I attended a workshop on family ministry directed by Bairbre Cahill in October 2015. I was attracted by the title – ‘God among the pots and pans – a phrase coined by the great Carmelite saint Teresa of Avila whose fifth centenary of her birth was celebrated in 2015. I was interested in hearing the perspective on faith and evangelisation in the context of the modern family offered by a young wife and mother and how I as a priest, could support the family as the domestic church - the first place where our Christian faith is handed on and practised. In my head, I knew that modern family life is different to what I knew it to be growing up in the 70’s and 80’s but here was an opportunity to learn about it from someone who lives the reality every day.

I was not disappointed. In a lively workshop, Bairbre helped us to see how God is truly to be found ‘among the pots and pans’ in the ordinary and everyday life of a busy family. What struck me most was how concepts we often hear as abstractions at Mass are in fact realities that are concretised in modern family life. Take for example our faith in the incarnation where God became really present in human life through his Son Jesus Christ. In the family, this is experienced as presence, service, physical connection, the wonder of children, the gift of sexuality, etc. Another example is how the Paschal mystery of Christ is experienced in the family as moments of death and resurrection - the death of loved ones, ongoing illness, job loss, depression, children leaving home and worry. On the side of resurrection, life is born anew as encouragement, listening, support, hugs, grandchildren and the joy of being together as a family. We also explored how family prayer time and meal times are preludes to the wider parish gathering of Eucharist where a family of families meet to pray and share a sacred meal.

The workshop helped me appreciate how the Eucharist is truly both ‘source and summit’ (Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, 11) of Christian family life. Perhaps we think more of what we can take home from the Eucharist and apply in daily life.  Bairbre helped us appreciate how the rhythms and events of family life flow towards the Eucharist and make it all the more meaningful.

I am delighted to endorse the work of Bairbre and promote it through this website. I am convinced that her workshop and ministry is helping hundreds of people to appreciate ‘the vocation and mission of the family in the Church and in the contemporary world’. It was a happy coincidence that this was the title of the Synod on the family that was taking place in Rome at the time of Bairbre’s workshop that I attended last October. Her insights into Christian family life are entirely consistent with those expressed in ‘Amoris Laetitia’ where Pope Francis summarises the fruit of the Synod on the family and emphasises once again, the central place of the family in the life of the Church.

In advance of the World Meeting of Families that will take place in Ireland in August 2018, the ministry of Bairbre is needed and deserves our full support.

Fr Billy Swan,

St Aidan’s Cathedral,

Enniscorthy.