



YEAR OF ST JOSEPH

# The Sheaf



ST. JOSEPH'S YOUNG PRIESTS SOCIETY



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AUTUMN 2021

Among the clerical changes made by the Archbishop of Dublin Dr Dermot Farrell is the Society's Chief Chaplain, Fr Séamus McEntee (pictured right) who, in addition to retaining his current duties, is the new Diocesan Director of Vocations to Priesthood, with Fr Bill O'Shaughnessy (pictured left) the new Assistant Vocations Director.



Fr. Bill O'Shaughnessy & Fr. Séamus McEntee

Fr Séamus is delighted to be working with Fr Bill in the role of guiding men who may be interested in discerning their call to study for priesthood.

Fr Bill says: Bishop Fulton Sheen once said that "The house of the priest is not the rectory, he is at home only where Christ is present. There alone he learns the secret of love." Since Archbishop Farrell appointed me Assistant Director for Vocations to the Priesthood for the Dublin Diocese, I have had the opportunity to meet and chat with a number of men interested in discerning the possibility that God is calling them to the priesthood. And I have been amazed at how every one of them is deeply attracted to the Eucharist. And on top of this love for Jesus in the Eucharist, they also have a deep love for the Blessed Mother. It is wonderful to see the zeal inside these men that has been brought to the fore in their lives through their devotion in praying the rosary. This is a Marian devotion that has only intensified their love for Jesus in the Eucharist.

Seeking future priests for Dublin is one of the many critical challenges of our era. The growth of disaffiliated generations from the Church in our time is only exposing more and more the longing people have for meaning, hope and a love for life. This is a crisis the Church needs to respond to. Answers to which are found in a life that has a deep personal relationship with Christ

so as to share that life changing encounter with others.

People who claim to live a life of faith and prayer, however, and neglect to share that faith, can be ineffective to the mission of the Church; so we will need spiritual shepherds who not only have a burning desire to share the faith of Christ, to feed the spiritually starving men and women of our time. This critical mission entrusted to them is built upon the twin pillars of the Eucharistic face of Christ and devotion to his Blessed Mother.

Concluding, Fr Bill adds: "It is in very frequent adoration of the Eucharist that one learns to love, and this transforming encounter is then transmitted in the daily pastoral duties of a priest in a parish. Indeed, as Archbishop Farrell recently said; 'The priest is someone who connects heaven and earth. His mission is to be a mediator, a bridge that connects, and thereby to bring human beings to God, to their redemption, to their true light, to their true life.' The men I've met have all expressed this very desire to bring people to Jesus and Jesus to people, and encourage others to do the same. This visible apostolic drive in them cuts right to the heart of a Catholic priest."

The new role for Fr Séamus and Fr Bill will require much prayerful support from the Society's members, and indeed, from parishioners across the Archdiocese.

We offer our sincere best wishes for the future and our congratulations on his ordination as a priest in the Chaldean Catholic Church to Fr Savio



Handula who in 2019 entered the Pontifical Irish College Rome as a theology seminarian for completion of his formation. He has been part of the Irish Seminary community there.

The Chaldean Catholic Church, in full communion with Rome, uses Syriac writing and language in its liturgy. Pope Francis celebrated the Holy Eucharist in the Chaldean Rite at the Chaldean Cathedral of St Joseph in Bagdad during his recent visit to Iraq, though his prayers and talk were in Italian.

Fr Savio comes from the same diocese as the late Fr Ragheed Ganni, previously a Civil Engineer, who resided in the Pontifical Irish College and was also supported by the Society while completing his priestly studies. Fr Rageed an Iraqi Chaldean Catholic priest on taking up ministry in his homeland was killed on Trinity Sunday 3 June 2007 along with three subdeacons who had accompanied him to Mosul's Holy Spirit church where he was parish priest.

The four were stopped by unknown armed men who demanded to know why the priest refused to close his church as he had been warned to do. The gunmen then ordered the four to convert to Islam. They refused and were shot down. Fr Ganni was secretary to the Archbishop of Mosul who was murdered nine months later in Mosul.

The Cause for Fr Raheed's Canonisation has been introduced. Currently he is referred to as 'Servant of God'.

# DUNBOYNE BRANCH

*in the Diocese of Meath*

In celebrating the Year of Saint Joseph the Dunboyne Branch welcomed the arrival of their newly acquired statue of St Joseph. The treasurer Con Wiseman organised the purchase and members and friends contributed to the cost. It was indeed an afternoon to remember during the difficult days of lockdown because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Phil Sheridan Meath diocesan president recalls the initiation of the branch in 1994 by the late Msgr Dunne, parish priest at the time. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam uasal. Since then there have been regular monthly meetings, until COVID changed everything. Over time membership declined however and currently there are only six actively involved. "But one thing has remained the same – dedication and commitment to the aims of the Society".

The branch holds a yearly church-gate collection, as it not only helps the finances, but also draws attention to the Society's presence locally. The members arrange weekly Eucharistic Adoration, including prayer for vocations to priesthood and consecrated life, especially vocations in the Meath diocese. There are also several promoters who are unable to attend meetings, but who circulate The Sheaf and other items keeping parishioners up-to-date with what is going on in the Society, such as pilgrimages though they are virtual pilgrimages at present.

On a wider scale Phil advises that the Meath diocese (though it adjoins Dublin, is part of the Armagh Ecclesiastical Province) has roughly twenty branches of the Society – some more active than others. During the lockdown Bohermeen Branch celebrated its Golden Jubilee. The president there, Catherine English, received an illustrated certificate with acknowledgment and thanks for twenty-five years support through prayer and financial support of students for priesthood. Congratulations to all involved!



*Outside Dunboyne's Church of Sts Peter and Paul during the pandemic, (l-r) Mary Wiseman branch president, Con Wiseman treasurer, Yvonne Conway and Phil Sheridan diocesan president.*

Some members have gone to their eternal reward during the last year and a half. Let us remember them. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a n-anamacha.

"When meetings, Masses and gatherings were suspended, I endeavoured to keep in touch with the branches by e-mail, texts and letters otherwise – at Christmas, in March for our novena to St Joseph and before 1 March for St Joseph the Worker. Since my election in 2014 I have visited most of the branches in the diocese, and always have been impressed by the faith and dedication of the members and supporters I meet. When the situation allows I look forward to visiting again. Meanwhile let us remember that 'more things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of' and that the diocesan secretary of the Society, Paul Tuite who contributes so much to our endeavours is always available to offer advice and help".

*Phil Sheridan,*  
Meath Diocesan President.



**FOUR MEMBERS OF THE INSTITUTE OF THE INCARNATE WORD**

*(l-r) Fr Victor from Paraguay with three Dublin men*

*Fr Brendan O'Rourke, Fr Stephen Kennedy and Deacon Paul Spaine. Frs Brendan and Stephen are serving in the Meath diocese at Holy Family Parish, Ballsgrove, Drogheda*

*Remember us  
in your Will*



*Should you desire to include the Society in your legacy bequests, it is advisable to consult your solicitor when making or amending your Will.*

# Saint Joseph and the Apparition at Knock Shrine

by Sr M Louise O'Rourke, pddm

*Disciples of the Divine Master*

Although the message of Knock is a one which still confuses some, it has been agreed that the Our Lady, St Joseph, and the beloved disciple John, together with the Lamb of God came to comfort a people who had suffered much. But why Saint Joseph? Apparitions of St Joseph are not widely known or well documented although it is good to remember that St Joseph was part of one of the apparitions in Fatima in 1917. Since he is often characterised as 'the silent saint' it is really not surprising that his presence at Knock has not attracted a great deal of attention. Not until recently! On 19 March 2021 Knock Shrine was elevated to being an International Shrine of Marian and Eucharistic Devotion. This took place during this Year of St Joseph and on the feast of St Joseph, 19 March.

On the 8 December 2020, Pope Francis issued an apostolic letter entitled 'Patris Corde'. He began the letter: *"Each of us can discover in Joseph – the man who goes unnoticed, a daily, discreet, and hidden presence – an intercessor, a support, and a guide in times of trouble. Saint Joseph reminds us that those who appear hidden or in the shadows can play an incomparable role in the history of salvation."*

This is St Joseph as we see him in Knock: "an intercessor, a support and a guide in times of trouble." We see the power of silent presence and witness. St Joseph is present. He is present to Mary his spouse, to Jesus the Lamb of God, to St John the Evangelist. Being present to someone with our whole presence is one of the greatest gifts which we can give someone. During this time of pandemic, we all longed for the time when we could meet family and friends, and be present with them, not just virtually. Joseph is turned towards the others in the apparition. We are present to people when we can look them in the eyes and listen, not just to the words but also to the silence, their gestures, their body language.

At Knock, in the figure of St Joseph, we embrace the mystery of silence and the absence of words. This absence is replaced by the eloquence of contemplation on the



icon of the apparition. It draws us in. We are called to behold. The silence of St Joseph is not just an absence of sound or words, it is the capacity to listen. As followers of Jesus, we are called daily to listen to what God our Father has to say to us, through the Word of God, and through each other.

We can say that in his relationship to Jesus, Joseph was the earthly shadow of the heavenly Father. He watched over him and protected him, being separated from him only in death. In our own journey of faith and of service in our homes, our parishes and throughout the wider Church, we know how important it is to have people around us and with us who support us in our spiritual pilgrimage.

We see St Joseph as a man who is focussed on Christ alone. St Joseph found happiness not in mere self-sacrifice but in self-gift. He knew how to love with extraordinary freedom for he never made himself the centre of things. In the centre of the Apparition is his spouse Mary. On the centre of the Altar is Jesus the Lamb. He was focussed on the lives of Mary and Jesus. Just as Joseph was a just and simple man, we are reminded of the simplicity of the visionaries which witnessed the apparition at Knock. They too lived simple lives and went on to do the same even after the apparition.

In Saint Joseph, we see the power of being faithful in time of trials. He is close to the Cross. Yes, he had his sufferings in life. He was called to be the guardian and protector of the Holy Family and from the very beginning it was not without its difficulties, but God always walked with him. The Cross is never far from any of us, but we are called to, as Scriptures reminds us: *"Go to Joseph," or 'bring it to Joseph.'* *St Joseph could not be other than the Guardian of the Church, for the Church is the continuation of the Body of Christ in history. At the end of 'Patris Corde', Pope Francis reminds us that "the proper mission of the saints is not only to obtain miracles and graces but to intercede for us before God. The saints help all the faithful to strive for the holiness and the perfection of their particular state of life. Their lives are concrete proof that it is possible to out the Gospel into practice. The lives of the saints are examples to be imitated. By his eloquent silence, St Joseph says the same. We need only to ask Saint Joseph for the grace of graces: our conversion."*

***The above is an abridged version of Sr Louise's talk for the 2021 Dublin Diocesan Virtual Pilgrimage to Knock - Ed.***

# CELEBRATING FIFTEEN YEARS OF PRIESTHOOD

I find when you have taken the very long road to the place where you find yourself right now, it becomes very difficult to put pen to that story. So what I can offer is a skeletal of the past and the present, hoping something may resonate with you the reader. As I sit to write this I am celebrating fifteen years of priesthood this week.

I was born and bred in Dundrum, Dublin and educated by the Holy Ghost Fathers. I am the second eldest of four (two brothers and one sister). No longer fit, but sometimes found on the road back fighting gravity. I worked as an engineer in the Structural and Software disciplines for a combined sixteen years, mostly abroad. I am less crazy now than I was in my 20s, 30s and 40s (only because I'm not able any more). I've been lost and found, foolish and sensible, loved and in love, and often to blame. I was a person who often struggled with my faith, but always believed, a great gift given to me by my parents in my younger years. I have been blessed with family for their love and support over the years. I have enjoyed life, sometimes too much, occasionally being responsible and mature. Always searching and never fully content, I was not aware of the power of God's Love until I finally stopped and listened, entering the seminary in 2001.

Since ordination I have ministered in three parishes in the Dublin diocese, Sandyford, Holy Redeemer in Bray and currently in the inner city at the North Wall. Each parish being unique in its own way, but all share the same challenge of witnessing to Jesus in a way that is relevant and that engages the people while never compromising on the richness of the truth of the Gospel. In each of the parishes, I've been heartened and blessed by the faith and commitment of some of the people. The generosity of the volunteers, in giving to their parish freely and witnessing to God's love through the sacramental life of their church, has been my privilege to be part of. Their tireless



Fr Robert Colclough

efforts and love have been a huge support to my priesthood.

As with the joys of ministry, each parish has presented some very difficult challenges through bereavement, addiction, violence and, apathy and hostility to the faith. It is more often the case that in these moments I have encountered Jesus more intensely. It is here that the Lord's words to Paul penetrate deeply 'My grace is enough for you: my power is at its best in weakness.'

As a priest, I can't stress enough how encouraging and helpful it is to know that people are praying for me in my ministry. I have probably been guilty of taking for granted the work and commitment of Saint Joseph's Young Priests Society, but I'm very grateful and moved by the support and care shown. Thank you! This support is needed more than ever right now as the pressures in ministry increase. As our society continues to question the relevance of God and remove Him from the public sphere, I really

believe that being rooted to the person of Jesus Christ is essential to ministering effectively today in priesthood. This call to holiness in priesthood has for me, found its meaning and expression in placing the Eucharist in the first place in my life. The parish must be built around the Eucharist.

St Augustine wrote, "John was a voice for a time, Christ the eternal Word in the beginning. Take away the word and what is a voice? When it conveys no meaning it is just an empty sound. A wordless voice strikes the ear, but it does not make the heart grow." I continue to be grateful and privileged that God has chosen me to be a voice for his Word in this time. The challenge is enormous, but I believe that my priesthood will only be authentic if it is lived through the Cross of Christ and with Christ. Parish life teaches you, that you do not have all the answers to the various issues that present themselves. Simply being present is a nice place to start.

The most beautiful aspect of my ministry over the years has been the confessional, where I have witnessed immense healing. Pope Francis has said that, "Awareness of the need for salvation is the best way of encountering Jesus." Being part of someone's journey, helping them to encounter Jesus is both humbling and overwhelming. No-one is beyond the reach of God and it's truly wonderful to see the moment when someone realises that about themselves.

No doubt, I will continue to get lost on this journey serving the Lord, but hopefully my heart will continue to burn as I listen to the Word with those I encounter in this wonderful priestly life. God's love for us is greater than any trial or setback we will ever encounter in life. That's always worth telling someone.

Fr Robert Colclough

Administrator, North Wall Parish, Dublin

## Recently Deceased

### VOCATIONAL BRANCHES

**Licensed Trade** Joan Ivory (née Woodbyrne)

**Teachers Branch** Liam Hayden

### LOCAL BRANCHES

**Ballinahinch** Nonie Healy, Martin Burke, Sheila Flannery

**Bohermeen** Francie Tuite, Anne Deane, Francis Byrne, Hugh Murtagh, Oliver Craughan, Thomas Weldon, Kevin Conaty, Kathleen Rogers, Tom Kerrigan, Philis Cassidy, Nora Drum

**Derrygonnelly/Botha** Jimmy Sheerin, Jim Hoy, Paddy Corrigan, Ken Maguire, Kevin Gallagher, Tommy Gallagher, Charlie McGowan, Tommy Howe, Celine McManus, Nuala Maguire

**Dromore Diocese** Fr Tony Corr

**Errigal** Margaret Martin, Betty Deighan, Bernadette McGlade, Gemma McKinney, Anna Mullan, Ryan McGilligan, Rose McNicholl, Catherine McNicholl

**Ferns Diocese** Fr James Cashman

**General** Mary Fitzpatrick

**Glasnevin** Vera Lawlor

**Killorglin** George Nagle

**Moycarkey/Borris** Mary Cummins

**Our Lady Crowned (Mayfield)** Josephine O'Connell, Eileen Sheehan, Mossie O'Sullivan

**Portadown** Fr Joe McKeever, Mary Livingston,

Matt Sloan, Willie Lappin, John Francis Lappin, Sally Donnelly, Antonette Litter

**Trillick** John Corry, Séamus McCann, Aidan Donnelly

**Two Mile House** Mary Cummins

**General** Muriel McCarthy, Keeper of Marsh's Library. (At eight years of age following her father's death, her mother in 1941 moved the family to the top storey of 23 Merrion Square becoming housekeeper of the Society's House. Ed)

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Photo on page 3 courtesy of Knock Shrine.

Photo: Sinéad Mallee