

COLLOQUE

Journal of the Irish Province of the
Congregation of the Mission

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Editorial

This is the first edition of *Colloque* to be published since 2014. A number of events prevented the Editor working on the journal during that time but he is happy to take up the reins again.

In coming editions, he will be collaborating with James H Murphy but this current, catch-up edition is entirely his responsibility.

It will serve to bring the reader up-to-date with major events in the Province; most especially the work of the Assemblies of 2015 and 2018. Sadly, it will also remember a number, though not all, of the confreres who have gone to take their places 'among the Saints in the halls of heaven'. Obituaries are not given in chronological order and one, more recent, is published here; that of Fr Tom Davitt, the second editor of *Colloque*; also published is his article on Lord Inchiquin.

I am particularly grateful to Joe McCann for permission to republish his piece on the role of the Vincentians in education in these islands.

It is to be hoped that the next edition of *Colloque* will follow quite soon on this and will include, among other articles, the remaining obituaries.

Provincial Assembly of the Irish Province

20-23 October 2015

Opening

The Assembly began with an opening prayer and the singing of the *Veni Creator*.

There followed the signing of the Register of Attendance; 29 confreres were present.

Elections:

There then followed the elections for the Officers of the Assembly.

E Curran was elected Secretary and P Scallon and P Roche were elected moderators.

The agenda, timetable and methods of procedure for the Assembly were accepted unanimously.

The proposal to avail of the services of a facilitator (John Foster) was accepted.

Opening Address by the Visitor

You will find in your folder a yellow coloured page *To Confreres preparing inputs on Mission and Ministry for the Assembly*. Have a look at it for a few moments. I have referred to these points in letters to the Province. A large part of our work at this Assembly will be an effort to discern together where we wish to go as a Province, more truly I hope where the Lord wishes to lead us in living out our charism, *Evangelisare pauperibus misit me*.

I have asked the confreres who will make presentations to us in the coming days to do so with a number of realities in mind, also in the context of where the Church and our Charism call us.

At the outset it is important to clarify that confreres are not vying with each other for the support of the Assembly. Each of the aspects of mission and ministry are expressions of our charism – we have and still are engaged in them to some extent. We may end up choosing some overlap expression of some of them. However it pans out not all of us will be asked or able to engage in our choice but it will be one clear direction in which we intend to go and which we will as a Province endeavour to promote.

When all is said and done, any confrere is free of course to make a completely different proposal to the Assembly. We wish, however, to think with the Church and remain true to our charism. We must also be

realistic: even though in the end we leave all to the workings of Divine Providence as St Vincent de Paul would have us do.

As we begin our Assembly I wish to reflect on three points – one on the Church, one on the Province and one on the world we live in:

1) *The Church:*

All the Popes since Vatican II have called all the baptised to live out their baptismal consecration – to a new evangelisation which is a kind of two-part symphony. Firstly, to proclaim the basic faith of the New Testament, Jesus as the Saviour of the world. Then to copper-fasten this evangelisation with a solid catechesis. John Paul II said: “It would be an error to catechise without having evangelised previously, just as it would be equally wrong to evangelise without later attending sufficiently to instruction in the faith received.” Our experience as a Church is largely neither to evangelise nor to catechise but to maintain. We struggle to move from maintenance to mission. What is happening in your ministry today? Where is the balance tilting – toward mission/evangelisation or maintenance? What is missing?

Are we leading others to faith through the way we are parish, or do mission, or act as chaplains? Does anyone encounter Jesus Christ in me in a way that inspires, attracts, engages, or challenges? If not, why not? If not, all the tinkering in the world with progressive plans, strategies and courses is at best maintenance, at worst self-deceptive. “Today’s world needs people who proclaim and testify that it is Christ who teaches the art of living, the way of true happiness, because he himself is the path of life. People who first of all keep their own gaze fixed on Jesus, the Son of God, the word of proclamation must always be immersed in an intense relationship with Him, in an intense life of prayer. Today’s world needs people who speak to God, so as to be able to speak of God. And we must always remember that Jesus did not redeem the world with beautiful words or ostentatious means but with his suffering and his death.” (Benedict XVI to church leaders involved in the New Evangelist, October 2011)

2) *Our Province:*

“Who and how we are as witnesses to Faith are as important if not more important than what we say” (Pope Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*) “Modern man hears a witness better than he hears teachers; or if he listens to teachers he does so because they bear witness.” Community for mission in our Province is gradually giving way to community as mission. Since Providence believes that God

is in what is happening, God's grace to us at this time is that there is a lot of suffering among us. Fifteen of the nineteen confreres who are not here are unwell, some seriously. Most of us here now have health issues. The primary mission of the Province is now our care of our elderly and infirm members. It is the first reality that I have highlighted for those who will be making presentations to us over the next couple of days.

Were it not for the presence of retired and often infirm confreres what would our community life look like? I think that one of the distinctive features of our charism which has almost disappeared is community for mission – yes, many confreres are engaged in valuable and effective mission, but few of us are engaged in it together. Necessity in some cases, choice in others has brought it to pass that we plough our furrows by and large with others and often fruitfully, but not alongside another confrere. I believe therefore that the Lord has caught up with us, as He did with the disciples on the road to Emmaus, though like them we are slow to recognise Him and He has brought us now to a place and a time where we have our last chance to be community as mission particularly in how we care for each other as age, stage and illness become our constant companions.

The role of a Local Superior, formally to animate and lead the local community, is increasingly to oversee the care needs of confreres. And it cannot be left to Superiors. All of us need to take responsibility for each other and especially for this important work of community as mission. The day when a confrere had no other role than his apostolate is gone. It is no longer who we are. I ask Superiors to support me in challenging every confrere in the local community to set aside time for the care and nurture of the confreres in his community, especially the infirm, those who need assistance in getting to hospital and medical appointments, and to visiting our confreres who are in nursing care. If you don't have someone who is infirm in your house, find one in another house.

Let us consciously become community as part of our mission so that community for mission might creep back into our lives. As you listen to confreres making their presentations ask yourself how will this option honour who we are and where we are, how will it take account of the reality of our personnel, the needs of our confreres, how might it allow us to be community as mission, community for mission?

Staying with the reality of our personnel and the situation as it is in the Province; the Superior General requires the services of two confreres as Directors of the DCs, at present, if not for much longer perhaps. We have a long tradition of Spiritual Direction as

part of formation of priests in Maynooth. We still administer three parishes which require confreres with necessary skills to be PPs in circumstances that are ever more demanding. The care of our elderly and infirm members requires – in at least the three large communities – Local Superiors who are free to dedicate time to this ministry. These are just some of the ‘givens’ in the Province and our presentations should take account of these, too, in evaluating the skills base needed for any new development, which naturally raises the question – what are we to relinquish so that new development can take place? We have closed three community houses in recent years but we are barely keeping up with the pressures on confreres as fewer and older are asked to do more just to keep things going. Closure is, as some of you know only too well from recent experience, a painful and slow process which requires much care and planning, and even then is never quite right.

One of the responses to our personnel shortage is the possibility of greater lay collaboration. We do this in a small way in our ministry and in a bigger way in support and ancillary staffing in our houses. Necessary yes: an ideal in mission but costly too. Almost quarter of our annual expenditure goes in wages and salaries.

Reconfiguration is (or has been) taking place in many provinces in Western Europe and North America, provinces like ourselves experiencing a decline in personnel, and an ageing profile. How we might do it is open to debate. Perhaps our practice of receiving confreres from other provinces as we already do can be set on a firmer basis. But it cannot be an end in itself, a way of prolonging our existence. Our experience in this field is limited; it has involved confreres from other provinces coming to minister to their own nationalities. Big questions need to be asked about how confreres from other provinces can integrate into our local communities where cultural differences are compounded by a growing age gap. The Church in Ireland at least is still very divided on the issue of how to meet its shortage of priests. Reconfiguration cannot be for us merely a means to that end. Again we ask our presenters to propose how reconfiguration in one or other form can be life-giving for all concerned – for confreres coming, for confreres receiving and for the Church/community in which they will work.

3) *The World In Which We Live:*

The cry of the poor in our world is now deafening.

- At home, homelessness is an epidemic.
- So are the poverties which drug and alcohol abuse and violence cause.

- Internationally, war, ethnic and religious persecution etc render the poorest people as refugees.

Pope Francis asks us to become a poor Church for the poor. Our charism sets the poor as our lords and masters. The Vincentian Family, DCs and SVP are to some extent a reproach to us. In our Province the church has long since lost the urban poor. We are as alien to them as Mars, more so because they are now gaining some understanding of Mars! If you engage with poor people you will be continuously converted to Jesus Christ. If you can have the privilege of serving one poor person you have received a tremendous grace. If you have to choose, choose someone or some group who will not thank you. They themselves are thanks enough.

As our confreres present to us, ask where are the poor in this? And how close to them will this ministry bring us?

Some key points of the presentation were:

- We to be realistic about our situation: and not go building castles in the air.
- We are looking for a movement towards some clear direction for the Province as we may have lost our focus.
- The situation in which we find ourselves is providential and a time of grace from the Lord
 - For the Church
 - For our Province
 - For the world in which we live.

The central question is; have we moved from ‘Community for Mission’ towards ‘Community as Mission’?

We have one last chance to embrace something new. But, in order to do that, significant changes will need to be made. Though we have recently closed three houses, that scarcely releases anyone for mission and we need to bear in mind that closure is, by definition, painful and slow. While we move towards greater lay collaboration, we have to be aware that this is, and will be, costly: a quarter of our annual expenditure is in salaries and wages.

Reconfiguration is a key issue for us but that raises the question of how might we reconfigure? Reconfiguration cannot be an end in itself.

In the world in which we live, the cry of the poor is now deafening – for example, the homeless. We are called to become a poor church for the poor.

As we listen to the various presentations over the coming days, we need to ask: ‘where are the poor in this?’

Wednesday Morning Session

First Proposal; Direct Evangelisation of the Poor

This presentation was given by Stephen Monaghan CM

Constitutions: have a clear and expressed preference for the apostolate among the poor, pay attention to the realities of the present day society especially the unequal distribution of wealth. Share in some way in the condition of the poor, attend to their evangelisation and be ourselves evangelised. And if necessary be ready to go to any part of the world, according to the example of the first missionaries. (C12:2/3/5)

Pope Francis: “the first step in helping others to God us to become lovingly involved in their lives. The parish is an ideal if for us community in which everyone can do this by sharing with and encouraging others. Churches need to care spiritually and materially for the poor. Only on the basis of real and sincere closeness can we properly accompany the poor on their path of liberation. The worst discrimination that the poor suffer is the lack of spiritual care. None of us can think we are exempt from concern for the poor and for social justice. It is essential to draw near to new forms of poverty and vulnerability, in which we are called to recognise the suffering Christ.” We can’t just be people of compassion and mercy, at times we are also required to be in solidarity with people, to share in their situation. Or as Pope Francis puts it: “Sometimes we are tempted to be that kind of Christian who keeps the Lord’s wounds at arm’s length. Yet Jesus wants us to touch... the suffering flesh of others.”

Given our present situation re vocations etc we are probably in danger of becoming as Pope Francis fears a group concerned with and clinging to its own security rather than a province that is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been on the streets.

- Approach a Bishop in a Diocese of Ireland.
- Offer to work in Parish or location where there is social depreavation, marginalisation and poverty. (As have the Redemptorists in Ballyfermot and Cherry Orchard).
- Build on works already supported or led by confreres in the province, e.g. homeless projects in Dublin and London, rehabilitation for addictions, the VLM in Ethiopia.
- Collaborate with DePaul Ireland/SVP/DCs.
- Make an active response to the needs of homeless people who are located on our doorstep in Phibsborough. Pope Francis speaks of the parish as an ideal community in which everyone can become lovingly involved in the lives of the poor.

- Give permission to confreres of a certain age to offer their services and energy to the overseas mission with the blessing of the Province.

All this would require at least a six year plan, the need to avoid creating a dependency, require some financial backing, be accountable to the province and require the backing of other confreres with skills in adult/faith/leadership formation.

Negatives: A reduced capacity for appointing some confreres to leadership roles in houses. Maybe having to withdraw from ministries already aligned with our charism.

Reconfiguration: with a specific province to facilitate continuity and ownership of the mission in Ireland, preferably English speaking.

Responses from the groups

Group 1

We have tended to dissipate our resources.

It is important to make some commitment for the poor
the Parish is not an appropriate location for such a ministry; it has its own demands etc.

We should keep the tension between the Matthaen and Lucan poor.

Group 2

Our numbers are very limited; any movement would cause voids in other ministries.

Individual ministries have not been supported by Province.

We should try to identify areas of need in parishes.

Group 3

There seems to be no enthusiasm for new projects.

We should 'take a last crack' at Phibsboro and seek to do something there.

We are about evangelisation, not social services.

Group 4

There is much going on already; for example in our parishes... connections with Travellers.

We need to know the needs of peoples; e.g. of Sheffield overseas support etc.

We are going to have five points to consider; do we need to focus?

This implies a need for greater clarity about our mission.

Presentation on Finances

Overview; S Monaghan

Details; L Downes

The Visitor pointed out some truths of which we need to be mindful:

- Our properties are mostly old and will require constant upkeep.
- Medical care costs will increase.
- Our assets are disappearing.
- Income will continue to decrease and expenditure to increase.
- God is in what is happening; we steward our resources as best we can.
- Yet we still need to be mindful that this is the patrimony of the poor.
- This calls us into the share in the life and experiences of the poor.
- We can still make savings, even if ‘all the low-lying fruit’ has already been plucked.
- Are there expenses that are the result of the ‘institutionalisation’ of our minds?

Wednesday Afternoon session

Second Proposal; Parish Missions:

E Curran made a presentation

- It is central to our charism; we exist as ‘The Congregation of the Mission’.
- It is in keeping with the call of the Church, both locally and internationally.
- We have skill, expertise and experience.
- We have the wider ‘Vincentian Family’.
- It may take us beyond the ‘boundaries’ of our province – a pan-European team.
- We can respond in the areas of ‘Metanoia’, Kerygma, Diakonia, Leitourgia, Koinonia.
- It does not have to be a ‘full-time’ commitment.
- There is some funding available and more may be sourced.
- The greatest challenge is within ourselves.
- How do we understand Church, Evangelisation, priesthood, community and the role of the laity?
- There is a variety of understandings of ‘mission’ and ‘evangelisation’ amongst us.
- We do not have a great record of collaborating.
- It is a limited field and there is competition.
- Different people have widely varying expectations of ‘Mission’.

- What we offer may not be what people seek.
- The Church (in Ireland at least) is in post-traumatic stress.
- We will need to surrender some control; personally, within the group and within the Province.
- There will need to be a designated director, a large pool to be drawn on and a recognised source of funding.
- There will have to be planning for a team with no confreres; it cannot be put off to some 'future date'.
- There has to be retrenching; only works which allow flexibility and which support the Mission could remain. However, even with that, we need to consider how many confreres would, in fact, be able and willing to engage in the process.
- Participating confreres would have to be willing to engage in formation and retraining.
- There will be risks to be taken; we cannot advance on all fronts even within this ministry.

Responses from the groups

Group Four

The Mission is to empower parishes to embark on their own mission.
Our role is to train and empower.
We have the personnel to train such groups.

Group Three

This is a traditional and great ministry, though very demanding and a challenge to our resources.
There have been twenty missions in two years.
Parishes need mission... they are not always sure how to go about renewal.
Means, content and directions of parish missions are very diverse.

Group Two

The types of missions vary, e.g. in England. There are questions about where to go?
Can missions be ecumenical, not just sacramental.
People are coming; parish councils request and are involved and committed.
The diversity on the current team is very good, consisting of two Vincentians, a lay man and a lay woman.
People are deeply encountering Jesus and the Gospel of joy is being preached.
There is a variety of cultures and varying language groups in our parishes. A significant question is how do we contact youth?

Group One

Positive discussion on Mission; the most 'portable' of all our ministries, it needs little infrastructure.

There is a challenge of working with lay people.

Have we confined ourselves too much to the parish structure?

What might be our response to the 'clergy shortage' in Ireland.

Expectations from parishes may be somewhat unrealistic – a hope that the team will bring back the young, the alienated etc.

In the past, we 'left the 99 and went after the one', but now we are 'leaving the one, and going after the 99'.

SESSION FIVE

Proposal Three; Adult Faith Formation/catechesis/development;
presentation by J McCann

Recap on what faith formation was; pay, pray and obey! Society and social norms supported this.

Role of the Laity today: transform the world. Call to witness to Jesus Christ.

Hoffinger: sharing experiences, especially from other places.

Baptism does not, of necessity, guarantee encounter with Christ.

Faith must be Christ/Trinity centred.

Certain documents; *Catechesi Tradendae*. General Directory for Catechesis. Catechism of the Catholic Church. In Ireland 'Irish Catholic Catechism for Adults' and '*Share the Good News*' – *national plan for faith formation* (2010) which lays out specific things that we should be doing.

Handout... four kinds of learning (Gregory Bateson)... Mapping learning; movement to transformational learning.

Four signs of commitment; kerygma, koinonia, leitourgia, diakonia... word, welcome, worship, welfare.

Four themes of catechesis; faith, life, worship, prayer.

Six catechetical activities:

- Promote knowledge of faith.
- Liturgical education.
- Moral education.
- Learning to pray.
- Educating for Community.
- Missionary initiation (General Catechetical Directory, 1972).

Drawing on objectives from Share the Good News.

Example of Jesus' call to the Fishermen; come with me and I will make you fishers of men.

He did not say 'come to me and I will talk to you about the Trinity'.

Responses from the groups;

Group One

The example was given of the *Preparing for Ministries* programme, now called *Pathways*; started in All Hallows it is now under the care of Dublin Diocese.

There is a perceived unease in parishes about dealing with faith development of adults, other than in the homily.

Having lost contact with two generations, it's important for us to engage with the real life and faith of adults.

There is the importance of common witness; the powerful testimony of journeys in faith.

Group Two

The ALBA course in All Hallows is an excellent example of this ministry, in which some of our confreres have been involved.

The Scripture passage cited is an idealistic image of the early Church! Adult faith formation can and does link in to Parish Missions; where can we do it now?

We should be aware of the vitality of the RCIA programme.

The obligation is on all of us to evangelize.

What is happening to the teaching of the faith in schools?

We each have our own faith story to share.

Group Three

The experience was given of the *Pathways* programme in Drumalis; helping adults find their own voice and articulate their own faith.

This is a task presented to us; it may encompass all the other presentations.

This proposal is really an examination of conscience; are we doing it in all our ministries?

Might there be another phase of this meeting; buying in to what has been started here, e.g. of the Synod on the Family.

Group Four

Could we have a Vincentian Initiative in this area; even if it means locating it in another property?

The example was given of *Pathways* in Drumalis and its development

into Certificates in Theology, Spiritual Direction, Small Group Facilitation, Lectio Divina and a Diploma in Pastoral Theology. Sourcing funding has allowed them to keep costs low.

SESSION 6

Fourth Proposal; Continuing the Pastoral Ministry of the Province;
Presentation by K Magovern

The report on Parish and Pastoral Ministry in the Province today includes the various chaplaincies as well as the three parishes.

In the past in the Irish Province was defined by our institutions: seminaries, Teacher Training Colleges, Schools; places where large communities were involved and a steady stream of vocations were produced.

Seventy percent of the Congregation's priests worldwide are involved in Parishes. This makes it a serious apostolate. Yet parish work is frowned upon because there is a fear that parishes and dioceses assimilate confreres with the result that there is very little difference between a secular parish and a Vincentian parish. The Vincentian charism is blunted in these places.

I began my community life as an ordained priest in 1970 in Castleknock. Around the table in 'Knock there were 13 priests: one of them retired. The superior, Paddy O'Donoghue, was 43. The rest of the community were very young. Today when I sit at table with Jimmy Sheil, the average age is 70.5 years. When Padraig Regan and Harry Slowey are present the average age is 76.

It is assumed by the Curia in Rome that parishes serve the very poor and the commitment is temporary. The aim is to set up a structure which will minister to the poor and then move on. Yet the majority of the confreres in our parishes, Dunstable, Mill Hill and Phibsborough are in their eighth decade; yet they do have contact with and ministry to the poor.

The Dunstable Vision Statement and Mission plan is Kerygmatic with emphasis on the four key areas of, Word, Liturgy, Community and Service. We are to reach out not only to the regular parishioners but also to the alienated, un-churched and disadvantaged.

We do not minister alone in the Parish. Our partners are laity of both sexes who administer, catechise, and assist in the delivery of our mission. Their formation in the Vincentian way of living and charism is vital.

Vocations are non-existent. Some strategies might be discussed: inviting Deacons to come forward, ex-priests perhaps who only left to get married, importing priests from other countries, finding mature married men *virii probati*. With regard to importing priests, Brendan Hoban in the Western People remarks that "priests are not like footballers who can be transferred for a given fee from Real Madrid to Manchester United and

hardly notice the change, as what they do and how and where they do it is exactly the same. The size of the pitch and width of the goal-posts are the same in Madrid as in Manchester... Priesting is different”.

Despite advanced age, diminished strength, and age related infirmities, heart by-passes, diabetes, cancer scares, artificial limbs... we continue to minister...

Responses from the groups;

Group One

All discussion needs to be in the context of research and debate about the future orientation of the Church.

Parish life is not part of our charism; it may restrict us from taking on new projects.

Do we have an ‘exit strategy’ for each of our works?

Fewer parishes may allow us to take on new projects, especially for the poor.

We could be a more visible and more viable community.

Group Two

We acknowledge the need for on-going care in our parishes for areas of social deprivation.

We believe in the importance of ministry to the sick and hospital chaplaincy.

Concerning the role of chaplaincy: it often involves team-work and ecumenism.

Group Three

The model of ‘retired ministry’ in Knock may be appealing for some of our retired men.

Think of parish as a base for other ministries.

Who will replace us? It may be clergy from other countries and there may be some task for us in forming them.

Group Four

We should consider withdrawing from Parishes; it will free confreres up.

We have not been trained to be parish clergy but we could put the skills we have at the service of parish clergy; we could assist clergy in dealing with issues that arise for them.

Whose needs are being met by our continuing involvement in parishes?

Day Two

Proposal Five: International Mission:

Michael McCullagh

The personnel profile of the confreres of the Province: we have to be ministers of ‘la possibilité’, ministers of restlessness attempting “do one thing, do something.”

The skills base available to ministry/mission: We have personnel who can teach theology; conduct missions; engage in priestly and lay formation; develop educational programmes; serve those on the margins of life and engage in works of justice and development;

The lean on our resources: Yes! And Vincent suggested selling the chalices!

What we will have to let go of and move away from? Think of mission first. In climbing a mountain place your heart at the pinnacle and then it’s easier to drag the body along!

Contexts: The call of the Church to:

- A new evangelization: *Evangelii Gaudium*: “The joy of evangelizing always arises from grateful remembrance” (13) Our memories of our missionaries inspire us.
- A poor church for the poor: In *Evangelii Gaudium* Pope Francis says that “The church must go first to the poor... the poor are the privileged recipients of the gospel.” (EG) 48
- Immerse ourselves in the lives of the people: “I prefer a church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets.” (EG 49)

The call of the Congregation to:

- Reconfigure with other Provinces: our mission is global: Karl Rahner referred to a “world church”. Look to the example of Kenya, Ukraine and the London mission.
- Collaborate with the Vincentian family: the Vincentian family is now a force for change in the world. It does not matter who is in charge. Look at the SVP, De Paul, AIC, AMM.
- Remain true to our charism: think of the statue of St Vincent on fire!

A resolution or proposal: for Vincent it had to be “single, precise, definite and possible!”

1. Establish a forum for Vincentian formation for mission.
2. Invite the Curia to help us. (We received that promise at the visitation).

3. Collaborate with the wider Vincentian family on the project.
4. Set up a programme to form formators.
5. Work to promote and develop the MISEVI, Vincentian Lay Missionary programme.
6. Produce a book on Vincentian spirituality.
7. Encourage our lay groups to have a Vincentian formation programme in place.
8. Involve young people to create a new future.
9. Run a one day seminar for all our workers on the Vincentian mission and charism.

Responses from the Groups

Group One

The call before us is to sow seeds for the spread of the gospel.

Whatever good we do is done not for ourselves but for the good of the church and the poor.

We note the example of Vincentian Lay Missionaries and the school for the deaf in Ambo.

We can make a dynamic contribution without being in charge of every initiative.

Phibsboro offers the possibility of transformation; what imaginative ideas could be put into practice?

In this context the example was cited of the ministry of the Palace Court confreres.

There is a possible training in inculturation for ministers coming to Ireland that we might offer.

Group Two

It is important to be, and remain, open to new ideas.

The group shares the aspiration 'of doing something'. The implication of doing something within the reality within which we live means to give up something else.

The Irish Province suffers from an 'insular' approach in many ways; we need to broaden our vision, to do something is to empower others.

Examples were given of St Vincent's attempts at works that failed; e.g. the Confraternity of Sword Fighters.

There is a tension between what is possible and working with the 'givens', our current commitments.

The reality of age and energy differences impact our freedom to choose.

Group Three

We believe in rustling up a bit of devotion.

We support the commitment to the international mission.

VLM is a life-changing experience; often, a change that happens over a long period of time.

It is not so much a question of ‘reconfiguration’ as one of collaboration, especially in Europe and with Europe.

Is there work/ministry available to us in the various holding centres for refugees and asylum seekers?

This is a time of inverse mission; we are becoming the mission territory.

There are a lot of very different viewpoints about the International Missions; did it lead to fracture in some way?

We suggest the idea of an international novitiate in Ireland.

Scope for international work/collaboration in the future.

Group Four

The VLM; this is something fresh and new for many of us (do we always know about what is going on in other parts/ministries of the province?)

There was an informational discussion about VLM which did show the possibilities of engaging with such initiatives.

John Foster reflected on what he had seen and heard: seven gifts, five proposals, one charism.

Wisdom

Understanding

Reverence

Knowledge

Courage

Wonder and Awe in God’s Presence

Right Judgement

There is also a two-sided call;

- A call to experience the Love of Christ (spreading the joy of the good news)
- A call to share this love with others (serving the Poor in every sense)

We have faith; in our charism

St Vincent suggested that we should make it a practice to judge persons and things in the most favorable light at all times and under all circumstances. We cannot direct the wind but we can adjust the sails.

The vision for the future of the Vincentian in Ireland raises some questions for us;

- which proposals are the most viable?
- where is the vitality of the spirit?
- How vigorously can the confreres apply themselves and their resources?
- What does the vision of the future look and feel like?

We remind ourselves that, after the experience at Emmaus the disciples returned to Jerusalem.

John Foster raised the topic of Stewardship; which is also about setting us free. Do the five proposals set us free to spread the joy of the Good News with the Poor (both Lucan and Matthean).

THIRD SESSION

Advices to the Provincial, from Mill Hill Community

1. The Province, being unable alone to continue its missionary work, should, within two years of this Provincial Assembly, bring about a reconfiguration of this Province in relation to other Provinces of the Congregation.
2. The Provincial and his Council should enter immediately into dialogue with neighbouring Provinces and the Nigerian Province as part of this reconfiguration programme.

In response to the last two points, it was pointed out that these are advices, supported from the floor, which the Provincial has heard. However, were it to move to reconfiguration, this would have to come back to the Provincial Assembly.

SESSION 10

The focus is now on the five proposals and two questions arise. Firstly, if confreres were joining us, what would you want them to be doing? Secondly, are there proposals you 'lean away' from?

Are these proposals going to bring us any closer to the Mission; will they make our hearts burn within us?

John offered some further thoughts: 'Who will excuse us before God for the loss of such a great number of people, who could be saved by the slight assistance we could give them?' (St Vincent de Paul) and 'Courage, do one brave thing today... then run like hell!'

Thanks were offered to John for his work with us. It was noted that we are yoked together like a team of oxen – may have moved ploddingly but may now be moving a little more nimbly.

*Preparation for the General Assembly;
responses to the Preparatory Commission*

Friday, 23rd October

Postulata for the General Assembly;

There were no postulata for the General Assembly.

Provincial Norms:

E Devlin gave a brief reflection on safeguarding, noting that this should happen at all gatherings of the province and at all community meetings.

The National Board for Safeguarding in Ireland is on the point of publishing agreed guidelines. This means we will have a common set of guidelines for the whole country. This will replace our current handbook. In England, CM follows diocesan guidelines. P Scallon will organise a training day on the new guidelines.

The Provincial Council has responded to and implemented all the recommendations of the audit which was published last year. We have brought ourselves fully in to line with the National Board on all matters. The HSE (Tusla) Report has not been published and there is no indication that there is any publication intended. The Goddard Enquiry (England) has been in contact and will continue. We will respond to it as required and requested.

We have to deal with allegations as they may arise. Training, individual and communal, has been on-going. We must recognise that other cases may arise in the future. There are also individuals to whom we are providing pastoral support and/or psychological counselling.

In light of this, the Provincial is proposing certain norms to the province:

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults

- Local Superiors, together with the Local Community, are responsible to ensure that the community residence is a safe place of ministry (this was passed unanimously).
- The Local Superior will submit, at the end of the calendar year, an audit of safeguarding practice in the local community (this was passed unanimously).
- Each confrere is responsible to ensure that his Garda/Police clearance is renewed at the time of a new appointment or change of house. The confrere will inform his Superior and the Provincial when clearance has been received. (28 in favour, 1 abstention).

Some clarifications were sought and given on the issue of clearance.

Letters of Appointment should include a reference to ensuring that clearance is applied for and that the Provincial Office is notified once it is received. The celebret is not awarded until clearance is received. In Ireland, clearance for each is sent to the Provincial Office; in England, it is sent to the individual confrere.

Election of Delegates

As the Provincial has requested to be excused from attending the General Assembly and this request has been accepted by the Superior General, the Provincial Council has been asked by the Superior General to nominate a member to travel in his stead. Fr Paschal Scallon was nominated and, therefore, cannot be considered as a Provincial Delegate.

P Roche was elected as delegate with S Monaghan as substitute.

The Provincial declared the Provincial Assembly closed at the concluding Mass.

Contribution of the Vincentians to Catholic education in Ireland and England

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This article is an account of the actions and achievements, i.e. the 'contribution', of the Ireland Province of the Vincentian Congregation, known officially as 'the Congregation of the Mission', in respect of Catholic education in Ireland and England.

The approach is, first, to outline the motives and intentions of the Vincentian fathers, i.e. their practical understanding of their 'mission', especially in education. Given the title of the Congregation, the word 'mission' obviously plays a big part in their thinking. We will proceed by focussing on the three principal and longstanding kinds of Vincentian educational involvement: secondary education, priestly formation and teacher training. Finally, the article will further examine the mission intentions of the Vincentians and the consequences of their actions in order to discern what, in the end – and as lack of new vocations is obliging them to hand on their educational institutions to other agencies – may be their lasting contribution to Catholic education.

PART ONE: CHURCH AND MISSION

The word 'mission' as used in the Church includes these meanings and connections.

First, there is bedrock of the 'Great Command' of Jesus to his disciples at the end of Matthew's Gospel:

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am – with you always, to the end of the age. (Matthew 28:18-20)

The early Christian community, in response to Jesus' command, sent out its teachers and preachers to gather communities of the People of God. Theologically impelling that mission was the prior mission of the Son of God by the Father into the world, and the sending of the Holy Spirit by the Father (and the Son) to reconcile the world to God. So, the early Christian missionaries considered their sending forth as a participation in the activity of the Trinity, and believed that Jesus and the Holy Spirit would be with them to the end of time drawing the whole world to the Father.

The Christian Church in time came to possess institutions, hospitals and schools, and other agencies to serve the people of God. They also looked abroad to non-Christian lands to spread the good news and institute the kingdom of God.

Accordingly, by the sixteenth century, the word 'mission' is used of the Church's dispatching of personnel to particular tasks and especially, to foreign locations – a usage first employed by Saint Ignatius Loyola. The word 'mission' also referred to the particular works, such as education or health provision, etc. (Bosch 1991, 227-228)

Vincentian mission: the inspiration of Saint Vincent de Paul

The Vincentian mission is the inspiration of Saint Vincent de Paul. As a young priest-chaplain on a French nobleman's estate in the early seventeenth century, he first discerned a pastoral need for a dedicated group of priests to renew the faith of peasants in the French countryside. He planned and worked to accomplish this, in France and beyond, by means of extended campaigns of preaching, instruction, worship and parish renewal to support the work of the local clergy.

The seeds of future difficulty could already be discerned in that simple statement of purpose, namely, the number of distinct activities that could be aligned to the project and give rise to debate over the appropriate balance and relationships between them. Administering parishes, founding schools to form priests and clerics (seminaries), setting up establishments for sustained evangelisation and devising systems for encouraging, supplementing and revitalising the ministry of dioceses and parishes could, and would, all play a role in that project. Two of these apostolates, in particular, seminaries (schools to form clergy) and evangelisation (parish mission campaigns) would later pose a dilemma for the Irish Vincentians.

Vincent and his first associates at St Lazare in Paris developed a successful methodology for preaching and an ability to organize extended campaigns for rural dioceses – 'missions' – and, in 1625, with the support of noble sponsors, Vincent formally established the Congregation of the Mission (CM). Thus he used the word 'mission'

more or less with the same meaning as other church men of his time, but with a special emphasis, in the first place, the ready deployment or the capability for 'sending' his priests to places that needed their services, but also having in mind the more theological concept of 'mission' mentioned earlier. This latter arose from personal experiences as he struggled spiritually with his direction in life (Román 1999, 100-101). From these influences came his spiritual approach and pastoral theology.

'Missio Dei'

Vincent saw Jesus Christ as present in the poor and needy, heard God asking him to help them personally, and recognised that call through the Spirit in the Church and its bishops. He found that the will of God was at work in his own life.

Vincent was personally convinced of that experience and its meaning for him. As a young and inexperienced pastor in Clichy and as chaplain to the galley slaves, he had seen the face of Christ in the poor. Christ, however, is also present in his Church, in the world-wide communion and in its leadership. This involved the role of the bishops. The Bishop possesses the grace of ministry to supervise, teach and inspire Christians to follow Jesus. Accordingly, bishops represent the will of God, especially concerning the pastoral care of the souls in their care. This too for Vincent was no rhetorical metaphor or theological concept, but a personal reality. He had to deal with bishops that could be every bit as worldly and as venal and as unworthy as any in Christian history, but the Church, for Vincent de Paul, was not a gathering of the perfect and ideal.

All Christ's disciples, apostles and missionaries throughout the ages are called by the Spirit to join with the People of God – the Church, the communion of the faithful in union with their pastors – in reconciling everything to God. Ultimately, 'the mission' is the mission of God, not the mission of the Church or of the Congregation.

The communal life and church commitment of the missionary was, therefore, neither an operational convenience nor a political necessity. Vincent's attention to the bishops, his insistence to his priests that they comply with their wishes and requirements, was not being devious, manipulative or tactical. It was an imperative if the mission was to be God's work (Toscani 2012, 49).

However, Vincent was also a supreme pragmatist, a man for the long haul. For example, he saw that charitable works done by individuals at inspirational times in local situations were good. Sustained efforts were better. Work done at the behest of the Spirit, in the name of Jesus, was best.

PART TWO: VINCENTIAN EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

As many as 10% of those who joined the Congregation in Vincent's own lifetime were Irish. Conditions in Ireland, however, were inimical to Catholic initiatives. Priests and clergy were hunted down and a Vincentian seminarian was martyred in Limerick (1).

Change arrived with the last decades of the 1700s. The English Government funded the establishment of a Catholic seminary in Maynooth in 1795, to halt the flow of Irish seminarians going to Europe for their priestly formation (2)

Foundation of St Vincent's College/Castleknock College

A small group of seminarians and young priests in Maynooth from Dublin and Meath recognised the need for a concerted effort to renew Catholic life in Ireland by preaching revival missions – and was advised to seek affiliation to the Congregation of the Mission.

In 1833, the Maynooth group of 'mission priests' established a secondary school for boys, St Vincent's, on Usher's Quay in Dublin. They intended to form themselves into a team, clarify their thinking, and gain experience for their project. They called themselves 'Vincentians', the first time the title was used, although they had not as yet applied to join the Congregation of the Mission.

The new school joined a small group of just 13 Catholic secondary schools for boys already in existence in Ireland. Catholic emancipation allowed Catholic fee-paying second-level schools to cater for children whose parents could afford the tuition. Most of these boys' schools were ecclesiastical, intended to prepare young lads for the priesthood, in other words 'minor' seminaries (O'Dowd 1962).

Within a year, the Archbishop of Dublin asked the little band of priests to take on an ecclesiastical seminary on behalf of the Archdiocese. In 1834, the Vincentians purchased land to the west of the city of Dublin, transferred their Usher's Quay school to the new location, and added a programme for priestly formation. So began St Vincent's College (now called Castleknock College) in August 1835.

Early years 1835-1867: secondary school/minor seminary

In this first stage of the College's history, according to the College historian, JH Murphy, the priestly founders finally joined the Congregation of the Mission. The new Province became quite divided about the place of the school in their work. Should they principally pursue the aim of preaching missions or be diverted into the running of a school? The needs of a growing school – namely, young, vibrant and energetic priests – were the resources also for a serious missionary effort. Two

of the founding fathers – Philip Dowley (or Dooley) and Thomas MacNamara – were on opposite sides. The dispute rumbled for two decades, but came to a head in the 1860s with the result that both aims – school and parish missions – were to be kept up equally, not an easy balance to maintain (JH Murphy 1996, 39-48).

The College had about 100 pupils at this time, sons of the rising Catholic middle class who saw Castleknock as providing secondary education for their boys. Few Catholic secondary schools for boys existed yet, fewer still boarding schools and only the seminaries for third-level education for Catholics. Castleknock had the further advantage of being within easy reach of Ireland's principal city. Accordingly the seminary was changing gradually into a secondary school. Fewer graduates were going on to the priesthood. Educationally, it was structured on the tradition of classics, rhetoric, humanities and natural philosophy (physics and mathematics) for the majority of students. Three final years were devoted to theology for the few clerical students who entered the Vincentian congregation, and so did not go to Maynooth.

After Castleknock, the boys generally entered employment in farming, family businesses and professional callings such as medicine, law and the military. Probably the most eminent pastman of the time was Charles Russell, a student in the 1840s who rose in 1894, as Lord Russell of Killowen, to be the first Catholic lord chief justice of England since the Reformation.

Nevertheless, Castleknock still supplied some vocations to the Church and to the Vincentians. Graduates included 11 bishops and 5 of them attended the First Vatican Council in 1870 (1935, St Vincent's College Castleknock Centenary Record 1835-1935). The most famous was John Lynch, who had been the first student to come to Castleknock in 1835. He joined the Congregation of the Mission in Paris, taught in Castleknock, was sent on mission to the United States, and founded a Vincentian seminary at Niagara, NY, subsequently to develop into Niagara University, before being appointed Bishop, and then Archbishop, of Toronto, Canada.

New Irish Catholic establishment, 1867-1900 (3)

During this second phase of the College story, according to Murphy, the characteristic quality of life in the College evolved into an informal and gracious discipline. Murphy judges that this was due to the particular institution of 'prefects' (JH Murphy 1996, 13). The anecdotal evidence is that this system was inspired by Arnold's Rugby School in England. The prefects were not student priests or clerics, but trusted senior boys who ensured that a generally pleasant and benign regime inculcated a gentler and less polarised atmosphere.

Another factor was the religious community spirit which the early Vincentians sought and, in general, achieved, in the service of the overall mission of formation of mind and heart. After all, the college was in origin half a seminary.

The significant Vincentian teacher of the period was Richard Bodkin CM, a student around 1860 who returned to the school staff in 1870. He combined scholarship, teaching and religious zeal in an engaging and amiable personality. As an advocate of humane and religious learning, he was opposed to mere information absorbed for regurgitation in examination halls. He spent his own money on buying books for the library and equipment for the science laboratory. Bodkin taught in the College until his death in 1925.

As the decades passed, it became clear to the Vincentians, to educators in general, to the bishops and to influential laity that an educated Catholic middle class was a necessary step to full maturity for the Irish Catholic Church (Murphy 2001). Educationally, the College was increasingly engaged to assure academic and professional progression for students, to ensure a corporate reputation for study and learning and to secure some government funding. An emphasis on science, and on technology, a more systematic approach to physical education and attention to the successful careers and public service of past pupils were emphasised in College life.

The wars and the new Irish Free State, 1900-1959

Castleknock College had to respond to the external events, internal aspirations, economic demands and political realities of this singularly dramatic period. In its earlier decades, it tried to steer a line through the conflicting forces of loyalty to the empire, revolution, nationalism and cultural identity. A particular controversy was its stance on the national question: some perceived Castleknock College to be less than enthusiastic for an 'Irish Ireland'. Their concern was that a leading Catholic school was exerting an alien influence on Irish life. An indication of this problem, indeed, was the visit of Queen Victoria herself to Castleknock in 1900. The boys enjoyed a week's holiday in honour of the Queen, though apparently, some boys and Vincentians avoided her altogether (JH Murphy 1996, 100).

The majority of students came from the farming, business and professional class and past pupils tended to be more conservative. Those who entered politics – and some rose to high positions – were likely to be pro-British rather than nationalist. Few were found in the ranks of the rebels in the Easter Rising in comparison to those who joined the British forces before and during the World War (4).

After Irish independence in 1921, the College embraced the emerging national identity, sincerely, if not entirely wholeheartedly. The Vincentian facility for compromise and reconciliation contributed to the balance of reasonable practicality that prevailed. Castleknock education fitted its students with the sense of order and hopeful enterprise that the new state needed to steady itself in the choppy economic and political waters of Europe during the first half of the twentieth century. Hence, priests and teachers sought to instil appreciation for equality, a sense of justice and a commitment to Christian service in the students. Politically and culturally, Castleknock had, by 1959, positioned itself successfully in the mainstream of Irish Catholic educational life.

Catholic and educational renewal 1959- present

Success brings its own problems, of course, and a new set of challenges would now present themselves to the Vincentian community and the College. Castleknock, having played a part in the building of Church and State in an independent Ireland, found it has had to adjust to fast-changing circumstances and plan for a quite different future from the 1960s onwards.

The 1944 Education Act in the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland and, in 1968, the implementation by the Irish Government of its own universal free secondary education raised fresh questions about the college's education and mission. In the wake of 'free education' (when the state began to pay tuition fees for students) the secondary school-going population expanded from 20% to well over 70% of the age cohort during the next two decades. However, Castleknock could not afford to accept the conditions of entering the 'free scheme', and remained a fee-paying school (5). The college was, therefore, now part of a country-wide system, but its elite status within this system had been underlined (6). On the other hand, the Second Vatican Council had heralded a 'turn to the world', an 'option for the poor' and an attention to social justice, and these ideas, integrating as they also did with the wider Vincentian mission, gained more traction in the college's curriculum.

The most formidable challenge has been posed by changing Irish culture as it instigated a 'late enlightenment', rising rationalism, secularism, relativism and distrust for all institutions. At ground level, the professionalisation of teachers, a precipitous decline in vocations and an aging religious community were bringing matters to a head. Some Vincentians interpreted the discussion as a replay of the division between schools and missions from a century earlier. In reality, however, there was nothing particularly Vincentian about these difficulties at this time. The forces of social change were challenging every religious institution in the same way.

The College remained an effective Catholic school throughout, however, equipping its students well for responsible contribution to contemporary society. No event more aptly symbolised this achievement than a special College dinner held in 1973 to celebrate the accession of three former students to the National Cabinet, including Liam Cosgrave as Taoiseach (Prime Minister) and two of his colleagues as Ministers of Defence and Justice.

Nevertheless, continuity itself was seen to depend on large changes. The first resolution was to prepare the College for expansion and the number of students was increased from 300 to 500, admitting day students alongside boarders from 1987 and becoming an all-day school from 2006. A governing body was set up and later brought into line with the 1998 Education Act. Middle and top administration was devolved to laity, although a Vincentian remained as president. Another move was a plan to pass on the Vincentian and Catholic ethos of the College to future generations. In these ways, the College was being re-fitted to navigate the new waters of the twenty-first century.

Murphy remarks in passing that the Vincentian experience at Castleknock led the Congregation to espouse a more cosmopolitan and more liberal and, probably, less confrontational kind of Catholicism than that which they originally intended to foster (JH Murphy 1996, 47). The significance of that extends beyond Castleknock, for it is a template for the Vincentian contribution to education in Ireland and subsequently in England. Of that, the story of All Hallows College is an illustration.

All Hallows College Drumcondra: seminary education

Among the 'Vincentian' group of young priests in the 1830s there was another hopeful Maynooth man with energy and vision: John Hand of County Meath. He knew the others and collaborated with them, joining them in 1835, and spending a period teaching with them in Castleknock. Nevertheless, he was soon discerning the future direction of his own life, and was shaping what was to be his legacy to the Irish Church. As his ideas matured, he took a different path from the 'Vincentians', intent as they were on a mission for Ireland. The Gospel phrase 'signs of the times' (7) was later a slogan in the Church and a theme of the Second Vatican Council. John Hand put his finger on the signs of his own times by articulating the need for a missionary college to form priests for the foreign missions. As divine providence worked out, the future mission for the college would be Irish emigrants abroad and it would not be a 'Vincentian' college for its first half century.

Like an Old Testament prophet, he repeated this message, in season and out of season, to the Archbishop of Dublin, priests, the Vincentians, and not least, to the Congregation de Propaganda Fide in Rome. All

agreed with him, eventually, but left the task of making it happen to the young priest himself. With a letter from the Archbishop, he travelled to Rome, and returned with the papal authority for him to found a mission seminary in Dublin.

John Hand had very little money, but, supported by the Archbishop and Daniel O’Connell, the ‘Liberator’ responsible for Catholic Emancipation, he acquired Drumcondra House and named the College ‘All Hallows’ after a twelfth-century Augustinian Priory on whose lands it stood. The College opened, appropriately, on the Feast of All Saints, 1 November 1842.

The story of All Hallows College may be divided into three clear eras: Foundation, 1842-1892; Seminary, 1892-1992; University College, 1992-2016.

Foundation, 1842-1892

The beginning was slow. Lack of money held up progress, but the number of students, the reputation of the College, and the construction of buildings proceeded carefully. Father Hand had initially intended to found a college governed by the Irish Bishops, but the Bishops would not agree to this relationship. In the upshot, a directorate constituted of the full-time clerical teaching staff (initially recruited by Hand) formed a governing body for the College. Throughout the first fifty years of the College, they lacked the consensus among themselves to establish a religious community, a situation commented on frequently by visitors.

In 1846, the founding father, John Hand, died suddenly. The historical events that would clearly justify the existence of All Hallows in retrospect were already beginning to happen. The Great Famine commenced in 1845 and over the next decade, two million people were lost to Ireland: one million dead and one million to emigration (8)

The College had been intended for the foreign missions in general but by the 1850s, past students of All Hallows were accompanying the Irish emigrants to the English-speaking world: the USA, Canada, Great Britain, the Caribbean, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand. By 1890, 1,500 priests had been ordained and dispatched on mission to those parts of the earth which received the Irish diaspora.

Vincentian Seminary, 1892-1992

The difficulty in college governance diagnosed in the early years came back to haunt the College in the 1890s. A serious dispute concerned the future direction of the seminary. The problem was resolved by Propaganda Fide in Rome and the Archbishop of Dublin by entrusting the College to the Vincentians in Ireland in 1892.

During the twentieth century, effective presidents such as Thomas O'Donnell, William Purcell and Thomas Fagan presided over the College, as the seminary grew and prospered, in numbers, reputation and buildings. Another 2,500 priests were educated. There was no lack of vocations, or of mission fields to receive the priests when ordained. Graduates from the College rose to significant positions in their respective foreign dioceses. A number of bishops – for instance, diocesan vicars, eminent monsignors and pioneering pastors – are listed among the alumni of All Hallows.

The most symbolic event for the seminary in the mid-twentieth century was the visit of John Cardinal Glennon to his alma mater in March 1946. He had been Archbishop of St Louis, Missouri for four decades.

University College, 1992-2016

In the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, when Thomas Lane and Kevin Rafferty were presidents, the times were offering different signs to All Hallows College. Successive presidents noted the fall in vocations and the parallel decrease in demand for Irish priests in the traditional mission fields. The emerging need in the Irish Church, however, was for lay ministry and adult religious education. Accordingly, the College developed its mission into one of educating for leadership and pastoral care in the Irish Church and Irish society.

Graduates of the college during more recent decades may be found in management positions in community and voluntary organisations and in leadership roles in pastoral occupations, as well as working as hospital chaplains, counsellors, teachers and a variety of the caring professions. In 2008, the College entered into an academic relationship with Dublin City University. The College's century long experience in professional formation and its particular suitability in location, facilities and resources for mature students assured a successful approach to an area long neglected in Irish education and not well served by traditional universities.

Founded as a seminary for Catholic priests to accompany Irish emigrants to the far corners of the world during the famine years, All Hallows had transformed itself and its mission to fit the 'signs of new times'. The passing decades, however, posed critical challenges of finance, and the survival of an independent religious third-level Irish college, in the heel of the hunt, proved impossible. The adaptability of All Hallows had only delayed the inevitable.

In 2014, All Hallows announced the formal closure of the College, sold the property to Dublin City University, and graduated the final classes of College students on 1 November 2016 (Feast of All Saints).

Having served Catholic Ireland for 174 years, the College's mission and legacy are preserved in the All Hallows Trust, and the annual Jubilee celebration and reunion every July keeps the memory alive. 'The All Hallows Campus of Dublin City University' (9) houses the All Hallows Trust Office and the School of Theology, Philosophy and Music as well as general classrooms, student accommodation and a small museum.

St Patrick's College Drumcondra: teacher education

The third major Vincentian educational institution to be highlighted in this article, St Patrick's Training College, Drumcondra, Dublin, educated the majority of Irish male primary teachers for over a century. The story of the College also falls into three periods: Foundation, 1875-1921; the new Irish State, 1921-1970; university status, 1970- the present.

Foundation 1875–1921

Primary education in Ireland was established during the middle decades of the nineteenth century amid religious and political struggle. The civil authorities were intent to prevent the schools becoming 'nurseries of nationalism'. The churches, Catholic and Protestant, wanted to have control of the religious and moral formation of their children. The result was accommodation between political parties and church authorities.

Teacher training was caught up in this climate of give and take. The National Board of Education's efforts to train teachers over a half century in its Marlborough Street College were educationally inadequate and under-resourced. It was failing to produce an effective teaching force for the country and, from the perspective of Cardinal Cullen of Dublin, the National Board Training had never fulfilled the required formation for Catholic teachers. In 1873, the Irish Bishops asked Cardinal Cullen to establish a central training school for male Catholic teachers.

The Cardinal then invited the Vincentians to administer the new institution. The Congregation had already been responsible for the 'imparting of religious instruction at Marlborough Street College' since the 1830s, and was judged to have demonstrated the prudence and expertise needed to manage this necessary project for Catholic education in the political situation.

The London Government agreed with the idea of state-supported denominational teacher training, in general, but politics delayed its implementation. Nevertheless, the College opened (with Church funding) in a house on the Drumcondra Road in 1875. The College soon moved to its present location and expanded rapidly.

Political circumstances changed, and Cullen's successor, Cardinal McCabe made a satisfactory settlement with the government, so that, in 1883, the authorities introduced 'the English scheme' involving

the grant-aiding of colleges ‘under local management’, that is, private denominational establishments, subject to terms and conditions respecting courses of study, success of students and performance of graduates in subsequent employment.

The new principal of the College was Father Peter Byrne and the new Archbishop of Dublin, after McCabe (died 1885), was William Walsh. The two men set the course of the new College, presided over its early development and established it politically, financially and educationally. The Archbishop obtained reasonable government capital funding while Peter Byrne embarked on an expansion that gave the College a striking array of buildings. The principal also inaugurated an educational curriculum for the College in 1897 which made provision for a more practical course, including more drawing, science, manual instruction, musical and physical education, and the Irish language (Kelly 2006, 125).

The Irish free state, 1921-1970

The only immediate impact of national independence on St Patrick’s was the introduction of Irish as a compulsory subject for primary schools and for the training of teachers. Indeed, the events of 1916-1921 had had little impact on College life: a graduate of the College, Gearóid O’Sullivan, had raised the rebel flag on the General Post Office in 1916 (10) and John Carolan, Professor of Education, had been killed in a fire fight with the security forces in his Drumcondra house in 1921.

However, Fionán Lynch, another graduate of the College, was appointed as Minister of Education in the newly established Irish Free State in 1922, and it was noted that, in that capacity, he discontinued the Commissioners of National Education who had themselves sacked him from his teaching position six years earlier because of his participation in the Easter Rising.

University College status, 1970- present

Post-Second World War, radical change happened in government policy. The Department of Education recognised that Irish education required substantial investment if Ireland was to progress economically. This, providentially for the College, coincided with the careers of Archbishop of Dublin, John Charles McQuaid and President of the College, Donal Cregan CM (Kellaghan 2000). The two men had similar visions for Irish education and teacher formation, and proved able to implement them.

The first result was the second large building programme at St Patrick’s. Donal Cregan added a range of contemporary facilities in pleasant harmony with the eighteenth and nineteenth century buildings in situ. The present campus is justly admired as an academic oasis of tranquillity on one of the busiest thoroughfares in north Dublin city.

These developments heralded a range of educational reforms and innovations: the Special Education programme (1960), the Education Research Centre (1966), expansion of student numbers and of staff, the introduction of co-education with the admission of women students (1972), and finally, the provision of formal university degree recognition, by the National University of Ireland, of the three-year honours B Ed (1972). All of this accompanied a complete overhaul of the primary school curriculum through the 1970s, a process in which the College enthusiastically led the way. The education of Irish primary school teachers had come of age: there was now an adequate supply of well-trained teaching recruits, young people who valued a primary teaching career and the country possessed the intellectual and economic resources to invest in the education system as a whole.

Meanwhile, by the 1990s, many lay people were more than academically capable and sufficiently convinced of Catholic values to take up the administrative baton. Accordingly, the Vincentians withdrew from the management of the College in 1999. Throughout its history, the College contributed on many levels to Irish public life. This was particularly true of literature and the arts: writers, for instance, like Francis MacManus, Bryan MacMahon, Patrick McCabe and John McGahern (and many more through the medium of the Irish language) were all 'Pats-men', though not all of them enamoured of their time in St Pat's (11).

In politics, the College boasted of two Ministers of Education, among other members of parliament and public representatives, and in the 2013 Irish cabinet no fewer than three Ministers: Enda Kenny the Taoiseach (Prime Minister), Michael Noonan (Finance) and Brendan Howlin (Public Expenditure).

Despite the presence of graduates at the tillers of power, however, the winds of policy have changed again. No longer was it a national priority to invest in education as such. In recessionary times, value for money, impact on the economy, scientific and technical innovation, international research and employability take precedence.

Rationalisation in third level provision led in 2014-2016 to the agreed unification of three smaller religiously affiliated colleges with the public institution of Dublin City University: St Patrick's College, Drumcondra, the Mater Dei Institute (a college for the education of second level religion teachers administered by the Catholic Archdiocese of Dublin) and the Church of Ireland College of Education, Rathmines, (the Anglican equivalent of St Patrick's Drumcondra). The agreement guaranteed that the individual mission of each institution was to be respected and continued after incorporation. The university implemented this purpose by establishing two denominational institutes of

religious education, Catholic and Church of Ireland in the Faculty of Education on the St Patrick's Campus of the University.

Other Vincentian educational institutions

This is not a comprehensive history of Vincentian schools and colleges, so there is no need to rehearse in any detail the other foundations of the Congregation of the Mission in education. These three stories provide a template for the rest. In other words, the major issues faced by the Vincentians in education have been identified already. Nevertheless, the other significant Vincentian institutions should be listed, if only to indicate their variety.

The major ones were, in the order of Vincentian participation: the Irish College in Paris (1858), St Patrick's College Armagh (1861) (Dunning 1988; Magovern 1990) and St Mary's College London (1899) (Cullen 1933). The Paris College was an ecclesiastical seminary, Armagh was a minor seminary, and the St Mary's College, a training establishment for Catholic teachers. Each involvement was occasioned by appeals from Bishops, and the Vincentians administered the institutions on their behalf. In each case, the Vincentians were specifically requested to take over an institution that was first, in difficulty, and second, strategically, important for the Church.

The Irish hierarchy at the behest of the Roman Congregation de Propaganda Fide was asked to nominate an Irish Vincentian for Rector of the Irish College Paris at a precarious juncture in 1858. The Vincentian contribution in responding to the invitation has been acknowledged as preserving the College for Irish priestly formation up to 1939 and, after the War, for the Irish nation (12).

Vincentian contribution to Catholic teacher education in England has also been considerable. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Cardinal Vaughan consulted with Peter Byrne CM in Drumcondra about the possibility of Vincentian administration for his Training College in London.

St Mary's had been founded in 1850 at Brook Green, Hammersmith, but in 1899, faced a crisis of succession and needed to expand in students, staff and facilities. The anecdotal account says that the Cardinal wanted Peter Byrne himself. In the event, William Byrne CM became College Principal, who subsequently proved to be an excellent choice. The College moved to Strawberry Hill, the Gothic Revival home of Horace Walpole, in 1925, and has since continued to play a key role in Catholic teacher education in England (1950, Centenary Record of St Mary's College).

Clearly, on the evidence of Paris, Armagh, Drumcondra, St Mary's and All Hallows, the Irish Vincentians had a reputation for

‘trouble-shooting’ for Bishops in sensitive educational situations. It seems that the Congregational DNA, so to speak, was programmed to deal with fraught circumstances, managing the balance between compromise and concession.

Scarce personnel and professionalisation of college staff meant that the Vincentians left Paris after the Second World War, Armagh in 1988, St Mary’s in 1992, St Patrick’s College Drumcondra in 1999 and finally, All Hallows College on the formal closure in 2016.

Another Irish foundation was St Paul’s College, Raheny, in north Dublin city. Founded at the insistence of John Charles McQuaid in 1950, and established at Sybil Hill, the former residence of the Protestant Bishop of Meath, the school thrived in the expanding population, the increased national investment in education of the 1960s and 1970s and from student expectation for progress to the professions (Farmar 2000).

The College’s first fifty years of existence can be divided into four phases (Larkin 2001). In the first, from its foundation to the mid-1960s, the school matched its sister school in Castleknock, educating boys from ‘relatively high-income families’ from the new northern suburbs of Dublin. The second phase, which lasted to the late 1970s, was one of rapid growth in the wake of the school entering the ‘free education scheme’ during which the school undertook to serve the entire local community.

The third phase, through the 1980s, was one of stability and consolidation by a pragmatic and practical president, Frank Lyne CM. The fourth phase was inaugurated with the appointment of the first lay principal in 1990. The history of St Paul’s mirrors closely the changing educational scene in Ireland. Today, St Paul’s College, Sybil Hill, Raheny is the location of a successful school and the Vincentian Provincial House.

PART THREE: DISCUSSION – MISSION AND APOSTOLATE

The group of young priests in Maynooth intended to do one thing, and ended up achieving another as well. They planned to preach ‘revival’ missions, visiting regions of the country that were particularly in need of a spiritual renewal (JH Murphy 1987). That entailed detailed preparation, forming a community capable of organising mission campaigns, up-skilling in teaching and preaching, gaining experience and reputation as individual or group and securing a steady source of income. That preparatory work led them to start a school.

The Vincentians founded a ‘minor’ seminary because the Archbishop of Dublin wanted them to do that. The Catholic Church, newly emancipated, needed clergy. Minor seminaries educated young boys to prepare them for priestly formation. The Irish educational situation, however, dictated that minor seminaries would – sooner or later – evolve into regular secondary schools, educating Catholic laity of the middle class.

The Vincentian success in Castleknock led to more episcopal invitations to undertake the administration of the Irish seminary in Paris, a minor seminary in Armagh and finally, the foreign mission seminary at All Hallows. Then other bishops, through the years, invited them to found St Patrick's Training College in Dublin and secondary schools in Gateacre, Liverpool (Davitt 1990) and Raheny, Dublin. Finally, their success in St Patrick's Training College led to the Bishop's invitation to take over Strawberry Hill in London.

Thus the Vincentians were led into a heavy participation in the 'other thing', education. They had of course founded and maintained 'mission houses' too, in Phibsborough, Cork, Sheffield and Lanark. At times, though, the Vincentians were quite conflicted on the direction they should take, though the different bishops were clear on their dioceses' pastoral needs. The division in the Province between the schools as a legitimate Vincentian mission on its own and the missions as the only true Vincentian mission was precariously reconciled as both were equally pursued.

While the schools generated many Vincentian vocations, both mission and school continued to be valued (F. Murphy 1966). In the wake of the Second Vatican Council, however, severe doubts were raised about the Vincentian credentials of the education mission (JH Murphy 1996, 135). The Vincentian mission was articulated as 'the evangelisation of the poor' and education of middle-class boys seemed to fall short of that mission (JH Murphy 1991).

A defence of Vincentian education, however, might distinguish between mission and apostolate. The 'mission' is a general aim of evangelisation of those in need. The 'apostolate' is more particular, a specific ministry, for instance, such as parish or preaching, priestly formation or teaching.

The real difficulty, however, is not poverty, but privilege. Castleknock, in particular, has historically always served only families who could afford a secondary education for their children. After 'free education' was introduced in 1968, it opted to remain a 'Fee Paying School'. This posed a problem if the service of the poor were to be the only criterion of Vincentian mission. The problem was not as acute for day schools, or teacher colleges, or seminaries and other third-level institutes, but it existed nonetheless. Youth in full-time education, and students in seminary or university, are far removed from the true poor.

On the other hand, these considerations ignore the theological concept of 'mission' mentioned at the outset. St Paul succinctly remarks: 'And how can they preach unless they are sent?' (Rom. 10:15) St Vincent conceived of the necessary sending as being by the religious institute certainly, and also by the bishops discerning their diocesan pastoral

necessities, and ultimately, through divine providence by the Spirit of Jesus and the Father.

This was a crucial part of Vincent's thinking, as it was for many Vincentian priests throughout the period under discussion. Such a priest would typically remark, if challenged on the *bona fides* of their Vincentian mission: 'I went where I was appointed; what was I supposed to do?' This was neither fatalism, nor lazy acquiescence, as it often involved a difficult assent to a superior's decision. This was spiritual and theological conviction of the divine will. A modern commentator would call it 'ideology'.

Ideology is defined as 'the body of ideas reflecting the social needs and aspirations of an individual, group, class, or culture' (www.thefreedictionary.com). Ideology emerges from power relationships, party interests, property stakes or personal ambitions. Ideological analysis is often based on a reductive theory of human nature and social life.

Spirituality, on the other hand, is defined in the same source as 'the state or quality of being dedicated to God, religion, or spiritual things or values, especially as contrasted with material or temporal ones' (www.thefreedictionary.com). The definition of spirituality presumes that the transcendent realm to some extent exists. At least, the transcendent possesses the capacity to be experienced by human beings and is able to engender convictions and produce a sense of meaning. This is the state of mind of religiously committed persons. For them, the spiritual is a motive for action – even for corporate action. A spiritual or theological world-view, such as Vincent himself professed, and inculcated in his followers, can be just as real a motive as any political, economic or cultural factor that historians or social scientists may emphasise.

Some historians prefer ideological to religious motives. For these writers, the motives of religious people are rendered into social or economic or political terms with payoffs that can be calculated and compared. That is reductionism. It is methodologically alien to religion and to humane education. Religious founders established schools in order 'to save souls'. Historians of education should take that reason seriously, examine it carefully and weigh it fairly. They may find that 'the salvation of souls' is more humane and holistic than appears at first sight (13).

CONCLUSION:

'SERVICERS OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE OF CATHOLIC IRELAND'

What then did the Vincentians contribute to Catholic education for Ireland and England?

The Vincentian stewardship of St Mary's College, Strawberry Hill between 1925 and 1992 was crucial to the success of the College as a

leading provider of Catholic teacher education in England whose alumni strengthened the ranks of Catholic school leadership both at primary and secondary level. At least, they contributed a spirituality of education that took account of the reconciling mission of Christians to respond to the invitation of God, the Church and its people for the poor, the ignorant, outcast, stranger, sick and vulnerable.

The Vincentians' actions were motivated by that invitation. Every educational establishment they founded, or in which they participated, was at the behest – sometimes the urgent behest – of the local bishop. And it was intended to better the condition of the impoverished Irish Catholic people especially in the matter of spiritual and human formation.

The bishops, of course, saw the situation in Ireland around the middle of the nineteenth century in stark and simple terms. They were faced with the vast majority of the Catholic people in abject poverty, with very little education, a dearth of resources, a lack of priests, Catholic teachers and lay leaders, few educational institutions such as schools or colleges, and little social leverage that they could utilise. One historian remarked: 'The Irish Church picked itself off the floor' (O'Donoghue 1985). One of the strategies pursued by the Irish Catholic Church was to harness for the educational effort all the resources it could call upon: the unstinting devotion of vowed religious and priests, donations of the rich and contributions of the poor, and endowment from public finances whenever it became politically possible.

The bishops recognised that the band of Maynooth 'Vincentians' – clerics from Dublin and Meath, with advanced education, religious zeal, youthful energy, team spirit, academic experience and a pastoral touch – would be part of the solution. There was one obvious place in the Church's apostolate, at that time and in that place, they should be deployed. The experience of Nano Nagle and Edmund Rice in Cork and Waterford, in the early decades of the nineteenth century, had shown that a substantial educational project required a stable group of dedicated teachers, if possible, with religious vows, with the capability to bring concerted effort, community memory and Christian zeal to the task. A community of priests, however, who were almost diocesan in culture, and not strictly speaking, religious, would be very appropriate for the formation of boys, and therefore, help to prepare recruits for the seminary at Maynooth.

At a broader perspective, a particular quality of the Vincentian approach to the task of education, at second level and in the formation of teachers, was crucial to their ultimate success. The Vincentians brought an attitude open to collaboration with the state. Their motto was 'He who is not against me is with me.' This policy stance became part of the

culture of Vincentian establishments and perhaps, it may be seen playing itself out in the DCU expansion of 2014-2016.

As with the Irish Christian Brothers, the Presentation Brothers and Sisters and the other religious orders who joined the work of Catholic schooling in Ireland, Vincentians benefitted from autonomous administration of schools, attention to community, pastoral care, student formation, talent development and a strong academic focus on core humanity subjects (McCann 1998, 26). This is the Catholic tradition in education, and its presence generally in Irish schools is directly due to the contribution of the Catholic Church and various religious orders in the beginning. The humane and personal atmosphere and culture is so pervasive in Irish education that it is not even remarked upon today as being particularly Catholic.

What did the Vincentian educational apostolate uniquely contribute to Irish Catholic education? It is apparent that the Vincentian institutes encouraged Irish Catholic students towards responsibilities in church and state, helped to keep the Irish educational enterprise in the social mainstream between the forces of nationalism and colonialism and promoted an ethos of conservative pragmatism and ‘temperate social development’ (JH Murphy 1996, 154). James H Murphy summarises the point thus:

The works of education that the Vincentians now prioritised were about keeping things on course for that Church and nation. They had the safe pairs of hands into which seminaries and teacher training colleges could be entrusted; they thus became the servicers of the infrastructure of Catholic Ireland. (JH Murphy 1996, 46)

NOTES

1. During the aftermath of the 1641 Confederacy of Kilkenny, the Cromwellian campaign resulted in the martyrdom of Catholic priests, brothers and laity because they were Catholic. One of these was Thady Lee, a seminarian of the Congregation of Mission, who came from Limerick. Some other members of the Congregation escaped to France safely.
2. There was suspicion of clergy being educated in the European seminaries which had received Irish students because they would return to Ireland with revolutionary ideas. Hence, the English government at this time (1790s) was willing to aid the foundation of an Irish seminary.
3. This is a combination of two of James H Murphy’s phases: 1867-1922 and 1922-1959.
4. Following the old adage ‘England’s trouble is Ireland’s opportunity’, the advocates of physical force republicanism – Irish Republican Brotherhood and Citizen Army – embarked on an armed rising in Easter 1916 while England was in the throes of the Great War. They occupied the centre of Dublin, declared a Republic and prepared to

- resist the Crown forces indefinitely. The rebellion lasted a week. It failed to ignite the country in outright revolution. The execution of the leaders by firing squad caused widespread public revulsion and subsequently led to the successful war of independence (1918-1922).
5. Castleknock College was a boarding school, and there were doubts if the government funding scheme would be sufficient. Most boarding schools remained outside the 'Free Education' arrangements.
 6. St Paul's College, the other Vincentian school in the Republic (but a day-school), did enter the scheme.
 7. The Gospel context is Matthew 16:4 'You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times.' The Vatican Council stated: 'The Church has always had the duty of scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel' (Vatican Council [1965] Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, 4).
 8. There had been many local and brief famines in Ireland previously, but in the winter of 1845, when the potato crop succumbed to blight, the Irish peasant population was particularly vulnerable. The potato was the staple crop and when blight was followed by disease, the crisis became a calamity. More died of illness than of hunger, it was observed. Exacerbated by a laissez-faire economic policy and inept famine relief by the British government, the Great Famine escalated into a national disaster which reduced the Irish population by almost a quarter.
 9. The acquisition by Dublin City University of the All Hallows College property, and the incorporation of St Patrick's College into the University in the same year, 2016, and their location in the same village, Drumcondra, meant that the University had to differentiate between the two Campuses by their historical and religious titles.
 10. Later O'Sullivan became the father of a Vincentian Priest-Teacher with the same name.
 11. John McGahern strikes a critical note about the education in the College in his autobiography.
 12. The Irish College in Paris was one of more than forty establishments for Irish seminarians and university students in Europe after the Reformation. Through the centuries, it moved location several times, evolved from a residence to college to a traditional seminary, survived a number of revolutions and three wars to be made available to the Irish nation in 2002 as an Irish Cultural Centre in Paris in the Rue des Irlandais.
 13. See Bryk, Lee, and Holland (1993) for an example of such research conducted in USA Catholic High Schools.

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Do you expect to meet your parents in an after life?

Jim McCormack CM

I understand Bertie Ahern was asked this question on a recent TV programme, and a few of my colleagues were less than favourably impressed by his answer which they found to be vague and unclear – as though there was some doubt about it. They were working I thought, rather simplistically from the catechism/credal assertion that we believe in the resurrection of the body – recited every Sunday at Mass. All my sympathies were with Bertie, and I would imagine that most Catholics would have hesitated like him, because we simply do not know who we will meet, if anyone.

We have been given no knowledge about this – for life after death is in the realm of mystery. To say that it's implicit (or, more glibly, explicit) in the resurrection of the body is to go beyond anything we know. We know nothing about embodiment in the hereafter. Any images or expectations we have of people, and indeed of ourselves and hence of 'recognition', never mind of 'meeting' them, which we formulate are conditioned by our experience of embodiment in our current space-time mode of being.

There are also further aspects to the question. For example I have heard people assert strongly that they have no wish to meet their parents (or a parent) in the hereafter, or various other people as well, but might not like to say so on National television. I suppose the post-death purgatorial process, whatever that may be, deals with such matters.

Another obvious point about embodiment in the hereafter is that millions of people loathe their bodies and have no wish for "the same again". How does this affect recognition and meeting? Look at the extremes they go to in order to alter their bodies and re-shape themselves physically.

These last few points are footnotes to the basic question, though not without relevance as many people would struggle with an answer. Further, are our parents embodied and recognizable as such, or as children of their own parents? And so on, and so on. The matter is opaque beyond even human imagining, and speculation about it silly.

We simply do not know, and can only in humility bow down before the mystery and let it be.

Tom Lane

The President of All Hallows stood up. His task – to say the few customary words at the lunch on Ordination Sunday. The setting – the old dining room (now Woodlock Hall).

He began:

“If you leave this room and turn left and move up the long corridor you will find the ordination photographs. Everyone who has been ordained in All Hallows appears once in those photographs. With one exception. If you look carefully you will notice that one person appears SEVEN times, once in his ordination photograph, another as the ordaining bishop in 1967 and five times when he appears in a picture of a Shakespearean play. That man is the ordaining bishop today – Most Rev John Scanlan of Honolulu.”

Not the usual few customary words. But few ordinary speeches were ever uttered by Tom Lane. As usual what Tom had to say had the touch of the Master’s hand. He had learnt well Robert McKee’s advice to writers “The mark of a master is to select only a few moments but give us a lifetime.” His introduction that day typifies what could be considered to be the hall mark of Tom’s fifty years in the ministry – sheer artistry.

Few men had the array of abilities that Tom Lane possessed. Coming onto the staff of All Hallows in 1953 he brought a freshness and brilliance to the teaching of philosophy and theology that injected a new vitality into college life. Teaching through the heady days of the immediate post Vatican II period, he delighted in mining the works of the best theological minds around and excelled in making complex ideas accessible to the students of the day.

Unquestionably, Tom could have taught theology at any university in the world and could hold his own with the most nuanced of academics. While well capable of teaching at the highest level his main passion was to make theology accessible to as wide an audience as possible. His experience and astuteness had taught him that some very promising seminarians, undoubtedly fired up with vocational zeal, had the capacity to send their brains back to God in the fine unused condition in which they received them (to quote from Hugh Leonard). Consequently, as well as catering for the few bright academic sparks, Tom had the flexibility and compassion to come down quite a few gears and design courses that would capture the attention of the widest possible cross-section of students. Throughout his life, while he maintained a deep

interest in the world of academia, his overriding zeal was for ministry. His abiding passion was that seminarians, with whatever limitations they had, would become the best priests they could be.

His passion for rounded education meant that he was an obvious choice to become president of All Hallows in 1970. In his twelve years in that role he ensured that students were schooled not just in the traditional subjects of philosophy and theology but also in pastoral activity, drama, crafts, sports, public speaking, music, athletics, etc. Carefully monitoring the shifts in pastoral practice he made the necessary adjustments to the social and educational life of the college that would prove to be the initial steps that laid the foundation for the All Hallows of today.

In the mid-eighties he was struck down with a severe stroke that greatly limited the use of the right side of his body. This drawback, which would have put an end to the career of a lesser man, only served as a stimulus to Tom. He acquired new energy and immersed himself in two of his greatest talents – preaching and retreat giving. Soon he was in demand all around the world, preaching diocesan retreats from London to Los Angeles to Sydney. Already in possession of a vast amount of knowledge and experience he was always on the lookout for new ways to deepen and expand his learning. His reputation for turning up at lectures and conferences on theology or spirituality was legendary. Yet in the midst of all this activity, when you encountered Tom you were in no doubt that you were in the presence of a deeply spiritual and contemplative man totally committed to his Vincentian charism.

Tom had two great loves in life – priesthood and education. He loved being a priest and greatly relished the company of other priests especially the All Hallows Pastmen. He was never content simply to settle for being any kind of priest but continually fine tuned his priesthood by his dedicated pursuit of theology – something he did, not just for his own personal benefit, but for the enrichment of all those privileged to study with him.

When he died in August 2011 the accolades came pouring in:

‘A great teacher has gone from among us’.

‘We have lost a legend’.

‘It’s the end of an era’.

While Tom, being human, would rest for a moment in the afterglow of such accolades, basically he would have none of it:

‘End of an era’, he might say, ‘forget it’.

As far as he was concerned the Word of God must be preached in season and out of season. So with a smile he would lean his head to one side and quietly say, “This humble wretch tried his best.”

But there is no doubt that with his passing the voice of a master

preacher was silenced. The lectern was his home, his patch, his stage where he proclaimed the Word of God with a brilliance, passion and imagination that has scarce been matched. He was the supreme artist with the Word of God – there was none better.

In Tom's eyes he stood at the lectern, not because he was a master preacher (which he undoubtedly was) but because he had no choice. He stood there because he was a priest and he knew that the priest's first obligation is to preach the Word of God. Sure, he would luxuriate briefly at being called an artist, a great preacher or a gifted theologian. But the honour he would clutch most closely to his breast would be the very simple, "Tom Lane was a priest."

Vincent De Paul & the First Earl of Inchiquin (1614-1674)

[Murrough O'Brien "of the Burnings"]

Thomas Davitt CM

Part I

Murrough O'Brien was born in 1614 into a Catholic family. On the death of his father, Baron Inchiquin, in 1624, Murrough was made a ward of court because he was still a minor and was entrusted to the care of Protestant relatives and from then on was brought up as a Protestant. He became the sixth Baron Inchiquin. In 1636 he was sent to receive military training in the Spanish army. He then returned to Ireland.

In the English Civil War he abandoned the Royalists and sided with the Parliamentarians and it was during the campaign in Ireland in the 1640s that his ruthlessness earned him his nickname.

In view of later events it is somewhat ironical that he built up his reputation as an arsonist during the period when, and in the areas where, the 1646 Vincentian mission team from Paris were giving their missions. He later abandoned the Parliamentarian side and resumed allegiance to the King. In 1650, he sailed to France to join the exiled Charles II. In France he got to know Cardinal Mazarin and was appointed Governor of French-occupied Catalonia in Spain. In 1654 he was created Earl of Inchiquin. In the late 1650s, he returned to his former Catholicism. In November 1659, he set sail for Lisbon with his son William. They were captured by Algerian corsairs, and imprisoned until a demanded ransom would be paid.

Part II

On 16 April 1660, Vincent de Paul wrote to Firmin Get CM, superior in Marseille, enclosing a letter of exchange for two thousand *livres*. He explains how this money is to be expended:

Thirdly, you will take from it thirty-three *livres* which I am asking you to send likewise to Algiers, to be passed on to the Earl of Inchiquin's valet (*homme de chambre*). The Earl is an Irish nobleman, recently enslaved together with his son.

On 16 July 1660 Vincent wrote again to Firmin Get:

I hope to send you, at the next possible opportunity, some money for the Earl of Inchiquin who is in Algiers at the moment... (XV 159).

On 23 July he wrote once again to Firmin Get:

We have received 384 *livres* for the Earl of Inchiquin, a slave in Algiers. We will forward them to you as soon as possible. If, however, you find an opportunity to get them to our confreres to pass on to him, please do so. (XV 162)

On 30 July 1660 Vincent wrote once more to Firmin Get:

I will be sending you the letter of exchange which I have led you to expect; it is for 984 *livres*, as follows: six hundred *livres* for the advances made and to be made for the poor galley slaves; three hundred and eighty-four *livres* for you to send to the Earl of Inchiquin in Algiers; I ask you to do this as quickly as possible. If Providence procures his freedom, and that of his son, before this charitable donation arrives, it can be used for other slaves (VIII 332).

On 6 August 1660 Vincent wrote a fifth time to Firmin Get, saying that he had sent, in the previous week, a letter of exchange for 984 *livres*:

Six [hundred] are for you to re-pay the advances made to the galley slaves, and the rest for the Earl of Inchiquin, a slave in Algiers (XV 162. *This is a different letter from the one mentioned above, also on page 162*).

On 22 August [1660] Nicolas Sevin, bishop of Cahors wrote to Vincent:

Finally, Father, I am much obliged to you for sparing my purse, as you have done with regard to Lord Inchiquin (VIII 388).

Correspondence between Vincent and the Bishop goes back many years, but this is the only letter from the Bishop which mentions the Earl. It seems to imply that Vincent has sent money to the Earl, thus sparing the bishop from doing so. Perhaps it may also indicate that the Earl had been released.

In May 1660 Charles II regained his throne and Inchiquin's wife, Elizabeth, petitioned him to try to obtain her husband's release. The king

set the matter in motion and a huge sum was sent and Inchiquin was released, apparently in August 1660, but his son and servants were not. Awaiting payment of the full sum; they were released in June 1661.

I wonder who suggested to Vincent that he interest himself in trying to secure the Earl's release. The extracts from the letters cited above seem to indicate that Vincent was given money specifically for the Earl, rather than taking it from the usual funds at his disposal for the benefit of captives in North Africa. Would the Earl's previous acquaintance with Mazarin have come into play?

Part III

On 10 October 2002 there was an item in *The Irish Times*, with a photograph, about Lord and Lady Inchiquin changing residence. By this time, the earldom had become extinct but the barony had not. I took the opportunity of writing to Lord Inchiquin on the 14th, enclosing translations of the excerpts from Vincent's letters, and asked if there were any letters or documents in the family archives about this part of the first Earl's life, but I did not receive a reply. I have retained the cutting from the paper and a copy of my letter.

Note: The information in Part I, except for the reference to the Vincentian missions, is summarised from *MURROUGH the BURNER, Murchadh na dTóiteán*, by Ivar O'Brien, Ballinakella Press, Whitegate, Co Clare, 1991.

An Irishman in Paris during World War II

James Reddiough

This article was first published in *Ireland's Eye* in February 2014 and is republished by kind permission of the editors and the author.

Father Pat Travers was born in South Sligo in 1900 and died in Dublin in 1987. He served in France, England and Ireland during his ministry and the most remarkable period of his life, which he documented in an unpublished memoir, was in Paris during World War II at the time of the German occupation. He also studied in Rome.



Fr Pat Travers

At the outbreak of the war, Fr Travers was left to look after the Irish College during the occupation of Paris in 1940, when the other teachers left, along with the seminarians. After they were evacuated, he stayed on, although he did go home in December, 1939, for the Christmas break during the period known as the Phoney War. It was still peaceful at that time.

The turning point came in May 1940, and as the fighting intensified Con Cremin and Sean Murphy of the Irish Legation in Paris offered to take Travers out of Paris in their car.

On 11 June 1942, they reached Tours where Fr Travers parted company with them.

He awaited a train to the port of St Malo from where a ship would take him to England. The French authorities however delayed his visa and he was left to live in a convent in Tours for six months. He tells us in his memoirs that he returned to Paris in a van, which was taking a number of Sisters of Charity back to Paris.

Neutral stance

The Germans and the Vichy French wanted to take over the Irish College but Fr Travers, who was once again living there, reminded them of the neutral stance of Ireland, and this did not go ahead. To supplement any food supplies, Fr Travers took up market gardening and with soil and manure from the Luxemburg Gardens, he grew a wide range of vegetables. His project of hens and eggs was not as successful because the hens died; he did however rear rabbits and he had rabbit meat each day, something which he began to tire of after some time.

He must have been thankful to one Mary Maher, who sent him geese

for the Christmas dinner in 1942 and also sent them meat, cheese and eggs thereafter.

A German officer visited him and he was made an offer to broadcast on German radio, but he declined. The Germans did not interfere with his day to day running of the college even after the refusal; one officer had spent time in Ireland and he was the one that visited him.



Fr Tom Travers

The next turning point was in mid-August 1944 when the French Resistance policemen attacked the Germans and attempted to take over the city. They wished to take over the Irish College as a prison in which to detain the German prisoners, but Fr Travers would not allow it.

Transit centre

It was only when an American GI, whose mother was from Roscommon, asked that Fr Travers allow the college to be used as a transit centre for newly-freed prisoners that he agreed. The following year, 1945, it became a centre for displaced persons claiming US citizenship.

Fr Tom Mulligan, in a detailed article on the priest, wrote of his post-Paris ministry: "After the war he served as spiritual director in Maynooth College until 1952. So the following years of his life were spent at St Vincent's, Mill Hill, London. He returned to Ireland in 1960 where he was engaged in parish work in St Peter's Church, Phibsboro, Dublin until 1965, when he returned to Maynooth College for a further three years as spiritual director. He was to spend the final years of his ministry at St Peter's, Phibsboro. He died on 3 September 1987, in Rickard House, Blackrock, following a long illness." Such was the life of this Sligo-born priest in Paris during the momentous and decisive years of 1939 to 1945. Fr Travers would spend the rest of his life in Ireland, a place he might well have been in 1940, had it not been for the delayed visa.

- Many thanks to the parish priest of Attymass, Co Mayo, Fr Tom Mulligan, for his assistance in preparing this article. He was given access to an account of the memoirs which Fr Pat had recorded and which was in the possession of the Travers' nephew, Jerry Queenan.

Some French Vincentians in England during the Revolution

Jerome Twomey, CM

First published in English in *Evangelizare* (1956)
This was later published in the *Annales de la CM*, tome 123 (1958)

Note on the translation:

The translation, by the editor, of the French text, which has some notable additions, is put in italics. Where the English version differs from the final French, the difference is given in parentheses. I have used the English form of listing the confreres' names in every case.

A professor at Twickenham (Strawberry Hill: College for Teachers, see Annales, t.114-115, pp 329-332; t. 116, pp 120-121; t.121, pp. 71-72), our confrere, M Jerome Twomey has applied himself with diligence to the history and the lot of the Lazarists who came from France and found refuge in England during the French Revolution, while this deep and profound incision prepared, both in their country and far and wide on the planet, the bases for a new world.

Drawing on rare printed sources which he discovered, M Twomey has drawn together, in his simple but precious ways, various pieces on the confreres about whom we have, heretofore, known little, on account of their troubled times and their ruins.

In this matter, again and always, it is wise to harvest these lists. We are joyful for the harvesting and the gleaning, and thankful to the workmen of the gathering-in, M Jerome Twomey and his translator, M Charles Siffrid.

Notably shortened, his work was first published in the stereotyped revue of the Vincentian students of Blackrock, Evangelizare 1956.

What is published here follows a more complete text of M Twomey. In his present work, in French, the whole has been marked by some clarifications and more detailed matters. To these improvements, one must emphasise the notes and additions which are the contribution of the Annales.

F Combaluzier

The *Annales* then lists the sources which, in the original (and in this text) are listed at the end.

I have, however, followed the outline of the French article in all other matters. (Ed)

A search through the secondary sources, listed at the end of this article, reveals the names of some fourteen priests of the Congregation of the Mission who had some contact, great or small, with England during the French Revolution. Some of them lived there for many years; some of them died there; some of them merely passed through England, usually making a short stay, on their way to the Missions in the East. No doubt a search through the many records extant in the British Museum, the Public Records Office and the archives of the Diocese of Westminster, as well as through other similar collections in other parts of the country, will reveal more.

The few notes gathered here may inspire in some confrere the desire to undertake some research which might supply matter for a fuller knowledge of these confessors of the Faith who underwent what the old Irish proverb calls the 'martra glas', i.e., the 'grey martyrdom' (sic) of exile in defence of the Catholic religion in those dark days.

1) Joseph-Mansuet BOULLANGIER was born on 30 August 1758 at Fontenay-le-Chateau (*Vosges*), in the diocese of Besançon. He was received into the seminary at Paris on 2 January 1779 and there made his vows just over two years later (10 February 1781) in the presence of M Julienne. The Revolution found him at the Seminary of St Firmin, in Paris. He was one of those who, by the aid of a friendly butcher's boy, made his escape from there before the mob invaded it and massacred all they found in it, including the two Vincentian Martyrs, Blessed Louis-Joseph François and Blessed Henri Gruyer. He was on the staff of St Firmin in 1785, according to the Catalogue in the *Annales*. He came to England, probably after a stay in Jersey, in 1794 and lived in London. He seems to have been the main clearing house for letters to and from China and to have been in charge of the making of arrangements for the missionaries in China and Macao in the years when the Congregation practically ceased to exist in France.

We find many letters to him from confreres in the East – some of them making mention of the Irish confreres, Frs Ferris and Hanna – in the *Memoires sur le Chine III*. In fact most of the correspondence of the times seems to have passed through his hands and to have gone 'by way of London'. He returned to France after the Concordat and became Assistant to the Superior General after the re-assembly of the Congregation in France, dying on 1 December 1843, at the Mother-House in Paris. His life has been written in the *Notices*.

2) Jacques-Louis-Joseph CARDON, born in Frévent, in the parish of Saint-Hilarie, in the diocese of Boulougne, on the 14 March 1754: received into the seminary in Paris on 22 November 1771, making vows

there on 23 November 1773, in the presence of M Chalamel. In 1785, he taught at the seminary of Tréguier, at the same time as two other confreres, MM Magny and Chevrollais, of whom we will speak later. Like many of the Breton bishops and priests, when the Revolution and the Civil Constitution of the Clergy rendered exile inevitable, he took refuge first on the Anglo-Norman islands (the Channel Isles), then in England. Plasse noted that he lived in London at 17 Tottenham Place, in 1803. We know nothing of his activity during this period. He died on 15 September 1830 in Somers Town, and was buried at Moorfields in the crypt of the church of St Mary, the sanctuary which Wiseman was later to make so famous. He lived also at Gee Street in Somers Town, near the present Euston Station. The parish was established thanks, particularly, to another confrere: M Chantrel.

3) *Francois CARRE, born in Clermont in the Diocese of Verdun, on 12 September 1761, received into the Congregation in Paris on 11 October 1761, making vows there on 12 October 1779, in the presence of M Foursy. In the registers listing the names of French priests aided by the English Government, the diocese from which the priests came is indicated, without making distinction between religious and secular priests: and Plasse notes as the beneficiary of such help in 1803, a certain Carré, living at no. 31 Skinner Street, Somers Town – the most important centre for the exiles, and the general area in which M Chantrel worked – but without any details other than that he came from the diocese of Le Mans. Plasse mentions also another Carre – without (mention of) Christian name – coming from Blois, who took refuge at no. 9 Clipstone Street, Fitzroy Square.*

4) *With Louis Chantrel we are on firmer ground. Louis CHANTREL was born at Montauban, in the diocese of St Malo, on the 18 October, 1747. He was received into the community at Saint-Lazare-lez-Paris on the 12 December 1767 and admitted to vows on 13 December 1769, in the presence of M Bossu. The Revolution found him Superior of the Seminary of St Pol-de-Léon, in Brittany, from 14 September 1780 to 1791. Chantrel remains the most visible personality amongst the French emigrant clergy throughout the whole time of the exile. In 1782, he is close to his bishop in Jersey – then a Protestant stronghold, where he opened several chapels for the use of French exiles, both priests and laity. By 1801 there were 5,600 priests and over 4,000 French laymen in England, apart from the great numbers in Jersey who were soon to go to England also. It is to the eternal credit of the English people that after some initial suspicion, they promptly took very practical measures to aid these impoverished and very miserable men. The King exempted*

them from the Provisions of the Aliens Act; the Treasury made them gifts amounting to over £450,000; private committees and public bodies of all kinds subscribed generously for their support; Oxford University printed for their use and gave them as gifts Latin New Testaments and full Roman Breviaries. Perhaps their presence marked the first thawing of the hard winters of the Penal Days for English and Irish Catholics and gave the first promise of a Second Spring.

One of the most urgent needs of the exiles was the place and the means to say Mass and when Fr Chantrel came to London in 1796 this was one of his first cares. He went to what was then the small village of Somers Town, on the outskirts of London, and there he opened a chapel, workshops and houses of residence for the French exiles, especially the priests, in the area now covered entirely by the group of buildings comprising St Pancras station. His centre was at the angle formed by the meeting of two small streets, Brill Place and Garden Gate. He opened a chapel with the charming dedication of 'Our Lady at the Garden Gate'. Hither he transported the workshops he had already set up in Jersey and there French ladies worked at making vestments and altar linen (for which the British Government allowed them one guinea each) for the use of their priests. There, too, he organised a baths service for the émigrés, a faithful son of St Vincent in his practical approach to things! His chapel became the centre of religious life for the French exiles and it is of interest to note that the first entry in his register is dated 17 March 1797. Father Dumazel, in a letter to Father Delgorgues, dated 15 February 1802, from Canton, mentions Fr Chantrel's chapel in Somers Town – and also mentions the substitution of Father Fenaja for Father Ferris as Assistant General "since the latter can no longer fill the post, being in Ireland". Fr Chantrel returned to France at the Concordat. *In 1870, he headed the staff at the major seminary of Saint-Brieuc.*

5) François Joseph CHEVROLLAIS, was born at Angers on 20th October 1755, received on 3rd January 1775 and made his vows at Paris on the 4 January 1777, *in the presence of M Foursey*. In 1785 he was at the seminary at Tréguier with Fathers Cardon and Magny, and from there he came to Jersey and England on refusing to take the oath to the Civil Constitution. He was in receipt of help in London from the end of 1793. In 1803 he was living at Edmonton near Tottenham, and giving French lessons three times a week in a school – for which he received £25 per year. Mgr Douglas, Vicar Apostolic of the London District, put him in charge of the congregation of Stratford, a parish founded about 1770, *and entrusted to the Friars Minor*, which met for Mass and other Services in a private house on West-Ham Lane. On the 22 November 1809 Father Chevrollais signed his first baptismal registrar. Soon he

appealed for funds and was able to open a small chapel in 1811, *at 252 High Street (la Grande-Rue)*. To this he quickly joined two schools and a presbytery.

On the re-establishment of the Congregation in France in 1816 he went back to Paris to get the advice of the Vicar General who, at his request, allowed him to remain on at Stratford while remaining a full member of the community, ready to return at the call of his superiors. He was not recalled. On the 18 September 1823 he was found dead on his knees in his room.

The well-known Abbé de Franous sang his Requiem Mass, assisted by Mgr Poynter's (*died 26 November 1827*) Secretary and another priest. A sign of the changed times was that his funeral was followed by almost the whole parish from Stratford to St Mary's, Moorefields, where he was laid to rest in the vault constructed for the burial of French priests and where Fr Cardon (*died 15 September 1830*) followed him seven years later.

6) *Charles CORMIER, born at Nontsalès, diocese of Cahors, on 19 February 1750, received at Cahors on 28 April 1771, taking vows there on 17 May 1773, in the presence of M Delmeja. He does not figure in the list of 1785, given in the Annales; as we only find there the names of the superiors for the houses of the provinces of Lyons and Aquitaine, this proves nothing. We note, in passing, that the superior who heard his vows was, in 1785, in Rodez, in the province of Aquitaine. Plasse mentions a 'Cormier' coming from Chartres – but with no other indication – who died in England in 1798; and the necrology list of the 'Laity's Directory' indicates, for the period from 1 September 1798 to 1 September, 1799, a 'Cormier, priest, Chartres'. At that time, we had at least two houses in Chartres: the major and minor seminaries. This identification is not without issue and would need to be confirmed by further research. Plasse is not always complete. Charles Cormier is listed as being alive in December 1804, in the nomination lists of M Brunet, Vicar General CM.*

7) *Charles-Joseph DARTHE, born in St Pol in the diocese of Boulogne on 25 October 1752, received in Paris on 2 June 1770 and made his vows there two years later, in the presence of M Chalamel. In 1785 he was at the Seminary of St Firmin. The Revolution, however, seems to have found him in Ile Bourbon (and the Ile-de-France) where he was Prefect Apostolic. Returning home via South America, the French ship on which he travelled was captured by the British and Father Richenet, on his way to China from London on a British ship, was in port at the same time in Rio de Janeiro. In a letter to Fr Boullangier in London dated*

from Canton on the 26th April 1800, Fr Richenet asks him to explain to Father Darthé why he could not see him: he made two attempts, one via the British authorities, one via the Portuguese Viceroy, who was acting for his father, and both were refused; he had therefore to be content with sending a message by the chaplain who visited the ship to say Mass for the prisoners. Father Darthé was taken to England by his captors and there released, probably in London (but after that there is no more trace of him in the sources available at the moment). *Between 1802 and 1808, he had retired to the Sisters house at Saint-Omer.*

8) *Augustin DELGORGUES, born in Halley in the diocese of Amiens on 14 November 1760, received in Paris 17 August 1779, making vows there on 28 August 1779, in the presence of M Julienne. In 1785, he is attached to the professorial staff of the major seminary of Amiens, under the direction of M Ferris.*

At the start of the Revolution, he took refuge in Denmark, at Altona, where he made the acquaintance of an English lady of old Catholic stock, the dowager Lady Clifford, who took an interest in him, and from then on never ceased to offer great help to the priests of the Company that she was to meet. During his stay at Altona, M Delgorgues often received long letters from the confreres in China; they have been reproduced in the Memoires, Tome 3. In 1801, he was in London. M Brunet, Vicar General of the Congregation, wrote to him on 29 September 1801, to arrange the travel of confreres who were going to the Orient. After the Revolution, he returned to France: he died in Paris on 15 August 1828. On 19 November, 1827, he had been named the admonitor of the Superior General, M Dewailly.

9) *Jean-Louis-Claude DESESSMENT, born in the parish of St Sulpice in Paris on 24 August 1752: he was received into the Company on 28 October 1770, and made vows there on 19 July 1773, in the presence of M Chalamel. The necrology of the 'Catholic Record Society', p 70, is based on the list of the French ecclesiastics who died in England in 1799, published by the 'Laity's Directory', mentions "Jean-Louis-Claude Desessment, missionary priest, superior of the Seminary of Angouleme". Already a professor at Angouleme, he had in fact been named superior in 1791. Available documents do not allow us to fix a date for his arrival in England (cf Annales, t 64, p 155. J-P-G Blanchet 'The Clergy of Charent during the Revolution' Barbezieux, 1898, pp 59, 448)*

10) *Lazare-Marius DUMAZEL (was a native of Apt (Vaucluse) whose death only is recorded in the Catalogue). During the Revolution he emi-*

grated first to Altona, then to Hamburg and finally to Italy where we find him in Ferrara and Rome. There his friends tried to dissuade him from going to China, whither he was bound, and he was talked back into his own resolution by Fr Ferris. He came from Italy to London and from there sailed to China on 1 May 1800, where he worked with Fr Hanna and Blessed Clet, and where he died, in Peking, on 15 December 1818. (He figures largely in the *Memoires sur le Chine*.)

11) *DUVAL*. *Joseph Gillow's great work Bibliographic Dictionary of English Catholics, has the following entry; Duval, French Lazarist Father, for many years attached to the French prison at Stapleton, near Bristol, where he died on 9 March 1814, at the age of eighty-four. Mgr Collingridge held him in great esteem.*

Gillow attributes to him a work entitled 'Letter to a Quaker; the doctrine of the Quakers refuted' as well as 'Response to a letter; are the Quakers right?, no date.

It is impossible to find out more about him. No Duval is mentioned in the Catalogue that might be identified with him; there is no Duval in the 1785 list in the Annales.

12) *Marie-Joseph-Augustin Frémont received into the seminary in 1773, vows in Paris on 9 December 1775, in the presence of M Pronez, died in London on 11 October 1797. In 1785 he was at St Méen. Plasse omits 'Augustin' and mention the death 'in England' of Frémont (sic), Marie-Joseph, missionary priest, came to England from Noyon (the Congregation had a seminary there from 1662) and gives the death as 1798: but Plasse has a tendency to give as the year of death the year during which the event is announced in the necrology of the 'Laity's Directory'; this work mentions as dying between 1 September 1797 and 1 September 1798: Marie-Joseph-Augustin Frémont, missionary priest, Noyon.*

13) Jean-Pierre-Gabriel GONDOUIN was born at Merlerault, in the diocese of Lisieux on 15th November 1749. He was received at Paris on 3 December 1768; *made vows on 4 December 1770, in the presence of M Bossu*. He was at Tours in 1785 and, in September 1788, he was named superior at Luçon.

Plasse records in London in 1793, a Jean-Pierre Gondorcin, Superior of a Seminary, who came there from Luçon. The Congregation had a parish and mission-house in Luçon since 1786, and the confusion of names is easily explained by the difficulty of deciphering handwriting when one has no clue as to what it should be. (There is no further trace of him in the printed sources but he may yield to research.)

14) *François GARNIER, born in Laval in the diocese of Le Mans on 14 April 1750, received in Paris on 14 June 1769, he made vows there on 15 June 1771, in the presence of M Charbonnel. Plasse indicates as being in London, from Paris, in 1802; Garnier, François, Priest of the Mission. He was to return to France. In 1808, he was first curate, in the parish of the Missions Etrangères in Paris.*

15) *François-Joseph MAGNY, born in Lure in the diocese of Besançon on 11 November 1734, received in Paris on 20 February, 1755, pronounced vows on 21 February 1757, in the presence of M Cossart. In 1785, he was in the seminary at Tréguier, and remained while the Revolution struck. The 'Laity's Directory' of 1801 registers his death in England (in 1799), without exact date.*

16) *Jean-François RICHENET, born at Petit-Noir in the diocese of Besançon, on 4 September 1759, was received in Paris on 22 May 1781 and pronounced vows thereon 23 May 1783, in the presence of M Julienne. Between 1786-91, he was procurator at the major seminary of St Pol de Léon; he accompanied his superior, M Chantrel, to England, arriving in Great Britain in 1796, after a stay on Jersey. M Richenet left for China on 1 May 1800, aboard the 'Dorsetshire'. He was to return to Paris, in 1815, for the reestablishment of the Community in France. Visitor of the province of France in 1829, M Jean-François Richenet was third assistant to the Superior General (M Nozo) in 1835. M Boullangier, of whom we have already spoken, was, at that time, second assistant. Both had already been members of the Assembly which, in 1819, had named M Boujard Vicar General. M Richenet died in Paris on 19 July, 1836. Cf Nouvelle Revue de Science Missionnaire, Beckenried (Switzerland) 1955, p 47.*

Besides the (six) confreres dealt with above (and the other eight already referred to), there are also traces of other names which may prove on further investigation to be those of exiled confreres working in England at that time. It seems fairly certain that the *Minutes of the Committee for the Relief of French Ecclesiastics* and of the lists they kept of people aided by the British Government of the time will yield the names of others. (Among those figuring in the printed records available at the moment, which could be those of confreres, are the names of Louis NOEL who assisted at a wedding in Lincoln's Inn Field's Chapel on 7th August, 1797; Etienne FLEURY, who could be the French exiled priest who was baptising Irishmen (!) in the 'Fencibles'; François-LANGOLIS, Jean-Jacques-Joseph COMBES, Martin-Louis FRANCOIS and Jean-Olivier DUVAL who all died in England between March and August,

1793 (Duval sometime before 1793.) *There still remains work for patient, methodical and careful researchers.*

Complimentary Notes;

Apart from the details and clarification inserted above in M Twomey's text, we add here, as a supplement, some other details.

Further research may clarify various points in these sixteen biographical notes. It is a departure point for attentive and detailed investigations.

F Combaluzier

- (1) *“M Boullangier, refugee in England, after the massacres of September 1792, which he escaped in Paris and Versailles, worked for many years in London in the office of the King of France, directed by M the Duke of Harcourt. He was frequently tasked with seeking out the generals and royalist envoys, either of the Vendée or of the other royal armies of France, who came to London, and to sometimes bring them, with M Caron, monetary help, on behalf of Monsieur, the brother of the King.*

He was entrusted with the honourable mission of going to seek and accompany the venerable confessor of Louis XVI. He was also honoured with the mission of going to Uxbridge to attend on Monsieur, on his return from Edinburgh, with Mgr the Bishop of Leon, and M the Count François d'Elear. Monsieur, the brother of the King, had the goodness to say to him; “M l'Abbé, we both know, my brother and I, of the zeal with which you serve us; we are most pleased with it and I hope soon to have the pleasure of demonstrating to you our satisfaction”

(Handwritten note of Gabriel Perboyre, Archives of the Mission)

- (2) *There are some notable letters of M Boullangier to his compatriot from Besançon, M Claude François Létondal (1753-1813), of the Missions Etrangères of Paris, procurator at Macao, in the ‘Archives des missions étrangères de Paris’ vol 312, p 425 (London, 6 March 1798); p 469 (12 March 1796); p 583 (12 April 1798); p 595 (9 July 1798); p 599 (16 July 1798); p 603 (9 October 1798); p 607 (1 March 1799); p 621 (20 February 1800); p 725 (10 April 1802) etc...*
- (3) *In a version of the New Testament (preserved in the Library at the Maison-Mère: A 73) Novum Testamentum vulgatae editionis juxta exemplum Parisiis editum apud fratres Barbou, sumptibus Academiae Oxoniensis in usum Cleri gallicani in Anglia exulantis, cura et studio quorundam ex eodem clero*

Wintoniae commorantium. Oxonii, e typographæo Clarendoniano MDCCXCVI. On a protective cover, which has since disappeared but of which a copy is preserved, M Boullangier had written; 'Boullangier, Priest of the Mission of Saint Lazare, deported to England on 23 September 1792, for refusing to take the Civil Oath demanded of the French Clergy, returned to France on 19 September 1802. Given by the Doctors of the University of Oxford.

- (4) *In the list of the goods of emigrants, M Boullangier is noted as possessing goods to the amount of 2,400 livres. Fontenay-le-Chateau, by Abbé Constant-Auguste Olivier, Epinal, 1884, in-8, p 148 – on 3 June 1805, M Boullangier was present at Fontenay, for the blessing of the chapel of St George (ibid, p 225)*
- (5) *Procurator General at St Lazare, in 1817 (the Vincentians established themselves and entered the house at 95, Rue de Sèvres, on 9 November 1817), by 1827 M Boullangier was second assistant to M Pierre Dewaill (sic), Superior General (16 January 1827 – 23 October 1828). He was superior (assistant, according to the official nomenclature as the Superior General was, officially, Superior) of the Maison-Mère from 19 August 1827 to 31 August 1835.*

M Boullangier died in Paris on 1st December 1843 and is buried in the cemetery of Vaugirard (Rue Lecourbe), where the confreres of the house (95 Rue de Sevres) used to be buried. On 14 April 1885 (see Annales de la Congrégation de la Mission, tome 50, pp 341-352), the remains of M Boullangier, as well as those of Frs Brunet, Placiard, Hanon, Verbert, Boujard, de Wailly and Salthorghne, were transferred from the said cemetery at Vaugirard to the cemetery of Montparnasse, in the present burial place of the Congregation of the Mission.

- (6) *Jacques Cardon. His name is noted in the work of the Marquis, Regis-Marie-Joseph de l'Estourbeillon de la Garnache; The French Families in Jersey during the Revolution, Nantes, in-8, viii-680, We read there: p 300, Cardon, priest, professor in the seminary of Tréguier; p 304, Chantrel (Maurice-François), superior of the seminary of Léon; p 308, Chevrolais, priest, professor in the seminary of Tréguier; p 367, Haméon, J-B, Lazarist priest, of the parish of Gausson in the diocese of St Briec; p 440, Magny, N, Lazarist of the diocese of Tréguier; p 454, priest of the diocese of St-Pol de Léon.*

- (7) *Pierre Carré, born in Clermont in the diocese of Verdun on 14 October 1759, received into the seminary in Paris on 11 October 1777, making vows there on 12 October 1779, in the presence of M Foursy, director of the internal seminary. In 1792, he was procurator in the major seminary in Poitier*
- (8) *On Darthe, see: Nouvelle Revue de science missionaire. Beckenried (Switzerland), 1954, pp 265-266.*
- (9) *Dumazel, Lazare-Marius, born in Roussillon in the diocese of Apt on 13 November 1769, received into the seminary in Lyons on 16 February 1785, make vows there on 19 November 1787, in the presence of M Daudet. Cf Ami de la Religion, tome 26 (1821), p 333.*
- (10) *In his typed work; Biographical Notes; Lazarist Missionaries in China, from 1699 to 1934, M Henri Crapez gives this note on M Dumazel, n 39:*

“Dumazel, Jean-Baptiste, was a native of Rousillon, near Apt, in the department of Vaucuse. When the Revolution broke out in France, Italy served as a refuge for him and it was while in Rome that he received his mission to China. Many of his family and compatriots, who were also living in the capital of the Christian world, made major efforts to turn him from this voyage; but the generous missionary only taking into account the merit of obedience, persevered in his resolution that he was called on to bring the Gospel to China. He left from England on 1st May 1800, with another Lazarist, M Richenet, on an English ship that was part of a fleet of six vessels, which had to navigate the journey slowly. After a long crossing, the arrived at Macao, in the month of February 1801.

Destined for Peking, but with no hope of arriving there, in 1806, after a fruitless wait of five years, he was sent to Hou Kouang, with M Clet. In order to get there, he went through Cochinchine, where three complicated illnesses, dysentery, kidney stones and dropsy, reduced him to extremities, until he found himself suddenly cured on 27 September 1807, on the day of the anniversary of the death of St Vincent de Paul. He continued on through Tonkin, Seu Tchoan and rejoined M Clet at Hou-Kouang, in 1810. His health, already compromised, did not take long to succumb to the works to which he submitted himself. It also seems that to bodily maladies were added to those of the spirit. Mgr Baldus, Vicar Apostolic of Honan, in a letter of 26 December 1861, said that this virtuous missionary was strongly tormented by interior trials. The

letters of M Clet, he adds, suggest it, especially as follows: that M Dumazel, alone, took more effort to direct than the whole province of Houpe. M Dumazel was, nevertheless, a tireless worker: he often preached and spoke against laziness as the queen of all vices and, in order to give example along with precept, he was always usefully occupied and when not constantly occupied with the work of the spirit, he undertook certain useful manual labours, either for the chapel or for the house.

In 1817, he was attacked while on mission by a kind of typhoid fever: during his illness he always maintained a happy and tranquil demeanour. Being already close to death and learning that certain sick people sought the sacrament of Extreme Unction, he had them brought to his bedside, in order to administer it to them himself. On the evening before his death, God, in order to increase the virtues of his soul, permitted him to be assailed again by great interior trials which drew these words from the dying man; "Oh! How terrible the demons are!" But he soon calmed and gave his soul back to God on 4th day of the first moon of the 25th year of Kia King (15 December 1816). He was assisted in his last moments by M Paul Song, who travelled 40 leagues. His burial place is in Sse-keou-ho (Houpe).

- (11) About M Gondouin, we find the following note in Edgard Bourlouton: *The Clergy of the Vendée during the Revolution, Vannes, 1908, t 1, pp 97-98.*

The Superior of the Seminary (at Luçon), Jean-Gabriel Gondouin was also a Lazarist. He was unwilling to take the schismatic oath and left for exile, we do not know from which port he embarked. The only information on his story are found in two letters of Mgr de Mercy to M Paillou (Vicar General of La Rochelle), that of 17 June 1801 says: M Gondouin and several priests who live in England are available to come to my diocese when they get passports. If M Gondouin arrives, which will not be so soon, it will be necessary to settle him in a pleasant situation and to remember the respect which the place which he held in my diocese merits.

The other letter is of 14 October 1801: I have heard nothing further of M Gondouin.

There is nothing to indicate that the former superior of the seminary did return to the diocese. He was still living in 1809, since on 24 May, he had an 'Notaries Act' made, which is useful to reproduce in terms of the information it contains:

“Today, 24 May 1809, were gathered before our person, the Mayor of the Town and Commune of Luçon:

1°Mr (Le sieur) Martin-François Sicard, priest, parish priest of this town, aged 55 years, former inhabitant of this commune, well respected, and of good name, who declared that he knew well that Mr Jean-Gabriel Gondouin, of the Congregation of Priests of St Lazare, was, in 1790, superior of the seminary of Luçon, that he appeared to be about 40 years old then and that he had worked for several years in the said Congregation.

Having read a copy of his declaration, he said that it was true, affirmed it and signed; Sicard, Parish Priest of Luçon

2° Mr Pierre Delestre, teacher, aged 59 years;

3°Mr Pierre Albert, ex-porter of the seminary, aged 44 years;

4°Mr Pierre Martineau, sacristan, aged 46.

Of all these statements, declarations and affirmations, we, Mayor of Luçon, have brought together in this present act;

Signed; POICTEVIN

Seen at Fontenay, in order to be legalised, 29 May 1809.

CAVOLEAU, secr.gen

Seen by us, auditor of the Counsel of State, prefect of the Vendée

To Napoleon, 6 June 1809,

Signed; BARANTE

- (12) *About M Richenet, M Henri Crapez, op cit, note 10, has inserted the following :*

“...He arrived in Macao, with M Dumazel on 16 February 1801. Intended for Peking, he waited in vain for five years to get there. Having reached, with M Dumazel, the border of Tchely, he received orders, on 18 September 1805, to return to Canton, where M Ghislain had decided to place him as replacement for M Minguet, as bursar.

Following a new persecution, M Richenet went to live at the seminary of St Joseph in Macao, where he was put in charge of procuracy for the Missions, to the development of which he applied himself with ardour and devotion. On 20 August 18097, an imperial edict established him in Canton as procurator for the Mission of Peking. In 1815, he returned to France to promote the Chinese Missions. His age and infirmities restricted him to Paris, where he became assistant to the Superior General and was named director of the Daughters of Charity, an office which he fulfilled with devotion, always

concerning himself with the Mission in China, right up to his death, which came on 19 July 1836. He was aged 76 and had lived 58 years in the Congregation.

- (a) *In the Archives des Missions Etrangères de Paris, volume 312, pp 705-706, there is a letter from M Richenet of 29 May 1801, addressed to M Létondal, procurator of the MEP, in Macao.*
- (b) *On 11 July 1815, in London, M Richenet wrote to M Hanon, telling him that he had arrived in London a fortnight beforehand and that he proposed to go on to Paris without delay.*
- (c) *On Richenet, see notice in Biographie Universelle, Dictionnaire Historique by Fr X Feller (1849 edition) tome VII, p 239*

Sources:

(where further bibliographical detail is given in the French text, this is in bold italics)

Annales de la Congrégation de la Mission, tome 108-109, (1944).

a) pp 311-317 Catalogue de la Congrégation de la Mission en 1785.

b) Table Alphabétique des Auteurs et des éléments de biographies, (1834-1937)

c) Mémoires de la Congrégation de la Mission, (**Lazaristes**) **La Congrégation de la Mission en Chine**, vol. III, 1912. **Tome III, Paris, 758 p**

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Provincial Assembly of the Irish Province

5-9 November 2018

Drumalis Retreat and Conference Centre, Larne, Co Antrim

Monday 5th November

SESSION ONE

Following a celebration of the Eucharist, presided over by the Visitor, P Scallon, the Assembly opened with a period of prayer led by E Curran and the hymn 'Veni Creator Spiritus'. There followed a presentation and the formal opening of the Assembly by the Visitor. After this, all present signed the register.

E Curran, on behalf of the Organising Committee, introduced the election of the Secretary of the Assembly and was, himself, returned unanimously.

M. McCullagh and P Roche were elected Moderators. The Directory and the Timetable of the Assembly were proposed and accepted.

On behalf of the Organising Committee, E Curran proposed Cora Lambert as Facilitator for the Assembly and this was accepted unanimously.

There followed a presentation by C Lambert who introduced her role and raised a number of questions for the members of the Assembly.

- * Have there been times when you have been afraid – when you tried to hold on?
- * If this Assembly is asking me to let go of the shore, how might that be for me?
- * Who is with me? Who has my back? Who is my support? Who could I give thanks for just now?
- * How would I be different if I banished the word 'struggle' from my attitude and my vocabulary? What would be free to emerge in me if struggle were gone?
- * We are the ones we have been waiting for; can we trust that God's providence is in that?
- * What do you hear in 'Go, put out into deep water!' As your call or invitation to contribute to the work of the Assembly?

Tuesday 6th November

SESSION TWO

P Scallon made a presentation on the state of the Province and raised a number of issues and questions for the members of the Assembly.

The topics that surfaced were;

- There is not a shared continuity in our mission.
- Collaboration; International, Vincentian Family, other groups who work for the poor.
- Let us address our unresolved griefs.
- Accountability re decision at last assembly.
- International confreres are part of our renewal.
- Deepening our sense of discipleship as mission.
- Recognising the need for vocations; do we really want them?
- Question the current model of care of our elderly confreres; there are, and may be further, differences between Ireland and Britain. We are not sure how Brexit may affect this.
- The only future is in internationalisation; how do we develop this?

We acknowledge our unresolved griefs. Different events have impacted confreres differently; we need to resolve them together – e.g. closing of All Hallows', Dunstable, Cork. P Scallon has noted that they have been a frantic few months.

SESSION THREE

Presentation by Linda Downes, Financial Administrator of the Province, on the financial situation of the province including UK and Ireland (dealing only with the community houses, not the parishes or schools).

There has been significant decline in terms of pension/salary income and stole fee/supply/Mass stipends. She also noted the effect of sale of land/property at St Paul's and Iona Drive.

There is good control over our expenses and outlay. Eventually, our accounts will be made public under Charity Regulation requirements and we are prepared for that.

Some questions and clarifications were sought from the floor; we don't have liability under the National Redress Scheme but there are amounts which have been paid out – most of the cost being in legal fees.

We have estimated figures allotted to health care, renovation, formation etc but these are not in separate designated funds.

There are contingent liabilities that we must provide for and sums of money have been set aside for this.

We have spent very little on capital investment in the last few years; the WK Nowlan report (conducted by Pat Clarke) will probably make suggestions for such investments. In the past, the costs of maintenance of many of our larger institutions were born by specific trusts.

It was noted that, in the past (2001) significant money was invested in the evangelisation of young people. Is this recorded anywhere? We have access to the yield from the 'Ministries and Mission' portfolio. We note that the sale of lands does affect our actuarial situation.

C Lambert invited the confreres to reflect on what they had heard individually and then to share in their smaller groups.

- * Faith is declining, poverty is increasing; where do we prioritise the allocation of our funds?
- * What can we do in the likelihood of a financial world 'crash'?
- * Care around the known unknowns (Brexit etc.)
- * Gratitude for good stewardship.
- * Prepare for more external/international demand on our finances.
- * Arrange and maintain discretionary funds for missionary initiatives with the Province.
- * Review of income from chaplaincies to boost our financial health.
- * The Province might present the accounts appropriate to the specific audience.

SESSION FOUR

Inputs on various developments in the Province over the past three years

Presentation on Safeguarding by E Curran.

There was a time for discussion, reflection, clarification and questions afterwards. Safeguarding is important most of all in creating safe environments, which facilitate children and adults in coming to know Jesus Christ in a loving and joyful relationship.

Presentation on Healthcare by E Curran.

E Curran outlined recent developments in Health Care in the Province. In Dublin, a Health Care Co-ordinator, E Maher, has been appointed and she currently has two assistants, with a third due to be appointed.

There was a time for discussion, reflection, clarification and questions afterwards. While there is a recently established Health Care Committee which is examining various medical and care needs, it is important for individuals to take responsibility for their own self-care and hygiene and to make us aware of their health conditions and needs.

Presentation on evangelisation project by E Curran.

There was time for discussion, reflection, clarification and questions afterwards. While the project is advancing, it is doing so at a slower pace than anticipated, as we are not the pace-setters in this work and we are called to move in step with the needs of others.

C Lambert then asked the Assembly to consider the question; ‘What is important to remember, record and bring forward to the work of the Assembly as you discern your future directions?’

- Affirm recent CM developments about evangelization.
- To affirm and own what is going on, in conformity with our Vincentian mission.
- We need to improve our communication about what is happening.
- Grief and discipleship.
- International and Vincentian Family collaboration.
- International confreres as part of our renewal.

Wednesday 7th November

SESSION FIVE AND SIX

Presentation by Dr Jessie Rogers, Maynooth.

Dr Rogers began with a reflection that each of us and we as a community are deeply loved by God. We have been called and that God continues to work with us.

The presentation is in two sections; endings and beginnings. She shared her experience of returning to South Africa to lay her mother’s ashes to rest – a sense of a return pilgrimage, to a place that is at once both familiar and strange. This brought a sense of how transient life is; how lightly her story sits on the surface of the world.

Abraham moved from place to place building altars but what happened when he moved on – did the altars just become lonely stones – full of rich stories but without a voice. Some endings just bring about melancholy but others insert themselves deeply in our lives.

For the Old Testament, the deepest sense of loss was the Exile; captured most in Psalm 137.

Her talks are entitled; ‘How can we sing the Lord’s song in a strange land?’

The exile is catastrophic; not something the Israelites can control but something over which they have no control. The psalm comes at the beginning of the exile and we hear both anger and loss mixed with sorrow. The first verse emphasises ‘there’; it is not ‘here’, which is the place they know as home.

This world is not the world or the community that we entered; it is something foreign, different, not meeting the expectations that we had. And the question then is; ‘how can we sing the Lord’s song in a foreign land’? The people decide that they cannot; they must remember Jerusalem, political stability and greatness, and Zion, the holy city, the place where God dwells. They are pining for the glory days. Nostalgia kept the people bound to a Jerusalem that, by that time, no longer existed.

The third stanza expresses the anger and violence of their experience; it gives us permission to pray out of where we are. So often we try to by-pass the violence of these lines. It can be very difficult to work out the difference between grief and rage, between grief and depression, between grief and devastation. Yet, these are the kind of words that we sometimes need to be able to pray. This is permission for us to pray from where we really are.

What prayer would you pray if you knew in the depths of your heart that you had permission to pray honestly? What would you be saying to God now? There may be work there that you need to return to; carve out time and space to really speak to God from this experience.

When we have acknowledged this, then the problem becomes the task; how can we sing the Lord’s song in a strange land? What steps do we need to take to ensure that we can continue to sing the Lord’s song.

There are a few movements that we need to make; the movement from ‘there’ to ‘here’ – not a future as we imagine it but as it is, here and now. Then, just start singing! Eventually, someone must have reached up and taken a harp down. Eventually, they discovered their identity in a foreign land.

They move through anger to praying for the good of the neighbour; note Jeremiah’s letter to the exiles (Jer 29); build houses and live in them, plant gardens and eat what they produce. Pray for the welfare of the place in which you find yourself.

Look also at Ezekiel, who begins by the rivers of Babylon, where he sees a storm-cloud approaching. It is the glory of God coming into exile with God’s people. God is in a chariot – not a fixed place. It is a lot easier to sing the Lord’s song when you realise that God is already in that strange land.

What resources does Vincentian spirituality offer us for singing the Lord’s song, she noted the five Vincentian virtues, especially, mortification, which springs from a generous heart.

We practice mortification by

- Renouncing one good thing in order to do a better thing.
- recognising our goals and channel long our limited energies into achieving themselves.
- learning to let go.

If our hands are open, the Lord can give and the Lord can take. 'Letting go' is leaving hands open so that the Lord can give. It took time for the exiles to realise that the faith was more than the great temple and a Davidic King. It is from the Exile that the Scriptures come; a people reflecting on and feeding faith when they have lost the supports of the past.

Following the session, Dr Rodgers posed this question; of the various things that you have heard; what stays with you and what might the Lord be saying to you? Listen to one another, with empathy but without reacting.

How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land? Now we will look at what is 'here and now'.

It is the Lord's song; so we need to be listening out for what God is doing and we join in. Are we thoroughly convinced that God is at work in the world and that God is already at work in the people and the communities in which we are called to minister? God is not in the '*should have beens*' and '*if onlys*'. The only place that we can start is here; we do not have to go to somewhere else in order to start. We may be called to go to somewhere else but that journey begins with God in this place at this time and in the Church as it is.

It is not the church that has a mission of salvation to fulfil in the world; it is the mission of the Son and the Spirit through the Father that includes the Church (Moltmann). It is not the Vincentians that have a mission of salvation to fulfil in the world; it is the mission of the Son and the Spirit through the Father, that includes the Vincentians.

The signs of hope point to seeds of resurrection already sprouting in this world

When we sing the Lord's song; we sing it to a Vincentian tune. Therefore, it is important to stop often and reflect on who we are as Vincentians. What is the particular calling, tune, charism that God has given to us to sing?

She then drew from a text on our own website:

Our vocation is to be holy, to evangelise the poor and to minister to clergy and work in the formation of those who will serve the people of God.

When, together with other members of the Vincentian Family, we share in the life and goals of the poor, we will discover the presence of the Spirit of the Lord who renews us to speak with them, listen to them, consider them as agents of their own way to liberation. Then we can let ourselves be evangelised by them.

There is a strong sense here of collaboration, both with others in ministry and with those to whom we are called to minister. We then are also ministered to by them.

We talk of a tension between caring for our elderly and mission; is this really a tension? ‘An openness to the weak and needy in our own group helps us to open our hearts to others’ (Jean Vanier). The most needy within our communities are a gift to our mission. They give us the gift of allowing us to be more fully human. They have an active role to play in making this a community that is open to God in the other and that is open to God in the other in ways that are transformative.

What is it that we are called to do in this strange land that is no longer a foreign land but is now our ‘home’; captured by the phrase ‘thy kingdom come’. What are we doing? Do we see the bigger picture? Am I building a wall, digging a hole, filling foundations or building a cathedral? She told the following story:

In the medieval world, a man came upon a group of workmen all busy about their tasks. He asked the first; ‘What are you doing?’ ‘Me, I’m digging a hole’. When he asked the second, he replied ‘I am building a wall’. Another said that he was cutting stone and yet another that he was working with wood. Finally, he asked a young boy, who was doing all the odd jobs of the site, what he was about. ‘I’m building a cathedral’ came the reply.

If I focus on myself, I will be overcome by the enormity of the task.

The poor – and, especially, those made poor – are always with us. And Jesus says; ‘I will never leave you or forsake you: I am with you always, even to the end of time’.

It will be hard as long as we continue to look back to the Jerusalem of the past. What is needed then is the imagination and ability to see what God is doing and how he is inviting us to come along side to assist in this work. Take, for example, the parables; they are a way to look, to see and to be disorientated. What are the fingerprints of God’s grace at work in the world?

For example, there is the story of the mustard seed; a story of inauspicious beginnings. Mustard grows like a weed. This parable speaks of the conscious planting of something that others might seek to weed out. Also, would the farmer be happy to know that the birds are flocking around? If the birds are eating the seeds, the plant might not be fulfilling its potential as the farmer would see it.

Or examine Matthew 13:33; the woman with the yeast in three measures. The yeast gets worked into the flour and, by its working, transforms it. It is an ordinary person doing an everyday task. It is

especially notable that this is a woman – one of the marginalised people. The yeast and three measures should make about 52 loaves – enough to feed a community. Yet for the Jews, yeast was impure – it was not sacred (women had to remove all trace of yeast from the house for Passover). The woman kneads, works, the flour into dough. Who are the surprising people who might be working this yeast? What are we called to do? God is working. We may not be called to go back to Jerusalem

She quoted Pope Francis (*Evangelií Gaudium*):

Faith also means believing in God, believing that God truly loves us, that God is alive, that God is mysteriously capable of intervening, that God does not abandon us and that God brings good out of evil by God's power and God's infinity creativity.

Let us believe the Gospel when it tells us that the kingdom of God is already present in this world and that is always growing, here and there and in different ways like the small seed which grows into a great tree, like the measure of leaven that makes the dough rise and like the good seed that grows amidst the weeds and can always pleasantly surprise us.

The kingdom is here, it returns, it struggles to flourish anew.

Christ's resurrection everywhere calls forth seeds of the new world; even if they are cut back, they grow again for the resurrection is already secretly woven into the fabric of history, for Jesus did not die to rise in vain.

May we never remain on the sidelines of this march of living hope.

How can the Vincentians sing the lord's song here and now and into the future? Of the things that might have struck you, what stays with you, where is the energy? Stay with what arose from you, rather than moving too quickly to what we can do.

Following this C Lambert led the assembled confreres in a reflection on the work of the morning.

The afternoon was free for reflection and recreation.

Thursday, 8 November

SESSION SEVEN

M McCullagh, as Moderator, introduced the work of the morning and the theme of 'discerning our future direction', reminding us of Fr Maloney's work *The Seasons in Spirituality*. We may be in a season of storm, with

choices facing us, but there is no need to fear... the Lord is always with us.

During the first session, confreres were invited to move to the theme around which they had the most energy/enthusiasm; *Discipleship, Mission, Evangelisation, Internationalisation*. Each group was asked to address the question 'How can we sing the Lord's song for that particular theme'.

Discipleship

We aspire to discipleship ourselves (Constitutions and Statutes).

Discipleship does not resonate with contemporary culture.

How do we speak of salvation in a culture where, seemingly, people do not want to be saved or do not express their awareness of needing to be saved.

People do not experience us as being caring, kind and compassionate.

Plenary session

People need to know that they are loved by God. We need to examine our own ideas of, and language around, salvation, sin and baptism.

Mentoring is a word that people can use, e.g. of grandparents.

The real struggle is the perception that core matters are not resonating with people; when people think of Church, they do not experience faith, joy, hope, compassion, mercy etc.

There is almost almost a counter-culture which has assumed the language of compassion, tolerance, justice etc. This was noted especially in the recent referendum on abortion in Ireland.

Pope Francis asked us to stop talking about sex – it is the area where we are least caring and least compassionate.

In the recent past, people looked to the Church for leadership, e.g. the parish's response to refugees in Phibsboro. People no longer want to listen to the wisdom we have to offer.

We have noted the impediments to discipleship in the Ireland today.

The importance of the notion of missionary disciples; people respond to that challenge.

The importance of the Vincentian Family – the importance now of task.

The importance of working as members of the Vincentian family.

Importance of working among ourselves; looking at our own commitment to discipleship. It is important to share our affective experiences and responses to discipleship: sharing of our faith with each other.

We are disciples of a person – not of a church! Are we in love with Jesus Christ?

We are also disciples of others; we have been mentored and formed by others.

We are not alone in this; it is an issue for the whole Church.

SESSION EIGHT

Evangelisation

Our own formation and evangelisation is key; we should revive the Vincentian Family Spirituality Day.

Respect the fact that each of us is an evangeliser, albeit in different ways.

Initiate Pathways in UK.

Engage with young adults already involved in Evangelisation; 'like-to-like' ministry. Support VLM, Micah etc.

Plenary Session

There is variety among us and we have different ways of expressing evangelisation but we are all equally committed.

The Pathways programme could be initiated to do formation with the people in the parish. There is a strong emphasis on evangelisation in Mill Hill Parish. On-going formation for adults is very important.

The challenge is engaging with each other on tasks; communications between one another are poor. For example, do we invite one another to participate in our works etc.

We are dealing with at least three different churches (Ireland, Britain, Northern Ireland); yet in all, there seems to be a lack of programmes in adult faith formation. We have to acknowledge the huge uphill struggle that faces us. How might we engage with the clergy on these matters?

We can work on our own on-going formation; E Curran is available to work with anyone interested in taking this further.

The St Vincent de Paul Society in England and Wales has now more young members than older members; eg *B-attitude* and *Mini-Vinnies*. In the coming year, they will be working with the 18-33 age group.

Young Adults; can we work on a vision for 2030?

Internationalisation

We discovered that we were, in fact, talking about very different things under this heading. What do we, as a group, mean by 'internationalisation'?

Proposal for International FamVin project; setting up a project in the area of migration.

We could follow the model of the vice-province of Cyril and Methodius; CMs from all over the world coming together, in collaboration with other organisations.

Are people who come on international mission members of the Province or not?

International Mission and Support; what are we inviting people to come for? What is the expectation of the existing membership?

We should welcome CMs from around the world to participate in our missions, tasks etc?

The CM ethnic chaplaincy in London – members remain members of their own province.

Implications for vocations and formation; to what are we inviting vocations?

Plenary

At the last General Assembly, there was a proposal about the setting up of an international mission in London;

The CEVIM decided to set up four international missions in Europe; nothing developed for a number of years but it has started to move forward.

Currently, CMs come from their own province for a specific mission; is this the best way forward? Might they come to join the Province and then be sent to a particular mission.

Mission

Should we consider to a specific minority group in our parishes? For example, a new mission to gay people; we need to start small – communication ad intra and ad extra.

This would require a great deal of collaboration.

It would also mean dealing with prejudice, including our own. It raises questions about our own attitudes.

Plenary

Why the option for such a narrow point of mission? Every Christian through baptism is called to membership of the community.

Why do we make a distinction between Mission and Evangelisation; they should be dove-tailed?

Is there also a confusion between Evangelisation and Catechetics?

We need to be conscientised ourselves; sometimes how we comment in community does not reflect an inclusivity or an acceptance of difference amongst us.

There is a danger of people becoming the objects of our ministry/ evangelisation.

This echoes the proposal of the evangelisation group on our own formation; have we ourselves been open to education/formation? How at ease are we in talking about these matters with one another?

SESSION NINE

C Lambert outlined the formulation of Direction Statements for the four groups

- A statement of your ideal future in respect of the theme allotted.
- Written in the present tense (as if it is already in place).
- Grounded in what you know from experience is possible.
- Desired; what is really wanted by your group.
- Provocative: challenges the cultural mindset (eg we're doing that already).
- Is affirmative: describes what you want, not what you don't want.
- Is exciting: written in language that energises the confreres.
- Suggests action: a variety of potential actions, rather than one specific action.

Discipleship

This is the tune to which others put the lyrics.

The Vincentian Family is called by God to share in the mission of Jesus Christ as he invites the people of God to be his disciples.

We are called to serve our poor brothers and sisters in a spirit of kindness, love and compassion.

Evangelisation

Honouring our tradition of being evangelisers:

- We resurrect our tradition of spirituality days.
- We affirm each other in our various of expressions of evangelisation through the manner of our living in community.
- Through our experience of Pathways, we enable and encourage the development of the programme in the UK.
- We engage with young adults already engaged in the work of evangelisation; young SVP, Vinnies, VLM, Micah, Vincentian Volunteers etc.

Internationalisation

The continuation of the mission of the Irish Province is becoming increasingly dependent on support from outside Ireland. Thankfully, the

confreres from other countries working in Ireland are members of our province. Confreres doing further studies in Ireland are now participating in the Vincentian contribution to the whole Irish society.

The Fam-Vin movement which is international is undertaking a mission project around immigration and homelessness.

Mission

We are called to a new outreach to the marginalised and excluded. An attractive and sympathetic service to, for example, gay people, the addicted, to wounded families and migrants.

We engage in respectful and humble accompaniment with them and others, learning and sharing our resources and Vincentian heritage.

C Lambert closed the session by quoting the poem '*Start Close In*' by David Whyte (see conclusion) and the day's work concluded with a celebration of the eucharist. In the absence, due to parish commitments, of the former Visitor, E Devlin, who was to have presided at the Eucharist, it was offered in thanksgiving for his years of service to the Province.

Friday morning

SESSION TEN

This session focused on proposals and submissions from the local assemblies.

The Visitor, P Scallon, addressed a number of the proposals and matters which arose from the Domestic Assemblies. His responses are in italics.

There followed a short presentation by P Gildea on the Pathways Programme in Drumalis and on its future development and needs.

At this point, the Visitor formally closed the Assembly and Eucharist, at which he presided, followed.

Start Close In

Start close in,
 don't take the second step
 or the third,
 start with the first
 thing
 close in,
 the step
 you don't want to take.

Start with
 the ground
 you know,
 the pale ground
 beneath your feet,
 your own
 way of starting
 the conversation.

Start with your own
 question,
 give up on other
 people's questions,
 don't let them
 smother something
 simple.

To find
 another's voice,
 follow
 your own voice,
 wait until
 that voice
 becomes a
 private ear
 listening
 to another.

Start right now
 take a small step
 you can call your own
 don't follow
 someone else's
 heroics, be humble
 and focused,
 start close in,
 don't mistake
 that other
 for your own.

Start close in,
 don't take
 the second step
 or the third,
 start with the first
 thing
 close in,
 the step
 you don't want to take.

*David Whyte, River Flow:
 New and Selected Poems*

OBITUARIES

Fr Thomas (Tom) Woods CM

Fr Tom was a great brother in community, he was a dedicated priest, committed to his Vincentian vocation. To many people he was a good friend and, to a few, he was I know, an incredibly loyal friend.

The last few years were a difficult, painful and confusing time for Tom, illness and confinement did not sit easy with him. Despite the fact that Tom would give you a wonderfully warm welcome, a visit to Tom was for me always tinged with a real sense of regret at the consequences for him of his illness. But Tom had great faith and so we can be confident today that the Lord will overlook his faults and failings and look only on the good he has done in this life and that our friend Tom having completed his priestly mission and ministry on earth is now counted among the angels and saints.

You know, when I worked with Tom, he never spoke much about previous works or ministries: I don't know anything about his time in Nigeria; I know a brief amount about his time in St Paul's; and I have some sense of his time in St Pat's. However, I don't think this matters much when it comes to appreciating Tom and his attitude to life and ministry. Because I would imagine that the Man and the Priest were the same wherever and whenever any of us knew him. So I hope in my own reflections on Tom, I will capture a bit, just a bit, of the Tom each of you knew and admired and indeed loved.

There are three things that mark Tom out for me as a person and as a priest:

- A real desire to communicate the Word of God to people.
- His sense of compassion and sensitivity to those who were ill or struggling.
- And his sense of Justice for equality and inclusion of people, especially those on the margins.

His homilies were often instructional, but it was his life and how he dealt with people that was inspirational. He studied and understood the word of God and wanted to share that with people, but he also lived it and put it into action.

In my first year or two with the Deaf Community, before I was let loose on my own, I used to accompany Tom around the country as he gave retreats to the Deaf, there were hours of preparation, working on his talks, putting them on overheads, trying as best he could to make the

Word of God accessible to everyone who came to the retreat. On such occasions, the teacher, the academic often came out in Tom, his mind was working hard on trying to appreciate and grasp this message, he wanted so badly to share that with others. He felt they were entitled to understand, felt it was an obligation on him not to hog such insight and knowledge, but to share them with everyone. His aim was to try, as the Gospel reminds us today, to make God's name known to people. The great thing about Tom's homilies, for me, was that it meant I didn't have to read the books, I could just borrow his notes.

My first real recollection of Tom was the evening he arrived to the bedside of my mother as she was dying. That was over twenty-one years ago and I didn't know him all that well, though I knew I would be working with him very soon, but had not really any sense of the man, but on that occasion he was very gentle, he was obviously affected by being there and, before he left he offered to say a prayer: his ability to empathise with my family, his confidence in offering a prayer that was heartfelt and sincere impacted on us at that time. He came and went quietly and yet he left an impression, a reassuring and consoling one.

Throughout the time I worked with him in the Deaf Community that was the mark of the man: he was deeply sensitive, not to what others thought of him, but to the situations that others found themselves in, especially to those who were in trouble, who were unwell, who were struggling. I am looking at the Deaf community, and I have no doubt each of them could tell a story similar to myself. He had a natural empathy with people which was core to his priestly ministry.

Still, he also had the ability to celebrate the success and the joy of others, to acknowledge an achievement. There is one (deaf) sign I will associate for ever with Tom, and that is the sign for 'Great': he used it again and again and again, to acknowledge and celebrate good news, some achievement, some joyful event in a person's life. "Great", he said it and signed it and meant it and when he did, it was always heartening and encouraging.

Fr Tom could be angry at times, but it was that sort of justifiable anger, that toppling of the tables in the synagogue kind of anger. If he felt there was any sort of injustice involved in something he would not be able to contain his disapproval or at times outrage. I remember arriving home to the house one evening and as I passed by the community room I heard Tom giving someone a piece of his mind: he was furious and I felt sorry for whoever it was that was at the receiving end. When it seemed that things had calmed down, I knocked on the door and went in, but there was no one in the room except Tom and TV, and he explained that he was just incensed by something Anne Doyle was reporting on the nine o'clock news and he was incapable of sitting as a

silent observer, he was venting his rage at the injustice of the situation. I can't remember what the issue was, but the depth of feeling it generated in Tom was a mark of the man and his sense of right and fairness and justice. His anger was not reserved for a chair in front of the TV – I saw him put it to good effect in the defense of people or causes when it was necessary and when it would have been easier to keep his head down and not get involved. Indeed, I remember him get more offended and upset by something that was once said to me than I did myself: I understood at that moment the meaning of the word 'Ally'.

It was hardly a surprise then for me to learn then that he was in Washington and present when Martin Luther King gave his great speech about justice rolling down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream.

There are many other aspects to Tom's life: his encyclopaedic knowledge of bird species in Ireland; his love of photography; the contributions he made to international Conferences for the Deaf and so on. But, again, for today, the three things that mark Tom out for me as a person and as a priest:

- A real desire to communicate the Word of God to people.
- His sense of compassion and sensitivity to those who were ill or struggling.
- His sense of Justice for equality and inclusion of people, especially those on the margins.

Difficult as his last months and weeks were, we are reassured by the second reading today, that Tom can rest for ever after his work, since his good deeds have gone with him. May he rest in peace. Amen.

I would like to welcome Fr Tom's family and friends, the members of the Deaf Community, other colleagues and acquaintances of Tom from different works over the years, my fellow Confreres and other priests who have joined us here today to celebrate the life of Tom Woods and to assist him on his journey back to God with our prayers. I would like to say a special word of thanks to the staff in Rickard House: I saw first-hand the care and attention they gave to Tom. I have no doubt this made a difficult transition into illness and care that little more bearable for him. I know I will be in trouble for mentioning the next name, but given Tom's sense of fairness, it would be wrong not to: Fr Aidan Galvin who accompanied Tom through his illness and gave him so much companionship and support – maybe you need to realise that is not something we, as your confreres, take for granted.

Stephen Monaghan CM

TOM WOODS CM

Born: Coalisland, Co Tyrone, 19 May 1935
Entered the CM: 7 September 1953
Vows: 8 September 1958
Ordained Priest: 27 May 1961 in Holy Cross College, Clonliffe by
Dr John Charles McQuaid

APPOINTMENTS:

1961-'65: St Paul's College, Raheny
1965-'81: St Patrick's College, Drumcondra
1981-'85: St Justin's, Ogobia, Nigeria
1985-'88: St Peter's, Phibsborough
1988-'94: Park View
1994-2008: Iona Drive
2008-'11: St Paul's, Raheny (living in Rickard House)

Died: 21 October 2011
Buried: Coalisland, Co Tyrone

Funeral of Fr Andrew (Andy) Spelman CM

One of the stained glass windows behind the sanctuary here in St Peter's (Phibsboro) is dedicated to the Archangels: Gabriel, Raphael and Michael. We had it repaired and conserved last year as part of the restoration work in progress now.

We are familiar with Gabriel whose name means 'the strength of God'. Gabriel is the one who tells Mary that she is going to have a child she must name Jesus.

Raphael is not as familiar maybe. He appears in the book of Tobit and accompanies the young Tobias on his quest to deliver Sarah, his future wife, from the demon Asmodeus. Raphael means 'the healing of God'.

The Archangel Michael is more familiar to us. His name is actually a question, asking: 'Who is like God?' It was the war cry of the angels who fight to defeat Satan and implies that no-one is like God in spite of Satan's attempts to make himself such.

Michael is often shown as a warrior, wearing armour and raising a sword to deal the death blow to a fierce and writhing serpent of monstrous size and obvious malice. Michael is an immensely powerful figure, protective and aggressive, and in the religious imagination of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, he is the Prince of the Heavenly Host, but with a name that asks, 'Who is like God?' Michael is a paradox.

Fr Spelman's first name was Michael... and on the surface of things that's probably where the comparison with his archangel namesake ends. On the surface of things it would be hard to imagine Michael Andrew Spelman, our brother and confrere, wearing armour and brandishing a sword unless they were made of tinfoil and Andy had dressed up for a pageant as he sometimes did but even then only to appear as a very dodgy wizard whose tendency to laugh all the time messed up his three card trick routines.

But the Archangels speak to us, as messengers of God of the things of God, reminding us that in God there is healing and strength to name but two aspects of God's love and in the case of the Archangel Michael, whose name asks, 'Who is like God?' there is an insight on something that deeply marks our relationship with God namely that even before we acknowledge and bow in humility before the wonder of God, God liberates us and lets us go even at the risk of losing us. The humility of the Archangel Michael recognises God is God and there is no other, certainly not one whose creation is so profoundly free.

Our faith is a deep paradox because so much of what we believe seems to contradict almost everything our instincts tell us. Our instincts, religious and otherwise do not easily accept, for example, that there can be humility in God who is, after all, almighty and transcendent but if we say with St John that God is love and read then in St Paul's letter to the Corinthians that love, or God, does not seek his own interests, then we begin to glimpse the nature of this God who is so... respectful.

All of us who knew Andy Spelman would have become aware of how the paradox at the heart of our faith played out and came to a high degree of resolution in his life and person. No-one is going to erect a marble, martial statue in honour of Michael Andrew Spelman. The very thought of his small bespectacled head protruding from the neckline of an armoured breastplate is just absurd but the reference to the Archangel Michael in the book of Daniel does also refer to the sort of man Andy was because it says, 'The learned will shine as brightly as the vault of heaven, and those who have instructed many in virtue, as bright as the stars for all eternity.'

Andy was a most gifted man who carried his intelligence and his learning very lightly and doing so brought his giftedness to the threshold of wisdom. I like to think that after we had reposed his remains in the chapel of adoration on Sunday evening and had set the crucifix and lit the candles, we placed his hat nearby, not entirely out of mischief but also in recognition that he was a wise man, an elder, one who will shine in the vault of heaven because he shone on earth.

Whether as a teacher in Castleknock and Armagh, as chaplain to student teachers and nurses, as spiritual director to praesidia of the Legion of Mary, or as a pastor, his work and all the people he befriended in these appointments speak of him as a loveable man who rejoiced himself in relationship with others. He needed and thrived in the company of other people. He did not force himself on others; there was a humility in him which had a touch of timidity but it liberated others. In Andy's company you felt free to stay or go and felt, on account of that, drawn all the more to him. His light touch might have risked losing those who met him but it was actually a most attractive characteristic. His breezy, 'Cheery!' was no Adieu; it wasn't even au revoir. The chances were you'd meet him within minutes looking for his hat or stick and calling himself an eejit.

Which is why the words of Jesus in St John's gospel are, I hope, encouragement to him and to us now; 'All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I shall not turn away. The will of him who sent me is that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me.'

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam usail, dhílis.

MICHAEL ANDREW SPELMAN CM

Born: Sligo, 30 March 1920

Entered the CM: 7 September 1938

Vows: 8 September 1940

Ordained Priest: 26 May 1946 at Holy Cross College, Clonliffe
by Dr John Charles McQuaid, Archbishop of Dublin

APPOINTMENTS

1946-'50: St Vincent's Castleknock College

1950-'70: St Patrick's College, Armagh

1970-'79: St Mary's, Lanark

1979-'85: St Joseph's, Blackrock

1985-2012: St Peter's, Phibsborough

Died: 25 October 2012

Buried: Glasnevin Cemetery

Father Simon (Sam) Clyne CM

You can take the boy out of the country but you cannot take the country out of the boy. Of no one is this saying truer than of Father Simon Clyne CM, known universally as 'Sam' throughout his life. He first saw the light of day in Clara, County Offaly on the 28th January 1934, and Clara and its customs, traditions, culture and ways was the touchstone for his life. He consistently judged everything by the practical, down-to-earth common sense and wisdom of the countryside.

The saying also refers to the community one hales from. Sam was born in a family of eight children, four boys and four girls. The four boys 'lit up College life during the fifties' according to the Castleknock Chronicle: Hugh, the oldest, who graduated in 1951, Sam and John in 1952 and Owen in 1957. Notably, in the light of his subsequent career, Sam was appointed Head Prefect in his final year at school, and also was a stalwart centre on the College Senior Cup Team which reached the final of the Leinster Cup that year, beating Blackrock in the first round but falling to Terenure in the Final.

At home, the Clyne boys and girls (Margaret, Bidy, Mary and Anne) must have been a lively lot, too. Sam clearly benefitted from his upbringing amidst the camaraderie of a vivacious and spirited family. As anyone who was close to him throughout his life would know, Sam was confident and outgoing in company. He could regale his company with stories and tales, cite appropriate proverbs and sayings in Irish and English, and always kept close in touch with his brother and the homestead in Clara. Staying close to the soil and one's roots is safe and solid and secure and, you might say, supportive. Sam was assured as a person, optimistic in disposition, and gregarious in nature, while being deeply concerned and solicitous for others.

Sam Clyne entered the Vincentians in St Joseph's Blackrock, on the 7 September 1952 and attended UCD studying for the BA until 1956. His next four years were spent in theological studies at St Kevin's, Glenart, Arklow. Simon Clyne was ordained priest on the 11th June 1960 at Clonliffe by Archbishop McQuaid. After ordination, he was sent to Rome to study Philosophy at the Angelicum. In the following year, he moved to St Benet's Hall, Oxford University for the BA and MA degrees. During his Oxford studies he had been a member of the Drumcondra Vincentian community so it was appropriate that in 1964 he was appointed to the teaching staff of St Patrick's College Drumcondra. There he remained, with a two year interval for further study, for the next thirty five years.

He used to recount the story of celebrating his very first Benediction in St Patrick's College with two hundred lads 'training' to be primary school teachers in the early 1960s. He attempted to intone the verse and prayer in Latin: *Omne delectamentum in se habentem*. Whatever talents with which the Good Lord had endowed Sam, singing was not one of them. In a chapel full of young men with strong true voices (who had passed a singing examination to achieve college entry) Sam was badly shown up. When he left the chapel to go to the refectory while walking along the corridor, one of the young men came up beside him and said in his ear: "It's well seeing how you got in at the top!"

Sam quickly became part of the warp and woof of St Pat's life at all levels. He was bursar during the final part of the building programme in the 1960s, acted as House-Master in the student residences, and held a number of academic posts through the years. He was an enthusiastic participant in the national reform of the Primary School Curriculum, and the subsequent revolution in Irish primary school teaching, the foundation for the expansion and flowering of the Irish Educational System at all levels from 1968.

At the turn of the 1980s, he took time out to pursue a PhD in Boston College in Educational Administration. This fitted him with the appropriate academic background and administrative mileage before succeeding to the Presidency of the College in 1984 after Father John Doyle. During his term as President, it fell to him to navigate troubled waters for Church and College, education and country, where his sagacity and prudence, political nous and life experience were severely tested. The ship sailed safely on...

His not-inconsiderable achievement was in presiding in the late 1990s over the transition from religious administration to lay management in St Patrick's College. Other transitions lay ahead for College and University, but they all depended upon this one being successfully negotiated. Again the ship sailed safely on...

In 1999, Sam retired from the Presidency of St Patrick's to take up the Presidency of his own old school, St Vincent's College, Castleknock. He was President of Castleknock for seven years. Then at Morning Prayer, in 2006, he suffered a severe stroke. After hospital care, he was admitted to the Sacred Heart Residence in Raheny administered by the Little Sisters of the Poor. One consolation for him was that it was just across the Road from the Vincentian Community House at St Paul's on Sybil Hill. In the early years, he could make it across the road on his own, but later on, even that short journey was hazardous and difficult.

Sam's speech and linguistic powers were badly impaired, and it was painful to see one who stored up in his mind so many narratives and anecdotes, and was such a genius at telling them, reduced to phrases and

gestures and smiles and nods. It was very frustrating for him, and was such a huge loss to his visitors, family, confreres and many friends. This was the time when he should have been passing on the torch, keeping the rumour going, telling the stories, as he recalled and celebrated the events and people and experiences in his long and fruitful life. But the *seanchai's* tongue was stilled. It seemed to us that he was suffering his Purgatory on earth. His faith in Providence and God's redemption, we hoped, afforded him some support and joy but the suffering was all too evident.

If one pole in Sam's life was his attachment to the Irish countryside, the other pole was his Catholic faith. He was a priest forever. Again, he often told us that when his father left him to Blackrock, on September 3rd 1952, the pair of them had attended a coursing meeting earlier in the day. Then in the evening when his father saw the interior of St Joseph's Seminary, he turned to Sam: "This is a mad house. Sam, when you want to get out of here, just you come home!" But Sam really wanted to be a priest, and he stayed, and made being a priest the core of his being. He was a pastor to his fingertips and toenails. He brought the good news of salvation to multitudes of students and colleagues and friends along with the lift of heart and word of joy that lights up lives.

Sam died quietly in the late evening of Thursday, 22 January 2015 in the Sacred Heart Residence. Ní feichimid a leithéad arís. We shall not see his likes again.

Joe McCann CM

SIMON (SAM) CLYNE CM

Born: Clara, Co Offaly, 28 January 1934
Entered the CM: 7 September 1952
Vows: 8 September 1957
Ordained Priest: 11 June 1960 at Holy Cross College, Clonliffe,
Dublin by Dr John Charles McQuaid,
Archbishop of Dublin

APPOINTMENTS:

1960-'61: St Joseph's, Blackrock
1961-'99: St Patrick's, Drumcondra; President, 1994-1999
1999-2006: St Vincent's Castleknock College – President
2006-'15: St Paul's, Raheny (Sacred Heart Residence)

Died; 22 January 2015
Buried; Deansgrange Cemetery

Homily by Fr Joseph McCann
at the funeral Mass for Sam
in the Church of Our Lady of Divine Grace,
St Patrick's College Drumcondra

The Gospel of St Luke: Jesus picks his twelve apostles:

Now during those days he went out to the mountain to pray; and he spent the night in prayer to God. And when day came, he called his disciples and chose twelve of them, whom he also named apostles: Simon, whom he named Peter, and his brother Andrew, and James, and John, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James son of Alphaeus, and Simon, who was called the Zealot, and Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

As Jesus selected his apostles, he ended up with two pairs of brothers in the group: Simon and his brother Andrew and John and James the sons of Zebedee.

Jesus also chose three pairs of apostles with the same name: James brother of John and James son of Alphaeus; Judas son of James and Judas Iscariot who became a traitor. Lastly Simon who was called the Zealot and Simon to whom he gave the new name Peter.

Jesus faced a problem all teachers have: A new class of students. How can I absorb the names? Make sense of what is now just a list. Know which face goes with which name.

Recall the background of each student. Where he is from? Whose family is she? What abilities do they have? Which one is the musician, the athlete, the talker, the leader. Absorb the network of relationships that defines a group. And so Jesus gave a new name to one of the Simons. I suspect that one reason was so he could tell the two Simons apart.

We are saying goodbye to Simon. But he is universally known as Sam. I asked his family how he got the name, and they said he was always called 'Sam'. Simon is a traditional name in the Clyne family. Sam's grandfather was Simon. But he was also known as Sam in Clara and Sam inherited both names and kept them!

He came to Castleknock as Sam and moved on to the Vincentian Seminary at St Joseph's Blackrock to Glenart, Rome, Oxford and St Pat's as Sam. And as Sam, he remained for forty years here at Colaiste Phadraig. To the boys in the primary school, to teachers, lecturers and students in the College from hedgers to gents, Pats men and Pats women,

inspectors, principals, department officials, union reps, Vincentians, the diocese, from low down to high up, in English or in Irish, he was Sam. And that was the way he wanted it.

For a name is a self identity as well as a reference. A reference distinguishes us from others, indeed. That's Sam over there, we say. But a name also speaks for the mysterious personality within. Jesus called Simon by the nickname Peter, Cephas which means Rock. And Jesus went on to announce that this man would be the foundation stone for his church and that the gates of hell would not prevail against it. Simon, by the way, means in Hebrew 'he who listens intently'. And Sam (short for Samuel) means 'one of God'. Both names are certainly appropriate for our Sam. Simon is probably a bit too formal. Sam sounds more down to earth, Comfortable as befits a good listener. Friendly, amiable, hospitable, welcoming, inviting... a loyal and staunch companion.

Sam was famous far and wide for his recall of names. His ability to remember a person's name was legendary. Each of us has our favourite story about Sam and names. For Sam was passionately interested in people, in their individuality and uniqueness, and as they say now, in their stories both where they came from and where they wanted to go. A teacher, an educator, a mentor par excellence he wanted the best for everyone he knew.

And he knew his colleagues, his students, his friends and his family by name and nature and narrative. He had insight and empathy with everyone. He could easily strike a common note with complete strangers, set them at ease, note their names, and recall them when he came across them in the future. He was of course like many teachers in this easy and wide and deep regard for others.

Jesus, the supreme teacher, picked his apostles (or messengers) from his disciples (or students) in our Gospel today. He sent them to go and teach the nations all that he had taught them, to baptize them by name and bless them in the name of the Father, Son and Spirit. For God knows all our names and Jesus has told us God's name. God blessed us by name in his name and gave a mission to each of us to assist and encourage, to accompany and to love each one we greet on our own road through life.

In time, God will call each of us by name to himself. He called Sam on Thursday last at ten at night and Sam quietly slipped out of the room. So we bless him today as he departs and say Good Bye, or God be with you. We bless Sam by name in the name of God.

Farewell Sam, teacher, lecturer, president, educator, counsellor, adviser, colleague, pastor, mentor, neighbour, brother, friend. May God bless you, Sam, In the name of the Father the Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Address by Prof Daire Keogh,
President of St Patrick's College,
Drumcondra,
at the Funeral Mass of Fr Sam Clyne CM

Father Joe has spoken beautifully; I do not intend to repeat this, nor will I eulogise Sam. Before we take our leave and take Father Sam to his final resting place, however, I would like, on behalf of the entire College community to express our deepest sympathy to the Clyne family and his Vincentian confreres on their loss and heartache evident in his brother's words.

I would like to welcome some mourners from across the spectrum of Sam's friends:

Dr Martin McAleese, Chancellor DCU, and
Former President of Ireland, Mary McAleese,
Dr Danny O'Hare, President Emeritus DCU,
Professor Paucic Travers, President Emeritus St Pat's,
Professor Anne O'Gara, alumna and President, Marino Institute,
Mr Brian Cowen, Former Taoiseach,
Monsignor Dan O'Connor, Diocesan Vicar for Education,
Mr John Carr, alumnus and Former Secretary General INTO.

We are very honoured that the family chose to celebrate Sam's Requiem Mass here in this chapel. This beautiful space was so special to him. Sam witnessed its completion – and it was here he came every morning to begin his day, to celebrate Mass – to this altar he brought his joys and concerns throughout the thirty-six he spent at St Patrick's.

As I look around the chapel, too, I am conscious of the many lives he touched and the extensive friendships he enjoyed. Each of us could share a different dimension of Sam, as brother, confrere, colleague, friend or teacher. But over the last few days, so many of you have shared stories of his wonderful personality, his warmth, his care and above all, that great quality prized by St Vincent, his affability.

Sam was the life and soul of St Pat's – and a founding member of the social committee which he animated. Staff members remember his generous support when they were facing challenges. He always had a great pastoral influence and never sought reward or recognition.

Generations of students, too, recall his kindness; his uncanny ability to remember their names, and his visibility. Above all, they recall his deep humanity.

Sam was very much a Pat's Man – unusually he was not associated with Castleknock or St Paul's. And even before he joined the staff he had established relationships with staff and students – many of them recall his openness to debate and recall being excited by the prospect of his appointment as professor of philosophy in 1964.

He had a great sense of humour, too. At his inauguration as President (1985), he recalled:

During my period of studies in Boston my father was approached by a neighbour, curious as to my whereabouts – “where's the young lad the priest these days, Michael?” and, on being told that I was back at school, replied “God, Michael, isn't it a fright that the likes of him has to read books again.”

Sam served the college in so many capacities – in Fr Stephen's words, ‘Pat's was his home’. Fr Donal Cregan is celebrated as the architect of the new Pat's, but behind him, Sam carried out many of the necessary duties to make it happen. He served in so many critical roles, dean of studies, head of education, bursar. Vital roles in the ‘engine room’ of any organisation.

Sam played a central role in negotiations with UCD on the shape of the B.Ed. and on his appointment as Head of the Education in 1976 he oversaw the very first B.Ed. graduates in their degree.

And as President, too, Sam worked with a vital team, his Vincentian brothers, but today it is fitting to recall today, Stiofán Ó hAnnracháin, his Registrar and great collaborator who we laid to rest just weeks ago.

Neither must we forget that Sam's presidency coincided with one of the most challenging periods in the history of the State; appointed in 1985 when unemployment was at 17% – the closure of Carysfort was announced in 1986 – a period of great uncertainty which required his great skill, judgement and characteristic flexibility.

Sam was pragmatic in his approach – one his favourite sayings was ‘Nothing is as practical as a good theory.’ Significantly, in this context Sam, together with colleagues Paid McGee, Michael Clarke and others here this morning, he negotiated a new linkage with DCU (1993) – a move which opened so many possibilities – programmes in Humanities – higher degrees, up to and including doctorates. There were new structures, too, and the instruments of governance which we now take so much for granted, including the Governing Body and Academic Council, were put in place. He oversaw too, preparations for the transfer of the College to Lay leadership and effected a smooth transition.

Sam could not have seen the possibilities of that linkage nor the way

in which we would move, too, as we grow closer towards DCU in the Incorporation.

In 1993 he argued that the DCU linkage, and new relationship education and the humanities was not ‘a quantitative accumulation of knowledge’ but rather ‘a qualitative integration of enquiry’ which can lead students to a “more comprehensive truth”. We hope that this will continue into the future. We remain faithful to the essential character of St Patrick’s and its mission to the schools which was his life’s work.

St Vincent de Paul advised his brothers to

‘deal kindly with all, and to manifest those qualities which spring naturally from a heart tender and full of Christian charity; such as affability, love and humility. These virtues serve wonderfully to gain the hearts of men, and to encourage them to embrace things that are [often] repugnant to nature’.

Sam had those qualities and lived by St Vincent’s maxim. Like St Paul in today’s reading, Sam fought the good fight... ran the race... but more than that, he kept the faith, especially in his debilitating illness. We thank God for the gift Sam was to all of us and pray for his eternal rest.

Fr Timothy (Tim/Tadgh) Casey CM

They say you can take the man out of Cork but you cannot take Cork out of the man! This much-quoted observation epitomised Tim Casey. He once told me that he would ultimately be carried out of St Vincent's, Sunday's Well in a coffin! His 'prophecy' wasn't fulfilled but, at least, he died in the county of Cork.

I lived with Tim for six years, from 2003 to 2009, when I was Superior and Parish Priest in Sunday's Well. As with all of my predecessors, it wasn't long before I perceived myself being compared by Tim, to his own style of leadership there some two decades earlier! Undeterred, like those before me, I forged by a distinct way of operating. After all, what other people think of us is none of our business!

What succeeded in (partially) deflecting such 'comparisons' was Tim's passionate interest in all things boating – along with his brother, Barry. A select few (including yours truly) formed part of an annual outing on Tim's boat *Star of the Sea* – usually on the Lee or the Shannon or elsewhere too. I recall Tim exuding unbridled delight in being not only the captain of the boat but also the chief celebrant of the Mass onboard.

Tim's other love was his lifelong affiliation to St Finbarr's Hurling and Football Club of 1876. Being the oldest club of that genre in the country, Tim enjoyed reminding us that the players were never obliged to change the colour of their strip, irrespective of its similarity to that of opposing teams. Nearer 'home' – and at the opposite end of the 'pitch' – Tim espoused visible disappointment in being (by default) the last Vincentian President of St Vincent's Hurling and Football Club, on the Blarney Road, west of Sunday's Well!

Up to his time, holding the presidency of that esteemed club was commensurate with being Superior and Administrator/Parish Priest of Sunday's Well. However, Tim's immediate successor decided to end this seemingly inextricable link with the past, thereby reinforcing my earlier point in regard to 'comparisons' (and continuity) with his predecessors.

We may be familiar with the Irish proverb –

There are good ships and there are wood ships,

The ships that sail the sea.

But the best ships are friendships and may they always be.

Tim was happiest amongst people. To paraphrase John 10:14 he knew his own and his own knew him. Gifted with a gentle nature and possessed of sound pastoral instincts, he was adept at identifying and eliciting the very best in those with whom he lived and worked. His childlike simplicity succeeded in easily drawing young and older people

alike to Christ and engaging them more deeply in the life and service of the Christian Community. In Sunday's Well, one thinks in particular of his involvement with the Girl Guides and the numerous devotees of Little Nellie of Holy God (1903-1907). Also worth mentioning is Tim's collaboration with the junior and senior choirs, which resulted in his compilation of a hymnal.

Notwithstanding his many pastoral initiatives, many would have felt that Tim was pushing his 'boat' out too far when he announced his vision for a church car park! Undaunted by not a few sceptics, Tim successfully 'captained' this bold venture to its completion in 1988 – much to the cherished acclaim of all, near and far! Had he not pursued his dream, many parishioners would have voted with their feet and transferred their allegiance elsewhere. Furthermore, we might well have been left with the original presbytery around our necks like a giant millstone for years to come. Eventually, this was sold, along with the carpark (a condition of sale) to the UCC Dept of Music in 1999-2000. The parish would continue to enjoy, albeit limited, use of the car park for the likes of Masses and funeral, but always subject to the terms and conditions set out by its new owners. Certainly, the Province owes Tim a deep debt of gratitude for the twenty-eight years existence of the carpark, until the closure of the parish in 2016.

The practical side of Tim's character and his adaptability is reflected in the variety of ministries he occupied during his fifty-eight years of priesthood; teaching (Armagh); parish work (Mill Hill and Sunday's Well); Nigeria; chaplaincies in Killinarden (one he found very demanding), Stillorgan Park, Liverpool and Warley; not forgetting his ministry with the hard-of-hearing in Cork city.

A scientist by training, Tim saw no conflict between religion and science. Instead he saw them as complementary rather than competitive. His constant quest whilst 'sailing' in the 'waters of life' was that of St Anselm – 'fides quaerens intellectum'. Tim abhorred the loss of clarity and certainty so prevalent in today's world; he saw it as the arch-enemy of faith and a sure recipe for 'running aground' on the voyage of life.

Tim spent the final four years of his life in a retirement home at East Ferry, near Midleton, Co Cork. Just two days before his death, he was heard to say to his closest friends "I am going home". On 6 November 2015, Tim Casey departed for the final port of Eternity, heeding the slogan of the RTÉ radio maritime new programme, *Seascapes*; 'Tight lines, fair sailing'.

Colm McAdam CM

TIMOTHY (TADGH) CASEY CM

Born: Cork, 28 June 1931
 Entered the CM: 7 September 1949
 Vows: 8 September 1954
 Ordained Priest: 19 May 1951 at Holy Cross College, Clonliffe, by
 Dr John Charles McQuaid

APPOINTMENTS:

1957-'69: St Patrick's College, Armagh
 1969-'71: Mill Hill, Broadway
 1971-'74: Ugbokolo, Nigeria
 1974-'84: St Vincent's, Sunday's Well,
 (Curate & Deaf Apostolate)
 1984-'85: De Paul House, Celbridge (Killinarden)
 1985-'90: St Vincent's, Sunday's Well, (Superior & PP)
 1990-'94: Iona Drive (1990 sabbatical –
 Liturgical Centre Carlow & USA)
 1994-'96: St Joseph's, Blackrock
 1996-2010: St Vincent's, Sunday's Well
 2010-'15: St Joseph's, Blackrock
 (living in East Ferry Nursing Home, Cork)

Died: 6 November 2015
 Buried: St Finbarr's, Cork

Father Brendan Steen CM

Brendan Steen was born on the 29 November 1921. It was a fateful week for Ireland. Because the Anglo-Irish Treaty negotiations were coming to a climax in London, and the final document of 'The Treaty' was going to be signed on the 6 December just a week after Brendan's birth!

Brendan was the son of Doctor Patrick and Eileen Steen of Ardee, a family well known in County Louth. Brendan was brother to Carmel, Larry, Kevin and Maureen. When they came to secondary education, the three Steen brothers were sent in turn to the Vincentian Fathers at Castleknock College, first Larry, then Brendan, and last Kevin. Uniquely, each was named Head Prefect of the School in their final year.

They were not the first Steens to be educated by the Vincentians: their grandfather Laurence graduated from the College in 1865, their father Patrick in 1901, and their uncles Laurence Jr, Vincent and Herbert between 1900 and 1910. Nor were they going to be the last of the family: Brendan's brother Larry and his uncles and nephews were to entrust their sons to the College too, and in time their sons would send their own offspring as well. So Castleknock educated five generations of the Steen extended family from 1862 to 2007. Kevin and Maureen however, did not send sons to Castleknock as Kevin became a priest in the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton, and Maureen joined the Daughters of Charity as Sister Louise.

When Brendan reached Castleknock, therefore, he felt quite at home. He settled into his studies and books, but balanced that with an active athletic career. Talented as a rugby player, he featured on the College teams, playing in the front row for the 1940 SCT that made the Leinster Final, losing only by 3-0 to Blackrock. The team captain that year also joined the Vincentians: Liam O'Rafferty. Brendan was a more than handy tennis player. His family are very well known in Irish tennis, representing Ireland and even playing at Wimbledon in the veteran category.

Brendan entered Blackrock, the seminary for the Irish Vincentians in September 1940 and was ordained priest in May 1948. At UCD, he was awarded an honours BA for Mathematics and Maths Physics. He was ordained on the 22 May 1948 alongside Liam O'Rafferty, Kevin O'Hanrahan and Myles Dowley, and appointed to Castleknock College.

Brendan came to Castleknock as a teacher, becoming in due course, Dean of Discipline and eventually Prefect of Studies, the equivalent of the Principal. He was known by the boys as one who would apply mathematics to the most mundane matters, as a great teacher, and as a successful rugby coach. He coached the last Castleknock team to win the SCT in 1965. That team beat Blackrock in the Leinster Cup Final 12-8.

The *Castleknock Chronicle* remembers him: “Many boys passed through his hands in these years and all of them, I think, would readily admit that no one spent himself more fully or gave himself more entirely for their better interests than Father Steen... as a teacher of maths I think it would not be unduly flattering to say he had few equals... and in extra-curricular activities that must form part of any educational establishment Father Steen was literally on tap for any hour of the day or night, coaching tennis, refereeing basketball or taking rugby teams. In these different sporting activities he had much success but perhaps none was more satisfying for him than the team he coached to win the 1965 Senior Schools’ Rugby Cup.”

In 1965 (after his success in Lansdowne Road) he was appointed to St Paul’s College as President and brought his broad range of talents to the job. Naturally, he taught mathematics to senior level when his schedule allowed. As a sideline (literally) he coached the St Paul’s Senior Cup Team, and the 1967 team promised much. Though they did not win the cup, two of the team subsequently became full internationals.

As a principal, Father Steen made two important decisions: to bring St Pauls College into the newly established Free Scheme for Second Level Education in 1968, and to expand the school physically with two ‘new wings’ and a ‘swimming pool’. Both issues were connected, of course, because the announcement of ‘Free Education’ heralded the unparalleled growth of the Irish school system, and St Paul’s College expanded in line with the local increase in pupil numbers.

Brendan was, at the same time, also the religious superior of the Vincentians in the Sybil Hill House. He discussed both moves fully with the priests’ community, so that all were happy with what was decided. His attitude to a young and eager group of young men in the Vincentian house was, first, caution (in retrospect, quite justified), then encouragement and, finally, determined energy as he went with the flow...

In this, Brendan showed himself to be a good mentor. A mentor accompanies the ‘mentee’ if that is the word, allowing the other to grow, to change, to make mistakes, to progress and to achieve with the challenge of high positive expectations and also the comforting awareness of psychological safety. Of course, the mentor is not barred from offering advice and counsel, warning and guidance, provided he does not do it all the time. And Brendan didn’t... generally. But in his exercise of authority, Brendan qualified as a mentor par excellence.

Outside the school, he served on the Department of Education committee for school planning, where his mathematics was certainly useful. Some historians argue that the O’Malley Free Education Scheme was the principal factor in the success of Ireland’s economy in the following decades. (The other candidate was the Whittaker-Lemass Economic

Policy). As Irish secondary education exploded by over 100% at this time, the Dublin education planning committee ensured that growth in school provision was relatively smooth and generally effective in the North Dublin area.

Brendan Steen left St Paul's College in 1974 to serve as Head of Mathematics in St Patrick's College Drumcondra. "It was", in his own words "a welcome break to teach mathematics to adults". The post allowed him time and freedom to develop his professional interest in the subject and become deeply involved in its educational role. He was an active and loyal member of the professional association of maths teachers for half a century.

In the College, Brendan served as a Housemaster or residence adviser, a pastoral role which made his services available to many of the trainee teachers who were not studying for a degree in mathematics. Brendan was personal coach and spiritual adviser and academic consultant and a reliable rock of sense for many of them. During this period, Brendan was truly a happy man, freed from the political stress of administration, while exercising his personal gifts, intellectual ability and pastoral skills for others, in short, a true Vincentian.

He retired in 1986 from St Pat's, and was appointed to St Peter's Church Phibsboro as Curate and Bursar. After eleven years there, he really and truly retired, retreating to Sybil Hill House, the priests' residence at St Paul's. He renewed again his acquaintance with St Paul's College, serving on its Board of Management for twelve years, contributing to its deliberations from his vast experience and wise counsel, helping others to continue the task he had laboured at for so long.

The years had taken their toll though, slowing his quick step but it did not dim his sharp eye or dull his telling comment. At a ninetieth birthday celebration with the former teachers of St Paul's, the hope was expressed that they would all be present for his hundredth birthday, Brendan responded in great good humour: "Who are you to set a limit on the grace of the Almighty?"

The Almighty's limit proved to be five more years. Father Brendan died in the Raheny Hospice on 30 November 2015, the morning after his ninety fifth birthday. A mathematician, precise to the end.

BRENDAN P. STEEN CM

Born: Ardee, Co Louth, 29 November 1921
Entered the CM: 7 September 1940
Vows: 8 September 1942
Ordained Priest: 22 May 1948 in Pro-Cathedral, Dublin by
Dr John Charles McQuaid, Archbishop of Dublin

APPOINTMENTS:

1948-'65: St Vincent's Castleknock College
1965-'74: St Paul's College, Raheny
1974-'87: St Patrick's College, Drumcondra
1987-'97: St Peter's, Phibsborough
1997-2015: St Paul's, Raheny

Died: 30 November 2015
Buried: Glasnevin

Homily by Father Joseph McCann
at the funeral Mass
for
Father Brendan Steen CM,
St Peter's Church Phibsboro

Father Steen, if he were here, would have stood at the church door and could have named most of you as you came in, whether you were from Castleknock, or St Paul's, or Pat's, or Phibsboro, or family or friends in Ardee. Brendan would not forget you.

And Brendan Steen was someone you could not forget either. Whether as mathematics students, or rugby players, or fellow teachers or student teachers, or the young people he married, or his Vincentian fellow priests or his wide family and many friends. By all of us, Brendan is warmly recalled for the kind of person he was. As teacher, mentor or coach, Dean of Studies in Castleknock or President of St Paul's Raheny, College lecturer and Department Head in St Pat's Drumcondra, Curate and Bursar here at St Peter's, Bursar for the Vincentians at Sybil Hill, over seventy years through five appointments, Brendan had an impact on many people.

The banquet on the mountain, from the first reading of Isaiah, is the perfect one for Brendan as Bursar and Priest. Many times over the last years, Brendan welcomed us Vincentians to his house for celebrations as he was responsible for the catering and he was very hospitable.

And he was a good and loyal priest for sixty-seven years. A Priest should be a good host, especially when celebrating Mass for what is the Mass but the Supper of the Lord? Brendan always provided a kind and warm welcome to the Eucharist when he said Mass with feeling and sincerity.

The Psalm is about the Lord as our Shepherd. A shepherd is the ancient Biblical symbol of leadership, one going before, knowing the terrain, taking the safe path, seeking out the lost and straying, defending followers from attack. Those who relied on Brendan Steen for leadership on the football field – or elsewhere – will agree with the verse 'though I walk in the valley of darkness, no evil would I fear.'

The second reading in our Requiem Mass from the Letter to the Romans dwells on our gifts from God and the call to contribute our talents for the good of others. Brendan was wise and visionary in his advice, guidance and counsel. He advised the Department of Education

on the provision of secondary education in Dublin during the expansion years of the 60s and 70s. He was a key member of the Irish Mathematics Teachers Association, contributing much to teaching in our schools for over fifty years.

The Gospel from Matthew is astonishing. Jesus goes up the hill and sits, and we expect him to start teaching. The crowds come, however, with the sick and disabled for Jesus to cure. Without fuss, he heals them according to their illness. Only then does Jesus turn to the disciples and teaches them. What does he say? He says that he feels for the suffering people who have come out to see him, and though he has healed them, they also need to be fed. And he proceeds to show them how to feed the multitudes with his help.

Brendan was a teacher. He was simple in his understanding and knowledge. He identified the important in anything he approached. He was clear and direct in passing it on. He was straightforward and blunt when necessary, and it was sometimes necessary. He was kindly and patient with those in his care. The lame duck was taken care of. Those who needed extra attention were accommodated. That, too, was often necessary. Good teaching begins with real feeling. We teach people, not subjects. Teaching begins with healing. Healing begins with feeling.

Brendan Steen was no poker player. We, anyone who knew Brendan, could see when he was happy. And we could guess if he was unhappy about something. Those feelings lie at the bottom of many of our memories of him. For whatever happened, we know deeply that we could trust him.

Brendan was a gentleman, a good man, kind and considerate and concerned. Many reactions to the news of his death repeated those words, again and again. A gentleman. A good man. What more can you say?

When Fr Steen arrived at the Raheny Hospice last Friday, he spent the weekend sleeping soundly without pain or distress. We said to ourselves in the Vincentian community that Brendan would go in his own time. He would slip away when he was good and ready. We were sure that the Good Lord would fall in (I was going to say, had better fall in) with that arrangement.

And so it was that Brendan died at ten o'clock on the Monday morning 30 November, with his fellow Vincentians, Aidan and Eamon, the Hospice Chaplain, Marian, and his niece, Mary, at his bedside. He had completed his 94th year. On the day before, Sunday the 29th, his birthday had been celebrated with him by his family and Vincentian confreres.

May he rest in peace.

Rev. Brendan P Steen CM, 1921-2015
An Appreciation from
the Newsletter of the Irish Mathematics
Teachers' Association, No. 116, 2018

(reprinted by kind permission)

Fr Brendan P Steen CM, who passed away on 30 November 2015 in his 95th year, was a member of the IMTA from its very beginnings in 1964. He served the Association faithfully and with great distinction for more than fifty years.

Born on 29 November 1921 in Ardee, Co Louth, to Dr Patrick J and Mrs Eileen Steen, he followed a family tradition in attending St Vincent's College, Castleknock, where he excelled academically and at sports including tennis and rugby; the latter, as his friends know, became a lifelong passion for him. He entered the Vincentian community in September 1940 and was ordained on Saturday 22 May 1948 in St Mary's Pro-Cathedral, Dublin, by Archbishop John Charles McQuaid. In addition to his theological studies during this time, he graduated from UCD in 1944 with an honours BSc degree in Mathematics/Mathematical Physics with first class honours in Mathematics.

From 1948 to 1965 he served on the staff of Castleknock College as a teacher of mathematics, and also took on roles of responsibility including those of Dean of Discipline and of Prefect of Studies, in which he was responsible for the teaching programme of the school. He was deeply involved in extra-curricular activities with students, and in later years he remembered with great pride coaching the rugby team to win the prestigious Leinster Schools Senior Cup in 1965, beating Blackrock College 12-8 in the final.

It was also in 1965 that he was appointed President of St Paul's College, Raheny, in Dublin. This was an exciting time of great change and expansion in second level education. Fr Brendan presided over the building of a new classroom wing, so that the college could double in size to meet the demand for places; a swimming pool was also constructed. The most important decision during his presidency, however, was to include St Paul's in the newly introduced 'free education scheme'. In addition, he contributed to general educational policy development through his role in the Catholic Headmasters' Association, notably by being its representative on the Dublin Advisory Committee on Post-

Primary Educational Facilities; this group consulted with the Department of Education on the number and location of new schools to cope with population growth on the north side of the city. He also served – as a Vincentian trustee – as Chair of the Board of Management of Coolmine Community School, Clonsilla, one of the first two community schools in Ireland.

The year 1974 saw his appointment as Head of Mathematics in St Patrick's College, Drumcondra. The Bachelor of Education degree (replacing the longstanding two-year diploma as a qualification for primary teaching) had just been introduced. The model adopted in Drumcondra included the study of Education and one other subject to degree level, and Fr Brendan had responsibility for drawing up the programme in Mathematics. As well as leading the Department and teaching Calculus and Analysis courses, he mentored students on school placement, was Resident Adviser in one of the student residences, and supported students in sporting activities, particularly basketball. Moreover, his pastoral work with students was outstanding.

During the 1970s also, he furthered his own knowledge and skill in the burgeoning area of IT in education. He attended a ground-breaking course for teachers in University College Galway led by Prof AC Bajpai, an early pioneer of computer education in schools, and then took the Computers in Education Diploma course in Trinity College. After obtaining the Diploma in 1976, he went on (with other high-achieving students from the early years of the course) to complete a Master's degree in Computer Practice in 1979. His thesis was entitled "College of Education: student record system," reflecting his interest in serving the institution in which he worked.

On his retirement from St Patrick's in 1987, he moved to the parish of St Peter's, Phibsborough, where he ministered to parishioners until 1997. He also played a role with the parish primary schools there and was involved in preliminary work on their amalgamation. From 1997 until his death in 2015, he assisted in the work of the Vincentian Provincialate based in St Paul's, Raheny.

In this article, we pay special tribute to Fr Brendan's role in the IMTA. His contribution to the life of the Association was enormous. He attended its first meeting in 1964, and over the following decades was active at both national and branch level.

At national level, he became a member of what was then known as the Standing Committee (now Council) in 1967, and served for almost thirty years. In the session 1970-71 he was the first holder of the post of Vice-Chairman; the following year he was elected as Chairman – succeeding the original Chairman, Denis Buckley – and he held that office until 1977. His active leadership is reflected and acknowledged in the

many activities reported in Newsletters during that period. Syllabus committees (later known as course committees, now as development groups) were very busy at the time, and through Fr Brendan and other IMTA personnel, the Association was involved in providing feedback to the committees on draft syllabus proposals. Discussions at Standing Committee meetings also addressed the relationship between computer science and mathematics and the use of calculators in public examinations. With regard to teacher professional development, issues included the organisation of courses and related payments and expenses for lecturers, together with travel grants for teachers attending courses – topics on which support was sought from the ASTI and TUI and other subject associations.

When he vacated the chair in 1977, he was appointed Vice-Chairman with special responsibility for courses and liaison with the Department of Education. Thus, when the Department of Education set up a committee on ‘inservice training’ in 1980 and requested submissions, it was Fr Brendan who prepared a document for the IMTA, based on consultations with branches. After discussion at the 1980 Delegate Conference – at that time, a meeting held annually as the policy-making arm of the Association – he submitted a report to the Department; it appears in Newsletter No 45, and contains proposals that are still relevant today. Fr Brendan continued as Vice-Chairman up to and including the session 1994-’95, after which he finally stepped down from Council.

His service to the Dublin Branch was perhaps even more remarkable. The Branch was founded in 1964, soon after the birth of the Association. Fr Brendan was not actually the first treasurer, but took over in 1965 and held the position for fully fifty years before handing over the reins in 2015. As well as being an excellent steward of the funds, he contributed greatly to the Branch and its Committee through his knowledge of the history of the Association and his firm grasp of protocol, as well as his wide experience of mathematics teaching at second and third levels. On his retirement as treasurer, he was presented with a medal and a scroll acknowledging all that he had done for the Branch.

The Branch and the Association also celebrated major events in his life outside the IMTA. At the Delegate Conference in 1988, he was given a presentation marking his retirement from St Patrick’s College; in 1998, the Branch Committee invited him to a dinner in honour of the fiftieth anniversary of his ordination.

His immense contribution to the Association was also acknowledged, notably by his being awarded Honorary Membership. Furthermore, a presentation was made to him at the IMTA Golden Jubilee celebrations attended by His Excellency President Michael D. Higgins and Mrs Sabina Higgins on 11 October 2014. The plaque that he was given

(designed by another long-standing IMTA member and Council Officer, Michael Moynihan) was later offered as one of the symbols of his life at his funeral. Appropriately, it depicted the structure of an ancient computing machine recovered from a Roman shipwreck in the Mediterranean!

Looking back over Fr Brendan's life, we recall a modest man who wore his talents, learning and achievements lightly. His many friends will attest to his kindness, loyalty and sense of humour. Fr Brendan is very fondly and gratefully remembered by his friends in the IMTA, his colleagues and many generations of students, as well as by his Vincentian confreres and his extended family. It was a privilege to know him. Ar dheis De go raibh a anam uasal.

Olivia Bree, formerly of the Mathematics Department,
St Patrick's College, Drumcondra.
Elizabeth Oldham, School of Mathematics,
Trinity College, Dublin

Father Richard (Dick) McCullen CM

As Dick's assistant for six years in Rome, I knew him very well. Others have written at length about his life and works. Here, I offer a few personal reflections.

What did I admire most in Dick? Reflecting on that question often since the time of his death, I have thought of four qualities especially. As I describe each of them below, I will add a tiny, related literary phrase, as I think Dick himself might have done if he were writing his own obituary.

1. His spirituality

Dick had a deep personal piety. Three of its pillars came from the French School of Spirituality. He placed strong emphasis on 1) the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, 2) devotion to the Blessed Mother, and 3) daily meditative prayer.

How often I saw Dick praying in our community chapel early in the morning or late at night. When we traveled together on visitations, he would always visit the church where the confreres served or the chapel where they lived. He would immediately kneel before the tabernacle with his head bowed. Then he would look for the statue of the Blessed Mother and pray there too. Chuckling a bit, I recall that, together, we once visited a parish in a far-off land where the confreres were working. They were very proud of the new church that they had just built and invited Dick and me to see it. It was quite beautiful, but starkly plain. Dick prayed there quietly before the bare altar. Afterwards, he thanked the confreres courteously. Then, as we left, he whispered to me (not too ecumenically!), "Very Protestant".

While his piety had a genuine horizontal thrust (he was warm in his human relationships), it had an emphatic vertical dimension. He believed deeply that God spoke directly to him and to others. Some felt that this led him to pass too quickly over secondary causes while hastening to invoke the primary cause. What was clear, however, was that he unflinching confidence that God was accessible and that God both listened and responded.

If Dick were writing in my place today, he would probably quote Tennyson: "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of." (1)

2. *His gift for words*

Dick expressed himself beautifully. His use of the English language was elegant. He had a knack for choosing the right word and formulating the apt turn of phrase. Even his accent (well, it was an accent to the ears of a foreigner from the USA like me!) was attractive to his listeners.

He wrote engagingly. In his circular letters, he often cited a poem or a passage from English literature. Since his death, numerous people have commented on how beautiful his language is in *Deep Down Things*, the book of his writings edited by Sister Eleanor McNabb and Sister Mary Ellen Sheldon, both of whom loved and admired him.

Language was very important to Dick. He labored over the wording of his letters and talks. His style was his own. Though he asked the members of his Council for ideas for the letters he wrote in Advent and Lent, the final product was Dick's, distinct for its imagery and its beauty.

If he were writing in my place today, he might quote Hopkins: (2)

THE WORLD is charged with the grandeur of God.
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil
Crushed.

There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
And though the last lights off the black West went
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs –

3. *His sense of humor*

For those of us who lived with Dick, his humor was often a saving grace. During that period, life in the General Curia tended to be quite work-oriented, even bleak. Many worked on Sundays and holidays; some, even on Christmas and Easter. While a very hard worker himself, Dick had his own healthy rhythm that kept him from being chained to the desk. He would shut his door on Sundays or escape for a walk or a visit to St Peter's.

He could laugh at the incongruous and often did. He loved to tell stories about confreres and others whom he liked, but who were 'original' in their ways. He had a loyal group of friends at the Curia itself. He was especially close to Fr Paul Henzmann, the Secretary General, whose devotion to Dick went beyond measure. Close too were the Vicar General, Fr Miguel Pérez-Flores, Fr William Sheldon, the Procurator General, and Fr Alejandro Rigazio, the General Treasurer. Their friendship was not so much one of relaxing or going out together; rather, it was one of common vision, hard work, and utter loyalty. Of this tiny group, Dick himself was the most light-hearted.

If he were writing in my place today, he might quote Belloc: “There’s nothing worth the wear of winning, but the laughter and love of friends.”

4. *His love of the formation of the clergy*

Before he became Superior General, Dick served almost exclusively in the formation of our own confreres and of the diocesan clergy. There was no ministry that he loved more. He spoke about it often. Many priests in Ireland remember him fondly as a much sought-after spiritual director in their seminary. They recall his talks, but, even more, his life.

He lamented the diminishing presence of the Congregation in seminaries and the formation of diocesan priests. He was deeply pained when scandals arose among priests. I never saw him so upset as he once was when a bishop he knew was removed from ministry. One of the last times that I was with Dick was when I was concluding a visitation on sexual abuse, on behalf of the Vatican. By that time, while pained, he was taking the long view. He was convinced that the situation was horrendous and intolerable, but he trusted that a purified Church, after time, would be revitalized.

If Dick were writing in my place today, he might quote Chaucer’s description of the parson in the *Canterbury Tales*:

*This fine example to his flock he gave,
That first he wrought and afterwards he taught;
Out of the gospel then that text he caught,
And this metaphor he added thereunto –
That, if gold would rust, what shall iron do?
... Christ’s own law, and His apostles twelve
He taught, but first he followed it himself.*

Of late I have often been reflecting on the ‘great cloud of witnesses’ whom the author of Hebrews (12:1) describes so eloquently. They are women and men, old and young, poor and rich, obscure and famous. During our lives, we are privileged to know some of them personally. I thank God today for knowing Dick.

Robert P Maloney CM

ENDNOTES

- 1 Alfred Lord Tennyson, *Morte d’Arthur*.
- 2 Gerard Manley Hopkins, *God’s Grandeur*.
- 3 Hilaire Belloc, *Complete Verse* (London: Gerald Duckworth, 1970), *Dedicatory Ode*, 60.
- 4 Geoffrey Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales*, Parson’s Tale, 498-530.

RICHARD McCULLEN CM

Born: Dublin, 28 July 1926
 Entered the CM: 3 September 1945
 Vows: 8 September 1947
 Ordained Priest: 25 May 1947 in Holy Cross College, Clonliffe,
 Dublin by Dr John Charles McQuaid,
 Archbishop of Dublin

APPOINTMENTS:

1952-'53: St Kevin's, Glenart: Lecturer in Theology
 Angelicum, Rome
 1953-'56: St Kevin's, Glenart:
 Superior & Professor of Moral Theology
 1967-'75: St Patrick's College, Maynooth: Spiritual Director
 Provincial, Irish Province
 1975-'80: Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission
 1980-'92: St Patrick's Drumcondra
 1992-'96: St Paul's, Raheny
 1996-2015: St Paul's, Raheny

Died: 24 December 2015
 Buried: Castleknock College

Father Thomas (Tom) Davitt CM



My friendship with Father Tom Davitt began about thirty years ago when we used to travel together to international Vincentian gatherings. Tom was interpreting from French and Italian. In more recent times we travelled together on Tuesdays – his day off – mostly by train but sometimes by bus. We travelled all over the country. When we went to Belfast, which involves crossing a border – Tom loved to go to Belfast on the Enterprise train – he always referred to the waiting area in Connelly Station as the international departure lounge. Then with a mischievous twinkle in his eye he would wait for me to react. Tom had a

mischievous sense of humour and we had many chuckles together.

On the train journeys, we both did *The Irish Times* Simplex Crossword and then compared notes. Very often Tom completed the whole crossword in next to no time. Clues about Mexican and Chinese food and sport very often stumped him. Those kind of clues were not the flavour of the month. He didn't have the satisfaction of completing the crossword.

On the journey Tom would give an occasional commentary about the railway as we passed various stations and interesting landmarks. Tom's interest in railways began in his childhood days in Sydney Parade in Sandymount in Dublin. He was very knowledgeable about railways and gave many talks to railway societies up and down the country. At a recent meeting of the Dublin Railway society there was a minute's silence in Tom's honour. One of Tom's brothers told me, when they were growing up on Sydney Parade they occasionally opened manually the level crossing gates on Sydney Parade to let the trains pass and close them again. They recorded the opening and closing of the gates in the register in the Station Master's office. The Station Master could then do other things and left the responsibility of the gates with the Davitt brothers. Tom never told me that story. Probably the adult law minded Tom wouldn't have approved.

On our Tuesday travels, we didn't always agree on things. There was always friction when crossing a street. Tom insisted on waiting for the green light at a pedestrian crossing even if there was no car within miles. I used to pull his leg about it and joke about it but it didn't make any difference. Tom insisted on not breaking the law. It used to drive me mad at times.

The beginning of the end for Tom happened on a train to Sligo about two years ago. Regrettably I wasn't with him on that Tuesday. At Dromod Station he felt unwell and left the train. He got a taxi and asked the taxi driver to take him to the nearest doctor. The doctor got him an ambulance which rushed him to Sligo General Hospital. He spent about 4 weeks in hospital and was full of praise for the care he got there. He was also most appreciative of the support of a member of the St Paul's Community while he was in hospital. He recovered from that episode but he was never quite the same again. Our Tuesday travels began to be much curtailed and he was happy to go to Howth or Sandymount for lunch. We had lunch together on most Tuesdays right up to the week of his final illness.

He taught in St Vincent's Castleknock College for many years and loved his time there. One time when he was in the Europa Hotel in Belfast a man approached him and asked if he was the gamesmaster in Castleknock College. Tom chuckled at the good of that. Games were not Tom's strong suit but when he was Dean in Castleknock he had to organise games. The man in the Europa Hotel was a teacher in Methodist College, Belfast and he remembered Tom from a visit to Castleknock with a rugby team.

He spent time every summer for many years in a parish in the Diocese of Reykjavik in Iceland. He celebrated Mass and preached in Icelandic. I remember having a cup of coffee with Tom in a café in Paris during an international Vincentian gathering. A young couple were at the next table. Suddenly Tom turned around to them and began speaking in a strange language. It was Icelandic. It sounded very fluent. I didn't know until then that Tom spoke Icelandic. Tom never, ever blew his own trumpet. He could be full of surprises in some things. He also spoke French and Italian and Latin fluently.

Tom spent much time in archives doing archival work. As well as being archivist for our Province for most of his life, he was in the Vincentian Curia in Rome for four years as archivist when Father Robert Maloney was Superior General. I emailed Father Maloney to tell him Tom had died. This is his reply:

Dear Mark,

Sorry to hear the news of Tom's death. Both of us have lost a good friend. What happy memories I have of my years with Tom in Rome! He would come to my room in September. We would then schedule a concert every month, working it around my travel plans. He loved classical music and knew it well. His mother and father, he told me, sang.

I remember our conversations about Michael Davitt, the Land League and the struggle for Irish independence. And, of course, we

often spoke of Vincentian history, which he knew inside out. I think he told me that he had visited every town in France where St Vincent had gone.

I'll miss him very much, but trust deeply that he rests in the peace of the Lord.

Bob

Tom was highly confidential. I never heard a single word from him about the archives at home or in Rome. The same quality of confidentiality enabled him to work very successfully in the Marriage Tribunal of Dublin Archdiocese where he spent many happy years.

Tom spent much time over the years with the Daughters of Charity. He spent some years as Director of the Daughters of Charity in Japan – not the happiest time for Tom. He also spent a summer in Vietnam. Because there was no safe water to drink, he had to drink wine and beer but never enjoyed it. He couldn't stand the taste of it, he told me many times when I would pull his leg about his attitude to alcohol. He called alcohol buooze – his own special pronunciation with a derogatory inflection.

He worked as Chaplain to the Daughters of Charity in Ricard House, Dunardagh for twenty-five years where he was very happy. He loved his work there with the sick sisters and was very upset when Rickard House was closed. When Tom was lecturing in catechetics in University College, Cork he would travel to Dunmanway every week to give talks on St Vincent to the Daughters of Charity. One of the Daughters who was in Dunmanway at the time told me Tom was always well prepared; always started on time and finished on time; And there wasn't a word out of place.

He gave many talks in Ireland and England about his grandfather, Michael Davitt. He was very proud of his grandfather and did a lot of research on his life and work. Last year he travelled to Achill Island to name a new bridge in memory of Michael Davitt.

He gave hundreds of talks on St Vincent de Paul in every continent. He was very well known internationally in Vincentian circles mainly through *Colloque*. He was a highly respected authority on St Vincent de Paul not only in Ireland and England but in many other countries as well.

Now he is gone and taken all that Vincentian information with him. But we are still left with the memory of a very extraordinary man, gifted in so many ways, upright, discreet, dependable, with a keen sense of duty and a huge love for the Vincentian Community.

Tom prayed for an hour every day. He got up an hour early to do the extra thirty minutes before joining in community prayer. He prayed every bit of the Divine Office every day, very often in Latin, finishing

with night prayer before turning off the light. It was very important for Tom that the hours of the office were said at the appropriate time. We had many discussions on the topic. He was most intolerant of people who could say evening prayer at lunch time or even earlier.

Within the past year, when he wasn't well, I urged Tom to get up a little later in the morning and do the extra prayer during the morning or even in the evening. But no! Tom had to do what he always did and continued to get up at cock crow until the morning he became ill in his room in St Paul's.

I will miss Tom. But we are not without hope in our sadness, grief and loss. The words of the second reading at his funeral Mass in Dunardagh are so applicable to him: I have fought the good fight to the end; I have run the race to the finish; I have kept the faith. All there is to come now is the crown of righteousness. 2 Tim 4:6-7 No doubt the crown of righteousness is rightfully Tom's.

Mark Noonan CM

THOMAS DAVITT CM

Born: Dublin, 18 February 1929
 Entered the CM: 7 September 1946
 Vows: 8 September 1948
 Ordained Priest: 30 May 1954 in Holy Cross College, Clonliffe by
 Dr John Charles McQuaid, Archbishop of Dublin

APPOINTMENTS:

1954-'64: St Vincent's College, Castleknock
 1964-'65: 75 Lewis Avenue, Brooklyn, New York
 1965-'68: St Vincent's College, Castleknock
 1968-'73: St Vincent's, Sunday's Well, Cork
 1973-'74: Roppongi 7-3-10, Minato Ku, Tokyo, Japan
 1974-'77: St Mary's, Strawberry Hill
 1977-'81: All Hallow's College
 1981-'82: 5 rue des Irlandais, Paris
 1982-'93: The Bungalow, Dunardagh, Blackrock
 1993-'97; Curia Generalizia, Via Dei Capasso, Rome
 1997-'98: St Peter's, Phibsboro
 1998-2012: The Bungalow, Dunardagh, Blackrock
 2012-'16: St Paul's, Raheny

Died: 30 January 2019
 Buried: Deansgrange Cemetary

Father Thomas Davitt CM Provincial Archivist 1983-2019

Miriam van der Molen

I became Assistant Archivist for the Irish Province in 2015, joining Father Tom Davitt CM in working in the archive. I have worked in the archive since then and, having taken a break for a year in 2018, am very happy to be back again. Father Davitt had been working as Provincial Archivist since 1983, taking over from James H Murphy CM (Senior) who worked in the archive before this. As Father Davitt passed away on 30 January earlier this year, I and many others will greatly miss him.

From the day that I was interviewed for my job, I always found Father Davitt a very engaging and considerate person. After the interview, I was invited to have tea and biscuits, which was lovely, and while I was still on the way home on the bus, he called me to say I had got the job and asked when I could start.

Working with him was always interesting, as he was full of anecdotes about confreres and various Vincentian houses. He was a great believer in chatting about various items of knowledge that he had, saying it was as much a part of the job as other archival duties, such as cataloguing and answering researcher queries. It definitely helped in acquiring a better picture of the function and set-up of the Irish Province, both current and historical.

Now and again, he would print me off an article that he had contributed to *Colloque*, of which he was editor for a number of years. He continued to contribute numerous articles after he was editor as well. The articles would often be about an aspect of St Vincent de Paul's life or Fr Davitt's reflections on his own travels. He compiled a list of the articles he contributed, so I will be able to read some more of these in the coming months.

Fr Davitt was lovely and pleasant to work with, and always showed a great appreciation for any work I did in the archive. There were some procedures that he preferred to have done a certain way, and I respected those, but other than that he left me free to do things in the way that I chose, and sometimes asked for my opinion on things.

He had a sense of humour and was never boring. One example of this, which occurred once or twice in the year before he died, was his observance that one day he would also go into the archive, as the personal files of the deceased confreres are kept there! Over the years, he had put the death dates of Vincentian confreres into the archival register. It was

strange when it then fell to me to write his date in after his name when the time came a few weeks ago.

He had a great passion for the archive and archive-keeping, evident in the amount of work that he put into setting up the archive. On occasion he would go into the archive room and look around and observe in a reminiscent way that he had stencilled the names of all the titles on these boxes over the years. He had invested a lot of time and effort into the archive, in the form of labelling boxes, writing lists of contents for the boxes, creating indexes of various kinds, writing numerous articles for *Colloque* and training in new Assistant Archivists.

It feels strange to be working in the archive without Fr Davitt, and I will miss him. However, he lives on in the archive through all the contributions he has made to it in shaping it and overseeing it for so many years. Whenever I see his handwriting in different places, I am reminded of him and his enthusiasm for the archive. I learned a lot from him, which I will apply as I continue to work in the archive.