



**DARING TO HOPE:
Irish Religious Sisters Embracing the Unknown 1923-2023**

Photographic Exhibition Final Report

The Coordinating group of the photographic exhibition *Daring to Hope: Irish Religious Sisters Embracing the Unknown 1923-2023*, are pleased to share their reflections on the exhibition throughout 2023-4.

The dream of the group of five women – Deirdre O’Sullivan, Toni Pyke, Srs Denise Boyle fmdm, Teresa Devine fma and Ann Gray ssc – was to share the social her-story of Irish religious sisters who left their homes, their families, their friends, their security, to follow their Gospel calling. Conscious that this was a Kairos moment, they wanted to share through the exhibition, spanning a 100-year period, the commitment and courage of sisters who inspired by the Spirit, and despite the social, political and canonical restrictions, travelled to all corners of the earth.

The exhibition reflects how religious sisters navigated their lives as doctors, nurses, teachers, entrepreneurs, activists, ecologists, scientists and more, to support those at the margins. Captured through the photos is how religious sisters transformed and embraced changing times within religious life from 1923 until the present day. The 100-year journey is shared through three distinct eras: **Pioneering Ministries** (1923-1966), **Era of Great Change** (1967-2000) and **Ongoing Ministries** (2001-2023) as lived out in Ireland and overseas, in response to the ‘Cry of Earth and the Cry of the Poor’ (Laudate Si 49).

In October 2023, Caoimhe de Barra, CEO Trocaire launched the exhibition in Iveagh House, at the Department of Foreign Affairs. Following the launch, the group took the exhibition to Kylemore Abbey, then Cuan Mhuire and subsequently around Ireland. They exhibited it in venues that included colleges, universities and parishes and at the invitation of the Irish Ambassador to the Holy See, Frances Collins, it was taken to Rome for the celebration of the feast of St. Brigid in February. The exhibition has been widely praised throughout its 14-month journey among the thousands of people who came to view it. The final public showing of the exhibition will be hosted at the Cathedral of Saint Patrick and Saint Felim in Co Cavan the weekend of January 17-19 January 2025.

The exhibition was made possible through the generosity and kindness of many religious congregations who provided photographs, videos, financial support and accommodation. Our gratitude extends to friends, professionals, and many organisations, who through their various contributions made the dream a reality!

The website www.DaringtoHope.ie provides the opportunity for many more to view it online. This website will continue to be updated and there are plans to prepare a teaching resource. We encourage you to explore the website and to join us on the journey through the Jubilee Year of Hope, to embrace a destination yet to unfold. Our prayer is that the story of Irish religious sisters as shared through the exhibition, offers hope to future generations, to follow their own Gospel call to service.

Toni Pyke and Denise Boyle on behalf of the exhibition Coordinating Group.