



More than a holiday

Agnes Milne reflects on 30 years of CPW membership

Last year's week in Downside with its theme "Welcome Home" made me relive our long association with CPW. We remembered how, during the last 30 years, we have received so much joy and affirmation, and shared in every week, a unique experience of Christian Community living.

Over the years we have experienced a variety of weeks in different venues, some less luxurious than others, some catered and others self-catering. In the latter we had much fun doing the chores, even when we

had to help with the cooking, and many quite deep discussions took place at those times. It was Donald Nichol who in his book *The Beauty of Truth* discussing "Where is the best place for theological thought?" decided that it was in the kitchen and with children around!

After our children were grown up we went to adult-only weeks and learnt a great deal about a variety of subjects and experienced the same love. More recently, with grandchildren in tow, we have returned to the all-age weeks, with participants from 0 to 90 years of age!

We really appreciate the following elements of Catholic People's Weeks:

In the all-age weeks, children are very well cared for physically and have a well-defined programme following the overall theme of the week. This is as meticulously prepared and worked out, as that for the adults. The contribution of children and young people to the weeks is central. This has been particularly evident in the liturgies where, in true Benedictine style, they teach their seniors and are listened to, and their enthusiasm is contagious. Many adults who might have felt a bit shy to join in the exuberant liturgies have had their inhibitions removed by entering into the Spirit of the young people.



The Liturgy itself is greatly enhanced by the involvement of all guests in the Preparation of the Mass on each day of the week. Liturgies and prayer times are central to the rhythm of the week and contribute to the building up of a truly God-centred Christian community.

A very impressive thing we have witnessed lately in all-age Weeks has been the large number of youngsters with special needs for whom CPW seems eminently able to cater.

Lastly, while for nearly 70 years CPW has been advertised as providing "a holiday with a difference" and for many families is an integral part of their holiday, we also proclaim that CPW revitalises the Heart, Mind and Spirit of Catholicism.

At our Baptism we were all anointed as Priests, Prophets and Kings and, as the laity, we have our own part to play with Pope Francis in answering Jesus' plea to St Francis of Assisi – "rebuild my Church which is falling into disrepair". CPW is just one way that we can take on the responsibility of assuming a proper leadership role in the world. While CPW and its work with young and old thrive we are filled with great hope for the future of our much loved Church.

At our Baptism we were all anointed as Priests, Prophets and Kings and, as the laity, we have our own part to play with Pope Francis in answering Jesus' plea to St Francis of Assisi – "rebuild my Church which is falling into disrepair". CPW is just one way that we can take on the responsibility of assuming a proper leadership role in the world. While CPW and its work with young and old thrive we are filled with great hope for the future of our much loved Church.



Photos (all 2013): top: planning sheet at Penmaenmawr; middle: children's banner at Malvern; bottom: Mass at Downside