

COLLOQUE

Journal of the Irish Province of the
Congregation of the Mission

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Editorial

I am struck constantly by how often confreres tell me that the first thing that they read in *Colloque* is the obituaries. Here, in our journal, we recall what a man has meant to us and to the life of the Province. The lives and stories are very different, some obituaries are longer than others, some strike more of a cord with the individual than others, some seem to capture the spirit of our confrere better than others, yet all, as I know as Editor, are proffered with love and affection and a very real desire to pay tribute to a fellow Vincentian who has sought to walk the road with us.

In this issue of *Colloque*, we have the obituaries of four confreres who have died in 2002. They were four very different men, working in four very different fields, representing, in many ways, some of the most significant of our works as a Province. Yet, each sought, in his particular corner of the harvest field, to do the work of the Lord.

I am stuck also by the care that the authors of each obituary put into their work and their desire to do justice to the memory of our departed. Perhaps this was most poignant in the case of Fr John Doyle's obituary of his brother, Gerald, who took ill just after the celebrations for John's Golden Jubilee and who died so soon after. I am grateful to John for undertaking to write Gerald's obituary but I take the opportunity to thank all the confreres, in this issue and in the past, who have taken on the responsibility, in the name of all the Province, to pay tribute to our dead.

This issue will come too late to mark the canonisation of Marcantonio Durando but, for those of us who know little of our Italian confrere, Tom Davitt's article will prove a useful introduction. His other article, on the *Expectatio Israel*, is a timely reminder for the prayer for Vocations and our hope that, as some labourers leave the vineyards, others will come to take their place, even at the late hour.

Continuing that theme, we publish Colm McAdam's homily on the occasion of his silver jubilee of priesthood and, albeit a little tardy, offer him our heartfelt congratulations.

In other articles, Sr Kathleen Hogg writes on the work of evangelisation with those who have learning disabilities and Myles Rearden writes on how we understand the role of Mary today. Finally, we publish, in abridged form, Michael Edem's MA thesis on St Vincent's debt to some of the Fathers of the Church.

Marcantonio Durando CM (1801-1880)

Thomas Davitt CM

*This is the text of a talk given to the seminarists
in Philadelphia in October 2001*

Early years: Birth till ordination

Marcantonio Durando was an Italian of the Vincentian province of Lombardy. He had two brothers who were very prominent in the military and political affairs of the time. He became Provincial of the province. He was also involved in the foundation of communities of religious women.

He was born in the town of Mondoví, 50 miles (80 km) due south of Turin, in 1801. In 1773 Pope Clement XIV had suppressed the Jesuits and in 1776 the Vincentians were given the Jesuit house and church in Mondoví. The Durando house was next door to the Vincentians. Marcantonio's father was a lawyer, and ten children were born into the family, seven boys and three girls. The first child, a girl, lived to be eighty. The second, Marcantonio Maria, died at birth. The third, Marcantonio Serafino Donato died the day after his birth. Then came another girl, who survived. The fifth was a boy, who survived. The sixth was our Marcantonio. Then came Giovanni, a celebrated general, Giacomo, also a general and politician. Number nine was a girl, who survived, and the tenth and last was another boy Giacinto Antonio Maria who died as at the age of eighteen. He apparently had some connection with the Vincentians, though the registers do not list him as having begun his novitiate; perhaps he merely had indicated that he wished to join.

After the French Revolution the French invaded Piedmont in 1798 and stayed till 1802. Marcantonio's father at first was against the French revolutionary ideas, but then became enthusiastic for them. His two sons who joined the military shared his liberal ideas. Marcantonio did not share his father's and brothers' enthusiasm for these ideas, which to some extent were certainly anti-clerical. He seems to have declared his intention to be a priest around the age of fourteen, and his father did not object, as he made some financial arrangements because of this. Marcantonio did his secondary school studies in the diocesan minor seminary in his home-town, though attending as a day pupil and not as a boarder. This was, partly at least, because his health was not too good. On 18 November 1818, six months after his seventeenth birthday, he was received into the Vincentian novitiate in Genoa. There were five or six in the novitiate at that time. As he would have done philosophy as part

of his secondary schooling he began theology after his first year in the novitiate. He went to the Vincentian house in Sarzana for his theology; this was about sixty miles down the coast from Genoa. After one year there he took his vows. Up till the early 1950s we took perpetual vows two years after entering the novitiate.

In early 1822, when he was in third year theology, his health began to cause some worry to the seminary staff. It was decided that he should be sent back to the community house in his home town of Mondoví. In those days there was a common medical belief that the air of a person's native place could restore a person's weakened state of health. His mother, who was sixteen years younger than her husband, died later that year. On 12 June 1824, Marcantonio was ordained priest in the cathedral of Fossano, about twelve miles from Mondoví. He stayed on in the community house in Mondoví till mid-August, when he was notified that he was being appointed to the mission team in Casale Monferrato, about thirty-five miles east of Turin.

On the mission team

He arrived in the mission house in mid-August 1824 and started preparing the sermons which he would need for parish missions. After almost exactly four months he was sent on his first mission on 12 December 1824. This mission, like most of those given from that house at the time, lasted just over three weeks. Twenty-five days seems to have been taken as the normal length of a parish mission, though there are variations of length on record. The team from that house gave five missions during 1825. I thought, at first, that this did not seem a large number for a year, but if we regard each mission as being roughly one month, and allowing for breaks for the team between missions, and the fact that all through the summer months there would be no missions because of farm work in the country areas, perhaps it is understandable. Also, the thinking at that time, not only in Italy, was that in the off-season missionaries were supposed to be studying, and revising existing sermons and writing new ones. The house also had ministry to the inhabitants of their part of the town of Casale Monferrato.

In December 1825 the superior of the house died unexpectedly, and Marcantonio was appointed acting superior, eighteen months after his ordination. This would seem to say something about how he was regarded by the community. Six months later, in June, the bursar of the house was appointed superior and Marcantonio took his place as bursar. Early in 1826 his father died.

From April 1826 till the end of 1827 Marcantonio does not figure in the lists of missions given by the team from Casale Monferrato. There were three reasons for this. First, once again his superiors were

worried about his health, because missions seemed to tire him out more than other members of the team. Second, he had a lot of extra work as bursar during this period, as the community moved into a new house. Marcantonio had to see to the details of this, including attending to much renovation work which was necessary in the house into which they were moving. Third, after the death of his father he had to take part, with his siblings, in dealing with family affairs. The family expected him to share with them the business sorting out of the legal and financial situation of the family after their father's death.

Even though he was not giving missions, he was involved in the other ministries of the house, catechising, preaching and giving instructions. The latter may, I think, have been some sort of adult religious education. But he also used the time to evaluate the type of sermons he had been giving on missions, and to re-cast them in a more suitable form. An Italian confrere who published a biography of him in 1970, put it rather well:

As is often the case with young priests, who always think that they have found the new formula for converting the world in two days, Father Durando seems to have, from the start, lacked a proper perspective in preparing his sermons. But as soon as he realised this, he did not hesitate in revising everything, from the very beginning, according to a simpler and more concrete plan (Chierotti, 67).

He had taken as his model the published literary sermons of great French preachers. During his period off the missions he realised that this was hardly a realistic way of preaching to the rural population of the northern Italy. He took the opportunity of completely revising his sermons, making them more suitable for the actual people who would be hearing them. There was also another practical problem. Not all the population understood Italian; there were French-speaking areas and also parts where a local dialect was the spoken language. He referred to one parish where the people were ignorant of matters of the faith because the parish priest always spoke in Italian.

In 1827 he re-started his missionary work, with two missions that year, five in 1828, seven in 1829 and four in 1830. In August 1829 he was transferred to the provincial house in Turin, from where he continued giving missions. In that year he was elected delegate to the Provincial Assembly, being the youngest confrere at the assembly.

There is plenty of still extant contemporary written evidence that Durando was the most talked about of the Vincentian missionaries. He seems to have had a charisma for evoking great emotional response, and again and again there are references to his hearers, lay and clerical, being

moved to tears. The Vincentians were regarded as being missionaries of the stricter type. They, as a group, had an agreed approach in matters of moral theology. Durando's professor of moral theology advised his students to study moral theology very well, and apply its principles with a tendency towards Christian strictness in their early ministry, and experience would gradually teach them how to be more understanding. There is mention around this time of the fact that Vincentian seminarists and students sometimes took part in missions. During one mission, when the weather was very cold, three fires in different places were kept going for Fr Durando. This is somewhat of a contrast to the attitude of John Francis Gnidovec who did not take any protective measures against the cold.

Superior in Turin

In 1831 Durando gave only three missions, as he had been appointed superior of the provincial house in Turin. This was only seven years after his ordination, another indication of the high regard in which he was held. As well as his ministry in that house itself, he was involved in ministry to diocesan clergy, seminarians and nuns. On the same day that he was appointed superior of the house in Turin the superior general, Dominique Salhorgne, appointed him Director of the Daughters of Charity of the Province of Lombardy.

The story of the Daughters of Charity in Northern Italy is a complex one, which I will try to simplify. In the middle of the 18th century there was a small community of Franciscan Tertiaries in Montanaro, about twenty miles from Turin. They had various charitable works. After a while they came under the influence of the Vincentians from Turin and gradually they took on the name, habit and rule of the Daughters of Charity. In 1788 they were linked with the Daughters of Charity. I will refer to them as the Montanaro community. They had only the one house.

In the early 19th century there was another group in Rivarolo, also about twenty miles from Turin. There were five sisters, with Mother Antonia Verna as superior. They tried to live in the spirit of the Daughters of Charity, and the king approved that title for them in 1828. They worked with the poor and sick, and also in schools. They were under the direction of the Vincentians from Turin. I will refer to them as the Rivarolo community. They also had only one house.

As both the Montanaro and Rivarolo houses were under Vincentian direction they had something in common. In 1830 Durando became director of the Rivarolo community on the death of the previous man. Vocations were coming, and he saw the need for clarification of the status of the two communities in the eyes of both the Church and the

kingdom, and also clarification of the links with the Daughters of Charity in Paris. In 1831-32 some diocesan priests tried to get control, and Durando was prepared to let them, putting the communities under the jurisdiction of the bishops. The sisters asked him not to allow this, and he agreed. He founded a common novitiate in Turin for the two communities, and asked the Superior General to send two experienced French sisters from Paris to take charge. The house in Turin was the property of the Durando family. Vocations continued to come and more French sisters arrived to give the benefit of their experience.

For the sake of uniformity Durando asked the original sisters from both Montanaro and Rivarolo to make their novitiate in the new house in Turin, under the French sisters. Mother Verna and the Rivarolo sisters were in favour of the spirit of the Daughters of Charity, but still wanted to be a separate group with the right to expand into their own choice of works, confined to the Rivarolo locality. The religious and civil leaders of the area backed them in this. This matter came to a head in 1834 when Mother Verna's second term as superior came to an end. Durando wanted them to give up helping the sick in their own homes, as not being the work of the Daughters at that time and also being a source of possible scandal. The Rivarolo sisters, and the local clergy and officials objected. Durando put in a French superior with another French sister. The objections continued, so Durando withdrew the French sisters and left the community to its own devices. In 1834 the Vincentians break all links with the Rivarolo community, and the four original sisters stay with Mother Verna. She died in 1838 and the cause for her beatification is in progress.

In 1835, the Montanaro sisters also went independent of the Vincentians, leaving only the sisters who had entered the new novitiate in Turin and the sisters who had come from France. Keep in mind what I said at the start of this section: what I have said is a drastic simplification of a complex period.

In Turin he had many contacts in high places, because of the family to which he belonged. But on the other hand, his two brothers were on the wrong political side and had to flee from Italy. In the year of his appointment as superior in Turin a new king succeeded to the throne, Carlo Alberto, and he was favourable to Durando and the Vincentians and helped in various ways, especially in connection with the Daughters of Charity. At first the archbishop was not favourably inclined towards Durando, but gradually changed his attitude and appointed him a diocesan examiner, censor of publications and eventually made him one of his personal advisers.

As superior of the house in Turin one of his ministries was supposed to be conferences and lectures to priests and diocesan seminarians. He

did not feel ready for such ministry, because of his relative youth and lack of experience; he was only thirty when appointed superior. He delegated this ministry to other confreres while he preferred to go on missions. However, he soon accepted that as superior it was his personal ministry, and he took it on. He soon attracted attention of the wrong sort, as some of his listeners accused him of being too strict and even Jansenistic. Some of these people used to go to his conference precisely to listen for expressions and ideas which they could denounce. This is probably why the archbishop was not favourable at the start. On the other hand, he attracted attention as being a very understanding and sympathetic confessor, and soon became one of the most sought after confessors in the city. On Fridays when he was hearing confessions the traffic in the street became snarled up with the carriages bringing people to him. In 1832, the second year of his superiorship, he initiated lectures for lay people in the house in Turin.

In 1835 there was a sexennial assembly of the Congregation. I was a bit surprised to see that there were only ten provinces in the Congregation at the time. The Lombardy province held its provincial assembly, and Durando was elected second delegate. As the provincial was eventually unable to go, for health reasons, the first delegate went as his substitute and Durando became first delegate of the province. It was his first visit to Paris.

The superior general, Dominique Salhorgne, asked the assembly to accept his resignation on grounds of age and ill health; he was seventy-nine years old. They accepted his resignation, and Jean-Baptiste Nozo was elected to succeed him as twelfth superior general. As Durando spoke fluent French he was someone who was noticed by Nozo himself, and also by Jean-Baptiste Etienne, who was both secretary general and procurator general, and who would become thirteenth superior general. He was the same age as Durando. During his time in Paris Durando also took the opportunity to meet the mother general of the Daughters of Charity, and Jean-Marie Aladel, the confrere associated with Catherine Labouré and the Miraculous Medal.

In the year after his return from the assembly, 1836, he re-introduced the Ladies of Charity to Turin.

As well as all his pastoral ministry he had a lot of administrative work as regards the house in Turin. There were problems about where the Vincentians should be in the city, and which house should be the central one and on which house the available money should be spent. The present provincial house, in Via XX Settembre, was the one that gradually got enlarged and renovated by his efforts. All this new work meant that he became less involved in missions.

In 1837, while still continuing as superior of the house, he was

appointed provincial of Lombardy by the superior general. This appointment would seem to stem from the impression he made at the general assembly, particularly on the two key figures Nozo and Etienne. His fluency in French would also have been an important element in the choice. He was only thirty-six years old, and would remain in office as provincial for forty-three years. At the time of his appointment there were seven houses in the province.

Provincial superior

The year of his appointment, 1837, was the centenary of the canonisation of St Vincent. There were big celebrations, understandably, in Paris. Part of the celebration was the re-emergence of a fair degree of normality after the upheavals of the revolution and the Napoleonic era which followed. Turin had its own celebrations for the centenary, and also with the same overtones of the end of a long troubled period of history. The Congregation of the Mission was not the only group involved in the celebrations. Giuseppe Cottolengo, later canonised, was an admirer and follower of Vincent, though not in the Congregation, and he had instituted many charitable works under the patronage of St Vincent. The archdiocese and even the city municipality were also involved.

One of Durando's contributions was the decision to have a biography of St Vincent re-printed, in order to give people the opportunity of learning more about the saint, the centenary of whose canonisation was being celebrated. He chose the biography written by an Italian Oratorian, Domenico Acami, which had been first published in Rome in 1677. It was an abbreviated version of the biography by Louis Abelly. Durando chose it because it was by an Italian, was short, and, although it had gone through four editions, had been out of print for some time. In the fifth edition Durando included the pastoral letter on the centenary by the archbishop of Paris. He also included a sixteen page chapter on the Daughters of Charity, taken from Collet's biography of St Vincent, to let the people of Turin know something about the origins of that community, which had been re-introduced into Piedmont not too long previously.

But as well as this broader intention of making Vincent and his works better known generally, his re-publishing of Acami's book also had a narrower intention, aimed at the confreres of his own province. He felt that the genuine spirit of the Congregation needed to be re-invigorated, and that that would in turn lead to an expansion of the ministry of the province.

His personal experience of life in the province convinced him that the older confreres, who had gone through the political upheavals of the previous years, were unlikely to be enthusiastic for a change to a

more disciplined lifestyle. For this reason, Durando decided that the most suitable context in which to start introducing his ideas about the original spirit of the Congregation was the formation programme for the seminarists and students. Some years previously he had done something similar with the Daughters of Charity. He split the formation programme into three, with the seminarists in Genoa, the philosophy students in Mondovì and the theology students in Turin. He also put an end to the practice of the students acting as prefects in colleges.

His main reason for having the theology students in Turin was so that he could keep a personal eye on them. He completely re-organised their study, bringing in new courses in Scripture and Church History. He also introduced what he called Sacred Eloquence, a course which he himself taught. This was probably because of his experience on parish missions. One of his students remembered later that Durando always emphasised the need for clarity of expression. This clarity was needed both in speaking and in writing.

His policy of starting with the young in order to animate the province with the genuine spirit of the Congregation paid off quite rapidly, and by 1840 he was able to report an increase in vocations. He had a waiting list of fifteen, because the superior general had told him not to accept more applicants than the province could absorb and support. He saw a bit beyond this, because he wanted the province to become involved in foreign missions. He admitted that originally that had been his own personal inclination, but since he realised that he could not go on such a mission himself he wanted to do all he could to advance the work of such missions.

By 1842, five years after becoming provincial, he had opened one new house, in Sardinia, and had 106 priests, 35 students and 15 seminarists, 46 brothers and 8 seminarist brothers. Three years later there were 39 students and 20 seminarists.

There had been a similar increase in vocations to the Daughters, who by 1845 numbered 260 in the province, with about 30 in the seminary.

There was a general assembly of the Congregation in 1843, because Jean-Baptiste Nozo, the superior general, had been forced to resign. Jean-Baptiste Etienne, secretary general and procurator general, was elected by a huge majority, on the first count, as his successor. Durando, of course, as provincial of Lombardy was present. It seems clear that he was a great supporter of Etienne ever since the previous assembly in 1835.

One of Etienne's priorities was to make a personal visitation of all the houses in France. The following year he put into practice a decision of the assembly, that in provinces where the provincial was superior of a house that house should have its canonical visitation made by

the superior general. When Etienne had completed his visitations of the French houses he next went to Lombardy to make a visitation of the house in Turin where Durando, the provincial, was superior. In his circular letter of 1 January 1845 to the whole Congregation he expressed his great satisfaction with what he saw in the province of Lombardy. He said that the King of Sardinia had told him personally of the great esteem in which he held the Vincentians, and Etienne says he heard the same from the clergy and people. He also made visitations of the houses in Genoa and Piacenza, and was equally satisfied with what he saw. He did not visit the other houses of the province, but met their superiors and was pleased with what they told him.

The central point in Durando's programme for renewal in the province was a return to the exact observance of the Common Rules. In this he would have been backed by Etienne. Not every confrere of the province, though, was as enthusiastic as himself about this, and in his first couple of years as provincial he had the unhappy experience of some confreres leaving the Congregation rather than fall in behind his reforming policy. He became provincial in 1837, and in 1838-39 nine confreres left, or roughly 10% of the priests of the province; one of these later returned. During the political upheaval of the Risorgimento, in the years 1848-49 ten left, and in 1850-52 five more. Once again, one returned later. It is interesting to see that Durando's predecessor as provincial is reported to have said, when he heard that Durando was to succeed him, that there would be a drop in vocations and many confreres would leave. He punned on Durando's name, as *duro* in Italian means "hard, severe". He was correct as regards the departures, but incorrect on the drop in vocations. This prediction may have been more of a comment on some of the confreres of the province than criticism of the new provincial.

The political situation in 1848 was centred on the call for liberty, rather in the spirit of the French Revolution. The archbishop of Turin forbade the clergy to get involved in this movement, but in spite of this prohibition some priests and seminarians wore the tricolour cockade and took part in marches and protest meetings. Some confreres were caught up in the spirit of the times and called for a more democratic form of government in the Congregation, including changes to the rules and style of dress. Two confreres of the province, on their own initiative, presented a request to the Holy See, in which they asked for:

1. That in the election of the superior general there should be one delegate for every 25 electors, without regard to provinces.
2. That local superiors stay in office for only three years, provincials and superiors general for only six.
3. That general assemblies have the authority to change and update the Rules according to the needs of the time.

A biographer of Durando mentions that one of the two confreres involved left the Congregation and the other went to work in America!

They presented their petition to Rome at the start of June 1848. It seems that Rome immediately contacted Etienne, who issued a severe criticism in a letter addressed to all the Italian confreres on 24 June. This letter seems to have been regarded in Italy as an over-reaction to the affair, and even confreres who did not agree with the petition to Rome disagreed with Etienne's reaction. There was a further petition to Rome in August, and Rome's reaction was to refer all the disputed matters to the forthcoming sexennial assembly. In October, Durando was called to Paris for discussions about the matter with Etienne.

He wrote back from Paris on 21 October 1848, to the superior of the house in Casale Monferrato, which was the centre of the new ideas. With regard to similar problems in the Daughters of Charity the superior general proposed to establish a province composed entirely of Italian sisters, recalling all non-Italians. Durando was opposed to this, and was able to ensure good relations between Italian and French sisters in Piedmont.

With regard to the confreres, he first points out that the number involved is a very small proportion of the whole Congregation. They claimed to have been persecuted. His reply is that it is not persecution to point out that a person's conduct and expressions of speech are not as they should be, nor is it persecution to impose a penance in circumstances where the person concerned deserved it. Durando said he did not have any objection to the fact that these men appealed to the Holy See, but rather to the way they did so. This gave rise to much criticism of the Rules of the Congregation. It also gave rise to criticism of superiors, with some superiors being called despots and tyrants, and references to the provincial council as animals. It was the younger confreres who were mostly involved.

He then dealt with the objection that some confreres had been dismissed from the community. He said that where such dismissals had taken place they were in strict conformity with the constitutions and papal bulls, and so could not be termed persecution. During the generalate of Fr Etienne the fact was that the tendency was to be even more lenient in such cases than the opposite. And it was not true that Fr Etienne and his council were against any change. They had, in fact, in many matters adapted the Congregation to the circumstances of the time, but they did so always in accordance with the legal requirements, and through the general assembly, which Durando called "our house of representatives".

He also dealt with anonymous letters, some of which he says fell into the hands of the superior general in a "peculiar and extraordinary way".

(I'd like to know what that means). He was saddened by the tone of these, as well as by their anonymity. He apparently had seen the letters. He says that he can understand and accept the diversity of opinions expressed, and can go along with some of the demands being made, and is in favour of progress, but he cannot accept the way in which these matters have been aired. He says that was more like what common street corner persons would have done.

At the end of the letter he says that he had tendered his resignation as provincial to the superior general, since all this trouble had occurred in his province during his period of office. His resignation was not accepted.

Finally, a confrere said later that in 1848 Durando in one swoop had dismissed thirty-six students because of their liberal ideas, and said that he would have preferred to have kept the novitiate closed for ten years. This seems to have been merely an anti-Durando story. In fact the novitiate was never closed during his period as provincial, and never during the whole of the nineteenth century were there as many as thirty-six students at the same time.

Durando and the foreign missions

There seems to be some evidence that Durando's intention in joining the Congregation of the Mission had been because he wished to be sent on the foreign missions. He took his vows in 1820, the year of Francis Clet's martyrdom, and that event also seems to have made an impression on him in this connection. Apparently he specifically asked, at least twice, to be sent. He referred to this original hope of his being sent to China in letters to confreres who had asked to be sent abroad. Also, it was obviously behind his evident enthusiasm and support for such missions during his time as provincial; if he could not go himself, he was determined to do all he could in the way of sending others. His ideas about the sort of men who should be sent, or not sent, on foreign missions have survived in writing, and it is striking that they are, for the most part, equally valid ideas for today.

He was quite clear in his own mind about the sort of men who should be sent on foreign missions. They had to be physically, spiritually and psychologically suitable for such exceptional work. They were to be prepared in advance for that type of work in every possible way. They had to be men who could stay with their decision and face up to all possible difficulties. It was the best men of the province who were to be sent on missions abroad. At the same time, the needs of the province at home had always to be balanced against the needs abroad, and sometimes the talents and gifts of a man might mean that he be retained at home even though his desire was to go on the missions. That, of course, was what had happened in his own case. He was also quite definite that

a man who wanted to go on the foreign missions in order to escape from community life at home, or to go merely from a sense of adventure, should never be permitted to go.

In spite of all his sound thinking on the matter, not all the confreres who went abroad in his time made a success of their mission. Experience showed him, for example, that it did not always work out well if a confrere was too young when sent; some were sent even before ordination. Also, it was not possible to predict how a man's health would react to conditions abroad. One man who was sent abroad before ordination was Giuseppe Sapeto. This was before Durando's time as provincial. We met him already when talking about Justin De Jacobis. You remember that he left his original mission in Syria and went to Ethiopia without authorisation, and this made Jean-Baptiste Etienne, the superior general reluctant to allow another Italian confrere, Justin, go there. Sapeto eventually left the Congregation and the priesthood.

During Durando's time as provincial he sent Giovanni Stella, in 1847, to Ethiopia, but unfortunately he also left the Congregation and the priesthood.

The first group sent abroad by Durando as provincial consisted of four priests and two brothers. They left in October 1840 for America. Two of this group became provincials in America: Antonio Penco, who had to return to Italy because of the financial ruin of his family, and Giacobbe Rolando, who died in Germantown in 1883. One of the other priests of this first group, Fr Roatta, whose first name I have not discovered, had to return to Italy because of bad health. At least two others of the province left for America during Durando's time.

He also sent an initial group of two priests and a brother to Brazil, with at least one more going later. He sent three to China, and there is a reference to his having sent two "to the foreign missions" without their destination being mentioned.

Durando and the Society for the Propagation of the Faith

The Society for the Propagation of the Faith was founded in 1822 Lyons, in France, by a young lay woman of twenty-three, Pauline Jaricot, the cause of whose beatification is in progress. Her purpose was to arouse interest among lay people in the Church's foreign missionary work, and to ask them to contribute financially to the maintenance and expansion of this work. One of the means which she and her council used was the publication of a magazine, *The Annals of the Propagation of the Faith*. The following year they were interested in spreading their work into nearby northern Italy, and they contacted a Catholic newspaper published the Marquis D'Azeglio. He publicised the new work, and the following year 1824 he was asked by the council in Lyons to

organise a branch of the society in his area. He obtained the backing of the king of Sardinia and several bishops. The king wished the branch of the society in his kingdom to be independent of the head office in Lyons, so the marquis divided all money collected into two equal portions, one of which was devoted to the spread of Catholic literature, which was his main work, and the other half sent directly to Rome to the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith. The marquis' main work was organised as a group called *Amicizia Cattolica*, Catholic Friendship. In the late 1820s there was a spread of secret societies of a political nature, and the king decided, for what seemed prudent reasons, to suppress *Amicizia Cattolica* in case he would be accused of favouring one such society. As the Society for the Propagation of the Faith depended on the marquis' main work, it collapsed when the other was suppressed. This was in 1828.

The following year, 1829, Durando came to Turin. He recognised that the remains of the local organisation were still there, and people, clergy and laity, were still interested in the work of supporting the foreign missions. In every way that he could, he encouraged this. He was in contact with people of wealth and position, and money was still being collected even though the original organised framework had been suppressed. Contemporary documents which have survived show that very large sums were forwarded to Rome at this time. When he became provincial in 1837 he was in a better position to move matters forward, and the following year, in conjunction with some of the influential people who were interested, he was able to get government approval for the Italian branch of the society. This allowed open soliciting of funds for the work and also the importation of the magazine *The Annals of the Propagation of the Faith*. After his death in 1880 he was described as having been the foremost supporter of the society in northern Italy.

One of the big names in the campaign for the unification of Italy is that of Count Camillo Cavour. He was quite anti-clerical in his politics, and at the same time generous towards good causes, including the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. His brother Gustavo was a practising Catholic, also interested in this work. In 1838 there was a legal problem about a large sum of money bequeathed in a will. The problem was uncertainty as to which of the brothers was intended to receive the money. The lawyers were unable to decide, so the two brothers agreed that the money be given to Marcantonio Durando for the work of the Propagation of the Faith.

A serious problem, 1842-43

In 1842 a serious difference became apparent between the provincial of Rome and three confreres of the Roman province on the one hand, and

the superior general, his curia and the French government, on the other. The provincials of Lombardy and Naples were drawn in to the controversy because their fellow Italians. Durando was drawn in to the controversy because the superior general, Jean-Baptiste Nozo sought his advice. As I mentioned earlier, Durando was fluent in French and had made a very good impression at the general assembly at which Nozo had been elected. The Italian assistant general Pietro Sturchi, and the Vincentian procurator at the Holy See, Vito Guarini, also turned to Durando for help.

The problem between the Italians and French had two main roots. First there was the alleged bad administration, financial and otherwise, by Nozo the superior general, and an Italian antipathy not shared by Durando) to Jean-Baptiste Etienne, who held the two offices of secretary general and procurator general, which made him a very powerful man.

The second root, though, was the one that really started the trouble. The Italians, and other non-French confreres as well, were very dissatisfied with the representation and voting arrangements at assemblies. Although the French were very much out-numbered by the non-French confreres they always commanded a majority of votes. This meant that the superior general would always be a Frenchman. On top of that, the election of a superior general had to be confirmed by the French government. A decree of Napoleon of 1804 said that the Vincentian superior general had to be a Frenchman, and one who was approved by and acceptable to the French government.

In 1842 the three Italian provinces had 250 confreres and ten votes at the assembly. The four French provinces had 80 confreres, and French confreres from foreign missions added another 130, making a French total of 210, but they had sixteen votes at the assembly. 210 French confreres had sixteen votes, while 250 Italians had only ten. This enabled the 1841 assembly, in view of the alleged irregularities in Nozo's administration to appoint a vicar general, Marc Antoine Poussou, who apparently was able, presumably with the assistants, to out-manoeuvre Nozo. The Roman provincial, Antonio Cremesini, and two others of his province, together with Vito Guarini the procurator at the Holy see, made a submission to the Holy See requesting proper administration of the affairs of the Congregation of the Mission. They said that the arrangements made at the previous assembly were a cause of worry, not just to the Roman province, but to the entire congregation, and the cause of all the trouble was the disproportionate power of the French voting strength. This was on 11 January 1842. Ten days later Guarini gave a more detailed submission to the Sacred Congregation for Bishops and Religious, which was close to a personal attack on Etienne. Rome had already received complaints against Etienne from the Society for the Propagation of the Faith in Lyons, and from missionaries in America

and Ethiopia, about the way Etienne handled financial contributions which he received for these missions.

Durando was in agreement with the ideas of the Roman confreres, and in March 1842 said that he would like to see the superior general take up residence in Rome, from where he would appoint a “commisary” to handle community matters in France, in the French missions, and for the Daughters of Charity. Later he also said he would like to see the next general assembly meet in Rome. He wanted two papal briefs, one to have the next assembly in Rome, and the other to have the superior general reside in Rome. At this point Nozo consulted Durando on these matters, and Durando advised him to resign as superior general, for the overall good of the Congregation. He also suggested that Nozo ask either Guarini, the procurator at the Holy See, or Bishop Joseph Rosati, who was in Rome at the time, to request the Holy See to call for the next assembly to meet in Rome. He also suggested that Nozo leave Paris and entrust the running of affairs to the vicar general. Durando was sympathetic to Nozo and considered that he was being victimised. Nozo did in fact go to Rome and hand in his resignation to the Pope on 26 July 1842.

The Italians attempted to get the Pope to appoint a new superior general, with John Timon, the American provincial, as the proposed candidate. The French retaliated by bringing in the French ambassador to the Papal States on their side, and threatening to separate the French provinces from the rest of the Congregation and to go ahead on their own. Durando saw that this was something to be avoided, but he would not back down on his contention that the idea of the superior general always being French was against the Constitutions, and that the system of representative voting was unjust. He was in favour of discussions in Rome, which would lead to some compromise between the two positions, but a compromise which would be just. Sturchi, the Italian assistant in Paris, asked him to change his thinking on these points and accept things remaining as they were, but he would not agree to this.

Early in 1843 two French confreres, Jean-Baptiste Etienne and Jean-Marie Aladel, with the approval of the French government, went to Rome for discussions with the Holy See and the Italian provincials, as had been suggested by Durando. The discussions were chaired by Bishop Rosati. The final document was signed by Rosati, Etienne, Aladel and Durando. The provincial of Naples signed it with reservations. The provincial of Rome refused to sign it, and tried to get changes, but a commission of seven cardinals decided the question in March 1843. Durando was accused of deserting the flag and running away from the battle. However, it would seem that the over-riding idea in his agenda was to avoid a schism in the Congregation. One outcome

of the meetings was a statement that the superior general need not be always French, but in general terms the French did better at the meeting than did the Italians.

The most unusual aspect of all these negotiations is that they were conducted in secrecy, and the ordinary Italian confrere did not know that they were taking place.

In August 1843 the nineteenth general assembly met in Rome and Etienne was elected superior general. It took a long time, well into the twentieth century, before the question of the unjust voting system at assemblies was changed, and it took one century and four years before a non-French superior general was elected.

Political problems in the 1860s

In the later part of the 19th century there was a political move to unite all Italy under one king, ending the fragmentation of the peninsula into small kingdoms and provinces, including the Papal States. Generally speaking, the move was also anti-religious. The Kingdom of Italy was proclaimed on 17 March 1861, though at that stage complete unity had not been established. The Papal States were still outside the union. The prime moving force in the movement was Piedmont.

Suppression of religious communities and confiscation of their property was part of the campaign. In the case of the Vincentian province of Naples, Jean-Baptiste Etienne, the superior general, was able to get the French government to request the new Italian government to exempt Vincentian property. It seems that this was agreed but not in fact done. Etienne also asked Durando to make contact with Cavour, with the intention of getting a similar exemption for property in the province of Lombardy. Cavour told him to stop meddling in politics and get on with missionary work. That was the only way their property could be exempted. Cavour had, in fact, great admiration for Durando. Durando continued to negotiate details of this agreement, and at the end even succeeded in getting a promise that the houses in Naples would be exempted in the same way as those in Lombardy, but Cavour died in June 1861 before this could be achieved. Durando started again with a new minister, but then that government fell and he had to start a third time, but in the new government Durando's brother Giacomo was Minister of Foreign Affairs. His argument in favour of the Naples province was that almost all the confreres of the province worked abroad in foreign missions, and if the new kingdom of Italy wanted to keep its influence abroad it should not suppress the Vincentian province which had so many missionaries in other countries.

Etienne saw that Durando was someone with access to the Italian government, and decided to make use of this. He appointed Durando

“commissary” for the provinces of Naples and Rome, with complete authority in everything concerning the Congregation. His idea was that in a united Italy the Congregation should also be united in itself, though not in the sense of only one province. The three provinces were to continue, but they must be united in spirit and not be embroiled in the politics of the time. Durando was promised help by his brother Giacomo. He went to Naples, and had, obviously, to overcome a certain amount of opposition from the confreres of the province. After some months he got government agreement, helped by his brother, to exempt the Naples houses from suppression. However, what actually happened was that the government fell and the new minister did not honour the agreement, and the Naples houses were suppressed.

Most of the Vincentian houses in the province of Lombardy were also taken. In December 1866 government agents arrived at the provincial house in Turin and began to make a detailed inventory of the contents of the house. In the following April Durando got official notification that the house was to be vacated within eight days, apart from a very small section, which was left for the priests actually serving in the adjoining church. This meant that all the seminarists and students, and their directors and teachers, had to be accommodated elsewhere. The Daughters of Charity were able to offer them accommodation in a nearby town, where they remained until 1870. In 1867 four government agents arrived at the house in Turin and proceeded to take over even the little section previously left to the priests, and also the church. They even demanded the key of the tabernacle, which Durando refused. He protested to the mayor of Turin, and sent a telegram to the government, at that time in Florence. This had its effect, and an order was made to restore the parts of the property which had been designated for the community.

Durando and the politics of the unification of Italy

One of the problems of trying to get a picture of Durando during much of the period of his provincialship is that a really good knowledge of the politics of the time, especially the whole movement for the unification of Italy, is necessary. I have not got that detailed knowledge, and anyway a short talk like this is not the place in which to go into such matters in detail. All I can do is to indicate some points.

The Durando family tradition would be towards the liberal wing of politics. Marcantonio’s three brothers, Giacomo, Giuseppe and Giovanni were all involved in the politics of the time. Marcantonio was very much Italian and patriotic, but he was also Catholic and very much a defender of the Pope and his rights, including his right as a temporal ruler of a large section of the Italian peninsula. There exists a large

amount of correspondence between Marcantonio and his brothers from this period and it would be a fascinating area of research to throw light on Marcantonio. Perhaps if he is beatified interest will be awakened and someone will do the necessary research.

It can be said that Marcantonio was involved in the politics of the time, trying to balance his patriotism as an Italian and his understanding of the rights of the Church and religious communities. He was a close friend of King Carlo Alberto and the king consulted him on many matters and often took his advice. Marcantonio also, as we have already seen, lobbied his brothers to use their influence in various ways, for the benefit of ecclesiastical property and other rights. There was the rather odd situation of his brother Giacomo being a general and later minister on the anti-religious side, while his brother Giovanni was a general in the papal army, though he later changed sides. His brother Giacomo founded a newspaper called *L'Opinione* in Turin in 1848. It started as a moderate publication but became more radical, and Marcantonio had to tell his brother that he would not allow it into the community houses.

As well as this side of Giacomo, there was another. Marcantonio was able to influence him to achieve quite a lot in reducing the effects of various anti-religious laws and decrees, and also in encouraging him in backing many works of charity for the poor and needy.

Giacomo was in favour of attacking the city of Rome and taking it by force, for the final step in unifying Italy. Marcantonio, like most priests of the day, would have held that the needs of the Church demanded that the Pope be a temporal ruler over some territory, with all the rights of such a ruler. He believed that the capture of Rome would not, in fact, achieve the unity of Italy but would ruin such a hope.

As I said a while ago, all this period is a complicated piece of history, and Durando's involvement is equally so. Perhaps someone will later investigate it more fully and we will have a clearer picture of Marcantonio Durando.

Durando and the Daughters of Charity in this period

Broadly speaking, all the problems that concerned the Congregation of the Mission at this period also concerned the Daughters of Charity, and Durando was their director.

A major development during his period as director took place in 1836, when the Daughters were given charge of the biggest hospital in Turin. Vocations were on the increase, and the central house was unable to cope with the numbers. King Carlo Alberto, who was aware of the situation, gave them a new larger house, from which another community had been moved. He also gave financial help. A marble bust of the king was still in place in the entrance foyer in 1970, and may still be there.

At the end of 1842 Durando wrote to the Vincentian procurator in Rome that in a period of nine years the Daughters had made twenty new foundations in his area, that there were then 260 sisters and 30 novices.

In the late 1840s, when the anti-religious wave was sweeping through Italy, the Daughters did not escape attention. Much anger was directed against the Jesuits, and at one stage the Daughters were described as female Jesuits. But the Daughters at the time had to cope with a problem which the Vincentians did not experience. This was tension and disagreement between the French sisters in the province and the Italian ones. The French sisters held all the important positions in the province, a situation which the Italian sisters wanted changed. Poor Durando was caught in the middle. The Italian sisters accused him of being favourable towards the French, and the French complained to Paris that he sided with the Italians. In 1848 Durando decided to offer his resignation to the superior general, both as Vincentian provincial and director of the Daughters. His provincial council, though, wrote to the superior general urging him not to accept the double resignation, and suggested that the visitatrix of the Daughters be changed. Durando took a two month break for reasons of health and the superior general recalled the visitatrix to Paris. The new visitatrix was also French, which seems to show a lack of sensitivity on the part of Etienne, but Durando and herself did, in fact, get on well together.

This period of good relations between the director and the visitatrix lasted for about twenty-five years, until that visitatrix was replaced. Trouble broke out again with her two successors, lasting till after Durando's death in 1880. In November 1871 he resigned as director of the Daughters, and this was accepted by the superior general. Before this was made public he entered into negotiations with the superior general about who should succeed him, but two unexpected things happened. First, the provincial council of the Daughters in Turin heard somehow that Durando had resigned, and the councillors, but not the visitatrix, wrote to Paris and said they would all resign if Durando did; they made the point that the problem was personal between the visitatrix and the director. The second unexpected happening was that Durando's designated successor refused to accept the position. So, about six weeks after offering his resignation he withdrew it, in January 1872. The visitatrix was replaced, but once again by a Frenchwoman. Unfortunately she was no better, and the problems between the French and Italian sisters continued until after Durando's death.

I'll mention just one other problem which the Daughters had during this ant-religious period. The government decreed in 1855 that every teacher must pass a state examination in order to be allowed to teach. This concerned the Daughters, and Durando looked for some guidelines

from both the exiled archbishop of Turin, then living in Lyons, and the superior general. The archbishop said all religious should refuse to sit for such an examination. His thinking, apparently, was that if all the religious engaged in teaching refused to sit the examination the government would back down. However, another bishop in the area allowed the Dominican sisters in his diocese to sit the examination, provided they could do so in their own houses.

In that same year, 1855, the government ordered the suppression of all religious communities not engaged in preaching, teaching or charitable work. This meant that the Daughters were exempted, but in a short time the law was changed to include all communities, with confiscation of their property. At a later stage Durando asked his brother Giacomo to intervene, and as a result the Daughters were not troubled by such laws.

Durando and other religious communities

Durando was a very highly regarded priest in Turin and the north of Italy, and was involved in various ways with many religious communities. This section is going to be very brief, little more than mentioning names.

In the early years of his priesthood he came into contact with a small community of four sisters, under the leadership of Mother Antonia Verna, who were living and working in the spirit of pre-Revolution Daughters of Charity, without being actually so. Durando became, in some sense, their director on the death of an elderly priest, and the group expanded into a community with many houses. Mother Verna's cause has been introduced.

There was an institution in Turin for unmarried mothers, and some of those women wanted to form a religious community of their own. They were called the Magdalens, and Durando became their director.

In 1860 he became the founder of a community called The Company of the Passion of Jesus the Nazarene, usually known as the Nazarenes. Their purpose was to honour the passion of Jesus and to help the sick and dying in their own homes, night and day.

Le Misericordie: The Mercy Units

From 1836 Durando was involved in a number of charitable enterprises in different parishes. They were known as Le Misericordie, which I am translating as The Mercy Units. They were run by the Ladies of Charity. One of these was established in 1854, in the parishes of St Massimo and Our Lady of the Angels. A contract was drawn up between two wealthy persons, the two parish priests, the visitatrix of the Daughters and Marcantonio Durando. A very efficient French Daughter of Charity,

Sister Maria Clarac, was put in charge. She had been in Turin for about one year.

The work progressed rapidly, which meant a succession of changes to larger premises. On the occasion of one of these changes, in 1862, a contract was drawn up between the Ladies of Charity, which was a legally recognised society, and Sister Clarac. Sister Clarac contributed about 40% of the cost, from her personal family money and from money collected. The superior general and Durando gave her specific permission to do this, but in such a way that she had to arrange that after her death the Daughters of Charity would inherit what she had invested.

Everything went well until the anti-religious laws of 1866, which deprived the Daughters of Charity of their status as a juridical entity, but did not suppress the community. Her visitatrix advised Sister Clarac to make a will in favour of the four sisters who were trustees of the property, in order to guarantee that her relatives would not inherit her investment in it. The authorities in Paris agreed, and sent her two forms to fill out and sign. She asked for time to consider, and after several further requests to sign were not complied with the visitatrix removed her from office and appointed her to another house. She asked for a further two months to reflect, but received no answer. She went to John Bosco for advice and he referred her to the bishop of Ivrea, dean of the Piedmontese bishops. He welcomed her and advised her to break with the Vincentians and Daughters of Charity and to continue her work under his patronage. She notified Durando that neither she nor her four companions were any longer members of the community. In canon law this meant that they were technically fugitive religious. The bishop realised that he had acted *ultra vires*, as the Daughters were exempt from diocesan authority, and when a new archbishop of Turin was appointed the bishop of Ivrea disassociated himself from all further matters concerning Sister Clarac and her four companions. From then on it was a matter for the archbishop of Turin. One of the problems was that in continuing their work the five former Daughters wore the full Daughters' habit, including the cornette. This caused problems, but I cannot go any further into the matter now. The only thing I need to add is that Sister Maria Clarac's beatification cause has been introduced and is in progress.

I mentioned John Bosco a moment ago. A rather interesting fact about Durando is that he was very friendly with four other men in Turin during his life, all of whom have been canonised: Giuseppe Cottolengo (1786-1842), Giuseppe Cafasso (1811-1860), Giovanni Bosco (1815-1888) and Leonardo Murialdo (1828-1900). An interesting link between all these men is that each of them was in some way inspired by Vincent de Paul's example, and was involved in ministry to the poor. At that

time the letters and conferences of Vincent had not been published, even in France, and that was one of the reasons why Durando, on the occasion of the celebration in 1837 of the centenary of the canonisation of Vincent, arranged for the reprint of the life of Vincent by Domenico Acami, as I mentioned earlier. To the four canonised men we can add the names of Antonia Verna and Maria Clarac, whose causes have been introduced. The atmosphere of the church in Turin at that period must have been extraordinary, with four men who were to be canonised and another man and two women whose causes are in progress, all living and working there at the same time.

Final years

All through his life Durando had never had the best of health. In spite of repeated attempts to resign as provincial and director of the Daughters, he was not allowed by the superior general to do so. Realising that his strength was failing, in 1874 he called Giovanni Torre, the superior in Sarzana, to Turin to help him in administration.

In 1878 Durando became seriously ill and received the last sacraments, and was three months in bed. Learning of this, the superior general notified him by letter that he was at last accepting his resignation as director of the Daughters. Torre, who was handling all correspondence, read the letter and instead of notifying Durando, sent it back to Paris. I imagine he felt that in the circumstances it was better for Durando not to know of it. Apparently after his recovery he never did learn of it.

All through 1880 Durando spent most of his time in bed, or on a couch in his room, and he very seldom went downstairs, even to the church. He was 79 years old by then. Even though his bodily forces were deteriorating, his mental capacity was till extremely good, and confreres used to go up to his room to discuss business. This is rather like the final period of Vincent's life, at about the same age.

One of the confreres who regularly visited him in his room was a student of the province, who was stationed in Turin while doing his military service. He has left it on record that Durando was very welcoming, very interested in hearing all about his life in the army, contrasting the young man's experience in 1880 with what he, Durando, knew from his family of army life in earlier periods. The student noted, to his surprise, that Durando hardly ever offered him any advice, apart from advising him not to get into the habit of smoking.

In the summer of 1880 Durando made two journeys away from Turin, to visit other houses. By November he had weakened considerably and never left his bed again. He died on 10 December 1880, aged 79 years and six months.

His funeral and the obituary notices in the newspapers showed the respect and honour in which he was held, as well as the affection that people had for him. Even at his funeral it was already being said that a saint had died, and soon people were visiting his grave and privately praying for his intercession. It was only a matter of time before moves were being made to have his cause for beatification started.

In 1928, forty-eight years after his death, the first official steps were taken, in Turin, lasting till 1930. In the period 1934-37 the Congregation of Rites in Rome studied the material sent from Turin. In 1940 the next step, called the apostolic (i.e. Roman) process, was taken and in 1941 Pope Pius XII signed the decree for the official opening of the cause for his beatification. It is hoped that later this year a miracle, alleged to have happened through his intercession, will be accepted in Rome. If the process goes to its logical conclusion, he will be the first Vincentian provincial ever to be beatified!

A Marian Focus for the New Vincentian

Myles Rearden CM

Origins

The original Vincentians made their mark by presenting the faith in an irresistible way. It involved very little self-promotion, and little enough that was specifically Vincentian. They were simply people able to share their enthusiasm for the renewed Church of seventeenth-century France with masses of ordinary people. This included normal Catholic reverence for Mary.

The first Vincentians who came to Ireland did here exactly what their confreres were doing in France, Italy and Poland: they were effective agents of renewed Catholicism. So it is no surprise to find that the Mayor of Limerick, Thomas Stritch, who began his term of office with a retreat at the lodgings of the Vincentians who were giving a mission there, went in procession at the close of the mission to the church of Our Lady of Limerick and placed the keys of the city in her hands. Those who launched the home based Irish Vincentian movement nearly two hundred years later were equally notable as effective agents of various aspects of the nineteenth century renewal of Catholicism in Ireland, with its strong element of Marian devotion.

Today

Today's Irish Vincentians are working nearly a hundred and seventy years after the first indigenous Irish Vincentian foundation – as long after Dowley and McNamara as they were after Vincent. The tide of Irish Catholicism is still ebbing, in contrast to the renewal at both periods of origin. There is as yet no movement in full spate for Vincentians to become its notably effective agents. Since major innovations are not in our tradition, we are clearly in an unprecedented situation: that of getting ourselves ready to go, once the going gets good.

This looks like an opportunity to get our theological house in order. Since 1985, we have deliberately followed a laissez-faire policy regarding theology, with everyone being asked to respect that of everyone else. That strategy was, I suppose, something like a brain-storming session in group work, aimed at letting everyone's ideas have a respectful hearing. By now, it is probably time for trawling through our various publications, such as articles in *Colloque* and *Vincentian News*, books and articles by various confreres, and documents produced by commissions, to see what key ideas have emerged. In other words, it is time to get

more focus on our collective thought. No doubt the monthly Vocation meetings in Ireland which completed their work in June 2002 will make their contribution to achieving this focus.

An icon

By way of a personal contribution to this process, I would propose a distinctively Marian shape for our group theology. We have had a Marian devotional focus from the very start, coming from St Vincent and especially St Louise, and feeding into the CM especially through our ministry to the Daughters of Charity. Then, around the time the Irish Vincentian movement began, this Marian devotional focus was greatly sharpened by means of the Miraculous Medal. What has happened in recent times in the Church in general is that Marian theology has developed enormously. As a result, Mary is no longer simply an object of devotion or a model of personal virtues, but central to the understanding of redemption, faith, the Church, the apostolate and the dialogue between religions. Her importance in the New Testament is becoming clearer, especially through the work of Ignace de la Potterie, (especially his *Mary and the Mystery of the Covenant*), and with it the call to imitate the beloved disciple in St John and take her to ourselves. We could take her as the icon of our personal and community lives and lose nothing in the process, but rather gain a great deal.

The benefits

What would we gain? Chiefly, we would gain an incentive to the closest possible involvement with Christ. This is expressed in the Cana-Calvary diptych in St John, as regards the public life of Jesus. It is expressed in the Nazareth-Bethlehem-Jerusalem-Nazareth circuit which accounts for all the hidden life of Jesus in St Luke. It is expressed in the two great Marian dogmas we have grown up with over the past century and a half, dealing with the origin and culmination of her life, the roots of both going deep into the original and on-going faith-development of the Church. Finally, it is expressed in the concluding chapter of Vatican II's *Lumen Gentium*, "Mary shines forth on earth, until the day of the Lord shall come, (cf 2Pet) as a sign of sure hope and solace for the pilgrim people of God." (n.68)

Our token

As Vincentians we have a token of Mary's relationship to us as a family in the Miraculous Medal. Its message is certainly one of "sure hope and solace". It shows Mary in her eschatological role, as in the Council's reference to 2 Peter, standing on the world and showering it with grace and (on the reverse) crowned with stars. It invokes her sinlessness, in a

notably sinful world, and seeks her intercession for a world greatly in need of transformation. The devices of the Medal of the Immaculate Conception seem well suited to our community as it sets out into the unknown.

Attracting vocations

Two points came up at a recent meeting of the Vocations group mentioned earlier which are relevant here. First, the value of celibacy and chastity as a point of attraction for people wondering what to do with their lives, which Sandra Schneiders writes about and Tom Lane presented to the group. Second, also presented by Tom, this time from Schillebeekx, that “every Eucharist should be an appearance of the Risen Lord.” A fulfilled celibacy and eucharistic celebrations that are at home with the Risen Christ are highly Marian realities.

Religious pluralism

Religious pluralism is increasingly a part of the setting in which we Vincentians have to live our vocation, in Ireland as much as anywhere. In his foreword to a recent Catholic book on mediation, the Dalai Lama described Christ and the Buddha as the ‘founding masters’ of their respective groups of followers. Clearly, it is not possible to put Christ and the Buddha on a par, because Christ is God Incarnate and the Gautama Buddha is a human being like anyone else. The person to put on a par with the Buddha is not Christ, but Mary. She is our “founding teacher” in the sense that she is the first believer in the Incarnation, and also in the sense that she was the teacher of Christ himself as his mother up to the age of twelve, and from then until he became a disciple of John the Baptist she was his chosen teacher: he left the Temple School and went to the home of Mary and Joseph at Nazareth to learn how to be “about his Father’s business”. The final words of Mary in the Bible - “Do what he tells you to” - are the words of a teacher, and a teacher who pondered everything about Jesus in her heart. John puts her on Calvary to be commissioned as the teacher of all the beloved disciples of Jesus. If we take Mary as our icon, it will help us to be very secure in our dealings with other faiths.

Expectatio Israel

Maurice Vansteenkiste CM & Tom Davitt CM

Introduction (TD)

Just over a quarter of a century ago, I wrote to the late André Dodin CM to ask if he had any information about the authorship and origin of the *Expectatio Israel*. On 9 April 1975, he sent his reply, from the Faculty of Theology of the Catholic University of the West, in Angers, which I translate:

Dear confrere,

After making enquiries I am forwarding to you the enclosed type-written information. The author is Fr Maurice Vansteenkiste.

This prayer was composed during Fiat's time, and the motive was a noticed drop in vocations after the upsurge in the time of Frs Etienne and Boré.

Believe me to be your sincerely devoted, in our Lord and St Vincent.

The Dean: A. Dodin.

Jean-Baptiste Etienne was Superior General 1843-1874, Eugène Boré 1874-1878, and Antoine Fiat 1878-1914. Fiat resigned and died in 1915.

Maurice Vansteenkiste was ordained in September 1947 and appointed to the Maison-mère in 1948, where he has been ever since. He was assistant director of students and seminarists when I was in Paris and Villebon in the summer of 1949. In 1998, the Maison-mère celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of his appointment to the house. I was in Paris in April and May of that year for the CIF session, and I went up to his room to ask him about something. He told me that while it was very unusual for a confrere to be fifty years in the same house, it was unique for a confrere to be fifty years in the same room, as he was. He was very elated about that. His room was cluttered with books, with just about enough space to move around between door, desk and bed.

When I was in Paris in November 2001 for another CIF session, I found that he had been moved to the infirmary. I visited him, and asked his permission to translate and print his material on the *Expectatio Israel* which Fr Dodin had sent me in 1975. He was 86 at the time, and like many old men he liked to talk of the past. He told me that he had finished his philosophy in 1936 and had then done his two years military

service. In 1939, he was called up for the army and was captured very soon. After five years in a German prisoner of war camp he returned to France and finished his theology studies and was ordained in 1947. He was appointed to the Maison-mère to teach philosophy, about which he said he knew nothing. He was told to prepare himself by reading Reinstadler. A few weeks later, before he had even begun teaching philosophy, his appointment was changed from philosophy to scripture, a change which he welcomed, and all during his teaching career he remained a scripture professor.

He said that the actual author of the *Expectatio* has never been identified. He felt sure that it was not written by Fiat himself, but probably by someone “in his entourage”, that is, someone in the Secretariat at the time. The wording of the Latin original is taken from the Vulgate bible (Vg). Sometimes verbatim quotations are used. At other times the wording of the Vg is adapted to suit the grammatical structure of the prayer. In his typescript he gives each section of the prayer in French, indicating its scriptural origin and commenting on it.

I give, below, the sections in the original Latin, with the original punctuation, as found in the *Regulae Seminarii Interni*, Paris, 1880, page 180. Confreres over a certain age will remember “Writing *Regulae*” from the first year seminaire timetable. I indicate in square brackets any deviation from the actual words of the Vg, and any other personal comment. I then give the English of each sentence, in the version commonly in use in this province, but corrected where necessary.

This version came into use during the time Desmond McGinley was director of students and seminarists, 1964-1968, and was printed by Brother Seán O’Dell in a *Formulary of Prayers* in October 1968. It contains some errors of translation: e.g. *vineam istam* is translated as *thy vineyard*, and *messam tuam* as *his harvest*. I have corrected such errors in the version used below, replaced the second person singular pronoun with the plural, and altered the punctuation in some places.

After the English translation I give my translation of Vansteenkiste’s commentary.

* * * * *

Expectatio Israel; Salvator ejus in tempore tribulationis,
(Jeremiah 14:8)

O Hope of Israel, and its deliverer in the day of trial

This, no doubt, dates from the period of Jehoiachin (609-598), during a period of severe drought. This is part of a dialogue between Jeremiah and Yahweh, a dialogue which borrows from a liturgy of lamentation. After the description of the scourge (2-6) comes the lamentation (7-9).

propitius de caelo respice, vide et visita vineam istam

(Ps 80:15, Vg 79:15)

look down with favour upon us from heaven. Take account of, and visit, this vineyard

[The Vg does not have *propitius*, and has *et* before *vide*, and does not have the Latin equivalent of *upon us*. I have always suspected that Brother Seán was either furnished with a defective text or misread what he was given, as I find it hard to believe that the wording “Take account and visit thy vineyard” could be what the translator intended.]

This psalm is a prayer for the restoration of Israel, which is to be understood as either the Northern Kingdom devastated by the Assyrians in 722, or the Kingdom of Judah ravaged by Nebuchadnezzar’s armies after the sack of Jerusalem in 586.

rivos ejus inebria, multiplica genimina ejus (Ps 65:11, Vg 64:11)

Enliven its soil, fructify its seed

This psalm is a thanksgiving hymn, after a fertile year with plenty of rain, in which the people thank the Creator. This verse is part of the second section of the psalm, which is an enthusiastic description of springtime in Judea.

et perfice quam plantavit dextera tua. (Ps 80:16. Vg 79:16)*and bring to maturity the work of your right hand*

[The Vg has *eam* after *perfice*. *The English translation has not taken over from the Latin the idea of God’s right hand having planted something*]

These words are taken from the psalm already used, the prayer for the restoration of Israel.

Messis quidem multa, operarii autem pauci. Rogamus ergo te, Dominum messis, ut mittas operarios in messem tuam.

(Mt 9:37-38, Lk 10:2)

The harvest indeed is great, but the labourers are few. We therefore pray you, Lord of the harvest, to send forth labourers into your harvest.

[The wording of the gospel has been altered to suit the context of the prayer.]

In Matthew’s gospel Christ’s exclamation is provoked by the sight of the crowds worn out and exhausted, like sheep without a shepherd. In Luke’s gospel this verse is the start of the missioning of the seventy-two disciples, when Jesus gives his instruction for the mission.

Multiplica gentem et magnifica laetitiam, (Is 9:2, Vg 9:3)*Multiply our numbers and increase our joy*

[The Vg wording is: *Multiplicasti gentem et non magnificasti laetitiam.*]

This is taken from Isaiah's well-known oracle announcing the coming of a child (*Puer natus est nobis*) who will be called Marvellous Counsellor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. This was probably given at the time of the deportation of the Galileans which followed Tiglath-Pileser's campaign of 732. It announces "the Day of Yahweh" which will bring freedom to the deportees and an imperial reign of a child of the royal dynasty. This obviously refers to the Emmanuel of 7:14. Christ's coming in Galilee brings this prophecy to its complete fulfilment.

ut aedificentur muri Jerusalem. (2 Esd = Ne 2:17)

so that the walls of Jerusalem may be built up

[The Vg has: *Aedificemus muros Jesrusalem.*]

Nehemiah, cup-bearer at the court of Artaxerses, had obtained permission in March-April 445 to return to Palestine in order to re-build the walls of Jerusalem. This extract is from an exhortation to the nation's priests, nobles and counsellors.

Domus tua haec, Domine Deus; domus tua haec:

(1 Par = 1 Ch 22:1)

This is your house, O Lord God, your own house

[The Vg has: *Haec est domus Dei.*]

This is David's exclamation when he had chosen the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite as the place for constructing an altar to Yahweh, a place which he was preparing to be the site of Yahweh's temple which his son Solomon was to construct.

Non sit in ea, quaeso, lapis, quem manus tua sanctissima not posuerit.

Let there not be found in it a single stone, which your sacred hand has not placed

This is not a verbatim quotation from Scripture. However, it utilises scriptural words such as *stone, hand, place*. What is involved here is the idea of "choice", in order to "keep", to "place" or to "reject".

In Zechariah 12:3 Jerusalem is compared to a huge stone which nobody could displace. This is an allusion to the siege which Jerusalem will have to undergo, but since it is a city founded by God it remains impregnable.

In Joshua 4:3 Joshua orders the erection of twelve memorial stones to commemorate the miraculous passage over the Jordan. In Isaiah 26:1 a victory hymn eulogises a strong city protected by a rampart and an

outer wall of stones. In Isaiah 27:9, in an oracle uttered before the fall of Samaria, the prophet gets a glimpse of a future time when, with its sin expiated, the altars which had been erected to false gods will be pulverised like stones for making lime.

Psalm 118 (Vg 117) :22-23 , Isaiah 28:16, spoke of a mysterious foundation stone, or capstone, of a building, rejected by the builders. In Mt 21:42 Jesus makes use of this image in the parable of the murderous vineyard tenants. He makes it clear to his opponents that he is this stone which they wish to reject. That is also the way in which the apostles understood him. Peter will say so before the Sanhedrin in Acts 4:11, and will recall it in 1 Pet 2:4, 6. Also St Paul in Rm 9:33. It is also what he will have in mind when he speaks of the role of preachers, each one building in accordance with the grace which has been given to him: “Everyone doing the building must work carefully. For the foundation, nobody can lay any other than the one which has already been laid, that is Jesus Christ (1 Cor 3:10-11).

Quos autem vocasti, (1 Reg = 1 Sam 3: 5-6, 9)

whom you have called

[In verses 5, 6 and 9 of this chapter some part of the verb “to call” occurs nine times, but the three words *Quos autem vocasti* do not occur. The sequence of ideas in the Latin has been reversed in the English.]

This is a simple reminder of the call which young Samuel had heard without, at first, understanding it. But Eli, the High Priest, eventually told him that it was coming from the sanctuary.

serva eos in nomine tuo, et sanctifica eos in veritate.

(Jn 17:11, 17)

Keep them in your name, and sanctify them in truth

Two items from the beautiful priestly prayer of Jesus, the Saviour’s great prayer of offering and petition which he uttered at the hour of his sacrifice. *Sanctify* means consecrate them, the verb meaning literally *set them aside for God* in the primary signification of this term. Cf. Acts 9: 13, and the important Note J in the *Bible de Jérusalem*. [In the English JB and NJB it is Note G.]

Spred; Special Religious Development

Kathleen Hogg, DC

The following article was written by Kathleen for the SPRED Newsletter but, for those not acquainted with SPRED, a few words of introduction might help.

Starting in Chicago, USA, SPRED has now expanded to many US dioceses and, more recently, to centres in Ireland, Scotland, South Africa and Australia. In Ireland, Srs Sheila Brown and Catherine Tansey are involved while Kathleen and Cecilia Dowd work in Scotland.

General Introduction to SPRED

SPRED is a parish-based catechetical programme for those people who have a developmental disability. Its aim is two-fold

- (a) to provide opportunities for those members of the Church who possess developmental disability to be educated in faith and to take their rightful place in their local worshipping community;
- (b) to train and develop personnel to implement the SPRED method effectively.

The method is derived from the Method Vivre (originating in France) and was developed through praxis on catechetical ministry serving developmentally disabled people in the archdiocese of Chicago. Catechetical teamwork is central to its method. The pedagogical method is termed 'symbolic catechesis' and the syllabus works on a five-year cycle and is based on the Biblical axes of creation, election, covenant, salvation and sanctification.

SPRED works by initially forming and training a local adult faith community in a parish in the SPRED method. The core faith community then engages in a process of catechesis with their developmentally disabled friends.

Sr Kathleen's Article

How beautiful on the mountain tops
are the feet of those who bring good news.
How beautiful in the world today
are the ones who bear your face, O God.

During the Easter-Pentecost period we hear of the mission Jesus entrusted to his disciples and in turn to us: "Go into the world and

preach the Gospel to the whole of creation” (Mk. 16; 15) and we hear the assurance that “You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes, and you shall be my witnesses.” (Acts 1; 8) This missionary dictate of Jesus places *Evangelisation* as the primary mission of the Church.

The ministry of catechesis is at the heart of that mission. Through our involvement in SPRED we are called to share in the mission of the church in a particular way – sharing with our ‘friends’ the good news, proclaiming *‘the kingdom of God is among you.’*

The General Directory of Catechesis 1977 states; “the vocation of the laity to catechesis springs from Baptism, strengthened by confirmation... and from our loving knowledge of Christ springs the desire to proclaim him, to evangelise and to lead others to the ‘Yes’ of faith”. (231) People called to this ministry through SPRED participate in catechesis “*specially adapted for our friends with learning difficulties and work towards their total integration into the community.*” (232) We can take courage, as the first apostles did, from the assurance of Jesus that we will be empowered by the Holy Spirit. The conclusion to the directory says; “In catechetical praxis neither the most advanced pedagogical techniques nor the most talented catechist can ever replace the silent and unseen action of the Holy Spirit.” (288)

I think every catechist involved in SPRED would affirm this statement. How often we witness this ‘unseen action of the Holy Spirit’ during the sessions - be it in the experience of stillness which descends on the group, be it in a glance of recognition, a dawning light in the face of one of our friends, be it a personal sharing. The Holy Spirit is ever at work and so we need not feel afraid or inadequate. During this Easter/Pentecost period we have the assurance of this outpouring of the Spirit, and we testify that “it is the Holy Spirit who is the principle catechist; it is the Holy Spirit who is the interior teacher of those who grow in the Lord. The Holy Spirit is the principle inspiring all catechetical work and all who do this work” (288)

I found reading the Directory at times inspiring and affirming and at others overwhelming. The guidelines are so well constructed and formulated. They suggest that Diocesan structures be in place to support effective catechesis. They outline clear lines of responsibility giving first place to the Bishop, who will ensure effective priority for catechesis in his Church “putting into operation the necessary personnel, means and equipment, and also financial resources”. (223) Secondly to pastors and educators of the faithful, and then to parents and trained catechists. I recall that during my training, I had drawn up a management structure for introducing SPRED to a Diocese – big ideal! It looked good on paper. And then the reality hits! What do I mean?

Recently I was asked to speak to the people in our Diocese who are

doing the pastoral ministry course. I realised that ‘Catechesis’ is a word little understood and hardly used in our vocabulary. We have largely placed the responsibility for R.E. teaching in the catholic school system, but I ask myself, what about our ‘friends’ who have no access to catholic schools and whose education is provided in non-denominational special schools according to their disability? And what about ongoing support and formation in the faith for the maturing adult? So when in SPRED we talk about recruiting and training ‘catechists’ it must be quite confusing. What, who are they talking about? And what of Diocesan structures which support the ministry of catechesis? They are not always a reality. I soon realised we were starting from scratch – ‘Seed-sowing in the field of God’, as someone recently termed it.

On further reflection dare I say that SPRED is in the forefront, we are forging a way forward, albeit slowly, in accepting this special ministry. Bishop Maurice Taylor at the Chrism Mass this year in our diocese, the Diocese of Galloway (Scotland), encouraged us all to live our vocation as baptised Christians – *by growing in faith, by forming truly Christian communities, and by reaching out in service*. I came away having heard his message with ‘SPRED’ ears, and thought this is what we are about.

Growing in Faith

The Directory calls for a formation for the service of catechesis. ‘To accomplish this task, it is necessary for catechists to have a deep faith, a clear Christian and ecclesial identity, as well as a great social sensitivity.’ Many times when trying to recruit volunteers, people say, ‘Oh, I wouldn’t be able’ or ‘What experience do I to be a teacher?’ My response is always that we look for people whose own faith is important to them and who are willing to share that with others. We look for people who show a commitment to the church and who are willing to learn. Someone with an ability to relate and to communicate. SPRED gives to all volunteers a sound initial training in the method, with opportunities for on-going training. This formation is fostered each time the catechists gather for their preparation session. As an adult faith community we unfold and explore the mystery to be shared with our friends the following week. This experience ‘nourishes the spirituality of the catechist, so that our activity springs in truth from our own witness of life. Every theme covered should feed in the first place the faith of the catechist.’ (239)

At each SPRED session, as the Leader evokes the human experience, are we not given insights from each other, catechists and friends, into the mysterious presence of God, alive and active in all life? Often catechists remark that the support in faith is mutual and we are surely

growing together in faith. We see more clearly the God of the present moment.

The early Christian church was united heart and soul, they remained faithful to the teaching of the apostles, to the breaking of bread and the prayers, they shared everything in common according to what each needed, they met together in their homes, they went daily to the temple. (cf Acts)

The General Directory suggests that ‘catechesis is the responsibility of the entire Christian community’ and that ‘at the end of the catechetical process, it is the Christian community that welcomes the catechised into a fraternal environment, in which they will be able to live in the fullest way what they have learned.’(220)

Forming Truly Christian Communities

SPRED offers ongoing catechesis for we are on a faith journey which continues throughout our natural life, growing and maturing in faith. The SPRED group offers an environment and a method through which our ‘friends’ are supported. However, the long-term goal of SPRED is integration into the parish community - that wider community of faith to which we belong - the local church. In a rural diocese such as ours it is not possible for each parish to have their own SPRED group, so we are stretched across a wider geographical area which fits mostly with a deanery structure. Our present experience, though, is to try through SPRED parish Masses to give our ‘friends’ a higher profile, so that they become better known and valued. During Lent we celebrated Mass in a local parish. We led the parishioners in worship through participation in the processions, in the liturgy of the word through mime and gesture, in the preparation of the table of the Eucharist and through music. The dignity and sense of reverence with which each member participated was very moving as many parishioners commented afterwards. One ‘friend’ from that particular parish took part for the first time in the responsorial psalm and after Mass took delight in showing the catechists where she normally sits, as if claiming ‘This is my church’ - And so it is! This was her parish community; this is truly where she belongs.

SPRED forges a sense of community, a deep sense of belonging for those who take part, but it must not become an end in itself. It is but a stepping stone enabling our friends to take their place as active members of their parish community, valued and respected for who they are. It is the local church, parish community, which must welcome them, even learn from them, from their unique gifts which they contribute to the enriching of all our lives.

Reaching Out in Service

The directory describes catechesis as a 'unique service' (219). In SPRED, we exercise this service in many ways. Direct catechesis is a service, a ministry in the church taken directly from Jesus' mandate 'to go and make disciples of all nations'. Jesus also showed us that this ministry was carried out by word and action. At the Last Supper he left the table and undertook the most humble of services, washing the feet of his friends. Catechists are at the service of their particular friend. The activity catechist and leader catechist have responsibilities of service to the whole group. At agape we are all at the service of each other through the careful and generous way we try to attend to each other's needs. From setting out activities, to clearing away, we are putting ourselves at the service of the group. SPRED could not happen were it not for the service given by others too – our drivers, janitors etc. All work together to make up the whole.

And service must reach out to others in the wider community. We can do this through parish liturgies, by being seen to be more actively involved, each according to our gifts. Being a member of a SPRED group puts us in contact not only with the 'friends' but also with their families or carers/ support workers. How we reach out to them, develop relationships with them and maintain good communication, is itself a witness that the Church cares, is inclusive and values everyone.

Our SPRED community can become, as the directory suggests, 'a sign of the Church's vitality. The disciples of Christ gathered together so as to hear the word of God, to develop fraternal bonds, to celebrate the Christian mysteries in their lives and to assume responsibility for transforming society' (263). Am I being presumptuous, thinking we are doing a good job? Well, surely a word of encouragement does no harm!

I offer these reflections, in the light of the Bishop's words at the Chrism Mass, on the ministry of catechesis to which we have been called as a service to the Church. SPRED is one method at the heart of this ministry – a method which works for us and for our friends, enabling us to grow in faith, to form Christian community and to be of service to one another.

As mentioned earlier, the end of catechesis is that the catechised be welcomed into a fraternal environment where they can live fully what they have learned. This is indeed our hope - that our friends will be welcomed and be enabled to participate more fully in the local church and parish - that they be valued and respected for who they are.

It is difficult to judge the effectiveness of our ministry, as the conclusion to the Directory states; 'The effectiveness of catechesis is and always will be a gift of God, through the Spirit of the Father and the Son.' Faith is that unique gift which often grows unseen, sometimes the

smallest, seemingly frailest seed of all, but with enormous potential for growth. Let us, as catechists, nourish that seed within our own hearts that we may bear fruit and new seed, which we are ready to tend, among other catechists and friends, in the field of God. St. Paul writes; 'I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.' (1 Cor. 3:6)

Saint Vincent, the Fathers of the Church and the Theme of Christ in the Poor in the Conferences to the Daughters of Charity

Michael Edem CM

This article is an adaptation of Michael's thesis work.

This study will focus on the following points: Introduction, the Fathers of the Church including personalities like Gregory Nazianzen, John Chrysostom, Gregory of Nyssa, Caesarius of Arles and Augustine of Hippo followed by a short conclusion.

Vincent was very familiar with the Scriptures and equally so with the Church's traditions handed down through the Centuries. He loved and cherished the Church, the Tradition and the Fathers of the Church.(1) Having drunk deep from the fount of the Church, he quoted freely from the Fathers of the Church. He made very frequent references to the personalities of some of the Fathers.(2) He used their ideas both in his conferences to the Congregation of the Mission and to the Daughters.

Giving a Conference to the members of the Congregation of the Mission on poverty, he pointed out the need to observe the vow of poverty. To substantiate and authenticate his teaching, he said that at the beginning the priests took a type of vow of poverty. He named St Basil and St Jerome(3) among the Fathers who renounced their property in order to be ordained priests and this was done in line with the fact that they recognised the Lord as their portion and cup (Ps. 15).(4) Yet, referring to the Fathers does not make him a specialist in Patrology. Such references featured sporadically and circumstantially.

Concerning the Daughters of Charity who worked in situations so hard and difficult that some of them died as a result of the nature of their work, he told them that in the days of St Jerome such Sisters would have had their lives written in such an admirable manner and the saint would have called them martyrs. (5) He further told the Sisters that they were martyrs. On another occasion, while talking to the Daughters about "Divine Providence" (9 June 1658) he again named St Jerome. He indicated how Jerome could have included the names of the Sisters in the Church's martyrology.

He spoke of St Ambrose with reference to Emperor Theodosius(7) and mentioned St Augustine in line with the Augustinian communities.(8) He mentioned St Thomas Aquinas(9) and spoke of the Sisters of Saint Dominic(10) in the context of austerity. Even though Vincent

made ample references to the Fathers of the Church in different contexts, only those directly linked or alluded to the theme will be discussed. Such study will aid in elucidating the sources that influenced his ideas, concepts and vision of Christ in the poor.

The Patristic Era

Many Vincentian Scholars have written extensively on Vincent in various fields but study in the field of Vincent and the Fathers is very scanty. During the 20th Week of Vincentian Studies at Salamanca, Spain, a Dominican Priest, Alberto Escallada, was invited to give a talk on "Charity in the Fathers of the Church".(11) The contribution embraced Augustine, Ambrose, Gregory, John Chrysostom and others. It concentrated on the aspect of charity from the Fathers' viewpoint. The talk evoked the essential elements of charity in a general sense as expounded by the Fathers whom he noted in the tradition of the Church as "privileged witnesses" of charity.(12)

The approach of Escallada does not rule out Vincent's references to the Fathers that are numerous indicated in Volume XIV (General Index) of Pierre Coste's work.(13) Apart from the fact that Vincent got in touch with many of the Fathers probably through the use of the Breviary, it could be conjectured that he read about many of them both at the time he was the Principal of Collège des Bons-Enfants and at his private examen and studies to which he dedicated two long periods every day.(14)

However, Pierre Coste, referring to the letter of Pope Boniface II to Caesar, the Bishop of Arles, indicates St Augustine among the Fathers of the Church who exposed the true doctrine of grace. A quotation from Migne, was used to buttress that point.(15) The publication of Antonino Orcajo and Miguel Peres Flores on "St Vincent de Paul, Spirituality and Selected Writings"(16) features no alteration whatsoever. Although Orcajo and Flores utilised the same reference and indications as Coste, the context points to the problem of Jansenism with its over-growth in the areas of grace and frequent Communion.

Jaime Corera made a quantum leap when he made use of the text of St Gregory of Nyssa that speaks of the poor as those who represent the Saviour.(17) Here, he touches one of the cores of Vincent's teaching on Christ in the poor. José Sendra makes an allusion to the ecclesiological aspect of Vincent's penetration referring to St Augustine's idea of the body of Christ. It is a reference which does not seek to study the affinity or sources of Vincent's idea as such(18) but which has the explanation of his viewpoint.

So far, these seem to be the only references or studies touching the Fathers of the Church and some Saints as such. In other words, this is

the first attempt to break the ice and to map a route even if infinitesimal in a virgin land with regard to Vincent and the Fathers of the Church and Christ in the poor.

Vincent, a true son of God and of the Church, who was immersed in both aspects, began to express his views in his behaviour, speeches and in writings like the Fathers when the grace of God came mightily upon him. Since he loved the Church, he also took delight in defending her as a member of the Council of Ecclesiastical Affairs(19) or the Council of Conscience.

The divergent approaches of the Fathers, which at the same time indicated collaborative efforts, fostered the growth of doctrine and dogma. Some moved from the level of “what is taught” to “what is lived”, from literal to existential by examining the link between Christ and the poor or the poor representing Christ and how Christ is present in the poor that is served. Since this “great crowd” or “multitude” (Rev. 7:9) drank deep from the Lord’s well, they perceived the effects of the Lord’s incarnation and demonstrated its overflow in their behaviour, writings, homilies and Sermons on the poor. Only those of the Fathers whose teachings directly or indirectly affected Vincent or are reflected in his thoughts are mentioned here. This accounts for the selectivity that will soon be evident.

Gregory of Nazianzen/Nazianzenus (ca AD 330 – ca AD 389)

Gregory of Nazianzen was “not prolific but extraordinarily profound, he alone is given St John’s title, the Divine, i.e., the Theologian”.(20) The teachings and sayings of this great Bishop and Saint concerning the poor and poverty are found in his *Orationes*. In his Sermon 14,38, he spoke of serving Christ in the poor. The theme is taken up in the discourse on the fifth beatitude, “Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy.” (Matt. 5:7)(21) In this exposition, he links mercy and the poor by making use of Psalm 41:1. The Jerusalem Bible renders the first part of this Psalm as “Happy the man who cares for the poor and the weak. The word “Poor” precedes “weak” in this context. The emphasis is laid on “care” or “considering”. He goes on to speak of the good man who lends generously (Ps 112:5). Such a person is compassionate or kind in lending (Ps. 37:26). This passage, follows immediately after the initial introduction:

Even the night must not interrupt your work of pity. Do not say. ‘Go away and come back. I’ll give it to you tomorrow.’ Nothing must come between your intention and your carrying out of your act of kindness. Kindness is the only thing which must not admit of delay.(22)

This is a classical text which seems to tally with Vincent’s way of reasoning and seeing things. Vincent began with the explanation of the

Horarium, namely: rising, prayer, examen and other exercises and in the process of enlightening the Sisters, he told them never to tell a poor person at the door to leave and come back the following day. He told them that even -prayer is not to constitute a problem for them in the execution of such acts, for charity is above all virtues.

Now there are certain occasions in which the order of the day cannot be kept; for example, someone comes to your door when you are at prayer to ask a Sister to go and see a poor sick person who needs her; what should she do? She will do well to go and leave her prayer, or rather continuing, because such is God's will. For you see, charity is above all rules, and all things must come back to that.(23)

In each of the two circumstances, it is evident that urgency is the key idea. There must be no delay of any kind. The person must not be told to come back the following day nor must any religious activity send the person away. The response must be immediate. The idea of urgency could be likened to that of St Paul who tells the Ephesians that the sunset must not find one still angry lest the devil be given an opportunity (cf. Eph. 4:26-27). St Gregory transposes the urgent need for reconciliation to the camp of charity while Vincent departs from the context of prayer to arrive at the same point.

One may ask why such an urgency when the poor person can easily come back if what is being sought is of utmost importance? The two saints would reply by saying that "kindness is the only thing which does not admit of any delay".(24) Or, "Charity is above all rules, and all things must come back to that."(25) Could it be that they perceived Jesus Christ as the Prince of charity(26) or rather as Charity itself or putting it in the words of John "Anyone who fails to love can never have known God because God is love." (1John 4:8). The Johannine text gives a clue to their penetration and use of the words "kindness" or "charity" which unveils the mystery of Christ in the poor. Reading a little further down, one discovers that their ideas are anchored on the incarnation of Christ and the love of the Father. In Verse 9, the text continues: "God's love for us was revealed when God sent into the world his only Son so that we could have life through him".

The aspect of urgency could further link the sayings of Jesus Christ urging all Christians to watch for they know not the time or the hour that the Son of Man would come. "But as for that day and the hour, nobody knows it, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, no one but the Father only" (Matt. 4:36). In Verses 42 and 44 the same note of vigilance and urgency are repeated 'So stay awake, because you do not know the day when your master is coming. [...] Therefore, you too must stand ready because the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.' The stand of these two great men of God strongly repudiates unnecessary

bureaucratic measures that turn people into a pawn on the Chessboard and reifies them. Such a relationship adopts an I-It rather than an I-You relationship.(27)

Combining the aspect of urgency with that of charity or kindness that need no delay, it could be seen that to delay charity that needs to be immediately done to a poor person is to gamble with that poor Christ at the door who does not admit of neglect. “For I was hungry and you never gave me food” (Matt. 25:42 ff.). To send the poor person away is to prefer whatever ‘duty’ or ‘devotion’ it is to Christ, a form of idolatry and worshipping of a false god. The action could, in the long run, mean giving a second place to God who does not admit of such (Exod. 20: 20 ff., Dt. 5:6-7). Verse 9 of Deuteronomy adds. “For I, Yahweh your God, am a jealous God”. For the two Saints, God is to be preferred to any other thing. Nothing is to come between the person ministering to the poor and the direct or immediate service of the poor. Gregory shows how mercy is practicalised through the application of the text of Isaiah 58:7. The first part of the text “to let the oppressed go free and break every yoke” is omitted and the second part “to share your bread with the hungry and shelter the homeless poor” is applied. It points out not only the relief of hunger but enabling the person to experience some sense of freedom and security. Such charity does not demand all one owns but some part of one’s possession. The important thing is to perceive the fact that one is taking care of Christ by relieving the physical hunger of the poor, clothing him and welcoming him and clothing him.

In his *Orationes* 14,40, he goes on to mention all those who ministered to Christ in different ways while on earth and even at death but adds:

Let us offer him (the poor) his mercy through the needy and those who are at present cast down on the ground. Let us do this so that, when we depart hence, they may welcome us into the eternal habitations. in the same Christ our Lord, to whom be glory forever. Amen.(28)

The aspect of the generous donor being the guest of the poor in the eternal habitations clearly identifies the poor with Christ since Christ is the only one who can welcome a person into his home “eternal tabernacle”.(29) This same term is used almost verbatim by Vincent. It is possible that Vincent might have been aware of the great thought of Gregory but it seems more likely to come from that the same depth of penetration of the mysteries of the Lord’s incarnation and use of the Scriptures as a source of living water from which they derived their focus form the common basis. Vincent, on his part, on 25 November 1659, in the course of an explanation, said:

Make friends of your riches so that they may receive you into eternal tabernacles.(30)

The observation of the two texts indicates that both utilised an identical vocabulary, based on the Gospel of Luke as a common source although with their own peculiar background and point of departure. The interesting thing is that both arrived at the same level of perception of Christ in the poor as the ones who will open the doors of eternal abode to those who conscientiously care for, help and consider them. The opening of Heaven to those who cared for them is not as derogatory as in the sense of the rich hiring the poor to be their gate-keepers as explained by Hauck(31) but in the sense of having a privileged position and as citizens of Heaven or members of God's household (Eph. 2: 1 9) and as those representing Christ himself.

John Chrysostom (AD 344/345 – AD 407)

This great preacher and Bishop was called the “golden mouth” that is “Chrysostom” because of his eloquence. He is one of those Fathers of the Church who taught very profoundly the incarnation of Christ in the poor. He uses the Offertory context of offering gifts at the altar, adorning the altar and personal houses to bring out the connection between Christ and the poor.

After exposing the miracle of the multiplication of the bread of sincerity and modesty, he told the rich not to be attached to their riches as Job was never attached to the things of this world.(32) Instead of being attached, they should learn to use their riches to serve as best they could, giving them to the poor and learning a better art and being merciful as their heavenly Father is merciful (LK. 6:36). He goes on to ask a question “what can be the end of this?” It is “heaven and the heavenly goods”.(33)

He points out the connection between Christ and the poor especially as mercy towards the poor is better than adorning the altar. He states very simply that if one wants to honour the body of Christ, his nakedness should not be despised. Christ should be honoured, in the Church clothed in silk linens and at the same time passing him by unclothed and frozen outside.(34) He connects the Eucharist with those who are hungry and have no food and how these were neglected, focusing on the statement of Christ “I was hungry and you gave me no food” and “in so far as did it not to any of these, you did it not to me” (Matt. 25: 40).

God has no need of golden vessels but of golden hearts. I am not saying you should not give golden altar vessels and so on, but I am insisting that nothing can take the place of almsgiving. What is the use of loading “Christ's table with gold cups while he himself is starving? Feed the hungry and then if you have any money left over, spend it on the altar table. Will you make a cup of gold and withhold a cup of water?(35)

This passage of John Chrysostom was very familiar and dear to the heart of Vincent de Paul even though he attributed it to Saint Bernard. He says that St Bernard among other Saints blamed those of his days who cared so much for the Church and dress the silverware.(36) He used almost the exact words of Chrysostom to speak to his daughters about the adornment of the Church and altar vessels but instead of the word “gold” he uses “silver”. In this context, Vincent does not simply speak of Christ in the poor but he calls them living temples.

Whilst the living temple, which is the poor, is on the streets suffering from cold and hunger, you are wasting money on superfluities!(37)

It is marvellous to see Vincent’s transformation of the idea of the poor outside. They are the Living Temples that ought to be adorned. They should not be left languishing. The instruction on the Sisters’ uniformity also extended to uniformity of poverty and the need to avoid superfluities. St Francis de Sales was careful to point this out to his Sisters when he told them that they should have only one book and a holy picture for their meditation.(38)

What use is it to adorn the altar with cloth of gold hangings and deny Christ a coat for his back! [...] If you see someone starving and refused to give him any food but instead spent your money on adorning the altar with gold would he thank you? Would he not rather be enraged? [...] If someone is with cold and then you did not give him clothing but set up golden columns in his honour. would he not say he was being made a fool of and insulted?(39)

Vincent, reflecting on this same vein, instructed the Sisters “Go first of all to the poor and help them; then, if you can do other things, all right.(40)

The loving tenderness with which John Chrysostom saw, handled and loved the poor is the same spirit with which Vincent de Paul was disposed toward them. Vincent was so much in love with the poverty of Christ and the service of the poor that he did not hesitate to exhort his confreres to sell even the chalices belonging to the Church in order to serve the sick poor. Some months before his death on December 5, 1659, speaking on poverty to his confreres he exclaimed:

But for the Company. poor Company! oh! sick poor! for whose assistance even the Church’s chalices need to be sold.(41)

For Vincent, the service of the poor was to be preferred to any other type of work. This accounts for his attitude and position concerning holy things and the poor. Very early on in his life, Vincent wrote to one of his confreres, Pierre du Chesne, who was at Sancey(42) with an ill confrere, Monsieur Dufestel, to make sure that nothing was spared in giving Dufestel proper treatment. He said that he would be so delighted if someone in the Company from somewhere were to send word to him

that someone had sold chalices for that purpose.(43) For Vincent, the sick had to be treated with respect and courtesy.(44)

John Chrysostom demonstrated that even adornment of the altar, donations to the Church should not be used as a pretext to neglect the poor. Their service comes first before the adornment of the altar because by helping the freezing poor, the hungry, the naked poor, it is Christ that is being personally ministered to. If the chalices need to be sold as Vincent put it to help the poor, it means that even the adornment of the altar has to come next or be abandoned or put aside to serve them.(45) Whether there was direct or indirect influence or assimilation of the thought of the “Golden Mouth” by Vincent or not, the important thing is this common heritage arising from this passionate love of the poor. in Christ or rather Christ in the poor.

Why should one abandon the adornment of the altar or donation of a chalice or any other golden vessel to the altar or selling things belonging to the Church if not for the sake of serving the living Christ walking around in the poor naked, hungry, cold, abandoned person? If not for a very high motive of serving Christ in the poor, it would be a sacrilege, an abomination or simony to sell a consecrated Chalice for the sake of making money.

In his second Sermon on Lazarus and the rich man, Chrysostom extols poverty and goes on to say that wealth without virtue is worth nothing and poverty is not to be seen as evil and that the situation of Lazarus is a lesson for both the rich and the poor;

You saw him in poverty then; see him in luxury now. You saw his sufferings; see his recompense, both you who are rich and you who are poor: the rich to keep you from thinking that wealth is worth anything without virtue; the poor. to keep you from thinking that poverty is any evil.(46)

Similarly, Vincent says;

My dear Sisters, I beseech Our Lord to make you thoroughly understand the happiness of those who live in poverty and the great unhappiness which will ensue to those who are attached to riches.(47)

Both John Chrysostom and Vincent de Paul indicate in the two quotations that unhappiness does not necessarily come from poverty and that poverty does not of necessity connote evil; it is rather a source of blessing.

Lazarus is shown as a model. He is depicted as one who did not complain or grumble and who lived in continuous poverty when he was alive but rather gave thanks. Chrysostom asks; “what pardon will those who complain have?(48) On his seventh Sermon on Lazarus and the rich man he shows the contrast between the two of them.(49) The final stage of Lazarus’ life, the poor man is shown as blessed. In Vincent’s

view, the blessedness of the poor comes from the very life of Christ himself and his teaching. (50) To live a life of poverty is to share in the life of Christ the poor man who had no stone to rest his head on. (51) The poor who share the same life and condition of Christ are blessed because of the incarnation of Christ, who decided to become poor even though he was rich (Phil. 2.7 ff.).

In another context, while commenting on Matthew's Gospel chapter 25 on the theme of the Last Judgement based on acts of charity and mercy, he revisited the theme of Christ in the poor as an intimate part of the continuum.

Putting himself in the position of the accused, he asks in a surprising manner "what, are they your brothers and you call them 'small'?"(52) He responds by saying that it is properly for this reason that they are his brothers, because they are humble, poor, driven away or repelled. The Lord calls the unknown, the unappreciated, intending by that not only monks and those that live on the mountains, but all the faithful into his brotherhood. Even if one lives in the world and is hungry, naked, a pilgrim the Lord wants all these to receive assistance. They become his brothers because of baptismal participation. Helping this group of people meant that God was the one who received the assistance through the poor.(53)

Vincent de Paul making use of the same text of Matthew arrived at the meeting point of the divine and the human natures of Christ in which the incarnation is made ever-present in the poor that is served. He told the Daughters, "it is by serving the poor that one serves Jesus Christ. Oh my daughters, that is true! You serve Jesus Christ in the person of the poor.(54) To seal the whole discourse, Vincent adopted a point made by one of the Sisters.

God has promised an eternal reward to those who give a cup of water to the poor... what will he give to a Daughter of Charity who leaves all to give herself in serving them all the days of her life?... 'Come blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom that was prepared for you.'(55)

Vincent told the Sisters that for offering themselves to become servants of the poor which is more than giving a cup of water, they would inherit the reward of eternal life since they serve not only the poor but Christ in the poor.

Gregory of Nyssa (ca. AD 335- AD 394)

In his thought, Gregory links love of the poor with fasting and speaks very strongly on the need to appreciate the poor.

Embrace the afflicted as gold. Stretch out your hands to the sick as if on them will depend your health and that of your wife and that of your children and all your life. Do not despise those that are [flattened] in

misery as if they are worth nothing. Consider rather who they are and you will discover their dignity: they have the face of the Saviour [represent the person of the Saviour to us]. The poor are the dispensers of the goods that we hope for, the porters of the kingdom of heaven. who open (the doors of heaven) to the good and close (them) against the bad and the inhuman.(56)

His appeal is to the rich. It is a form of conscientisation of the rich toward the poor's dignity. The picture of the poor in this passage is of people with significant responsibility. They have an important role, that of opening and closing the doors of the kingdom of heaven. This is close to Vincent's saying that they will open heaven's gates to you.(57) It could be that this is the text that inspired Vincent to speak to the members of the Company about turning the medal around when they see the poor and never to regard them from their outward appearance or dress but to see the face of Christ in this person that is disfigured. It was to such as these that Christ said he was sent to bring the Good News.(58) Vincent values the poor not just as gold but as our "lords and masters".(59) In exercising it, the mercy which Caesarius of Aries used as the core of reflections, is emphasised.

Caesarius of Aries (ca AD 470 – ca AD 542)

Caesarius is one of those great men of old who perceived without difficulty what the incarnation of Christ meant in the life of the Church. He is in any way directly referred to by Vincent. Yet, there can be little doubt that Vincent was aware of the existence of such a man who penetrated the heart of Jesus so deeply in his manner of seeing the poor in Christ. The starting point of his reflection is Matthew 5:7 "Blessed are the merciful for, they shall obtain mercy.(60)

Caesarius makes a distinction between human and divine mercy. He links mercy and forgiveness of sins. In this world God is cold and hungry in the person of all poor. If a poor man hungers, Christ is in need, as He Himself said: 'I was hungry. and you did not give me to eat.(61)

In order to make the link between Christ and the poor very explicit and to show how the service of Christ in the poor disposes one to obtain mercy, he exhorts;

Do not, then despise the miseries of the poor. If you want to hope for the forgiveness of your sins without anxiety. Christ hungers now, brethren, for in the person of the poor He Himself deigns to hunger and thirst; moreover, He repays in heaven whatever He receives on earth.(62)

Again, he adds:

If we carefully heed the fact that Christ hungers in the person of the poor, brethren, it will be profitable for us. God allowed poor people

to be in the world so that every man might have the means of redeeming his sins. If there were no poor, no one would give alms and no one would receive pardon. God could have made all men rich, but he wanted to assist US through the misery of the poor. [...] You give the poor a coin and you receive a kingdom from Christ; you bestow a mouthful and are given eternal life. [...] The misery of the poor is the remedy of the rich, [...] ‘As water quencheth a fire, so alms destroyeth sins’; and again: ‘shut up alms in the heart of the poor. and it shall obtain help for thee against evil (Eccus. 3:33. 29:150).(63)

He sees the existence of and charity to the poor as a necessary means of purification. There is an insistent affirmation of Christ in the poor and the need to take care of the poor. To take care of the poor is not a wasted effort. It entails the reception of the kingdom and gaining eternal life. How is this to be accomplished? The solution is proffered in the quotation from the book of Sirach 3:33 “Water quenches a blazing fire, almsgiving atones for sins” and part of verses 31 and 34 combined together say: “Whoever gives favours in return is mindful of the future; at the moment of his fall, he will find support.” To elucidate the point better, he joins chapter 29.15 which says: “...and it will release you from every misfortune”. It is the human mercy toward Christ in the poor that obtains help for the person against all evil.

With the foregoing, the thoughts of Caesarius of Arles could be summed up as ‘Generosity toward Christ in the person of the poor wards off evil or misfortune, grants forgiveness of sins, gains the kingdom and offers eternal life.’ In other words, generosity toward the poor gains one eternal life. This is similar to the saying of Vincent that “the poor will open heavens’ gates” to their mentors. It is that God has promised an eternal reward to those who give a glass of water to the poor.(64)

This saying of Vincent does not only bring out the link between the poor and Christ but gives the motive for acting thus. In the case of Caesarius, the motives are given as deliverance from misfortune, forgiveness of sins and receiving the kingdom from Christ. The reception of the kingdom entails eternal life. Serving the poor brings all these benefits. Instructing the Daughters to teach the poor to know God, Vincent had no doubts that the instructed poor people will introduce the Sisters to God with joy as those who taught them to know him. “My God, look at the one who assisted us in your love, my God, look at the one who taught us to know you.(65)

To show how important was the work of serving Christ in the poor, he said to the Sisters, “Does that not make us to see that God specially accepts the service you render to him in the persons of the poor?”(66) The joy with which the poor are to introduce those who helped them is expressly shown in their attitude “behold those who helped us”.

Concerning the “Foundlings”, Vincent told the Daughters to make sure “that they lack nothing; you will always do your best for the poor”.(67)

Sometimes, when Vincent explained things to the Daughters, he spoke as if he had the whole situation laid out on the board before him. He told the Sisters with every assurance; “you are going to give life to those sick poor, in the body as well as in the Soul”.(68) A clue as regards the type of succour the Daughters were to give to the poor is given in this text. They were to render both bodily and spiritual help. It was not meant to be one sided only; it needed to be holistic so as to respect the integrity of the person and to bring about a holistic healing. The similarity of thought is not accidental but consequential to the common focus, the poor.

Augustine of Hippo (AD 354-AD 430)

He is one of the most erudite of the Fathers, with the “most remarkable theological insights, and is actively the most prolific.(69) The famous Matthean text (25: 31-46) is used in a different sense by him. In his exposition of Psalm 90, he links the scene of the Last Judgement with Christ’s words concerning the service of the poor: “I was hungry and you gave me to eat (Matt. 25:35).”(70) The text appears in the context of the Christian’s struggle against temptations and persecutions and the eventual reward of possession of the kingdom; “Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the world” (v.34). Their invitation to share in the kingdom arises from their fidelity of confessing the faith and supporting those that were on trial.(71) Since the text is used in the context of the struggle against temptations and persecutions, it does not have the basic elements in order to establish a firm link between Christ and the poor. Augustine reflects on Psalm 90:15 as Vincent did but twists it toward the recompense that comes after a faithful struggle. Vincent on the other hand used the Psalm to explore God’s protection and care for the poor.(72)

In another context, Augustine, reflecting on Psalm 72:13, makes every effort to show that there is no distinction between the rich and the poor that they both have the same first parents, Adam and Eve; both had the same path of entry and exit into and from the world. He later expanded his reflection to embrace the rich and the poor in Luke 6: 1 9 ff. with the roles being totally reversed. The rich who knew no sufferings on earth was in torment in hell while the poor man who was accustomed to suffering was experiencing rest. He emphasises the neglect that the poor man suffered and the comfort that the rich man enjoyed.(73) He shows that the plea of the rich man for water, and his further request that the poor man be sent to his family, did not work. In this way, he shows

why the poor should not be neglected.

Augustine did not only treat the theme of poor/poverty but went further and deeper by linking the poor with Christ or rather by portraying Christ in the poor. In his *Sermo* 86,2, reflecting on Matthew 19:21, quotes “Go and sell all you own and give the proceeds to the poor”.(74) He immediately questions whether you are probably afraid to loose it, and gives a response by saying that “you will have a treasure in heaven” (19:21). The one custodian of such gold will be no other person than God himself.

What was given on earth will be preserved in heaven for the person. Saint Augustine then says, “If you had said to me: ‘Give it to me; I will preserve it for you in heaven’, I would not have hesitated to give it to my Lord to the Good Master; instead you said to me: Give it to the poor”.(75) He shows in this text how the rich man lost his opportunity to have his riches preserved in heaven for him. This is similar to Vincent’s view of “Turn over the medal”(76) or the one about the rich man entering the Kingdom; “And it can be more difficult for a rich man to enter heaven than to pass a cable through the eye of a needle, who will not avoid this danger?”(77)

To show the wretchedness of loosing that golden opportunity of preserving the treasures in heaven he points out that no one hesitates to give alms to the poor and that no one believes that it is received by the one whose hand is seen. In order to show that it is the invisible hand of Christ that receives it, he cites Matthew 25.35, 40, “I was hungry and you gave me to eat...all that you did to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me”. In *Sermo* 86, 2-4, he relates how the poor person who asks for alms is actually the rich one who receives it. “It is given by one who spends for himself but it is received by he who will give [it] back. This is a very beautiful way of demonstrating Christ in the poor. For Augustine, it is the hand of Christ that receives whatever is given to the poor. The poor physically receive it but it is Christ who invisibly receives it and preserves it for the person who makes the donation. In other words, what is spent on the poor is not actually spent but really preserved in a treasure house in heaven by the greatest Custodian, Jesus who is being helped in the poor. Such a manner of looking at Christ in the poor gives a very powerful motive for helping and serving Christ in the poor. Vincent, trying to incite the Daughters of Charity to serve the Foundlings without counting the cost, indicated to them how pleased God was with their services.

And accustom yourselves to see God in them. and to serve them in God and for his love. What a powerful motive. my daughters! You should conclude from this that God takes a great pleasure to see the service you render to them.(78)

Vincent wanted the Daughters to come to a better grasp of what they were doing and to do it well, realising that they were serving God directly in those little children. He did not want the Sisters to be in doubt of what they were doing and the recompense that would accrue from it. For him, these children would have been the rejected, abandoned Jesus driven out of his homeland even as a little child. They were the Jesus along the street, in need of clothing, hungry and thirsty that the Sisters have to take care of. The Sisters are reminded that God is pleased with their work.

Conclusion

These few incidences reveal how close in thought and ideal these great men of God were to each other. The closeness does not mean servitude and lack of independence of thought but only goes to emphasise common threads. Vincent was not alone; we know that his thoughts on the poor had affinities with some of his contemporaries also.

The position of Vincent is very similar to that of many of the Fathers of the Church in the use of the Scriptures as the basis of reflection and perception of the poor. It cannot be concluded with absolute certainty that he depended solely on the Fathers of the Church for the development of his idea of the Christ in the poor. Neither can it be denied that he gained from them but did not become a slave to them. His hermeneutical method gave him an opportunity to contemplate and reflect on Christ in the poor and arrive at the poor in Christ as well.

He adopted similar terminologies to the Fathers but came out with his particular nuances. He borrowed, from and differed from them at the same time. His intoxication with serving Christ in the poor made him view things from this perspective. He made use of the ideas of these great men of God but transformed them into his own unique language. Christ is to be imitated but he is to be imitated in serving him in the poor. He is to be loved and adored in the poor. The service needs to fulfil the double components of interior and exterior holiness. That forms part of the service recommended by Vincent.

NOTES

1. SV III, 319-32 1.
2. SV XIII, 147, 148 ff.
3. SV XI, 225.
4. SV XI, 225.
5. SV IX, 460 X, 42 5.
6. SV X, 510. Et je crois que, si elles se fussent trouvées du temps du saint Jérôme, il les eût mises au rang des martyrs.
7. SV IX, 386; XI, 149, XII, 52; III, 309; XIII, 27.
8. SV IX, 245; X, 205, 206. XIII, 708.
9. SV VII, 109.

10. SV X,98
11. ESCALLADA R., La Caridad en los Santos Padres in La Caridad, Carisma Vicenciano, XX Semana de Estudios Vicencianos, Salamanca, Editorial CEME, 1993, pp. 75-93.
12. Ibid. p. 77. The Fathers are called “testigos privilegiados”.
13. SV XIV, II6, 32,47,57, 67, 222, 251, 282, 284 amongst many.
14. SV XIV, 534, Cf. fidelity of the Brothers to particular examen, X, 605.
15. SV III, 330. In note 58 of this volume of the Correspondence, concerning the nomination of Saint Caesarius, Pope Boniface II makes reference to Saint Augustine. Coste gives MIGNE, *Patrologiae cursus completus*, i. LXV, col. 31 as the source of this information
16. ORCAJO A. & FLORES M. P., *San Vicente de Paúl II, Espiritualidad 3*, selección de escritos, Madrid, La Editorial Católica SA, Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1981, 265.
17. CORERA J *Servir a los pobres es ir a Dios*, 1999, pp. 27 & 28.
18. Cf. SANDRA J, La identificación de Jesucristo con el pobre, p. 178.
19. SV III, 319.
20. JURGENS W. A., trans., *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, Collegeville, Minnesota, The Liturgical Press. 1979,28.
21. Makarioi...hoi eleéinones, hóti autoi eleethesontai. The Latin translation of this beatitude is rendered thus: Beat misericordes quoniam ipsi misericordiam consequentur.
22. Gregory Nazianzen. *Orationes* 14,38 in *Patrologiae Graecae*, XXXV, Migne J. P., ed., Paris, 1857-1866, 907, 908. Page 907 gives the Latin while 908 gives the original Greek text. Ne nox quidem misericordiae officia tibi interrumpat. Ne dixeris: Rediens redi et crastino die dabo tibi (Prov. 3:28). Ne quid inter propositum tuum et beneficium intercedat. Sola enim beneficentia moram non admittit. In subsequent citations of the text, Orations 14,38 in PC together with the page number will be indicated.
23. SV X, 595. This conference took place on 17 November 1658.
24. *Orationes*, 907.
25. SV X, 59.5.
26. ORTEGA R., “La caridad al prójimo en el Nuevo Testamen” to in *La Caridad, Carisma Vicenciano*, pp. 35-71.
27. BUBER M., I and Thou, N.Y., Touchstone Book, 1996, pp. 54 ff. The basic word I-It can never be spoken with one’s whole being.
28. *Orationes* 14,38 in PG XXXV, 910.
29. The term ‘aionious skenas’ is used in the original to indicate the eternal habitation or abode and ‘aeterna tabernacula’ is the Latin translation used. Cf. PG XXXV, 910.
30. SV X, 679-680, ‘Vous devez traiter les pauvres avec grande douceur et respect: avec douceur, pensant qu’ils vous doivent ouvrir le ciel; car les pauvres ont cet avantage d’ouvrir le ciel; et c’est ce que Notre-Seigneur dit; “Faites-vous des amis de vos richesses, afin qu’ils vous reçoivent dans les tabernacles éternels.
31. Cf. HAUCK, Pénes, Penikrós in TDNT VI, 37 ff.
32. CHRYSOSTOM, *Opera Omnia Quae Extant VII*, in MIGNE (ed.), Paris, 1862, 500. This occurs in Homily on Matthew XLIX, 3
33. CHRYSOSTOM, *Opera Omnia Quae Extant VII*, 500-501, Homily, XIIX, 4.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid.
36. SV X, 3-59.
37. SV X, 359. Tandisque le temp vivant, qui est le pauvre, est par les rues qui endure la faim et le froid, vous employez vos biens à des dépenses superflues!

38. SV X, 3 59.
39. CHRYSOSTOM, *Opera Omnia Quae Extant* VII, 501, Homily, XIIX, 4.
40. SV X, 359. Allez premièrement aux pauvres et les assistez; puis après, si vous pouvez faire le reste, à la bonne heure.
41. SV XII, 410. Mais, pour la Compagnie, pauvre Compagnie! oh! pauvres malades! pour l'assistance desquels il faudrait vendre jusqu'aux calices de l'église.
42. Vide SV 1, 521, English version. Sancey was the Missionaries' residence at Troyes.
43. SV 1, 531. Je serais ravi si l'on me mandait de quelque lieu que quelqu'un de la Compagnie eût vendu les calices pour cela
44. SV X, 680. avec douceur et respect.
45. SVXII, 410.
46. CHRYSOSTOM *On Wealth and Poverty*, Roth C P (trans), New York, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1984, 39. The original title of this work was *Eis ton ptôchon Lazaron Kai ton plousion* (On Lazarus the poor man and the rich man.)
47. SV X, 206. Mes chères soeurs, je prie Nôtre Seigneur de vous faire bien entendre le bonheur de ceux qui vivent dans la pauvreté et le grand malheur qui arrivera aux personnes qui sont attachées aux richesses.
48. CHRYSOSTOM *On Wealth and Poverty*, pp. 39-40.
49. *ibid*, p. 139.
50. SV X, 206.
51. SV X, 206. The same idea is expressed by John Chrysostom when he showed that the bed of Jacob was the ground and a stone under his head his pillow (Gen. 28:1 1). Vide, *On Wealth and Poverty*, p. 25.
52. CHRYSOSTOM, *Commento al vangelo di san Matteo* III, Minuti R. & Monti F. (trans) Roma, Citta Nuova Editrice, 1967, p. 260.
53. *ibid*, poiché era Dio che riceveva attraverso i poveri.
54. SV IX, 252. C'est que, servant les pauvres, on sert Jésus-Christ, O mes filles, que cela est vrai! Vous servez Jésus-Christ en la personne des pauvres.
55. SV IX, 252. Dieu a promis des récompenses éternelles à ceux qui donneraient un verre d'eau à un pauvre; [...] que donnera-t-il à la Fille de la Charité qui quitte tout et se donne elle-même pour les servir tout le temps de sa vie?... Venez, les bénis de mon Père, possédez le royaume qui vous a été préparé (Matt. 25:34).
56. GREGORIUS NISSENS, *Orationes et Sermones* in PG XLVI, 459-460. Vide Frosini G., *11 pensiero sociale dei Padri*, Brescia, Editrice Queriniana, 1996, pp. 78-79.
57. SV IX, 252; Cf. CORERA J., *Servir a los pobres es ir a Dios*, pp. 27-28. In these pages, Corera presents the text of Saint Gregory before commenting that it has its basis on the Gospels. He makes some effort to demonstrate the identification of Christ and the poor and this was in the European conscience after Saint Vincent and extended even to the time of Blessed Frederick Ozanam.
58. SV XI, .32. Cf. also ABELLY L, *La Vie du Vénérable Serviteur de Dieu Vincent De Paul*, 11, 9.
59. SV X, 266; X, 332.
60. CAESARIUS of ARLES, *Sermons* 1, (1-80), Mueller M., (trans.), Washington, The Catholic University of America Press-Consortium Book, 19, 127. The text was originally published as CAESARII ARELATENSIS, *Sermones, pars prima, continens Praefationem, Sermones de diversis et de Scriptura Veteris Testamenti*, MORIN D G (ed.) Turnholt, Typographi Brepols Editores Pontificii MCMLII, 111.
61. *ibid*, p. 128.
62. *ibid*.
63. *ibid*, p. 129.
64. SV IX, 252.

65. SV IX, 253. Mon Dieu, voici celle qui nous a assistés pour votre amour, mon Dieu, voici celle que nous a appris de vous connaître.
66. SV IX, 247. Cela ne nous fait-il pas voir que Dieu agré très spécialement le service que vous lui rendez en la personne des pauvres?
67. SV IX, 130-. X, 225, Que rien ne leur manque vous vous porterez toujours au bien envers les pauvres.
68. SV IX, 225. Vous allez donner la vie à ces pauvres malades tant du corps que de l'âme.
69. AUGUSTINE in Jurgens, op. cit., 1.
70. AUGUSTINE, *Esposizioni sui Salmi*, Mariucci T. & Tarulli V., Roma Città Nuova Editrice, 1976, 163.
71. *Esposizioni sui Salmi*, 163.
72. SV X, 680
73. Tarulli V, op. cit., 839-841. 82 SV IX, 130.
74. AUGUSTINE. *Discorsi 11/2*, (86-116), Sul Nuovo Testamento, Carrozi L., (trad), Roma, Città Nuova Editrice, 1983. 84 *Discorsi 11/2*, (86-116), 11.
75. SV XI, 3 7.
76. SV X, 206. Et puisqu'il est plus difficile qu'un riche entre dans le ciel que de faire passer un cable par le trou d'une aiguille, qui n'évitera pas ce péril?
77. *Discorsi 11/2*, (86-116), *Sul Nuovo Testamento*, p. 11.
78. SV IX, 132. E t prenez l'habitude de voir Dieu en eux et de les servir en Dieu et pour son amour. Que ce motif est puissant, mes filles! Vous devez en conclure que Dieu prend un grand plaisir à voir le service que vous leur rendez.

On Reaching the 25th Milepost

Com MacAdam CM

This is the text of the homily given by Colm on the occasion of his Silver Jubilee of Ordination, 10th June 2002.

Readings; 1 Corinthians 2:1-5 & John 15:5, 7-8

As Iarnród Éireann marks the twenty-fifth year in service of some of its most powerful locomotives, I'm often quizzed about my interest in *railways*. And particularly as a *priest*! I believe it's because of the notion of *journey*. Discipleship – the following of Christ – is a *lifelong* journey for us all.

"We are companions on life's journey": the words of a popular song at Mass. The past quarter-century has meant 'crossing' numerous fellow-pilgrims whose lives I have (hopefully) influenced. Yet, in lots of ways, *they* have ministered more to *me* than *I* may have to *them*.

I have been moved by the deep faith of so many people – young and not-so-young – and been humbled by countless expressions of genuine repentance in the confessional. I have visited hospitals and left homes on First Fridays more grateful for the smallest blessings in my life. I have appreciated the many words of encouragement.

It seems to me that the ministry of the priest is less about '*doing things*' for people than it is about '*being with*' them on a common journey: to nurture life and growth instead of engineering efficient performance. In a word, to be a *gardener* rather than a mechanic.

If, indeed, there is something that the priest is called to 'do', it's surely that of proclaiming and preaching the Word of God but, firstly, to make it his own. Which is why, like St Paul, I have tried to prioritise that call 'during my stay' in the various appointments I've held: in Armagh as a religious educator to boys aged 11-18; at St John's University, New York whilst engaged in further studies; and in parish ministry in Cork and Phibsborough. For, if I were to break the bread of the *Eucharist* only, I'd simply be a 'half-baked' priest, "withering on the vine".

The bread of the *Word* also needs to be broken and shared – and not just on Sundays! But again, like St Paul, the only power I can rely on is that of the Spirit. As Jesus reminds us, "*Cut off from me you can do nothing*".

Of course, there have been days when it wasn't easy to recognise the abiding presence of Jesus the Vine in a Church often beset by attack and menaced by occasions of infidelity. However, "the train is kept on the

rails”, when one recalls the Lord’s promise: “*I am with you always*”. “To the end of the line”, we might add. That’s what keeps me going in moments glad and sad.

There were also times when I was less than patient with the pace of the renewal envisaged by Vatican II. But then, as St Vincent observed, maybe we need to “*hasten slowly*”.

Speaking of St Vincent leads me to underscore the wealth of support from my confrères and other brother-priests during 25 years and more – their unfailing courtesy, consideration, understanding, generosity and wisdom. Such ‘foliage’ helps to keep us priests united as branches on the Vine.

Sharing in the eternal priesthood of Jesus Christ is a marvellous privilege, if an awesome responsibility! But, thank God, I have the good health to exercise it. Speaking for myself, the more I grow into the priesthood, the more aware I become of my unworthiness and inadequacies. And yet, it is not my doing but God’s. So, if my ministry thus far has borne any fruit, I can only echo the tribute of the author of the letter to the Ephesians (3:20-21)

To the One who is able to do so much more than we can ever ask for, or even think of, by means of the power working in us: to God be the glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus, for all time, for ever and ever. Amen.

Fr Thomas Devine CM

I like to remember Tom as he was in our long association as fellow students in St Joseph's, Blackrock, later as young priests on the staff of St Paul's, Raheny, and as missionaries in Nigeria; many kaleidoscopic memories!

Tom came to the Congregation from the same stable as that redoubtable trio; Kevin Condon, Pauric Doherty and James Johnston – St Nathy's, Ballaghaderreen, Co Roscommon. Like them he had a strong classical background. In his own time in St Joseph's, he came to be part of another formidable trio with Brendan O'Dowd and Tom Dougan. Because of their shared intellectual prowess, they were favourite protégés of a like-minded scripture professor, Donal O'Herlihy.

St Joseph's in the Forties? A kinsman of Tom's (according to Tom, anyway) Bishop Tom McGettrick, liked to speak of his student days in Maynooth and, where others would decry the regimentation and repression, he claimed to have enjoyed every single day of his seven years there. All that was necessary, he claimed, was to beat the system!

If, in Blackrock, there wasn't exactly a Maynooth-like structure, still there was always the danger of a cosy piosity in such a small, tightly-knit community but, if said danger ever threatened, Tom, with his Rabelasian humour, was always at hand to supply the required antidote.

In St Joseph's, he did much to expand student horizons, especially in knowledge of the Congregation at home and abroad. A notable achievement was the founding and editing of the first student journal – *Evangelizare* – destined to endure for many years. This did for us students what J-G Magarry's *The Furrow* did for the Irish Church. In both cases, it was *aggiornamento* before its time. *Evangelizare* may have been visionary in purpose but in production, distinctly medieval. For duplicating purposes we had to do each sheet separately, inking the stencil with a hand-held roller. Days and nights of toil to run off a few pages! If the instrument in question is not in the Provincial Archives... well, it should be! I would suspect, however, that it ended up as part of Br Sean O'Dell's collection of antiques.

Tom sent copies of *Evangelizare* to the students of all the English-speaking provinces and beyond. As a result, many of us acquired pen-friends among our peers and, for many years, regularly kept in touch.

After ordination, Tom was appointed to St Patrick's, Armagh, where he taught History. I think here was one of the first signs of a great talent of Tom's. Even though he hadn't done History in his degree, he now proceeded to take up a new subject, give infinite time to it and

master it. It was to remain a feature of his life.

In Armagh, it was History but in his next appointment, to St Paul's, Raheny, it was to be basketball. Again, the same determination to absorb the culture and technique of his new hobby. The trouble was that this unfortunately collided with the Higher Diploma in Education which was supposed to be the main object of his attention at the time. Professor Sean O Cathain, SJ, lecturer in education at the time in UCD had the unamiable habit of reading out names of absentees from his lectures. Tom's name invariably headed the list. As a consequence, he was threatened with expulsion from the course by an irate O Cathain. But for Tom, the lines were firmly drawn and his course was clear; basketball it was to be. There was an interesting denouement to all of this in the subsequent H Dip exam. When the first examination papers on the Principles of Education were distributed, Tom put his head in his hands and deeply contemplated the questions. Too deeply, in fact, and for too long a time. Our supervisor saw him and after the best part of an hour went over to him thinking he was ill. Result of the exam? Something of a sensation of Higher Diploma circles; Tom got a first class honours degree!

One thing, they say, leads to another and it certainly did in Tom's case. Instead of merely accompanying the Basketball team to the European venues of the student games, Tom decided to build a Grand Tour around each occasion.

So it was that, in 1959, he assembled a motley party; the team, other students, some parents and friends. We all travelled overland to Chambery in France. After the games, we went on by train to the Italian frontier to be met by a loquacious Giacomo – driver of a grand luxury coach. There followed a fascinating trip to Milan, Venice, Florence, Assisi and Rome. There were to be interesting moments when the Dominican Sisters, our hosts in the Villa Rosa in Rome, discovered that there were several women in our party; they set about immediately establishing a rigid separation of the sexes. I can still hear Tom's uproarious laughter.

A revealing thing about all this was that it showed again Tom's remarkable gift for addressing a new venture and mastering it. He had never even been to the Continent before but was now the Complete Tour Operator. Being an admirer of Horace, he always managed to combine the useful and the agreeable – the latter sometimes, it must be said, to the detriment of the former!

In 1960, I was home on leave and heard that Tom had been appointed to Nigeria. This was a fulfilment of his ambition to be a foreign missionary. Even since his Evangelizare days, he had followed closely all Vincentian missionary activity, past and present. He had, in fact, been

the first to introduce us students to men like the formidable Père Lebbe and the whole French Missionary story in China.

After a stay with us in Ikot Ekpene, he was sent to Ogoja Diocese where the bishop was none other than his 'kinsman', Tom McGettrick. Whether kinsmen or not, they were certainly kindred spirits, so that this should have been the prelude to a happy time in Tom's life but all was to be shattered by the approaching Civil War of June 1967, less than a year after Tom's arrival. Even in his short time there, he found a new subject to master. This time it was the CCD (Confraternity of Christian Doctrine) Programme, then the basic tool of the missions. CCD was unlikely to be ever the same again after Tom had brought his (very) critical faculties to bear on it. In the event, it was not to be – fortunately perhaps! He had to make a hurried exit home during the war.

During his later years, he worked again in Nigeria, in Sunday's Well, Cork, and in the diocese of Elphin for a spell.

But Tom's last years were clouded by a long painful illness marked by unease, anxiety and even alienation. Ever since our time together in Nigeria, our paths had not often crossed. He was to spend many of those late years in the care of the nursing home in Howth, coming occasionally to visit the confreres, especially in Raheny. I prefer to remember the Tom I knew of old.

In today's office, I noted a verse of Psalm 65 which seems very applicable to Tom;

You, O Lord, have tested us
 You have tried us as silver is tried
 You laid a heavy burden on our backs
 But then you brought us relief

Tom's illness was his cross but it is ended now and the Lord has brought him relief.

May he rest in peace.

Frank Mullan CM

TOM DEVINE CM

Born: Roscommon, May 3 1923
 Entered the CM: September 3 1941
 Final Vows: September 8 1943
 Ordained Priest: May 29 1949 in Holy Cross College, Clonliffe
 by Dr. John Charles McQuaid,
 Archbishop of Dublin

APPOINTMENTS:

1949 – 1955 St Patrick's Armagh
 1955 – 1960 St Paul's, Raheny
 1960 – 1966 Strawberry Hill, London
 1966 – 1968 Abakalaki, Nigeria
 1968 – 1969 St Joseph's Blackrock
 1969 – 1970 Fundraising USA
 1970 – 1972 Utonkon Makurdi, Nigeria
 1972 – 1979 Ogobia, Nigeria
 1979 – 1980 Sabbatical Year
 1980 – 1983 Lagos, Nigeria
 1983 – 1984 Sundays Well, Cork
 1984 – 1988 Diocese of Elphin
 1988 – 1991 Australia (Provincial House)
 1991 – 1992 Diocese of Achonry
 1992 – 1995 Phibsborough (Provincial House)
 1995 – 1999 Phibsborough (St Peter's)
 1999 – 2002 Provincial Office (St Paul's)

Died: February 12 2002
 Buried: Glasnevin, Dublin

Father Dermot O'Dowd CM

It is difficult to write an obituary for anyone. How does one capture in type the essence of a person? How can it be possible to encapsulate those traits and characteristics, which make us to be who we are and what we have been? The following few words are written by one who was a student of Fr Dermot's and later still a fellow confrere and for four years his Superior – God help me! I am proud to think that I even may have been his friend.

In 1960, I was in my last year in school at St Paul's College, Raheny, Dublin. A new Dean of Discipline arrived that year – a young, tall, black-haired Vincentian priest called Fr O'Dowd. All schoolboys are naturally conservative and wary of new regimes and so it was in our attitude towards this new Dean. We heard on the "grapevine" that he had come from some fancy-sounding college in the south of England : Strawberry Hill. He walked slowly and purposefully, dressed in soutane, cape, and cincture. I am sure he must have found it difficult to exchange the groves of academia – a third level college – for a new – founded only ten years previously – brash secondary school in Dublin. We did not give him an easy time – some of our schoolboy pranks must have been painful for a sensitive soul.

Slowly and surely, as the months went by, our dull intellects began to register that we had a gentleman in our midst. In one of his "University Sketches," John Henry Newman says: "... we can therefore say that a gentleman is one who never knowingly inflicts pain." If that is true, and I believe it is, then Fr Dermot O'Dowd was a gentleman. At the end of that year, he enhanced his reputation and popularity amongst the prefects by taking them on a trip from Dublin to Shannon airport by plane no less. This was no cheapskate Vincentian!

However, he was not just a gentleman – he was a Christian gentleman and in addition to that, he was a Catholic priest, in the following of Jesus Christ and on the model of St Vincent de Paul.

I think what changed my estimation of Fr Dermot happened one day in the Lent of 1961 when I was present at the morning Mass before schoolwork began. In those far off days, it was customary for many boys to try to go to Mass each day in Lent. On this particular morning, sloth had the better of me and I lay abed. My mother – "God be good to her" – just whispered very quietly into my half-asleep, guilty ear: "The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak." I jumped out of bed, dressed quickly, and pedaled furiously to school. Fr Dermot was celebrating Mass and somehow his reverence, his calmness, his serenity in dealing with these sacred mysteries, penetrated my brain, my soul, my heart and

I said to myself in some confused way: “I want to do that – I want to be like him.”

I estimate that Dermot O’Dowd celebrated Mass over 20,000 times in the 54 years of his priesthood. He offered Mass in Strawberry Hill, Hereford, Coventry, Sheffield, Blackrock and while he was giving parish missions in many many places in Britain and Ireland. Perhaps I knew him best when he was celebrating Mass in the beautiful chapel in Provincial House Mill Hill where he was Director of the Daughters of Charity for Great Britain and Ethiopia from 1986 to 1995. In that chapel he celebrated daily Mass, jubilees, vow masses, gatherings of all kinds and, of course, funerals. I may be wrong, but I felt that Fr Dermot particularly enjoyed celebrating funeral Masses. Not that he was happy that a Sister had died, but perhaps because he knew in faith that in death all were equal and all received the greatest honor that anyone of us can have – the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. Dermot was tireless in giving praise and thanks to God for Jesus and the people for whom He died.

Dermot O’Dowd was a quiet man – did any of us ever hear him raise his voice? He was a private person – a keeper of secrets.

He served God’s people in Ireland for 7 years and for 47 years in England and Wales. As we all know, the last 15 years of Dermot’s life were inextricably linked with the Daughters of Charity. He told me in 1986 – and I have never written this before – that he did not know why he had been appointed Director of the DCs. He may not have known, but many of us did. We knew why Fr Richard McCullen had asked him – because in Dermot, the DCs were getting a Vincentian priest who would listen and learn, who would not put his sickle into another person’s harvest, who would be a keeper of secrets; one of whom we could say at the end of his life: “He was a gentleman who loved the people he was asked to serve and all they stand for.”

The last six and a half years of Dermot’s life was spent in retirement as chaplain to the home for the elderly Daughters of Charity in Southport. He had regular Masses to celebrate in the local parishes. He was very happy when I called to see him and gave him all the news and gossip of the community. I have such happy memories of Dermot throwing back his head and guffawing as we reminisced about yesteryear in St Paul’s, Raheny or St Vincent’s, Sheffield and all those other places where he served.

The last time I saw Dermot was shortly after Christmas 2001 when he was in the care of his beloved Daughters of Charity in Richard House, Blackrock. He was obviously unwell and I am afraid I played the silly game “we are looking forward to seeing you back in Southport -- the sisters miss you.” His eyes lit up but behind that light I think I saw

the recognition that his old pupil was not being entirely frank. I think he knew that he had come home to his native city and that he would not leave it

Dermot O'Dowd son, brother, confrere, priest, teacher, mentor, headmaster, pastor, friend. I thank God for the life and ministry of Dermot O'Dowd, unworthy priest of the Congregation of the Mission. May he rest in peace.

Fergus Kelly CM

DERMOT O'DOWD CM

Born:	Phibsborough, June 26 1922
Entered the CM:	September 7 1940
Final vows:	September 8 1942
Ordained priest:	May 22 1948 in Pro-Cathedral, Dublin by Dr John Charles McQuaid, Archbishop of Dublin

APPOINTMENTS:

1948-'60	St Mary's College, Strawberry Hill
1960-'62	St Paul's College, Raheny
1962-'67	Coventry
1967-'68	St Joseph's, Blackrock
1968-'69	St Paul's, Raheny
1969-'74	St Vincent's, Sheffield
1974-'77	Provincial House, Dublin
1977-'83	Our Lady's, Hereford
1983-'86	St Vincent's, Sheffield
1986-'95	St Vincent's, Mill Hill
1995-'02	Southport

Died:	February 02 2002
Buried:	Glasnevin, Dublin

Fr Patrick O'Donoghue CM

A schoolboy arriving in Castleknock in the autumn of 1952 could not be expected to realise that it was also a significant, not to say momentous, time for one of the priests on the staff. Paddy O'Donoghue, ordained the previous May, was beginning his first appointment as a Vin. A career began that September which would leave its mark - a uniformly good mark - on hundreds of boys whose hopeful parents had decided to send their sons to Castleknock. Paddy would (if pressed) admit that by the position of dean, which he took up the following year, he was vested with the role of father to all his young charges in the strictly enclosed setting of a nineteen-fifties boarding school. In that role he was much appreciated by many men who saw that being the significant authority figure to their own teenaged boys was not completely within their powers. Paddy knew, to use his own words, that authority was not something you could turn on like a tap, but was based on respect that had to be earned. He earned it.

In my day, the dean hardly ever taught class, unless a regular teacher was absent for a few days. Paddy tried teaching us Irish once, and felt the devilment of schoolboys with a teacher out of his subject. But he deflected the probes and neither deflated the youngsters nor did his own standing any harm. Outside class though, when he would sometimes talk about the things he knew very well, such as the turbulent Irish political scene of the twenties and thirties, his value as a teacher flashed through. It could strike you that you were missing something through having him only as a dean, though of course the school was well supplied with talented history teachers. Paddy came into his own as a teacher in his second career, from 1972 to 1999, when he was a lecturer at St Patrick's College, Drumcondra.

In his early time in 'Knock, however, his leadership skills were given their fullest scope on the rugby pitch, at a later stage than ours. It is the measure of the man that he could forge a cup-winning team out of the small pool of some 120 senior boys. As a trainer he won passionate loyalty from his players. A good many, not only of them but also of the athletically more challenged, went on in business and the professions to prove themselves leaders and managers in his mould.

When he became President of Castleknock, in 1963, Paddy was confronted with the enormous financial challenge of developing a not very large school run by a not very wealthy congregation. For someone so highly respected within the college to take the road as a fund-raiser was a major change. It opened eyes we thought were already wide open to a new side of life. As he put it, "The ones who have won't

give it, and that's why they have it. And the ones who haven't want to give, and that's why they haven't it." But he never forgot the generous givers, however impecunious, and they were prominent among the vast numbers of people whose passing he marked by attending their funerals, or at least writing a letter to say just the right words.

Paddy was of course a perfectionist. As such he was at risk from the perfectionist's anger when it turns against himself. In the middle years of his priesthood, he had to engage in his greatest authority-struggle, that of self-mastery. Success in this was not immediate, as perhaps it had been earlier in his life. But it came, and he found himself cast in a new kind of leadership role among men and women who needed to win that same fight themselves. It would never occur to anyone to compare Paddy O'Donoghue with Matt Talbot, but he became just the kind of person a Matt Talbot needed to meet.

Paddy's faith was the bedrock of his life. He shared his Gaelic forebears' reverence for the priesthood. At an early stage in my class's dealings with him he banned us from imitating the priests in stage skits. "The office is too sacred" - yes, he said that. Surely Paddy must in time have relaxed his hard line on juvenile theatricals. What remained was a commitment to the daily offering of Mass in what was for him a very warm and devotional way. His Mass expressed his deepest personal conviction as much as anything he said or did. Paddy's last act before he died was to hear the Sunday Mass at Rickard House.

Did he die happy? Not in the bright glow of success - so much of what he strove to build up had begun to crumble. But he certainly attained the level of faith, and hope, and charity that enabled him to hand over the unappetising present and the unforeseeable future to the Lord, in whom his trust was absolute. In that respect, he never ceased to be a father to all those who knew him, a source of good-humoured peace. I líontaibh Dé go gcastar sinn go léir.

Myles Rearden CM

PATRICK O'DONOGHUE CM

Born: Limerick, August 31 1926
Entered the CM: September 7 1944
Final vows: September 8 1946
Ordained: May 25 1952 in Holy Cross College, Clonliffe,
by Dr John Charles McQuaid,
Archbishop of Dublin.

APPOINTMENTS:

1952-'72 St. Vincent's College, Castleknock
1972-'99 St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra
1999-2002 St. Vincent's College, Castleknock

Died: August 18 2002
Buried: St. Vincent's, Castleknock

Father Gerald Doyle, CM

On June 6th my brother Gerald's Funeral Mass took place in St Peter's Church, Phibsborough. It was close to where he was born, had grown up, had been an altar server under the perfectionist Fr Crowley CM and made the decision to become a Vincentian. I was the celebrant of the Funeral Mass for Gerald who was ten years younger than I. It seemed strange. There was a very large congregation of relatives, confreres, neighbours, friends and many from those communities, especially the deaf and parishioners, among whom he had carried out forty years of priestly apostolate. In the sanctuary and in front of the altar during the singing was the Deaf Choir, beautifully attired in blue albs and cream stoles, gracefully gesturing the words of the hymns. In the congregation, leaders at various points signed the words of the liturgy for the very large number of deaf people present. There was also a coach of parishioners over from Dunstable where Gerald was Parish Priest. Their presence and that of so many deaf people was a real witness of their affection for a well loved pastor. Fr Kieran Magovern preached the homily and it perfectly captured the spirituality and humanity of Gerald. And, this being a celebration and thanksgiving for him and his work for the Lord, immediately after the Mass many people approached my sister, brothers and myself recalling his positive presence in their lives. A sad occasion but also warm and uplifting - but still hard for us to bear.

After ordination, Gerald was sent to Rome to do a theological degree. The Provincial, Fr O'Leary, told me that he made that appointment so that, since I had a University degree, Gerald would not feel at a disadvantage. The intention was good but, having completed the examination section in Rome, he was assigned to the parish of Dunstable with the intention that he could also complete the thesis at a seminary some distance away. Gerald became immersed in the parish and, since Fr Maurice O'Neill did not press the matter, the thesis was conveniently forgotten! Gerald was now at the work he always wanted and Maurice was a marvellous example of the role of a parish priest. He was strict but Gerald learned from a master how a good parish functioned. They were happy and satisfying years and later, when Maurice was transferred to Goodmayes Parish, soon afterwards Gerald joined him. They made an excellent team.

In September 1971, Gerald returned to Ireland and was appointed assistant to Fr John Cleary and, when John was transferred, Gerald took over as Director of the National Chaplaincy for Deaf People. Gerald had been fortunate in having Maurice in Dunstable and he was to be equally fortunate in having our cousin, Sr Andrea OP in Dublin. She was the

headmistress of the School for the Deaf in Cabra and they too made an excellent team.

Gerald was accepted by the Deaf because of his constant effort to communicate with them. He learned the sign language very quickly and his interest encouraged them to teach him new signs every time they met. He spent hours 'chatting' with them and came to understand their culture. One of his main achievements was securing the present premises of the St Vincent Centre for the Deaf in Drumcondra but while he supported the Deaf in building up the Club, Andrea believes the Deaf will remember him as the priest who visited them and entered into their joys and sorrows. Just as in parishes, visiting was high on Gerald's agenda. The elderly Deaf in Brewery Road looked forward to his fortnightly visits and he made a point of being with them on their outings, participated in their parties and never missed a visit to them on Christmas Day.

Gerald organised afternoon Retreats for the Deaf in the country. He travelled down a day or two beforehand, visiting on the way. He often collected those needing transport or those needing encouragement to attend (!) and sometimes took one or two deaf people from Dublin so that the 'isolated' deaf could catch up on the goings on in the Deaf Community. In fact, he sought out these isolated people. The sick also, whether at home or in hospital, were sure of regular visits from him. When he prayed for the sick at Mass he often said: "So & So is in hospital and you know they would love a visit. " Those in trouble could also be sure of his support whether as 'go between' or as interpreter.

St Mary's organised a Retreat/Reunion for past pupils every three years. Some mothers brought their young children. While the adults were at lectures or discussions he would be found surrounded by the children totally absorbed in his stories. He also got to know the children in the school through his visits to the classrooms and working very closely with the teachers in the preparation of class Masses. Christmas and Easter Masses, which the whole school attended, were memorable occasions for the children and staff alike. He would encourage as many as possible to participate, admiring the achievement of the older pupils and accepting and enjoying the inevitable mistakes of the very small. These were happy occasions and he was invited to participate in the extra curricular activities, sports, outings, and concerts.

Sr Andrea said Gerald was kind and thoughtful and had a wonderful ability to share whatever he had, be it his records or tapes, his thoughts, ideas and his time (I know that he taught them to play Chess and Bridge!).

Gerald left the Deaf Work in 1988 but he never left the Deaf Community nor did they ever forget him as was witnessed at the time

of his death. Gerald used to go on holidays with Seamus O'Neill and myself but he stopped coming with us when he resumed parish work in Lanark and Dunstable. Instead he spent his holiday time visiting his deaf friends throughout Ireland. His and our golf suffered!

Gerald was appointed Parish Priest in Lanark and the many Mass cards the family received from parishioners there when he died showed that he was not forgotten. His early experience under Maurice served him well. His pastoral approach, his availability and dedication were appreciated and he introduced many personal approaches and ideas. There was renovation of the church, the club for the 'over-60s', which still thrives with over eighty members, and home-visitation. But I think it was his appointment back as Parish Priest in Dunstable in 1996 and the welcome he received from the people that gave him the most pleasure. They had known him as a young curate there under Maurice and Kevin O'Kane. During those years he ran a very successful youth club and, in particular, the girls volleyball was a success, not only in Bedfordshire but also through the South East of England, winning many trophies. Although many of those young people had moved away, quite a number of their parents and those who remained behind were very warm with their welcome for him. His roots were deep with them.

As Parish Priest, Gerald gave of himself wholeheartedly. Perhaps it was only after his death that people began to realise how much he did and that he was always there, available to people. With the poor he was generous but things had to be done in an orderly manner, arranging definite times when they could call. He had endless patience in dealing with problem people and gave generously, some would say too generously, of his time to them.

He readily answered the phone and should there be a call to the hospital or to a home, he was immediately into his car. At the door he was always most welcoming and listened to all callers. Indeed, at his funeral, his housekeeper admitted to me that she had been quite concerned about his health. He'd had a bad bout of flu and stayed in bed for a few days but he still continued to meet callers to the presbytery. When he came over to my Golden Jubilee he admitted that he tired easily. This was the only indication we had that he might be unwell.

During his final years he undertook the renovation of the house and church - painting, a new public address system, new electrical wiring and carpeting. Thankfully he had just completed that work before he died. He also prided himself as a financier and set the parish on a firm foundation and had the joy of having paid off all debts, including the house and church refurbishment. He had extremely good business acumen and, through the use of committees, managed to run both social clubs in Dunstable and Houghton Regis efficiently yet with a minimum

of fuss. At times he had to take harsh decisions but they were always tempered with an understanding and kindness towards those he had to deal with.

In his early years as a curate Gerald was actively involved in the Sunday school programme teaching religion to all age groups. On returning as Parish Priest he allowed the catechists to continue their work and he took responsibility for the RCIA and worked closely with Gerard Ferguson, a former colleague from Vincentian student days. Together they welcomed three or four members into the Church each year.

As with the Deaf, Gerald was extremely good in relating with children in the parish and they took readily to him. There was a regular stream of little ones calling to the door to see “Fr Gerald” or “Fr Gerry” (incidentally, our mother hated “Ger”). He had a great facility to chat and play with them at their own level. Hence, the demise of St Mary’s Primary School, through no fault of his, was the cause of much anxiety and he did all he could to address the issues but with little success.

As may be gauged from the above Gerald was not one to delegate and probably took too much responsibility upon himself. And what I have written about him could probably be written about chaplains and parish priests in general but I would have to say that the stream of letters of adulation the family and I have received from grateful deaf people, parishioners and priests, who sought his spiritual direction, makes me think Gerald was a little special. When I visited him in hospital he told me that he expected to live but was ready for what God willed. He was a man of prayer and had a lasting devotion to our Blessed Lady. It was St Vincent who said “If we persevere in our vocation, it is thanks to prayer. If we have success in our tasks, it is thanks to prayer... If we remain in charity and save our souls, all this is thanks to God and to prayer.” Gerald was a true son of St Vincent. May he rest in peace.

John Doyle C.M.

GERALD DOYLE CM

Born: Phibsborough, Dublin, August 1 1935
Entered the CM: September 7 1954
Final Vows: September 8 1959
Ordained priest: May 27 1961 in Holy Cross College, Clonliffe,
by Dr. John Charles McQuaid,
Archbishop of Dublin

APPOINTMENTS:

1961-'63 Rome
1963-'70 St Mary's, Dunstable
1970-'71 St Cedd's, Goodmayes
1971-'88 St Peter's, Phibsboro – Chaplain to Deaf
1988-'94 St Mary's, Lanark
1994-2002 St Mary's, Dunstable

Died: June 3 2002
Buried: Glasnevin, Dublin