

# corrymeela



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# Ceasefire

I  
Put in mind of his own father and moved to tears  
Achilles took him by the hand and pushed the old king  
Gently away, but Priam curled up at his feet and  
Wept with him until their sadness filled the building.

II  
Taking Hector's corpse into his own hands Achilles  
Made sure it was washed and, for the old king's sake,  
Laid out in uniform, ready for Priam to carry  
Wrapped like a present home to Troy at daybreak.

III  
When they had eaten together, it pleased them both  
To stare at each other's beauty as lovers might,  
Achilles built like a god, Priam good-looking still  
And full of conversation, who earlier had sighed:

IV  
'I get down on my knees and do what must be done  
And kiss Achilles' hand, the killer of my son.'

## **Michael Longley 1994**

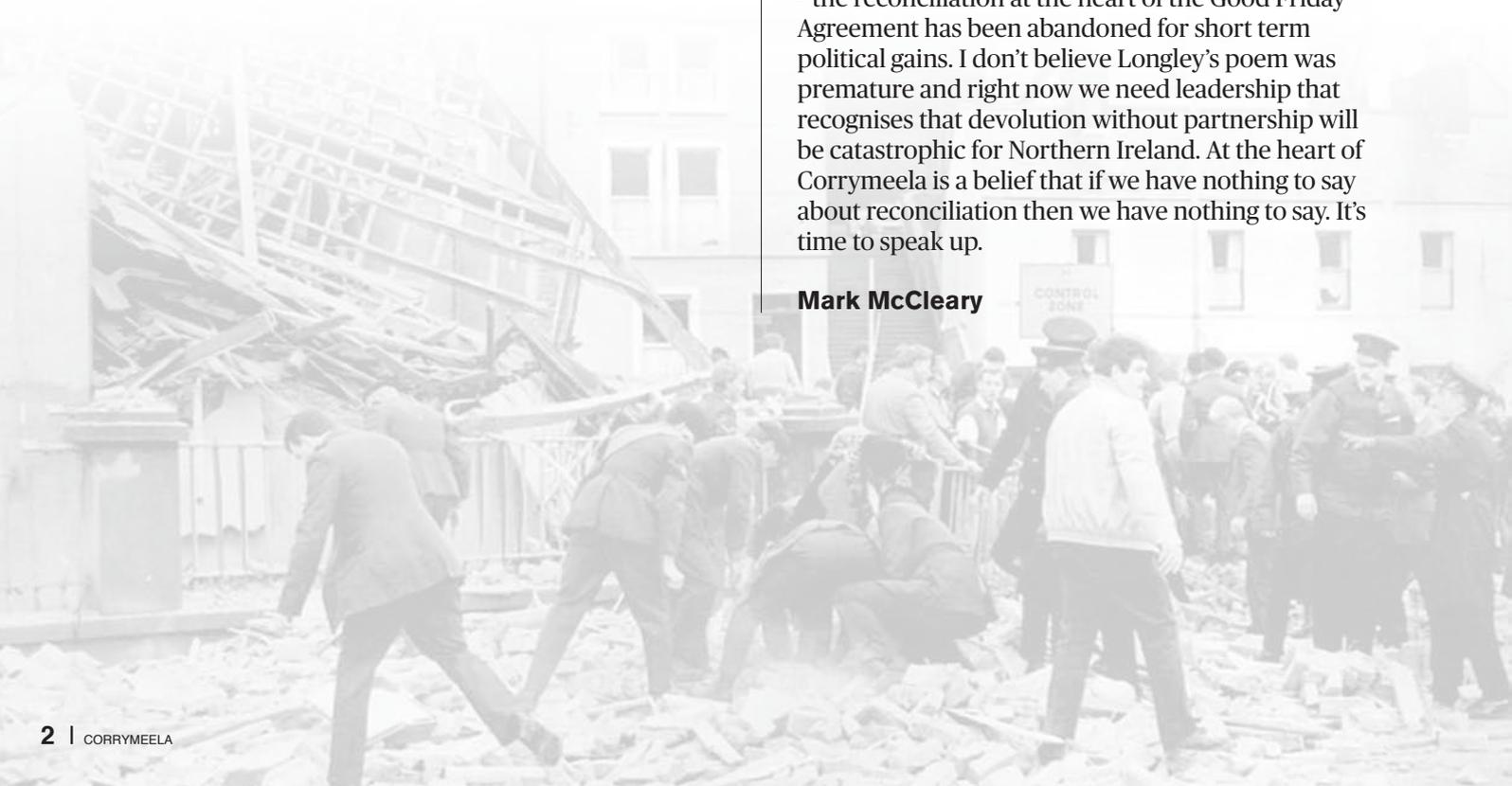
*From "Selected Poems" (Jonathan Cape, 1998).  
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## **As we were finalising the magazine in early November I was interviewing Michael Longley about the inspiration behind this poem.**

We talked a few days before the 30th anniversary of the 1987 Remembrance Day Bombing in Enniskillen. He said that in 1994 as rumours began to circulate of an IRA ceasefire he was reading The Iliad, perhaps the greatest poem in European Literature to deal with war, death and suffering. Longley saw the soul of the poem as the passage where Priam the old King of Troy comes to Achilles, to beg for the body of his son Hector. He decided to try and compress that whole long episode into something like a sonnet. And when he imagined King Priam, he saw the face of Gordon Wilson, who lost his daughter in the bombing but said he bore the bombers no ill will and would pray for them. It is probably his best-known work and yet Longley told me that a few days after it was published in The Irish Times, a man stopped him on the Lisburn Road and told him that he really admired his Achilles poem, but he wasn't ready for it. His son had been injured in a punishment beating and he wasn't ready to forgive. Longley wondered then if his poem had been premature, too symmetrical, too neat and tidy. And so, he wrote a corollary to it a poem called, "All Of These People."

In the same week that I talked to Michael Longley, negotiations were continuing to restore the devolved institutions and at that point making no discernible process. It seemed therefore apt to reprint this poem to remind us all of where we had come from. The current stalemate feels like a crisis for reconciliation - the reconciliation at the heart of the Good Friday Agreement has been abandoned for short term political gains. I don't believe Longley's poem was premature and right now we need leadership that recognises that devolution without partnership will be catastrophic for Northern Ireland. At the heart of Corrymeela is a belief that if we have nothing to say about reconciliation then we have nothing to say. It's time to speak up.

**Mark McCleary**



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## Dear Friends

'All sorts of events will take place here - it will be a place where all sorts of people will celebrate their togetherness - meeting each other and getting to know each other; rejoicing in being accepted and feeling that they belong; it will be a place of joy and laughter; of song and dance; of music and drama - proclaiming the unity of God's creation and the totality of life together. It will be a place where the bereaved and hurt will find comfort; where the lonely will find friends; where the threatened and insecure will find support, and where the young will find meaning and purpose. It is to be a place where we all find Hope.'

This was how our founder Ray Davey described the newly built worship space - The Croi - in 1979, but it could equally describe Corrymeela as a whole. I can think of no better description of what happens here on a daily basis. In this bumper end of year issue, we look back at some of the thousands of lives impacted by our work this year. The articles on Adams Camp and NICRAS are a joyous celebration of togetherness and acceptance. We highlight our continuing educational work with dozens of international university groups and wrestle with the thorny issues of borders, Brexit and the North Korean peace process. Our programme team continues to work at transforming division through real human encounters, curating conversations that matter and resourcing teachers left to face the legacies that our government refuse to deal with. I still believe that reconciliation is the vocation we are called to and at a time where the political process continues to fail, I pray that Corrymeela is still a place where we all find hope.

**Mark McCleary** Head of Communications, Corrymeela

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www.corrymeela.org  
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Follow us on twitter @Corrymeela

Corrymeela magazine  
83 University Street, Belfast  
BT17 1HP, Northern Ireland

**Tel:** +44 (0) 28 9050 8080  
**Email:** belfast@corrymeela.org

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**Corrymeela Belfast**  
83 University Street, Belfast  
BT17 1HP, Northern Ireland  
**Tel:** +44 (0) 28 9050 8080  
**Email:** belfast@corrymeela.org  
**Website:** www.corrymeela.org

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

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# Thoughts from

**There's a book I read years ago, called *The Art of Existential Counselling*, written in the 1960s by Adrian Van Kaam. Van Kaam was a Dutchman, who survived the Hunger Winter of 1944 by eating turnips, spuds and toxic tulip bulbs – which had lifelong effects on his stomach – all the while sharing food with Jewish people fleeing for their lives in the hope of safe passage off mainland Europe.**

He became a Spiritan priest, eventually moving to the United States where he undertook further studies on a spirituality and psychology of “human encounter” writing a doctoral thesis entitled “The Experience of Really Feeling Understood by a Person”. His was a life devoted to the complexity of human relations. He faced criticism from some religious quarters for his focus on psychology and from some

psychologists for his focus on religion. His work was important. He knew that in addition to human relationships, societal structures need health and healing. He knew that exclusion, privilege and disenfranchisement can be structures that impact contemporary society. But he focused on the area where he had insight: how improved human relationships can support individuals to agitate for, and facilitate, the changes that are needed in their lives: personal, professional, societal, structural.

All of this led him to write the line that sums up his work for me: “Human encounter is the essence of cure, in the deepest sense”.

To collaborate with others to make a change in a society requires relationships that are robust enough to withstand differences in opinion, disagreements, jealousies, hostilities and hurts. The courage to share – or receive – an apology can impact peace negotiations.

# *the Leader*

The ability to connect with the humanity in a person who appears to be a polar political opposite can influence policy for generations. Andrew Solomon, in his extraordinary book 'Far from the Tree' (Scribner, 2012) writes that "Love is not only an intuition but also a skill".

While Love may seem too intimate a word to use in the context of conflict de-escalation and transformation, I think it's appropriate. We are ultimately dealing with the human heart when we do interventions. Reconciliation is what love looks like in communities that need to stick together. No community can exist without reconciliation. Reconciliation – the renewal of feeling for the humanity of the other – is often what helps enact structural change. This builds on intuition and skill. It is painful. It is necessary if we are to survive together.

For us at Corrymeela, this is our work. We know that relationships are part of a large web of interventions in any reduction

of conflict, but we also know that relationships are vital in every process of peace. Resilient relationships make for real change. So, we do not simply host groups at Corrymeela for conferences. Rather we host sessions of sharing and learning within a facilitated experience of relationship, with opportunities for human encounter both in and out of session, both formal and informal, both planned and unplanned; just like real life.

We are interested in transforming divisions through human encounter, so that divisions themselves are reframed within the context of human relationality; where those who've always been excluded are the arbiters of their own fortunes, rather than the receptors of others' pity or charity.

Thank you for your ongoing interest and support of the work. Enjoy this Winter edition of the magazine.



# Farewell Colin

**Time is a funny thing as it doesn't seem that long since June when Colin first announced his decision to retire as our Executive Director and duly completed his last day of "official work" at the end of September.**

It's even stranger to realise that Colin and I first met over 40 years ago in the mid-seventies at the Ballycastle Centre, when in the midst of the troubles the Centre truly was a place away from what was happening in Belfast and elsewhere. Sparked by Ray's amazing gift of vision and risk and perhaps unburdened from today's world of governance we all had fresh youthfulness to throw into the life of the Centre.

Back then I can remember Colin as our recreation lead! - owner of the massive white inflatable, first on ghost walks to scare the group leaders not the kids, first to call water fights, maker and master of our canoes and organiser and lead of the many regular camping trips to the small plateau at the foot of Fair Head. Also throw in wild games at White Park Bay and many a day and night of conversation, discussion, learning and song & dance.

*With Colin, the door is always open. For conversation, collaboration on ideas, implementing ideas, coming up with solutions, brewing coffee, staying late, going from work to friendship and keeping on with the work. Thanks to Colin for his dedication.*

PÁDRAIG Ó TUAMA

*It was a real pleasure and privilege to be at the Centre while Colin was centre Director. He led by example, was supportive of all and initiated wonderful programmes.*

ALASTAIR KILGORE





Ever since those early days Colin has always stayed true to Ray's vision of reconciliation; developed and shaped from those Sunday evening sessions in Ray and Kathleen's house in Belfast he has been steadfast in a strong and firm belief in building capacity and encounter in the face of what Padraig describes as a "world of fractures".

Along the way Colin's contribution has been immense! First as a youth / development worker in England, then with Save the Children at The Ramoan Centre in Ballycastle and from 1990-2001 as our Centre Director. He followed this with the creation of TIDES, a uniquely innovative partnership in capacity building with Mary Montague and finally a "formal" return to Corrymeela as our first Executive Director working in partnership with Padraig and Council. Across all this time he has journeyed with Rachel and a wonderful family and many thankful friends from around the world.

In all his endeavours I would like to call out some of Colin's gifts - a sense of openness and welcome, a sense of the new and risk taking, a never ending belief and care for young people, a commitment to creating developmental training opportunities so that we may have the leaders of tomorrow and a strong commitment to our environment and a sustainable future.

Colin, we have been privileged to walk with you. We thank you and wish you well in the journey ahead, always.

**Mike Mullan**

*Colin Craig brought vitality and vision to the task of reconciliation by trying: to find new ways between people broken by fear and distrust - sometimes in very tense situations; to reconcile human beings to care and sustain our global environment for future generations and to affirm young people with vision and hope.*

DERICK WILSON

*Colin has been a true friend to me over the years. He often uses the phrase "I've got your back" and that has been my experience of him. I am so grateful for his faithfulness.*

TERI MURPHY

*Colin Craig has always been an inspiration, mentor, supporter and most importantly a friend for 20 years*

SHONA BELL



# Programme at Corrymeela

*For us at Corrymeela, our mission is transforming division through human encounter.*

**That's the key summary from a recent discernment process undertaken by our programme team.**

Over the last 2 months we looked at 1800 Corrymeela led programmes delivered within the last 6 years. We reflected on the what the project focused on and where that fitted in to current peace and reconciliation practices locally and globally. The research confirmed that the core of our practice is about transforming division through human encounter, about reconciling societies and working towards a world where people learn and live well together. A practice of facilitation, learning and listening is at the heart of that transformation.

The research tells the story of what we've been doing over the past number of years, as well as setting our future priorities for programme development and fundraising.

Sectarianism, as defined by Liechty and Clegg, is understood as “Belonging gone bad”. Often, belonging in our part of the world is defined by “You belong if you think, act, vote and worship like us”. Our work is to challenge that definition.

For example, over the past year, Corrymeela was delighted to partner with Garvagh Forest School to establish local shared-spaces for community play, inter-school activities, family events. Such local initiatives make an enormous difference to the community relations in these areas. They also contribute significantly to the lowering of tensions during times of the year when unionist and nationalist communities can move towards segregation rather than shared space.

*Often, belonging in our part of the world is defined by “You belong if you think, act, vote and worship like us”. Our work is to challenge that definition.*

The extraordinary focus of Sean Pettis’ work in facing the legacies of conflict is outlined on pages 12 and 13. Additional to that, as we face into the 100th anniversary of the end of the First World War, Corrymeela is partnering

with cathedrals, schools and media outlets across Britain and Ireland to focus on how young people can be empowered to enact peace-projects today.

2018 will be the 30th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement and we will be working with young people who have no memory of the events of 1998. Over the next twelve months, our Brexit project will explore the impact of increased attention on the borderland between the two Irish jurisdictions as the UK continues to negotiate the departure from the EU. (see pages 24 and 25)

All of these human encounters focus around our core transformative task. This is also true on a daily basis as our programme team have the continued and joyous cycle of retreats; school’s activities; training courses on mediation and storywork; relationship building with community leaders; standing with those on the margins.

We are thrilled to be part of hosting 10,000 people a year, and I am full of gratitude for the extraordinary focus of our staff, interns and volunteers who continue to work hard to transform conflict through human encounter.

**Shona Bell**



*Pathfinder Daniel loves horse riding at the farm*



**For two weeks in July, Corrymeela was filled with the delightful mix of energetic activities, therapy sessions, laughter and relaxation that Adam's Camp brings to our site.**

Adam's Camp is a non-profit organisation which began in 1986 in Colorado. Their mission is "to realise the potentials and develop the strengths of children and young adults by bringing together individuals and families with professionals and volunteers to collaboratively provide customised, intensive therapy, family support, and recreation in a camp environment." In 2016 Gráinne Ashe founded Adam's camp Northern Ireland which serves children and youth with Autism Spectrum Disorders and their families.

Gráinne's own Adam's Camp story began just three years ago when she was searching for ways to support



*Slime workshop with the senior siblings*

her daughter, Rose, who had been diagnosed with autism at the age of 5. Gráinne came across Adam's Camp's website and she, her husband Anthony and their three children Grace, Rose and Rowan attended the camp in Nantucket in 2015. Gráinne's face simply beams as she speaks of their Nantucket experience, "What I loved about Adam's camp was that it was for the whole family; Adam's Camp believes that if you have a child with special needs it affects every person in the family. The changes that happened in that week were so significant for each one of us and it turned out to be a life changing experience for us as a family and for Rose. The progress she made in those 5 days at camp was more than she had made in years of therapy."

Following the camp Gráinne was invited by founder Bob Horney to launch Adam's Camp Northern Ireland. Devoting a huge amount of talent, energy and time, Gráinne rose to the challenge and brought ten families to Corrymeela in July 2016 for the first ever Adam's Camp Northern Ireland.

Adam's Camp have a 555 approach; 5



*Horse riding with the Pathfinders*

children with 5 therapists for 5 days. Each day the children have six hours of intensive therapy sessions with a team made up of speech, occupational, music, behavioural, play, art and drama therapists. The therapists focus on each child's strengths to provide sessions tailored to their needs. This year activities ranged from horse-riding, to painting, to abseiling, depending on the ages and interests of the children.

At the end of the week the parents have an individual, hour-long conference with the five therapists who have been working with their child. Here the therapists present all of the strategies and interventions they used during the week and discuss how the parents can use them to make continued progress at home. Gráinne describes how powerful this conference was for her in Nantucket, "During that hour I learnt more about Rose than I ever knew. I got to know my daughter again, I got to understand her. It made me really appreciate what she is going through and how brave she is to go out into this world and how autism affects her."

Each week a Sibling's Camp runs alongside the therapy camps, allowing these children to take part in activities such as archery, clay modelling and laser tag, free from all of their usual responsibilities. As Gráinne explains, "This is hugely important as a lot of these siblings tend to take on a caregiver role. A lot of them come

to us with low self-esteem and are often anxious about their siblings with special needs. As the week goes on you see their little souls and their little spirits lifted as their confidence grows." Each morning they have circle time where they are encouraged to share their stories with each other. Siblings often feel protective of their brother or sister with special needs, unable to speak negatively about them or resentful that they take up a lot of their parents' time. Circle time allows them to express those feelings in a confidential space with other children who have experienced similar family dynamics.

While all this is happening the parents not only have a chance to rest and relax but also to attend optional support workshops where they can share their stories, resources, information and advice. Gráinne describes these sessions, "They are very powerful as often as a parent you can feel very isolated in your experience and it helps a lot to know you are not alone." Each day there is a different guest speaker who specialises in autism in



*Pathfinder Aibhne enjoying his horse riding lesson*



Northern Ireland. This year one of the guest speakers was Dr Clare Caughey, an educational child psychologist from SENSations. Clare worked with the parents, particularly those with younger children who have recently received their diagnosis, around accepting that their child has autism as well as giving them further insight into the condition.

In just one year Adam's Camp Northern Ireland has doubled in size and this year was spread over two weeks to cater for 20 families. The first week was for Pathfinders, 4-7-year-old campers and the second week for 8-12-year-old Trailblazers as well as 12-18-year-old Discovery campers. We were thrilled that Adam's Camp decided to come back to Corrymeela for their second year. Gráinne explains her decision, "I was blown away by the beauty and also by the facilities available here, it was



*Siblings campers help out with some watering*

almost as if it had been purpose built for us! We couldn't do this without the volunteers and support staff here, we have loved our Corrymeela experience and all of our families gave fantastic feedback about it."

We are always delighted to host groups whose mission and ethos resonate with our own and this is certainly the case with Adam's camp. As James

Weise, who has been working as an occupational therapist with Adam's Camp for the past 24 years, articulates, "Corrymeela is a fantastic place for Adam's camp. I have helped at three different Adam's camps sites in the USA. We can always find places that house our people and give us a space to work, but Corrymeela really is so much more. Much like Adam's camp there is great heart and soul here. Your mission and our mission, although different, dove tail with each other completely and I have felt nothing but support and great love from your staff. It's much more than just a place to do our therapy and I don't think it would be easy to duplicate it in another place."

For information on Adam's Camp 2018 please visit [www.adamscampnorthernireland.org](http://www.adamscampnorthernireland.org)

**Kerry Logan**  
Corrymeela



*Siblings camper Brandon discovers a dragon's egg!*

# Facing History and Ourselves with Corrymeela

*“The past has a way of returning to haunt you. It doesn’t go and lie down quietly.”*

Archbishop Desmond Tutu

*“It was inspirational. She was roughly around our age when she had to stand up to bullying, abuse and attacks, in order to go to school and in order to fight for her right to be educated. Hearing her story helped me to understand the importance of what the Little Rock students were fighting for.”*

**Finding a constructive way to address the legacy of the past in Northern Ireland continues to be politically and socially elusive and divisive. History teachers across Northern Ireland are expected to grapple with these complexities on a regular basis. For the past 7 years Corrymeela in partnership with US organisation ‘Facing History and**

**Ourselves’, have been providing specialist support to teachers.**

Our approach is centred on exploring episodes of violence, both locally and globally including the Holocaust, US Civil Rights, and of course, events related to Ireland, including the ‘Troubles’. Teacher Denver Charles from Magherafelt High School shared his experience of the project: “The first seminar that I was able to

attend was The ‘Choices in Little Rock’. It is one of the most useful courses that I have ever been involved in as a History teacher. The way we moved through the material, starting with the students and who they are, through to making choices that matter and ending with material on the Little Rock Nine profoundly impacted me. It was clear that we could use the Facing History approach to link US History to what we teach in Northern





Ireland. It inspires students with stories of those who stood up for change in Northern Ireland through a sensitive comparison with other historical contexts. We can use this model to generate excellent resources on Who are we? Us and Them - the Causes of Division, Prejudice and Discrimination, Civil Rights, Standing Up for Change and Dealing with Legacy and Transition. I was inspired with how the material enhanced our Shared Education History Project. As part of the US Civil Rights story there was an opportunity to do an online interview with a former student of Central High School, Little Rock, Dr Sybil Hampton (pictured). Meeting her had an amazing impact. The students still remember every detail of what she said in relation to the challenges of implementing desegregation. I made it an absolute priority to attend the ‘Holocaust and Human Behaviour’ course at Corrymeela this year and am already using these resources with my Year 11’s. The students, from all abilities, are really interacting well with the material. The great thing about these courses is that they always leave you feeling that there is work to do that is both necessary and essential. These courses provide you with the tools to embark on that work”.

One of Denver’s pupils, Mark (14 years old), spoke with Dr Hampton:



*“It was inspirational. She was roughly around our age when she had to stand up to bullying, abuse and attacks, in order to go to school and in order to fight for her right to be educated. Hearing her story helped me to understand the importance of what the Little Rock students were fighting for.”*

We have worked directly with over 500 educators, 2,500 young people and around 150 schools, and produced



resources that help facilitate difficult conversations about the past. Corrymeela believes that investing in the education system in Northern Ireland’s ‘post conflict’ society is critical in building a shared future for all. We thank all those educators who work to make this belief a reality in the lives of young people.

**Sean Pettis**

Development Worker – Education, Corrymeela  
[www.corrymeela.org/schools](http://www.corrymeela.org/schools)



People make choices. Choices make history.

The Facing our History, Shaping the Future programme is funded by the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs and the Community Relations Council



Community Relations Council



Over the course of three residential weekends at Corrymeela and a two-week ERASMUS+ partner programme in Germany, Conversations that Matter brought together a diverse group of 18-25 year olds from both sides of the Irish border. The programme gave them an opportunity to discuss critical issues and to explore how they can engage with and influence these issues.

# CONVERSATIONS THAT MATTER

John McCaul, a Masters student from Queen's University, reflects on his experience in Germany.

**This August, two Corrymeela facilitators travelled to Germany with nine young adults from Queens University Belfast, Trinity College Dublin and St Dominic's Grammar School Belfast, to take part in a two week programme alongside counterparts from Germany, Lithuania and Poland.**

In just over ten days they considered what keeps societies together in times of migration. Nestled in the sleepy town of Bad Bevensen, the Gustav Stresemann Institut (GSI) provided the backdrop for these young people to meet, discuss and learn. Seminars included visits from refugees, community organisers and politicians. There was also a field trip to Hamburg as well as a three-day seminar in the German capital, Berlin.

*... the (Northern) Irish group shared what it perceived to be the island of Ireland's "dark" chapters such as the ethno-national conflict, LGBT+ issues, homelessness and "Brexit".*

At the GSI, the individual and group exercises included opportunities to give presentations on the participants' countries. For example, the (Northern) Irish group shared what it perceived to be the island of Ireland's "dark" chapters such as the ethno-national conflict, LGBT+ issues, homelessness and "Brexit." The programme also enabled the young people to work on activities in international groups. These activities enabled participants to enhance their research, presentation and public-speaking skills as well as to focus on a range of topics throughout Europe.

The trip to Hamburg included opportunities to visit St. Mary's Roman Catholic Cathedral and the Central Mosque. There were also visits to Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)



*The group prepare for their presentation*



*Matters programme, including the Germany trip, was an action packed and enriching experience that the young people will reflect and draw on for a long time to come.*

*A walk and talk to reflect on the programme at the final residential weekend*

providing assistance for refugees. The last three days of the seminar were spent in Berlin and drew on the Berlin Wall and the division and unification of both the German capital city and nation state. The group also took part in a public action project in a Berlin park that involved designing images showing the aspects which individuals perceive keep society together. Participants engaged with park users and encouraged them to contribute to the images displayed between trees in the park.

Without doubt, the Conversations that Matters programme, including the Germany trip, was an action packed and enriching experience that the young people will reflect and draw on for a long time to come. The tangible consequences of both programmes in terms of skills development and confidence were deeply appreciated by the participants.

It is the hope of the programme and the participants that the knowledge, skills and confidence gained will



*Group work in Germany*

become even more apparent as these young people engage locally in the months and years ahead as Europe grapples with issues such as migration and “Brexit.”

This year’s Conversations That Matter will take place over three residential weekends in November 2017 and February and April 2018. For more information about future programmes contact [lisamooney@corrymeela.org](mailto:lisamooney@corrymeela.org)

**Lisa Mooney and John McCaul**



*The group present on (Northern) Ireland’s ‘dark chapters’*





# Drums, Dances and Discussions

NICRAS families come to Corrymeela with a joy and gratitude that are infectious. As we welcome them to the centre they too welcome us, with stories, dances and songs, into their rich cultures and lives. These families build a unique community at Corrymeela each summer that leaves everyone full of energy and hope.

The Northern Ireland Community of Refugees and Asylum Seekers is a refugee led organisation aiming to support the integration of refugees and asylum seekers into communities in Northern Ireland and to raise awareness of the issues and problems they are faced with. NICRAS have been coming to Corrymeela each summer since the organisation was founded in 2002. This year we had the privilege of hosting a fantastic group of families from Somalia, Sudan, South Africa,



Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Syria, Iran, Kuwait and Kurdistan.

As well as sessions designed for specific age groups, the week included activities for the whole family. On the first evening, everyone came together to make posters about their countries which they presented to the rest of the group. The following day we made the most of the beautiful weather and headed to the beach where sun bathers, volleyball players, sea swimmers, sand castle builders and wave jumpers alike filled the beach with energy and laughter. In the evening, everyone came together again for a drumming workshop led by Beyond Skin, a Belfast-based organisation who use music and arts to address issues of racism and sectarianism. The drumming workshop is always a highlight of the NICRAS residential with rhythm, dancing and drumming galore and huge grins around the room from start to finish. On the final evening the whole group came together for a concert where children, parents and grandparents were able to show case their talents in yet another rich cultural exchange.

In between these family activities the volunteers ran programmes for the children and teenagers, giving parents time to rest and relax while their kids ran about the site playing games, hunting for monsters and getting messy in arts and crafts. This also allowed space for the adults to take part in their own sessions. As Dougie Tyler, who has been leading the NICRAS residential for the past five years, explains, the adult sessions, “provide an opportunity for people to connect with their own culture, with each other’s cultures and with the culture in Northern Ireland. It was great that people found the courage within the space and the group to ask honest, searching, difficult questions.” In order to help facilitate this process guest speakers from the PSNI and the Law Centre are invited each year to come and answer questions. From dealing with hate crime and racism, to housing issues, to documentation, the group were able to ask vital questions



***“provide an opportunity for people to connect with their own culture, with each other’s cultures and with the culture in Northern Ireland.*”**

about how to keep themselves and their families safe and how to navigate the housing and immigration systems here. As one of the participants, Siph Sibanda, described “The sessions have been great, it has been mind-blowing to see people come out of their shells and speak out about things that are very close to home and emotional, people opened up, spoke freely and asked questions, I saw a different side to people.”

The combination of music, laughter, games, informative sessions, difficult conversations, rest and relaxation, makes the NICRAS week a special experience for everyone involved. As Betsy Cameron, who has been volunteering with the NICRAS week for the past three years, articulates, “Working with NICRAS has been absolutely magical, it has allowed me to see for the very first time that when you make a commitment to be with people and to cross over barriers, the positive energy is infectious and in the space of four short days you create this wonderful community. By the end of the week we all feel so connected, it is nearly indescribable.”

**Kerry Logan**





# International University Groups

Students from St Mary's University visiting Peace Walls in Belfast

**From Corrymeela's earliest days, as a place of gathering and welcome for university students, we have offered a space where students can be supported to think differently about (engage with) the challenges present in the world. Ray and Kathleen Davey had a heart for students and a deep belief that young people had the capacity to lead in making change.**

Today, Corrymeela continues the legacy of its founding members by working with hundreds of international university students

*“Being at Corrymeela and hearing the speakers has tied together everything we have been learning about the peace process. This place really embodies everything we have been learning about.”*

KYRA BUTLER, GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY, SOCIOLOGY AND PSYCHOLOGY

each year. Corrymeela works with between 40 and 60 international groups annually. Many of these groups come to Corrymeela because they are wanting a place where they can better understand reconciliation in Northern Ireland and its implications for areas of conflict and fracture in their own societies. It is the praxis

that Corrymeela offers—the lived experience of peacebuilding and conflict resolution—that draws people to share in our community for a time.

Groups learn with Corrymeela for varying lengths of time. Some come to us for as brief a time as a “talk and tour.” Others stay with us for up to two weeks, deepening their learning as they share in the experience of the lived community at Corrymeela. Many university groups return year after year to Corrymeela, including time with us as a cornerstone to their study abroad experience in Northern Ireland. Often, we find that groups that visit Corrymeela for a half-day, or experience a Belfast-based Corrymeela workshop, return for a longer stay and extended learning.

Corrymeela has been hosting international groups and universities over the past 50 years. However, in recent years, Corrymeela has worked to bring more focus to students' time with us. Over the past two “university seasons” of May and June, the Programme and Innovation team has used the following themes to guide groups' learning:



Students from Grand Valley State University exploring conflict theory

*“I feel very empowered to take what I have learnt home and I have also found this to be a very calming place. So in one sense my stay has been extremely productive but at the same time it almost feels like a vacation - it’s really interesting that both things can happen simultaneously!”*

OAKLEY HILL, UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY, INTEGRATED STUDIES OF ETHICS AND PEACE AND JUSTICE STUDIES

- Corrymeela: History and Practice
- Northern Ireland: History and Context
- Strengthening Civil Society: Building Capacity Through Dialogue
- Narrative, Story and Identity
- Theology of Reconciliation
- Peacebuilding and Transformative Leadership
- Community Building in Divided Societies

These themes are explored by workshops facilitated by staff members, Community members and colleagues of Corrymeela, as well as by experiential engagements with grassroots community workers and projects in Belfast and Derry/Londonderry. This approach allows students to relate reconciliation to their own lives rather than instilling the notion that Corrymeela or, indeed, Northern Ireland have a “special recipe” for conflict transformation.

Corrymeela’s ethos of reciprocal learning really shines during our work with international students. Though Corrymeela staff and members are happy to share some of the learning of the Community over the past 50 years,

*“I have been inspired by the community members who have made peace their life’s work, who understand the theory but also understand the very practical nature of peacebuilding.”*

MIGDALIA GARCIA, ST MARY’S UNIVERSITY, ST MARY’S CERTIFICATE IN CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION



Students from St Mary’s University and Utah Valley University learning about conflict theories

we also eagerly anticipate learning from the students as we share our time together. Corrymeela’s international education work is based on the idea of every person being a teacher and learner.

This reciprocity also comes into play in the “social enterprise” model of Corrymeela’s international education. International groups and universities are told that, in choosing to work with Corrymeela they are contributing to the ongoing work of reconciliation in Northern Ireland. The money paid by these groups is directly used to support the work of Corrymeela, thereby impacting the wider peace process in Northern Ireland. Groups are excited by this model and many report feeling privileged that their time

in Northern Ireland will have a lasting impact on the work of Corrymeela with communities here.

Corrymeela has always provided a safe space for people to push out their boundaries and to consider different perspectives. Helping students understand how to engage in difficult conversations in an increasingly fractured world is a vitally important part of Corrymeela’s international reconciliation work.

### Sara Cook and Kerry Logan

*If you would be interested in getting involved with our international university work we would love to hear from you. Please contact Shona at [shonabell@corrymeela.org](mailto:shonabell@corrymeela.org).*



Teri Murphy explains conflict style inventories to Grand Valley State University students



# Storywork Summer School



*“Someone asked before I came if I was afraid that my life might be changed by my experience. I said, ‘I expected it to be changed.’ And so it has been. Thank you for allowing the space for transformation to begin.”*

*“It deepened my understanding and awareness of the power of stories and particularly how they have been and can be used in peace and reconciliation work. There was also space for the participants to shape the content and discussion to ensure everyone was able to take applicable ideas away.”*

*“[The Summer School] has definitely made an impact. Personally, I am struck by the outpouring of hospitality and the culture of respect and true encounter...” Professionally, I have ideas of how to do my work integrating principles of reconciliation.”*

## **In August 2017, 22 people gathered at Corrymeela from around the world to share in a Summer School that explored the potential of narrative practice for transformative change.**

Led by Pádraig O Tuama and Sara Cook, with input from Derick Wilson, the Summer School focused on a variety of methodologies used to create positive change in groups, organisations and communities. Because so much of our work over the past 50 years has centered around the sharing of stories, this return to a Corrymeela Summer School had, at its heart, an emphasis on what has always been a core part of Corrymeela's lived experience of reconciliation.

The programme for the week included a range of themes and practices, including: literary theory, storytelling in the context of post-conflict societies, the ethics of narrative practice, the application of narrative practice to various fields of work and storytelling through creative processes. Participants also travelled to Belfast to participate in a tenX9 storytelling event, and take a tour of the city looking at the narrative elements of murals, graffiti and other community symbolism as it relates to identity in Northern Ireland.

The majority of participants travelled from the United States, with other participants joining the group from England and the Republic of Ireland, as well as Corrymeela staff and volunteers from around the world.



The international make-up of Summer School participants allowed for a robust application of narrative practice to conflicts currently being experienced in different parts of the world. The week-long, intensive also allowed the group to form temporary community, and participants warmly welcomed the opportunity to be integrated into Corrymeela's lived community.

One of the valuable elements of the Summer School was that it brought together the "programme" and "innovation" elements of the Programme and Innovation department's work. Participants knew that they some of the fees for the week were being reinvested in the work of Corrymeela, and were delighted that their experience of the Summer School would have longer term implications for peacebuilding in Northern Ireland.

As always at Corrymeela, the facilitators and participants of the Summer School were both teachers and learners. The robust, mutual learning was valuable to all of us who took part, and many participants requested additional learning opportunities about storytelling and narrative practice.

One of the participants Rev Abby Sines, the Dean's Vicar at Christ Church Cathedral in Dublin used her learning a few weeks later.

"I'd already decided to run these story events about the Asylum process in Ireland, and when I saw that Corrymeela were running Storywork, I knew it'd provide some support to the idea. The course came just at the right time."

"When I spoke to our speakers before each event, I had the confidence to listen to their story, to help facilitate the storytelling process so that those in attendance heard stories that'd impact them. Storywork helped me get in the mainframe of close attentive listening of how story can be used for social change."

### **Sara Cook**

*To hear more of Rev Abby Sine's story about applying the Storywork learning to Christchurch Cathedral Dublin and dates for next year's Storywork go to [www.corrymeela.org/storywork](http://www.corrymeela.org/storywork)*

CORRY MEELA

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# Learning to speak

**I'm one of those sad individuals who has theological heroes; writers, thinkers, and speakers who make me reflect on the world and on faith in new and sometimes provocative ways. So when I heard that we were hosting Avivah Zornberg for a lecture I was especially nervous when I remembered the old dictum that you should avoid meeting your heroes.**

I first encountered Avivah through her interviews with Krista Tippett on what was then called the Speaking of Faith podcast way back in 2011. In the first interview she opened up the book of Genesis in a way I had never before heard and I went straight out and bought her book, "Genesis, the beginning of desire." This commentary is daring and deeply literary and, honestly, no word of a lie, when I had read my copy, I threw out most of my other books on Genesis. I did the same when I got my hands on her Exodus commentary.

Avivah writes beautifully, is thoughtful and dense, drawing on the scriptures, on Jewish midrashic texts as well as classics of contemporary literature, in a way that is particularly challenging for those of us in the Christian tradition. I find myself frequently grabbing hold of the tail of a thought as she steams through the dark of the text while lights are going on all over the place. Sometimes something snags my progress and I sit on the ground, holding the thought, while the writer moves on further and deeper in.

So when Pádraig phoned and said Avivah had accepted his invitation to visit Corrymeela I couldn't have been more delighted. But also apprehensive, though it turns out I needn't have been. It was entirely a pleasure to host

Avivah, and her husband Eric. They stayed a number of days in Ballycastle, taking in the beautiful Antrim coastline and we drove many miles together, the three of us, through the County Antrim countryside discussing the oddities of Christianity and Judaism, the differences between the various streams of our faith traditions, the histories of Northern Ireland, Israel and Palestine.

The lecture itself took place in the Conor Lecture Theatre in the Belfast Campus of Ulster University. Thanks to the chaplaincy team at UU for making the space available and for hosting our evening so beautifully. Thanks too to Alan Meban for the recording of the lecture.

I am delighted then to make the audio of Avivah's Belfast address available for download. This resource is especially valuable because I know from the experience of the On Being podcasts that it will bear repeated listens if I want to get the richness of what is said.

It's the first episode of what will become a regular Corrymeela podcast in which we plan on making available content from the range of events we host in Ballycastle and Belfast. We will launch it in the New Year and will reveal more as we get closer to the date.

In the meantime, enjoy Dr Avivah Gottlieb Zornberg's Belfast address which is available for download from the Corrymeela website.

**Glenn Jordan**





# Crossing Borders

**As the whole of Europe, and our own island in particular, seeks to manage the implications of the UK withdrawal, what are people of faith saying and thinking about borders? How is our imagination being affected for what faith is, and how the church should be present to people in a post-Brexit world?**

Corrymeela is hosting a series of gatherings for Christians between February and May 2018 to talk about borders, about Brexit, about our own border and about the various forms of borders we construct between peoples. These gatherings will focus on the biblical Book of Ruth to help us discern how our biblical text can speak into the public square.



Now the Book of Ruth wouldn't ordinarily be a book that we would flock to for wisdom and advice on a contemporary issue like Brexit. The stereotype we often carry is that this is a romantic book of the young, beautiful woman fallen on hard times who meets a good man, they fall in love, get married and have children, or at least a child. Of course there is some questionable activity as the heroine seduces her soon-to-be husband, but by and large this can be glossed over, and at least it is tasteful, though only barely.

Perhaps the most well-known part of the story is the transcendent declaration of loyalty on the part of Ruth who commits herself to her mother-in-law to go where she goes, live where she lives, to worship Naomi's God in such a way that only death would part them.

As we engage deeper with the characters and their lives though, there are other profound things which reveal themselves. Like the mystery of relationships between women. Like the trauma of surviving one's children, of childlessness and marriage and patriarchy.

Reading Ruth also means we must encounter the reality that the bible tends to keep the voice of women out of the mainstream. The books of the bible tend to be written by men, and with the best will in the world this often means we have to work hard to find the perspective of women. This is the story in the bible featuring the most sustained engagement with the world of women and hence the voices of women need to be heard in our consideration of the text.

And of course, when we think about Brexit we face a number of border crossings. Elimelech and Naomi and their boys leave Bethlehem (due to famine) and move to Moab (the place of the traditional enemy) and fall on hard times. When Naomi seeks to go home, things change. Ruth becomes a woman in a man's world, a foreigner in a country that doesn't like her sort, childless in a society that required sons, a widow in a family-based culture, and poor in a community that lacked a safety net.

The Book of Ruth can be read as a form of counter-narrative to Ezra and Nehemiah, telling a story where ethnic and religious purity is perhaps not as critical as they might have claimed. In Jewish tradition it is read at Pentecost alongside the reading of the ground-shaking events of Sinai. It thus preserves the importance of the ordinary lives of individuals alongside great world-making events

*The book challenges us on the issue of welcoming the stranger; on redrawing our stereotypes through encounter with those who are 'other;,' on finding the gaps where compassion can thrive in the midst of technical debates about law and tradition; on carrying losses that cannot really be grieved.*

and dares us to find ways of making personal what could otherwise be overwhelming.

The book challenges us on the issue of welcoming the stranger; on redrawing our stereotypes through encounter with those who are 'other;,' on finding the gaps where compassion can thrive in the midst of technical debates about law and tradition; on carrying losses that cannot really be grieved.

We want to engage Christians throughout the island in conversation about Brexit through the lens of the Book of Ruth. And we want to discern what we might usefully say to those on both sides of the border beyond the simple observations that Brexit is either good or bad.

Corrymeela is developing study resources and discussion starters to enable this to happen. As well as a series of formal meetings in Dublin and Belfast and in a number of border towns between February and May of next year, we want to encourage as many local discussions as possible, in homes and communities, congregations and parishes, in organisations and institutions and even in private reflection. We can provide the resources needed and even facilitation where this is requested and possible.

#### **Glenn Jordan**

*To register your interest contact Glenn Jordan on [lpa@corrymeela.org](mailto:lpa@corrymeela.org) or call our Belfast Office 028 9050 8080 and join the conversation.*

# Peace Processes in Northern Ireland and Korea



**Before moving into academic life, I worked as a chaplain in the Korean Army.**

In South Korea, you hear about the Korean conflict and about North Korea from the news almost every day, but not many people would pay attention to such news. Maybe Koreans have become numb, sick and tired of it, or just too busy with their daily lives. However, life in the compulsory, military service makes this conflict very real. Suddenly, you are dragged into the conflict and trained to kill your enemy. I have witnessed so many young soldiers struggling with this new reality as it was presented to them. This experience motivated me to learn more about North Korea and, in the end, more about peace.



Then, interacting with peace research/practitioners from other conflicts raised my interest in peace processes beyond East Asia. Although I understand that every conflict is unique in terms of root causes, history, culture and social development, I believe we can benefit from learning about each other's context, and we can also find a way to support each other in building peace. The more I learn, the more I realize that, despite our uniqueness and differences, as a human society, conflict-affected societies experience similar challenges, and our situations are much more interconnected than I thought. Particularly, I have always wanted to conduct an in-depth research into the peace process in Northern Ireland.

Whenever I am on the train or bus crossing the Irish border, the trip always reminds me of my first trip crossing from South Korea to North Korea. My Korean colleagues who visited the Irish border with me were all envious of the open border here because the border between North and South Korea is closed. But, I am also conscious that international comparisons often result in biased views. As an outsider, it is not possible for me to fully understand the context of the conflict in Northern Ireland, I will just have to keep asking for guidance. In this sense, working in partnership with Corrymeela for this research project is my dream come true. In fact, it was my father, who visited Ballycastle in the early 1990s, that told me about Corrymeela. As a theologian and peace activist, he was deeply inspired by the invaluable contribution being made by Corrymeela for peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland, and beyond.





It was a painful experience for me to watch the Korean peace process break down in the late 2000s. The courageous work of many people, including my father, to build peace appeared to be in vain. I do not think that it was a phenomenon unique to Korea. In many conflict-affected societies, people experience setbacks. How can we keep our hope alive? I hope to find answers to this question in expanding the peace community beyond our own context, through sharing, learning, and working together.

In the middle of November, I will be traveling with Colin Craig and Yvonne Naylor to Korea for a peace education conference and workshops organized by the Korean peace NGO, Okedongmu Children in Korea. This time we will visit the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) between North and South Korea, one of the most heavily militarized areas in the world. But I have a dream, that one day I will visit the DMZ with people from Corrymeela once again, and you will not see weapons anymore.

Thanks a million for letting me be a part of Corrymeela's journey for peace in the world.

**Dr Dong Jin Kim**



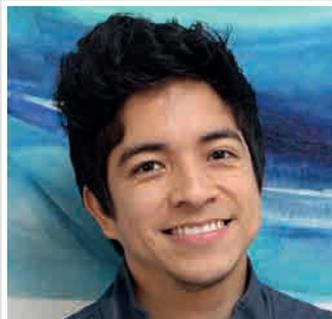
Dr. Dong Jin Kim is a Fellow at the Irish School of Ecumenics, Trinity College Dublin. His research project is entitled 'Comparative Studies on the Peace Processes in Northern Ireland and Korea: Toward Strategic Peacebuilding'. This research is carried out in partnership with Corrymeela (2017-2020).



# Meet our new Volunteers



**Alec Bishop**  
Long Term Volunteer  
USA



**Alejandro Sotomayor**  
Long Term Volunteer  
El Salvador



**Alex Polkey**  
Long Term Volunteer  
Northern Ireland



**Alfonso 'Poncho' Guillen**  
Long Term Volunteer  
USA/Mexico



**Eóghan Stanley**  
Long Term Volunteer  
Ireland



**Eoin Toner**  
Long Term Volunteer  
Ireland



**Gail Tierney**  
Long Term Volunteer  
USA



**Leoni Janssen**  
Long Term Volunteer  
Germany



**Selina Petschek**  
Long Term Volunteer  
USA



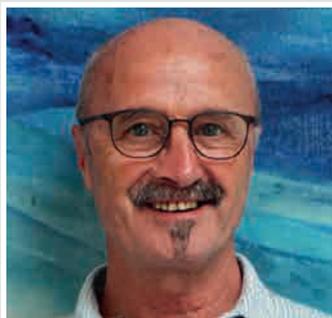
**Katosh Burke**  
Mid-Term Volunteer  
France



**Lois Bird**  
Mid-Term Volunteer  
Australia



**Aafke Whelan**  
Volunteer Support Staff  
The Netherlands



**Mick Whelan**  
Centre Support Team  
England



**Alex Wimberly**  
Centre Support Team  
USA



**Kiran Young Wimberly**  
Volunteer Support Team  
USA



**Sue Hanna**  
Volunteer Support Team  
Australia

Want to find out more about becoming a volunteer? Go to [www.corrymeela.org/volunteer](http://www.corrymeela.org/volunteer)

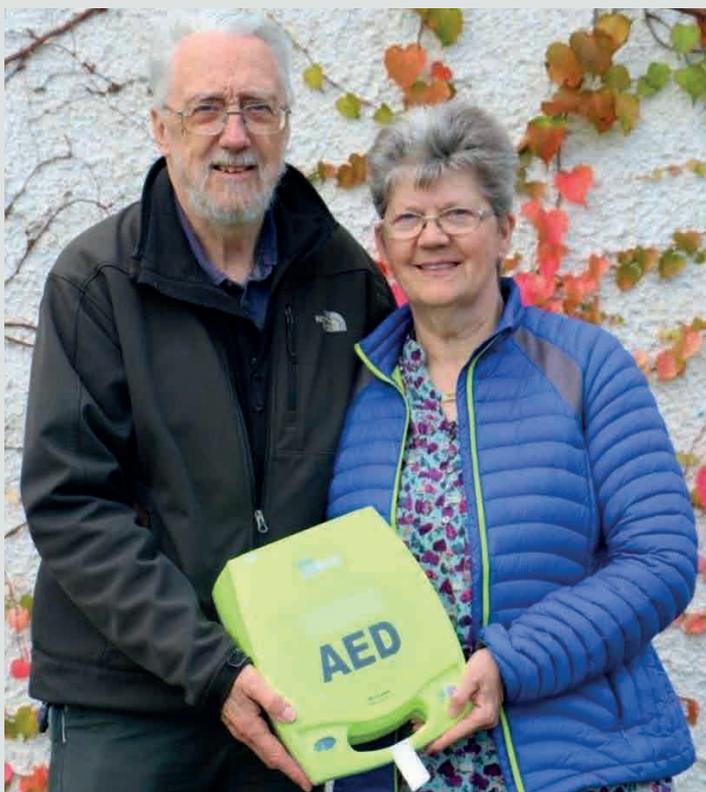
## Members Make Heart-warming Gift

**2017 was a year of anniversaries for longstanding Corrymeela members Richard and Yvonne Naylor.**

In July, they celebrated their 40th Wedding anniversary. This was followed by Yvonne's 65th birthday in September and Richard's 70th birthday in October. To mark the year of anniversaries they decided to raise money for Corrymeela but with a particular purpose in mind. Earlier in the year a member of their Ballycastle cell group collapsed at the side of the road. Fortunately, he was spotted by passers-by, two of whom were

trained in CPR. Their quick actions saved his life and he is now back to leading a normal active life. Inspired by this Richard and Yvonne decided to raise money to buy an Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) to be placed in our residential centre in Ballycastle.

Recently a number of staff, Community members and volunteers took part in the Heartstart training and learned about using an AED. Both CPR and AED can save the lives of those who collapse with a heart attack or cardiac arrest. Thanks to Richard and Yvonne for their ongoing support and this generous gift that may save many lives.



*Mayor Tim Morrow is pictured with Pádraig Ó Tuama, Leader, Corrymeela Community and Mrs Jenny Williams, Chief Executive, Habitat for Humanity Northern Ireland.*

## Mayoral Charity Partner

**We are delighted that the Mayor of Lisburn and Castlereagh Tim Morrow has selected Corrymeela as one of his charity partners for this year.**

Tim's family have a long history with Corrymeela and we appreciate the support for our continuing work. During his term of office all charity funds raised at official council events will be shared between Corrymeela and Habitat for Humanity. £12,000 has been raised already, ahead of last year's target and well on the way to reaching the overall target of £60,000 to be split between us.

To keep the momentum going we need some volunteer input with a

number of events that are due to happen before Christmas. If you or your friends or family can spare an hour to help please contact Kevin McCaughan who is co-ordinating our fundraising on [kevinmccaughan@corrymeela.org](mailto:kevinmccaughan@corrymeela.org) or by ringing the Belfast office 028 9050 8080. And thanks again to Tim Morrow for the support.

## SAD NEWS

### Legacy Gifts

Vera Jane Annett  
Ivan and Dorothy Wheeler  
Charitable Trust

### Gifts in Memoriam

Dora Elizabeth Berryman  
Elizabeth Law  
Ian Irwin  
David Bleakley  
Annabel Forbes

## Ballycastle Site Update

**The leaves are changing colours and presently that change fractal is also active among us. The autumnal/winter season invites different possibilities contrasted to busier times in our year when larger numbers of people are welcomed into our shared spaces. The facilities committee continues to support the process of managing our ongoing maintenance functions alongside the delivery of a range of one-off projects.**

We continue to make slow but sure progress in terms of our Waste Water Plant project and it is our hope that Northern Ireland Water will be integral to a long term solution with the specifics to be defined and implemented over the next year or so.

The integration of renewables onsite has reached a natural saturation point without investing more significant capital in an even 'greener' profile. Our most recent ROC payment, monies received by Corrymeela, for the wind turbine was just short of £3,000.

We've not yet made any final decisions about the replacement of the green slide but we have recently catalysed a blue sky exercise that explores how play might locate within our physical space in ways that fit with our ethos. We're working immediately towards building a £120,000 budget for investment in playground upgrades which will include a replacement slide. We're also exploring financial partner possibilities for this project with support from our new fundraiser Kevin.

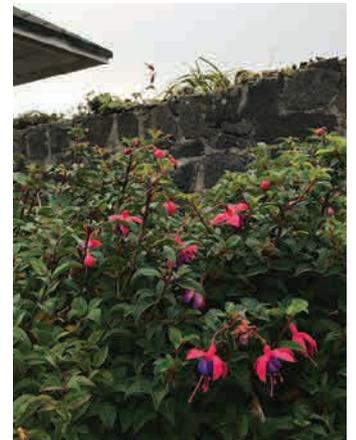
He is also helping us explore how we invest in digital technology onsite that serves and simplifies rather than



complicates and confuses.

Again and again people who pass through our doors comment on the beautiful grounds which are the silent witness of the comings and goings at the centre. We are deeply grateful to those wonderful individuals who faithfully serve us all in the hard work of nurturing and stewarding the physical spaces that make up our gardens and grounds. To them especially and all of you who faithfully support our work, Go Raibh Míle Maith Agaibh - A Thousand Thank You's!

**Matt Scrimgeour**





## Corrymeela in the City

Corrymeela is delighted to welcome you to an evening of quiet prayer, reflection and gospel reading. Beginning at 5.15pm in Fitzroy Church, University Street, Belfast (please enter through the side door towards the café area).

### 2017 dates:

26th November  
10th December

### 2018 dates:

28 January  
25 February  
18 March  
(Corrymeela Sunday events being held around UK and Ireland, more info in January)  
22 April  
20 May  
17 June

Corrymeela in the City will be followed by a cup of tea and a chat for any who wish to join us.

No booking required - all are welcome

# Corrymeela Learning Seminars

The “Corrymeela Learning Seminars” are run by Corrymeela, usually on the last Tuesday of each month from 4pm to 5.30pm at our Belfast Office, 83 University Street, Belfast BT7 1HP.

### 28 November 2017 with Jenny Meegan

Stories from Loyalist and Republican ex-prisoners. A discussion on the findings of an oral history project based on over 90 audio interviews with Loyalist and Republican ex-prisoners, Open University staff, prison education staff and Open University students who were associated with the prisons in a professional capacity during the period of conflict 1972-2000. This collective story provides a unique insight into learning, politics and conflict transformation in the early 1970s in the Maze Long Kesh Compounds, ‘the Open University’s most unusual study centre.’

### 12 December 2017 with Fidelma Ashe

Fidelma will be leading a discussion on findings from an Arts and Humanities Research Council funded project that was conducted over a period of 18 months, titled ‘LGBTQ Visions of Peace in a Society Emerging from Conflict’. The central aims of the project were to facilitate the inclusion of LGBTQ people in developing inclusive visions of peace in Northern Ireland and to provide creative and public spaces for the dissemination of those visions.

### 30th January 2018 with Dave Wall

Dave will be talking about the relationship between government and local communities including look at the history of community development policy and its impact on civic engagement and local communities in Northern Ireland. Dave is currently conducting research in this area at Ulster University.

### 27th February 2018 with Colin Harper

Colin Harper is CEO of Camphill Communities Trust (NI). The first Camphill Community (where people with learning disabilities and those without share their lives) was founded in Scotland in 1940. There are four Camphill Communities in NI and there are over 100 Communities in over 20 countries across the world.

*If you are coming along, please let us know, either email [belfast@corrymeela.org](mailto:belfast@corrymeela.org) or call 028 9050 8080, tea and coffee will be provided. A voluntary donation of £5 would be most welcome.*

# Blessed are the Brave

A weekend for LGBT affirming faith leaders

26th – 28th January 2018  
Corrymeela Ballycastle

**This is our sixth Blessed are the Brave event. Each year we welcome new and repeat participants on a weekend designed specifically for faith leaders from the Christian traditions who are inclusive of the lives, relationships and leadership of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people.**

The theme for the weekend is “Clan” - looking at the different shapes of belonging and family in both the bible and today’s world.

The price is £99 (shared accommodation), £139 (single room) or £50 (non-residential).

To book go to [www.corrymeela.org/blessed](http://www.corrymeela.org/blessed)



# Saint Paul and Reconciliation

2nd – 4th March 2018  
Corrymeela Ballycastle

**Paul of Tarsus (5AD-67AD) is a powerful figure in early Christianity and in Christianity’s texts. Some find him the perfect disciple of the gospels, others find him a distraction. Some struggle with his language about women in the life of the early church; yet others argue that, for his time, he was a progressive.**

As part of our Public Theology series Corrymeela is honoured to have Paula Gooder with us for a weekend of reflection and learning, discussion and retreat on Saint Paul and Reconciliation.

**Paula Gooder** is a British Theologian and Bible Scholar, specialising in the writings of Paul. A former scholar in residence for the Bible Society, a prolific author of scholarly and faith development texts, her communication is full of enthusiasm, subtlety, insight and joy.

The price is £115 (shared accommodation), £155 (single room) or £66 (non-residential).

To book go to [www.corrymeela.org/paul](http://www.corrymeela.org/paul)

# Public Theology and Reconciliation Events



**Public Theology is a new word for an old concept: that theological discussions should reflect on matters of real consequence to the daily lives of ordinary people.**

In this way, it's obvious that there has been Public Theology for millennia. The Hebrew Scriptures are filled with narratives about whether a second-born should inherit more than a first-born, surely a debate of life and death during the time. Similarly, questions about how Jewish and Greek believers in the early decades of Christianity should coexist received enormous attention; questions about how power and gender played out in early Churches also divided the faithful. And that phrase "be in the world but not of it" – what does that mean in an age of empire, in an age of capitalism, in an age of privilege and economic oppression?

Corrymeela's Public Theology Project sits at the intersection of academic theology, public policy, the life of the church, and the general public. It acknowledges the necessity of doing formal theology in the public square, but also that public theological discourse is happening already among writers,

artists, poets, film-makers, architects, designers and others.

The project aims to notice these various forms of discourse, comment upon them and facilitate dialogue between those engaged in them from whatever sector.

Starting in autumn 2017, we are delighted to announce that we will host a series of Public Theology events. These events will take biblical texts and stories – Hebrew bible stories of siblings; stories of the gospel and reconciliation with God and each other; stories of reformation; letters of Paul and questions about division and unity; practices of prayer in a violent age – and ask the most important question of Public Theology: "So what?"

This is what is so vital at the heart of any public theological enquiry. So, what? What difference do these texts, these experiences, these narratives make to the day to day living of the ordinary person. In a variety of events, with a variety of audiences, we will explore some of these vital issues, in the hands of scholars, in friendship with each other.

Some events are by invitation because of the sensitive nature of the conversations, though most of them are public. We are exploring, for instance, how to host healthy conversations on difference

between Christians of different traditions and understandings; how the church on this island can respond to the approach of Brexit and what we might learn from the Brexit process about all forms of borders we erect or negotiate; how we can learn from St Paul's teaching on reconciliation; how we can continue to learn from the Reformation.

Keep an eye on the events page of the Corrymeela website [www.corrymeela.org/events](http://www.corrymeela.org/events) to get the details of the variety of events and how you can attend.

## **November 2017 The establishment of Faith at the Borders**

A new symposium of faith leaders from Belfast, Dublin and across the borderlands that are getting increasing attention during the Brexit process.

## **February-May 2018 Crossing Borders**

A cross-border project working with churches, congregations, schools and youth groups reading the potential impacts of Brexit in light of the Book of Ruth.

## **March 2-4, 2018 St Paul and Reconciliation**

A weekend retreat at Corrymeela with the extraordinary bible scholar Paula Gooder.

## **March 30-April 2, 2018 Carafest**

A four-day festival over Easter bringing people from political, theological and artistic practices together for a festival exploring faith, reconciliation, borders and belonging.

## **May 10, 2018 Exploring our Violence in Prayer**

Theologian, musical scholar and historian Sheelah Treflé Hilden will offer insights and lead discussion on how spirituality can reckon with the human tendency toward separation and violence.

## **June 7-10, 2018 Blessed are the Brave Summer School**

A four-day gathering for clergy and faith-based youth workers to support people who wish to move forward in their understanding and inclusion of LGBT people in places of faith.

## **July 5-8, 2018 Word and World**

A four-day summer school in theology for young people from across Europe. With invited participants from France, Germany, Italy, Sweden and Norway, this project will explore what practical theology can say to contemporary contexts of human displacement, borders and exclusion.

**‘Heritage as Reconciliation’ addresses the roles of cultural heritage in building peace and promoting reconciliation in divided and post-conflict societies.**

Utilising both local and international perspectives and experiences, the school will include academic and practitioner inputs, dialogue and discussion sessions and participatory field visits. We want to welcome all those who are interested in exploring the role of heritage in reconciliation processes. There is no specific criteria for participation and we expect delegates from a variety of backgrounds, such as related academic disciplines,



Part-funded by:



museum professionals, peace building activists, policy and funding bodies and community development workers.

Thanks to funding from the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs, we have a number of bursaries for those living on the island of Ireland. Details

of the full programme and how to apply can be found at [www.corrymeela.org/heritage](http://www.corrymeela.org/heritage)

**BECOME  
A  
FRIEND**

**AS YOU ARE HERE, WE HAVE A SMALL FAVOUR TO ASK.** FUNDING FOR RECONCILIATION WORK HAS FALLEN DRAMATICALLY OVER THE LAST DECADE AND LIKE MANY ORGANISATIONS WE ARE FEELING THE PINCH. THIS IS THE WORST FUNDING CLIMATE WE HAVE EVER FACED, AT A TIME WHEN THE WORK OF CORRYMEELA IS NEEDED MORE THAN EVER. IN AN ERA OF FEAR, SEPARATION AND DIVISION WE STILL BELIEVE IN THE POWER OF INCLUSION, DIALOGUE AND STORY TO RECONCILE OUR DIVIDED SOCIETY. WE BELIEVE THAT DIVISION CAN BE TRANSFORMED BY HUMAN ENCOUNTER AND WE WELCOME 10,000 PEOPLE A YEAR INTO THAT SPACE.

**HUNDREDS OF SMALL DONORS HELP TO FUND OUR WORK, GIVING US THE ABILITY TO WELCOME GROUPS WHO OTHERWISE COULDN'T AFFORD TO STAY. WE WOULD LOVE TO ADD 1500 NEW FRIENDS OVER THE NEXT YEAR, 1500 PEOPLE GIVING A MINIMUM OF £5 A MONTH TOWARDS ENCOUNTER AND WELCOME AND MODELLING A DIFFERENT WAY OF BEING. FOR LESS THAN THE COST OF A CUP OF COFFEE EVERY WEEK YOU WILL BE MAKING A DIFFERENCE TO THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD.**

PLEASE VISIT [WWW.CORRYMEELA.ORG/FRIEND](http://WWW.CORRYMEELA.ORG/FRIEND) FOR DETAILS ON HOW TO SIGN UP.

# Spiritual Thought

There's a beautiful Celtic prayer – probably written in Breton, a Celtic language found in the north of France – that says:

**Lord help me, for my boat is so small and the sea is so big.**

Part of the reason why this prayer is so compelling is the simplicity and clarity of its language. It starts with a statement of need and then takes a metaphor and stays with it, looking within and then looking at the overwhelming expanse. It works on a level of poetry as well as prayer, the language does not interrupt itself, and it does not stumble in stating its own desire.

The simplicity and elegance of the language is a container for desire, for exile, for need, for poetics.

While such poetic form is not necessary for prayer it certainly can help. A recent book from Corrymeela is *Daily Prayer with the Corrymeela Community*. Mostly, this book is a long reflection on form, particularly the form of Collect that is found in the liturgical Christian traditions. A Collect asks for simple language, it asks the person who is praying to name only one desire. It follows five folds, five simple folds:

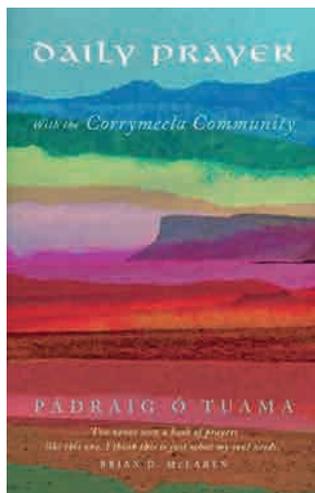
The person addresses God.  
The person says something more about God.  
The person names their desire.  
The person gives a reason for their desire.  
The person finishes with a small bird of praise.

In times of difficulty, when prayer escapes us, form can be a container for the uncontainable. We offer you a collect a day in this release, a collect to contain the hope of moving from fear towards friendship, from hostility towards generosity.

Jesus of Nazareth,  
You met unlikely people in unlikely places  
and joined yourself to them in friendship.  
May we be like you in this way,  
finding friends at crossroads and bus-stops  
in queues and crises, in kindness and curiosity.  
Because we, like you,  
need the company of others.  
Amen.

**Pádraig Ó Tuama**  
Corrymeela Community Leader

## DAILY PRAYER *with the* Corrymeela Community



Pádraig explores the form of Collect, as well as offering 31 collects for the 31-day cycle of Corrymeela prayer, in the new book "Daily Prayer with the Corrymeela Community" available now from our Belfast office, as well as the usual online and local booksellers.

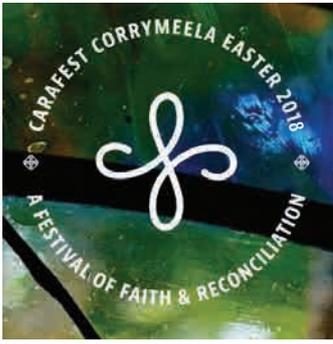
£8.99 + P&P. Call 028 9050 8080 to order or contact us by email

[belfast@corrymeela.org](mailto:belfast@corrymeela.org)

*"These poem-prayers are compassionate, contemporary and formally innovative. Improvising key moments in scripture, they offer a fresh perspective, linguistic rhythms grounded in truth and love. Savour them on the tongue, learn them off by heart, customise them, make*

*them your own."*  
Patience Agbabi,  
former Poet Laureate of  
Canterbury.

*"This anthology is indeed a treasure: prayers that turn hostility towards hospitality, prayers that help us say what we mean and not we thought we were meant to mean."*  
Malcom Guite, poet,  
theologian, priest, literary  
critic.



# A Festival of Faith and Reconciliation

**FRIDAY 30TH MARCH 2:00PM – MONDAY 2ND APRIL 2:00PM • CORRYMEELA BALLYCASTLE**

**We are delighted to invite you to our second annual Easter Festival of Faith & Reconciliation at our stunning North Coast site.**

We are currently confirming a host of speakers, poets and musicians to take part and will confirm the line-up when booking opens in January.

But just to whet your appetite we can confirm that former Beirut hostage Brian Keenan will be joining us and also the children of renowned folk act, The Sands Family have formed their own band. Called Na Leanai (meaning the Kids) they will be bringing new life to some traditional classics. There will be theology, cups of tea, politics, time to talk, a kid's programme, arts & craft, worship, a dawn service on Easter

Sunday morning and more tea and chat. Accommodation will be available on a bed and breakfast basis.

The word reconciliation means 'to become friends again' and so we've chosen the word 'cara' (friend in Irish and Scots Gaelic) for our festival of faith and reconciliation. We are Corrymeela and you are always welcome.

**BOOKING OPEN FROM WEDNESDAY 10TH JANUARY**



**Corrymeela acknowledges the support of the following**

Community Relations Council



An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha agus Trádála  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade



**The J V M Trench Will Trust**