

Stir the Embers! Advent Talks in Dublin

Every week families, young adults, priests, nuns and lay people came together from different parts of the city to live a moment of sharing, a family gathering which would prepare their hearts for the coming of Christmas.

Three main topics made up the core of the whole program aimed at reviving our commitment to be Love and to spread it to others. The first topic highlighted the question: **“God became Man, can we become God?”** and lead us to understand God’s personal love for each one of us: His presence in the Eucharist, in His word, in our neighbour and in the depths of our heart. A love waiting for an answer!

The second theme was quite thought provoking too: **“The poor will always be with us... (Matt 26, 11) How are they among us today?”** Together we were able to explore Pope Francis’ thoughts in his Apostolic Exhortation - *Evangelii Gaudium* regarding his vision of economy and the poor. Chiara’s idea of the Economy of Communion shed further light as to how we can help solve poverty in the world. December’s Word of Life was a striking answer to all of this with its invitation to make and share a Bundle so as not to *“accumulate many things thinking that one day they could be useful, but in the meantime there are people nearby who need them urgently”*. The “Bring and Share Bazaar” launched at the end of the programme was, needless to say, greatly welcomed by all, a timely action for the needy of our city.

The third and last theme was entirely dedicated to the family. Chiara Lubich’s talk to the Families in Lucerne, Switzerland in 1999 made us see it with the eyes of God while answering some of our pressing questions as to how we can make it possible for Jesus to be present in *our* families. Pope Francis’ straightforward and concrete recipe for a happy, long lasting relationship in marriage, when answering three questions set to him by couples on St. Valentine’s Day, simply won our hearts.

All the themes were interlaced with concrete experiences lived locally by members of the Focolare Movement giving that distinctive flavour of a love that is slowly being enculturated in our city giving hope for a better future.