeating Brentwood II 3-2 after extra time in the Tommy Murphy Memorial Shield.

The team and quite a few supporters travelled to Adams Park, Millisle on Thursday 30th April hoping to create a bit of history for the Club. Cup final nerves were settled just before half time when Donal McGrath fired home the opening goal. Ted Workman scored a second after half time to give his teammates a bit of breathing space. The nerves were jangling in the closing minutes when Comber hit the woodwork and then had a penalty saved by keeper Paul Kelly. Then the final whistle sounded and we lifted a trophy to celebrate the 50th Anniversary!

**Gerald Morris**



# We are Corrymeela and You are always welcome



For our 50th anniversary we asked members to send in a few lines on the theme of “One Time at Corrymeela...” Here are just a few.

**ONE TIME AT CORRYMEELA**, I saw a woman celebrating freedom on a trampoline as she shouted “If only the neighbours could see me now!!”

My best friend is from Jonesborough in South Armagh. We never would have met had it not been for seed group... We sat on the floor of the cottages after watching the- political video footage... Everyone else went to lunch we couldn't move - we have stayed beside each other ever since!

**One time in the Croí** I received a new understanding of disability from Jean Vanier who told about his journey leading to forming the L'Arche Community.

When I come to Corrymeela it is just like coming home - there is just something indefinable about the sense of being enfolded, embraced by a presence.

**One time in Corrymeela**, at the first table in the dining room, two RUC men and their wives welcomed a Provo with a cup of tea. That led to stories being told in which each found themselves in the other.

One time at Corrymeela we didn't face up to what was going on because we were all being very positive.

**One time at Corrymeela**, I had the opportunity to be with children with profound life limiting disabilities and with their parents and siblings. It was transformative for me. I am now different.

One time at Corrymeela, I remember walking along the road as I struggled with a problem, someone kept me company.

**One time in the Croí**, I was asked to take worship and I became a leader.

One time in the Croí....my wife and I were privileged to commit to one another in the loving embrace of God, family and friends.

**One time in the Croí**, I listened to Jean Vanier speak to us about the L'Arche community. I decided later on, following my university, to spend some time in a L'Arche community in France.

One time in the Croí three very small children reverently and solemnly distributed the elements at communion and their nervous parents need not have worried because it was beautiful.



# *“You don’t know who you are until other people tell you.”*

**WHEN TULLIO VINAY**, the founder of the Agapé Community in Italy, spoke at the opening of Corrymeela in 1965 he used this quote from Antonia Byatt “You don’t know who you are until other people tell you.”

Right from this earliest time in Corrymeela’s story, we had the guiding words that alerted us to the borders between people - borders between people of one Christian denomination and another, borders between people who do or don’t follow a faith, borders between genders and borders between ideologies.

To create a place of belonging always alerts us to the ways in which belonging can be good for some but bad for others. We at Corrymeela work hard to make a space of belonging for all, but this is always an aspiration and never finally realised. We stumble, we have intentions of welcome that get lost in their impact. We are constantly in need of hearing what the experience of us is like, and we can’t do that, as Tullio said “until other people tell you”.

We regularly hear from those who have loved their experience at Corrymeela - they tell us that the welcome, the tea, the conversation, the space and the programme was rich and delightful. Sometimes we also hear from those whose time with us may have been a struggle. Maybe they found the crowds too much; or there was a misunderstanding; maybe they expected something different; or poor language was used about them; or they clashed with someone. We’re grateful for all of these glimpses – Corrymeela is revealed in the moment of

generosity. Some generosity is easy to accept, and other generosity can be harder to hear. Both are needed.

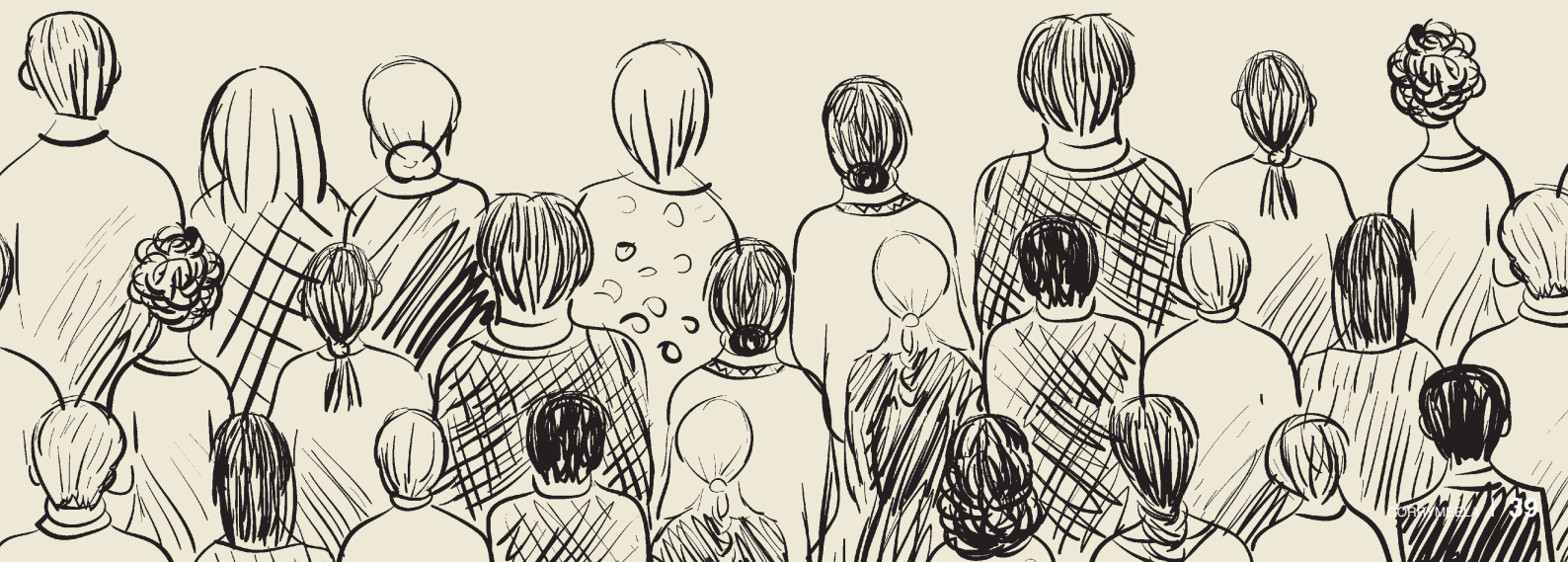
In response to Tullio’s words, Ray Davey had said: We hope that Corrymeela will come to be known as ‘the Open Village’, open to all people of good will who are willing to meet each other, to learn from each other and work together for the good of all. Open also for all sorts of new ventures and experiments in fellowship, study and worship. Open to all sorts of people; from industry, the professions, agriculture and commerce. This is part of our vision. We know we are only at the beginning and there is so much to be done.

He was right - there is much to be done, and we will not know how we are doing until we hear from those who have come. At the heart of Tullio’s words is the antidote to defensiveness. When someone speaks to us we may find ourselves wishing to blame or attack or abdicate. To listen deeply to words about who we are is a tender and tense thing, but therein is a treasure – of information as well as encounter.

We have chosen “A pilgrimage of listening” as part of our theme for our community weekends over the next year and we hope that in listening deeply we can learn more about who we are, and be changed in the light of our faith, our listening, our hope and our love.

**Pádraig Ó Tuama**

*Corrymeela Community Leader*



# Christmas Cards...

**Our Christmas cards reflect the importance of our place of worship at Corrymeela - the Croí.**

*"This place is rightly called An Croí - the heart. Indeed it is heart-shaped. Here we can take time to listen to the great heartbeat - in a society where there are so many violent and destructive beats, here we can take time to listen to the Heartbeat that guides, inspires and unites us all together."* **RAY DAVEY**

Our Christmas cards come in packs of 10 with a choice of 2 designs, the price is £3.50 per pack plus post and packing.

## **The Croí at Christmas**

Inside the message reads: *Heartfelt Blessings for Christmas.*

Image from a painting by Rachel Craig.

## **The Croí Window**

The message at the bottom of the card reads: *Wishing you Peace at Christmas and the New Year.*

The inside is blank for your own message.

Image from a photograph by Neil Shawcross of the stained glass window in the Croí 'Descent of the Spirit'.



**The Croí at Christmas**



**The Croí Window**

Order Form	No of Packs required	TOTAL
The Croí at Christmas £3.50 per pack		
The Croí Window £3.50 per pack		
	Plus P&P *	
	Donation to Corrymeela if desired	
	Total enclosed	

### **\*POST & PACKING RATES**

QTY	UK	EUROPE	REST OF WORLD
1	£1.25	£3.75	£4.75
2	£1.65	£5.25	£7.35
3	Same as 2	Same as 2	Same as 2

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

**Please make cheques/postal orders payable to the Corrymeela Community and send them with your Order Form to Corrymeela, 129 Ormeau Road, Belfast, BT7 1SH, Northern Ireland or please debit my card**

### **CARD NUMBER**

\_\_\_\_\_

### **EXPIRY DATE**

\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

### **SECURITY CODE**

\_\_\_\_

### **SIGNATURE**

\_\_\_\_\_

**You can also order your cards over the phone by calling our Belfast office 028 9050 8080**

**Corrymeela acknowledges the support of the following**



A full list of our current funders can be found at [www.corrymeela.org/about/funders](http://www.corrymeela.org/about/funders)