

More than a year ago, a small group of people got together because they wanted to play their part in building a better world. Pope Francis' call in *'Laudato Si'* (May 2015) for Care of Our Common Home resonated with them, and they have come up with two exciting projects in response. The first is *Loving Sister Earth* and the second is *The Story of Love*.

Loving Sister Earth draws its inspiration from the Holy Places of Ireland. As Blessed John Henry Newman stated, *'Our monasteries are a storehouse of the past and a birthplace of the future.'* The project is to network Ireland's ancient monastic sites, holy wells and places of pilgrimage and so create what someone happily named 'a national prayer-grid'! Organisers of celebrations at our shrines are being invited to focus on Pope Francis' call for prayer for Creation.

Loving Sister Earth invites us also to concrete action for the care of our Common Home. Ireland's Holy Sites offer a good place to begin an Irish response to Pope Francis' appeal, with their earth, water, stone and landscape. They are rich with the prayer of the generations that have gone before us: there is an energy stored there on which we can draw at this critical time. The website lovingsisterearth.com is a useful resource for participating shrines.

The Story of Love, composed by Irish musician Willie Hughes, expresses in art form the love that unites Creation, People and the Divine. It is a sacred concert which traces a human love story within the context of the divine drama of love, which began with creation. The show culminates in a crescendo in which choirs, live streamed from across the world, engage the audience in singing *'We Believe It's All About Love'*. This expression of global solidarity proclaims to the world that love is stronger than greed, that mutual concern can win out against aggressive self-interest, and that the 'civilisation of love', which is the Kingdom of God, is attainable.

The world premiere of *The Story of Love* will be staged in the newly-renovated Basilica at Knock, Co Mayo, on the evenings of 15/16 October 2016, and will be live streamed globally. During daylight hours on the same days, Creative Prayer Rituals will also be live streamed from some of the Holy Places of Ireland. Thus the two projects are closely connected. Their single intention is to open the hearts of participants to the wonder of creation and redemption, leading to a more loving relationship with Earth and its peoples. *The Story of Love* will go on tour in the US and elsewhere from next year onward: the website is storyofloveshow.com.

These events offer a feast for soul and spirit. They will foster a national sense of love and concern for Planet Earth and its peoples, and will inspire others at home and abroad to explore what they can do in their turn to bring about a conversion of heart to God, to our neighbour, and to our Common Home.

Shortly before dying of cancer, the daughter of one of the group members said to her mother: 'I believe it's all about love!' She meant that love was at the heart of human life. This little phrase, treasured by the family, catches up Pope Francis' thinking. For Him we are all infinitely loved by God; in return we are to love one another and all of

creation, and to show this love in prayer and action. He has announced that September 1 will be celebrated annually as 'World Day of Prayer for Creation'. *Loving Sister Earth* means that in Ireland this prayer for Creation will extend throughout the year, every year. We believe Pope Francis will be pleased!

Tickets for 'The Story of Love' are €38.50 & €28.50, available from TICKETMASTER, Knock Shrine Information Centre (opposite Parish Church) & Knock Shrine Book Shop.

The beautiful scenery at St Patrick's Well, Clonmel