



# The Sheaf



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ST. JOSEPH'S YOUNG PRIESTS SOCIETY

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AUTUMN/WINTER 2020

## President's Report

for the Year ended 30th June 2020

Dear All,

This is a brief report of the Society's activities and endeavours covering the year 1st July 2019 to 30th June 2020.

During the year we assisted financially the education of 573 seminarians around the world, 70 of whom were Irish. This resulted in 128 ordinations to the priesthood of which unfortunately only one was Irish as Covid 19 postponed church celebrations. We need to pray more earnestly for vocations and also to pray with a thankful heart that we have already received what we ask for.

We held our Board of Priests meeting on the 23rd July regarding adoption of seminarians for financial assistance towards the costs of their education.

On Sunday 28th July we had a successful pilgrimage to Our Lady's Island, Wexford with the pilgrims well up on recent years. The chief celebrant and homilist on the day was Bishop Eamonn Walsh, then Auxiliary Bishop of Dublin.

On Saturday 17th August some of us attended the Youth Festival in Clongowes Wood College, and participated in a special seminar for young men possibly discerning a priestly vocation. One never knows once the seed is planted, if and when it will bear fruit.

On the weekend of 24th and 25th August we

held our National Congress in Dublin City University (DCU). A very representative presence from the four provinces attended, heard some excellent speakers, and took part in discussion and debate in the matters raised. This was our first National Congress in quite a few years and all the feedback therefrom was very, very positive.

The Central Council meeting went ahead on Saturday October 12th in Dublin though I had to pull out at the last minute due to illness.

On Sunday 24th November the annual Thanksgiving Mass for Priesthood was celebrated in St Andrews Church in Westland Row, Dublin with light refreshments afterwards.

Then in 2020 on the 7th March I represented the Society at the annual pilgrimage organisers meeting in Knock which as always was very informative. On the following day, Sunday 8th March a few of us were guests of Maynooth Seminary at a recital of Haydn's "The Creation".

Unfortunately, the Coronavirus Covid19 Pandemic then took hold and we entered into lockdown and unprecedented times. In fact our last executive meeting for the year to 30th June was held on 15th February 2020.

Not to finish on a negative note, I am delighted to welcome you to our new website which was

launched during the year and which is much more user friendly.

Furthermore, the year 2020 marks the 125th anniversary of the founding of the St Joseph's Young Priests Society with the launch of The Sheaf in 1895 by Olivia Mary Taaffe. During those 125 years we have assisted 6,646 ordinations to the priesthood by your prayers and generosity. Isn't it amazing what one small step those many years ago, has yielded such lavish fruit? In that regard I wish to thank you the current members and benefactors, for your ongoing prayers and support for vocations. Remember that Holy Mass is offered daily for the intentions of all our members and benefactors, living and deceased. Please carry on with this vital mission.

Thanks also to our Trustees, Executive members, Fr Séamus McEntee our Chief Chaplin, Brigid, Anne and Maria for your dedication and commitment through the year.

*"Come let us ring out with joy to the Lord:  
Hail the rock who saves us.*

*Let us come into his presence, giving thanks;  
Let us hail him with a song of praise."*

PSALM 95:1-2

May God Bless and reward you all.

*John F Murphy,*

President of the Society.

## General Secretary's Report

on the National Congress

Our National Congress took place in DCU on Saturday 24 and Sunday 25 August 2019. The theme of the Congress was "**Be not afraid, the Lord is my Shepherd**". Between the two days approximately 178 people attended.

The Congress opened with Mass celebrated by Fr Séamus McEntee, and the homily was given by Deacon Eric Cooney who is Administrator of the National Vocations Office in Maynooth.

Over the course of the two days we had four guest speakers.

- 1 Fr David Vard, CC Portlaoise, (Ireland's youngest priest at the time),

- 2 Baroness Nuala O'Loan, Member of UK House of Lords, former Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland,
- 3 Writer and contributor to the Irish Catholic Newspaper, author, commentator and broadcaster on religious and social affairs, David Quinn, Iona Institute and
- 4 Very Rev Professor Michael Mullaney, President St Patrick's College Maynooth and President of the International Federation of Catholic Universities.

There was an open forum on **The Society and the Future** with discussion and questions and answers.

Eucharistic Adoration for Vocations took place on Sunday morning, and the Congress closed that afternoon with Mass. Fr Michael Mullaney was principal celebrant and homilist, with Fr Séamus McEntee concelebrant.

Those who attended very much enjoyed the National Congress and the speakers' presentations. Generally the attendees found it was a very informative weekend and that it was great to meet members from other branches around the country.

*Brigid Kelly,*

General Secretary.

# The Dublin Oratory in Formation

by Fr Gerard Deighan

Since the feast of the Presentation of the Lord this year, 2nd February, a new community of priests and brothers has existed at Saint Kevin's church, Harrington Street, in Dublin 8. We are in training to become an Oratory of Saint Philip. This process takes at least three years, and until it is complete we will be known as the Dublin Oratory in Formation.

What is an Oratory of Saint Philip? Very simply, it is a community of priests and brothers who live a common life in the spirit of Saint Philip. They remain in one place for life, and devote themselves to apostolic work. Saint Philip Neri lived in Rome in the decadent 16th century. He is credited with having spiritually reformed that city in those dark days, and is called the apostle of Rome, a title enjoyed otherwise only by Saint Peter. A man of immense holiness, Saint Philip radiated holy joy, and people flocked to hear him preach and to confess their sins to him. The youth were especially attracted by his style of ministry. He would gather them into a room in the afternoons and teach them how to pray. That room was called the oratory, the place of prayer. Some of Saint Philip's disciples went on to become priests, to help

him in his work, and so a new congregation was founded. It took its name from the original place of prayer: the Oratory.

The Roman Oratory soon inspired Oratories to spring up throughout Italy and further afield. The most famous Oratorian of more recent times was Saint John Henry Newman. Having converted to Catholicism, he decided to become an Oratorian priest, and was responsible for introducing the Oratory to England, firstly in Birmingham and then in London (the Brompton Oratory).

Saint John Henry lived and worked in Dublin as rector of the Catholic University from 1854 to 1861. His address was on Harcourt Street (now within the parish of Harrington Street), and nearby on Saint Stephen's Green he built the architectural gem that is the University Church. It had been his intention to found an Oratory in Dublin, but it was not to be. Since then there has never been an official attempt to found an Oratory in Dublin, or indeed anywhere in Ireland, until now.

An Oratory can spring up in a place in a very natural way, when a group of priests

and laymen begin to live together in the spirit of Saint Philip. They need the blessing of their bishop, of course, and we are very grateful to Archbishop Diarmuid Martin for allowing this project to go ahead. They also need the blessing of the Oratorian father in charge of new foundations, known as the Procurator General, whose office is in Rome. The Procurator guides the new community along their path of formation, and after three years or so, all going well, the Oratory is officially established by a special decree of the Pope.

What can the Oratory add to the Catholic life of Dublin? A stable priestly community in the heart of the city; a place of prayer, where the liturgy is celebrated in a worthy and inspiring manner; a high standard of sacred music; regular preaching of the word of God in a familiar style; ready availability of the sacrament of confession; the promotion of devotion to two great saints, Saint Philip Neri, and Saint John Henry Newman.

I ask all who read this to keep us in your prayers.

Fr Gerard Deighan

## Executive Changes

Not seeking re-election this year were **Rita Russell** former Secretary of the Society and organiser for many years of pilgrimages to Knock, Our Lady's Island and St. Oliver Plunkett Shine in Drogheda, **Pauline McHugh** recent Secretary of the Society and Chairperson of the Dublin Diocesan Committee and **Anna Rafter**, Freshford and Officer of the Ossory Diocesan Committee. All three deciding to take a step back to concentrate on development of their branches locally. Their work on the Executive is most appreciated. We thank them sincerely.

Coincidentally, three persons proposed in accordance with the rules, had indicated their candidature for election, and they are now ratified and take office on 1 December until October 2021 Council Meeting. We welcome —

I am **Bernie Corry**, married to Mick Corry, both enjoying our retirement. I am a member of St Joseph's Young Priests Society for over 32 years and am currently president of the St John Vianney branch at Ardlea Road, Artane, Dublin 5. Additionally, I have chaired the North Dublin District Committee of the Society (when District Committees were more active than at present!).



In my professional life I spent a fulfilling and enjoyable 35 years teaching at St Joseph's School for Deaf Boys on the Navan Road Dublin 7. For a number of years I've been secretary/treasurer of the Teachers Branch. The main work of this branch is to distribute each year our bi-lingual 'Prayer for Guidance' bookmark for Leaving Certificate students, to as many secondary schools as possible.

After a review of the Society in the diocese, I was asked to be a contact person for all branches/parishes north of the Liffey. This work, though it involves a lot of commitment, I find most rewarding. It involves assisting in setting up new branches and helping to re-vitalise those that need support.

My name is **Maureen Long**. I have been acting as honorary secretary of Naas branch in Kildare and Leighlin diocese, for the past number of years. Having witnessed at first hand the great hunger that exists for the Holy Eucharist and the tireless work of our priests in serving their flock pastorally and spiritually, I realise that the work of St Joseph's Young Priests Society is more necessary than ever.



My own brother, Fr Richard Naughton was ordained in Rome by Pope St Paul VI on the 29th June 1979. It was a great gift to us as a family to witness his vocation at close quarters and to see his commitment to serve the people of God with joy and deep gratitude.

I believe and trust in the words of Thomas Aquinas who said Our Holy Patron St Joseph has the power to assist us in all causes, in every necessity, in every undertaking. In entrusting the work of the Society to St Joseph, we will succeed in our endeavours to assist and increase vocations to the priesthood and to religious life.

Hello. I am **Tony Melia** from Ardee, Co Louth. For over 40 years I've been involved in my parish. I joined the Ardee Branch of the Society in 1994 and have served as branch president and treasurer. I was also elected Armagh Diocesan President of the Society. Currently, I chair the Ardee/Collon Parish Pastoral Council, and am a member of the Armagh Diocesan Council at the invitation of Archbishop Eamon Martin.



When Mrs Taaffe started St Joseph's in 1895 there were many young men particularly interested in the vocation of priestly overseas missionary work. She encouraged her friends to support them and whatever financial help could be given was very welcome, though her Society is built on praying for vocations.

Our world has changed forever in 2020. Our churches will be very different going forward and we as laity will have to play a bigger role in our parishes. We will need to support our wonderful priests and to pray that God will continue to keep them all safe and in good health. Do not lose hope, continue to pray. The Lord of the Harvest will provide.



## Joe Keegan, clerical student for the Archdiocese of Dublin



Mr George Dee, former national president, represented members of the Society at ordination of Fr Shane Costello at the Basilica of Our Lady Queen of Ireland on Sunday 23 August.

Pictured here with the ordaining prelate, the Archbishop of Tuam, are L to R Fr Shane's parents Seamus and Mary, Fr Shane, Archbishop Neary, Canon James Quinn, Taugheen and Shane's sisters Sharon, Cathy and Lorraine.

Shane has written expressing his gratefulness to the members of the Society for their support and prayers. We wish him every happiness and success in his ministry.

I would like to thank St Joseph's Young Priests Society for the support given to me over the years. This includes financial assistance towards paying for my training in seminary, but also the inestimable support of prayer. I am recently finished my seminary training and hope to be ordained in 2021 for the Archdiocese of Dublin.



The Holy Spirit is undoubtedly the agent in stirring up any vocation, but I have found he often works by means of other people. Many people have, often unwittingly, played a role in my vocation. The first time I ever really considered becoming a priest was while still a secondary school student. Stepping into a Church one Saturday for Mass, I was struck by the priest's words at the end of his homily: 'Today, more than ever, the Church needs good priests. And the Church needs men to step up and see if God is calling them to be a priest.' I never spoke with this priest, and only in recent years have I learnt his name, but his challenge caused me to think and pray about whether God was calling me to be a priest. This event set in motion a process in my life that would lead to priesthood.

I owe the development of my faith to many people. My parents first gave me the gift of faith. The Holy Family parish at Kill O'The Grange, where I was given the opportunity of serving as an extraordinary minister of the Eucharist, nourished my faith. A number of excellent priests and people there were witnesses to me of what the Christian life looked like. The parish even fundraised for me to go World Youth Day, which had a deep spiritual impact on me. A retreat organised by Youth 2000 was another occasion of great grace for me. I applied to join the Jesuits in my early twenties, and, while I ultimately decided to leave after a year, my experience in the novitiate did much to shape me, and the advice and friendship of many Jesuits then and since has been greatly valued by me.

I applied to join the Archdiocese of Dublin five years ago. I have spent most of my time as a clerical student at the Irish College in Rome, which sadly closed its doors as a seminary last year. Returning to Dublin a few months ago, I am now eagerly looking forward to working in parish as a priest. However, I am also conscious of the unhappy fact that I am, to my knowledge, the only current clerical student for the Archdiocese of Dublin. There is, at present, no one else. Other dioceses have similarly historically low numbers of students in seminary. Nevertheless, the realisation of this bleak situation does not cause me to become despondent, rather it serves as a wakeup call: as an impetus to revive and renew the Church. I hope it is so for others.

How do we foster more vocations, and, a related issue: how do we get more young people to embrace the faith? I reflect on the challenge that I heard in that priest's homily years ago that set me on this course. I reflect on the many people who have played an important role in the development of my faith. If it was not for those people I would almost certainly now be pursuing a different type of life. This causes me to ponder: how many young women and men may have a vocation to religious life or priesthood, but the challenge is never really posed to them? How many people in Ireland could be responsive to the faith, but who have no one in their life who will really communicate the faith to them? The Holy Spirit continues to draw people to the faith, but he generally does so through ordinary encounters with Christians who are not afraid to share the Gospel.

In today's climate, the wonderful work of St Joseph's Young Priests Society and the men and women up and down the country who are not afraid to speak positively of the faith, and who actively pray for and promote vocations, is more important than ever. It is the quiet work done by such people that allow the Spirit to change people's lives: moving some to embrace or return to the faith, or to pursue a vocation. It is this necessary work that will sow the seeds of faith for future generations.

*Joe Keegan*

## Executive

as at 1st December 2020

The following (showing their home dioceses) were elected or appointed to their respective offices.

### Elected/ratified by Central Council

**President:** John Murphy *Kildare & Leighlin*

**Vice Presidents:** Dominic Dowling *Dublin*  
Marian Fennelly *Ossory*

**Secretary:** Vacant (pro tem)

**Assistant Secretary:** Vacant (pro tem)

**Treasurer:** Pádraig O'Brien *Achonry*

**Committee:** Bernie Corry *Dublin*  
Maureen Long *Kildare & Leighlin*  
Tony Melia *Armagh*  
Joan O'Brien *Cashel & Emly*  
Peter Tierney *Dublin*

### Provincial presidents elected locally

**ARMAGH** David Greer *(Armagh)*  
**DUBLIN** Kieran Hickey *(Dublin)*  
**CASHEL** Marie Morcan *(Cashel & Emly)*  
**TUAM** Marie Dempsey *(Galway)*

### Appointed by Central Council

Dominic Dowling Editor of The Sheaf  
Cunningham & Co. Auditor to the Society  
Frank Friel & Co. Solicitor to the Society

### Appointed by the Archbishop of Dublin

Rev Fr. Seamus McEntee Chief Chaplain

# What inspires me..... A reflection by Thomas Murphy

For me, the most inspiring feature of *The Sheaf* is also its most regular. I mean the list of recently deceased members. As we leave behind the month of the Holy Souls and face Christmas, times of the year when we remember those who are lost to our eyes, that list inspires me. It inspires me because in choosing the Patron of the Universal Church as the heavenly patron of *St Joseph's Young Priests Society*, Mrs Taaffe also chose him as patron of a happy death, a death in the arms of Jesus and Mary. I am always inspired by the practical and prayerful work of the Society, but never so much as when I see that the ties of friendship that bind the members together, extend to those who have gone before us.

November 2020 in particular, was a special month for the Holy Souls when, by a singular privilege of the Holy See, the November Indulgences for the Holy Souls were extended to the whole month.

The affliction of pandemic isn't the first occasion when the Church has reached out *in extremis* to the Holy Souls. Two others come to my mind. The first relates to our

own country here in Ireland, during those long centuries of persecution, when the Catholic Faith was proscribed by law and the faithful, living and dead, were deprived by the State as far as the State was able, of the opportunity to obtain the Sacraments for themselves or to frequent the Sacraments for the benefit of the Holy Souls, and the Clergy were put under legal disabilities and faced criminal penalties for administering those Sacraments and offering the consolations of religion under pain of fine and imprisonment. In those days the venerable obligation of reciting the *De Profundis* after every Mass was instituted to pray constantly for those Holy Souls who had been deprived of receiving in person the ministrations of the Church.

Beyond that beautiful custom, we have for example, the story of Archdeacon Cavanagh of Knock who, on the very day when the Lamb of God appeared surrounded by angels at the gable end of the parish church, had completed one hundred Masses for the Holy Souls. And so, in a sense, the Church Suffering was right there when the Church

Triumphant met the Church Militant at Knock, Co Mayo.

The second great historical moment is that of the Great War, just over a hundred years ago, when so many thousands of soldiers were lost in the trenches, unknown, unshriven and perhaps unremembered. Pope Benedict XV issued the Bull *Incrumentum Altaris Sacrificium* on the 10th August 1915, granting all priests throughout the world the privilege of offering three requiem Masses on All Souls Day. Pope Benedict XV gives two reasons for the privilege. First, concern at the diminishing of foundations for the celebration of Masses for the deceased and second, to come to the aid of the large number of soldiers killed and still being killed without spiritual comfort as the conflict continued.

However, the Holy Souls are not just for November, nor even just for remembering those we have lost since last Christmas. I am thankful that *St Joseph's Young Priests Society* continues that friendship and fellowship that we all need here on earth – and that we may need more urgently when God calls us.

## Recently Deceased



The members of Enniskillen branch deeply regret the death of our paster emeritus Mgr Sean Cahill. He was Vicar General of the Diocese of Clogher up to a decade ago and has been our chaplain since. He died on the 60th anniversary of his ordination to priesthood.

Formerly a director of vocations for Clogher Diocese, he was a valued mentor and guide to men who were in discernment for priesthood and to those newly ordained starting out in their ministry. Monsignor Cahill was always on hand to give advice and encouragement to our members in Enniskillen and indeed to all branches of the Society at our diocesan meetings. He is sadly missed by all who loved him. May his gentle soul rest in peace.

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

### VOCATIONAL BRANCHES

**Garda Branch** John Barry  
**Motor & Engineering** Michael J Healy

### LOCAL BRANCHES

**Ardagh** Patrick Flynn  
**Ardfert** Noreen O'Mahony  
**Armagh** Regina Greer  
**Ballinahinch** John Shinnars, Thomas O'Dwyer  
**Ballymena, All Saints Branch** Mary Blayney, Mary Jane Reid, Nuala McErlaine  
**Ballyphehane** Josephine O'Brien, Rose Twomey  
**Bohermeen** Liam Clogher, Jack Devine, Cella Devine, Gretta Heary, May Lynskey, Betty Smith, John Carroll, Fr Mackin, Teresa Clarke, Adrian Bartley, Ultan Meehan, James Gilbride, Thomas Farrelly, Helen Moran, Sr Elma Hurley, Joe Reilly  
**Carrigaline** Barry Collins, Aidan Kiely  
**Dundalk** Kathleen Watters, Johnny Boyle, Dolores McCooney, Agnes Mc Evoy, Fr John O'Leary  
**Dungannon** Sr Anthony Devlin.  
**Ennis Branch** Bridie O'Connor, Moira Hannon.  
**Enniskillen** Clare Quinn, Sheila Nethercott, Elizabeth McCormick, Mgr Sean Cahill, Joe McCaffrey

**Foxrock** Kathlyn Murphy, Donal and Juliet O'Donoghue  
**Glendermott** Fr Anthony Francis Quinn, Philomena Josephine (Phyllis) Quinn  
**Graiguenamanagh** Miriam Prendergast, Betty Dunne  
**Kilmessan** Alice Montague  
**Knockavilla** Joan Carew  
**Knockkninny** Mona Winterson, Dr Brady, May Creaney, Charles Stafford, John McCabe, Eileen Murray, Collette Cox, John Martin, Peter McGovern, Anne Best, Tina McDonald, Patricia Farrelly, Darren McCarthy, Tom Maguire, Philomena O'Rourke, Sean Gilleece, Teresa Maguire, Kate Martin, Dermot Doonan, Tom Blake  
**Monasterboice** Margaret Martin  
**Murroe** Mary Quigley, Tom Cooney, Frances Carey  
**Newry** Josie O'Hare (Member of the Society's executive Committee)  
**Portadown** Kathleen Litter, Maura Cush, Brian Hughes, Brian Jordan, Sr Dorothy Bennett, Regina Greer, Maureen Byrne  
**Saggart-Rathcoole** Bill McEntee  
**Sixmilebridge** Bridie Moloney, Jimmy Grady  
**St John Vianney, Ardlea** Ita Courtney, Charlie Crowther, Eugene McGuinness  
**St John the Baptist, Clontarf** Eileen O'Mahony  
**St John's, Granaghan** Bridie Cassidy  
**St Kevin's, Harrington Street** Cáitlín Uí Murchadha  
**The Three Patrons Parish** Gloria Turton, Bridin

McDermott, Tony McDaid, Kathleen Duffy  
**Trillick** Michael O'Kane, Brian McAleer, Tommy McCaughey, Benny McNulty, Effie McKeogh

### NOTICE:

#### Josephine O'Hare (nee Marnell)

*The officers and members of the Dromore Diocesan St Joseph's Young Priests Society deeply regret the death of our esteemed member and dear friend Josephine O'Hare. Over the past 35 years, Josephine has served as a former Diocesan Secretary, Diocesan President and Armagh Provincial Secretary and this year as Diocesan Vice President and Executive member of the Society's Central Council in Dublin. She will be sincerely missed for her prayerful guidance and wise counsel and our heartfelt sympathy is extended to the O'Hare family circle. May she rest in peace. Saint Joseph pray for her.*

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

Anonymous Donations €20, €100, €75, €50, €100, €100, €100, €50