

With the call to mission lingering in their hearts, a former Derry Youth Community member and her Italian husband are preparing to launch...

Carnhill time of prayer and Adoration for an inspired synodal journey



Luca and Seanan Zaltron with their young son.

FORMER Derry Youth Community member, Seanan Cregan and her husband, Luca Zaltron, are looking forward to playing their part in the Synodal process that has been launched by Pope Francis for the Catholic Church worldwide this month, when they launch a monthly holy hour in St Brigid's Church, Carnhill, for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit amongst the parishioners there as they journey in faith with their curate, Fr Gerard Mongan.

Now living just outside Derry with Luca and their two-year-old son, 26-year-old Seanan's connection with Fr Gerard goes back to her Thornhill College days, when he was the school chaplain there.

It has been a family tradition to worship in St Brigid's Church, Carnhill, down through the years, and it has played a special role in nourishing Seanan in the faith that she and Luca give thanks for every day.

Seanan's love of sharing and encouraging others to grow in the Catholic faith is what drew her to spend time ministering with the Derry Youth Community, and it was during this period in her life that she first met her future husband. Along with

leaving the DYC, Seanan had spent two years on the staff of Net Ministries Ireland and brought her experience of this mission work to the Malta ministry. This included doing street missions as part of an evangelisation project that involved a copy of the Turin Shroud, which had touched the original shroud of Christ.

Founded by Elena Vaccaretti and her husband, Luciano Baron, the Abraham Community celebrated its 30th anniversary back in 2019, which included a private audience with Pope Francis in Rome. And amongst its members are other former members of the Derry Youth Community, Sebastiano Pellizzari, Emmanuele Bicego, and Micaela Dani.

Born near Venice, Luca first experienced the Abraham Community when he was 14 years old, at a time when he was beginning to ask questions about the Catholic faith and becoming disengaged with it.

Joy

"Seeing so many people of all ages, from babies to elderly, at the prayer gatherings and their joy in celebrating their faith impressed me so much that I just kept coming back," recalled Luca.

He added: "I then got involved as a missionary while studying at university. I first came to Ireland in 2012, when I was 18, which was before I had met Seanan.

"I was with a group invited over to do mission work by Bishop Donal, who has had a long relationship with the Abraham Community. He was Auxiliary Bishop in the Diocese of Down & Connor at that time. We visited different parts of the country and did some mission work, such as retreats, in parishes".

Looking back on this now, the 27-year-old can see the Hand of God in his meeting and marrying Seanan, with them now settled into family life within the Derry Diocese since 2019.

"Having both been on a

missionary journey helped us to understand the call that God had for us," reflected Luca, adding: "Pope Francis said in 'Evangelii Gaudium', 'All of us are asked to obey His call to go forth from our own comfort zone in order to reach all the peripheries in need of the light of the Gospel'" (20).

Recalling her first impression of the Community when she attended its annual conference, Seanan said: "I saw it as a lot of people and families that made up a big family. I see the community as one in which people have found a home".

A private association of the faithful that is recognised by the Holy See, the Abraham Community has spread to other countries, such as Spain and Switzerland, and provides a service to the Church and its dioceses.

A warm welcome is extended to whoever would like to come along for the time of prayer and Eucharistic Adoration following the 6 pm Mass in St Brigid's

Church, Carnhill, on Saturday, October 30, when Bishop Donal will be present to give his support.

Sharing his thoughts on the Abraham Community with 'The Net', Bishop Donal remarked: "The Church has been blessed in every generation with groupings of lay faithful who feel called to be missionaries in their own time. The Society of St Vincent de Paul was set up by a young student and the Legion of Mary was another lay movement. Some of these initiatives stayed as parts of the lay apostolate - while others eventually became religious congregations. And some movements have lay, consecrated and ordained members.

"I came to know the Abraham Community from the North of Italy about 10 years ago. They are a group of passionate laity, led by a married couple and supported by a priest. They focus on prayer to the Holy Spirit, Eucharistic Adoration and actively sharing the Gospel, especially with young people.

"A few years ago, they had felt a call to offer a presence in Derry. But God had other plans! Now, through the strange ways of Divine providence, a former member of our Derry Youth Community, Seanan Cregan married a member of the Abramo Community, Luca Zaltron. And she brought him back to live in her native diocese of Derry.

"They have been discerning how to minister here, and have felt called to begin a regular prayer meeting to ask that the Holy Spirit will guide the Diocese in its discernment of God's will for us.

"I am delighted at this new shoot of prayer and witness in the Diocese. God is always leading his people, and that generally happens through passionate young people. I really hope that this can be the beginning of yet another great work of God here as we seek to bring divine mercy and healing to the people of our day".

For further information on the Abraham Community, check out its website at www.youhope.it

Derry Choir Festival 'Reawakening Voices'

THE Derry International Choir Festival's 'Reawakening Voices' Community Programme, gets underway on Saturday, October 23, with a Community Forum via Zoom, starting at 10 am.

Later in the day, at 4.30 pm, is the 'Let's Just Sing' event in the Foyle Arena, and at 9 pm is the ceremony of Hymns of Remembrance & Hope in St Eugene's Cathedral.

There will also be various Choral Trails from October 20-24.

