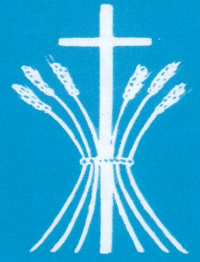


The Sheaf



ST. JOSEPH'S YOUNG PRIESTS SOCIETY

www.stjosephsyoungpriestssociety.com

23 MERRION SQUARE, DUBLIN 2, IRELAND, D02 XE02. TELEPHONE: +353 (1) 676 2593 Email: editor@sjyps.org

SPRING 2018

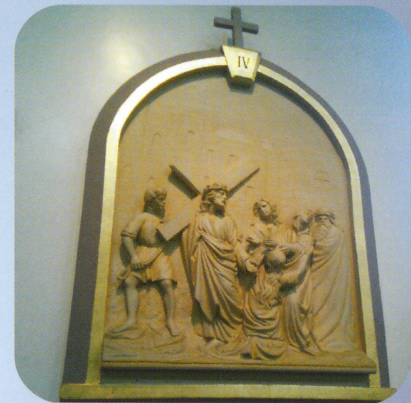


Officers and members of the new branch at St Cronan's parish, Brackenstown, Swords, Co Dublin.

L/R Front Row: Bernie Corry, Dublin Diocesan Committee, Sr Eileen Carroll, Chaplain, Anne Keaney, Asst Treasurer, Bernadette McGuinness, Treasurer, Greta Byrne, Teresa McQuillan, Asst Secretary.

Back Row: Teresa Croke, Secretary, Fr Seamus McEntee, Chief Chaplain, Mary Martin, Vice-President, Maureen Cullen, Kieran Hickey, President Dublin Diocesan Committee, Michael Scahill, Branch President, Tom McCann

Inset: Fr Paul Thornton PP (not present when picture taken)



At The Fourth Station

(Jesus meets His afflicted mother)

Where do You go My Only Son
In the springtime of the year?
Is there another Feast at Cana
And other guests to cheer?
But why the wood upon your back
And on Your brow a thorn?
And why those weary steps and slow
Upon the Friday morn?
And where have your disciples gone?
Where is Peter? James? and John?
And why these cruel soldiers?
And why this vengeful throng?
Please tell me you go to Cana
Where the grape grows on the vine,
That You go once more to Cana
To change water into wine.

I go no more to Cana,
The wedding guests have fled,
I travel now this Calvary Road
My Living Blood to shed.
For I must shed my Living Blood
Upon the Hill of Shame
Because it is My Father's Will
That I must take the blame.
I take all sin upon My Head
To set the captives free
I let Myself be mocked and scourged
And nailed upon a tree.
My Cross shall smash the fowler's snare,
My singing birds shall soar,
My Blood shall cleanse the world of sin
And open Heaven's Door.

Frank Holohan

Leading the entrance procession at the Society's recent Mass of Thanksgiving for Priesthood were Maynooth students Mykola Diachuk, Joseph Mensah, Mark O'Farrell (crossbearer) and Clement Narcher.



On 24 November the Magheradoll pastoral area of the Dromore diocese had an evening of prayer for vocations to priesthood, missionary and religious life and despite the inclement weather the event was well attended. The Eucharist was concelebrated by Fr Mc Neill PP Dromara, Drumgooland and Dromore with Fr Brown PP Magheradoll.

The evening ended with tea where those attending could explore more about the Society. Similar events will be held quarterly in the other pastoral areas of the diocese.

The vocations director needs the help and prayers of all to pray for vocations and for our seminarians so that God may send us good and holy priests

The Diocesan Vocations Director

In the last month Rev Eric Cooney of the National Vocations Office and myself have been visiting vocations directors throughout the country. This initiative was to gather diocesan vocations directors together to see how we can work in unity for the promotion of vocations to the diocesan priesthood in Ireland. This is the third year of the initiative which always proves successful in its facilitating the sharing of ideas and resources on vocations promotion.

In Canon 385 we are told that the bishop is required to foster all vocations to ministry and religious life though with “a special care for priestly and missionary vocations”. Importantly the task of fostering vocations is not just the responsibility of the bishop but of the whole Christian community (Canon 233). In these two canons we see that the office of Vocations Director is a reflection of the bishop’s commitment to encouraging the growth of all vocations.

The 1997 document *In Verbo Tuo* which came out of The Congress on Vocations to the Priesthood and to Consecrated Life in Europe reinforces the need for the community to foster a culture of vocations. This document encourages the support by dioceses of all vocations whether ordained or lay, but that this should include a particular support for priesthood and consecrated life.

So what does a vocations director do? It is the responsibility of the Vocations Director to recruit the next generation of priests for his diocese. Easier said than done. Some of the key areas are going around different parishes, youth groups, ecclesial youth movements and schools, talking to young people about vocations and the possibility that God indeed might be calling one of them to a vocation to the priesthood.

If a man expresses an interest in the priesthood, the vocations director meets with him personally to help him discern whether or not God may be calling him to the priesthood.

Careers fairs in both secondary and third level colleges are also an opportunity to distribute literature and prayer cards for discernment. The vocations director also

plans different diocesan events throughout the year to motivate young people to think about vocations.

Once a man decides to apply for seminary, it is the job of the vocations director to guide him through the application process, which includes an application form, a biography and an interview with the vocations board. If he’s accepted by the bishop to be a seminarian, then the process of formation begins and the journey towards priesthood gets underway. On ordination day, it is the role of the vocations director to formally present the candidate(s), in the name of God’s people, to the bishop for ordination to the priesthood.

shortage in candidates coming forward to discern a vocation. God still calls people and it remains the role of the Vocation Director to help those being called to quieten the noise in life, so that they may hear the whisper of God. The National Vocations Office is bringing a team of priests who have enjoyed considerable success in North America to deliver a formation course for diocesan vocation directors. This is an exciting development as it is the first time that this course is being presented outside of the US. The course will take place in Knock from Sunday 24th June to Thursday 28th June. Over the four days the course will provide an opportunity for Vocation Directors to discover what has worked well for others

labouring in the field of vocations and take encouragement and motivation for new strategies for helping men to discern God’s call. Vocation Directors who attend this course can expect to learn about a variety of ways to promote vocations, how to respond and

“*Priests of the country and city, with their anointing, have given strength to the people, have passed on the teaching of the faith, have given the sacraments; and in a word given holiness.*”

POPE FRANCIS

The vocations director needs the help and prayers of all to pray for vocations and for our seminarians so that God may send us good and holy priests. For every vocations director it is a privilege to witness the formation of the future priests of our dioceses. Diocesan Vocation Directors face many challenges in nurturing vocations to the priesthood today. Quite apart from the demands on their time, the vocations landscape has changed. The growth in secularisation along with the portrayal of negative coverage in the media all contribute to a

screen applicants, how to leverage various social media tools and applications and most importantly how to journey with those who are seeking to discern.

RTE 1 will televise Mass for Vocations Sunday on April 22nd 2018.

**Father Willie Purcell,
National Coordinator for Diocesan Vocations
National Vocations Office.
Columba Centre.
Maynooth.
Co. Kildare.**



The Tuam recent regional vocations directors meeting. Fr W Purcell is second from left.

CONTEMPLATING THE WORLD MEETING OF FAMILIES ICON PRAYING FOR VOCATIONS

Sr Karen Kent OSU Coordinator of Pastoral Development in Cork and Ross diocese has sent us the homily of Rev Dr Charles Kelly at a Holy Hour for vocations held as part of the journey around Ireland of the icon written for the World Meeting of Families

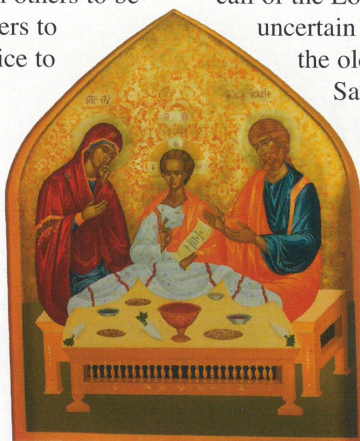
It is easy for us to say that calling forth men and women of today to be a priest, sister, brother, nun or friar is the work of God, and yes, we know it is God's initiative...it is God's choice whom he calls...but sometimes God also calls on others to be part of his calling forth. Sometimes he needs others to assist in the call, in the discernment of a life choice to priesthood or religious life.

What does Jesus teach us about discerning a call to follow him? Within the family, as we see here in the icon, Jesus lived the life of a Jewish child of his time...he witnessed Joseph at work, he learned his trade from him. He experienced his mother who nurtured him by teaching him, praying with him, and loving him. Around their table they shared the joys and the difficulties of family life.

As a teenager Jesus was lost and found by Mary and Joseph among the teachers. When Mary approached him we see tension between mother and son, this is something we see in every family – especially when it comes to children making choices in their lives. How do parents reconcile the desires, wishes and hopes for their children when the plans of their children might not be what they had in mind for them? It all begins with communication and develops into respect for one another. Like Mary, Joseph and Jesus we must learn to listen to and respect the needs, desires and duties of each other.

The time of discernment of a vocation is a grace-filled time for families and for the discerner. Both parents and children need to spend time together in prayer and reflection with dialogue between them and with the wider family circle, friends and local parish community. It is a time for conversion, not only for the one considering a vocation but also for those around them.

As Jesus was gaining an understanding of his mission, we recognise moments of confusion and anxiety – the same as in every family going through this moment together. Each family member is called to sacrifice something – some dream, some hoped-for experience. In the midst of this each family member is also given a great gift when a member of the family chooses religious life or priesthood. All of this begins and continues in prayer – as Pope Francis says: “behind and before every vocation to the priesthood or consecrated life there is always the strong and intense prayer of someone: a grandmother, a grandfather, a mother, a father, a parish community”. In our homes, in our parishes and in our religious communities we need to create a special time to pray for vocations and in particular to pray for those who are discerning their vocation – even when it may appear that no one is interested in our way of life today.



Those of us who are priests and religious must live our way of life with joyful commitment to the Lord, to one another and to prayer so that our witness may inspire others to be open to the call of the Lord. In our reading today we see the boy Samuel uncertain of the call – who is calling him – and it takes the older man, Eli, to point the way to the Lord to Samuel. Samuel needed the intervention of Eli in order to hear the Lord calling. Eli was the instrument God used in this call. We are all invited to be an Eli for someone today

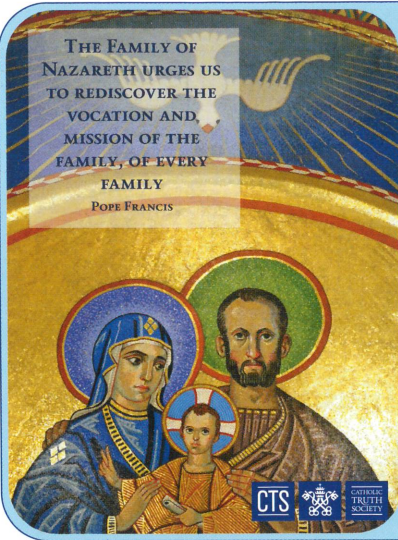
Today the Lord continues to call forth people to priesthood and religious life in all its different forms...perhaps he needs you to be his “Eli” today? Perhaps you are needed to help someone to respond to the Lord to help them to find the right words to answer the call of the Lord.

Today, the world is a very noisy, busy place – but this means that there is all the more need for us to be listening and assisting the Lord in his calling others to him – the voice of God needs to be heard through parents, family, neighbours, friends and parish communities – we must not be afraid to propose to our young people the priesthood and religious life. If we keep silent we may prevent God speaking through us to the one whom he is calling to himself...

Priesthood and religious life are essential to the ongoing life of the Church. Since the beginning certain people within the Christian community were called to follow Jesus in a unique way. This legacy has been handed down to each generation beginning in the domestic church of every home, where we are educated in the faith and encouraged to discern where God is calling us in life. We need to encourage parents to be courageous in talking about Christ, talking about vocations in the homes of our parishes and most of all to continue to pray together as families.

Each of us needs to play our part – in the icon we meet Jesus in Cana – the wedding feast is a place where each one plays their part. We see Mary, turning to Jesus with her request – her pointing the way for her son – Do whatever he tells you – the servants doing as they were bidden – the steward tasting the wine. The guests at the wedding delighting in the best wine – saved until last.

Coming back to our story of Samuel and Eli we must ask ourselves the question – who will I be Eli for? What part is the Lord asking me to play in the work of vocations? then like the servants at the wedding feast I must – do whatever he tells me...



The Catholic Truth Society wishes readers to know that CTS have a wide range of titles in support of the World Meeting of Families, covering prayers and guidance for parenting, marriage and those preparing for marriage. As well as support for marriage, CTS titles offer parenting and relationship guidance. One may view all relevant CTS titles at www.ctsbooks.org/wmof2018

A Thought from Sister Janet...

Many people used to stop by my computer to look at the picture I had on the desktop. I was not surprised. I liked it myself, which is why I put it there in the first place.

The black and white picture showed a very new baby, held up in the air by two hands: that of its mother and father. The infant sucked its thumb, even in its sleep. Just above its little chest, a light glowed softly. The hands and the light seemed to say that there were three people involved in the little life, curled up in peaceful sleep: its mother, father and God.

Yet sometimes the wonder of life is trivialised in a world where so much is disposable that human life can also be put onto the rubbish heap.

Working as a midwife, mine was the privilege of being the very first person ever to have seen the baby emerging from its mother. There was a uniquely special feeling of being 'in' on the act of Creation. One of the most unforgettable joys of my life was when an unborn baby took hold of my finger and refused to let go.

Unfortunately, I had to release my finger from the tiny hand. After all, the baby had to be born and its hand was in the way, even if infinitely precious and in spite of my wanting to treasure that moment of closeness.

We hear a great deal today about the "abortion issue" and "the right to die debate". Life is not an issue or a debate. Those who are doing all the talking can sometimes forget that they are only able to voice their opinions because they themselves are alive and that someone loved them into being.

Thank God that there are those who are willing to stand up for the defenceless.

God bless, Sr Janet

For your diary

Provincial Congresses

Cashel	Saturday 24 March
Tuam	Saturday 7 April
Armagh	Saturday 14 April
Dublin	Saturday 21 April

Pilgrimages

Knock	Saturday 23 June
Our Lady's Island	Sunday 22 July

Centenary Remembrance Ballapousta Saturday 26 May

May is the 100th Anniversary of the death of Mrs Olivia Taaffe, the Society's foundress

Recently Deceased

LOCAL BRANCHES

Ardfield / Rathbarry Tim Joe O'Donovan, Kitty O'Sullivan, Peter Griffin, Chrissie Hayes

Athea Birdie Ahern

Ballypnehane Jerry Scannell

Blackrock Agnes O'Connor, Dr Ivo O'Sullivan

Borrisoleigh Marette Smyth

Bohermeen Sean Dunne, Maureen Fitzgerald, Betty Shaffrey, Mattie Rogers, Patrick Farmer, Richard Allen, Philomena Folan

Carrigaline Paul Drievers, Bernie Mullane, Finbar Aherne

Coleraine Bernard Morahan

Derrygonnelly / Botha Mary Margaret Greene, Susan Carty, Rose Corrigan, Blayne Foster, Robert Beatty, Joe Duffy, Martin Maguire, Veronica McConnell

Dundalk Jim McCooley, Sisters of Mercy Sr Josephine Sullivan and Sr Brenda McCaul

Enniskillen May Maguire, Philomena Brewster, Christopher Masterson,

Niall McManus, Carolyn Hicks, Martin Logan, Emma Reid, Jim McGovern, Camillus Hanley, Sheila Slevin

Foxrock Eamon Byrne

Lisdoonvarna Betty Queally

Loughrea Brendan Killackey

Lordship and Ballymacscanlon Vera Keenan

Maghera Michael Bryson, Paddy McKenna, Tony McGuire, Dermot, John and Richard McErlean, Frances McCabe, Phelim Diamond, Tommy Convery, Eamon McCusker, Frank Kearney, Patsy O'Kane, Joseph Thomas Brennan, Rose Cassidy, Nuala McGuigan, Bella McEldowney, Teresa Logue, Joan O'Neill, Damien Gallagher, Mary Jane Glass, Seamus O'Doherty, Neecie Kelly, Donna Henderson, John McCusker, Patricia Owens

Mountnugent / Balinacree Seamus Hennessey, Mary Carroll, Michael Donoghue, Jim O'Reilly, Tommy Smith, Ann Flood, Michael Foley, Rose Brady, Matt Farnan, Kim Glennon, Noel Lynch, Johnny McLarney, Michelle Cahalan

St Columba's, Long Tower Tommy McCay

St John's, Granaghan Jack McGuckin, James McKeagney

St John the Baptist, Clontarf Mary Cahill, Eileen Healy, Gerry O'Brien

St John Vianney, Ardlea Anna Kelly

Sts Peter & Paul, Athlone Anne Savage, Nora Kelly, Patricia Killian, Bridie Corcoran

Templemore Ned Meagher, Elizabeth Wolohan, Breda Rogan

Templeogue Sarah Kissane

Terenure Martha O'Neill

The Three Patrons Parish Branch Isobel O'Doherty, Lily Wade, Claire Casey

Trillick Carmel McCarney, Bernadette Maguire, Sean McSorley, John Joe McQuaid, Eugene McQuaid, Willie Warnock, Michael McManus, Agnes McManus, Eugene McGrade

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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