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ST. JOSEPH'S YOUNG PRIESTS SOCIETY

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SUMMER 2016

JUBILEE YEAR OF MERCY CONGRESSES



Fr. Michael Maher at St. Joseph's Young Priests Society Congress, Dublin

At Dublin, Fr. Maher shared with us some perspectives on Pope Francis' book **'The Name of God is Mercy'**. The book spells out for us Pope Francis' reasons for announcing a holy year of Mercy. He reiterates that the Church cannot close the door on anyone.

In his answer to the question, **Why does God never tire of forgiving us?**, Pope Francis' says Because He is God; **Because He is Mercy; Because Mercy is the first attribute of God.** Mercy is the name of God. We are not condemned to sink into quick-sand. Jesus is always there and ready to help us. He is ready to pull us out of sin.

Fr. Maher reiterated that we need to be honest with ourselves and to be conscious of our present state; that Jesus waits for us. God's faithful and Mercy will always be greater than any sin. No-one can put a limit on the love of the all-forgiving God.

To see this program please visit www.ewtn.ie using your iPad or laptop computer.

Monsignor Dullea spoke in Cork about the Jubilee Year of Mercy. He said that Pope Francis was asked what is the most important thing about this Year of Mercy for a believer.

He said that a believer should open up to the mercy of God - open one's heart and one's self - to allow Jesus to come towards us by approaching the confessional with faith, and to try to be merciful with others.



Monsignor Gearoid Dullea at St. Joseph's Young Priests Society Congress, Cork

Monsignor Dullea's inspiring talk unpacks and fleshes out each of the Pope's reflections.

To see this program please visit www.ewtn.ie using your iPad or laptop computer.

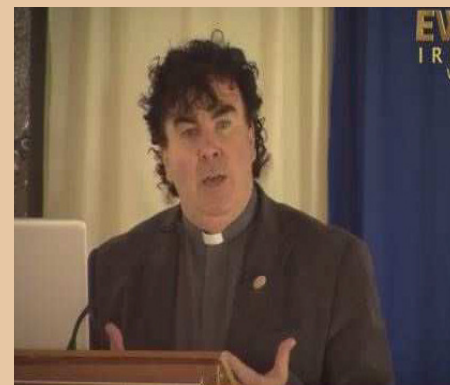


Sr. Martina Purdy at St. Joseph's Young Priests Society Congress, Armagh

In Armagh, Sr. Purdy spoke about how great it was to be speaking in the city as a Missionary. She shared with the listeners that she prays Pope Francis' Prayer for the **Year of Mercy** every day, and she encouraged everyone to pray it. At the beginning of the talk, she prayed the "Hail Mary" asking Our Blessed Lady, invoking the Mother of Mercy, to intercede for everyone.

Sr. Purdy said that we should remember to thank God for His Grace and to thank Him for His mercy; that God became man to come into the world to save us from sin and death; He made us His children; that we are now heirs to the Kingdom; and that you can have your share in the kingdom of God right now!

Sr. Purdy shared with the audience how she had worked for the BBC, but that she had felt the Lord calling her to join the Sisters of Adoration in Reparation. **"For with God nothing shall be impossible."** (Luke 1: 37) To see this program please visit www.ewtn.ie using your iPad or laptop computer.



Fr. Willie Purcell St. Joseph's Young Priests Society Congress, Knock Shrine

At Knock, Fr. Purcell also gave some reflections on the **Year of Mercy**. He describes how he loves Knock Shrine, and outlined his "five pillars of Knock": Pilgrimage, Mass, Adoration, Confession and Rosary.

Going to Knock Shrine is a journey of mercy. As one travels to Knock and prepares for the journey, people may ask that you light a candle, say a prayer for them and remember them in the Mass. With this **Year of Mercy** we need to prepare, make this journey with the Lord and pray for others to return to the mercy of God.

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THE ARCHBISHOP OF ARMAGH WITH SR MARTINA PURDY, HER SISTERS AND CLERGY AT THE ARMAGH PROVINCIAL CONGRESS



ALTAR SERVERS AT KNOCK



OSSORY RETREAT DAY WITH FR WILLIE PURCELL ON 1 MAY. THE THEME OF THE DAY WAS 'MERCY AT THE HEART OF VOCATIONS MINISTRY'.



Archbishop Eamon Martin and the Grand Master of the Order of Malta, Fra' Matthew Festing at the blessing and formal opening of Smarmore Castle Addiction Centre. The Grand Master told of his family's association with the Taaffe family of Smarmore going back continuously over 750 years. The Castle was the family home of Olivia, as she herself said, for the 27 happiest years of her life. Pic: Ken Finnegan, Ardee.

MEETING WITH THE RECTOR AND SEMINARIANS OF REDEMPTORIS MATER

On Saturday 14 May 2016 I had the opportunity to meet with Fr Giuseppe Pollio (Rector), Fr Neil O'Donoghue (Prefect of studies), seminarians and volunteers from the Redemptoris Mater House of Formation in Dundalk.

It was a lovely day and consisted of gathering for midday prayer together, having lunch together, an opportunity for me to speak about the Society and distribute our Society leaflet and Vocation Prayer to them. Then I met with Fr Giuseppe and Fr Neil and we spoke about the Society in the Archdiocese of Armagh. Fr Giuseppe and Fr Neil stressed the importance that our Society offers as pivotal in the formation of the students of Redemptoris Mater. Currently there are 14 Seminarians studying and they are from 7 different countries. We have already had the ordination to priesthood of Fr Maciej Zacharek from Redemptoris Mater and he currently serves in St Peter's Parish Drogheda.

Following this visit I invited Fr Giuseppe, Fr Neil and the seminarians to our June diocesan meeting on 15 June to meet with members of our Society from our various branches. The evening began with Mass celebrated by Fr Giuseppe and co-celebrated by Fr Neil. The Seminarians proclaimed the readings, led us in prayer and enhanced our evening with wonderful singing and music playing a range of instruments.

After Mass we had our meeting. To begin, all from Redemptoris Mater said a little about themselves and then our members also introduced themselves and the parish they were representing. Fr Neil then spoke to our members about Redemptoris Mater and the evening ended with our having refreshments with the seminarians.



FR NEIL AND FR GUISEPPE WITH THE SEMINARIANS AND VOLUNTEERS AT DUNDALK

Members of the Society felt the evening was very special and it was wonderful to be gathered in the same room with so many young men who are studying for priesthood. Please God they will be ordained for ministry in the Archdiocese of Armagh and along with our diocesan seminarians we look forward to the future for our Diocese.

David Greer
Armagh Diocesan President

Archbishop Eamon Martin's talk at the Society's National Pilgrimage to Knock - 25 June 2016

The splendid new mosaic of the apparition here in the Basilica at Knock brings out so vividly the power of that miraculous moment back in 1879. But in all the swirling activity of that scene, I'm struck by the quiet dignity of St Joseph, his head bowed, hands joined, humbly conscious of his place alongside Blessed Mary as they stand with John in awe at the presence of the Lamb of God. St Joseph's pose appears gentle, yet supportive. It is a strong presence, comforting and encouraging - just as he is described in the Gospels. Although Joseph is not quoted anywhere in the Gospels, you get a sense of his character: caring and courageous, a good husband and constant protector to Mary, a loving guardian for Jesus; he comes across as a man of great generosity, wisdom, faith and trust. Today's gospel passage brings out his complete obedience to God's will.

It is no accident then that your founder Olivia Mary Taaffe wanted her supportive movement for young priests to be under the patronage of St Joseph. During the years that she and her husband spent in France, they developed a deep devotion to the Saint; she also became convinced that a friendship with St Joseph can help open the mind of a young boy to the possibility of a vocation to priesthood; for a seminarian it can help develop him in his progress towards priesthood; and for the ordained priest a friendship with St Joseph can help to sustain God's call in his life. And no wonder! Those outstanding qualities of St Joseph - his faith, trust, wisdom, generosity, care and compassion; his strength of character, courageous witness and obedience to God's will - these are the very qualities needed in the life of a priest.

I've always believed that to be a good priest, you need to have the qualities that would have made you a good husband and a good father, had you not chosen the priesthood - characteristics evident in the life of St Joseph.

Earlier this year, in his Message for Vocations Sunday, Pope Francis reflected on how vocations are born, how they develop and on how they are sustained. He emphasised that all three of these things happen in living and praying Church communities.

In my own case, I know that I heard my call to priesthood in and through the living and praying faith communities of my family, my parish, my school, my seminary in Maynooth. These same communities shaped and developed my understanding of what it is to be called, and since ordination my vocation to the priesthood has been sustained by similar supportive communities in my various appointments over the past twenty-nine years.

If we are to encourage and sustain vocations for the future in Ireland, then we need to find opportunities for young men to be in contact and engage contact with living and praying Church communities. One of our greatest



challenges is to ensure that sufficient numbers of young men are given the opportunity to participate in our parish and Church communities. It is no surprise therefore that fewer young men are hearing the call to priesthood. Even those who do hear the call, often find that is drowned out by so many other preoccupations and allurements in today's hectic world. We need to find ways of actively engaging young men in the life of our parishes in peer ministry, caring and charitable outreach, visible participation in prayer, liturgy and parish activities.

Alongside this I think it is important to have strong role models for our young men, both in the priesthood and among the faithful. Nowadays the so-called celebrity culture can sometimes present young men with rather superficial images of masculinity - with body images which are often self-obsessed and virtually unsustainable, with false promises of easy success and popularity in your social life and relationships, and shallow expectations of husbands and fathers. Many young men discover that life can be full of disappointments and failures even in teenage years and early adulthood. As a result they can easily be drawn into addictive or abusive behaviours, into selfish relationships and expectations, and many of them end up facing a crisis of identity and endure depression, anxiety or other mental health problems.

How much we need to recover and present for our young men strong and inspiring male role models as husbands, fathers, seminarians and priests.

We are united here today by our care and concern for the priesthood - you the members of St Joseph's Young Priests Society have chosen to devote part of your lives to prayer for priests, to promoting vocations and supporting our students who are preparing for the priesthood. My brother priests and I, with all our faults and sinfulness, have chosen to give ourselves in love for God, knowing that, as St John

Vianney once said: 'The priesthood is the love of the heart of Jesus'.

In the light of the example of St Joseph, it is worth asking ourselves about the quality of our love and giving: Do we give our whole hearts to Jesus, or just our 'left-overs'? Do we sacrifice our inmost being in friendship of him, do we give until it hurts, or do we prefer to do our own thing and hold something back from God?

I realise how much I'm tempted not to give and love God unconditionally. Please pray that I, and all seminarians and priests, will be like St Joseph - generous, wise, believing, caring, trusting and strong.

I invite you also to be generous in your prayer and work as members of St Joseph's Young Priests Society. At our Conference recently the Irish bishops committed to encouraging a major national initiative for vocations in 2017. Your Society can help provide the critical foundation of prayer on which such an initiative could be built. Please pray that our national initiative can help create a culture of vocation in Ireland, one which will encourage families and parishes to respond generously and supportively if one of their sons expresses an interest in the priesthood.

Pray also for those who work in the formation of priests. Being involved in formation nowadays is no easy task because students sometimes bring to seminary formation very complex needs and unresolved personal issues from their life experience before seminary. All seminarians are asked to be open to being shaped in the four key areas of formation: spirituality, human, pastoral and academic. The Various steps along the road to ordination and priesthood are taken in a process of mutual discernment between themselves, their formation team and their bishop or superior. The whole process must be treated with the utmost sensitivity, care, complete confidentiality and openness and obedience to the will of God. May St Joseph guide all those who live and work in our seminaries and houses of formation.

Please pray also today for your priests after ordination. It can mean so much to a priest or bishop when one of you comes up and says, "Father you are doing a good job, we love you and we need you". Often people will be quite open in their criticism of priests, but how many will offer words of gratitude and encouragement and prayer to their pastors who often have to deal with traumatic or tragic situations in their parish ministry.

I know that you, in the St Joseph's Young Priests Society, inspired by the example of your patron saint, are a tremendous support to our seminarians and priests. Thank you and may God bless and reward you for your invaluable contribution to the life of the Church in Ireland.

“Creating a culture of vocation in today’s Irish Church - is it too late?”

by Sr Louise O’Rourke pddm

What is a culture of vocations? Such a culture encourages, fosters, promotes, affirms and celebrates young and not so young people as they discern their particular vocation to serve Jesus Christ and his Church. This is not a new concept. However it seems that for a while, we had a culture, even in religious circles, that discouraged vocations. We all pray for an increase in vocations. But would you dare to pray for a vocation in your own family? Your son, your daughter, grandchild, niece or nephew? When Bishop Kevin Doran was consecrated as Bishop of Elphin in 2014, he posed the question - do we really pray for vocations? Or is it, vocations, yes, but not from my family.

Whose responsibility is it to create this culture of vocations? Pope Benedict XVI said: *‘Particularly in these times, when the voice of the Lord seems to be drowned out by ‘other voices’ and his invitation to follow him by the gift of one’s own life may seem too difficult, every Christian community, every member of the Church, needs to consciously feel responsible for promoting vocations.’* So there’s our answer. Answering Jesus’ call of “Follow me!” is ‘no less challenging’ today than it was for the disciples 2,000 years ago. “The ability to foster vocations,” Pope Benedict XVI wrote, “is a hallmark of the vitality of a local Church.” But what about Ireland?

Some of the seeds of hope which I see in the flourishing of a culture of vocations in recent times in the Irish Church are:

Rise of the Roses - a group of young women spent 10 Saturdays touring Ireland visiting 10 different convents with a bus load of friends and families. They have been instrumental in sowing the seeds of the call to religious life in the hearts and minds of many young people during the Year for Consecrated Life. The fruits of this are showing in small cells of young women who are coming together to discern and share common life.

Youth 2000 - Last year, over 1300 young people between 16 and 35 years of age attended a 4 day festival of faith in the Cistercian Abbey, Roscrea. They sang, danced, prayed the Rosary, attended Adoration, went to Confession, took part in workshops on a number of topics, including vocations. There are now over 30 weekly Youth 2000 Prayer groups throughout Ireland.

Pure in Heart - a movement which promotes the beauty of chastity and healthy relationships, many religious and priestly

vocations have grown from this group and Youth 2000.

Sisters Café - an initiative of Vocations Ireland whereby sisters go to different venues and parishes to speak about vocations in an informal setting.

Over the summer there are various ordinations to deaconate and priesthood in different religious orders and in the dioceses. Also numbers in the enclosed and contemplative orders are on the rise and there is a trickle of applications for apostolic and missionary orders. This is the fruit of prayer of individuals and communities and also of committed vocation directors.

So what can I, what can we do? Something as simple as having even one person encourage an individual to consider a vocation doubles the likelihood that they will do so, for both men and women. We must promote this same vocation culture in the digital world too. Somewhere in the region of 90% of inquiries for priestly and religious vocations now come from social media: from websites, via Twitter and Facebook and email! You can involve the local community with something like the Chalice Programme, a programme whereby at the end of a Sunday Mass, a family, couple or individual, receives the chalice from the priest and pray daily for vocations. It may be the first time this topic has been explored in that home. In one year, 52 families will have actively prayed and hopefully dialogued about vocations. In ten years, 520 families. Multiply that by the 199 parishes in Dublin...you’d need a calculator! Is it too late for the Irish Church to create a culture of vocations? I would answer ‘no’. Not because of any of our human efforts but because the call comes from God and He keeps calling. The good news is that much work has been done to begin to create a culture of vocations. Some parishes, dioceses, religious orders, and colleges are developing vocation programs or youth programs to encourage young people in their faith, helping them to realize that a relationship with Christ is a beautiful and powerful thing that is worth developing despite what the popular culture may say. We have to focus on the small mustard seeds which we see flourishing and be prepared to keep dreaming, hoping and praying.

The full version of this talk given to a Dublin branch of the Society is found on Sr Louise’s blog:

<http://pilgrimsprogresspddm.blogspot.com/>

Recently Deceased

LOCAL BRANCHES

Abbeyfeale Mary Mann
Armagh Aileen White, Maureen McKenna, Anne Haughey, Frank Hughes
Athea Nora O’Connell, Sr M Gerard Fox
Ballinascreen Joe McCullagh, Pat McCullagh, Joe McEldowney, Charlie Kearney, Monica Kelly, Patrick Armour, Maureen McCallion, Damian McGuigan
Ballyphehane Carmel Coen, Breda O’Regan.
Ballinahinch/Killoscully Paddy Seymour, Michael Hourigan, John Joe and (daughter) Mary O’Dwyer, Martin Kelly
Borrisoleigh Mary Lennon
Derrygonnelly/Botha John Higgins, Carmel Meehan, Anna Cadden, Pat McManus, Maureen McConnell, Tommy Duffy, Joey Jones, Patsy Greene
Dundalk Francis Brady, John Lambe, Maureen Sloane, Mona McDonald, John Byrne, Oliver McClean
Buncrana Fr Michael Kelly, Kathleen Barber, Evelyn McNelis, Kathleen McBride
Callan Bridget Hackett

Coleraine (St John’s) Pamela Howard
Curaheen Road, Cork Mary Phelan
Douglas Anna Mulchrone
Enniskillen Barbara Brazil, Vincent Burns, Sr Raphael Maguire, John James Treacy, Teresa O’Doherty, Geraldine Monaghan
Foxrock John Howard
Graigenamanagh Stella Carroll, Eileen Connolly, Sean Kiernan (Borris)
Harolds Cross Eithne Doyle, Bernadette Murphy
Knockninny Fr Jim Maguire, Carmel Flanagan, Liam McEnri, John Drumm.
Leighlin Michael McCartney
Lordship and Ballymascannon Philomena Sutherland
Maghera Margaret Merron, Tommy Doherty, Dan McEldowney, Michael McKenna, Raymond Convery
Marino Peggy Wilson
Mourne Rd, Dublin Sheila Moynihan
Newbridge Rose Murphy (née Keating Brownstown The Curragh)
Newport Billy Lenihan
Our Lady Crowned, (Mayfield) William (Bill) Doocey

Portadown Gerry Barlow, Edel Sharkey, Eddie Leonard, Malachy McCann
Raheny Catherine Ryan
Rathmines Peter Veale, Christina Brennan, Thomas Kearney
Roscrea Mary Bergin, Frances Bergin
Sandyford Geraldine Glasgow
Scotshouse Frances Connaughton
Skibbereen Jim McCullagh
St Kevin’s, Harrington Street Elizabeth Cullen, Pauline O’Reilly, Tommy Coleman
St Patrick’s, Kilkenny Eileen Harrington, Maria Lee
Templemore Sean Murphy, Marjorie McKeone, John Cormack
Thomastown, Ossory Angela Walsh
Trillick Dymrna Donnelly, Jim McCaffrey, Moira Kelly, Nora McQuade, Thomas Green, Alice O’Reilly
Tullyclair/Glasson Teresa Fox.

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