

*I believe in the sun,  
even when it is not  
shining.  
I believe in love,  
even when I do not  
feel it.  
I believe in God,  
even when He is  
silent.*

Scrawled on a  
cellar wall in Cologne  
which was bombed in  
World War II

the Catholic

MOTHER

THE UNION OF CATHOLIC MOTHERS NEWSPAPER



[www.theucm.org.uk](http://www.theucm.org.uk)

Summer edition 2008

## National Welfare and Study Day

**T**HE subject chosen this year was the fast growing international crime of Human trafficking. This subject was shared by four speakers, who spoke passionately and sincerely from their own knowledge and experience of this evil, cruel and barbaric process.

We first heard from, David De Verny, an Ecumenical Chaplain working with immigrant workers.

Our second speaker was Sister Ann-Teresa the founder of The Medaille Trust. Sister began by telling us how she and many other religious communities had become involved with trying to fight this terrible menace. At first there were a series of national and international conferences held, that high lighted this growing evil, and everyone was asking, How can we help? What can we do?

Although most of you must have some idea of what human trafficking is all about, I feel it is well worth giving you a rather long, and detailed definition.

Trafficking in human beings means the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons using threat, force, coercion, fraud, deception, or abuse of power by payments, to achieve the consent of control over a person, for the purpose of exploitation. Which in simple terms means subjecting fellow human beings to slavery, whether as in forced labour, prostitution, and many other forms of servitude, including the removal of organs. Treating people as commodities, where there is sadly, because of dire poverty in third world countries, an endless supply, of willing vulnerable people!

How very sad that when we have just been cele-



Delegates listen intently to the excellent speakers

brating the 200 years of The Abolition of the Slave trade, that this diabolical trade has become spread worldwide, and throughout every country, not only in major cities but in towns and villages too.

We all must have heard of some of the harrowing stories that victims of the trafficking have told, the lucky few who have managed to escape the relentless tyranny of the traffickers.

Sister told us a few of the stories of young people she has met through her work with The Medaille Trust. To illustrate her talk we were shown a short film, the fields of Mudan, which showed how easy a young child can be taken by traffickers and exploited. It was quite harrowing. The parents, or young people themselves, agree to travel with the traffickers having been deceived into believing they are going to a better life, where eventually they will be able to help their families, or to the offer of good well-paid jobs. As soon as they arrive, the picture changes, they are prisoners, trapped in an unknown country, unable to speak the language, and with no one to turn to for help. They are often beaten and punished, and warned that they will suffer if they do not cooperate with their handlers. They are often sold on to other people, and so the weak links they had with their homes are broken.

The Medaille Trust was set up to alert people to trafficking, and to help any victims that might escape. Unfortunately, the victims are often too scared to help themselves, and are filled with horror stories of what might happen to them in the



Sister Ann-Teresa the founder of The Medaille Trust

hands of the police, so that they do not try to get away.

However, by highlighting these peoples plight, with support from the government, the police have undertaken to break into these illegal brothels, and rescue the girls, who are often quite young. The children are taken care of by social services, but the adults often are so frightened that they will not help the police by being witnesses, and often chose to stay with the traffickers.

However, some of those who are rescued are cared for by the sisters of the Medaille Trust, who have safe houses where they are offered help for physical and psychological healing and rehabilitation. Alas, there are not enough safe houses for all who need their help, but the number of safe houses are increasing as the work gets known, and thanks to the generosity of kind benefactors.

Our third speaker was Chief Inspector Nick Kinsella, who heads the National Centre based in Sheffield, dealing with Human traffic.

He told us how the concern for these people has grown and grown. Thanks to government grants, raids have been organised and many people rescued. On one occasion fifty-five police authorities were involved with a combined operation, but they have a huge problem to contend with, and financing these operations causes difficulties. But they are certainly aware of what is going on, and have made all the police forces aware of what is happening and what help is available. Because of the language difficulty, they have now got ipods with

recorded messages in at least 10 different languages, explaining to the victims how they can get help, and what is going to happen to them.

When a raid takes place, women officers are used in plain clothes to help the women to be less afraid, as they sometimes greatly fear the police uniforms. Again progress is being made, but because of the magnitude of the trafficking taking place, so far they have only been able to touch the tip of the iceberg.

The police are very willing to work with any organisation, such as The Medaille Trust and CHASTE, who are trying to help these people. They fully support advertisements in the form of posters and leaflets being distributed everywhere trying to warn vulnerable people of the dangers.

Finally, Brother Michael Newman from the Order of St John of God, gave a beautiful reflection on what we had heard which was comforting and uplifting. He said, above all we must place these unfortunate brothers and sisters in God's loving care.

Please pray for them, and their oppressors, and if you are able give support to the charities that are trying to help the victims.

Brother Michael works with The Medaille Trust, and is responsible for the managerial side of running the safe houses, looking after the finances, maintenance, and staffing needs.

*Ruth Greaves  
Diocesan Study Officer,  
Archdiocese of Southwark*



Brother Michael Newman (Brother of St John of God) works with The Medaille Trust



Chief Inspector Nick Kinsella, who heads the National Centre based in Sheffield, dealing with Human traffic

### Welcome to Angela Batey National Secretary

**N**OT long after having my first baby, I joined St Margaret Mary's UCM, where I have been a member for about 37 years.

Eventually I became Foundation Vice President and then Foundation President, learning many new skills particularly in the catering department, as during the time I have been a member we have catered for just about every occasion you can think of including two Ordinations to which 400-500 people were invited. St Margaret Mary's has a very active Concert Party and over the years we have raised lots of money for various causes; we have also enjoyed ourselves a great deal whilst taking part in pantomimes, sketches, reviews etc. We meet weekly and have speakers, demonstrations, retreats and never miss a Diocesan Bi-monthly Mass, sometimes we just like to have a good chat and a laugh with each other. Our chaplain is very encouraging and supportive. Currently we have 52 members.

After I had finished my term as Foundation President, I became the Minuting Secretary to the Archdiocesan committee. This role also



included writing the weekly UCM "Mum's the Word" column for the then Liverpool Archdiocesan Newspaper the Catholic Pictorial, not that I knew anything about writing newspaper columns, but an extremely supportive Editor, Norman Cresswell was very helpful. As long I sent something in, he would always give whatever I submitted a little tweak if needed. After that I was elected to the office of Diocesan Treasurer, I managed to keep Diocese solvent, and a few years later I was elected as Archdiocesan President. Many interesting and enjoyable events took place during my term of office, but most interesting of all was visiting the Foundations, meeting the members and seeing at first hand the work undertaken in the parishes by UCM members.

I was appointed Public Service Officer on National Committee, amongst the tasks was looking at legislation that affects family life! Wow. The first time an invitation arrived to the Houses of Parliament to a lunch where the discussion was about Euthanasia, and 'the right to decide' I was terrified but I went, again I learned a lot. There were other seminars, 'Teenage Pregnancy', 'Influence of violent television/film scenes on children' etc. 'Marriage and Families' 'Sex Education in Schools' all this information was passed back to Diocesan Officers and hopefully reached Foundation Members.

Currently I am coming to the end of my term of office, as Secretary to the Walsingham Sub Committee, which has been an honour and great pleasure. I feel that the Walsingham Pilgrimage is such an important part of being in the UCM as it allows us to come together in prayer and socially, as a National organisation.

Having been elected to the position of National Secretary, I hope this post is as enjoyable as the others have been and I look forward to working with you all.

Please, if Foundation, Diocese or National needs new officers do not be afraid of taking on the challenge. Yes, it means giving up a bit

of your time but it is well worth it, look at all the new skills you will acquire, all the people you get to meet, and the new friends you make both locally and from across the country. Membership of The Union of Catholic Mothers give us an excellent opportunity to care and support other members and their families, it enables us to give witness to our faith, and provides us with an opportunity to come together in prayer and socially, as a local and national organisation.

### Goodbye and Thank You to Anne Gallagher retiring National Secretary

**ON BEHALF** of all members of The Union of Catholic Mothers, we would like to thank you for all your hard work over the past five years. As any secretary at any level knows, it is a very demanding and time consuming job and you have been a wonderful ambassador for our organisation.

We wish you every happiness and joy in your well earned retirement and hope to see you often at National Council and Walsingham.

*With much love from everyone. xx*

