

# Trócaire's JustFaith Programme:

Its new, it's different and it will be a challenge, but we're looking forward to it



Photo: Trócaire

Trócaire supporters pictured at a protest about the effects of climate change on the developing world

If Catholic Social Teaching is referred to as the Church's best kept secret then why keep it that way? Many parishes and groups are beginning to spread the word and reach out to young and older in their community writes Hannah Evans, church officer, Trócaire.

The recent publication of *Share the Good News*, the National Directory of Catechesis speaks to us of the ways in which we can promote the message of Christ in today's modern society. The Directory points us in many directions at Parish and Diocese level where Evangelisation can take place and where the world of God can flourish. Section C of the National Directory for Catechesis in Ireland, 'Sharing the Good News' refers to the importance of continued faith development throughout our lives. Adult Faith Development, Sharing our Faith with the Young and Reaching out in Christ's Love to All are the three pillars of this journey and present new opportunities for our faith.

Trócaire has developed two pastoral programmes in the context of *Share the Good News*, which are resources for parishes looking to explore their own faith or share their faith with young people in their community through the lenses of Catholic Social Teaching. Catholic Social Teaching is an opportunity for people to look at our world in a new way i.e. our interdependence and our call to know and to love others as we are known and loved by God.

'Our programme recognises that all Christian action if it is to be Gospel-inspired, must be rooted in an ever-deepening relationship with Christ. For this reason, Trócaire's programme is an opportunity to build on the young person's experiences of prayer and perhaps to introduce them to new types of prayer. Each of the six sessions includes a "Take Action" session which draws the group out into the parish or the wider community. The programme encourages participants to "see God in all things" and connect their faith with the reality of their lives.'

*Share the Good News* reflects that 'ongoing faith development for young people in particular is a "constant challenge" but many parishes and agencies are embracing this challenge'.

Regina McCarrick coordinates the St Sylvester's and Yellow Walls youth programme, MYYAM in St Sylvester's parish, Malahide, north Dublin and says the group are looking forward to bringing Trócaire's Young Adult programme *JustFaith* to life this year in their community. MYYAM was born out of World Youth Day 2008 in Sydney Australia and the group reaches out to parishioners aged 18-35. 'In establishing the group we were guided by the teachings of Rev John C. Cusick, director of the Young Adult Ministry Office in the Archdiocese of Chicago so we have based the group on the pillars of social, spiritual and service, as set out by Rev Cusick' according to Regina. This has given the group a broad and

appealing scope through which to contribute to the parish.

Regina and the group became aware of Trócaire's *JustFaith* Programme earlier this summer as groups prepared for this year's World Youth Day in Rio, Brazil. '*JustFaith* ticks a lot of boxes for us because it speaks to the social, service and spiritual pillars of our group' says Regina.

*JustFaith* has been designed to meet the needs of parishes and groups who are looking for a focus for their group, a focus that appeals to young people and keeps them engaged. While *Share the Good News* highlights the need to communicate with young people in appropriate language and integrate faith with the reality of their lives, a significant proportion of *JustFaith* uses social media and online tools; areas that are appealing and comfortable for young people these days.

According to Regina *JustFaith* covers a range of topics that appeal to a younger audience and this is one of the main reasons they have decided to bring *JustFaith* into their group. 'Trócaire's programme addresses issues such as climate change, which is an area that is of real interest to young people. We hope to learn a lot and also link what we've learned to the spiritual aspects of the group. *JustFaith* is unique and it is a challenging and there's a lot of interest within the group for something new.'

'We hope this will be a new experience for the group and that it will give us an opportunity to reach out to people in the parish who don't feel as connected to the spiritual side of our group but are looking for a way of expressing their faith in a different kind of way. It is a gentle introduction for people to St Sylvester's youth programme and the work that we do' concluded Regina.

'It's new, it's different and it will be a challenge but we're looking forward to learning about what's happening outside of our own little zone here in Ireland.'

*Trócaire's JustFaith programme was developed by Kate McQuillan, church officer, Trócaire in conjunction with the Office for Evangelisation and Ecumenism. The resource will also be used by some of Trócaire's World Youth Day returnees in their own Dioceses.*

*For more information on the programme, please contact Kate McQuillan or Hannah Evans on 01 6293333. Trócaire is happy to provide individual groups with training and support in their running of the programme. Log on to [www.trocaire.org/justfaith](http://www.trocaire.org/justfaith) for more information.*

# Political commitment needed to deliver for world's poor

As discussions around the successors to the current set of anti-poverty Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) concluded at the UN in New York recently, Trócaire says that there is an onus now on governments around the world to truly drive change for the poorest and most vulnerable people.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were launched in 2000 and are due to expire in 2015. The eight MDGs – which range from halving extreme poverty rates to halting the spread of HIV/AIDS and providing universal primary education – form a blueprint for international development, agreed to by all the world's countries and all the world's leading development institutions.

The MDGs were a good idea, but in many ways the '8 goals' were a product of their time. Whilst they were good to focus minds on the importance of aid and development they have been a distraction from the underlying causes of poverty.

As we approach the deadline of 2015, it is obvious that the project has not been as successful as hoped and many look unlikely to be met by the 2015 deadline. Despite efforts, nearly half of the world's population remain in abject poverty – many of them now in middle income countries. One in eight people in the world today remain chronically undernourished. This truly is a scandal in a world where there is more than enough food to feed everyone. Even the MDGs greatest 'success' – 700 million fewer people living in poverty – can, in reality, be attributed to significant economic growth of China and India.

The failure to meet many of the MDGs by 2015 is likely to have few consequences for the governments who agreed on them, or indeed for many of those busy designing the next round of goals. However for those living in poverty, the failure to deliver on many of the goals has a significant impact on their daily survival.

The MDGs have been a fifteen-year numbers game that has never looked to tackle the causes of poverty and exclusion. By focusing on outcomes measured in numbers and statistics, the world's poorest people have been neglected by the process.

Trócaire's new report *My Rights Beyond 2015* is stark confirmation of this reality. Based on research in communities across six developing

countries, only 50% of the issues and concerns expressed by impoverished communities are addressed in the current goals.

A significant proportion of those needs centre around equality and power; having equal rights regardless of gender, ethnicity or income and being better able to hold governments to account – were among people's most significant concerns.

Some of the findings of Trócaire's research were shocking such as the number of children who have to leave school to support their families, particularly young girls who find themselves going into prostitution to bring in an income. Furthermore, a third of families in the poorest countries have no one to turn to in times of difficulty and have little support from government. Many are excluded by virtue of being poor and are unable to afford the charges for even basic services.

It is recognised that the means and resources to end poverty are available to us; what has been missing is the political will to do so.

The discussions in New York included a key UN Special Event on 25 September co-convoked by Ireland and South Africa, with both the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Eamon Gilmore TD and Minister of State, Joe Costello TD present. This Special Event marked an important step on the road towards determining the successor to the MDGs and Ireland has to be highly commended for their determination to drive this process. Minister Costello also launched Trócaire's new report – *My Rights Beyond 2015* – at a side event.

We welcome Minister Costello's commitment and that of the Irish Government to achieving an ambitious and inclusive post 2015 agenda which will aim to truly deliver on eradicating extreme poverty.

We urge the Irish Government to continue to play a critical role in



Former Executive Director of Trócaire, Justin Kilcullen together with Dr Lorna Gold, Head of Policy and Advocacy, Trócaire with Minister of State, Joe Costello TD at the launch in New York on 25 September of Trócaire's new report – *My Rights Beyond 2015*.

translating the conclusions of that Special Event in to concrete commitments.

Tinkering round the edges – for example coming up with 10 or 12 similar goals with the same approach – is not enough. Something radically different is needed.

The process of negotiation around the new framework must take the voice of the world's poor into account; any strategy to eradicate poverty must not treat people as passive recipients of aid but must acknowledge their rights and entitlements.

A new plan must also focus on how richer countries contribute to poverty, inequality and unsustainable development both globally and in their own countries through greenhouse gas emissions, tax havens and a lack of corporate transparency.

What emerges from the process to follow-on from the MDGs that began this autumn in New York must have human rights for all at the centre. Given the position of Ireland on the Human Rights Council, the continued success of our aid programme, and the human rights commitments outlined in Ireland's recently published Policy on International Development, the Irish Government is in a position to give strong leadership and effect real change in the international process to find an effective successor to the MDGs.

To access a copy of Trócaire's new research see: [www.trocaire.org/resources/policy-papers](http://www.trocaire.org/resources/policy-papers). *My Rights Beyond 2015* is based on research with communities in India, Pakistan, Malawi, Sierra Leone, Nicaragua and Haiti.

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