



The Sheaf



ST. JOSEPH'S YOUNG PRIESTS SOCIETY

www.stjosephsyoungpriestssociety.com

SAINT JOSEPH'S YOUNG PRIESTS SOCIETY, 23 MERRION SQUARE, DUBLIN 2. TELEPHONE: DUBLIN 676 2593

SUMMER 2012

A Greater Hope

by Fr. Owen Gorman OCDS

In early November 1887, a young girl called Thérèse Martin from Lisieux, arrived in Paris together with her father, Louis, and her older sister, Céline. They had come to the capital city to participate in a pilgrimage to Rome in honour of Pope Leo XIII's jubilee. Before departing, the Martins stayed in one of Paris's hotels for a number of nights and what is noteworthy is that in the same hotel at the same time, there was a German philosopher there also as a guest. His name was Friedrich Nietzsche and like Thérèse, he would profoundly shape the modern world.



Fr. Owen Gorman OCDS

Nietzsche is known as the 'father of modern atheism' and it is a title that is well deserved. In his philosophy, he boldly proclaimed that 'God is dead' and urged mankind to throw off the laws and commandments of Christianity which he said, have kept us imprisoned as slaves. Only then will we be free to create our own reality, to live by our own truth, to make our own rules and to become 'Supermen'.

These ideas which were proclaimed by Nietzsche over a century ago are now well embedded in our culture. A large number of people now say that they do not believe in God. Others say that they believe in God but live as if He does not exist. With the rejection of faith in God has come the diminishment of Christian hope. There are people now who no longer hope for heaven. They believe that this world is all that there is and then after death, nothingness.

For us Christians, however, our attitude is different. It is an attitude that takes its cue from Christ who revealed to us the reality of an eternal realm that will be the inheritance of the just and the righteous. Our hope is not deceptive, as St Paul says, but it is something that is based on the reality of things that 'no eye has seen, nor ear heard; things beyond the mind of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him' (1 Cor. 2:9). The life of the faithful Christian will not end in oblivion but in the vision of God's face which is eternal life. To gaze into the face of love for all eternity and to know that in that gaze one is loved completely, is the life that awaits us and to which we are called in and through Christ.

While as Christians heaven is our ultimate hope, we also have hope for things within this world. We hope for difficult family

situations to be sorted out; for the children or grandchildren to come back to the practice of the faith; for prayers to be answered and for the Church to undergo a great renewal. These are things for which we hope and keeping hope alive by backing it up with prayer and concrete steps which lead to its realisation is important. Our hope calls us to action and this is something which characterises many people whose endeavours are renewing the Church right now.

A great springtime of the gospel has arrived and we have to train our eyes to see the new shoots that are springing up everywhere. The new religious movements, the number of lay people studying theology, the quality of our current seminarians, the small but significant number of young people who are on fire with the love of Christ. These and other signs of hope should speak to us of a great renewal that is currently underway and that will in time lead to a great harvest.



- The daily programme for the International Eucharistic Congress from 11 until 16 June 2012 takes place in the Arena of the Royal Dublin Society (RDS). *The Statio Orbis*, the Liturgy on the final day of the Congress, will be celebrated in Croke Park, Dublin on Sunday 17 June 2012.
- The Programme of the Congress is built around the daily celebration of the Eucharist and each day has a theme of its own. The theme for Wednesday 13 June is: 'Priesthood and Ministry in the Service of Communion'. There will be an Evening Eucharistic Procession at 7.30pm.
- At 11.30am on Wednesday 13 June in Dodder Suite D of Hall 5, Dominic Dowling Vice-president of the Society will talk on 'Supporting the Call to Ordained Ministry - a Lay Response'. George Dee the Society's President will preside and Fr Eamonn Bourke Chief Chaplain to the Society will be present.
- During the Congress a special welcome is extended to all, especially the members and benefactors of the Society, at our stand in the main Hall, where those from around the country who have volunteered to assist will be identified by their light blue polo shirts showing 'St Joseph's Young Priests Society'.

Reflection on A GREATER HOPE at Mallow Co Cork on 10 March, 2012

by V Rev Noel O'Sullivan PP Glanmire Co Cork

CURRENT ECCLESIAL LANDSCAPE

The Catholic Church in Ireland has taken a painful battering over the last twenty years. The revelations of child sex abuse by priests and religious rocked the Church throughout Ireland and far from Ireland. Here were men in whom total trust had been placed by parents and children and that trust was exploited to commit the most heinous of crimes, the blackest of sins. As a result, the Church has lost its authority, its moral voice, which had once been so respected by Catholics and non-Catholics alike. As a Church, both lay and clerical, we have become the butt of jokes and the easy target of those who would want to destroy the Church anyway. It was distressing to see the head of our government stand up in the Dáil and give an intemperate and inaccurate diatribe against the Vatican. To add insult to injury this was followed with indecent haste by the closing of our embassy to the Vatican, on the dubious grounds of saving money. It is gratifying however, to see a strong reaction against that cynical move by the public and within government itself.

The effects of these developments on the ground are evident in every parish in Ireland: we have a huge trust deficit to build up; the decrease in the practice of the faith, which was happening anyway, has accelerated; the sacrament of confession has almost disappeared; the prevalence of couples living together before getting married seemed to happen overnight; and, of course, religious and priestly vocations are in free fall. I will begin by commenting on the vocations situation, given the special nature of this assembly.

The following table gives the total number of seminarians in Maynooth from 1971 to 2011, a forty year period:

Year	Number of Seminarians
1971	374
1981	322
1991	273
2001	111
2011	70

A GOD OF HOPE

Hope is a Christian virtue: it is important to unravel its meaning: it is a grace that comes from the Holy Spirit:

'May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit' (Romans 15: 13).



V Rev Noel O'Sullivan

Hope in that sense does not depend on the state of the Church or the way the world is. Christian hope is deeper than our psychological make-up or the sociological evidence. It is not a feeling but, rather, a conviction.

Hope is based on our faith. The letter to the Hebrews defines faith in this way: 'Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen' (Hebrews 11: 1).

Faith, Hope and Charity are theological virtues. This means that they have God for their origin, motive and goal. The theological virtue of hope comes from God; it is his gift. His presence is always with us, blessing us; so our motives are conformed to his will. Finally, hope has God as its goal.

A CHURCH OF HOPE

As we have seen so clearly, the Church is human, fragile and sinful. But that is the Church as institution. All too often we only hear of the human and fragile side of the Church but the Church is not simply the institution made up of human beings. Just as there are two natures in Christ we can speak of two elements in the Church: the human and the divine. In the case of the Church the human side can fail and be sinful. This is not so with the humanity of Christ. The parallel between the two natures in Christ and the two elements in the Church, human and divine, helps us to distinguish between the failures of the Church, on the one hand, and the divine side of the Church, on the other. The Church is the Body of Christ: it is a spiritual reality that will not be destroyed. Just before he left us Jesus said: 'And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age' (Mt 28: 20). All too often we neglect this aspect of the Church.

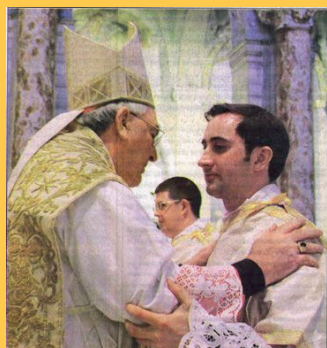
SEMINARIANS

Between Maynooth and Rome we have some 90 students who have shown great courage and commitment by stepping out of line and going for the priesthood in this time of crisis. They are the hope of the Church of the future. They are deeply spiritual and committed to priesthood in the Catholic Church. The Mass is the centre of their lives, with Eucharistic Adoration being very prominent in their spirituality. They are orthodox in their theology and they consider loyalty to the Pope and the Magisterium of the Church as pivotal. Not for them the call for women priests and an end to celibacy. They are utterly committed to the priesthood as understood by the Church and explained in the Conciliar and post-Conciliar documents.

This leads me to the question of vocation promotion. In recent years we have been of the opinion that it is impossible to promote vocations to the priesthood because of the scandals. Some priests and very many lay people believe that we should get rid of celibacy and then we would have vocations. 'Make it more attractive,' they would say. From my experience of the seminarians this is not what they want. These young men want to make personal sacrifices for Christ; they want their lives to be conformed to his. Any lowering of the bar would offend their idealism.

CONCLUSION

By way of conclusion I would like to make a couple of remarks. I believe that despite appearances, the faith is very strong in Ireland. I doubt if any other national church could withstand the crisis that we have been undergoing. Here our churches by and large are still full. We have many young families who want to engage with the Church; they want their children to be altar servers and receive the sacraments. Then we have seen the great rise in the involvement of lay people in parish life. Parish assemblies or parish councils, together with finance committees, are making a huge difference on the ground. People are realising that they are the Church, the People of God. Though the numbers in the seminaries are low compared to forty years ago, the quality of the seminarians is better; they are more mature and a considerably higher proportion of them reach ordination. The signs of spring are in the air but there is no room for complacency.



Pictured is Raymond Donnelly, who was ordained a deacon for the Diocese of Clogher on Easter Monday. Most Revd Liam MacDaid, Bishop of Clogher, was the ordaining prelate at the Ordination Mass, which took place in St. Mark's Basilica, Piazza Venezia, Rome. Michael McGavigan, Diocese of Derry and Paul Murphy, Archdiocese of Armagh were also ordained at the same ceremony. Raymond is in his fourth year of formation in the Pontifical Irish College, Rome, and is currently studying for a Licence in Theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome. He will be ordained a priest in June 2013. Prior to entering seminary he taught English and Religion in Our Lady's Secondary School Castleblayney. He is the son of Colm and Maureen Donnelly, Aghatamy, Dublin Road, Monaghan.

Photo: Colm Donnolly

Talk by Fr Liam Dunne SVD for the Dublin Congress, at St Patrick's College Maynooth on 31 March 2012

I would like to begin by reading from the Gospel of Mark, chapter 14. I have chosen this reading because it speaks beautifully of two contemporary disciples of Jesus, who were called by him, and sent by him to prepare for the celebration of the Eucharist, the very first one.

I have chosen this reading because, in my mind, it speaks beautifully of you who are one of a number of wonderful groups of faithful disciples of Jesus in Ireland today. What is striking about this story is that Jesus needed someone to go ahead and prepare the way for him; to that he could gather his people around him; so that he could make God present to them in the Divine Word and in the Sacrament, both of which incarnated him at that moment.

I am very happy to be with you today. I am happy because I want to give something back to you. I want to express my gratitude to you for what you are to me as a member of the Divine Word Missionaries, the largest Missionary Order of men in the Church today.

Why do I want to give back to you? There are three reasons.

1. The example of Sr Patricia and her companions. One day when I was going down town I encountered them going to their SJYPS meeting. They were doing it for us priests.
2. The number of people whose obituaries I see in each issue of The Sheaf remind me of how many have cared for, loved and served the priesthood.
3. It is also an opportunity for me to express my gratitude to 23 Merrion Square for the Mass intentions they send to my office for the support of my confreres around the world.

I am also happy to have the opportunity to address you in the lead up to the International Eucharistic Congress. I was interested to read in The Sheaf of Summer 2006 the suggestion that the anniversary of the Congress of 1932 should be commemorated. Little did we know then that we would be hosting the event this year.

LOOKING BACK

It is fascinating to look at your beginnings and to see how they emerged and developed. Olivia Taaffe was much influenced by the spirituality of the French church. She was struck by the way in which one of her French priest friends was caring for young boys and preparing them to be seminarians. She wondered why this model could not be emulated in her own country too where there were so many good young lads who would have liked to be priests but could not afford the fees. Upon her return to Ireland, she found the opportunity to assist one lad and then with friends began to do it for more.

PRIESTLY EXPERIENCES AROUND THE WORLD TODAY

When I went to Papua New Guinea in 1976 there was one local priest in the diocese of Wewak. Today there are around 45, three of whom became bishops. When the SVDs went there in 1896 they began to



Fathers Roger O'Neill, Willie Purcell, Liam Dunne, Paddy Cushen and deacon Sean Maguire photographed at the Maynooth Congress on Saturday 31 March. Fr Dunne SVD delivered the keynote address.

train diocesan priests. After the Vatican Council, understanding that no church is fully church, unless it is missionary, the SVD began to recruit and train missionaries too. Now there are SVDs from Papua New Guinea working in the Philippines, Argentina, Mauritius, Brazil and Ghana.

In countries, like India and Indonesia, where the SVD recruited local men as priests and brothers early on, they were able to put down roots which became very important when restrictions on foreign missionaries were imposed. Today, those countries are contributing many priests and brothers to countries all over the world. Last year, in one of our Indonesian seminaries, where there were 274 students, there were 27 ordinations of whom 19 have been assigned to work overseas. This same process is going on in the 14 countries of Africa, as well as throughout Asia, South America and Europe where the SVD are working. :

WHY DO, WHAT YOU ARE DOING?

I was impressed by the insights in your Mission Statement. It refers to:

- The renewal of Faith
- to the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ
- to working in partnership towards creating a greater understanding of Christ's call: "Come follow Me"

This Statement resonates so wonderfully with what Pope Benedict said in Mexico when speaking to the people there in March 2012.

"I wish to confirm those who believe in Christ in their faith, by strengthening and encouraging them to revitalize their faith by listening to the Word of God, celebrating the sacraments and living coherently. In this way, they will be able to share their faith with others as missionaries to their brothers and sisters and to act as a leaven in society"

To whom was Benedict speaking? He was speaking to the Mexican people. What distinguishes their faith? Their pious dispositions; their love for their devotions; some might say, their folk religion. And yet, what is the reality around them? It is the phenomenon of a society in decay caused by drugs, fear and death. It is said that over 50,000 have been killed in the last 10 years alone because of drugs.

Mexico has the reputation of having the second largest population of Catholics after Brazil but would you know that by reading the papers? Unfortunately not. How evident is the influence of the Faith there? At a certain level, yes, crawling on one's knees to Guadalupe; parading with statues of weeping Madonnas in Holy Week but at other levels, not so much.

That is why both yourselves and the Holy Father speak in the first place of the obligation to grow in FAITH. We must know in Whom we believe and what that proposes to us.

We have to be able to say and live our YES to this. Like Our Blessed Lady did at the Annunciation.

HOW CAN WE KNOW ABOUT THIS GOOD NEWS?

It can only come about if we love the WORD of GOD. We have heard so many times that the Scriptures are the WORD of GOD. We have been told that it is a love letter from God to us!

So often we have heard the plea,

"Oh that you would listen to His word; Harden not your hearts" or

"this is my beloved Son, listen to Him"

And yet! And yet! Does it look like we have heard the WORD? Does it look like we are following the WORD?

Look around us. Think of the newspaper headlines! The stories in the news? The heartbreak that comes from changing cultural mores in personal relationships; in the pursuit of wealth at all costs; in the pursuit of selfish pleasures; the lack of respect for the other and for life.

Look at the way we 'hold' the Bible. Is it just lying there unopened? Or is it hidden under a lot of other books or papers? Or have you forgotten where you put it? Is it covered with dust?

Look at how we use it in church. Do we venerate it lovingly? Or do we just use a flimsy piece of paper? Do we come close to it in church or do sit as far back in the church as is possible? Do we strive to hear it well? Do we let it speak to us? Do we give it time to penetrate us? Do we ask ourselves, what is the Spirit trying to say to us? Do we let the message of the Lord direct our steps or do we reject it and, instead, go back to reading and believing the opinions that the Editors of the Sun, the Star, the Irish Times, Prime Time etc put before us in the newspapers and the TV? This is a challenge for all of us to reflect upon. What is forming our outlook and guiding our behavior?

The Word wants to guide us and to lead us to happiness in life. It wants to teach us what is right and just and leads us to everlasting happiness. Examples: *Tob 4:16-17, 19-20; Col 1:9b-11; Jm 1:22, 25; Col 3:12-13.*

So, as members of the St Joseph's Young Priests Society and members of the Church in Ireland let us grow in our Faith, in our love of the Word and in our desire to encounter the Lord in the Sacraments.

Reflection on A GREATER HOPE at Claremorris on 21 April 2012

by Monsignor Tommy Johnston VG, Charlestown, Co Mayo

In the book of Isaiah, chapter 43 the prophet presents a beautiful image of a caring, loving God, a God who knows us by name, a God who calls us precious, a God who honours us. This is the God I believe in, this is the God who gives and sustains life, the God of our hope, that wonderful, life-giving gift without which life loses its drive, loses its enthusiasm.

We cannot live without hope and we should never try. There are many challenges to hope in our world and in our church today. Hope does not ignore these but it does ask us to look beyond them and offers the reassurance that no matter what the problems, concerns, anxieties or worries of the immediate reality, God is always greater than any one or all of them and by enlisting His help we are enabled to meet and deal with the challenges or difficulties that come our way.

So many things in our world and in our church have changed over the years things that can cause concern and anxiety but I draw strength and encouragement from the fact that God has not changed. He is the still point in our turning world, the anchor of our hope and we must nourish that hope in sincere and humble prayer.

Also I need to remember that the future of the church, the future of humankind does not depend on my efforts alone, God is in charge, but I need to work with God. I need to do what I can, I need to be a person of faith, a person of courage and hope to stand up for that faith with confidence and assurance. To support and nourish that faith, I need to be a person of prayer, a person of trust, a person of hope.

The Lord looks on those who revere him, on those who hope in his love. When our lives reflect something of the love and goodness of God we are people of hope,



Michael Carty, President of the Society for the Ecclesiastical Province of Tuam, with Fr Austin Fergus the Provincial Chaplain, Mgr Tommie Johnston VG PP Charlestown and Fr Seamus Roland on holiday from Texas.

and in our own little corner of the world miracles can and do happen, and life for ourselves and for others can find a greater level of goodness even in the most unlikely of situations such as a prisoner of war camp as shown in Ernest Gordon's inspiring book, 'Bridge on the River Kwai'.

The prisoner of war camp recalled in that book was set up by the Japanese to build a railway bridge over the river Kwai in South East Asia. It was a cruel and horrid place where death, disease and brutality claimed thousands of lives and yet in that place of horror, the kindness and care of two ordinary soldiers saved the very ill Gordon from the brink of death and also generated within the men a new sense of hope and a desire for faith. In that valley of death these half starved, suffering men discovered that God had not left them, that he was calling them to faith, forgiveness and a renewed hope.

In that valley of suffering, the voice of God spoke in the love, care, forgiveness and hope the men shared with one another, but it also spoke to Ernest Gordon in a very particular way. As a young man Ernest had little, if any interest in religion; but the kindness, helpfulness and faith he witnessed in that awful camp touched him deeply and God found a welcome space in his heart. After his years of imprisonment, he returned to Scotland to attend the seminary and was ordained a minister.

When we allow God to walk with us through suffering our eyes are opened to His grace and goodness and our hearts are touched with hope, a greater hope than we can ever ask for or imagine.

Intinn Choitianta an Phápa do Mhí Aibreáin 2012

Go n-éiste mórán daoine óga le gairm Chríost agus go leana siad é sa tsagartóireacht agus sa bheatha chrábhaidh.

Recently Deceased

VOCATIONAL BRANCHES

Pharmacy Branch

J J (Jerry) McMorrow

LOCAL BRANCHES

Ardagh Una McGeary

Ballinascreen Eithne Badley, Ella O'Kane, James McTeague, Hugh Watson, Nellie McWilliams, Mary McNamee, Nellie Toner, Rose Brolly, Owen Walsh, Phyllis Convery, Agnes Murray, Breige Rogers, Rose Bradley, Helen Gray, Veronica Kelly, Mary Gordon, Mary Hegarty

Ballypaphane Nancy Walsh

Ballyroan Branch Bill Doherty

Beechwood Ave, Dublin Kathleen Diskin

Blarney Marie Russell, Peadar O'Callaghan, Breda Murphy

Boyle Sr Anita McDermott

Carrigaline Con Kiely

Christ the King, Turner's Cross David Golden, Ita Ryder

Cleenish Jim Bartley, Rose

Cunningham, Cassie Ray, Marie Boyle, John Patrick Ferguson, Terence Ferguson, Laura Spence, John Maguire, Anne Keenan, Kathleen McGourty, Ellen Maguire

Coleraine Gráinne McKeefrey

Craiguecullen/Killehsin Fitzpatrick, Henry Bolton

Derrygonnelly/Botha Kathleen Gillece, Eddie Hoy, James Greene, John Maguire, Paddy Hoy, Joe Tracey, Tommy Gallagher

Dundalk Olive Clarke, Margaret McCann

Dungannon Maureen McCall

Enniskillen Madeline McGinty, Séamus Carron, Sr Kathleen O'Donnell, Martin Gilligan, Collette McGovern, Marcus McKeogh, Kitty Gault, Collette Henderson, Nance O'Reilly, Jim Bartley

Eskra Kevin Ward

Goleen Phyl O'Driscoll, Nora O'Regan, Kathleen Ellis, Kathleen Attridge, Joseph O'Sullivan,

John O'Sullivan, Mary Monica O'Regan.

Killorglin Ann Kelly, Bridie Keane

Killougher Paul O'Dowd, Seán Brady, Mary Ann Lynch, Margaret Smith, Séamus Smith, Séamus Kelly, Hannah Smith

Kinsale Tim O'Brien

Maghera Gerry McGuckin, Philomena Kelly, Eliz Boyle, Pat McCusker, Kelly Hutchinson, Philomena Convery, Dan Bradley, Bernard Bradley, Andrew Bradley, Alex Kelly, Damien Flanagan, Annie Gilloway

Marino Marie Lawless, Ann Dolan

Pennyburn Eithne McCloskey, Eileen McCloskey

Portadown Brian McGrane, Susan Brankin, Pauline Fay

Ss Peter & Paul, Athlone V Rev P Canon Murray, Paddy Kenny

St Agnes's, Crumlin Una Morris, Anne Daly

St John the Baptist, Clontarf

Elizabeth (Lil) O'Reilly

St Joseph's, Limerick Mary Shine

St Kevin's, Harrington St.

Margaret Earley, Una Morrisroe, Angela O'Boyle

St Patrick's, Limerick

Teresa Cantillon

St Patrick's, Pennyburn

Isobel Harley

Templemore Paschal Clohosey

Templeport Mary Ellen Dolan, Aiden McGovern, Mary Kate Baxter, Anna Farrelly, John McGerty, Joey Darcy, Eilís Heerey

Trillick (Kilskerry) Shaun Annetta, Hugh P McDonnell, Charlie Garrity, Jim Lynch, Thérèse Kelly, Kathleen McCann, Mickey McCann

Trim Kitty Naughton

Tyolland Kathleen Hughes

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