



# The Sheaf



ST. JOSEPH'S YOUNG PRIESTS SOCIETY

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SPRING/SUMMER 2020

## A Reason for Hope

What a blessing it is for me as Chief Chaplain to St Joseph's Young Priests Society to contribute a few words to the Sheaf as we celebrate the 125th anniversary of the Sheaf and the founding of the Society in 1895.

Since March of this year, due to the Corona virus, certainly we are seeing some extraordinary times. We have all had to face many challenges, fears and uncertainties, and learn to deal with dark and anxious moments as we suddenly grapple with a new reality. We have learned a new vocabulary, with terms one might expect to hear when watching a movie about deep space exploration or a nuclear holocaust, terms such as lockdown, cocooning, quarantining and isolation and how they impact our emotional/psychological and spiritual lives and our social relationships with families, friends and parishes communities.

To protect the vulnerable, our churches have been closed to public Masses, the faithful have been deprived of the sacraments and community gatherings, which have been a source of consolation, nourishment and strength for all of us. I am also sadly aware that perhaps some members of the Society have contracted Covid-19 and fallen ill or perhaps even died, and we remember all our sick and deceased members and those who have cared for them, in our prayers and daily Masses. These past months have taken their toll on priests as well, most of whom live alone and many are elderly, and whose ministry centres on building community through the service to God's people. They could no longer celebrate the sacraments publicly or visit the sick. Contact with parishioners was reduced to phone calls.

As you may know, I am also a full-time chaplain in Dublin City University (DCU), and due to its closure because of the virus, I have had to work from home and so have missed that direct contact with students. I have tried to use my spare time fruitfully in prayer and reflection, working in my greenhouse or getting out more on my bicycle in the glorious weather that we have had. I have also spent time working with members of the executive on the new SJYPS website that was launched at the end of May (sjyps.ie). Recently, I have been asked to help as a chaplain in a local prison, and like many of you, I have found more time to connect with family and friends.

We know that the hallmark of many of the great saints and Christians throughout the ages is

measured by how they have lived and responded in faith, hope and charity, especially in times of adversity. These extraordinary times are our moment in history. How have we responded so far and how will we respond in the future?

St Teresa of Calcutta reminds us that we are an Easter people, to be filled with hope in times of uncertainty; "Never let anything so fill you with sorrow or despair as to make you forget the joy of the risen Lord." St Paul also encourages us not to lose hope, but to remain firm in our faith until we reach our eternal reward; "As long as you persevere and stand firm on the solid base of the faith, never letting yourselves drift away from the hope promised by the Gospel, which we have heard" (Col 1:23). God is in charge, he has not abandoned his Church or his people. He has promised "to be with us until the end of time" (Mt 28:20). We believe that "love casts out all fear" (1 Jn 4:18) and so when we live in God, we live in truth and we are not afraid because God is our strength and he leads us and guides us.

And so thankfully, these recent stumbling blocks have been turned into stepping stones. Many priests, with support from parishioners, have found new ways to stay connected with their parish community, through the adaptation of virtual technology, such as parish webcams, social media and so on. The sacrifices we have all made have not been in vain and thankfully we can now see the positive signs of hope once again as the virus is being slowly suppressed. I welcome joyfully that public Masses in churches can once again resume and that perhaps small gatherings of prayer groups and meetings of SJYPS can take place again. I think this is so important in restoring the balance we need as spiritual and social beings to live healthy, happy and holy lives.

Maybe these surreal but quieter times have given us all thought for reflection on the things that matter most in our lives, our faith, our families, our purpose, our contribution and our destination in life. I hope that many more men and women have used this time as an opportunity to reflect on and maybe even explore the call to priesthood or religious life and I pray for God's continued grace and blessing on the Society and on all its members and benefactors at this special time as we continue to grow together into the future.

Fr Seamus McEntee  
Chief Chaplain

This is **Joseph Léon Canon Roy (1832-1899)** of Maranville in the Department of Haute-Marne, France, founder of *l'Archiconfrerie Saint Joseph* and its newsletter *La Gerbe de S Joseph* (St Joseph's Sheaf).

In the first issue of *La Gerbe* on 1 January

1872, Canon Roy explained that he had chosen its title in the hope it would produce a sheaf of good works in honour of St. Joseph.

One of the several blades in the sheaf of Canon Roy's own good works was his initial training of local boys interested in priesthood. He provided guidance, lessons and books. They served at this altar.

In all eighteen of his altar boys were ordained priests between 1885 and 1913. The last of the eighteen Maranville priests was Canon Androit, former Dean of Juzennecourt. He died in 1958.

Though throughout her life Mrs Olivia Taaffe was devoted to St Joseph, it was Canon Roy's archconfraternity and his sheaf of good works that inspired her at age 63 to initiate the work of St Joseph's Young Priests Society, by publishing the first issue in English of *St Joseph's Sheaf* from her home at 7 Eblana Terrace, Dun Laoghaire in 1895. For what happened next see page 3.



## PASTORAL MESSAGE OF MOST REV MICHAEL NEARY, ARCHBISHOP OF TUAM, FOR VOCATIONS SUNDAY MAY 2020

Recent weeks have been challenging for everyone. As Church we have been endeavouring to maintain and sustain our relationship with the Lord and with each other in ways which are in keeping with the health restrictions. Thanks to modern technology and social media the celebration of Mass is live-streamed to homes and people are in contact with neighbours and friends. Of course we miss the visits, the coming together whether for worship, work, sporting or social occasions. The busyness that controlled our lives is not as dominant now. We have more time to reflect and so to tune in to God and consider what God may be saying to us.

As the people of God graced with different gifts and entrusted with varied responsibilities, whether in marriage, single life, religious life or priesthood, the present situation affords an opportunity to pause and acknowledge our dependence on each other, our responsibility to support, encourage, challenge and pray for each other. Next Sunday we will celebrate a day of prayer for vocations. The different vocations which I mentioned do not compete with each other but rather collaborate with, affirm and challenge each other. I have stated on a previous occasion that the priest is called to be a facilitator, enabling married couples, single persons and those in religious life to interpret God's call for them encouraging and supporting them in answering their call.

Having focused on and encouraged the baptismal vocation on various occasions in the past, I would like to focus on priesthood today. Our view of the priest and our attitude towards priesthood will be influenced by priests we have known. It may be a priest who officiated at your wedding, the one who baptised your children, was with you as a supportive presence when your world was shattered by bad news. Recent years have been a difficult time for priests; all of us are affected by the scandals associated with some priests and bishops. Having apologised for these on numerous occasions in the past we must never become complacent but endeavour to maintain the highest standards of integrity in ministry as we continue to keep victims in our thoughts and prayers.

As priests we are privileged to find ourselves at the heart of God's human family. Why? Not because we have been chosen by God, called by Him and responded to that call. Therefore we represent and are a pointer to the God who is at the very heart of the human family. This is something which we treasure and will always respect and is something for which we will always be grateful. Speaking personally, while I appreciate and will always be grateful for the theological formation and years of study, I can say without hesitation that I have learned more from yourselves, the people of God with whom I work and pray. As priests we never

cease to admire and be grateful for the inspiration, example, courage, patience and perseverance of our people, sometimes expressed in the most difficult situations. This is not to deny that at times we may be saddened and frustrated when our best efforts are misunderstood.

In our relationship with our people there is and must always be a special dimension. This has impinged on us in a very particular way at this time when visiting your families is restricted for health reasons. It is a source of great joy for us when you are happy and celebrate. Likewise we are saddened when you suffer. We endeavour, albeit at times very imperfectly, to be a reminder of the fact that the Lord continues to journey with you through the rough places and the greener pastures of life's journey. The God in whom you believe and I believe and try to serve is a God of welcoming, understanding, sympathetic, encouraging and wants the best for all of us.

In every Mass, as priests, we bring our people before the Lord asking him to hear your cry for help, respond to your needs, enabling you to utilize your gifts for the good of others in transforming our world. At this time as we cope with covid-19 people have experienced and expressed their appreciation of the generosity and support of the ministry of their priests albeit an "online" ministry.

Priesthood is undoubtedly a demanding but also a very fulfilling life. Like any vocation it has its ups and downs, its joys and sorrows. In our culture today people experience constant pressures – competitive climate, productivity in the workplace, educational demands, etc. With so many situations clamouring for our time and attention it is understandable that God's call could easily lose its urgency and may even go unheard. I extend an invitation to young men to reflect on whether God may be

calling them to follow him as a priest. I encourage all the People of God to pray that the Lord will inspire young men to hear and answer his call. Should someone know to you express interest in a vocation to the priesthood, I ask you to keep that person in your prayers and encourage him. The priest is one who radiates joy, serves others, in a man of prayer and plays a very significant role in building up God's Kingdom. Here in our Archdiocese we have been blessed by our priests who continue to respond generously and faithfully to the various challenges with which we all cope in a complex and rapidly changing culture.

The priests I know and with whom I work are happy in their service of God and the people of God and each day we recommit ourselves to priesthood and to the service involved. When storms blow we need deep roots. On entering uncharted territory we need direction. What provides us with the strength to cope in these situations are a loving family, a supportive community and the hope which our faith in Jesus Christ generates. With hope in our hearts we can face the future with courage. Here in our Archdiocese of Tuam we look forward to the ordination of deacon Shane Costello and keep him and other students in our prayers along with those who are studying for the permanent diaconate. The ordination of a priest demonstrates how much faith is alive in a local Church. It illustrates the hope-filled courage which gives a young man the strength and joy to entrust himself to the Lord's service, conscious that the faith of the people of God will support him.

This Sunday the Gospel sets before us the one priest who was without fault, the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ. He is the one who has called us, sustains and challenges us. I ask you to pray for us your priests, that we will draw every closer to him and be a more faithful reminder of Jesus Christ to yourselves.



*The Limavady Branch celebrated the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the Society at St Mary's parish Limavady Co Derry with Mass celebrated by Fr Paddy Baker. He joined the meeting afterwards where new members enjoyed the company of founding members with the Derry diocesan president Christina McLaren. Branch president Brigitte Gallocker writes that it was a beautiful memorable celebration under the patronage of St Joseph.*

# IN THE BEGINNING . . . . .

Prior to her marriage with John Joseph Taaffe in May 1867 the Society's foundress Olivia Blake went on holiday to France in January. During her holiday she visited a shrine of St Joseph at Haute-Marne in the diocese of Langres, near Maranville some 160 miles south-east of Paris. From her early years she had a devotion to St Joseph, and she enrolled as a member of the confraternity there.

Joseph Leon Canon Roy at the shrine had a few local boys helping him with the liturgies and devotions in honour of St Joseph. In return they were taught Latin and other subjects. In time some of the boys interested in priesthood, were adopted by benefactors who financed their higher education. Olivia was impressed and later became a benefactor. Canon Roy maintained contact with the members of his confraternity (later Archconfraternity) by means of an occasional Notice and a regular publication called *La Gerbe de St Joseph* (St Joseph's Sheaf). This interested Olivia greatly.

Olivia pondered the work of Canon Roy. If he could help aspirants to priesthood in France, surely she with her circle of friends could do something similar for the Church in Ireland. What follows is a translation from the French of an interesting article in the December 1950 issue of *La Gerbe*.

We had the good fortune and pleasure to receive a visit from Mr James Pakenham, a member of 'The Irish Daughter' of the Archconfraternity of St Joseph during the latter days of July. Mr Pakenham came from Luxsuil where he and a group of his co-patriots had been attending the celebrations in connection with the 14th centenary of St Columbanus. Mr Pakenham was very glad to find amongst the numerous ex-votoes which cover a large portion of the walls of the Sanctuary, two souvenirs of Ireland (1) "To Saint Joseph, Love and Fidelity, Ireland, 1881" and (2) "Thanksgiving to Saint Joseph who protected my son at the hour of his death, O M Taaffe, 1884" Our members are aware that from the early years of its foundation the Archconfraternity of St Joseph was very favourably known to the Catholics of faithful Ireland. A pilgrim, Mrs Olivia Mary Taaffe, whose name appears one of the ex-votoes referred to above, was granted a very great favour by St Joseph, and later she applied all her energy and zeal to the propagation of the devotion to her great benefactor. Since those days the relations between the Shrine at Maranville and the Irish Branch of the Archconfraternity have been many and the amount of correspondence has been abundant.

A letter which Mrs Taaffe addressed to the Very Revd Canon Roy, Director of the Shrine, some days before his death in October 1898 explains the name under which the Irish Branch was established and

gives us an idea of its working and how all classes wish to participate in the work of fostering vocations to the priesthood

"You understand, Very Reverend Father" wrote Mrs Taaffe "how humble was the beginning of 'St Joseph's Young Priests'. We gave it this name because the souls who are devoted to St Joseph, and principally because of the love they have for him they subscribe the necessary funds for the students education, and the day on which these young men are advanced to the sacerdotal dignity they will not forget the intentions of their benefactors. The students understand they are really "St Joseph's Priests" and that it is due to him and the pious people who are devoted to him, they are indebted for the support to follow their sublime vocation. It is by this means that devotion to the great and glorious patriarch St Joseph is spread. The number of our students is gradually increasing. Actually the work supports ten students. Even the soldiers wish to contribute towards the apostolate and look forward to supplying the necessary funds for the education of a seminarist who belonged to a foot regiment. The police also wish to help in this pious enterprise. In the near future we hope the sailors of His Majesty's Fleet will help two or three sailors drawn from their ranks to finish their sacerdotal education."

In a letter of June 1900 the Irish Committee rejoiced at the acquisition by this Sanctuary of a relic of the True Cross and sent a generous contribution towards the reliquary. They also announced that the number of students has increased to 18 and that three have been accepted for the Chinese Mission. In December 1900 Ireland sent excellent news: the number of members is considerable, the work of St Joseph's Young Priests is received with universal sympathy, His Eminence Cardinal Logue, Primate of Armagh, has kindly offered his warmest encouragement and the English version of *La Gerbe* has eight thousand subscribers. In August 1902 *La Gerbe* announced that our brothers in Ireland have not forgotten us. To a generous assistant and benefactress in Ireland we now owe the privilege of being able to enclose in future numbers of *La Gerbe*, copies of superb images (from St Joseph's Sheaf) which are much appreciated by everyone.

In January 1904 we read in our records "a superb chalice has arrived from Ireland. It is silver gilt and a really artistic piece of workmanship. The cup is in the form of a tulip and is ornamented with sheaves of wheat and branches of the vine, the Hearts

of Jesus and Mary, and the crown of Thorns executed in a remarkable fine style. The knot is equally well chiselled and enriched with amethysts of a perfect clearness and topazes crowned with diamonds which give a very beautiful effect. The base is of an equally fine workmanship to the upper portion with the Evangelists on four medallions which blend well and the finish harmonises with all the rest." (This chalice is used on the occasion of all the principal feasts and is kept in a green satin lined box. It is the work of Mr John

Smyth and Sons, 17 Wicklow Street, Dublin)

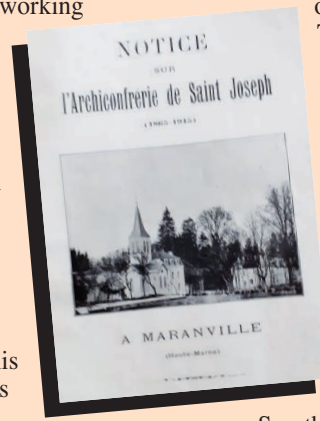
A closer liaison between the two editors of St Joseph's Sheaf was organised in January 1905. Thanks to the initiative of the Irish Committee, Maranville could then give to its readers a choice collection of interesting facts compiled by our Irish brothers. Thus in the following March *La Gerbe de St Joseph* published an account of a remarkable conversion attributed to St Joseph, and this had a wonderful effect throughout the country. In May 1905 we learned that Mrs Taaffe had bestowed, in memory of her pious and well beloved aunt, a statue of St Joseph which had been erected in the Parish Church of Kingstown, Ireland. On this occasion *La Gerbe* recalled how this valiant fervent lady had consecrated her life and her fortune in making known the work of St Joseph's Young Priests and in contributing largely to the education of Irish youths destined for the Catholic Missions in China.

The First World War (1914) cut off completely the relations between Maranville and Ireland on account of the difficulties corresponding and of sending offerings. It was only about two years ago, after the recent war, that the secretary of the society in Ireland was able to renew relationship with Maranville and thus renew the tradition. The organ of the society, the Sheaf, now presents the work to us as "St Joseph's Young Priests Society" approved by the hierarchy of Ireland, blessed by Pope Benedict XV, encouraged in its action by Pope Pius XI, and always affiliated to the headquarters of the Archconfraternity.

By making a translation of the constitution left us by Mr Pakenham we hope in the near future to make known the work of the Society in Ireland. In the meantime it is interesting for our members to know that in that Ireland on which was bestowed the title of 'Island of Saints' there are many other fervent clients of St Joseph who pray to our glorious Protector.

Union makes force. Let us learn how to gather in holy emulation a greater zeal for our actions and a greater attachment to our work.

(This concludes the article in *La Gerbe-Ed*).



# What we've been doing.....

My name is Fr Damian Farnon and I am assigned to Clondalkin Parish. Clondalkin in south west Dublin is part of the wider Combined Catholic Group of Parishes. There are approximately twenty-five thousand parishioners with eight churches in the area. The parish is centered around the historic village of Clondalkin with a round tower dating from the seventh century and plenty of new housing estates. Readers may be familiar with some of our landmarks, Newlands Cross Flyover, Casement Aerodrome at Baldonnell and the Red Cow Roundabout.



I was ordained twenty-six years ago and along with priests and people have faced challenges from the historic scandals to the secularization of Ireland and the fall in vocations to the priesthood. However, the Covid 19 pandemic forced all members of the Church to evaluate how we continued to minister as Church, preaching the Gospel, caring for the vulnerable and giving praise and glory to God.

There was a lot of disappointment and frustration that many of our churches closed incredibly early on during the pandemic. When some churches did reopen, Masses including funeral Masses continued to be celebrated behind closed doors, adding to the grief felt by those bereaved.

From this seemingly hopeless situation many parishes rose to the challenge and I would like to share some of these challenges with you the members of the Saint Joseph's Young Priests Society. Many parishes already had webcams installed enabling parishioners to view Masses at home or in hospital and more parishes had

webcams installed to embrace the new situation. An incredibly positive aspect was the number of parishes that embraced Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and created or expanded their websites.

In Clondalkin we had daily podcasts, online newsletters, novenas to St Anthony, at Pentecost and to the Sacred Heart. This meant that many people including me had to learn new skills such as typing, broadcasting and voice projection not to mention lighting, sound and stage management. This involved not just Priests but Deacons,

Parish Pastoral Workers, Religious and Lay people. We had families leading us in prayer and reflection, Lectio Divina, talks on Nano Nagle and Marcelin Champagnat. Many of our new contributors were younger members of our parish community who brought new skills to the parish and some have expressed an interest in migrating to other ministries. As I write this, we are preparing to reopen our churches. It is not as easy as it seems. The parish church got a thorough cleaning, signage has been installed and stewards trained to welcome parishioners back to worship. As a parish we have hope inspiration and joy to bring to our parishioners. During these times when we were deprived of Mass, we have become very aware of the many Catholics throughout the world who have no access to Mass on a regular basis because of persecution or a shortage of priests.

The prayers and generosity of the members of the Saint Joseph's Young Priests Society are helping enormously to alleviate the shortage of priests in many parts of the world. May God continue to bless this work.

## PANDEMIC

*I see her coming towards me  
Walking swiftly in the noon-day  
sun;*

*I can hear the sound of silence  
On our deserted street,  
And should I pass with head  
bowed low*

*The friend I may not greet?*

*I must step off this path and keep  
Six feet apart - a coffin length  
between!*

*Should she or I ignore the rule  
This wood at noon becomes a  
tomb*

*For one or both:*

*And who would dice with doom?*

*I do not know if I should walk or  
run:*

*We were two ships that passed –  
Not in the night - but in the noon-  
day sun!*

*Frank Holohan*

## Recently Deceased

*Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine,  
et lux perpetua luceat eis.*

### VOCATIONAL BRANCH

**Insurance Branch** Tony Leahy

### PARISH BRANCHES

**Abbeyfeale** Timmy O'Rourke, Noreen O'Rourke, Noreen Flynn, Ann O'Connor  
**Ardfield / Rathbarry** Vincent Griffin, Kitty Hurley, Kitty Fitzpatrick, Mary Moloney  
**Ardkeen** Anne Crawford, Teresa Gilmore, Maura Lipfird, Irene Matchett, Lil Hughes, Brigid Daugherty, Teresa Lonergan  
**Armagh** Eileen Fegan, Kathleen Sherry  
**Ballagh / Ballyleague** Nancy Kelly, Pauline Brennan  
**Ballina / Kilmoremoy** Evelyn Connor  
**Ballyfermot** Oliver (Ollie) Allen  
**Bayside** Fred Daly, Geraldine Shea  
**Blackpool, Cork** Beatrice Daly  
**Caherdavin** Sheila Armstrong, Una Gillespie, Rose Hassett, Anne Torsney  
**Carrigaline** Jack O'Connor  
**Churchtown** Jim Cunningham  
**Clontarf** Margaret O'Neill, Johnny Allen  
**Derrygonnelly / Botha** Oliver Sheerin, Molly Cassidy, Noreen Maguire (Botha Branch Secretary)  
**Drogheda** Joan Matthews, Sheila Halpin, Jennie Heeny  
**Dunamanagh** Kathleen Quinn, Winnie Gormley

**Ennis** Pauline Horgan, Canon Pat Taaffe  
**Enniskeane** Kathleen Crowley  
**Enniskillen** Nora Sheridan, Michael Mooney, Pat O'Connor, Kevin Maguire, Noreen Maguire, Margaret McElroy, Brendan Lilley  
**Errigal** Margaret Marti, Betty Deighan, Bernadette McGlade, Gemma McKinney, Anna Mullan, Ryan McGilligan  
**Farranree** Ann Hurley  
**Faughanvale (St Mary's)** Kathleen McLaughlin, Mick Donaghey  
**Foxrock** Judy Fleming (née St John), Venerable Archdeacon Ciaran Canon Holahan (Pastor Emeritus)  
**Golden** Pat Stapleton  
**Harolds Cross** Evelyn Ashworth  
**Holy Family, Ballymagroarty** Bridin McDermott  
**Killesher** Bridget Drugan, Nuala Gilleece, James Magee, Mick Monaghan, Patricia O'Connor  
**Killorglin** Cathy Foley, Margaret Casey, Anne Sheehan  
**Maghera** Maureen Hegarty, Michael McGuigan, Helen Heron, Seamus Muncey, John Crilly, Henrietta Karicos, Sean Convery, Margaret McEldowney, Michael Óg McKenna, Eddie Neeson, Sarah Craig, Niall Regan, Frank McKenna, Joe Hegarty, Veronica McSorley, Ita Glass, Mary McEldowney, John Joe Doherty, Monica Simpson, Patrick O'Kane, Gemma McLaughlin, Kathleen Convery  
**Moycarkey / Borris** Nicholas Stokes  
**Our Lady Crowned, Mayfield** Michael Connell, Fr Dermot Brennan OP  
**Portadown** Brian Beattie, Fiona McAlinden, Paul McCann, Jim McCann, Toni Green

**Skerries** Patricia O'Sullivan  
**St Anthony's, Clontarf** Mary O'Donoghue  
**St John Vianney, Ardlea** Alice McKenna  
**St John the Baptist, Clontarf** Cormac McCarthy  
**St John's, Granaghan** Frank Mallon, Margaret McCormack, PJ McKeefry, Mary McAllister  
**St Mary's, Galway** Maura Noone (Tuam Provincial Secretary and Galway Diocesan President)  
**St Patrick's, Limerick** Jack Sheehan, Gerry Ryan  
**Templemore** Sr Bridget Cleary, Kitty Lanigan.  
**Trim** Nancy Giles, Fr McGearty  
**Tyholland** Bridie Rooney

### NOTICE:

The meeting of Central Council scheduled for 10 October has been postponed and will take place on **Saturday 21 November 2020** if it is considered safe to do so.

At [www.sjyps.ie](http://www.sjyps.ie) (about us/what we do) showing the overseas outreach of the Society, members meanwhile, may access details of where and how many of our beneficiaries are located, their dioceses and seminaries, though the students' names, which are strictly confidential, are not shown.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Anonymous Donations €100, €50, €100, €25, €100, €100, €50, €100