



# 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

WINTER 2010



The Report with Statement of Accounts for the Society's year ended 30 June 2010 was proposed, seconded and adopted at the Central Council Meeting held as shown above, in All Hallows College Drumcondra Dublin on Saturday 2nd October 2010. Our picture shows Mrs Kathleen Reynolds (Templeogue branch) standing, addressing the assembly from the floor.

Happily the report for the year under review showed a welcome increase of over 10% in the number of Irish clerical students assisted. The number of Overseas Students however, fell by roughly 6%.

There was a decrease of 20% in the figure for Ordinations to Priesthood. The details are as follows:

SEMINARIANS				ORDINATIONS		
Year to June	Irish	Overseas	TOTAL	Irish	Overseas	TOTAL
2008	106	691	797	14	157	171
2009	106	711	817	13	134	147
2010	118	669	787	9	109	118

The President of the Society, Mrs Marie Hogan, in her report said "2009/2010 was a very good year for St Joseph's Young Priests Society, as His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI dedicated it to priests, the 'Year for Priests'. Members made special efforts to arrange and take part in Masses, Adoration, Rosaries, Prayer Vigils and Pilgrimages for priests and for vocations to priesthood." She thanked them for their hard work and co-operation, and she encouraged them to keep up the good work. "Your help is on two levels, on the financial but ultimately on the spiritual" she said.

## PRAYER FOR THE CHURCH IN IRELAND

*God of our fathers,  
renew us in the faith which is our  
life and salvation,  
the hope which promises forgiveness and  
interior renewal,  
the charity which purifies and opens  
our hearts  
to love you, and in you, each of our  
brothers and sisters.*

*Lord Jesus Christ,  
may the Church in Ireland renew her  
age-old commitment  
to the education of our young people in the  
way of truth and goodness, holiness and  
generous service to society.*

*Holy Spirit, comforter, advocate and guide,  
inspire a new springtime of holiness  
and apostolic zeal  
for the Church in Ireland.*

*May our sorrow and our tears,  
our sincere effort to redress past wrongs,  
and our firm purpose of amendment  
bear an abundant harvest of grace  
for the deepening of the faith  
in our families, parishes, schools  
and communities,  
for the spiritual progress of Irish society,  
and the growth of charity, justice,  
joy and peace  
within the whole human family.*

*To you, Triune God,  
confident in the loving protection of Mary,  
Queen of Ireland, our Mother,  
and of Saint Patrick, Saint Brigid  
and all the saints,  
do we entrust ourselves, our children,  
and the needs of the Church in Ireland.  
Amen.*

## PASTORAL LETTER OF THE HOLY FATHER POPE BENEDICT XVI TO THE CATHOLICS OF IRELAND

Extract from letter:

14. I now wish to propose to you some concrete initiatives to address the situation.

At the conclusion of my meeting with the Irish bishops, I asked that Lent this year be set aside as a time to pray for an outpouring of God's mercy and the Holy Spirit's gifts of holiness and strength upon the Church in your country. I now invite all of you to devote your Friday penances, for a period of one year, between now and Easter 2011, to this intention. I ask you to offer

up your fasting, your prayer, your reading of Scripture and your works of mercy in order to obtain the grace of healing and renewal for the Church in Ireland. I encourage you to discover anew the sacrament of Reconciliation and to avail yourselves more frequently of the transforming power of its grace.

Particular attention should also be given to Eucharistic adoration, and in every diocese there should be churches or chapels specifically devoted to this purpose. I ask parishes, seminaries, religious houses and monasteries to

organize periods of Eucharistic adoration, so that all have an opportunity to take part. Through intense prayer before the real presence of the Lord, you can make reparation for the sins of abuse that have done so much harm, at the same time imploring the grace of renewed strength and a deeper sense of mission on the part of all bishops, priests, religious and lay faithful.

I am confident that this programme will lead to a rebirth of the Church in Ireland in the fullness of God's own truth, for it is the truth that sets us free (cf. Jn 8:32).



BISHOP'S HOUSE,  
PB No 50,  
DIBRUGARH - 786001.  
ASSAM. INDIA.



14 July 2010

Dear Bridget Kelly,

Cordial greetings to you from Bishop's House,  
Dibrugarh!

I am happy to enclose a letter written by Fr Manjit  
Michael Barla who was ordained by me this year for  
the Diocese of Dibrugarh. Thank you very much for  
accompanying him with your support and prayers.

I am enclosing photos of his ordination! Let us pray  
for all priests of the Catholic Church, so that  
through their lives and ministry, the people of God  
will grow up into the likeness of Christ himself.

Yours affectionately in Christ,  
+ Joseph Aind sdb  
Bishop of Dibrugarh



Fr Barla being ordained in his parish church by Bishop Aind



Fr Barla with his parents and Bishop Aind

Dear Benefactors,  
Many happy greetings from Fr Manjit Barla.

I am indeed privileged to be ordained in 'The Year of the  
Priest'. God the Almighty has done mighty deeds in my  
life, by calling me and choosing me to be his own.

I was ordained by Rt Rev Joseph Aind on 13th June, in  
this joyous season. I take this opportunity to thank you all  
for your prayers and support, during my formation to the  
priesthood.

In my Thanksgiving Mass, I remembered and prayed for  
your self-sacrifices, love and support. Now, I am happy to  
step in to the Lord's field.

I am appointed to a parish called Majuli. I request you to  
pray for me that I may be a faithful priest of God and his  
people, and that I may reap many more souls for Christ.

Once again, thanking you all and wishing you God's  
choicest Blessings in all your endeavours,

Yours in Christ Jesus,  
(Fr) Manjit Michael Barla



Members of the Fermoy branch arranged a most enjoyable dinner marking the occasion of their Chaplain's  
transfer to Ballynoe parish. Joan Crowley tells us that Fr Andrew Carville will be greatly missed as a devoted  
spiritual director and a wonderful promoter of the Society.

Seen her are (Front l-r) Joan Crowley secretary, Bernie Cooney treasurer, Nellie O'Donovan and  
Betty O'Leary. (Back l-r) Pauline Wilson, Kay Cremin, Margaret Mulkeen vice-president,  
Fr Andrew Carville, Catherine Fant president making a presentation and John O'Brien.

Missing from the picture are committee members Ann Barry and Maureen Egan.



# THE SHEAF

by Dominic Dowling, Editor

The unmistakable aim of *The Sheaf* is to assist in promoting, fostering and sustaining vocations to priesthood and religious life, and to do so under the patronage of Saint Joseph. The main trust of this aim remains today what it was in Olivia Taaffe's day, when the first issue was published by herself and Father Darlington in 1895, thus bringing the Society into being. Fr Darlington SJ, the first editor, wrote in that first issue in 1895 'We do not ask to be judged by the present number, but by what Saint Joseph's Young Priests Society may accomplish through the co-operation of others in the future'.

At the Society's Tralee Congress in 2008, Bishop Bill Murphy, Bishop of Kerry, said - "St Joseph's Young Priests Society is one of the longest established lay organisations in the Irish Church. Significantly, it is the most active in encouraging vocations to priesthood and in providing financial assistance for the education and training of priests not only here in Ireland but in Eastern Europe and on the missions. The number of Irish students on the Society's register has unfortunately fallen, but on the brighter side the number of clerical students in other countries on the register has increased".

It is therefore right and fitting for us periodically, to ask the question - In the present climate, is *The Sheaf* true to its aim of promoting, fostering and sustaining vocations; and is it playing its part in the apostolate of *vocations awareness* which is so badly needed in the Irish Church of 2010?

When Mrs Taaffe started this Society, she was motivated by her deep love of the Mass and her devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. She was also aware of the need for financial support of a boy who needed this sort of help to enable him to commence his studies. This is why the Society that she established has a two-fold approach to achieving its purpose:

1. to extend the Kingdom of God by promoting the vocation of the priesthood; that is, to promote a growing awareness of the role of the priest, to foster vocations to priesthood and religious life, and to assist financially some students for the priesthood,
2. to help its members to understand and fulfil their role as people of God; that is, to promote the vocation of the laity, to foster a greater understanding and love of the Mass and to help the members to be Christ's presence in every aspect of life.

Neither of these two aspects of the one purpose can adequately be promoted on

its own. Both are interdependent and interacting.

The Society's two-fold approach may be seen:

1. **in its people**, around the country and in the cities who by their dedication and enthusiasm keep before themselves, and us, the reason we gather together in this great work
2. **in its publications**, literature, prayer leaflets and website, which speak silently about what we try to do.

Which is where *The Sheaf* comes in to the picture. For *The Sheaf* like the website, is the carrier of the Society's message to the larger church community, and indeed to the public at large, when **its people** are not engaged on the Society's apostolate. It is the carrier of the Society's message to the public at large, when **its people** are not engaged in the Society's affairs.

And here's the happy news for anyone in the Society who wants to do a little promotion, but is not quite sure what to do or what to say. No experience is necessary! You don't need a degree in theology! Many of us shy away from talking about vocations these days. Some of us are slow to discuss our beliefs with others, particularly with strangers. Have no fear! Let *The Sheaf* and the other publications of the Society do your promotion for you. Ensure that the literature you get from the Society's House has the widest possible distribution among your friends and in your area and remember that the task of praying for and encouraging vocations is not yours or ours alone, but the duty of every baptised person.

In four pages *The Sheaf* gears itself not only to the members of the Society, but also to the wider community who have no awareness of what we do. It carries some news of the branches. And it would not be true to its mandate, if it did not carry some words of encouragement to priestly and religious life. Our patron St Joseph, is the patron of a happy death, so the Recently Deceased List asks every meeting of the Society to remember in prayer, our members and benefactors who have died. But there is another matter which may have escaped the notice of some. Although the Society is a registered charity, and has been since the foundation of the Irish State in 1922, *The Sheaf* never asks for money, though it does carry an occasional reminder of how one can assist in due course by naming the Society among the beneficiaries when making one's will.

In these days of prolonged recession one must consider if the policy of *The Sheaf* of not asking for money to ease the considerable burden the Society has undertaken by adopting the 787 students on the register, is a valid one, by having a look at the financial returns in the Society's annual report. Suffice to say that in the year ended 30 June 2010 the total amount of branch subscriptions, from all the Society's 467 branches amounted to €696,831, whereas the total of other donations, subscriptions, contributions and legacies received by the Society was €595,608. It is reasonable to assume that part of this €595,608 came from people not attached to branches, who know the Society through word of mouth or through its literature. We have no way of knowing, of course, how effective our publications are in encouraging people to be more vocations conscious; but we can at least hope that wide distribution of the Vocations Prayer card encourages at least some people to use it, and that somehow somewhere the spark of a vocation is enkindled.

Is it possible to have a more substantial regular publication? Of course it is - but it could not be issued free and post free. There would have to be a charge. *The Sheaf* could be given over to commercial publishers of the glossy magazines that we see on the shelves of our newsagents and supermarkets, but how many people would be tempted to buy? Or maybe we could have a quarterly full-colour magazine like some religious orders do. But there would still have to be a charge, even if we reduced the print run from 24,000 copies to say: 1,000 or 1,200 copies.

The concept behind the present format is that it should be capable of being read in about 10 minutes by anybody sufficiently interested. It comes out every three months, and is a reminder every quarter to anyone who reads it, as to what membership of the Society is about. The present print run is 24,000 copies. It is produced on a voluntary basis. The only costs are the printer's bill and the cost of postage. I suggest that it is not only worth the effort put into producing it on a shoestring thereby leaving benefactors' money for the purpose for which it was intended, but also worth the time of the members who voluntarily take the trouble of getting it into the hands of those who support the work of vocations promotion and support.

What do you think? Please feel free to write with your ideas to: The General Secretary, St Joseph's Young Priests Society, 23 Merrion Square, Dublin 2.



# A Thought from Sister Janet.....

"Why do you write 'God bless' when he does not believe in God?" I was asked.

It was a simple, genuine question, which I answered automatically before realising that I had said more than I realised. "Well, he might not believe in God, but I do and I have worked with so many people, especially Asians, who really understand and appreciate receiving a blessing. They do not have to be Catholics, but they know what is meant by a blessing."

A few nights ago, experiencing Internet difficulties, I rang British Telecom and discovered that my call had been automatically forwarded to a centre in Delhi. Fortunately, it was a free call on both occasions, because sorting out the problem took some time.

On the first evening, I have no idea what religion my youthful helper professed. I only know that he seemed not to be a Christian. The help on the second evening came from a Sikh. Whilst they accessed my computer from the other side of the world, we chatted amicably. It proved to be a pleasant interlude that I appreciated, and think that they did too. I ended the conversation with my customary "God bless" and was genuinely touched by their surprise and appreciation... but then India has an ancient and deep spirituality that all of its religions treasure. Its people understand a blessing.

When living in Africa, it was easy to speak of God. Regardless of a person's status, it could be presumed that he or she believed in God.

The emeritus Cardinal of Mozambique, when he was a newly appointed bishop, once remarked to me in a conversation at a friary garden party that 'to be an African is to believe in God'.

So, if most of the world believes in God why is there sometimes a reluctance to speak of him? Are not atheists and agnostics actually in the minority? Is there a tinge of political correctness if we hesitate to speak of the One who is the reason for our existence? Is it that we do not want to impose religious belief on one who does not believe? Do we think it unlikely that an atheist or agnostic's response might be one of understanding that whether or not God exists, we wish them well...and if he does, then may they be blessed?

Personally, even if someone drives me mad, I think it is good to be able to say "God bless". As we hear, 'A kind word turns away hard words'. It is hard to verbally lash out at a person when, moments later, there will be a blessing on its way to heal any hurt.

My father once remarked that, as a father, he had the authority to confer a blessing on the family. "Every night when you go to bed, I bless each one of you."

If we each blessed a few people each day, would the world not be a better place?

God bless,  
SR JANET

A meeting of the Society's diocesan presidents held in September at the Society's House, heard that the Society now has 467 local and vocational branches - up from 458 at the end of June 2009. During the year one new branch was registered in Armagh Province, one in Cashel Province, seven in Dublin Province and five in Tuam Province, but in the same twelve months eleven branches became inactive and six were re-activated.

Joseph Merrick (*Front - extreme right*) reviewed his work for the Society, and re-introduced a book of suggested prayers for branch meetings when their chaplain is not present. The Society's president Mrs Marie Hogan is seated fifth from the left.



## Recently Deceased

### VOCATIONAL BRANCHES

**Insurance Branch**  
Dolores Coleman

### LOCAL BRANCHES

**Ardee** Patricia Halpenny, Vera Murphy, Clair Burke, Val Callan, Rose O'Neill, Oliver Meade, Mary Muckian, Michael Meegan

**Ardfield / Rathbarry** Joe O'Sullivan, Noel Daly, Catherine O'Leary, Pete Keohane, Liam Keohane

**Ballyroan** Mary Doyle

**Blarney** Rita McSweeney, Mary O'Connor, Donal Ahern, Michael Kelly, Ellen O'Donoghue, Denis O'Sullivan, Tom Barrett, Bob Forrest, John Kelleher, Nora N Harte, Paddy O'Connor

**Ballinascreen** Bridgit Hegarty, James Anthony Toner, Patrick Trolan, Mary B Cuskeran, Hugh McWilliams, Peggy Trolan

**Bandon** Eileen Crowley

**Bishopstown** Paddy Hassett, Joe McGarry

**Borrisoleigh** Mick Cowen, Tom Ryan-Murray

**Carrigaline** Pauline O'Brien, Maura Hart, Emily Fitzgerald, Joan O'Flynn

**Castletown-Kilpatrick** William Smyth

**Christ the King, Turner's Cross**  
Nancy Duggan, Rita O'Riordan

**Clontead** Rita Corridan

**Curraheen Road Branch** Sheila Crowley

**Drogheda** Betty Tiernan

**Dundalk** Nora Hughes, Maureen Murphy

**Ennis** Sheila O'Sullivan

**Foxrock** Laurence Sweetman (Branch President)

**Glasthule** Ann Murtagh, Dr Bernadette Corboy

**Holycross / Ballycahill** Mary Bourke

**Kilmacshalgan (Dromore West)**  
Peggy Dunleavy, John Rutledge

**Kilmihill** Mary Enright

**Knockninny** Pat Lee, Rose Lunney, Colin McCaffrey, Seamus Gunn, John Lunney

**Maghera** John Glass, Brigid O'Kane, John Lagan, Rosemary McKenna, Hugh McWilliams, Edward Sargent, Maura Scullion, Henry Brennan

**Marino** Margaret Ryan

**Midleton** Betty Wade

**Moyne** Christy Campion

**Newbridge** Kay Wilson

**Our Lady of the Rosary,**

**Limerick** Maeve White

**Pettigo** Annie McGrath

**Portadown** Vincent Hanratty, Sr Brigid Kavanagh, Rosemary Hyde

**Rathgar** Eileen Farrell

**Rathmines** Patricia Shanahan, Philomena Higgins, David Peter Franklin, Veronica Tonge

**Rochfortbridge** William Lynam, Betty Hyland, Betty Dawson, Vinnie Mooney

**Sandymount** Donald Murray

**Skerries** Patty Kingston, Mona O'Brien, May Redmond

**St Anthony's, Clontarf** George O'Halloran, Tom Doherty, M Butler, Alice Firth

**St John the Baptist, Clontarf**  
Jerry O'Grady

**St John's Branch, Granaghan, Derry** Mary McMullan

**St Vincents, Cork** Nelly O'Regan, Agnes Murray

**Tinryland** Patrick Murphy

**Tournafulla** Dan Leahy

**Tubberclare/Glasson** Rita McBrien, Mary Doogan

**Willington** John Kane

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Anonymous Donations €5