

EMPOWERING WOMEN IN CARRICKMACROSS.

They came with the Harvest of 1888 from Monaghan, September 24 it was Our Lady of Mercy blessing them on her feast day, to empower women -though scarcely empowered themselves.

Just listen to this : it is Mother Xavier of Monaghan writing to Dean Bermingham of Carrick about their coming : 'If you approve of the Sisters going on the day mentioned, they could keep INDOORS during the 3 days of the Fancy Fair, it would not be right to see nuns amidst the festivities on those days.'
So much for empowerment.

Three weeks later the schooling began, and then the boarding-school and a night-school for 'servant-girls' as they were called then. Success followed success and, amid strict rules of silence and decorum, prayer and meditation, State examinations were held often with distinction; Distinction too in music and drama and all that. Another quote from our Annals : 'At Christmas, the Adeste Fideles was accompanied by harmonium, harp and 3 violins.'

But St. Paul told us in last Tuesday's Mass Reading:

Do not allow yourself to be called 'teacher' There is only Teacher, the Christ'. Outside the town there was the Workhouse. And 4 of our nuns went there in 1895, followed by more, to our Sacred Heart Convent. They nursed the poor and fed them and sometimes the boarders went there and entertained them with music and a tea-party and cheered their hearts. Sr. Brendan McEneaney had a room there still called after her.

In 1897 a lace class began. We did not start the craft but saved it from extinction. It still thrives -'though not in the Convent. Women in from the country learning the stitches and continuing to ply the needle at home in poor light - candle or oil-lamp and plenty of smoke in the kitchen: A great bleaching brought out the work of art
The good empowering with a sense of self-worth and a little money of my own.

And so the years rolled by and the 'vocations' rolled in' In the late 1940's and in the 50's and 60's we went to the developing world from Carrick and taught and nursed and helped instil the christian Faith, not forgetting the craft, 'though not the lace' Empowering women from that side of our globe'
Sr.Chrysostom from Carrick was one of the very first to go there. She was Sheila Daly, daughter of 'Red' Daly of the Shercock Road the house is still there.

I was educated in Carrick and I went there too, from Magheraclone, to our own Teacher Training College, and Sr. Sheila Finnegan from Donaghmoynne to nurse and teach in our Nursing Training School" we are backhome now, as are many others from further away, and we salute those who kept the home-fires burning all that time.

In the mid 60's the great Church Council was held in Rome -Vatican 2, and nothing was ever the same since for nuns! Our lifestyle changed and we moved more among people' and, as one journalist put it "we kicked the habit"
There was an emphasis on personal responsibility as never before.

A slight poem written by one of us describes a humbler calling to a less powerful way of being less noticed, less 'important', less visible. The title says it all -Who Do We Think We Are?

Instead of 'classroom only' or 'hospital only'
there has come about a flowering of ministry.
It may be worth your while to take a look at these details

Here are our actual activities in Carrick today.
I would love to bring you through them but for time
What one of us is doing, all of us are doing.
Each one carries out her ministry
in the name of the whole community here
and in the name of the whole of St.Louis.

We are, of course, 'unprofitable servants'.
We come now to the real EmPowerment :
With contemplative prayer grounding our life,
we make a free choice to free ourselves
from persons, possessions and power'
in order to work at whatever presents itself
as needing to be done,
for love of God and neighbour'

And now I end with a few questions about the Empowerment of Women and about the Future :
Who is your favourite female world-figure of today?
How do you see the future of SSL in Carrick?

What remains to be achieved in the empowerment of women

- In the home? (domestic violence)
- In politics? (women to go forward)
- In the Church? (decision-making)
- In business? (equal pay for equal work)

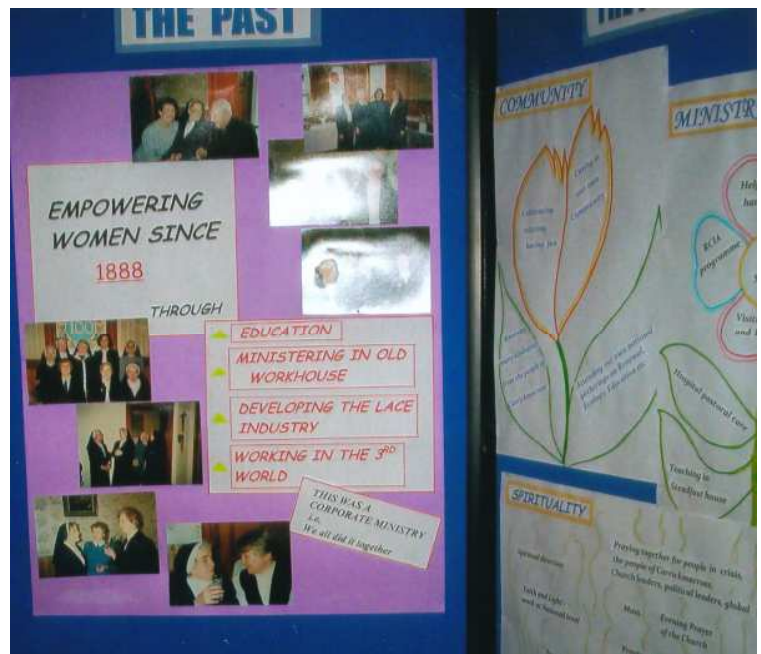
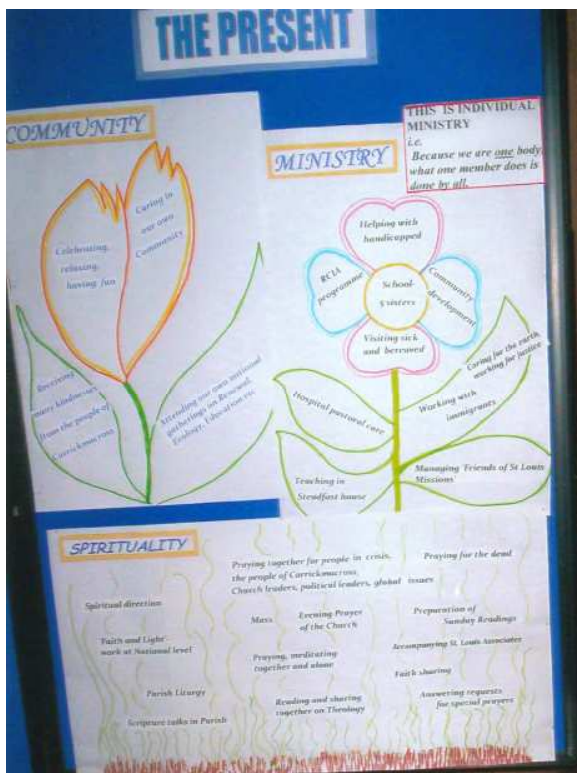
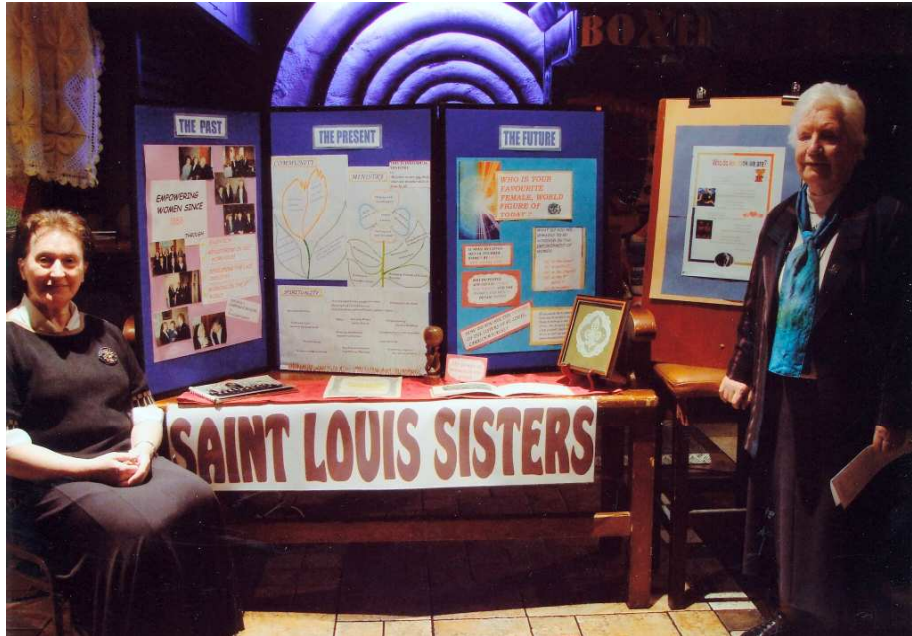
How do you feel when you see pictures on your TV screen of almost any Summit Meeting
And notice that the men outnumber the women by about 100 to 1? Why is this ratio so poor?
why do people always say 'men and women' and not 'women and men,?

Note : If you would like to enquire from us about any aspect of these ministries or any aspect of
Our way of life, or would like to be a nun yourself, speak to any one of us or visit our website
[www. stlouissisters. org](http://www.stlouissisters.org).

Oh! And by the way -Macdara sends you her love, Macdara of the Arran Islands, and Maddie, and Marie
and Rita and Bernadette -our community leaders, and Brid the whist-player, Maureen, Margaret and Enda from
Iona House ; Ann, Pauline from Plas Fionnbara ; Olivia of Wimbledon and Pia of Manchester United and Bridin of
the birds; Sheila and Sheila and cousin Mairead ; Majella of the coffee mornings ; Christine who has empowered

generations of musicians; Marie de Paul the Luxembourg Lady and Mary, big friend of a dog called Gypsy, Monica and Mary Jo, who, I hope has kept within her allotted 10 minutes for this talk. Thank you !


Here are some photographs of the display used during the talks.





Who do we think we are?


To know our place
In time and space,
To know ourselves beloved, be-graced.



To sit with old,
To walk with young,
To dry some tears and have some fun.



To love and love
And yet be chaste;
For things of prayer a deeper taste.

Let God be God,
Let us be human.
In things of faith we're catechumen.



To love the earth,
To turn a pun -
And that's to be a 'Louis nun'.

For heaven's sake
Don't be so serious.
We bow before the great mysterious.

~Mary Jo.Hand.

