

## **REFLECTING ON MY EXPERIENCE OF THE EMMAUS JOURNEY IN WEST CORK**

*“The heavens are yours; the earth also is yours; the world and all it contains, and you have founded them.” Psalm 89:11*

From October 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>, I went on an amazing journey. Due to some indescribable experiences I had, I was prompted to ask the question, “Lord how wonderful is your creation?”

For me, the most interesting experience was the time that I spent in the presence of the sea. I got a chance to stand and walk, feel and listen to the Wild Atlantic Way in the mornings and evenings. As I stood in the vastness of nature, I felt that I was standing in the “Cathedral of God” that connects everybody in this world. A very significant thought from Br. Martin – “sky, earth, sea and everything that God creates unites everything” – helped me to have a new understanding of God’s creation. This was the most memorable experience for me because I really found meaning while I reflected and prayed in nature – particularly so close to the sea.

I also had some other ‘God moments’ while on this journey, especially climbing Knockomagh. The climb was filled with mountains, valleys, uphill and downhill, bends and narrow paths. As we walked these paths, at times I got tired and slowed down. But every single time, there was always support from our group, which encouraged me. This made me realise and feel that God is always with me to lift me up and carry me along on my life journey.

This Emmaus journey to West Cork taught me a lot, especially how marvellous nature is, and how we can find God in nature. I also learned that there will always be difficulties in our life’s journey too; since, during our experience, I faced lots of easy and enjoyable times, but also some challenging moments. However, God was present in both. Finally, I got an opportunity to reflect on the question for myself - “How am I going to personally take care of God’s beautiful creation?”

I think this journey was very helpful for me to connect with my reflections on “**Laudato Si**” published by Pope Francis. St. Francis of Assisi reminds us that “our common home is like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us”. I can now clearly understand this statement. How can I not care for the earth and all of creation, when I’m connected intimately with everything around me? “What kind of nature I am going to hand over to the next generation” is what challenges me most from “Laudato Si”.

Pope Francis writes "We are not God. The Earth was here before us and was given to us." May God teach me to discover the worth of each thing, to be filled with awe and contemplation, to recognize that I am profoundly united with every creature, and that all is a gift.