

The Sheaf



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ST. JOSEPH'S YOUNG PRIESTS SOCIETY

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SUMMER 2019

Bishop Donal Mc Keown, Fr Willie Purcell National Diocesan Vocations Coordinator, Margaret Cartwright of Vocations Ireland and Rev Eric Cooney administrator of the National Vocations Office recently attended the European Vocations Services Meeting in Rome. Some 50 delegates from 22 European countries met in Rome, from 4 to 7 June, to attend the annual meeting of the heads of the vocations ministry of the Bishops' Conferences of Europe. Its theme was: "They spoke to each other of all the things that had happened" (Lk 24,14). We had questions and perspectives after the Synod, three days of prayer, testimonies and reflections on the vocation to the priesthood and to the male and female consecrated life, to Marriage in the light of the synod on the youth, and the final document and Apostolic Exhortation *Christus Vivit*.

The pinnacle moment of the conference, the audience with Pope Francis who, in his impromptu speech, reminded the participants that a vocation "is not proselytism. It's not looking for new members for this club. No! The work for vocations must move along the line of growth that Benedict XVI said so clearly: the growth of the Church is by attraction, not by proselytism."

The challenge for the Church, the Pope continued, is "communicating with young people. Working with them requires a lot of patience. A lot of listening skills... It is necessary to understand their language, which is a poor language of communion, because although they know so much about contacts, they don't communicate. We need to accompany, guide, and help the youth so that the encounter with the Lord will show them the way in life. Young people are all different; they are different in all places, but they are equal in their anxiety, in their thirst for greatness, in the desire to do good, they are all the same."

"In the current almost univocal cultural context, vocations have diminished, but neither the enthusiasm of the proposal nor the certainty that the Lord will not fail in giving ministers to His Church has been extinguished; the call to a special consecration is still attractive and timely. Young people are the recipients of our commitment with a look of benevolence, esteem and trust; they want to be loved within so much loneliness that they experience. They are strict with the Church but if they find credible witnesses from within it then they are attracted to it. They want to be involved in the Announcement to become first witnesses for other young people. They must be accompanied so that they recognize the work of God in their personal experiences and are available to listen to God who asks something more of them."

Fr Willie Purcell

PROMOTING THE SOCIETY

How does one encourage someone who wishes to promote the work of Saint Joseph's more effectively? How can it be best done by the ordinary sincere Catholic who makes no claim to oratory or to the talent of persuasion?

The most important talent required to influence others in the Lord's work is the sincerity of one's own conviction. It can be left to the Holy Spirit to provide the gift of words where necessary. Christ's own directions are quite clear: "*Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven*".

Perhaps one way of interesting others in the Society's work of encouraging and supporting priestly vocations is to remind them of the enormous privilege you consider it is in being asked to share in the work so fundamental to the success of Christ's mission on earth. Not every Christian is called to serve Christ in ministerial priesthood or consecrated life, or indeed to have one of their own family called, but all of us are called to assist especially by our prayer and encouragement, those who are.

"May increased opportunities for boys and girls never lessen your esteem for the privilege of having a son or daughter of yours selected by Christ and called by Him to give up all things and follow Him"
(POPE JOHN PAUL II).

As we approach the National Congress over the weekend of 24 and 25 August, we remember that membership of Saint Joseph's provides an opportunity for us laity to play a significant role in the Lord's work, not only as single or married lay Catholics in our own right, but also by promoting and supporting the vocations of ordained ministry and religious and missionary life.

Offer that opportunity. Of course not everybody will respond in agreement. Some people will.



Bishop Donal McKeown, Deacon Eric Cooney, Margaret Cartwright, Fr Willie Purcell and Archbishop Jorge Carlos Patron Wong, Secretary for the Council for Clergy with responsibility for Seminaries



In this photo of members of Leixlip branch, Fr Seamus McEntee is standing, Dublin seminarian Frank Drescher is in centre of the front row with Kieran Hickey seated between him and Fr John McNamara.

*Dear members of the St. Joseph's Young Priests Society,
Dear Readers of THE SHEAF,*

I send to you my warm and heartfelt greetings from Rome! It is with pleasure that I accept the invitation to address you in this newsletter and to introduce myself briefly.

My name is Frank Drescher. I am 43 years old and am currently in my sixth year of priestly formation as a seminarian for the Archdiocese of Dublin. Since 2017 I have been studying the theology of spirituality at the Pontifical Gregorian University. Before taking up studies here, I had the opportunity to gain valuable parish experience in Clondalkin Village in County Dublin under the mentorship of Fr Damian Farnon and with great support from Fr Séamus McEntee, following a year of studies in Maynooth previously. I spent last summer on a pastoral placement in Leixlip, where I enjoyed the great hospitality of Fr John McNamara and his parish.

From these occasions I know a number of SJYPS members personally and I appreciate your very generous support. And by that I don't just mean the financial sacrifices you make for us. I also know that you continuously keep us in prayer, support, and encourage us whenever we have the opportunity for a personal conversation. I cannot thank you enough for that!

I'm often asked about my vocation story. In a few words, I was born in Germany in 1975 in the industrial city of Duisburg at the river Rhine. During and after philosophical and theological studies at the University of Münster, I often thought about becoming a

priest. But I lacked the courage and personal maturity to follow the call when I was younger. I needed my time and had to pursue things at my own pace.

After working several years in the private sector, life (or rather, providence) brought me to Ireland. I found a new home in Dublin, where I used to live in Blanchardstown. There I learned an important lesson for my vocation: For a long time, I thought my call was to serve God on behalf of the people. Now I understand that it is exactly the other way around – as a priest one serves the people on behalf of God.

After many wonderful people taught me this lesson in the course of my life, I was finally ready to accept this vocation. And, thank God, the Archdiocese of Dublin offered me the opportunity and the possibility to respond to this call with joy.

Here in Rome I am enjoying an excellent training in spiritual and pastoral theology, which I hope soon to bring back to Dublin for the greater benefit of all.

Once again, I thank everyone very much for their support, also on behalf of my brother seminarians here at the Pontifical Irish College, and I look forward to my next encounter with members of the SJYPS.

Praying for God's blessing for all of you.

Yours in Christ,

Frank Drescher



On Thursday 16 May Society members attended the clerical students 6pm Mass in St Mary's Oratory Maynooth. It was a time their examinations approached and the academic year was coming to a close. Afterwards there was a time for relaxation and good wishes over refreshments in the dining hall.



This photo shows members of Malahide branch with their new processional banner. Their only disappointment with the Society's day in Knock was that there was no outdoor procession with the Blessed Sacrament on such a lovely day.

Sr Louise's talk at the AGM of Foxrock Branch on 10th June 2019

The Congregation to which I belong, the Disciples of the Divine Master was founded in 1924 by Blessed James Alberione, who also founded the Pauline Family, a Family which consists of five religious congregations including ourselves, four secular institutes and an aggregated institute. The Founder intended that as Disciples, our life of contemplative Eucharistic prayer would support the activities of the other Pauline congregations. In daily life, we were the maternal presence to generations of young boys who joined the minor seminary of the Society of St Paul and diocesan seminaries in the early 20th century; hence how the vocation to support and care for priests flowered and developed. Today, this ministry to priests takes on different expressions according to the needs of the local Church throughout the world.

During Adoration we hold up to God the needs of humanity and of the Church, praying particularly for priests who are in difficulty and struggling with the different challenges of their life and ministry. We pray for priestly vocations, assisting and accompanying them in their formation and in the exercise of their ministry, through friendship, caring and practical support to priests, especially in times of suffering and crisis and also with our presence and prayer when they are elderly and infirm. For us, the priest is the 'alter Christus', (other Christ), and we walk with them, just as our Mother Mary walked alongside Jesus in his earthly life. This support of the priesthood also extends to helping all the baptised understand the call of the priesthood of the people of God and how this complements ministerial priesthood.

You can see how our mission overlaps with that of St Joseph's Young Priests Society which exists to help student clerics on their journey to priesthood and fosters vocations to the priesthood and religious life. It assists students for the priesthood both financially and by prayer as it promotes the vocation of the laity and fosters a greater understanding and love of the Mass. As Sisters who are encouraged to support priests and seminarians, 'from the womb to the tomb' and as SJYPS, where presumably you do likewise, it is good for us to rediscover how we can walk together as Church, supporting young people and helping them discern the plan which God has for their lives and also to learn from them.

Last October 2018, Pope Francis convoked a Synod of Bishops with the theme "Young people, the faith and vocational

discernment." Then on the 25th March 2019, he promulgated a 74-page post-synodal apostolic exhortation, a reflection on the findings of the Synod entitled *Christus Vivit*, "Christ lives" or "Christ is Alive." He addresses this exhortation primarily to young people but also to the whole People of God.

In the Chinese language, the same word is used for crisis that is use for opportunity. We continue to speak of a 'vocation crisis', but maybe we need to change our language to 'vocation opportunity'. Pope Francis writes: "A vocation, while a gift, will undoubtedly also be demanding. God's gifts are interactive; to enjoy them we have to be ready to take risks. Yet the demands they make are not an obligation imposed from without, but an incentive to let that gift grow and develop, and then become a gift for others. When the Lord awakens a vocation, he thinks not only of what you already are, but of what you will one day be, in his company and in that of others." (CV 289)

Our young people are formed by different environments but as the Pope writes: "Young people need to have their freedom respected, yet they also need to be accompanied. The family should be the first place of accompaniment." (CV 242) Elsewhere he says: "In discerning your vocation, do not dismiss the possibility of devoting yourself to God in the priesthood, the religious life or in other forms of consecration. Why not? You can be sure that, if you do recognize and follow a call from God, there you will find complete fulfilment." (CV 276)

To those promoting vocations to the priesthood and religious life, he encourages, saying: "If we are indeed convinced that the Holy Spirit continues to inspire vocations to the priesthood and the religious life, we can "once more cast out the nets" in the Lord's name, with complete confidence (CV 274). And again: "The Lord cannot fail in his promise to provide the Church with shepherds, for without them she would not be able to live and carry out her mission. If it is true that some priests do not give good witness, that does not mean that the Lord stops calling. On the contrary, he doubles the stakes, for he never ceases to care for his beloved Church (CV 275).

The good news is that men are still responding to the call of God to priesthood. Every response is an ordinary person responding in an extraordinary way. Each call and response is unique. I would like to

share a few examples:

On the 2nd June 2019, Fr Probo Vaccarini, a priest from the Diocese of Rimini, celebrated his 100th birthday! His celebration was concelebrated by many priests including his four sons who are also priests, one of whom is a founder of a religious order. After Fr Probo was widowed in his sixties, he became a diocesan priest.

Br Michael Los, a Polish brother from the Congregation Sons of Divine Providence was granted a dispensation by Pope Francis allowing him to be ordained both a deacon and a priest in the same Mass on the 24th May 2019. He was ordained by Bishop Marek Solarczyk of the Diocese of Warsaw-Praga on his hospital bed, having being diagnosed in previous weeks with terminal cancer. The day after his ordination, Fr Los celebrated his first Mass from his bed and peacefully died 10 days later.

On the 25th May this year, in Italy, identical 26 year old twins, Giacomo and Davide Crespi were ordained for the Diocese of Treviso, Italy. Although it's a path they walked together, they both emphasise that each one's discernment was "personal, autonomous, and free." Fr Giacomo explains, "My brother David and I never confronted each other, asking, 'What are you going to do?' We simply shared the same path."

Closer to home, on the feast of Pentecost this year, in the Cistercian Monastery of Mount St Joseph, Roscrea. Br Malachy Thompson, OSCO, a native of Finglas, Dublin, also received ordination. Br Malachy had a long working life and career before joining the Cistercians.

As Pope Francis reminds us, to be a disciple of Jesus means to offer the world new testimonies of holiness. In these examples above, we see the commitment and willingness of these different men, from different paths in life, to respond to the call to holiness, specifically through the vocation to priesthood.

As Disciples of the Divine Master, we are always happy to support the St Joseph's Young Priests Society in your mission. Together let us continue to pray for all our seminarians and priests, and those discerning God's plan for their lives.

Sr M Louise O'Rourke pddm

The full talk given at the AGM can be found on Sr M Louise's blog:
<http://www.pilgrimsprogresspddm.blogspot.ie>

Reminder

Most Rev Kevin Doran, Bishop of Elphin, speaking at the Society's pilgrimage to Knock on 22 June likened the few seminarians studying in Ireland today to the scarcity of disciples at the foot of the cross.

"They have heard the promptings of God's Word in their hearts" he said,

"I encourage you to pray for them and also for the many others whom God is calling but who, for one reason or another, are not able to hear His call just at the moment, because of all the competing noises in our culture."

Pastoral Message of Archbishop Eamon Martin

ARCHBISHOP OF ARMAGH AND PRIMATE OF ALL IRELAND

for Vocations Sunday, 12 May 2019

Pope Francis likes to remind young people that they are not just the future of the world and the Church, but they are very much its present – “You are the ‘now’ of God!” he tells them in his apostolic exhortation published in April, *Christus Vivit* (Christ is Alive).

It is beautiful to look at a young person today and see in them already the qualities of a future father, mother, husband, wife, priest or consecrated person.

The Gospel Acclamation for today, the Day of Prayer for Vocations, reminds us that Jesus is the Good Shepherd: “I am the good shepherd, says the Lord; I know my own sheep and my own know me (Jn. 10:14)”.

The Lord Jesus, the Good Shepherd, knows our young people personally. He knows their strengths and weaknesses their joys and their fears, their worries and their hopes and dreams. He continues to call them to serve Him in many ways. Sometimes it is difficult for them to hear the Lord’s call among so many other competing voices. The Lord has not stopped calling some young people to serve Him in the priesthood – in fact, as Pope Francis writes, “he doubles the stakes, for he never ceases to care for his beloved church” (CV275).

For many years the families and parishes of Ireland provided large numbers of priests for both home and for the missions overseas. We are blessed in the Archdiocese of Armagh to have twenty-one young men preparing in Dundalk, Maynooth and Rome to serve as priests in our diocese. Most of these are coming to us from abroad. However I am still very keen to encourage and nurture vocations to the priesthood from among our own young people, many of whom have strong faith and great gifts to offer our Church. How might this be done?

In *Christus Vivit*, Pope Francis cautions against “pre-packaged answers and ready-made solutions” without appreciating the emergence of “new sensitivities and...new questions” (CV65). In that spirit, I am inviting all people in the diocese to prayerfully reflect in the coming weeks on two questions that will help us plan for more vocations to the priesthood in our diocese:

1. What is the most important role that the priests of tomorrow will play in our diocese?
2. What qualities will the priests of tomorrow need to have for our diocese?

Please consider these questions – at home around the kitchen table, or in

school, or out with friends, or during your coffee and lunch breaks at work. Share your thoughts with me and with our Diocesan Vocations Commission. You can send your responses via email to armaghpriest@gmail.com or via post to Diocesan Vocations Commission, Ara Coeli, Cathedral Road, Armagh BT61 7QY.

All of us share in the responsibility of nurturing future vocations, and of supporting our young people to “discern pathways where others only see walls, to recognise potential where others only see peril” (CV67).

Thank you for considering this message and please pray with me for vocations to the priesthood and the religious life, and to generous Christian service in marriage and the single life:

O Jesus, send labourers into your fields which are awaiting holy apostles, saintly priests, heroic missionaries and dedicated sisters and brothers.

Enkindle in the hearts of men and women the spark of a vocation. Grant that Christian families may desire to give your Church helpers in the work of tomorrow.

(PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS,
ST. JOSEPH YOUNG PRIESTS SOCIETY)

+ Eamon Martin

Recently Deceased

BRANCHES

Ardagh and Moydow Michael O’Reilly
Ardboe Branch Fr Patrick Mackle SMA (founder and chaplain of the branch)
Ardfield / Rathbarry Ann Fitzpatrick, Maureen Creedon
Ballyhaunis Helen Hoban, Freddie O’Brien
Bekan Peggy Murphy
Blackrock Branch, Cork Davy Cummins, Eily Lyons
Carrigaline Ted Moore, Eileen Tobin, Jean Lynch, Tony Foley
Celbridge Catherine (Creina) Curran
Clonakilty Ann (Nan) Whelton
Coleraine (St John’s) Tony Devine, Eileen Shanahan
Curraheen Road, Cork Olive Riley, Pat Kelleher
Dundalk Briega McArdle, Loretta Duggan, Johnny Boyle
Ennis Mary Ellen McGrath

Frankfield / Grange Maura O’Mahony
Killorglin Ita O’Neill, Bridie Naughton, Bridie O’Reilly
Knockninny Noel Donohoe, Claire Curry, Michael McManus, Eamon Donohoe, Katie McBrien, Anne McBrien, Rosina McCarron
Loughrea Maureen Healy, Sr De Sales, Frances Martin
Maghera Bridie Harkin, Patsy Quinn, Anna Daly, Kathleen McShane
Naas Michael McCarthy, John McDonnell
Portadown Molly McVeigh, Margaret Hamill, Vonie Liggett.
St Anthony’s, Clontarf Peggy McPartland.
St John the Baptist, Clontarf Mary McAdams, Rosemary McGrath, Vincent McGuinn
St John Vianney, Ardlea Maura Maher
St Kevin’s Harrington Street Paddy Allen
Templeogue Mary Farrell
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