



The Sheaf

ST. JOSEPH'S YOUNG PRIESTS SOCIETY
A LAY ORGANISATION FOSTERING VOCATIONS



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Annual General Meeting of the Central Council

A very positive AGM of St. Joseph's Young Priests Society took place at the Ashling Hotel on Saturday, 22nd October, 2022. 66 Members from across the country attended along with Fr. Seamus McEntee, National Spiritual Director SJYPS, the Rector, staff and students from St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, Peter Cunningham, Auditor, and staff members.

Mass for the Feast of St. John Paul II was concelebrated by Fr. Seamus with Fr. Tomás Surlis, Fr. Sean Corkery and Fr. Chris Hayden with grateful appreciation for the beautiful music provided by the seven students attending led by Dr. John O'Keeffe.

John Murphy welcomed everyone on his final day as President and thanked us for our loyal support. He said it has been a strange time. Things do not stand still. They are constantly changing but God is in charge. More prayer is needed. He reminded us that 8,000 priests have been ordained with the help of the Society since its foundation in 1895. He wished Dominic Dowling a happy retirement after a lifetime of dedication to the Society and production of our quarterly Sheaf. He also wished to remember Maureen Keogh, former General Secretary and active promoter of the Society and Anne Condrón from the office who had special responsibility for financial assistance to seminarians. May God grant them both their reward in Heaven. He reminded us again that Mass is celebrated daily for our intentions and for benefactors living and deceased.

The following officers were ratified unanimously, no election being necessary as the number of candidates did not exceed the number of vacant positions.

President:	Marian Fennelly (Ossory)
Vice Presidents:	Tony Melia (Armagh), Peter Tierney (Dublin)
Secretary:	Thomas Murphy (Kildare and Leighlin)
Treasurer:	Padraig O'Brien (Achonry)
Executive Members:	The four Provincial Presidents, elected locally, David Greer (Armagh), Redempta Furney (Cashel), Pauline McHugh (Dublin), and Marie Dempsey (Tuam) and also Breda Daly (Cloyne), John Murphy (Kildare and Leighlin), Gerard Quinn (Dublin).

There followed a Holy Hour led by Fr. Seamus and John Murphy. Michael McManus (Dublin) highlighted the importance of handing in the Prayer for Guidance to as many schools as possible. John wished everyone a safe journey home after a very enjoyable and satisfactory day for our Society where the sense of camaraderie and friendship was palpable.

PRESIDENT'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

Dear Members,

I am honoured and humbled to have been ratified as your President. It has been a journey of saying 'YES' at every level when somebody asked just like the many who have gone before me. It is my hope that we will all work together, whatever our talents to ensure the work of our Society continues. We all accept that these are very changed and challenging times from when the Society was founded. We are at a very difficult juncture in the life of the Society. Just as the Church is on a synodal journey, we can do the same.



I would like to thank outgoing President John Murphy and all the Executive Members for their sterling work during his Term of Office. It has been a privilege to work with you and to Dominic Dowling, a special thank you for his steadying hand and wise council in service to the Society for so long and to me personally. It is much appreciated. To the office staff who are always on hand to help, thank you too while remembering fondly Maureen Keogh, former General Secretary and Anne Condrón from the office recently deceased: May they rest in peace.

I had the privilege this summer of reading Oscar Romero at the Golden Jubilee celebration of our Parish Priest and these words struck a chord with me: 'We cannot do everything and there is a sense of liberation in realising that. This enables us to do something and to do it very well'. Remember all the good you've done for the Society and for seminarians. The Society has lasted for 127 years. Remember too that Mass is offered every day for your intentions and for our benefactors living and deceased. Let us entrust the Society and ourselves to St. Joseph's care and see where it takes us.

Wishing you all a happy and holy Christmas and a fruitful year for our Society in 2023.

Marian Fennelly
President

SAINT JOSEPH, SUPPORT IN DIFFICULTIES, PRAY FOR US!

Homily for the feast of Pope St. John Paul II

Given by Fr. Seamus McEntee during Mass at the Annual General Meeting

Today's Gospel is one of the more applicable parables for those of us in St. Joseph's Young Priests Society. The parable calls to mind some of the stories we hear about failing Vocational branches of SJYPS as well as many in parishes. Some branches have been in existence for years and yet more recently, many have closed and others seem to be stagnant and barren, at least in terms of finding new membership. But today's Gospel, is full of hope for us. The owner of the fig trees is persuaded by the optimism of the man looking after the fig trees, to "give it one more year" and allow him to tend and manure it. We don't know if the fig tree produces fruit the following year or not. The parable is left without a final answer because I believe we are asked to decide, through our actions and God's grace. Whatever is barren in our personal lives and in our branches of SJYPS we can bring back to life and become fruitful once again with tending and with a bit of hard work. Each of us is being asked to bloom and produce fruit where we are planted, in whatever situation we find ourselves in life, as a member of SJYPS, as a seminarian, as a priest, as a married or single person. It doesn't matter what age we are, or even what we have achieved in the past, there is still more we can do... our Gospel encourages us not to give up, to persevere, to be persistent in our efforts and our prayers because God is patient and has all the time in the world, and He wants our success.

We celebrate the feast day of Pope St. John Paul II. Through the fruits of his own intimacy with God, he became a great modern saint who continues to influence how many people know, understand, and

live out the Catholic faith even today. Many priests and religious credit St. John Paul II with their decision to answer the call to their vocation. And they, in turn, continue his legacy by bringing the Gospel to all they meet. As the Pope travelled the world, many young people felt inspired through his lived life of holiness and the way he fearlessly and powerfully preached the Gospel, that they wanted to follow his example and become priests and religious. He loved priests and said about priesthood that: *"The world looks to the priest, because it looks to Jesus! No one can see Christ; but everyone sees the priest, and through him they wish to catch a glimpse of the Lord! Immense is the grandeur of the Lord! Immense is the grandeur and dignity of the priest!"*

Yes, "The world looks to the priest because it looks to Jesus". We look to Jesus because he is merciful to us. And so people look to the priest because he is the instrument of God's mercy to the world. In every aspect of their ministry, priests are instruments of God's mercy. When a priest for example, pronounces absolution in confession to repentant sinners who are hoping for God's mercy, and they then experience the forgiveness and the healing and the peace of Christ, then they have been instruments of the mercy of Christ. When a priest comforts and anoints the sick who are hoping for God's mercy and they, through the priests' ministry, experience some relief or comfort or healing from their distress, then the priest has been the instrument of the mercy of Christ. Or when a priest through counselling and spiritual direction, brings the light of Christ to those who are trying to find their way through darkness and confusion, then the priest has been the instrument of the

mercy of Christ. Above all, a priest's first duty of mercy is prayer. The prayer of a shepherd for his sheep is always music to the ears of God. Prayer is an act of love. Every prayer whether of praise or contrition or petition is always a plea for mercy.

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

That's what our mission is as members of SJYPS. Through our support in prayer and financial giving, pilgrimages and retreats, we grow in holiness because we share in that mission of the mercy of Christ. How many thousands of priests have SJYPS supported around the world since its founding in 1895? And those priests have carried out hundreds of thousands of baptisms, heard confessions, anointed the sick, buried the dead, offered Masses and prayed for intentions of those in need. What an awesome task and mission we have been given, but we are not alone, we are to go boldly forward as we hear St. John Paul II, say to us, *"Do not be afraid. Do not be satisfied with mediocrity. Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch."*

*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.*



We are grateful to Bishop Alphonsus Cullinan, Diocese of Waterford and Lismore, led the SJYPS resumed annual pilgrimage to Our Lady's Island, Co. Wexford, on Sunday, 24th July, 2022. This joyous and prayerful occasion was well attended by members and friends of the Society from across Ireland and included Confession, Holy Mass and the traditional stations of the pilgrimage around the island.

General Secretary's Report

Year ended 30th June 2022

BRANCHES AND COMMITTEES

There has been a significant fall of branches over the last number of years. A summary of the position over the last four years is as follows:-

Year	Armagh	Cashel	Dublin	Tuam	Vocational	Total
2018/2019	134	78	74	38	10	334
2019/2020	120	70	65	29	8	292
2020/2021	94	66	59	23	8	250
2021/2022	90	61	57	20	8	236

STUDENTS

The Board of Priests meeting was not held in 2021/22 or in the previous year due to Covid-19. All applications were considered by the Executive members for approval. In the year under review the number of students assisted in Irish Colleges is 45. The number of students assisted Overseas is 589. The overseas students are broadly located as follows:-

Africa	383	India	99	Philippines	26
South America	20	Eastern Europe	43	Asia/Pakistan/Others	18

A summary of the position over the last four years is as follows: -

Year	Ordinations			Students Assisted		
	Irish	Overseas	Total	Irish	Overseas	Total
2018/2019	8	140	148	65	563	628
2019/2020	1	127	128	70	503	573
2020/2021	3	98	101	64	583	647
2021/2022	11	126	137	45	589	634

Brigid Kelly,

General Secretary

Reflection on a collection

From Bernie Doheny, Mount Merrion Branch

Our branch of Saint Joseph's Young Priests Society has held a sale of work yearly. Everyone loves the occasion, the excitement the surprises and the camaraderie. It's a three week event, dropping leaflets in every door in the parish, collecting goods for the sale filling our garages our living rooms our halls and then we baked and we baked.

The sale is held over the Saturday and Sunday. It's hard work and in latter years the effort outweighed the reward and the yearly collection was established. The day of our first collection, one of our members remarked on how much easier it was to hold a box and on how some were so willing to support us.

Collections require planning, getting permission from the parish priest, choosing

the right date when there are no other collections (and before winter), then having a notice in the church newsletter three weeks before the event.

On a glorious sun-filled Autumn day we had our most recent collection. We scattered the prayer for vocation cards around the church. Our priests spoke highly of the society. The congregation spilled out of the church and were happy to give what they could. Some stopped for a chat and assured us of their prayers for vocations.

Unlike the sale of work, the collection day is more about awareness and bringing the aims of the society to our congregation, and on that last collection day we even got a new member.



Follow Your Vocation!

“The duty of fostering vocations pertains to the whole Christian community, which should exercise it above all by a fully Christian life.” *Optatam Totius* The Second Vatican Council’s Decree on Priestly Training.

Saint Joseph’s Young Priests Society is a Society of lay people approved by the Irish Catholic Bishops Conference, organised in parishes and workplaces, throughout the whole of Ireland, to help students on their journey to priesthood, to foster vocations to the priesthood and religious life, to promote the vocation of the laity and foster a greater understanding and love of the Eucharist and Holy Mass.

We need your support. Contact your local branch or the General Secretary of the Society. Get involved in our work and prayer for Vocations to the Priesthood in Ireland and around the World.

Ite ad Joseph! Go to Joseph (Genesis 41:55)

RADIO MARIA
IRELAND

The Sheaf takes to the Airwaves

Every last Friday of the month at 7 p.m. a programme by (and about) St. Joseph’s Young Priests Society is being broadcast on Radio Maria Ireland.

Radio Maria Ireland is Ireland’s only Catholic Radio Station, broadcasting 24 hours a day, every day of the year, with a vast range of programmes. Holy Mass is broadcast at least daily and the day is filled with occasions of prayer and uplifting Catholic content, including a monthly programme by and about St. Joseph’s Young Priests Society.

Radio Maria Ireland is not on ‘the wireless’ but you can listen on SAORVIEW Channel 210, on a Smartphone App, on Facebook or on www.radiomaria.ie.

Please listen in on the last Friday of each month at 7 p.m. and encourage others to listen in, especially members and benefactors who can’t attend meetings. Write in, text or ‘phone in with your news and your views. This is your hour!



John Murphy, outgoing President SJYPS, Bishop James Raphael Anaparambil, Diocese of Alleppey, Kerala, and Fr. Dixy Faber, Diocese of Tuam, during a visit to the SJYPS.



Two Ethiopian Capuchins, Fr. Alazar Wondimu and Fr. Adane Heramo, were ordained priest by His Eminence Cardinal Berhaneyesus, Metropolitan Archbishop of Addis Ababa on 24th September, 2022.



Fr Ronan Sheehan (seen here with his parents and sisters) was ordained in his own parish church of St. John the Baptist, Newcestown, Co Cork, on Sunday, 18th September, 2022. (Photo: Peter Pietrzak)

Recently Deceased & Acknowledgements

LOCAL BRANCHES

Ballinanteer Eileen Kelleher

Ballinahinch / Killoscully Kathleen Finn.

Blackrock – Cork Ann Dixon.

Bohermeen Paddy Connell, John O’Brien, Jim Rennicks, Noel Lynskey, Brendan Thornton, Oliver O’Reilly, Sinead Ball, John Joe Halpin, David Craughan, Noel Kerrigan.

Callan Margaret O’Driscoll.

Cashel and Golden. Kathleen Landy, John Stapleton, Philomena Phelan, Noreen Hand, Kathleen Kennedy, P.K. Anglim, Michael Hartnett.

Cleenish Fredrick (Freddie) Lucy, Peter McManus, Agnes Buchholz, Patsy McManus, Hugh McManus, Joe McTernan, Jim McGuinness, Felix (Faley) Steward, Winnie Burns, Ann Gray, Mary (May) McAloon, Annie Doherty, Frank Nugent, Patsy McCabe, Josephine Corrigan,

Curaheen Road Declan O’Connor

Foxrock Mary Hickey (Nee Dowling), Sandymount.

Lordship and Ballymacscanlon Mavis Woods, Elizabeth Ruddy, Mare Rice, Rose Keenan, Peadar Keenan, Christina Rogan, Eileen O’Reilly, John O’Hanlon, Annie Sheehan, Sean Hanratty.

Maghera Annie McKenna, Seamus Higgins, Padge McAllister, Richard Cudden, Geraldine Gillan.

Mitcelstown Helen Flynn

Mountnugent/Ballinacree Joe Sheridan, Peggy Sheridan, Brendan Sheridan, Noel O Hagan, Michael Connaughton, John Connell, Phonsie Smith, Margaret Brady, Bridget O’Beirne, Michael Lynch, Eugene Gaffney, Tommy Briody, Phyllis Kelly.

Portadown Thomas Corrigan, Bernadette Guy

Portglenone Alec McDonnell, Kathleen McAleese, Dick Carey, Helen McAtamney.

Skibbereen Margaret Ryan, Liam Calnan,

Eileen Burchill, Pat Burchill, Anna McCarthy, Michael O’Driscoll, Betty Crowley (Ardralla), John O’Donovan, Monica Keating, John Keating, Joan Sheehan, Jerry Sheehan, Peter Nolan, Peggy O’Driscoll, Fintan O’Driscoll, Betty Crowley (Skibbereen), Pat O’Donovan, Colm Crowley, David Crowley, Maryann O’Neill

St. John the Baptist – Clontarf Thomas O’Connor Jnr.

St. John Vianney, Ardlea Michael (Mick) Corry.

Templemore Sr. Helen Kennedy.

The Three Patron’s branch Margaret McChrystal

Trillick Vincent Keenan, Annie McGee, Paddy Doyle, Kathleen Farry, Kathleen McCaughey, Patsy Trainor, Mary McCaughey, Margaret McSorley.

Tullamore Tom Coughlan.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Anonymous Donations €10.00, €12.44.