

# corrymeela<sup>✦</sup>



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# Advent

We have tested and tasted too much, lover –  
Through a chink too wide there comes in no wonder.  
But here in this Advent-darkened room  
Where the dry black bread and the sugarless tea  
Of penance will charm back the luxury  
Of a child's soul, we'll return to Doom  
The knowledge we stole but could not use.  
And the newness that was in every stale thing  
When we looked at it as children: the spirit-shocking  
Wonder in a black slanting Ulster hill,  
Or the prophetic astonishment in the tedious talking  
Of an old fool, will awake for us and bring  
You and me to the yard gate to watch the whins  
And the bog-holes, cart-tracks, old stables where Time begins.

O after Christmas we'll have no need to go searching  
For the difference that sets an old phrase burning –  
We'll hear it in the whispered argument of a churning  
Or in the streets where the village boys are lurching.  
And we'll hear it among simple, decent men, too,  
Who barrow dung in gardens under trees,  
Wherever life pours ordinary plenty.  
Won't we be rich, my love and I, and please  
God we shall not ask for reason's payment,  
The why of heart-breaking strangeness in dreeping hedges,  
Nor analyse God's breath in common statement.  
We have thrown into the dust-bin the clay-minted wages  
Of pleasure, knowledge and the conscious hour –  
And Christ comes with a January flower.

'Advent' by Patrick Kavanagh is reprinted from Collected Poems, edited by Antoinette Quinn (Allen Lane, 2004), by kind permission of the Trustees of the Estate of the late Katherine B. Kavanagh, through the Jonathan Williams Literary Agency.

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### Dear Friends

As we close off this year and move gratefully into the warm embrace of Christmas, I would encourage you to pull up a chair by the fire, grab a cuppa and enjoy the latest magazine. We are moving to a new format of two magazines a year and as such this is a bumper end of year edition, designed to give an overview of our work and the thousands of lives that have been touched by the work of Corrymeela this year. Inside you will find stories of singing children from North Belfast and refugee and asylum seekers from across the globe. There are polytunnels, politics, poetry, plays and radio making. We also reflect on the visit of Irish President Michael D Higgins and his thoughts on narrative hospitality and how to live in the present so we don't lose the future. The image on the front cover is from our new film resource that grapples with the difficult story of times we chose not to take a stand.

We believe that in a world of fracture the presence of Corrymeela is more vital than ever and deeply appreciate your support. It makes our continuing work possible. I will leave you with some words from the writer Frederick Buechner that I reread around this time every year.

*"At Christmastime it is hard even for the unbeliever not to believe in something if not in everything. Peace on earth, good will to men; a dream of innocence that is good to hold on to even if it is only a dream; the mystery of being a child; the possibility of hope . . . For a moment or two, the darkness of disenchantment, cynicism, doubt, draw back at least a little, and all the usual worldly witcheries lose something of their power to charm. Maybe we cannot manage to believe with all our hearts. But as long as the moments last, we can believe that this is of all things the thing most worth believing. And that may not be as far as it sounds from what belief is."*

**Mark McCleary** Head of Communications, Corrymeela

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# Thoughts from the Leader

“And what we propose as interventions to these wrongdoings are the simple practices of community: welcome, storytelling and friendship.”

**I HAVE BEEN THINKING A LOT ABOUT ADVENT RECENTLY.** Advent is the period in the Christian calendar where people prepare for the festival of Christmas. Traditionally, Advent was a time when people fasted and abstained – from food, or sweet things – as part of focusing attention on the deeper meaning of Christmas. Patrick Kavanagh wrote about it in his poem “Advent” where, from a dark room he eats black bread and drinks sugarless tea in the hope of charming back “the luxury / of a child’s soul”.

It’s an extraordinary poem, because in the final stanza, he speaks of what that vision of a child’s soul is - it’s the ordinary. He wishes to see the ordinary with a new gaze, he wishes to see light and life in the midst of a dark winter in the “the whispered argument of a churning” “among decent men...who barrow dung in gardens under trees”. He sees that ordinary life is the essence of beauty, of the holy, of the lifegiving. And Patrick Kavanagh sees that the

focusing of the heart and mind during the winter hours helps focus the heart of the beauty of the ordinary.

I think of this because I have been paying attention to stories about the Calais Jungle, where up to 7000 people have been camping throughout the French seasons in order to seek a home. I have been reading stories of people who have thrown themselves into the waves because the water was safer than staying

in their homeland in Syria. I have been reading stories of Muslim women in Belfast who have their dignity demeaned when they go about their daily business, and I have been reading the works of Claudia Rankine and Ta’nehi Coates whose works proclaim the dignity of the black body and the demeaning treatment perpetuated by racism.

And reading these news reports, essays and poetry as we prepare for Advent leads

me to think of how Patrick Kavanagh’s vision of life’s ordinariness is part of the vision for what peace means.

**Peace is not a mountaintop experience. Justice is not a party. Reparation and Reconciliation are not luxuries.**

At their heart, each of these – Peace, Justice, Reconciliation – should be found in the ordinary. In little and large ways, we can find ways to make the ordinary experiences of inclusion, embrace and justice accessible to ordinary people everywhere.

This is the work of Corrymeela. In so many ways we are responding to circumstances that are divisive. We live in a region that has been torn apart by complicated relationships to national borders. We live in a place where a lot of the Christian witness was marked more by apprehension than prayer. We live in a world where gender, ethnic and religious factors mark enormous populations of people for poor treatment, degrading experiences and disenfranchising behaviour. And what we propose as interventions to these wrongdoings are the simple practices of community: welcome, storytelling and



***We are people of delight and celebration, and these are our tools against the rot that undoes us.***

friendship. These practices are as old as humanity, and as fresh as each time they are practiced.

So much of civic extremism is permitted because ordinary

people do not speak up for the ordinary. We listen to stereotyping language and excuse it. We share jokes that aren’t funny; they are flawed. We excuse leaders or speakers or journalists who promote

lies about slews of people. It can be hard to know how to resist, and yet, we each carry in ourselves the essence of reframing: stories, friendships and welcome. In response to hatred, we can speak loudly about the friendships we have across identities, politics and faiths. In response to derogatory statements, we can seek out those who are marginalised and exchange welcomes. The small ordinary story, the everyday friendship, the practice of welcome – these are our protests in a world that seems to celebrate harshness. We have so much to share, we are full of stories, and full of welcome. We are people of delight and celebration, and these are our tools against the rot that undoes us.

To return to advent. If the central narrative of Christianity – that God became incarnate in the small body of a small human – is true, then we must always turn to the small, knowing that the small is the container of the important; knowing that the voice that is ignored must be listened to; knowing that the life that is in need is the life that is speaking truth.

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





# Global citizens

In August 2016, Corrymeela hosted a group of Palestinian and Israeli activists from Sadaka-Reut, a youth-focused organization based in Jaffa. The link was forged in partnership with the Mitchell Institute for Global Peace, Security and Justice at Queen's University, Belfast. The group, accompanied by Dr Julie Norman from the Institute, engaged in an exchange of learning and practice with Corrymeela staff, volunteers and members based on our collective experience in working for peace and justice in divided contexts.

On the next page are two reflections on the study visit by Rula Khalaily from Sadaka-Reut and Community Member Yvonne Naylor.

**OUR TIME WITH THE CORRYMEELA COMMUNITY** might have been short, but we feel it was very enriching for us, and hope that it was so for you, as well. Apart from gaining a deeper understanding of the situation in Ireland, learning about the conflict from your first-hand experience, as citizens and as activists, allowed us to explore the differences and similarities between the two conflicts and gain a fresh understanding of the processes we see unfolding back home.

One of the main points we took back from that discussion concerns the aspects of reconciliation. Unlike your work, we feel that our communities are so far from that, perhaps to the extent that we haven't really considered reconciliation as something we at Sadaka-Reut should even be thinking about - but now we know we should. Understanding the deeper challenges you face now, which certainly did not go away with the agreement, or maybe took on a different form, gave us motivation to explore different ways of approaching our own conflict, even though it feels somewhat stuck in the maintenance phase.

Furthermore, through presenting our methods to a similar organization with a rich experience, we were able to reflect, together on our work. This feeds into a process we are currently going through, of looking into our methods and rethinking them, ideally becoming a centre that outside organisations, schools and communities can come to for advice and joint work on promoting Jewish-Palestinian partnership and youth activism in all parts of life.

We were deeply inspired by your approach to community work and the links you have managed to establish and sustain throughout the years, and hope to be able to take some of that and incorporate it into creating more firm relationships with schools and community centres - and maybe, one day, even with local government.

We cannot say enough how thankful we are for your warm hospitality, which made us feel welcome in your community right from the onset, and hope you have enjoyed that time with us, as well.



**IT WAS A PRIVILEGE FOR ME TO MEET** this wonderful group from Sadaka-Reut. They each shared their own personal stories and inspired us with their honesty, courage and commitment. What was most stark for me was the injustice of their situations and their personal risk-taking for the good of all in their country. For the Palestinians in the group there is one very restrictive and oppressive law for them and another for the Jews and for the Jewish activists in the group, so little knowledge amongst their friends and family about the situation in their country and a resistance to change and to move from oppression to equity, diversity and interdependence. These folk were 'border-crossers' in the true sense of the word yet remained positive in the face of tremendous obstacles and passed on to us some of the very creative methodologies like film/photography that they use in their work.

This programme reminds us of the importance of being 'global citizens,' of paying attention to what's going on in the world,

to keep as well informed as we can, to lobby our governments and to challenge them to address problems they are in a position to do something about. In Corrymeela we need to continue to support groups like Sadaka-Reut working for change and to strengthen our local and global networking. We talked about the flags - Israeli and Palestinian - that members of the group saw flying in Belfast and other parts of N. Ireland, again reminding us of our inter-dependence as global citizens and our need to keep on addressing our fractures and distorted expressions of identity and belonging.

I personally took great inspiration from the readiness of this group to not only share their learning and some of the activities that worked for them but to also enter into our programmes and discussions so wholeheartedly. One of their group led an evening worship/reflection and asked us to draw a picture of home. We had some very moving feedback and I can still remember my own picture - of our one world/earth and for me one God, the light of the world.





# NICRAS Family Week

**EACH SUMMER FAMILIES** of the Northern Ireland Community of Refugees & Asylum Seekers (NICRAS) grace the Ballycastle Centre, inserting energy and life to all those they encounter. Organised and hosted by members of the Corrymeela Community, with assistance from staff and volunteers, the week with NICRAS is anticipated with excitement year-round.

The week is co-ordinated by Community Member Dougie Tyler, who has been part of the programme for the last four years. He said, "I look forward to two weeks every year - Christmas and NICRAS." After spending only a few moments with the group, it is not difficult to see why Dougie feels this way. Just as Corrymeela welcomes

NICRAS to the centre, year-after-year the people of NICRAS welcome us into their families lives with grace and love. It is a welcome that is generous by nature and rare

to fully encounter elsewhere.

The purpose of the residential is twofold. Firstly, it is intended to provide participants with a break



Father and daughter jumping in the waves during beach visit.

from lives which are marked by living day to day on very low income in cramped spaces and surrounded by people and culture that is unfamiliar and sometimes hostile. In addition, families are isolated from supports at home and unaware of and unable to make connections with people in similar circumstances here which could alleviate those feelings of alienation. In short the residential hopes to make connections and provide relaxation and even laughter and fun!

Secondly, and not unrelated to the above, the residential, and in particular the adult programme, has been designed to promote understanding of each other's cultures and the culture of NI in which refugee and

*"I come back each year because... It's fun! Equally important, I believe that response to the refugee situation will define our generation. Help people feel at home and understand they are an important part of Northern Ireland."*  
**Dougie**

asylum seeker participants find themselves. This includes having input from key people in NI society and the opportunity in a safe environment to ask questions and receive helpful and respectful answers. Through these workshops and the relaxation time in between, participants and volunteer facilitators have the opportunity to develop connections and mutual cultural understanding.

A highlight of the week, for adults and children alike, is taking part in an African Drum circle - an annual tradition. The energy that brings the Centre alive is increased ten-fold in this space. At first, the Croí chaotically erupts to the dissonant beating of drums. Over time, beautiful, rhythmic sounds replace the dissonance and are accompanied by smiles, laughter, and joy.

In the moments of playing the drums, it seemed as if

life's worries washed away for many of the adults in the room. Instead, the focus turned to the drums, using energy to become one unified chaotic and collective voice, together. From near or far, all in this moment were a people together, sharing, loving, and building community.

In many ways, this is the goal of NICRAS, as "Northern Ireland's only refugee led organisation that represents the interests of the refugee community." Some of the organisation's aims are to "Support the integration process of refugees and asylum seekers into local communities throughout Northern Ireland and raise awareness of the issues, problems and difficulties faced by refugees and asylum seekers in Northern Ireland."

One mum commented on her week saying, "I love it here because I haven't had time without the kids for over two years. I can go on walks, think

*"I come back each year because... NICRAS is what Corrymeela family weeks are all about. Families come up that wouldn't get a holiday otherwise and kids are able to play all day with new toys and surroundings. It's so much fun - I love to see the mixture of volunteers and community members."*  
**Ciara**



Mark Mullan, Long Term Volunteer, with a child on shoulders

about life and rest assured my kids are cared for and loved."

When asked about what the week can mean to the families, Dougie said, "This week means families are valued and appreciated as people who have struggles, pain, and joy. We are all ready and willing to walk beside each other."

The highlights are always too numerous to remember as much for the participants as the volunteers. This year holding hands and rushing together into the waves on Ballycastle beach comes to mind as is the thought of one family after the "Family Posters" session to fold their poster into a large paper boat.

On this they then wrote their gratitude to the people of Northern Ireland. The boat was hung from the beams of the dining area and was there at the end of the residential.

On departure, there were smiles, hugs, and a few tears. Mostly, there was connection between all those who graced the space this week, full of thanksgiving for encounter and finding community with one another.

As I write, the Croí sits quiet. I am often reminded of energy NICRAS brought into it and look forward to next year, when NICRAS brings renewed life to our Centre once more.

**Rosie DeFilippo**



Drum Circle





# Living Well Together Beyond 2016

*President Higgins and his wife Sabina with Corrymeela Volunteers after his speech.*

**BOTH THE CORRYMEELA COMMUNITY AND THE IRISH ASSOCIATION** have long pedigrees as people dedicated to reconciliation and the peaceful exploration of cultural and political issues in Ireland. In 1966, the year of the 50th Anniversary of the Easter Rising and the Battle of the Somme, Corrymeela hosted a conference at which the then Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, Terence O'Neill, gave a ground-breaking address on the potential for co-operation and the end of historic enmity. In the address, O'Neill said, "As we advance to meet the promise of the future, let us shed the burdens of traditional grievances and ancient resentments. There is much we can do together. It must, and - God willing - it will be done."

Sadly, any hopes for peaceful change were quickly challenged by subsequent events. But fifty years after that address, in the midst of centenary celebrations for

both the Easter Rising and the Somme, Corrymeela and the Irish Association came together to create an opportunity to look back to the Easter Rising and Battle of the Somme and their impact while, at the same time, looking forward to relationships beyond 2016. The result was a conference, "Living Well Together Beyond 2016", designed for people who respect the past but are not bound by it. Those in attendance focused on examining some of the big questions facing civic society North and South and the challenges in peace making and reconciliation in society.

Corrymeela and the Irish Association were honoured to host a variety of speakers including keynote speaker Lord Paul Bew and main evening speaker, Michael D. Higgins, President of the Republic of Ireland. In his speech, Higgins acknowledged Corrymeela to be "a site of healing, where the sensitive and quiet work of reconciliation, the building of trusting and respectful relationships between communities is carried out on a daily basis." A fitting space for a political conference that acknowledges the past, talks through present challenges, and looks ahead to the future.

## Day 1: Acknowledging the Past

The conference started with a look back to the 1916 Easter Rising. In his keynote address, Lord Bew started the conference with a wide-ranging and provocative contribution with a strongly argued interpretation of the nature and implications of the 1916 Rising. He argued that many of the admirable qualities of the Republic have nothing to do with the 1916 Rising, instead there is an emotional pull of "sympathetic imagination" that is weaved into commemorating and remembering the event. After his address, there was a lively question and answer session where the main topics of discussion centered around the paradox of the Rising remaining popular while the consequences were ambiguous.



*Corrymeela and Irish Association Delegation (Colin Craig, Executive Director; John Hunter, Chair of Council; Christopher McGimpsey, President of the Irish Association) welcoming President Michael D. Higgins and walking to the Croí for the delivery of his speech.*

## Day 2: Present Day Challenges

After the participants had a chance to reflect on Bew's address and the historic legacy of the Rising, the second day of the conference focused on the present-day challenges in the North and South. Dr. Katy Radford opened the conversation by presenting a report on the evolving pattern of relationships on the island of Ireland.

The focus of the report was to consider areas of progress, challenges and risks in building and sustaining all-island links at a time of flux as a result of the Brexit referendum. In the afternoon, the session focused on political change and the future in Northern Ireland, with politicians representing the four largest parties in Northern Ireland. The conversations following both sessions were lively and engaged. Many people probed the possibilities of opposition, for which there was a broad welcome and many voiced encouragement at the tone of the debate as



*John Hunter, Chair of Corrymeela Council presenting President Michael D. Higgins with a Turf Cross and In the Shelter by Pádraig Ó Tuama*





Christopher McGimpsey, President of the Irish Association, meeting President Michael D. Higgins and his wife Sabina.

evidence of continuing progress.

The conference was honoured by the participation of President Michael D. Higgins addressing the theme of

commemoration as the main evening speaker. Immediately, Higgins set the tone stating, “When invited to perform an act of public remembering, and to do so in relation to what are assumed to be



Brian John Spencer, visual recorder, putting his feet up after a conference session.

foundational, or contested narratives, a protective humility surely suggests that one should try to anticipate how such an act of commemoration will be remembered in the future.”

In his comprehensive and poignant address, the President highlighted the benefit of perspective that hindsight allows us, enabling historians to research and understand aspects of history, which has previously been hidden. However, he also noted that the task involved a complex challenge of trying to “move easily and equally between the aspirations of communities seeking to get past the memory of old wounds so as to live in the present and not lose the future.”

In this context, the President made a plea for a slightly different approach, which he called “narrative generosity and hospitality.” He said, “Such a generosity, a willingness to be surprised, confronted, even destabilized, in the assumptions of those foundational myths we all needs as source - that is, I believe what is required if the act of remembering is to enable us to make a fist of living together in the present.”

Referencing the philosophy of Paul Ricoeur, the President suggested that ethical remembering is preferable to any project of forgetting or denial: “Rather than any false denial of the past, then, what can be achieved through ethical remembering is... a way of relating to the past that does not serve to form exclusive judgments or reinforce grievances, but rather, to embrace the stories, the memories and the pain of others... I have described this particular disposition as ‘narrative hospitality,’ that is, an openness to the perspectives of the other carved out at the very heart of public commemorative discourse.”

The conclusion of the speech began with the Irish phrase, “Taraingíonn scéal scéal eile- One story leads to another.” A phrase, he stated, that captures that intertwined nature of life on the island of Ireland and also captures “the hope that our stories can lead us somewhere anew.”



Graphic Recording of Living Well Together Beyond 2016 conference by Brian John Spencer

### Day 3: Looking Beyond 2016

The final day of the conference looked beyond 2016, at what is ahead for both the North and South of Ireland. It began with a session filled with opinion, insight and humour from two leading commentators on Irish and Northern Irish affairs. Deaglán de Bréadún and Alex Kane both reflected on change in political life and the opportunities of the future.

After a lively discussion, question and answer session and breakout conversation, the conference was brought to a close by rapporteur, Duncan Morrow,

who reflected on and highlighted some of the key issues raised by the speakers and the workshops. He concluded by stating that the task ahead was “not to condemn this predicament but to make it visible: to replace our culture of ‘insisting and

imposing’ with a new culture of ‘meeting and figuring out together.’”

Indeed, the concluding words of Duncan echo President Higgins’ hope that “our own united endeavours at living well together in this new century strengthen our hope in the unrealized possibilities of being human truly free, in celebratory, joyous co-existence, with and for others.”

**Rosie DeFilippo and Duncan Morrow**

Corrymeela would like to give a wide variety of thanks to all those who made the event such a success, including ESB, Community Relations Council, Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council, and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.





**DURING THE MONTHS OF JULY AND AUGUST**, forty young people participated in the Freestyle summer camp at Corrymeela. Funded by Together Building United Communities (TBUC), the camps are an initiative to have young people from both Protestant and Catholic backgrounds come together for summer fun! Doing projects and team building in a shared environment, the camps focus on looking at community relations and peace relations through multiple types of media.

Freestyle camps were run in two separate groups: 11 - 13 years and 14-16

years. For those in the 11 - 13 camp, most sessions and activities focused around



using local history and nature learning to explore community relations. The environmental sessions ranged from the sustainability efforts at the Corrymeela Ballycastle site to an outing in the Breen Forest with Heart of the Glens. Excursions to local historical sites were also taken, allowing the participants to dive into an exploration of history across the ages. Through tours in Coleraine and Dunluce Castle, interactive learning about medieval, plantation, and modern day histories took place.

The focus of the 14 - 16 camp was slightly different, as the focus was on

community relations, community building, and exploring identity through many different lenses, including diversity, community, and family. The participants looked deeply at shared spaces, talking and analysing shared spaces for young people in Northern Ireland existing today.

Throughout the week, the group looked at the effect of the Troubles on young people today and how diversity is embraced in Northern Irish society today. The participants were given a certain level of autonomy in sessions and were challenged, as a group, to dictate the topics of focus, then exploring them in depth throughout the camp. All of these conversations impacted the main project of the camp: redecorating one of the play spaces at the Ballycastle Centre where young people gather, play games and relax.

There was also a strong element of outdoor adventure intertwined throughout the week, as the group kayaked, canoed, and coastered around the North Coast. Through a brilliant blend of activities in the programme, the group successfully imagined, designed and created the pièce de résistance - the re-decorated play room. The loved ones and friends of participants were invited to the Ballycastle Centre for an art show to present and explain their work.

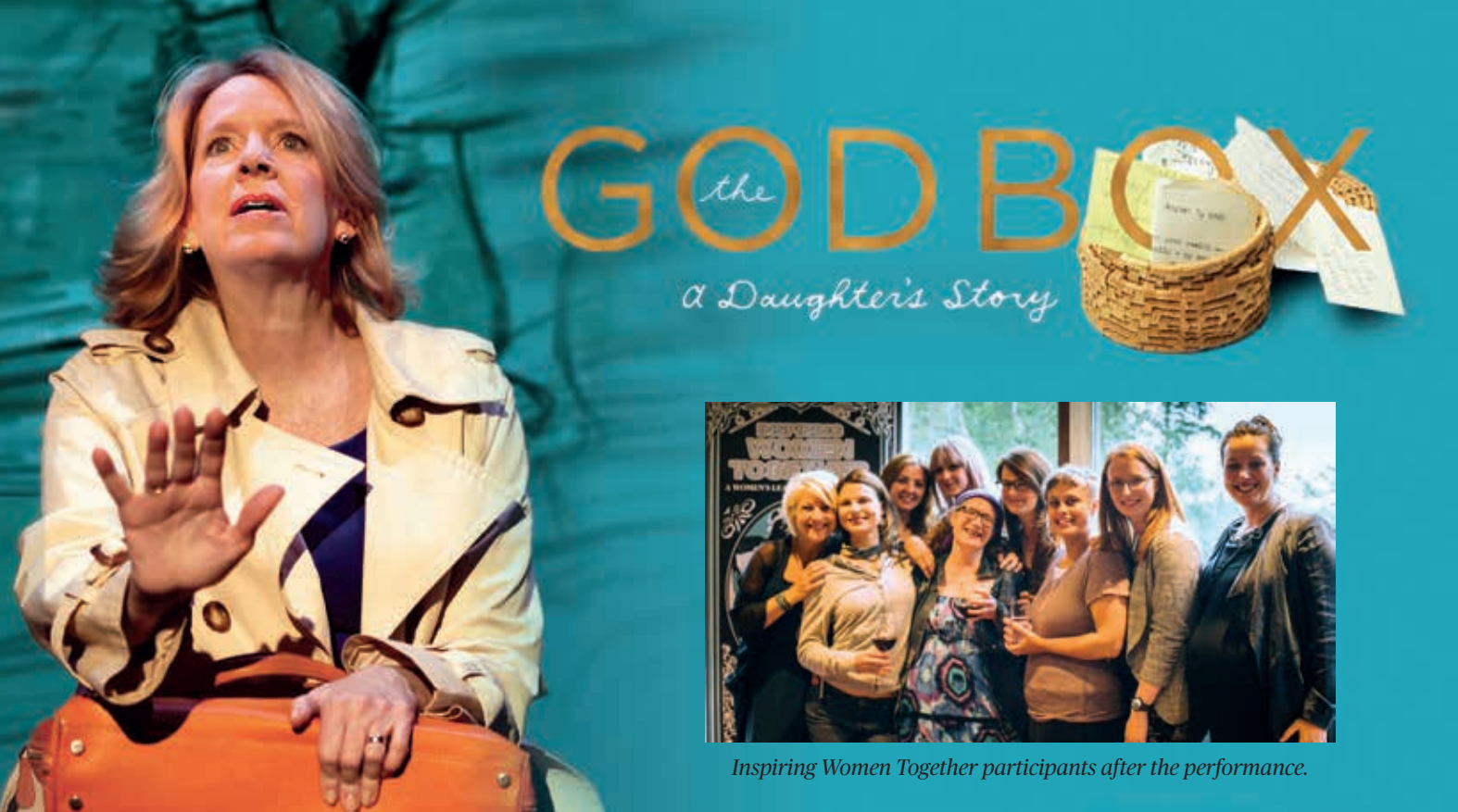
Facilitated by Chris Foxall, Corrymeela Programme Support Worker, and Corrymeela Volunteers, they reflected on the summer camp sessions saying, "The strengthening of relationships between the young people was so apparent and strong. Young people were immersed in community together and everyone was friends with everyone."

The same sentiments were reflected in the feedback of the participants, most of whom mentioned the friendships they made, the strengthened belief in communities that were different than them, and the incredible memories. It is clear that Freestyle 2016 was a success!

**Rosie DeFilippo**







*Inspiring Women Together participants after the performance.*

**ON AN OVERCAST JUNE DAY**, Mary Lou Quinlan performed “The God Box: A Daughter’s Story” to a packed house in the Lyric Theatre in Belfast, with proceeds going to Corrymeela’s women’s leadership initiative, Inspiring Women Together.

Based on her New York Times bestselling book, Mary Lou tells the story of loving, learning, and losing her mother, a woman guided by her faith. As I sat in the audience during the performance, I was captured by her story of hope, pain, and love. Her story was a reminder that one person can change lives by making the ordinary moments of a day - checking out in a grocery store, chatting with co-workers - extraordinary. During the performance, Mary Lou had the audience in stitches of laughter and eyes full of tears. She talked of the beauty found in simple relationships and moments - a fond memory when giving the example of washing dishes with her family after meals.

My mind couldn’t help but travel to Corrymeela in this moment - for over 50 years, thousands upon thousands of people have gathered after meals to wash the dishes, to engage in community, and to share stories. Much like Mary Lou’s story and sentiment, the Centre has held

people brimming with hope, pain, loss and love reminding us all genuine human connection is essential to the core of our wellbeing. In these moments, we have the power to turn an ordinary act into an extraordinary witness, worshiping the sacredness of everyday moments.

Author Elizabeth Bowen said, “*To have turned away from everything to one face is to find oneself face to face with everything.*”<sup>1</sup> The audience in attendance at “The God Box” certainly experienced these sentiments through Mary Lou’s incredibly moving performance. Pádraig Ó Tuama commented, “In exploring one narrative, it held meaning for people everywhere,



*Mary Lou Quinlan and Rosie DeFilippo, Corrymeela Volunteer, after the performance. Both are alumna of the same university - Saint Joseph's University in Philadelphia, PA, USA.*

people seeking to reconcile pain in the present with loss and the past.”

In reflecting on her first Belfast performance, Quinlan said, “I’ve been performing The God Box for five years and each time, I am amazed at the way audiences connect to this simple story of love and loss and connection. Particular to Northern Ireland, I wanted to bring this story of healing to an area that has suffered from hurt too long.”

After the performance, Mary Lou interviewed one of the participants of Inspiring Women Together, demonstrating the importance of the work while combining arts and advocacy. Mary Lou hopes to return to Northern Ireland in 2017. The proceeds of all of her shows go to local charities.

If you’re interested in the work of Corrymeela and our programmes exploring gender and power, visit [www.corrymeela.org](http://www.corrymeela.org). For more information on “the God Box” and Mary Lou Quinlan visit [www.thegodboxproject.com](http://www.thegodboxproject.com).

**Rosie DeFilippo**

<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth Bowen, *The Heat of the Day* (A.A. Knopf, 1949)

# Sowing the Seeds

## Sowing the Seeds of Sustainable Peace

The Corrymeela ‘Prayer of Courage,’ bears witness to our failures and our complicity in the fractures of our world.

The fractures caused by how we treat our planet are numerous; climate change, ocean acidification, biodiversity loss, air

pollution. Be it how we travel to work, power our buildings, or dispose of our waste; our complicity is manifold.



*Rachel Craig harvesting in the polytunnel*





Community group learning new recipes using polytunnel crops

## Sustainability and Peace

The destruction of our planet is diminishing natural resources and deepening social inequality. This is one of the many ways in which paying attention to environmental sustainability is intertwined with our peace and reconciliation work. As Executive Director Colin Craig explains, "Part of what drives conflict is access to, and control of, natural resources; if we are serious about reconciliation we have to look at these underpinning issues." By identifying and addressing the root causes of conflict, transformative change and sustainable peace are made possible.

## Steps towards Sustainability

Since 2000, when our first permaculture garden was created, there has been a growing narrative of sustainability at Corrymeela with particular focus on how we source our food, care for our wildlife and run our buildings.

### Fork to Fork

In 2015 our polytunnel and raised beds were built, allowing us to grow food on-site. From kale, to herbs, to courgettes, the range of crops used each day by our chefs can be seen on our Fork-to-Fork notice board. Not only does growing our own food cut back on the energy used to transport food from elsewhere but, as our Head Chef William McCullough

emphasises, "It is fantastic from a chef's point of view; there are very few restaurants in Northern Ireland where you can pick your own food!" William explains that the polytunnel enables us to preserve the vitamins and flavours that vegetables lose the longer they are out of the ground and to serve a wide range of nutritious salad leaves that would otherwise be too expensive.

### Re-wilding

Agricultural intensification and the use of fertilisers have caused a huge decline in native insect pollinators, which are critical in sustaining our food systems. We have therefore allowed large areas of our site to regrow into wildflower meadows. Our wildlife pond also helps us to tackle the loss of wetland habitats caused by drainage from agriculture, increasing our site's capacity to support a diverse range of indigenous wildlife.

### Eco-Energy

Corrymeela has been taking further steps towards sustainability in terms of how we power our buildings. Our wind turbine provides 20% of the Centre's energy, a 99KW biomass now heats our residential volunteer building, and we are carrying out an energy audit to help us cut our carbon footprint further. These steps are important both for our environmental and financial



William preparing a salad with polytunnel crops

sustainability. Our wind turbine, for example, has saved over £40,000 since 2010.

## Sowing the Seeds

Our 2016 - 2020 Strategic Plan calls us to 'sow the seeds of sustainable peace.' Our programme team have been working hard to sow those seeds, figuratively and literally! Groups have been engaging with edible education by planting seeds and harvesting crops, as well as exploring the sustainability projects around our site through games, Bush Craft and other interactive activities. As volunteer Lynn Finnegan explains, "scientists and politicians now almost universally realise we have to decrease our carbon emissions by 80% by 2050 if we are to prevent dangerous and unpredictable climate change. Corrymeela can be a practice ground for such change." At Corrymeela we have long been a microcosm for societal change. Through our sustainability projects we can continue to offer groups the chance to experience an alternative way of living that they can take back to their communities. Furthermore, as International Programme Support Worker Kelsey Thompson-Briggs explains, sustainability is a powerful tool for our grassroots work in peace and reconciliation, "Our group work methodology at Corrymeela uses experiential learning, based on the idea that doing things together can transform relationships. The act of planting and harvesting food together can be very powerful as we all need to eat, it is a basic human need, by doing these human acts together we can enter into relationship with each other in a deeper way."

## The Journey is Long...

There is an exciting buzz around Corrymeela about the importance of sustainability and how to build it further into our organisational life. Alongside that buzz is a deep, conscious awareness



Our polytunnel

that commitment over the coming years is crucial if we are to continue to become a more sustainable community. In our Strategic Plan we recognise that 'a commitment to reconciliation calls on every person to face changes that seldom come easily.' At Corrymeela we know that change takes time, it takes sacrifice, it takes accountability. But we also know

that change brings learning, it brings transformation, it brings joy and that ultimately change is possible if we, as a community, work together.

### Kerry Logan

Assistant to the Executive Director  
Department, Corrymeela



Our wildlife pond



# Songs from St Anne's



Children practising for their performance.

*“I felt... Brave. Helpful. Surprised. Fantastic!”*

**ON A SUNNY, LATE SEPTEMBER MORNING,** twenty children from St Anne's Cathedral Choir Schools Project came together from different North Belfast communities for a day of team-building activities, games and songs at Corrymeela.

The depth and variety of the children's one-word reflections about their trip highlighted what a powerful impact Corrymeela can have, even in a matter of hours. The honesty and simplicity of the 7-9 year olds' words offered a beautiful insight into what it means, what it feels

like, to build relationships with the other; be they a pupil from another school, another community or another country. The bravery required to take that first step. The importance of feeling helpful, and being helped, in strengthening those relationships. The surprises that await when we confront our prejudices. And how fantastic it feels when that bravery and helpfulness and those surprises amount to new friendships being formed.

The St Anne's Cathedral Choir Schools Project began three years ago to reach out to the community through music. The project works with three schools from different communities in North Belfast; Edenbrooke Primary School, Sacred Heart Boys' Primary School and Cliftonville Integrated Primary School. Catherine Harper, Head of Vocal Tuition at St Anne's, goes into the schools once

a week to give singing lessons to each class. Some of the children then have the opportunity to engage in weekly rehearsals at St. Anne's and sing in the Cathedral's choirs at Evensong and Sunday services. Catherine explains the importance of ensuring that children have access to music lessons, “The schools have found that the ability to engage with learning improves with the regular exposure to music and also that the children can be calmer after a session of singing.”

The trip to Corrymeela was an opportunity for children from the different schools to get to know each other and to sing together. The day began with some icebreakers. From the Pony Dance to the Moose Song, the Corrymeela favourites went down a treat, getting everyone's voices warmed up. Next came the Corry Hunt, giving the children the chance to team up with a pupil from a different school and explore the site. I had the joy of joining Dylan and Alan on their adventure. While both were a little shy at first, the excitement of the hunt soon broke the ice. As they worked



Writing a group agreement in the Croí.

out the clues together, helped each other with spellings and navigated their way around the site, there was a great sense of teamwork and a firm friendship was formed - complete with a secret hand-shake!

To round off the day the children performed three of their songs in the Croí for Corrymeela staff and volunteers. The singing was beautiful, the children's enthusiasm was contagious and the impact of the Cathedral Choir Schools Project was clear to see. The Project gives children the opportunity to have fun



Playing Giants, Wizards and Elves

singing together, to develop their musical ability and to build friendships across community divides.

As the day drew to a close, St Anne's Volunteer, Melissa, asked the group

“Who here has made new friends today?” The hands shot up. What a success. What a special day to have been a part of.

**Kerry Logan**  
Assistant to the Executive Director  
Department, Corrymeela



Choir performance in the Croí.



Choir performance in the Croí.



**THIS SUMMER WAS AN EXCITING TIME** at the Ballycastle Centre. Many were still buzzing about the Living Well Together conference in June and hosting the first international Adam's Camp in early July. The month's excitement continued with the four-day visit of Krista Tippett and the On Being team.

Krista Tippett is an award winning journalist based in Minneapolis, Minnesota USA. She was honoured with a National Award for the Humanities by Barack Obama at the White House in 2014 for "thoughtfully delving into the mysteries of human existence. On the air and in print, Ms. Tippett avoids easy answers, embracing complexity and inviting people of every background to join her conversation about faith, ethics, and moral wisdom."

She and a wonderful team, together, produce the programme On Being listened to by over 1 million people each week. The team also produces two other podcasts and weekly columns exploring what it means to be human in our world today. They

hear from authors, theologians, poets, scientists and thinkers and explore the world of ideas and meaning from a first person narrative.

When asked to reflect on the visit, Pádraig Ó Tuama said, "Having Krista Tippett and the members of the On Being team with us for the recording of three programmes, as well as community discussions about reconciliation was an honour. In the face of public conversations that can often be hostile, On Being is a programme that creates calm corners for asking important and vital questions - questions about what it means to be human. It was an honour to have the team with us, to share some of our work with them, and to engage in their extraordinary practice of radio making."

## Day 1

On their first day, Krista and the team jumped right in and conversed with Michael Longley, celebrated Northern Irish Poet, at the MAC in Belfast. With more than twenty books in publication, he has won the Whitbread Poetry Prize,

T. S. Eliot Prize, the Hawthornden Prize and in 2015 was awarded International Griffin Poetry Prize with judges noting "the light touch he brings to serious subjects, as if sentences are his way of breathing." Michael D. Higgins, President of Ireland, spoke of Michael Longley as "a remarkable man whose poems speak for themselves - eloquent, precise and passionate. Large hearted, intelligent and - above all - humane."

During the conversation, Longley's "Ceasefire" was read. He reflected on an encounter he had after the poem was published, pondering whether or not the poem itself was premature. He said, "A man walked up to me, talking about the poem, and said 'I really admired your Achilles poem, but I'm not ready for it. My son was the victim of a punishment beating. I'm not ready to forgive.'"

After a short pause, Longley continued, "When I wrote it ["Ceasefire"] there was a wonderful guy in Enniskillen called Gordon Wilson... his daughter was killed by a bomb... I had his face in my mind for Priam. And I thought... that not everyone could behave with the extraordinary magnanimity of Gordon Wilson. And I thought that my poem... may have been too symmetrical and neat and tidy."

Later in the conversation, after talking more about many of his famous works, including "Lisburn Road" and "The Ice-Cream Man," he reflected "All a poet can do is write good poems, but they may not be current for a long time."

## Day 2

The next day, Daniel J. Lawton, US Consul General in Belfast, and Paula Hawkins, his wife, had a reception to honour the On Being team's trip to Northern Ireland. There was wonderful company, great chat, and the sun made an appearance! Brief remarks were made by the Consul General noting the breadth and depth of the team's work.



*The On Being Team with US Consul General, Daniel J. Lawton, in Belfast during trip to Northern Ireland in July 2016. Pictured right to left: Mariah Helgeson (On Being), Lily Percy (On Being), Daniel J. Lawton (US Consul General), Krista Tippett (On Being), Trent Gilliss (On Being) and Chris Heagle (On Being).*

Before a lively conversation, driven by questions from those in attendance, Krista talked of her time in Northern Ireland and reflected, "This [Belfast] is a place that in recent memory has moved away from sectarianism. At this moment, it feels like much of the rest of the world is drawing toward sectarianism. I believe that some of what you know here the rest of us need to know... and be part of our way of finding our way back to the possibility of lived peace and finding out what that can mean." She continued, "I believe change happens in the margins... the work of Corrymeela is found in the margins as well."

After the reception, both the On Being and Corrymeela teams travelled up the coast to the Ballycastle Centre to venture into a weekend full of conversations, cups of tea, and community.

## Day 3

The third day of the visit was much anticipated at the Centre, for two conversations were to place in the Croí: Pádraig Ó Tuama, Leader of the Corrymeela Community and Dr. Siobhán Garrigan, Loyola Chair of Catholic Theology and Director of the Loyola Institute at Trinity College Dublin.

All in attendance were graced with another beautiful, sunny Northern Irish day (yes, they exist!). In the morning, Pádraig and Krista and sat down in the Croí for a conversation, with Corrymeela Community Members as an audience. The conversation encompassed spirituality, theology, words, language, and questions.

The conversation started with Krista asking Pádraig the question, "How would you begin to reflect on the religious or spiritual background on your life?"

He answered speaking about his childhood, understanding and the importance of language, saying "I think the most important things require the most plain words and the most elemental words. And the unadorned words so that you can get to the heart of things. And ... finding ways where you can be amongst people and be with yourself where you can put words to something. Every possibility of people putting words to something, especially something that's been difficult, in itself is a sacrament."

Two hours quickly passed, speaking in great detail of story - the importance of story, hospitality, and creating spaces where story and hospitality meet difference and conversation. At the end of the conversation, they spoke of the Buddhist concept of mu, which means 'Un-ask the question because there is a better question to be asked.' When speaking of it, Pádraig said, "I think this is a delightful way to understand the world. And I think in a certain sense, [when we pray] we are being told by God mu."

That afternoon, Krista had a conversation with Dr. Siobhán Garrigan. Afterwards, all gathered to share food and stories. Among those who shared were Desney Cromey, Corrymeela's first volunteer and Matt Scrimgeour, Head of Hospitality and Facilities at Corrymeela and Founding Member of Boundary Beer

***"I believe change happens in the margins... the work of Corrymeela is found in the margins as well."***

- KRISTA TIPPETT

Co-operative. It was a wonderful space, where communities shared joys, struggles, passion and faith.

## Day 4

The last day of the visit was about community. In the morning, Corrymeela Community Members and the On Being team held a space for intentional conversation, learning, and discovering together. Afterwards, everyone moved into the Croí for worship led by Community Member Sarah Williamson.

When reflecting on the worship, Sarah said, "I love the prayer of courage. And recently the line regarding our complicity has been playing on my mind. During the On Being team's visit there was a sense of the complexity of our brokenness, frailty and strength as a community. I wanted us, having spoken of the history of our experience of reconciliation, in worship, to practice it - since that is our daily call as Corrymeela members - to keep practicing and practicing reconciliation in the ordinary and extraordinary moments of each day."

In thinking of the On Being programme and team, Pádraig Ó Tuama beautifully summarised the sentiments and admiration of many. "The word host is a really rich one. It can mean someone who receives guests, can also mean a multitude and also has sacramental undertones. All three of these are really appropriate for the richness that Krista brings to her craft and the guests she brings to the audiences who listen so regularly. They go with deepness listening beyond the headlines."

**Rosie DeFilippo**



*On Being's Krista Tippett interviewing Northern Irish Poet Michael Longley at the MAC*



# SPIRITUALITY OF CONFLICT

*The Spirituality of Conflict website will be accessible from late November 2016 at [www.spiritualityofconflict.com](http://www.spiritualityofconflict.com) and is free.*

*Spirituality of Conflict is a website that gives resources for reading the Sunday gospel text through the lens of conflict. Each week, the text of the Sunday gospel is explored in a way that highlights the conflicts in the story, pays attention to the conflicts in groups, and suggests prayers, insights and understandings that can help the readers deepen their faith and deepen their understanding of conflict.*

*The website is aimed at anyone who follows the Sunday Gospel readings of the Christian calendar and is interested in deepening their understanding of the dynamics of conflict in the gospel texts and the dynamics of conflict in contemporary society.*

*Spirituality of Conflict is a project funded by the JVM Trench Trust, the Community Relations Council and the Mission and Discipleship Council of the Church of Scotland. The idea began in Corrymeela and developed when a number of communities, denominations and organisations collaborated together in the project: The Corrymeela Community, The Iona Community, Coventry Cathedral Reconciliation Project, the Irish School of Ecumenics, Place For Hope and the Mission and Discipleship Council of the Church of Scotland.*

## I DISLIKE CONFLICT.

My instinct is always to avoid a fight. But bitter experience has also taught me that ignoring conflict can be disastrous. It can allow a mere difference of opinion to escalate into a fierce argument capable of destroying a valuable friendship.

I have spent a long time working in the Church. I have found many Church people do not seem to understand conflict or how to deal with it. Church culture seems to suggest that 'conflict is bad' and it is a failure for a Church to experience conflict. After all aren't we meant to 'love' one another? The reluctance of Church culture to acknowledge the presence of conflict means the conflict is

allowed to escalate with long lasting consequences.

I was at an ecumenical conference recently and the service in the chapel used the reading for the day where Jesus says "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword." (Matthew 10.34) Did Jesus really intend to cause conflict? Well yes! His life is proof of it, ending as it did in a conflict of national proportions resulting in his tortuous death. Somehow, who Jesus was and what he taught, proved to be so disruptive of the social and religious order of the day, that those in power had to stop him, no matter what the cost.

In our own lives conflict is present in small almost

Reading conflict  
through the lens  
of the text



*In our own lives conflict is present in small almost unnoticeable ways. All change involves an element of conflict, a challenge to the way things are. When we think about it, there can be no development, no progress, no improvement without some element of conflict.*



unnoticeable ways. All change involves an element of conflict, a challenge to the way things are. When we think about it, there can be no development, no progress, no improvement without some element of conflict.

On a larger scale, if we respect life, the invaluable dignity of each person, regardless of race, class or creed; if we oppose exploitation, domination and manipulation of others which denies them the possibility of becoming their best selves, if we pursue

those values we will inevitably face conflict.

The experience of conflict can bring a sense of threat as we find ourselves in the presence of powerful emotions such as anger, and face the possibility of catastrophic loss. It is also true that in most conflicts there is an opportunity to learn something new, to change, or take a new direction in life.

As we have seen, Jesus' life was full of conflict and his example has a lot to teach us.

Jesus' freedom to respond to conflict positively was, I believe, because he knew he was ultimately secure in the knowledge that he was loved by God. This enabled him to respond to conflict creatively.

Our response to conflict requires careful discernment rather than an immediate emotional reaction. That's where a 'Spirituality of Conflict' can create a space where we can align our response to conflict with our deepest beliefs about life. When we live by the story of

the Gospels, hearing again and again of Jesus concern for the poor, the outcast, the sinner, the marginalised, and how each of us are held securely within the love of God, the threat of conflict is diminished and it becomes possible to discern how that conflict can be handled creatively. That is what a 'Spirituality of Conflict' means to me.

**Trevor Williams**





## WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR US?

**WHEN I HEARD THAT THERE WOULD BE A DISCUSSION ABOUT BREXIT** at the Corrymeela Community Weekend in October, I wondered how many people would want to take part. I imagined that most people would shrug their shoulders and say something about how politicians always seem to ignore the views of their constituents anyway, so what's the point? It was wonderful to see so many people crammed into the Croi, and hear so much lively discussion going in the small groups. Some of the feedback struck me in particular - most people in the room said that their anxiety levels after

the Brexit vote were around 5-7 on a scale of 1-10, with 10 being the highest. This explains why they wanted to get together and talk about some of their questions and concerns. Many people made the point that they wanted to find a way to reassure refugees and immigrants that they are still welcome in Northern Ireland, but didn't know how to do that. Some small groups said that they wanted to stand up for immigrants, and stand up to the bullies who abuse them with words and actions, like pulling a woman's hijab in the street. How can you do that without putting yourself or your family at risk? These are all very important factors for

us to think about at this turning point in history. What can we do to make a positive difference in this very public debate? Our opinions matter, and we can use them to influence our family members, friends and neighbours who may be struggling to make any sense of all of this.

**So what is Brexit really all about?**

**Borders? Migrants? Employment and the economy?**

We're being told that Brexit will help to bring improvements in all of these areas, but in reality there is no blueprint

of how it will look when the UK finally leaves the European Union. That's another issue - although Brexit stands for Britain and exit, it is being taken to include Northern Ireland, which is technically part of the United Kingdom but not Britain.

**Is it any wonder we're confused and concerned?**

One of the central planks of Donald Trump's presidential campaign was his threat to build a wall with Mexico to keep out immigrants. That brings us back to our own local situation. Our thoughts and feelings about walls and borders tell us something about ourselves. We've lived with a border all our lives, and seen all sorts of tricks and schemes that people devise to avoid paying tax to bring goods from one side to the other. Many of us enjoy being able to travel freely across borders in EU countries, which have no formal passport controls for residents of other EU member states. This reinforces our sense of community, a shared identity as part of Europe, which has extended massively and now includes countries that were formerly part of the Soviet Union.

**What is the purpose of borders?**

**Do they exist to keep strangers outside, or to keep people safe inside?**

Politicians talk about their preference for 'soft borders' or 'hard borders', but the truth is that no-one really knows how the final picture will look at the end of negotiations to bring the UK out of the European Union.

Did we know what we were voting about on 23 June this year? Many people feel the answer is No, but voter turn-out was high, so we recognised that this is a hugely important issue for us and generations to come. Now that governments are starting to talk seriously about what kind of process they should create to make Brexit a reality, it is becoming clearer just how much impact this will have on many of the other countries within the EU.

The Carnegie UK Trust publication last year "Towards a Wellbeing Framework: Findings from the Roundtable on Measuring Wellbeing in Northern Ireland" states that, "A reported sense

of control over our lives is one of the most reliable indicators of wellbeing." It brought together researchers, policy-makers, academics and others to gather views about the most effective ways to understand how people can work together to improve our lives in a complex world. 'It is about using what we know to create a better society. Most importantly, it is about engaging citizens in meaningful deliberation about what that better society should look like'.

We need to have more conversations like this right across the community, with businesses, Trade Unions, voluntary organisations and community groups. There are opportunities for us in this situation, to encourage more people to think about the kind of society they want to live in, and what they can do to make that come about. Our vote counts, and our opinions matter. Brexit may take three years to come about, but we can use this time to look for ways to make our society a better place.

**Brid Cullen**

*Corrymeela Community Member*





# Hosting hope in challenging times

## THE LAST SIX MONTHS HAVE BEEN A CHALLENGING PERIOD

for Corrymeela and Northern Ireland. While the violence of our sectarian fractures has diminished, the legacy of these fractures is still carried by many communities in Northern Ireland. Fears about immigration and ethnic differences are fuelling an increase in Hate Crimes here in Northern Ireland, across Europe and beyond. Our fragile experiment in sustaining a shared Local Assembly continues to highlight the difficulties in securing a jointly owned political strategy to address these fears and tensions. Whilst 55% of voters in Northern Ireland voted to Remain in the EU, those fears and tensions no doubt helped fuel the UK-wide pro Brexit vote.

Alongside the challenge of finding ways to reconcile these complex issues, Corrymeela has had to face an increasingly difficult set of financial challenges. Austerity, an often frozen political context, and delays in grants have contributed to the ever increasing complexity of running a Charity sustainably. Indeed, notwithstanding the fantastic contributions that groups such as Public Achievement, Gingerbread, Challenge for Youth and the Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities have made, they have all had to close their doors.

While we remain somewhat off that cataclysm, in March this year it became clear that we needed to undertake some serious cost reductions and organisational restructuring if we were to remain sustainable and continue to meet the challenge of navigating our way through this uncertain world.

It became clear that this restructuring

would inevitably mean the loss of posts. Posts held by dedicated, talented, committed and hardworking staff. Whilst such cuts were necessary, these were choices that both I and our Council were deeply saddened to have to make. In the end four of our staff members took Voluntary Redundancy. I would like to acknowledge the service, dedication and skills that each of them brought to Corrymeela. Anne McDonagh, in her position as Personal Assistant to the leader, was with us for 32 years and supported five different Community Leaders in that time. Susan McEwen was with us for 12 years, initially as a Programme worker and later helped us lead and develop our Programme Team as Head of Programmes. Ivan Cross oversaw our Youth Work as a Programme Development Worker for over 14 years, working continuously to build better lives for the most vulnerable youth across Northern Ireland. And Marie-Louise McClarey was with us for nearly 4 years as our Fundraising Manager, working tirelessly to write the grants we needed to support our work. Our deepest thanks go to each of you. Earlier in the year we also closed the post of GB fundraiser and are deeply grateful to Honor Alleyne for her 14 years of service.

To manage these losses, we have merged the posts of Communications and Fundraising together as well as the posts of Programme and Social Innovation. It is with profound gratitude that I would like to acknowledge Mark McCleary as our new Head of Fundraising and Communications and Shona Bell as our new Head of Programme and Innovation. These are greatly challenging positions and we are blessed to have such committed and talented people striving to carry them forward.

While Northern Ireland no longer commands the attention that our violent sectarianism once created, we live in a world that is becoming increasingly polarised and fearful and we have a deep understanding of the price that is paid when that happens. The title of our new Strategic Plan is “Living Well Together”. It is a call and a challenge that echoes across the world. There is great need for Safe Harbours where people can find refuge, respite, healing, learning and the strength to return to their fractured communities and carry out the work that is needed in our stormy world. In this incredible space that we are blessed with, and through work developed over so many years, in Corrymeela we have learned the craft and faith to continue to host hope, even in the midst of dark times. This is a time for us to look up and look forward. Ray and Kathleen would expect no less. It is a time when we need to recognise the new challenges and demands that are emerging. It is a time to nurture the resilience and strength of our brilliant staff and volunteers that come to live out their commitment to host, learn and lead. Our commitment to the work of reconciling our complex and broken history on these islands is as strong as ever. The need for our work is not diminishing but is in fact growing. We embrace this challenge knowing that, while there are many uncertainties, this remains the work we are called to. We will continue to draw on our deep reservoir of learning, we will answer the call to live well together, we will host hope in these challenging times.

**Colin Craig**

*Executive Director Corrymeela*

# Worlds end

After the Referendum, the world  
changed.

Political resignations.

Soured relationships.

Reconsidered borders.

Broken promises.

Passports applied for.

Blame given.

Depression and euphoria. Two camps.

Deep sighs.

Kicking a ball in France  
was a temporary cheer.

Standing by a grave in France  
sobered many minutes.

Every day the world ends.  
Every day  
a new world begins.  
Every breath has an end.  
Every breath  
is a new beginning.

But,  
we live in a distracted daze,  
live as if  
the next gulp  
(of air)  
is guaranteed.

It isn't. But it is  
a gift.  
It is  
a new world. Every mouthful  
of air a  
composition of wonder, uncertainty, blessing and finitude.

**Paul Hutchinson**



Meet our new Volunteers and Interns at Corrymeela Ballycastle



**ALYSSA TENDER**  
Long Term Volunteer,  
USA



**KENDAL JONES**  
Long Term Volunteer,  
USA



**JACOB ELLEN SOHN**  
Long Term Volunteer,  
Germany



**BENJAMIN KELLER**  
Long Term Volunteer,  
Germany



**Nicole Blaney**  
Long Term Volunteer,  
Northern Ireland



**Gareth Gould**  
Long Term Volunteer,  
Northern Ireland



**Kerry Logan**  
Assistant to Executive Director  
Department, Northern Ireland



**Catriona Kennedy**  
Volunteer Office Assistant,  
Ireland



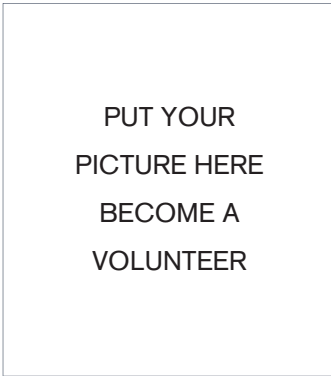
**Sarah Clarke**  
Centre Support Team  
England



**Crystal Hill**  
Centre Support Team  
Canada



**Teri Murphy**  
Scholar/Practioner-in-  
Residence, USA



PUT YOUR  
PICTURE HERE  
BECOME A  
VOLUNTEER  
  
**FIND OUT MORE AT**  
[www.corrymeela.org/volunteer](http://www.corrymeela.org/volunteer)

**Corrymeela  
Christmas  
Open Day 2016**  
**Sunday  
4th December  
2 - 5pm**



Corrymeela Christmas Open Day 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 arts and crafts, a puppet show, Christmas carols, face painting and lots of goodies at the Christmas Market to get the Christmas spirit aglow!

**Entrance fee: £2 for adults,  
free for kids.  
(Visits to Santa £2)**



**TEDX**

Corrymeela believes in stories. At the heart of peace, we see stories that need to be told between people who do not know each other's stories. At a recent TEDx Stormont event, Pádraig shared stories of peace and friendship, surprise and pain as part of a TEDx day exploring Imagination. The event was organised by Eva Grossman of the Centre for Democracy and Peace and featured talks on the imagination of business, health, space, education and mistakes. You can find Pádraig's talk by searching "Imagining Peace TEDx Stormont" YouTube.

If you're interested Don't miss our "Storywork" and "Story Theology" residential trainings see [www.corrymeela.org/events](http://www.corrymeela.org/events)

**SAD NEWS**

**Legacy Gifts**  
Margaret Cromey  
Pamela Halliday  
Ivan and Dorothy Wheeler  
Charitable Trust  
Margaret Creasy  
  
**Gifts in Memoriam**  
Chalmers Dick  
Elsie McKelvey  
Francis Wright

**LGBT Forum**

Corrymeela were honoured to be invited by the UK Foreign Office to an event in Wilton Park near London exploring "Opportunities and challenges: the intersection of faith and human rights of LGBTI+ persons". Sixty people from thirty countries, representing many faiths, human rights organisations, diplomatic corps and advocacy groups gathered to explore what safety, full access to places of faith and leadership looked like for LGBT+ persons.

The event was a forum for shared projects, skills exchange and resourcing, funded generously by the Arcus Foundation. If you're interested in this project, check our "Blessed are the Brave" weekend for LGBT affirmative faith leaders in January 2017.

**Pricing Update**

At Corrymeela we review our prices from time to time, and we are introducing some price changes from December 1st 2016.

These prices will apply to general open weekends (Retreats, Training Weekends etc.).

From December 1st, the cost for a shared room will now be £99 per person sharing. (The previous cost was £100), the cost for a single-occupancy room will be £139 per person. (The previous cost was £120).

There are no hidden charges!

These prices include all costs – booking charges, all food; accommodation; constantly available tea, coffee, fruit, biscuits; facilitation and volunteer support.



**We are thrilled to  
announce Carafest  
over Easter 14-17  
April.**

Carafest is an Easter Festival of friendship, faith, reconciliation and arts. The word "cara" is Irish for "friend" and this word is at the heart of all reconciliation work. On all levels - community, business and politics – peace is nurtured by friendship.

Come join us for a weekend of light.

Join 100 new (and old) friends who are coming together for conversation about community, faith and reconciliation.

Carafest will host conversations about faiths, about reconciliation, as well as having wonderful poetry, music, film and arts.

There'll be events for the devout, events for the doubting, music to dance to, poetry to listen to, conversations to join, and walks to be had. We are very excited about this weekend.

You'll have the opportunity to hear novelist Jan Carson; singer Blue Rose Code; theologians, artists, home-grown musicians and, of course, the fantastic Corrymeela Programme staff.

**Details and prices are being  
uploaded on the Corrymeela  
Website [www.corrymeela.org/carafest](http://www.corrymeela.org/carafest)**



# CORRYMEELA EVENTS

(Belfast)

## Corrymeela in the City

### Fitzroy Presbyterian Church

Corrymeela is delighted to welcome you to an evening of quiet prayer, reflection and gospel reading on November 27th and January 11th at 5.15pm in Fitzroy Church, University Street, Belfast (please enter through the side door towards the café area).

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.

## Theologies of Atonement

Jesus of Nazareth died by crucifixion, and the Christian scriptures offer different reasons why this is significant. The explanations of Jesus' death and subsequent resurrection is referred to as the "atonement" - literally meaning "at-one-ment" - depicting that in dying, Jesus of Nazareth was at one with humanity.

Join the Corrymeela Community for a series of six gatherings exploring different Theologies of Atonement during Lent 2017. All are welcome. We will explore some theological readings, read some biblical texts, and consider these texts in conversation with our own stories and the story of our world today.

2 March 7-8.30pm  
9 March 7-8.30pm  
16 March 7-8.30pm  
23 March 7-8.30pm  
30 March 7-8.30pm  
6 April 7-8.30pm

Location: Corrymeela Belfast Office, 83 University Street, Belfast, BT7 1HP. If you are coming along, please let us know, email [belfast@corrymeela.org](mailto:belfast@corrymeela.org) or call 028 9050 8080. Suggested donation of £5 per gathering. Tea, Coffee and Lent-appropriate biscuits provided!

## Jesus wasn't born in a Stable

(Belfast)

You are very welcome to join the Corrymeela Community at our Belfast Offices for a series of four evening discussions on the nativity texts of the gospels of Luke and Matthew.

This series will explore the powerful descriptions of the birth of Jesus, the genealogies, the atmosphere of political conflict into which these narratives speak and some details that are either overlooked or invented (for instance, that Jesus wasn't born in a stable).

These evenings will be led by Pádraig Ó Tuama. Pádraig is the leader of the Corrymeela Community, a poet and theologian. He is a popular speaker and broadcaster and lectures on the topics of the gospels, conflict and poetry.

These seminars are free, and all are welcome, suggested donation per seminar £5. Tea and coffee (and perhaps the occasional mince pie) will be provided.

These seminars will take place at Corrymeela Belfast Office, 83 University St, Belfast BT7 1HP on the following dates:  
**Thursday 24th November 7pm-8.30pm**  
**Thursday 1st December 7pm-8.30pm**  
**Thursday 8th December 7pm-8.30pm**  
**Thursday 15th December 7pm-8.30pm**  
If you are coming along, please let us know, email [belfast@corrymeela.org](mailto:belfast@corrymeela.org) or call 028 9050 8080.

## Spirituality and Power Seminars

**The "Spirituality and Power Seminars" are a series of seminars run by Corrymeela, usually on the last Tuesday of each month, at our offices in Belfast, 83 University Street, Belfast BT7 1HP.**

They run from 4pm-5.30pm and will feature a speaker who will present some reflections on the topic of Power and Spirituality. The seminars are free details below, but you are welcome to make a donation if you choose.

Tuesday, 29th November 2016 -  
The Power of Truth with Corrymeela Staff Member Sean Pettis

Tuesday, 20 December 2016 -  
From Empire to the Kingdom with Rev Robert S Heaney.

Tuesday, 31 January 2017 -  
The Poetry of Hell with Pádraig Ó Tuama.

Tuesday, 28 February 2017 -  
The Power of Servant Leadership in Benedictine Spirituality with Eva Grosman.

Tuesday, 28 March 2017 - The Healing Power of Language with Linda Irvine.

Tea and Coffee will be provided, If you are coming along, please let us know, email [belfast@corrymeela.org](mailto:belfast@corrymeela.org) or call 028 9050 8080.

## Cantate!

A Concert to celebrate  
St Cecilia's Day

**22 November @ 7pm in  
St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast  
Come celebrate with Belfast  
Cathedral and the Corrymeela  
Community.**

An evening of music and poetry  
featuring: **JUBILATE! Chamber  
Choir; St Anne's Girls Choir  
Voices Together Community Choir**

Tickets: £10 - on sale from St  
Anne's Cathedral or Corrymeela  
Belfast Office - 83 University St,  
Belfast BT7 1HP call 9050 8080 or  
online from Musicglue.com.

## Conflict in Groups

6th December 9.30am -1pm,  
Corrymeela Belfast Office, 83  
University Street, Belfast, BT7 1HP.  
Suggested donation £15.

**A morning exploring the  
contribution of Group  
Psychoanalysis to Peacebuilding,  
led by John Alderdice.**

Groups are powerful experiences. In every group there is both desire and resistance. There are unnamed and powerful undercurrents. So much of peace building is about working well with groups. Corrymeela is delighted to partner with the Centre for Democracy and Peace Building for a morning exploring some of the insights of Group Psychoanalysis to groupwork as it is relevant to peace practitioners.

Participants on this seminar will be emailed in advance with a short paper, and the seminar will consist of some teaching, some discussion of the paper, some case studies and some attention to the dynamics of the gathered group.

If you are interested, please email [belfast@corrymeela.org](mailto:belfast@corrymeela.org) with your name and a brief paragraph about your interest and your contact details.

# CORRYMEELA EVENTS

(Ballycastle)

## Jesus wasn't born in a Stable

(Ballycastle)

For detailed information on this event see our Jesus wasn't born in a Stable (Belfast) event - we will be providing tea, coffee etc., the only difference in the location - the Croi at Corrymeela Ballycastle and the times

**Thursday 24th November**      **Thursday 1st December**  
**Thursday 8th December**      **Thursday 15th December**

You are very welcome to join us  
9am      **Silent worship** (Quaker Style)  
9.30am      **Coffee in the Croi** followed by  
10am      **Advent talk** - finishes at 11.15 (*No need to book in advance*).

## Hope - A Light in the Darkness

### *Reflections on Chanukah and Christmas*

**Saturday, 26 November 2016, 10am - 3.30pm**

Coming the day before the start of Advent, this day of guided reflection will focus on the theme of hope found in both the Jewish festival of Chanukah and Christian festival of Christmas. It is facilitated by Yvonne Naylor, a member of the Corrymeela Community and the N.I. Inter Faith Forum and by Alyssa Tender, a member of the US Jewish Community and a Long Term Volunteer at our Centre in Ballycastle.

Cost: £20 per person (including lunch). To book a place, please check our website [www.corrymeela.org/events](http://www.corrymeela.org/events) or contact: Corrymeela Belfast Office, 028 9050 8080 or email [belfast@corrymeela.org](mailto:belfast@corrymeela.org)

## Dialogue for Peaceful Change

**Mon 28th Nov - Friday 2nd Dec 2016.**

From Antioch to Zimbabwe more than a thousand people around the world have been trained in the Dialogue for Peaceful Change (DPC) programme.

It was developed by practitioners working in national and international conflict settings. This is a hands on course offering learning about the nature of conflict and practical tools for managing conflict. Participants will learn through lectures, reflections, coaching and real life mediation scenarios. We would love to welcome you to our next round of DPC training taking place in Corrymeela, Ballycastle from Monday 28th November to Friday 2nd December. This training will give valuable tools of mediation and conflict analysis to people in the public sector, healthcare management, education, third sector leadership, community development and business.

More information and booking details: [www.corrymeela.org/DPC](http://www.corrymeela.org/DPC)

## Clergy Retreat

**A gentle retreat for clergy at Corrymeela Ballycastle - to rest, reflect on scripture and recharge.**

This retreat is for clergy in ministry who wish to be among a group of other clergy to support each other in prayer, reflect on what brings life, engage with discussion in a beautiful calm setting and find refreshment. These retreats are hosted by members of the Corrymeela Community.

Beginning at 9am Wednesday to 2pm on Thursday, these retreats cost £72 (full board, single occupancy room), but for clergy based in Northern Ireland, NIAMH subsidise the cost which is £44. To book a place, please check our website [www.corrymeela.org/events](http://www.corrymeela.org/events) or contact: Corrymeela Belfast Office, 028 9050 8080 or email [belfast@corrymeela.org](mailto:belfast@corrymeela.org).

## Storywork Narrative Practice Weekend

25-27 November, 2016

**From healthcare to business, from congregational work to community work, it is being increasingly recognised that story is a key factor in personal and group wellbeing.** When a person can know their story, can know that their story will be heard, can find words to share their story, and can find ways in which their story both resembles and differs from others' wellbeing is deepened.

For 50 years Corrymeela has been a place of story. We have been a gathering place where people from many sides of conflict and division have shared their story. While for many years we held much of this work quietly, we are now beginning to offer training courses on using narrative practice in your personal, community and professional life.

This weekend course will explore methodologies of narrative practice that are relevant for: Teamwork, Community development, Conflict situations.

We will cover some of the theoretical bases for understanding narrative dynamics within groups, and we will also cover a variety of practices for using narrative work in professional and community settings.

We will do most of this through doing narrative work ourselves - opening up stories amongst the gathered group, to show and share and develop methodologies that are relevant in the workplace environments of the participants.

Costs: £100 Shared room with limited availability of single-occupancy rooms available for £120

"We do not tell stories as they are; we tell them as we are."

Interested in going to this event? Check out our website [www.corrymeela.org/events](http://www.corrymeela.org/events) or call 028 9050 8080.

## Blessed are the brave

### *A weekend for LGBT affirming faith leaders*

**20 - 22 January, 2017**

The retreat will run from 6.30pm on Friday to 2pm on Sunday and costs £99 for a shared room, £139 single occupancy.

This is our fifth Blessed are the Brave event. Each year we have welcomed 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. We spend time in reflection together, in learning, reflecting on biblical texts, day to day stories, and offering encouragement and support. Additionally, at retreats at Corrymeela, we offer tools and learning from the many years of responding to sectarianism that are relevant for people who are engaging in dialogue about LGBT lives within the life of the Christian churches.

This weekend is not only for those who are LGBT themselves, but for those Christian faith leaders who are inclusive of LGBT people. There are more details on the FAQ sheet linked below. To book a place, please check our website [www.corrymeela.org/events](http://www.corrymeela.org/events) or contact: Corrymeela Belfast Office, 028 9050 8080 or email [belfast@corrymeela.org](mailto:belfast@corrymeela.org).



# the choices we made

## Bystanding and Conflict in Northern Ireland...

is a filmed collection of six true stories about individuals wrestling with how to behave and act when confronted with sectarianism, violence and prejudice.

The stories range over a 30 year period (1972 - 2002) and offer a fresh take on the options available for people during the Northern Ireland Troubles and post-ceasefire.

**There are no simple answers.**

**This is not an easy lesson or comfortable viewing.**

**What can we learn from this?**

**How does it help us to understand this period in our history?**

**How does it differ from the more loudly heard narratives?**

**What choices could people have made in relation to sectarianism and violence?**

**What choices can we make today?**

**How can we as individuals and as a society learn from the past and nurture a more flourishing, inclusive and diverse society?**



On Thursday 10 November, 2016 we launched the resource at the Queen's Film Theatre, Belfast to an audience of funders, practitioners, policy makers, academics, and other interested parties.

Again we are truly indebted to the individuals who shared their story with us - sharing something you didn't do can be much harder than something you did. We thank them for their courage. We also thank the film-makers Ben Jones and Paul Hutchinson. They have taken complex and sensitive stories and presented them with care, consideration and in a visually arresting manner. We believe their tireless work will break new ground in learning from the past.

The production was funded by the Community Relations Council through their Media Grants Scheme and the Irish Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade through their Reconciliation Fund. We are grateful to these funders for supporting us in our vision to bring these stories to screen.

You can find more information on how to access the film on our website under the 'resources' section, category 'peace & conflict'. We will be integrating the resource into our programmes and will be producing an Educators' guide to support facilitated use of the resource in classrooms and communities locally and globally.

For more information, contact [seanpettis@corrymeela.org](mailto:seanpettis@corrymeela.org) or call 028 9050 8080.

Supported by



## *Spiritual reflection*

**ONE OF THE MEMBERS** of the Corrymeela group in Aberdeen recently commented that he had been part of a church meeting in England sixty years ago. The church meeting made national news because of the insults exchanged. At one point, one of the participants stood up, addressed the church leader and said:

With all due respect to you Vicar, you are the biggest liar, humbug and hypocrite it has ever been my misfortune to meet.

What do we do with words like this? The meeting became notorious because a journalist captured the sentence and it was reported nationally.

To insult another in the name of making a point usually undermines rather than underlines the point.

And, in a certain sense, it can be easy to use insulting and demeaning words to make a point, no matter how sincere or well-meaning our point is. After all, many, if not most of us love a bit of drama. It makes for delicious repetition and we can feel part of the group who finally nailed a point, and won a competition of verbal exchange.

Yet does this bring any real change? Has any opinion been changed when the opinion-holder is part of an exchange of insults? Often strong language such as this harms more than it heals, breaks rather than builds relationship.

True dialogue is very difficult. When we get into dialogue, we have words to say that are important. To express our true thoughts, with insight, emotion, language and conviction in a shared space is demanding. It can be easy to revert to insult, but the short-term gain is lost in the effect of longer-term estrangement.

The New Testament writer of the letter to the Romans wrote "If possible, as far as it depends on you, be at peace with everyone". This is demanding, and difficult. It requires effort on all sides to make our important points.

At Corrymeela, we celebrate the fact that one of the meanings offered for "Corrymeela" is "Lumpy Crossing Space".

Community is difficult, and demands much from us - it demands that we speak to each other, share strong words with each other, and engage in arguments that are life giving rather than tribal. Such exchanges can be lumpy, we can cross each other, but this is the hope we have - that in speaking from the heart, we can find the words that are strong enough and wise enough to build rather than break understanding.

**Pádraig Ó Tuama**  
Corrymeela Community Leader





