



The Sheaf



ST. JOSEPH'S YOUNG PRIESTS SOCIETY

www.stjosephsyoungpriestsociety.com

23 MERRION SQUARE, DUBLIN 2, IRELAND, D02 XE02. TELEPHONE: DUBLIN 676 2593

AUTUMN 2015

A Reflection by Bill O'Shaughnessy

I was about eight years old and my father and grandmother brought me, along with my younger brother on a trip to Knock Shrine in Co Mayo. As soon as I saw the great statues in the Apparition Chapel I got a strange feeling of becoming aware of whom they were. The reality of what and who I was looking at struck me. That night after returning home, I had a curious dream about our local Church in Kilkea, Co Kildare, and the following morning after I woke up I had this powerful sense and urge that I had to become a priest. So started my vocation for the priesthood! For many years prayer was a very strong part of my life, and especially during my teenage years, as I spent many lunch-time breaks in a small chapel in Knockbeg College, Co Carlow. I had always felt a closeness to God throughout my years in Knockbeg. As the leaving cert arrived, however, the thought of priesthood waned into the background and University began!

Ironically, the subject I wanted to study the most was theology and I found myself studying it in Maynooth for five years. The reason was not to be a priest, but to teach theology. However, in the summer of 2011, as I was finishing up a Masters in Theology, which was funnily enough on the Apparition of Knock, the idea of priesthood flooded back into my mind and was stronger than ever before. I was torn between continuing to study a PhD or enter Seminary. I had to make a decision. And decide I did. It was in August of 2011 when I came back to Maynooth, to begin my discernment in the Seminary. I can honestly say that deciding to come back to Maynooth as a seminarian was the best decision I ever made. I have never felt unhappy; yes there have been bumps in the road, but never enough to sway me from the goal of priesthood. With the level of prayer and support from those around me, my family and friends, and indeed organisations like the St Joseph's Young Priests Society; it makes the journey through seminary that bit easier.

So after two fantastic years in Maynooth, I was asked by Archbishop Diarmuid Martin to go to the Irish College in Rome, to finish out the remainder of my time in Seminary. It has been a very interesting experience living in the Irish College since August



Bill O'Shaughnessy. The Pontifical Irish College Rome in the background.

2013. Life is very different to Maynooth but I love living in Rome. There is an assortment of reasons why. First, I am a major history buff, having studied a year of Greek and Roman Classical Studies and completing a degree in History, to live in the city where so much began, and to walk past the Colosseum every day going to class gives me goose bumps! Sometimes I have to pinch myself to make sure it is real! When I get some time off I spend much of it climbing like a mountain goat over the ruins of Ancient Rome, be it on the Via Appia Antica or the Ostia Antica. Each time it feels like a new experience of awe and wonder. Secondly, to be in such close proximity with the Universal side to the Church is a very refreshing and uplifting experience. I have gained so much from listening to the other students and priests in Rome of their lives and both troubles and joys of the Church in their countries. Of course having met Pope Francis one-to-one on Pentecost in June of 2014 was a real highlight for me. Being so close to the Holy Father is very special. It is something that I will treasure for life. I am currently in my final year of a Licence in Dogmatic Theology in the Gregorian University and I am looking forward to the day of ordination so as to return to Ireland to serve Christ and the people of the Dublin Archdiocese.

One very important point I would like to add is, that throughout my time as a

seminarian, I have had a very strong sense of prayer coming from other people. The thought of knowing someone is praying for me is a very encouraging and powerful thought. Saint Joseph's Young Priests Society is to me, almost like a battery of prayer that enables people like me to keep going. In a world where money and material wealth is so common, prayer is by far the most important support anyone can give to someone like me. The strength of prayer cannot be underestimated. My gratitude to those who pray for seminarians is second to none. I thank and pray for the members and benefactors, for their support and continued prayer. Remember Jesus' words; 'And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones, because he is my disciple, I assure you, he will not go unrewarded'. (Matthew 10:42).



*T*hank you for your constant support to the Redemptorist Seminarians.

In gratitude I send you my first Priestly Blessing.

G. V. D.
Rev. Fr. Gilbert V. Dandoy, C.Ss.R.
Ordained Priest
June 1, 2015

Our Mother Perpetual Help Church, Cebu City

Pope Francis's Holy Year of Mercy

Pope Francis on Saturday, 11 April, presented the official Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, set to begin on 8 December 2015. The bull is the fundamental document for the Holy Year that outlines the overall spirit and intentions for the Jubilee, as well as the spiritual fruits that are hoped for.

The 28-page bull, titled *Misericordiae Vultus* or 'The Face of Mercy' opens with the declaration, 'Jesus is the face of the Father's mercy. These words might well sum up the mystery of the Christian faith.'

In the document, Pope Francis says the Holy Year is 'dedicated to living out in our daily lives the mercy' which God 'constantly extends to all of us'. He explains the year will begin on 8 December to commemorate both the feast of the Immaculate Conception and the 50th anniversary of the closing of the Second Vatican Council, which called the Church to proclaim the Gospel to the world in new ways, bringing God's mercy to everyone.

After the Holy Door of St Peter's is opened on December 8, the Holy Doors of the other paper basilicas will be opened in subsequent days. As well, as a sign of communion of the whole Church, the pope has requested that every diocese in the world open a similar 'Door of Mercy' for the local celebrations of the Jubilee.

The document develops three main themes:

- First, Pope Francis elaborates the theological understanding of God's mercy, explaining the role of mercy in the life of people and of the Church, who are both the beneficiaries and the witnesses to God's mercy in the world.
- 'The mercy of God is not an abstract idea, but a concrete reality through which he reveals his love as that of a father or a mother, moved to the very depths out of love for their child,' the Pope writes.
- 'Mercy is the very foundation of the Church's life,' he continues. 'The Church's very credibility is seen in how she shows merciful and compassionate love.'

He recalls that the motto of the Holy Year is 'Merciful like the Father.'

'Wherever the Church is present, the mercy of the Father must be evident,' he writes. 'Wherever there are Christians, everyone should find an oasis of mercy.'

As a second theme, the Pope offers practical ways to live well the Holy Year: go on pilgrimage as an 'impetus to conversion'; do not judge or condemn but forgive and give, avoiding gossip, envy and jealousy; have a heart open to the fringes of society and bring consolation, mercy and solidarity to people who live in precarious situations; take up the corporal and spiritual acts of mercy with joy; and observe the '24 Hours for the Lord' initiative, which encourages prayer and the sacrament of reconciliation, in every diocese during Lent.

He also addresses confessors, encouraging them to be 'authentic signs of the Father's mercy'. And, during Lent of the Holy

Year, the Pope says he will send out 'Missionaries of Mercy' - priests to whom he will grant 'the authority to pardon even those sins reserved to the Holy See.' They will be 'living signs of the Father's readiness to welcome those in search of his pardon,' he writes.

As a third theme, the Pope issues particular calls for justice and conversion. He asks members of criminal organisations and those involved in corruption to change their lives and to embrace God's mercy.

He also notes that both Judaism and Islam 'consider mercy to be one of God's most important attributes.' And he expresses 'trust that this Jubilee...will foster an encounter' with these and other religions that will 'open us to even more fervent dialogue' toward greater knowledge and understanding, 'eliminate every form of closed-mindedness and disrespect and drive out every form of violence and discrimination.'

He also recalls the relationship between justice and mercy as 'two dimensions of a single reality that...culminates in the fullness of love.'

'God does not deny justice,' he continues. 'He rather envelopes it and surpasses it with an even greater event (mercy) in which we experience love as the foundation of true justice.'

The Holy Year will conclude on November 20, 2016, on the feast of Christ the King.

To read the Bull of Indiction for the Year of Mercy please click visit <http://tinyurl.com/pqgwfaz> or scan the qr code.



CORPORAL WORKS OF MERCY

- To feed the hungry
- To give drink to the thirsty
- To clothe the naked
- To visit the imprisoned
- To shelter the homeless
- To visit the sick
- To bury the dead

SPIRITUAL WORKS OF MERCY

- To admonish the sinner
- To instruct the ignorant
- To counsel the doubtful
- To comfort the sorrowful
- To bear wrongs patiently
- To forgive offences
- To pray for the living and the dead



At a Cloyne Diocesan Meeting in Mallow attended by members from the several branches in the diocese, V Rev Fr Donal Broderick on behalf of the Society presented Fr Patrick O'Donoghue (Cobh) with a violet stole showing the logo of the Sheaf. (Pic: Joan Crowley, Fermoy Branch).

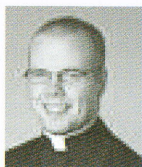
Saint Joseph would have been among the greatest fathers to ever take up the job. And like any good father he was surely clued in to what His son was going through. Aside from the Blessed Mother, there was no one who knew Jesus as well as St. Joseph. He knew Jesus inside and out and knew just what Jesus would need at any given time so that Jesus could one day step up to the altar of the cross and lay down His life for the world.

He is a fitting Patron for this Society, and may I suggest that St. Joseph speaks to your mission now more than ever? The priesthood is under threat and it needs your protection. And God, I am confident, has designs for you all to help in the renewal of the priesthood.

Much of the great work of the Society has focussed on the important task of raising funds for the formation of seminarians. But I propose to you that there are other areas of great need among priests which you are capable of addressing.

The first thing I can say is that among priests there is often a struggle with their identity. You no doubt have noticed a reluctance among some priests to wear their 'clerics' or to being called 'Father'. As priests, we're all too keenly aware of people's bad experiences with priests and we don't want your experience of us to be negative. So, some priests conclude, I won't identify myself with the priests of the past but will give people a new experience of me as an ordinary man.

This all sounds good, but hidden within this reasoning is a lie and a loss. The lie is that priesthood is an expression of power and harmful to people. And lost is the beautiful but distinctive friendship people can have with their priests. I hope that the people I serve will count me as a friend and not fear me or resent me. But I also hope that our friendship will be totally different because I'm a priest, and their priest. Even when it's done for seemingly good reasons, when we lose that identity of the priest and I try just to be 'Shane' with people, not only are we pretending the special Grace that God has given to us (priest and people) isn't there, but we miss the unique friendship that can develop between a priest and his people, a people and their priest.



This relates to a second struggle I can say exists among priests in this country: a struggle with the meaning of our priesthood. Priests can often forget the incredible and spiritual nature of their priesthood. You might have heard of the threefold structure of Jesus' unique priesthood: He is Priest, Prophet and King? We who are ordained as priests of Jesus Christ, are ordained to provide spiritual care for the people of God: guiding them with God's Holy Word (as prophets), introducing and strengthening in them in the Divine Life of God in the sacraments (as priests), and serving them by building them up (exercising the servant-kingship of Jesus).

But priests often operate, having forgotten the awesome scope of their vocation. Very few are ordained cynical, but many come to be that way. Often there are no visible results for all a young priest's efforts. In fact, looking around it seems that the cause of Christ is being defeated, despite all his zeal. He's confronted with the hard facts of his own sinful nature, too. And so, too many priests' initial idealism and fervour loses steam until eventually he settles for keeping the show on the road or winning the admiration of other priests or the affection of his people. He's lost the spiritual meaning of his priesthood.

Which brings us to the third thing priests struggle with: a crippling spirit of fear. If what a priest has become fundamentally concerned with is winning the esteem of his brother priests or the affection of his people or anything else besides living the priesthood of Jesus, then of course he will be susceptible to the spirit of fear! Why? Because if he comes across as too strong, too holy too passionate or challenging then he risks rejection or alienation.

Okay, so there are three struggles which the priests on our own doorstep face. Now, like St. Joseph, knowing these men and what they're going through, let's apply ourselves to giving them and the men who are coming up after them everything they need to be good priests, priests like Jesus Christ. Some of the things I'd like to encourage you to do are hands-on and practical, others are spiritual efforts. They're not exhaustive though. You may be able to think yourselves of other ways to build up priests.

- Thinking of the first struggle, the priest's struggle with his identity, can I suggest that you sometime thank a priest for wearing his clerics? And that you call your priests 'father' not like a title but indicating the privileged relationship which, again, is both a gift for you and for him?
- Thinking of the second and third struggle-the priest's struggle with the meaning of his priesthood and fear-the most important this here is to pray for your priests. Seriously, pray for your priests! For their protection from cynicism and for a deeper and more personal love of God and the Church. Such love drives out the spirit of fear.
- You might look for ways priests go out on a limb for God and give them a clap on the back for it. Or tell a priest who's taken a brave stand for the Gospel that you're with him and that we need to hear the truth, even if it's hard.
- Lastly, please strive for holiness yourselves! The truth is that the more you savour your faith and let it change you, the more it challenges priests to do the same. For ways to do this I happily recommend Eucharistic Adoration! Jesus transforms us powerfully there, as it is a continuation of what happens at the Mass.

I'm sure you're not, but you wouldn't be totally off base to think *Well, that's all fine and well, building up priests, but surely they have a long way to go themselves- building up us, their people!* You definitely wouldn't be wrong there. And if I got the chance to speak to a bunch of priests my talk would probably be much more down those lines. But today I address you all, a group of men and women who have committed yourselves to supporting priests. That's why I want to encourage you! Continue the good work you have faithfully done for so long in an age marked by many crises in the priesthood.

I am convinced the St. Joseph's Young Priest Society has never been more needed than right now! Thank you most sincerely! And may God bless you and all your work.

*Fr Shane Sullivan CC
Cathedral of the Assumption, Tuam*

Changes in the Society's charitable outreach (Over a 20-year period 1993/94 – 2013/14)

Students on our Charitable Register

	<i>Irish</i>	<i>Overseas</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Year to June 1994</i>	419	338	757
<i>Year to June 2014</i>	120	738	858

In accordance with an undertaking previously given to the Irish Episcopal Conference, no student in Ireland who has been admitted to an Irish seminary to study for ministry in Ireland as a priest will be deprived of financial support towards his fees so long as funds permit. This undertaking does not apply elsewhere.

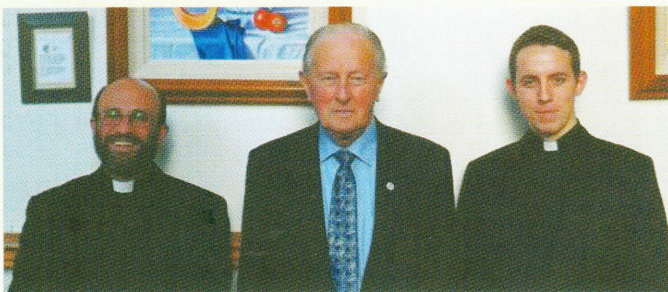
Prayer for the Year of Consecrated Life (Recommended by Archbishop Eamon Martin)

O God, we thank you for the witness of those among us who have chosen a vocation to the consecrated life.

Continue to inspire some of our sons and daughters to serve you as religious sisters, brothers and priests.

Show us your plans for the renewal of faith in Ireland and give us the grace we need to help wake up the world with your love.

Amen.



Seen here with the president of the Society George Dee (centre) is Fr Giuseppe Pollio, the rector of a new House of Formation in Dundalk, who visited the Central Council meeting with James from Belfast. Redemptoris Mater is a new institution of the Archdiocese of Armagh. It was founded in 2012 by Cardinal Seán Brady to form priests for the New Evangelisation who are both diocesan and missionary. The young men studying for the priesthood in Dundalk come from the Neocatechumenal Way and will be ordained as priests of the Archdiocese of Armagh. The Neocatechumenal Way helps parishioners deepen the treasures of their Baptism and to live as Christians in today's society. One of the fruits of the deepening of the Baptismal graces has been a flourishing of vocations to the priesthood.

Saint John Paul II opened the first of Redemptoris Mater seminary in Rome and gave it the name Mother of the Redeemer (Redemptoris Mater in Latin). There are now 100 such Redemptoris Mater seminaries throughout the world and almost 2,000 priests worldwide have been ordained for different dioceses from them. Currently there are 13 seminarians from seven countries being formed in the Irish Redemptoris Mater in Dundalk. Last year Fr Maciej Zacharek was the first priest ordained from this new initiative and he is now working in St Peter's Parish in Drogheda.

When, please God, the seminarians are ordained, they will be incardinated into the Archdiocese of Armagh and serve in the parishes of the Archdiocese; they will also be available, at the discretion of the Archbishop of Armagh, to serve as missionaries, both in other parts of Ireland and internationally, thus allowing the Archdiocese to have a new missionary thrust answering the Pope's call for the New Evangelisation.



Members of the executive committee photographed following their inaugural Mass at the Society's House on 7 November.

Among the decisions taken during this first meeting since the October elections, was the general theme of the talks at the four 2016 Provincial Congresses - **MERCY** - as chosen by Pope Francis for the Extraordinary Jubilee Year commencing on 8 December 2015.

The altar table in the photo incidentally, is that loaned to the organisers of the 2012 International Eucharistic Congress in Ballsbridge for the celebration of religious services by foreign dignitaries of various denominations. It is in regular use for Mass by branches of the Society, and weekly by the young people of Pure-in-Heart who meet at the House.

The table is the base of a shrine of Saint Joseph that the Society's foundress Mrs Olivia Taaffe set up in St Catherine's church Ballapousta early in her marriage to John Joseph Taaffe when they moved into Smarmore Castle to share with the head of the family Myles Taaffe, his mother and five sisters. The shrine and the adjoining gallery, which was used exclusively by the Taaffe family until the early 1900s were removed when St Catherine's church was substantially renovated in 1980.

Recently Deceased

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord

VOCATIONAL BRANCHES

Electrical Industries Daniel McKenzie

Insurance Branch Billy McDonald, Joan Campbell

Civil Service Branch Donal Heffernan (Sandymount), age 102

LOCAL BRANCHES

Ardfield/Rathbarry Joan Keohane, Fergal Beamish, Mary Walsh, Michael O'Donovan, John Paul O'Sullivan, Jim O'Sullivan, Fr Edward Barry, Jack Lahiff, Elizabeth Twohig

Armagh Bernadette (Bernie) O'Neill, Mary (Chrissie) Sheridan, Augustine (Gus) Healy, May Oliver, Ann Chambers

Ballagh/Ballyleague Kitty Fallon

Ballymena Patricia Corr

Bangor Paddy Coyle

Blackpool Nora Coleman

Carrigaline Eithne Murphy

Christ the King, Turner's Cross John Linehan

Churchtown Betty Hogarty, Nellie McDonald, Seán Costelloe, Emily Phelan

Cleenish Anne Lilly, Gerard Timmons, Thomas Johnston, Monica Corrigan, Peter Stewart, Tessie Duffy, Mary Gilbride, Rosaleen Owens, Rassdeem Corrigan, M McGee

Derrygonnelly/Botha Barney Flood, Betty McLoughlin, Dennis Kelly, Tommy Leonard, Martina Connolly, Mary Blease, Agnes McGullion, Margaret Dolan, Gerry Dolan, Paddy Greene, Dinny Gallagher, Kevin Bannon, Hughie Jones, Emily Sprath.

Sr Monica Gallagher, Jean Jackson

Dundalk Maura Gerrard, Sr Concepta Kennedy, Mary Quigley, Fr John Finn, Seán Kettle, John (Jackie) Martin, Mary O'Hagan, Briege McCabe, Frances Ladley, John Rogers

Ennis Helen McCabe

Enniskillen Leo McGandy, Rosaleen Burns, Peter Duffy, Johnny Murphy, Lily Wynne, Frank McGovern, Cahir McKeown, Jean Henderson, Mary McManus, Jimmy Entwistle, John Brennan, Maureen Muldoon, Sr Monica Gallagher, Joe McManus

Faughanvale (St Mary's) Josephine King

Harold's Cross Kay Fulham, Mary McAndrew

Killorglin Betty Houlihan

Knockninny Richard McBrien, Dermot O'Connor, Patsy McDonald, Pee Murray, Janette Gilbert, Sr Mary Majella Gilleece, James McGurren, Pee McManus, Rose Curry, Pat Scallan, Philip Wilson, Seán Martin, Tony McCaffrey, Brian McCaffrey, Eileen Rodgers, Michael Keenan, Sarah Teague, Foncie McKieran, Rosaleen Owens, Raymond Cassidy, Joan Hughes, Eileen Crawford

Larkhill Eamon Walsh, Mary Murphy, Rory McDwyer, Ann Hourihane-Casey

Lordship and Ballymacscanlon Clare Cumiskey, Kathleen Gregory, Marie Mulholland

Loughrea Maura O'Sullivan

Maghera Anna Fleming, Annie McKenna, John Joe Convery, Joe Gormley, Desmond McKeefry, Sarah Catherine Kieft, Seán Brown, Marie Moore, Pat McKay, John Convery, Pete McCloskey, John Leadon, Therese Lagan, Michael McKenna, Stewart Johnston, Alan Quinn, Michelle Bradley, Dan Lagan

Marino Nuala Lynch

Middleton Myra Buckley, Seán O'Farrell, Irene Colbert, Dick Cashman, Angela Hennessy, Matt Kerins (founder member)

Mountnugent Brendan Flynn, Lucy Reilly, Paddy Daly, Kathleen Conaty, Noel Reilly, Paddy Smith, Paul Hennessy

Portadown Gerald McConaghy, Mary McCurdie, Mary McGrane.

Raheen Sr M. Seraphina Costello, Tom Bass

Rathgar Mairin McManus

Saggart / Rathcoole Vera Connolly

St John's, Granaghan Nora Lagan, Eileen Mooney

St John the Baptist, Clontarf Michaela Traynor-Murphy

St Kevin's, Harrington Street Kathleen Finnucane, Marjorie Ward, Martin Colfer

Swanlinbar Margaret Ann McGovern, Patsy Hughes, Anne Kellagher, Séamus McManus, Pauline McManus, Frances McGovern, John Owens, John McGovern, Rose Anna Herlage, Patrick Maguire, Bridie Maguire, Andy Kelly, Mary Kate Murphy

Templemore Martin Foley

Terenure Constance Murphy

Tournafulla Michael Curtin, Willie Brouder

General Leo Madigan (Fatima)

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Article on the Year of Mercy Courtesy INTERCOM (per Brenda Drumm)