

The Sheaf



ST. JOSEPH'S YOUNG PRIESTS SOCIETY

www.stjosephsyoungpriestssociety.com

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

SPRING 2016

Fr Paul's story:

Growing up in Co Galway, Mass was always a part of our lives as my mum made sure we all were up and out on a Sunday morning. I was an altar boy but it was only later as an older teenager that the thought of priesthood popped into my mind. Immediately I remember thinking to myself, who could ever be a priest! I left school not knowing what to do so I choose to study Mechanical Engineering.

As I went through college I began to drift from my faith and eventually stopped practicing altogether. As the years went on I noticed a lack of fulfilment in my life. I put it down to being far from home, but moving back didn't solve it. I became more depressed in life as I sought fulfilment in vain. One day at work a colleague who could see I was struggling invited me to a charity event at which I met a young woman who radiated joy. She spoke to me of her faith and she invited me to a large prayer gathering. During this event I had a profound experience of God's love and mercy. My life was transformed. I began to rediscover my faith and my prayer life grew. I had an ever increasing desire to do something more along the lines of my faith.

I went to the World Youth Day 2005 in Cologne and there I met a priest who spoke to me of the Emmanuel Community School of Mission in Rome. Within two months I had finished up my job and started the programme which involved living in community, learning about my faith and how to share it in street and parish missions. It was a dream come true! During that year the question of priesthood arose. Returning home I hadn't the courage to apply. It took another two years during which time a lot of healing took place. I am certain that my journey of healing and opening up to priesthood was through the prayers of others.

Little over a year into my seminary studies by chance I dropped into adoration in a south Dublin parish and they were praying for us seminarians. Members of St Joseph's Young Priests Society were offering their prayers for us and I realised I was being carried by people who desired and supported priests and that gave me great encouragement.

Another time I met a man who, upon hearing my name said he'd been praying for



New Dublin Priests Fr Chris Derwin and Fr Paul Glennon who celebrated Mass for St Joseph's Young Priests Society at the Society's House on 23 February. Pictured above: L-R John Murphy (Dublin Provincial President), Fr Chris Derwin (Balbriggan parish), Fr Paul Glennon (Skerries parish) and Kieran Hickey (Dublin Diocesan President).

Both Frs Chris and Paul shared their Vocation stories with the congregation following the Mass.

me. My sincerest thanks to all who pray and contribute so much to supporting students for the priesthood and their priests. Together we advance so much quicker toward the goal God calls us too. May the Lord reward you all for your selfless dedication to prayer and sacrifice for us priests.

Fr Chris's story:

What a year!!! It's been a great year following my ordination to priesthood on the 3 June 2015. I'm Fr Chris Derwin and have been on many trips to Knock Shrine with the local branch of St Joseph's Young Priests Society. I am the youngest priest in Dublin Diocese at 33 years of age. I have been assigned to Balbriggan Parish where I work with the Parish Team, Fr Eugene Taaffe and Niamh Morris Parish Pastoral Worker.

When I was first called by God to serve him by being a priest I felt that I was not a person worthy of a vocation, I felt that God must be calling the wrong person. But after months of prayer and discernment I rephrased the Why me? Question to the Why not me? Once I started thinking about priesthood and discerning I felt things were good for me. I felt that this is where God wants me to be.

Seven years later I never thought I would have been ordained but God's plan is greater than mine. It is thanks to the help of St Joseph's Young Priests Society that I managed to make it through my seven years

of study. Their members' donations towards the cost of seminarians studies, the gifts and prayers have been a huge support and have really been a great support.

Knowing people are praying for me on a daily basis is uplifting and supportive and really shows how important their work is. I was at the door of the Pro Cathedral one day shortly after being ordained and I was greeting people after Mass and a man came up to me and said "Are you Fr. Chris Derwin?" To which I replied "yes", "Well" he said "I've been praying for you for years, I'm a member of the St Joseph's Young Priests Society" I felt truly blessed and was amazed, I couldn't thank him enough.

I always believe in the power of prayer and believe it should never be underestimated. God plants seeds of vocation, and prayer is like the water and light that helps it grow. I have been lucky and I have been honoured to receive a beautiful Mass stole at a recent meeting in 23 Merrion Square, and I wear it with great pride.

I hope the members of St Joseph's Young Priests Society continue the good work of support to seminarians and priests and that their prayers for more labourers are heard by those the Lord is calling. May the Lord continue to bless the faithful members of the Society, their work and all seminarians and priests.

A QUESTION OF FAITH

What is the current situation for vocations to priesthood in Ireland?

In the first episode - 'Called and Chosen' - in a series of five videos, Fr Ruairi Ó Domhnaill, newly appointed full-time Vocations Director in the Diocese of Kildare and Leighlin, discusses with Wendy Grace his experience of a new confidence and interest around vocations to the diocesan priesthood.

The introduction to this first episode contains clips from interviews with seminarians at the Pontifical Irish College in Rome. These interviews form part of the series on answering the call to the diocesan priesthood that *iCatholic* is producing with Fr Ruairi.

To view 'Called and Chosen', visit www.iCatholic.ie player.

The Chalice

This delightful chalice, formerly owned by Fr Capt Donal V O'Sullivan aged 26, was presented to the Society by his nephew Dr Ivo O'Sullivan and is currently in use throughout the Kildare and Leighlin diocese by vocations director Fr Ruairi Ó Domhnaill in the cause of asking the Lord for an increasing response to vocations to priesthood.

For one hundred years, since 1916, the chalice, which is in pristine condition, has been in the custody of the O'Sullivan family of Blackrock Co Dublin in the hope that one day it could be presented to a member of the family on the occasion of his ordination to the priesthood. As this is now unlikely to happen, the family have decided to make the presentation to St Joseph's Young Priests Society to ensure its use for the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, possibly on the missions where vocations are plentiful but money scarce. For the 'Year of Mercy' however, the chalice will remain in Ireland, where vocations are scarce.

Dr Ivo O'Sullivan who presented the chalice writes: The Bishop of Kerry asked for volunteer priests and medical doctors to serve the many Irish soldiers who were in the forces in France during the First World War. My uncle Father Donal, and my uncle Dr Ivo O'Sullivan (after whom I was named) volunteered in February 1916. Dr Ivo served with the Medical Corps of the Connaught Rangers and survived the war, but Fr Donal did not.

Father O'Sullivan was an intelligent gifted and popular priest. He had a great love of the Irish language and the traditions of his country. He was appointed by his bishop as a professor to teach in St Brendan's minor seminary in Killarney. This was within two years after his ordination in Maynooth in 1914. He taught there for a year before going to the battlefield in France to serve as Chaplain to the 7th Battalion, including the Royal Munster Fusiliers.



One of the soldiers there asked Father O'Sullivan, if he would hear his confession because the following morning (5th July 1916) they were going over the top of the trench to attack the German lines. Fr O'Sullivan asked him to collect as many of the Catholic soldiers as he could from the Brigade and he would meet them in the chapel in the nearby village of Bouzincourt near the front. There he prepared them for general confession, gave them general absolution and offered the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass for them.

They went to battle, the battle of the Somme, with greater courage and lighter hearts. Half of the communicants were fated not to return, including Fr Donal O'Sullivan. He was killed by a shell, which exploded beside cavalry where he was giving the Last Rights to a wounded soldier. The shrapnel killed him. He was

aged only 26. He was buried in the cemetery at Bouzincourt in the Valley of the Somme.

Rev Fr C T McGuinness of the 76th Field Ambulance Brigade wrote that Father O'Sullivan was quite fearless and would face any danger to give the Last Rites to the wounded and dying. "He was a fine character, cheerful and energetic and one of the most zealous chaplains I met".

Fr O'Sullivan kept a cryptic diary, spanning a little over four months between his departure from Killarney on 28 February 1916 and his death on 5 July that same year. The diary is a vivid document. It lists the stages of his voyage to France (Killarney, Dublin, London, Folkestone, Boulogne...) and refers to snow falling, visits to 'Lady Gifford's convalescent home', getting around on horseback, notably a three-hour horse ride. He gives out general absolution (and sweets from home) to the troops. He sets up a field altar and visits the sick and the wounded. The high points in the diary are 'St Patrick's Day, shamrock for all' and 'Howe departs and leaves me his bicycle!' Fr Donal cycles everywhere, even as far as Le Touquet on the coast. He visits Amiens Cathedral. A passing reference is made to the Easter 1916 rising in Dublin. Life at the front gets increasingly grim: there are gas attacks, he visits the trenches, spends a night in a dugout on Bethune Road, gets hit by shrapnel. He loses friends: 'Poor Howard dead'. 'Poor Taylor died'. From Donal's second last entry on 4 July, the day before he died: 'Ulster Division Rifles under heavy fire. Heavy casualties. Wounded, wounded, wounded! Busy day for chaplains!'

Apart from his grave in Bouzincourt, Father Donal has been remembered by a photo and plaque (in Irish) in the chapel in St Brendan's, Killarney, where he taught before volunteering.

Maybe this year 2016, on the centenary of his death, it would be appropriate to offer a prayer via Fr Donal, that the Lord would send more labourers to the vineyard?

Please remember St. Joseph's Young Priests Society in your Will

FORM OF BEQUEST

*I give and bequeath to St. Joseph's Young Priests Society, 23 Merrion Square, Dublin 2 the sum of
€.....for the charitable purposes of the Society and I declare that the receipt of the General Secretary
of the Society shall be sufficient discharge to my Executor*

Mercy and the Priesthood

by Fr Seamus McEntee Chief Chaplain to St Joseph's Young Priests Society

at the Dublin Provincial Congress at All Hallows 5 March 2016

When Pope Francis was a young man, he had a powerful experience of God's mercy in a moment of prayer that led to him pursuing the priesthood. His personal spiritual life has been marked by a profound awareness of his status as a sinner who is dependent upon divine mercy. When asked in an interview "Who is Jorge Bergoglio?" his response was "I am a sinner."

His episcopal motto is taken from a sermon by St Bede on Christ's calling of the tax collector Matthew: *Miserando atque eligendo*, which can be roughly translated as "Looking at him with mercy and choosing him."

His entire pontificate has been characterized by a special desire to 'go to the periphery' and reach out to the marginalized. From the beginning, he has gone out of his way to make it very clear that no one is beyond God's mercy and he always became very emotional when inviting his audience to approach God without fear and with great trust in his mercy.

And from my own experience, God's love and mercy have influenced my decision to consider a vocation to priesthood. Not least, more recently back in August 2008, after 10 years since leaving Mother Teresa's community of priests, when late one June afternoon, I experienced the overwhelming love and undeserved mercy of God in my life, and knew immediately that I should consider once again the call to priesthood.

This season of Lent

During this season of Lent we have been directing our attention to the mercy of God, from the very first day of Lent on Ash Wednesday when we cried out in the Responsorial Psalm, 'Be merciful O Lord, for we have sinned.' Ever since then, all of our readings have directed us, through repentance, to know and experience the mercy of our loving God.

In our first reading of today, from the prophet Hosea, we hear of the mercy of the Lord to his people, "He has torn us to pieces, but he will heal us; he has struck us down, but he will bandage our wounds, after a day or two he will bring us back to life and we shall live in his presence. He will come to us as showers come, like spring rains watering the earth." In our psalm, we hear the cry of a captive people cry out for God's mercy, "Have mercy on me, God in your kindness, in your compassion blot out my offence." And our Gospel reminds us today of Christ's mission of mercy to bring glad tidings to the poor, and to sinners. The tax collector recognises his poverty and sinfulness and cries out in humility, "God be merciful to me, a sinner." Jesus then tells us, that this man experienced the forgiveness and mercy of God, and that "this man went home again, at rights with God."

Priests, who stand in the place of Christ, are instruments of the mercy of Christ to the people of God, through the sacraments that they celebrate and also through their very lives as living images of Christ the merciful high priest. At every moment, they act and live in the person of Christ and demonstrate His mercy. In fact Lent is a really good time to ask for mercy and celebrate the mercy of our wonderful God.

Dives in Misericordia

In Saint Pope John Paul II's second encyclical, *Dives in Misericordia*, it gives us a beautiful, concise description of what mercy is: 'when God's love

comes into contact with human misery or frailty, we experience it as mercy.' And this is what the tax collector in today's Gospel experienced.

In every aspect of their priestly ministry, priests are instruments of God's mercy. When a priest pronounces absolution in confession to repentant sinners who are hoping for God's mercy, and they then experience the forgiveness and the healing and the peace of Christ, then they have been instruments of the mercy of Christ.

When a priest comforts and anoints the sick who are hoping for God's mercy and they through the priest's ministry experience some relief or comfort or healing from their distress, then the priest has been the instrument of the mercy of Christ.

Or when a priest through counselling and spiritual direction, brings the light of Christ to those who are trying to find their way through darkness and confusion, then the priest has been the instrument of the mercy of Christ.

Holy Thursday Chrism Mass

At every Chrism Mass on Holy Thursday, the day in which Jesus instituted the Eucharist and the priesthood, celebrated by the bishop and his priests gathered, Jesus is bringing back priests to the very source of their priesthood, which is Jesus Himself. So when they renew their fidelity to the responsibilities of the priesthood, they are renewing their fidelity to Jesus Himself, the High Priest, who permits them to participate in and share ministerially in His merciful priesthood.

I think that we as priests can never talk enough about Jesus in our ministry, in our homilies, in our counselling, in our sacramental preparation with the faithful, because people are hungry to know Jesus and to know His mercy in forgiving their sins, in walking with them in their sorrows or sickness or disability, or standing with them in their poverty and their distress. Christ is the priest's model in his ministry of Mercy. Priesthood is a life spent in great acts of self-giving. The care of souls which all priests undertake is an awesome responsibility, one which serves to help people on their way to their eternal salvation.

On the eve of his February 12-17 visit to Mexico, the Pope went to the Basilica St John Lateran for his annual Lenten meeting with the priests of Rome's parishes and heard the confessions of a few priests. In a short, unscripted address, the Pope told the priests to make sure they try to understand their people, "to put themselves in the other's shoes" and be generous with forgiveness. Just as doctors and nurses can heal injuries, priests can alleviate suffering, too, he said. A kind word from a priest "is so good - very good. It works miracles." But they need to remember, he said, that "we are not princes, we're not masters. We are servants of the people." Priests have to remember that God became incarnate to be able to embrace and understand people. He said that Jesus instituted the priesthood precisely so they could "go and help the people with humility and mercy."

Priests of the Mercy of God

So priests are first and foremost priests of the mercy of God. We are not priests because we endured and survived the rigors and demands of seminary formation but because Christ endured all to make us priests. The priesthood is a gift from God who

endured all sufferings that we may be worthy to be called "other Christs". It is Christ not us who makes us worthy of this holy calling. There is nothing that we have done and nothing that we can still do to make us worthy of this gift.

There is a saying that says: A healthy person cannot feel the pains of sickness, nor can one who is well-fed feel the pangs of hunger. Therefore the more familiar we are with sickness or hunger, the greater will be our compassion and mercy for others who are sick or hungry.

I recently came across a quotation from St Bernard, which is taken from his treatise on the Degrees of Humility and Pride (1119). It can be applied not only to priests but indeed all of us. St Bernard says, "Just as pure truth can only be seen by the pure in heart, so the sufferings of our fellow men and women are more truly felt by hearts that know suffering themselves. However, we cannot sympathise with the wretchedness of others until we first recognise our own. Then we shall understand the feelings of others by what we personally feel, and know how to come to their help. Such was the example shown by our Saviour, who desired to suffer himself in order that he might learn how to show mercy. Scripture says of him that he learned the meaning of obedience through what he suffered. In the same way he learned the meaning of mercy. Not that the Lord whose mercy is from age to age was ignorant of mercy's meaning until then; he knew its nature from all eternity, but he learned it by personal experience during his days on earth." So priests of mercy, need to put themselves in the others' shoes.

Now I know it's true to say that not all priests can be good speakers or good preachers. Not all priests can be good administrators. Not all priests can be parish priests. Not all priests can be missionaries. Not all priests can be church builders. Each priest has his gifts and inadequacies which is understandable. But if a priest is rude and merciless, unforgiving and revengeful, arrogant and vain, materialistic and cold, then we shouldn't be surprised if people are turned away from the Church? However, the best tribute I think that anyone could pay to a priest after he dies is to say that he was Merciful like the Father.

I mentioned earlier some ways that priests, through their sacramental ministry, can be instruments of God's mercy, and I'd just like to add to this a further way that priests can also manifest God's mercy in their personal lives as well.

A priest's first duty of mercy is prayer.

The prayer of a shepherd for his sheep is always music to the ears of God. Prayer is an act of love. Every prayer whether of praise or contrition or petition is always a plea for mercy. Prayer ought to be our anchor. Prayer ought to be our cornerstone. For priests in the parish or school ministry, the breviary is mostly a private prayer. So let us make this Year of Mercy a year of renewed appreciation for the psalms and prayers of the breviary. Our daily fidelity to the Liturgy of the Hours prayed during the day is an act of mercy and our first duty is to be alone with God. Priests shouldn't allow the day to pass without beginning it or ending it with the breviary.

This is a shortend version of Fr McEntee's talk. The full version may be had from The General Secretary on request.

MY SHORT PERSONAL FAITH JOURNEY

by Sr Enda Maria O'Halloran

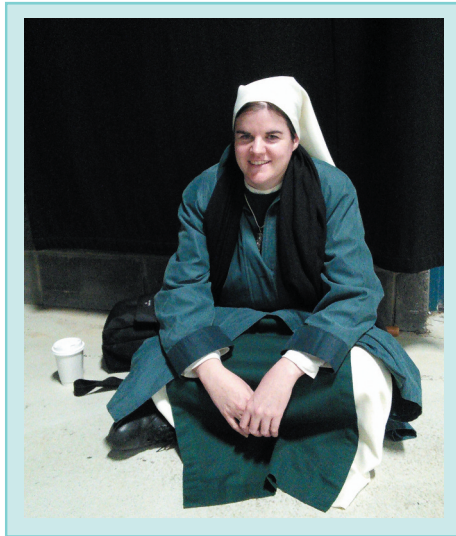
My Catholic faith has always been a very significant aspect of my life. Some of my earliest and fondest memories of growing up are of the times when my family and I prayed the rosary together at home in Co Galway.

I was about six years old when I attended my first Station Mass. I remember vividly how numerous neighbours would descend on the house and cram themselves into our small living room. When the priest began the Mass we would all crowd around the altar and God preserve you if you happened to giggle!

Our annual pilgrimage to Knock was something else I looked forward to. We would have our picnic basket at the ready hours before we set off, but rarely got the opportunity to use it. It always seemed to rain at Knock, so we had to settle for eating our sandwiches in the car. But this never dampened our spirits!

I have no doubt that my parents' encouragement and example played an important part in my faith development. However, on reflection I believe I was always searching for something more, something that would satisfy the deepest longings of my heart. I had struggled with feelings of worthlessness and self acceptance. I tried to ignore them but there was always an emptiness that couldn't be filled.

My search for meaning became more focused during my teenage years when I began to encounter some personal health problems. At the same time, my faith was being challenged by my peers. My neighbour invited me to a weekend for youth. It was there that things began to



unfold and make sense for me. I went to confession and experienced the sacrament of reconciliation in a new way. It truly had a transforming effect on me and continues to do so to this day. That night I met the God of love and mercy in a tangible way. I was set free from fear and shame and enveloped in the embrace of the Father.

After this very personal encounter with the Lord Jesus I had a deep desire to share it with others. Initially, I really felt at a loss as to how I could even begin to do this. Then I heard about a Christian discipleship school in Knock and thanks to the support of the Galway diocese I was able to raise the money to attend. It equipped me with the basics of Church teaching, scripture, prayer and practical skills on how to share the Gospel message (Kerygma) in everyday situations.

During my time at the school I met members of Céilí Community who came to teach us about evangelisation. Furthermore, we at the school got an opportunity to go on mission with Céilí. So a desire for community life and outreach in evangelisation was ignited in my heart. However, I was reluctant for a while to take that crucial step in faith and to really commit. Eventually, despite all my fears, I took the plunge and joined Céilí Community as a lay member in January 2009. I received a broad spectrum of training but was mainly involved with giving youth retreats and Secondary School missions. But, the Lord still wasn't finished with me!

During the community's annual Christmas retreat in 2010 I felt the call to Religious Life. It was not something that I was expecting as I had been going out with a young man for about three years at that time and I had been seriously thinking that married life might be for me.

God works in mysterious ways, however, and here I am, six years later, a religious sister in my second year of temporary vows for Céilí Community and I am still a work in progress! Céilí religious sisters strive to live a Patrician spirituality which is centred on the Trinity. We are a contemplative community with an active apostolate. We believe that in order to fulfill our apostolate effectively it must spring from a deep life of prayer and intimacy with Jesus, our Divine Spouse.

Céilí Community comes under the authority of the Irish Bishops through the Bishop of Meath Most Rev Michael Smith. See www.celicomunity.net

2016 PILGRIMAGE DATES

Knock Shrine Saturday 25th June

Our Lady's Island Sunday 24th July

OOPS! A SLIP-UP!

Apologies to Lesley Trott and the fine people in the Moville Branch in Co Donegal, who found themselves in the last issue of the Sheaf, reallocated to Raphoe Diocese in Co Donegal. Moville is of course in the Derry Diocese.

Dominic Dowling (Ed)

Recently Deceased

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord

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Loughrea Maura Sullivan

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Molloy, Willie McLaughlin, James O'Neill, William Gault,

Annie McCusker, Patsy Mulholland, Terence McFalone

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Mallow Lenny Robinson, Florrie Robinson, May Buckley

Moycarkey/Borris Margaret Peggy Stack

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Thurles Mary Doyle

Trillick Eddie Leonard, Neal Hanratty, Moira Gallagher

Killeavy, (Upper & Middle) Mary Rose Quinn, Michael McKnight

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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