

COLLOQUE

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Congregation of the Mission

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Editorial

The coming year, 2000, will see the golden jubilee of seven confreres of the Anglo-Irish Province (what Des O’Connell calls our own G7); Frank McMorrow, Frank Mullan, Sean Murphy, Vinnie O’Brien, Desmond O’Connell, Diarmuid O’Hegarty and Gearoid O’Sullivan. To them all, our heartiest congratulations and prayers. Four of them have written their reflections on reaching this milestone. The styles, content and reflections are very different but all are thought-provoking. Michael McCullagh, as one of 1999’s two silver jubilarians (Aidan Galvin being the other) has written a reflection on the changes both for himself and for the province over the past twenty-five or more years. Following the reflections of the jubilarians, there is a brief piece from one of the newest vincentians in these isles, Simona Botezatu, from Romania, who has joined the Vincentian Volunteers.

The changes are marked here also in pieces on two very different Vincentian parishes; the old and venerable St Mary’s in Lanark Scotland and the new Christ the King parish in Akowonjo, Nigeria.

Tom Davitt has written on his travels in France in the footsteps of St Vincent and Eugene Curran’s article on Margaret Aylward and the Holy Faith Sisters concludes. From our treasury, we bring out things both old and new; may they all help us to carry the vincentian charism into a new century and a new millennium.

Christ the King Parish, Akowonjo

Rod Crowley CM

The coming of the Vincentians to Christ the King church, Kowonjo was, in many ways, fortuitous. We were already well established in St Leo's, Ikeja, a mighty parish, when we were suddenly asked to hand it over to the Archdiocese. Maybe we had been too successful in it! We had been promised the largest of the outstations, St Timothy's, as an alternative, but this soon slipped off the screen.

Another parish-to-be called Okokomaikon, part of the major parish, was offered to us and we were ready to accept when the offer was withdrawn, perhaps due to behind the scenes politics. Then the focus shifted to CKC Akowonjo, an outstation of St Sabina's parish, where the Daughters of Charity were based. We had operated this from St Leo's before, but then handed it over in a rare act of generosity, to St Sabina's. Now it came back to us as the nucleus of a new parish, with one outstation, appropriately called St Vincent's, attached. Cast your bread on running waters!

What features of this new parish are worth noting? Providence was very good to us in leading us here. For me, none of the alternatives would have matched up to it. The community we met there is very cooperative, supportive and generous with their time and resources. There is never a dull moment. Activities of one sort or another continue around the clock often ending up with a free concert provided by the youth choir and band, late into the evening.

Morning Prayer of the Church, for the Vincentians and others, pretty well starts the day at 7.00 a.m. Morning Mass follows on some days, but Evening Mass is the preferred option, due to their work pattern, which requires them to leave for Lagos at around 6.00 a.m. The congregation for Evening Mass is pretty substantial. The sweeping of the Church, on a voluntary basis, and as a daily exercise, takes place at about the same time as morning Mass. This group would be the equivalent of Susanna, Mary Magdalene and Co. who looked after Jesus. The parish catechist arrives soon after 8.00 a.m. to begin his daily round. Assisted by some 30 other voluntary catechists he is the only one to receive a salary, even if not a princely one (though he is, in fact, a prince himself).

Regularly groups of the catechists are sent on leadership training courses (deles, the equivalent of Partners in Mission). In addition some other catechetical courses are provided (not enough) while two are taking a two-year course in the Vincentian Catechetical Training Centre

at Ogobia, which involves high-sounding courses such as Ecclesiology, Christology, Canon Law etc. No doubt they will return as some sort of professors! Even now they help to conduct seminars and workshops for various groups and societies in the parish. The catechists are the ones who take responsibility, two days per week, in preparing candidates for the various sacraments as well as a very well organised RCIA programme (Rite for Christian Initiation of Adults) which is my pride and joy and attracts 20 or more adults every two years. Every so often, during the Sunday Masses, they come forward for one of their many rites or stages, where they are supported by sponsors, and which involves the whole community. The Easter Vigil is their night for receiving these Sacraments.

One of our main thrusts is to set up Zones and Basic/Small Christian Communities in the parish. So far we have divided the parish into 8 or 9 Zones. Each of these Zones is meant to give birth to at least one Basic Christian Community in the coming year. We try to celebrate Mass in each of the zones once a month, in their compounds, normally outside. Friday is set aside for this and there is no evening Mass in the parish. This is generally followed by a zonal meeting to discuss any relevant concerns. It is a slow start but it is gradually taking root. The aim is to allocate to them various responsibilities in the parish, together with building up a community spirit, showing concern for each other and tackling some community problems. Preparing and presenting candidates for Baptism and the other Sacraments are among the activities intended for them, together with taking responsibility for the annual Harvest celebration, Parish Week etc. The eventual hope is to have a community of communities.

Our parish clinic looms large in our parish life. Since a little over a year ago, it functions on a daily basis and offers efficient and relatively inexpensive health care to a growing number of people, whether parishioners or not, whether Catholics or not. In one week recently we had two births there, which is not part of our regular services. It is staffed by a competent and dedicated team led by a very well qualified and experienced parishioner, with a doctor who gives his services free. This is backed up by a Vincent de Paul clinic on Saturdays which is free of charge. One of our outstations also has a weekly clinic operated by the Daughters of Charity. In this way we contribute to meeting the health-care problems which loom large for many of our people.

The parish structure includes a Church Council, as well as an overall Parish Council, who meet on a monthly basis to discuss and advise on parish affairs. They are backed up by various committees who meet weekly. Prominent among them are the Liturgy Committee and the Justice and Peace Group. There is also a Societies Committee which

oversees the activities of the various religious societies in the parish.

Marriage matters are given a special consideration in our parish life. We offer marriage courses, which last for twelve weeks, to prepare for marriage, with one session per week. It is compulsory before Church marriage. Most of the talks are given by the laity on a well planned programme. Each of the couples has a special interview as part of the course to see if there are any problems in the way of a successful marriage. It is backed up by a counselling service provided by a well qualified member of our parish, who makes himself available each day. He will invite the participation of the priest when needs be. This service is much appreciated and availed of by the parishioners.

Each year we produce a Mission statement, which then appears as a banner in the Church. It is intended as a means of focussing attention on some few aspects of parish life. Last year the focus was on the Bible, Justice and Peace and Zones. As a result, we organised a Bible Course on Sundays over a six month period, which proved very successful. Special attention was also given to the other aspects. This year the emphasis is on the Fatherhood of God. This is developed under the aspects of prayer, the Eucharist and concern for the poor. In addition, a short passage from the Catholic Catechism is now commented on at each Sunday Mass.

We prepared our parish council for their assignment by a series of talks on Church and parish. The emphasis on trying to establish a real community emerged from that and this has been focussed on, with some degree of success. The Legion of Mary flourishes with some twelve or more praesidia. It is now raised to a Curia. The Charismatics are a power in the land and draw large numbers. They have two evenings in the week for their functions. The Vincent de Paul is quite strong, and there is a second collection for the poor on a regular basis. Of course the choirs, three in all, are very active, and contribute a lot to our worship even on a daily basis. Each year, before the feast of Christ the King, we have a parish week in preparation. On Sundays, we have two morning Masses with about 2,500 at each. We hope to add a third one shortly. So, we thank God for his blessings on our work there, and hope that He will stay with us.

Margaret Alyward and the sisters of the Holy Faith – Concluding part

Eugene Curran CM

*Miss Alyward, Sr Mary Agatha and Lady Halbert
– Facets of a Foundress*

On May 5, 1861, Margaret was finally released from prison. Given her state of health it is doubtful if she walked down to Eccles Street, as Miss Gibbons suggests, but it is undoubtedly true that she “there resumed her work in directing St Brigid’s Orphanage’.(1)

The impact of St Brigid’s on the care of, and service for, orphans requires a separate study itself beyond the scope of this essay. It had the strong support of the Archbishop and curates of Dublin – though apparently not of the Parish Priests. It was lauded in the Press in both England and Ireland, even by Oscar Wilde.(2) Many leading church dignitaries acted as Chairmen of the Annual meeting – though Cardinal Newman and Fr Faber were unable to oblige. A letter from Joseph Dixon, Archbishop of Armagh, seems to indicate that it was impolitic to refuse an invitation to perform such a duty. He writes:

My Dear Madam,

I am very sorry that you have not found a better Chairman for your annual meeting. But, such as I am, you have made it impossible for me to decline the honour. I shall say nothing of the inconvenience of a journey from Armagh; because, now that I have resolved, with the blessing of God, to go, the more inconvenient the journey, the better. I hope to be at the Church in due time on the day mentioned. In the meantime, I have the honour to remain,

My dear Madam
Your most faithful servt.
+ Joseph Dixon. (3)

The support for Margaret’s charity seems to have been quite strong for a good many years, though when funds lessened she was likely thus to write individual parish priests:

“Perhaps I ought to remind you that I canvassed you for a subscription many years ago without success... I trust you will now begin (4)

Just as Cornelia Connelly and M. A. Cusack found that their work was occasionally derided because of their sex, so Margaret Aylward found that, while attesting to the quality of her work, many churchmen took exception to her forceful character. Archbishop Dixon's letter, above quoted, shows a somewhat patronising attitude to Margaret, as does a letter from Bishop Leahy (the Dominican lay-brother who was bishop of Dromore) dated 31.12.1860. Just as the Nun of Kenmare was, at first, mildly taunted by such as Father Angus, a vociferous opponent, but later actually banned from various dioceses in Ireland and America, and found that her continuance as Superior General of the Sisters of Peace was more of a liability than an asset, so Margaret was in occasional conflict with individual bishops. After her death, but apparently not before, Bishop Brownrigg of Ossory entered into a correspondence with her successor, Sr M. Agnes Vickers, on the subject of the convent at Mullinavat, in his diocese. This correspondence extended from November 1889 (one month after Margaret's death) through to February 1892, and there is a noticeable difference in the tone of his letter to Father Gowan (5) – which is one of equality – to that of his letters to “Mrs” Vickers – emphasizing episcopal authority and duty:

I think it might be well to put an end to this *impasse* and let it be clearly understood where the authority & jurisdiction over your house here resides.(6)

or

I am glad to be assured by you beforehand (a meeting had been arranged; editor) that you are in a position to make a satisfactory due, for indeed, your relations with the ecclesiastical authorities here have been till now of a very strained nature. (7)

Speaking of Margaret herself, Brownrigg writes (and I give the full text of the letter)

Dear Miss Vickers,
Your letter announcing the death of your late M. Superior, Mrs Aylward, was duly received by me and I beg to offer you & your Sisters in religion my sincere and hearty sympathy. Mrs Aylward, whom I had not the pleasure of knowing, unless by repute, was, I believe, a woman who deserved well of religion and the Church. Her name has been associated for many years with some of the most deserving charities of Dublin & she will long be revered for her heroism in defence of the faith of the little ones.

Personally, I have only one fault to find with her and that is that though she had a branch of her community in this diocese she

never thought it worth her while to put herself in communication with the Bishop in reference to it – so that for the last five years it has been living its own life and following out its own devices without any reference to the ecclesiastical authorities – there has been no visitation – no retreat but one – the Srs. come & go seemingly without any reference to any Superior and are engaged in working a large farm which was taken over by them without reference to me.

I hope now as there is a change in the government that all these things will be looked, into and put in joint with the laws and requirements of religious life. I remain, dear Mrs Vickers,

Faithfully yours hi Xt
+C.Brownrigg, Bp. of Ossory (8)

In her reply Agnes Vickers, much like her departed foundress in many ways, stated that she had to hand “a letter of yours dated August 4, ‘86 in which... you grant faculties to Fr Gowan”. Margaret, so the letter continues, “also wrote in your absence to the Vic(ar) Gen(eral).” Later in the same letter she continues:

“... ‘No retreat but one’, this shows that Yr.Lr. has been misinformed. The sisters in question made their retreat every year without exception. ‘No Visitation’: Yr.Lr. was twice in Mullinavat. They, the sisters, expected that you wld. have visited them. They were (upset) that you did not, especially as they were afraid that the people would think you ignored them.”

On the question of changing sisters she states that:

“Cardinal Moran knew perfectly well that M(iss) A(ylward) would change a sister now and then without reference (ordinarily) to him and he not only accepted them but repeatedly pressed for it. With regard to the farm, it was given to Miss Aylward in Card(inal) Moran’s time. I have found among her papers the Cardinal’s letter in which he announces to her that Mr Carroll had called upon him and told him that he had left the farm to M.A. (she and Mr.C were related) and tells it her approvingly.” (9)

Brownrigg in his reply of November 23 1889 refused to accept Agnes Vickers’ arguments as ‘mitigating in any degree the attitude of isolation taken up by Miss Aylward from the beginning of my episcopacy towards the ecclesiastical authorities of this diocese.’(10) The correspondence continues but it is indicative of the reaction of certain clerics to Margaret Aylward.

As J. J. Lee suggests in “Women and the Church since the Famine”: “the clergy instinctively shared the farmers’ attitudes” (11) and these attitudes included a belief that a woman’s place was in the home. It derived from the immediate post-famine days when, in order to provide work for the menfolk who would otherwise emigrate, the women were obliged to cease field labour, at which in pre-famine times they were necessary wage-earners. Professor Lee’s study of the influence of economic necessity (the woman confined to the house) on socio-religious habits is interesting, and, in the context of the life of Margaret Aylward, informative. To establish an orthodoxy, sex became equated with sin and women were idealized. Professor Lee further noted that “some of their male brethren may have conveyed the impression that nuns should be neither seen nor heard”.(12) Women, like Margaret, who were willing to stand by their ideals and their beliefs often had to face such a barrage as Brownrigg’s and women who shouted their message too loudly and refused to yield faced the ostracization experienced by the Nun of Kenmare, though it should also be noted that Br Rice had trouble with bishops. Their ire was roused by any challenge to their authority whether from men or women. For bishops, the presence of religious orders, by definition outside their jurisdiction, within their dioceses was often a cause for complaint. Those religious communities which were under the control of local bishops were often preferred to autonomous communities accepting as ordinary a foreign superior general.

In England, Cornelia Connelly also found herself in conflict with her local bishop who interfered so far as to draw up a new Rule for the infant congregation, (just as her husband Pierce had also attempted to do) placing himself as ‘Bishop Superior’ of the Institute, though luckily the other bishops, in whose dioceses were convents of the Holy Child, opposed him. Cornelia’s biographer tells that this same bishop noticed, as the sisters arrived to kiss his ring, “that Cornelia’s obeisance was merely sketched, a travesty he considered of what it should be. He ordered her peremptorily upon her knees and immediately Cornelia obeyed, apologizing before her whole community for her apparent lack of respect. The Bishop, turning, left her and there she remained (due to her rheumatic gout) unable to move until one of her nuns... helped her to her feet’ (13)

Margaret seemed to have little such trouble but Brownrigg was not the only bishop to question her authority, motives or actions. Bishop Niall Donnelly of Dublin wrote to her in 1884 alluding to “a matter that vitally concerns the success of your good work”. He continued:

... For the last seven or eight years perhaps longer there has been steadily growing a feeling of indifference if not of hostility to St

Brigid's on the part of the Clergy, especially those of the city. I confess to have shared in this feeling to some extent myself. I fancy that I can trace it to two causes. 1st, the great difficulty experienced by the Clergy when critical cases arose of getting children into St Brigid's without giving a personal guarantee of an annual sum which many of them cannot afford. 2ndly. a decided want of savoir faire to use the mildest term on the part of some of the well-meaning officials of the orphanage, which to my own knowledge has been interpreted by some clergymen as little short of insulting. Not knowing as you do that so much depends on our Clergy & the interest they can be got to take in any work in order to make it successful, I think it would be desirable that the Directors & Officials of the Orphanage should make some effort to regain, if possible, lost popularity amongst the Clergy... I think it would be better to trust to general charity & quietly enlist the good wishes of the Clergy without appearing to make them pay for their efforts in rescuing the little ones in danger... (14)

The letter, though couched in polite and affable terms, is indicative of the clergy's view of themselves as central to any undertaking: what is now referred to as "the priest on the pedestal". It lacks the continuing references to 'authority' and 'duty' of the later letter from Brownrigg but is, nevertheless, adamant that a proper respect should be shown for clergymen.

In reply Margaret states, in an extensive letter beginning impressively, "S.Brigida, ora pro nobis" and "Unus Deus, una Fides".

My Lord,

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your Lordship's esteemed letter of the 10th and to thank you very much for your valued subscription of £1 to St. Brigid's Orphanage.

I thank you most sincerely for the candour and friendliness of your letter and I ask you to allow me to reply in the same spirit.

I am sure I need not say how glad I am to learn from you that a select body of priests with your Lordship as Chairman are charged with the duty of combating proselytism in the City. Theirs is no holiday work, they must give themselves to it unsparingly and heartily, and put in practice prudently all the means necessary to succeed. All that we can do to second your efforts shall be done.

This brings me to the complaints which you say the Clergy of the City make of us and in which you (you say) to some extent agree with them".(15)

Dealing with the Bishop's first point she says:

... These children were in imminent peril of being reared in heresy. They lay so to speak on the conscience of the Clergy.

They would of course have had to answer to God for the souls of these children.

But you say "there is a feeling of indifference, if not of hostility on the part of the Clergy to St Brigid's." Is it for saving so many souls committed to their charge?

She then continues:

... The total cost of saving all those children was I estimate not under £30,000... After working all day we have hundreds of times staid up till 2 and 3 o'clock in the morning doing the work of the orphanage, that is trying to save the children for whom the Clergy were accountable.

But you say it is within the last seven or eight years that the indifference or hostility of the Clergy has sprung up. Well even in these years we have taken every case that could not otherwise be saved. We may have been mistaken in a few cases. But before that time we received all cases that were in serious danger, and they were all, either put upon us by the Clergy or recommended by them. Now what help have the Clergy given us for doing their work?

There are in the City about one hundred secular priests and of these 12 are Subscribers to the Orphanage. But let us take the year 1874, before this hostility sprang up. In that year there were just 19 priests of Dublin subscribers. There was a Priest in St Andrew's who had a great name for saving children. We received from him a very large number. He requited us in the end by withholding his small subscription of Ten Shillings or a Pound, and complaining afterwards at a meeting of the Clergy of the inefficiency of the Orphanage...

In truth we did not begin to impose terms on the Clergy till we saw in the near distance a crash and the total break up of the Orphanage.

How can sensible men show hostility for this?

You say that a priest bound to save an orphan or destitute child cannot guarantee a sum. And will he impose the whole labour and responsibility upon us?..

... You seem to think that 'parochial rating' is out of the question, that the local demands are so pressing that nothing could be added. But is not the Orphan child of the parish local, and when he fails or is about to fall into the hands of heretics is not his salva-

tion before every other demand? Is the seating of a Church to be put in comparison?

Would it not be lawful to melt and sell the sacred chalice to save him?

... What is the use of thinking that we can cure a widespread gangrene with a pennyworth of plaster?

With regard to the second cause you give of the hostility of the Clergy viz, the discourtesy of the Officials, I must respectfully request of you, my Lord, to give me particulars of who the Priest was that was insulted, when, by whom, and what was the insult. There is only one Lady who has been constantly in the Office in Eccles Street. She has devoted her life and fortune to the service of the Clergy and for 25 years has literally been their slave. Is this her recompense?..

The force of what she says seems to have struck the Bishop, for in his final note he says:

... I fear I conveyed my meaning very imperfectly in my recent letter & unwilling that any misapprehension should exist concerning it I beg to state that my sole object in writing it was to call your attention to a fact:-

... No one is more alive to all the assistance rendered by your good work than I am, & when I said that "I shared to some extent" in that dissatisfaction I referred to a case which occurred whilst Adm. in Westland Row where I certainly felt disappointed, but for which you may have had excellent reasons. I quite forget the name and circumstances of the case now,... With regard to complaint No. 2 I am beginning to think that I overstated the case. It was a casual conversation that occurred some three or four years ago where a number of priests were assembled & someone present said that he had an answer from St Brigid's that was 'little short of impertinent'. I think that was the word not 'insulting'. At this distance of time I could not recall the facts not even the name of priest who made the observation.

But be assured that nothing would give me greater pleasure than to use the opportunity I now have of recommending St Brigid's to the Clergy & my sole object in writing as I did was that stating a fact however unpleasant I might facilitate a return to a better understanding on both sides which I am satisfied would result in the cordial & generous support of the Clergy. (16)

Yet if Margaret sometimes faced opposition she could also count on the support of the genius of Catholic Church policy and progress in the

nineteenth century, Paul Cardinal Cullen. As Lee says, "Cullen himself, who combined a good mind with great common sense, was not quite as preoccupied with sex as some of his subordinates and successors".(17) Indeed, it is because of the 'liberties' allowed to Margaret by Cullen that she escaped the harangues of Cardinal McCabe. As Canon McCabe he had been a strong supporter of the Orphanage. Although as Cardinal, McCabe was to issue his famous pastoral in 1882, accusing the nation of hiding under womens' petticoats, he did not interfere either with the life or works of Margaret Aylward. MacSuibhne in *Paul Cullen and His Contemporaries* notes the approval of Cullen for Margaret and her community and also the fact that canonical erection "was granted from Rome where he had gone to be created cardinal".(18) It was Cullen who encouraged her to extend her vision and open schools for the middle classes, thus leading the Holy Faith sisters into their second work of educational 9)

The Bishop of Ardagh and Clonmacnoise, writing to her on 18 December 1874, speaks to her with easy familiarity and humour. "I am happy to learn," he says "... That you have been raised to the peerage by the style and title of "*Lady Halberd of Eccles Street*". I beg to offer to your Ladyship my warmest congratulations upon this well deserved honour."(20) The letter goes on to inquire, as from one with superior experience in such fields, what should be done in the case of restoring children to their mother. The request is for practical aid in helping to locate the children, but also, and more pointedly, for advice in what to say to the mother if the children should not be found.

A final letter from her former director, John Curtis S.J., shows that his former 'pupil' is now recognized as an equal with whom matters of more than purely personal import may be discussed. The old man recognizes Margaret's role and position and discusses the future of the work with her as a leader in her field and a woman of experience.

"I thank you exceedingly for your kindness in sending me the report of St Brigid's Orphanage. It is well you did not forget me as I am now so long out of the active world. The report is, as usual, solid, interesting and useful. I attach great importance to your concluding words: "All this could be put an end to in a few years at most by Catholic organization, moderate pecuniary sacrifice and resolute persistence, persistence in driving the heretical wolf from his prey." Your orphanage is now nearly a quarter of a century old. You have lost little or nothing of your activity in promoting its success... There have appeared a large number of talented young priests, and they should learn how to vitilize or even to improve by organization suited to the circumstances the pious confraterni-

ties... The advent to his high position of our present estimable and zealous A.Bishop affords an opportunity for this and you may do much by active exertions in your own sphere. *A word to the wise is sufficient.*(21)

In the foundation of her congregation Margaret had one other difficulty to overcome. As Fr Gowan was so intimately involved with the new institute it was desirable that he would become engaged with the formation and direction of the Sisters on a permanent and secure basis. However, his provincial, Fr McNamara, had reappointed him – to St Vincent’s College, Castleknock, a house considerably more distant from the Glasnevin Convent than the house at Phibsboro’. Faced with this Fr Gowan wrote to the General in Paris:

I very humbly ask you to take into consideration the question of my return to Phibsboro’.

1. I have no employment in this house nor have had during the last twelve months.
2. I go into Dublin almost every day, at an expense of time, labour and money, and I am obliged to be frequently absent from dinner and also from some of the exercises of piety in consequence of the inconvenient hours at which the train travels; all which would be avoided if I were in Phibsboro’.
3. My health for a long time past is very feeble & during the coming winter I will be exposed to rain etc. and consequently to fits of sickness.
4. St Bridg’s Work to which you so kindly appointed me has grown and is now a Congregation. Besides the Orphanage it has six large schools which have been the means of saving many hundreds of the children of the poor from heretical schools. A great part of the time required for these & my other employments in Dublin is spent on the road every day.
5. Some of the Senior confreres seeing the anomalous position in which I was asked me a few months ago if I would go to Phibsboro’. I said I had no objection. They applied to Father McNamara. He said he had no objection, but that he would not interfere, perhaps because I am here directly by your appointment.(22)

Fr Etienne had appointed him to the position of spiritual director and Superior General of the Holy Faith in 1861 at the request of Archbishop Dixon of Armagh and Cardinal Cullen of Dublin. Either at this stage, or perhaps at the time of the 1861 negotiations, Fr Gowan had written that

if he were to be prevented from fulfilling his duties to the Holy Faith Sisters due to his residence in Castleknock he would have to ask to be released from his vows as a member of the Vincentians. For a man who had chosen to enter his community so late in life and who was deeply attached to its spirit such a step would indeed have been a grave one and an indication of the respect he had for Margaret Aylward's vision.

Conclusion: Towards the Light

As the early Congregation of St Brigit (1859) evolved into the Sisters of the Christian Schools and then of the Holy Faith (1867), in common with many contemporary foundations it expanded rapidly. By the time of its canonical erection in 1861, due in some measure to the exertions on her behalf of Margaret's fellow countyman – Archbishop Kirby, former rector of the Irish College, Rome – the Orphanage, Crow Street, Great Strand Street and West Park Street Schools formed the Sister's apostolate and Glasnevin had just been purchased. This last, then a quiet retreat, was to become the mother-house and close to Margaret's own heart.

With the taking of first or private vows (1867) came the adoption of one's new name and Miss Margaret Aylward became Mother Mary Agatha. This is perhaps one of the most intriguing questions about Margaret's personal development. At the time the change of names was one of the most obvious signs of a woman's dedication to the religious life and became an integral part of her being; Fanny Taylor signed herself Mary Magdalen of the Sacred Heart, S.M.G., and even after she had left her community and the church the Nun of Kenmare signed herself M(ary)F(rances), in preference to M(argaret)A(nna) Cusack. Yet Margaret Aylward's signature, at the end of those letters still remaining, is never Mary Agatha. She signed herself M.A: no longer Margaret Aylward yet not actually her religious name. Only Fr Gowan addressed his letters to Mother M Agatha, and although "Mrs" was a common form of address for religious sisters (as in Brownrigg's letter to Mrs Vickers) it was still predominantly for Miss Aylward that the letters arrived.

And even as society began to cast nuns in the role they were to play for the next century, emphasising uniformity and conformity, Margaret remained Miss Aylward to all with whom she came in contact. There was not even the religious habit to suggest her change in status. Mother Taylor, when founding the Poor Servants of the Mother of God, had been much concerned with the habit they would wear, but such concerns do not seem to have occupied Margaret. By dispensation from Cardinal Cullen, she was released from the obligation to wear the habit and to live in the convent.

This was possibly due to Margaret's advanced age; she was by this time fifty-seven years old, but it should be remembered that her sister Jane, as Sr M Scholastica Pagan, was of similar age and still wore the habit. Perhaps it was due to the fact that for so long she had headed the Orphanage work as a secular and it might have been to the advantage of the work for her to remain in secular dress, but Mother Connelly had found the religious garb a decided advantage when called upon to appear in court. It would seem unlikely that it was for the sake of the orphans and poor that she remained externally a secular; her work was progressively administrative and she delegated the actual fieldwork to her sisters and helpers. Besides, to the poor a nun was more clearly defined by her role in their lives, and that predominantly by her dress, than the dedicated lay-woman. However, it may also be due to the fact that Margaret's health was, by now, seriously deteriorating. She was at Aix-les-Bains and Aix-la-Chapelle in 1864, 1868, 1872 and possibly 1878. She also had to spend long periods of convalescence away from Dublin and this may explain why, to her early novices, she seemed such a remote and distant woman. In reply to a letter written after her death Sr M Agnes Vickers wrote:

She was a lay-woman, you say. No, she was a nun... but Cardinal Cullen gave her permission to wear the lay-dress, because she had, while in health, almost incessant work to do in city and country to sustain her works of charity. She lay in the coffin in her religious habit with a copy of her vows clasped in her hand, and was thus buried.(23)

I have been unable to find the original of this letter, quoted in Gibbon's *Life* but it seems to capture something of her spirit. Yet, throughout her life Margaret had been an innovator and a woman of strong beliefs. Perhaps after three unsuccessful attempts at community life (including the 'lay community' of Berkely Street) she acknowledged that religious life, as it was then lived, was not for her. She certainly recognized that for the work of the orphanage to continue it was necessary that there be a constant stream of dedicated and available workers to staff it. For this reason the sisterhood was set up, but it is possible that Margaret had the wisdom to recognize that her constant presence could be a liability. Her scrupulosity and impatience with imperfection are recurring motifs in her letters, and she may have had the sense to recognize that while necessary as a foundress there was an interior inability to conform to the accepted norms.

If this is so then she had greater insight than the Nun of Kenmare. She, patently unsuited to contemporary monastic life, faced constant frustration as she found her self confined and thwarted at almost every

turn. As an enclosed religious her opponents could use the requirements of claustration as a weapon against her. As a nun she was restricted by society's view of the role of religious; hence she found her growing feminist ideas at odds with the social role of the nun. Her works, though, in her contemporaries' eyes, entirely suited to the aims of pious lay-confraternities or even to individual women, were too secular in nature for a nun.

While Margaret Aylward could, and did, speak from platforms to assembled clergy and laity, such behaviour was considered unbecoming and unmonastic for Margaret Anna Cusack. Thus, while Miss Aylward was a staunch supporter of the Roman Catholic Church – as was Cornelia Connolly – Sr Mary Francis Clare Cusack, like Pierce Connelly, became embittered: “I found from first to last Rome was a gigantic fraud”.⁽²⁾ Margaret and Cornelia, though strong-minded and convinced of their goal, had always managed to remain within the fold, never alienating the church authorities completely; Margaret Cusack, on first experiencing restriction, seems to have become entrenched in her own views. Whatever the judgement of her as a person, as a religious she certainly lacked discretion. Perhaps, like E. A. Bodenham and Pierce Connelly, she envisaged religious life as a means towards untrammelled self-expression and self-aggrandisement.

As with the others, Margaret's last years were marked by great physical suffering. For two years before her death on 11 October 1889 she was confined to her bed. Cornelia Connelly had predeceased her, dying on Friday, 18 April 1879. Her death had also followed a long and agonizing illness. Margaret Anna Cusack died, alone and confused, on 5 June 1899. Unlike the others, she died away from her community and shunned by those she had helped though she seems to have effected a reconciliation with her daughters of St Joseph of Peace. The youngest of the four, Fanny Taylor, died on June 8 1900, having lost consciousness while visiting her convents on the continent.

Miss Aylward's passing was mourned (Gibbons quotes the obituary notice from the *Freeman's Journal*) but she, like the other foundresses, was to upset convention even after her death. The Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, of St Joseph of Peace and of the Holy Faith found that they had as foundresses free-thinking women of action who did not conform to the accepted view of nuns. All three could be authoritative and occasionally domineering or autocratic; this was not considered behaviour fitting for the role of foundress. Thus it took seventy years, until 1969, before M. A. Cusack was recognized as having had anything to do with the foundation of the Sisters of St Joseph of Peace, and a further five before her role as actual foundress was officially recognized. Mother Angelica Croft, successor to Mother Connelly, it is

suggested, had pressure brought to bear on her to refrain from propagating Cornelia's memory, if she was not actually obliged to obliterate it. In any case, Cornelia's letters and diaries were, deliberately or inadvertently, destroyed. It was only after her death that her Rule, about which there had been constant controversy and battle, was accepted. Her biographer's vision of her community awaiting her death with eyes downcast and hands folded is perhaps not inaccurate; Cornelia Connolly had been a focus for action and controversy all her life and perhaps the sisters felt that her death would relieve the tension then prevalent. It took a good many years before her community came to publicly accept and value the true worth of their foundress.

For Margaret's Holy Faith nuns the situation was similar. Fr Gowan, spiritual director to Clonliffe College and to the famous Dom Colomba Marmion, O.S.B. of Maredsous Abbey, lecturer at Maynooth College and famous retreat master, was a much more acceptable founder by the criteria of the period. They did not attempt to disregard Margaret but, as Gibbon's *Life* shows, there were subtle attempts to make her conform in death as she had not done in life (had she asked to be buried in her habit?). In the spirit of today, however, she can be accepted for what she was, not for what she might have been.

They were not perfect, these women: they could be autocratic, and occasionally scathing. In defence of their work they sometimes became extreme in their views. They had personal failings and weaknesses, sometimes placing too great a faith in favourites – as is certainly true of Mother Connolly – or refusing to accept the advice of others. Margaret's refusal to accept schools affiliated to the National Board was the norm at the time; Catholics decried the Board and its works, but unlike her contemporaries, she did not affect a compromise. Thus the Board, which was turned to advantage by many of the Parish Priests, was a tool of heresy for Margaret, to be avoided at all costs.

The form of biography concerned with prominent Catholics, until recently prevalent, taught us to see an individual as a saint, a servant of God, almost from the moment of birth. Modern thinking has helped us to trace the development of the individual in the course of their lives, and, in the religious sphere, to note the gradual turning to God and coming to awareness of one's mission. In the life of Margaret Aylward, this is especially obvious as she gradually comes to recognize the nature, requirements and extent of the work before her.

What is surprising in Margaret's life is that there is no reference to the role of women. Like many of the foundresses she did not give general application to her personal experiences and insights. They seem to have had no sense of shared aims, they subscribed to no coherent body of thought on the role of women. To describe her, or Mothers Taylor or

Connolly, as consciously feminist would be a mistake. Though their paths were to cross, none seems to have been aware of the existence of the others, nor of the fact that they and their communities were part of a worldwide tendency in the church towards an increase in religious vocations and in the number of communities. Yet the general trend can only be recognized if the experience of the individuals who comprise it are synthesised, seen to coalesce to form a coherent unity. They were not women before their time. They were the necessary precursors of a general feminine consciousness, upsetting and disturbing the accepted conventions of the world in which they found themselves. They, by opening new vistas, helped their contemporaries to change their perspectives and examine their preconceptions and prejudices. To do that effectively it was necessary that they be accepted members of their society, altering without over-turning or destroying.

All this Margaret Aylward did. Her work was valuable and necessary and gained society's respect and admiration. But by her life and actions Margaret enabled her fellow-citizens to envisage at least the possibilities of change, changes of which she herself was not completely conscious.

With hindsight we, from our vantage point in history, can note general tendencies in the past, of which contemporaries were unaware. An ideology or movement is the result of the shared and combined life experiences of those who propound it, therefore it is the general expression of individual experiences. Yet it is also the fruit of a slow process of conscientization. Margaret Aylward was a part of the process but she did not envisage, nor did she live to see, its maturation in the movements for women of the twentieth century.

Short Biographical notes;

CORNELIA CONNELLY

Born Cornelia Peacock in Boston, she married Pierce Connelly, an Episcopalian minister, when she was twenty-three. They had four children of whom one died in childhood. After some years of marriage she converted, albeit reluctantly, to Catholicism for her husband's sake and moved to Louisiana. From thence they travelled to Europe and were patronized by Lord Shrewsbury. It was while they were sojourning at Rome that Pierce decided to enter the priesthood, and Cornelia was obliged either to take a vow of perpetual chastity or become a nun. Still nursing her youngest child Mercer, she was admitted to the novitiate of the Sacred Heart Sisters at Trinita del Monte. Before completing her novitiate she was asked by Bishop, later Cardinal, Wiseman to come to England to found a religious community. After some initial difficulty

the Religious of the Holy Child Jesus were founded. As the community gathered strength Pierce, now no longer a Jesuit but a secular priest, attempted to have himself acknowledged as Superior of the Community and sent a set of Common Rules to Rome with this end in view. His plans being thwarted he then demanded restitution of conjugal rights in 1848. At first the courts found in his favour but in 1851 the Privy Council reversed the decision. Pierce then reverted to Episcopalianism and retired to preach in Florence, Italy, taking his three remaining children with him. Cornelia remained as head of her institute until her death, though her Bishop, Danell of Southwark, also tried to have himself acknowledged as bishop-superior of the community. It was only after her death that her original rule was accepted by Rome. Her papers, whether accidentally or deliberately is not known, were all destroyed after her death.

MARGARET ANNA CUSACK

Having been born in Coolock, Dublin, in 1829, the young M A Cusack soon moved to Devonshire for the duration of her childhood. Like Mrs Connelly she was reared an Episcopalian but became High Church in outlook and joined Miss Sellon's Anglican Sisterhood, following the death of her fiance. Finding that Dr Pusey, founder of the institute, acted autocratically and chose what was to be revealed to the sisters, she left. She was received into the Catholic Church on 2 July 1858 and soon joined the Poor Clare Community at Newry in Co Down. From thence she was sent to the newly opened convent at Kenmare, Co Kerry. From her convent she became famous for the pamphlets she wrote, on both religious and secular matters, and earned the soubriquet 'The Nun of Kenmare'. She started a famine relief fund and attacked the behaviour of rack-rent landlords, especially the Marquis of Lansdowne. From Kenmare Sr Mary Francis Clare, as she had now become, began to find herself in opposition to many of the Irish hierarchy. By 1882, in the face of much ecclesiastical opposition, she had founded the Sisters of Peace and was living hi Knock, Co Mayo. From Ireland she moved to England and thence to America. Here too she raised the ire of many ecclesiastics. Finally, thwarted on all sides she left the Catholic Church and died on 5th June 1899 in Warwickshire, England. The observation, made by Dr Margaret McCurtain, that M. A.Cusack was religious but not spiritual hi outlook, seems to sum up the dilemma of her life.

FANNY MARGARET TAYLOR

The daughter of an Anglican clergyman, Margaret Taylor was the second youngest of a large family. She was born in 1832. After her

family moved to the city following her father's death, she found herself attracted to High Church Anglicanism. She also attempted to join Miss Sellon's sisterhood but soon left (though her sister Emma remained on as Sr Phoebe). It was while serving as nurses at Scutari in the Crimea, under Miss Nightingale, that Miss Taylor and her sister were received into the Catholic Church. It was some years later, with the help of Lady Georgiana Fullerton, that she founded the Poor Servants of the Mother of God – an English-based order. Of the four foundresses her life was the one least touched by scandal or incident. Her community grew and flourished and it was while on tour of her European houses that she collapsed and lost consciousness. Brought back to her mother-house at Roehampton she died in 1900.

Notes

1. Life p. 187
2. "The Month" 21.11.1866
3. Letter of Joseph Dixon, Archbishop of Armagh to MA (HFA) 02.11.1858
4. Letter of MA to Fr O'Sullivan (HFA) 06.10.1874
5. Letter of Bishop Brownrigg of Ossory to JG (HFA) 22.02.1892
6. Letter of Bishop Brownrigg to Sr M. Agnes Vickers (HFA) 07.01.1892
7. Letter of Bishop Brownrigg to Sr M. Agnes Vickers (HFA) 30.01.1892
8. Letter of Bishop Brownrigg to Sr M. Agnes Vickers (HFA) 17.11.1889
9. All above quotations from letter of Sr M. Agnes Vickers to Bishop Brownrigg (HFA) undated.
10. Letter of Bishop Brownrigg to Sr M. Agnes Vickers (HFA) 23.11.1889
11. J. J. Lee "Women and the Church since the Famine" in MacCurtain and O'Corrain *Women in Irish Society: The Historical Dimensions*, Dublin, Arlen House, The Women's Press 1978, p.40
12. *ibid.* p. 42
13. Juliana Wadham *The Case of Cornelia Connelly* London, Collins 1956,
14. Letter of Bishop Niall Donnelly to MA (HFA) 10.01.1884
15. Letter of MA to above (HFA) 14.01.1884
16. Letter of Bishop Donnelly to MA (HFA) 15.01.1884
17. J. J. Lee, *op.cit.* p.39
18. MacSuibhne, *Paul Cullen and His Contemporaries* (ii) Naas, The Leinster Leader 1962 p.46-47
19. These schools included:
The boarding school at Glasnevin Convent
St Mary's Private School, Celbridge, 1878
Dominick Street Private School, Dublin, 1884
and in the year after her death,
Star of the Sea, Clontarf.
c.f. Sr M Assisi (ed) *Sisters of the Holy Faith*, Dublin,
Three Candles, 1967

20. Letter of the Bishop of Ardagh to MA (HFA) 18.12.1872
21. Letter of Curtis SJ to MA (HFA) 22.03.1881
22. Letter of JG to Père Etienne (HFA) undated. Original in Vincentian Archives, Rome
23. 23 *Lifep.16.*
24. 24. Irene ffrench Eager *Margaret Anna Cusack: One Woman's Campaign for*
25. *Women's Rights* Dublin, Arlen House, The Women's Press 1979, p.206 25
Life p.359

The Grand Tour of Vincentian France

Thomas Davitt CM

Introduction

When I was in Paris in September 1988 for the annual meeting of The Secretariat International des Etudes Vincentiennes (SIEV), of which I was a member at the time, I mentioned in passing that I had been to every town in France in which there had been a house of the Congregation in Vincent's lifetime. It was suggested to me that I should prepare an account of my wanderings for publication. I made the initial draft of this article shortly afterwards, but have only recently prepared the final text.

I first visited Paris in the summer of 1949 as part of the requirements for the BA degree in University College, Dublin. I had the opportunity of visiting Vincentian sites in Paris, including Clichy. After ordination in 1954 I was in France on many occasions and took the opportunity of visiting the more important places, such as Folleville, Dax, Pouy and Châtillon-les-Dombes. As these places are well documented and are normally taken hi by Vincentians and Sisters visiting France, I will not deal with them in this article.

In 1978, while stationed in Strawberry Hill, I decided to read systematically through the eight volumes of Vincent's letters in the Coste edition. I set myself a certain number of pages to be read each day, a figure which I later doubled. I made notes as I went along and it gradually dawned on me that reading the letters would be far more interesting and enjoyable if I had some knowledge of the places referred to. Names such as Annecy, Cahors, Sedan would mean more to me if I had been to these places; they would change from being merely names to being personal memories. As well as achieving that aim visiting those places would be an enjoyable way of spending holidays. As a result, I spent three summer holidays doing this, in 1979, 1980 and 1982.

French Railways (SNCF) issue tickets called France Vacances which are available only to non-residents and must be bought outside France. These tickets allow unlimited travel on SNCF, and some bus routes, for periods of one week, two weeks, or one month. On each of my three holidays I used the one-month ticket and got exceptionally good value from them. In 1979 the one-month ticket cost £109.1 travelled 7,906 km in 1979, 10,024 hi 1980 and 11,769 in 1982. The SNCF timetables give the distance between stations. Unfortunately SNCF since then

have changed the rules applying to these tickets and now a one-month ticket allows only fifteen days travel within a designated month. When I used them the tickets meant what they said, unlimited travel within the month.

A few preliminary clarifications are called for. For trips like these fairly detailed advance planning is necessary. An absolute essential item is the complete six-volume set of the SNCF timetables, which in 1979 cost about £12.00, but this is a very worthwhile investment. Also some sheets of the Michelin maps are needed, as a certain amount of walking from railway stations is required; also, some of the places involved are too insignificant to be marked on larger general maps. Finally, I should mention here that rail travel and walking through the French countryside were, for me, a large part of the enjoyment apart from any Vincentian links.

I have included details of tunes and distances in order to help anyone else planning to visit any of the places mentioned.

I cannot guarantee the accuracy of some of the information which I obtained from local people on the spot at various places, as there was normally no way of cross-checking.

Lastly, like the Acts of the Apostles, parts of the following narrative have the pronouns 'we' and 'us', because for most of the time Stan Brindley was with me.

1979

On 18 July we arrived at 95, Rue de Sevres, Paris, and spent the night there. The next day we had a session with Raymond Chalumeau CM, the archivist of the Paris province and got some particulars from him about various places we intended to visit. We then headed off for **Le Mans**. There the chapel of the 12th century Maison-Dieu, a hospital-hospice, has been renovated and re-opened as a church. In 1645, according to a leaflet available there, the Maison-Dieu was taken over by Vincent de Paul. The Congregation undertook the chaplaincy ministry and also used the residence as a base for missionaries. Apart from the chapel nothing of the former building remains. A plaque has been erected commemorating the former Vincentian connection. This house was also known as Nôtre-Dame de Coëffort. That evening we continued on by train to **Rennes**, where we reached the CM house by a combination of two city bus routes from the station.

On the 20th we went to **Vannes**. The body of Pierre-René Rogue is hi a shrine in the cathedral, with his head re-attached. One can easily see just how small a man he was, about 4' 10". The Porte-prison in which he was imprisoned is still intact. No. 9, Rue Emile Burgault, has a plaque indicating that he was arrested outside that house on Christmas Eve 1795.

This street had three previous names, de Nôtre-Dame, de la Prefecture, and de l'Hôtel de Ville. His mother lived in Rue de la Monnaie, though the number of the house is not on record. He was guillotined in the Place de l'Hôtel de Ville. Part of the former grand séminaire remains. He spent time there both as a diocesan seminarian and as a Vincentian priest. Le Mené church, where he ministered, has been replaced by a Monoprix supermarket. The Retraite des Femmes, where he also ministered, has been demolished.

Further reading later on about Pierre-Rend turned up more information and necessitated a subsequent visit on 4 July 1980, as detailed below.

On the 21st I took the train to Redon and there changed into the Quimper-Toulouse express to get to **Luçon**. At the cathedral I asked a priest about the 17th century Vincentian house, and he brought me to the diocesan archivist. The archivist told me that the Congregation had been hi charge of the seminary and that at the Revolution the seminary became a military barracks which was completely demolished in the late 1930s and replaced by a new barracks. I got back to Rennes at midnight. It would seem, though, that the house referred to in Vincent's letters as Luçon was in that diocese rather than in the town itself, as indicated below under 26 July.

The 22nd was a Sunday and we had to walk to Rennes station as the bus does not run on Sundays. We took the train to **Brest** and at the naval museum we asked a gendarme about the Algerian cannon which had been captured by the French and brought to Brest. The French called this cannon "Le Consulaire". It had been cast in 1542. The French forces took it merely as a trophy of war, when they captured Algiers in 1830, but we were interested in it because it was at the mouth of this cannon that Jean Le Vacher was killed. The gendarme told us that it was hi the grounds of the Arsenal, erected vertically as a monument, but that no non-French nationals were permitted to enter the Arsenal. We could see it from a road overlooking the Arsenal. We thought it would be worth checking with the guard at the Arsenal gates as to whether we might be allowed hi to photograph the cannon. The rules were stretched a little and we were allowed walk over to La Consulaire and photograph it, provided that was all we did; we were kept under close observation all the time. Later on, back hi Paris, Jean Cantinat, a Breton confrere, told us that he thought the original cannon had been destroyed in the 1939-45 war and that what was now hi the Arsenal was merely a replica. Still later, though, he told us that he had made enquiries and that what is there is the original. Brest proved to be a deadly dull town, at least on a Sunday.

On the 23rd we had to get up at 05.00 hi order to catch a train at 06.00 to La Brohinière where we had to change to a bus for the seven

km journey to Saint-Méen. There were nine buses every day, unlike some other places we visited where there was only one bus per week. At the Eglise abbatiale we asked a priest we met, Abbé René David, about the former Vincentian house. He drove us to meet a Père Jalu who was a mine of information. We were then brought to meet yet another local priest, Père Roussel. We concelebrated mass in the hospital, part of which was a house of the Daughters of Charity in the 17th century. After mass Abbé David re-appeared and told us that Père Roussel had invited us to lunch. I should mention that we had not previously known any of these priests nor had anyone provided us with introductions to them; they were not Vincentians. Their welcome and help was typical of what we experienced in many places during these tours.

In 1645 the Congregation was asked by the bishop to take charge of the newly-established seminary in the former Benedictine abbey. The Benedictines refused to leave, and the municipality sided with them. The bishop insisted that the Congregation remain. The ensuing battle and siege is described in Leonard's translation of Coste: *The Life and Labours of St Vincent de Paul*. (henceforward L & L), Vol. I, pp. 582-592, and is referred to in many of Vincent's letters at the time. The abbey church, which was besieged, is still standing. The original seminary buildings were replaced, by the Congregation, in 1712. This replacement building is still there, though it is no longer a seminary. There is also a house called La Maison de Saint-Vincent, but it has no direct connection with the Congregation.

On the 24th we were up at 06.00 for the 101 km train journey to Saint-Brieuc. Confreres of a certain age may recall that this was where Canon Hervé taught dogma, but we did not pay any homage to him, merely changing trains to continue on to Tréguier, another 67 km. covered in 30 minutes. The Congregation used to be in charge of the seminary there. We went to find the cure to ask for information, and he referred us to a bookseller, Yves Moreau, who had done four or five years of research on the history of the town. He told us which sections of the buildings of the present Lycée Mixte were parts of the 17th century seminary.

The next day was spent in covering the 203 km from Rennes to Tours, where a confrere in Rennes had made arrangements for us to spend the night in the house of the Daughters of Charity. On the 26th we took a train to Nantes where we changed into another for Belleville, a combined journey of 253 km. From there we had a 7km walk to Le-Poire-sur-Vie. In note 9 to letter 459 (II 65; ET 2:79, note 10) Coste explains that as well as the house in Richelieu Vincent wanted another house in the diocese of Luçon. Cardinal Richelieu allowed him to buy the town-house (hôtel) of the seigneurs de Pont de Vie. Félix Contassot in some typewritten notes in the archives in 95, Rue de Sevres, Paris, says that

this was in the parish of Poire, "sous La Roche-sur-Yon". In Le-Poire-sur-Vie we were directed by the cure to the organist. He was absent but his wife telephoned him and put our question to him. He was unable to give us any information. There was only one 17th century house in the town. The chancellor of the diocese was of no help to us either but he drove us to the station in La-Roche-sur Yon, from where three different trains took us back to Tours.

On the 27th we took a bus for the 71 km journey to Richelieu; there are three buses a day. In spite of this relatively short distance the bus took two hours and forty-five minutes. The church and presbytery from Vincent's time are still intact. At the time of the Revolution half of the community residence was removed from church use. That half included the bedroom Vincent used on his visits to Richelieu. We were able to look up from the street at the windows of this room, but we were not allowed into that section of the building. We were able to enter the other half and we visited the former kitchen and some of the upstairs rooms. The former refectory was locked but we could see into it. The cure, who was not a confrere, said that Richelieu was Vincent's favourite house, and that he stayed there on thirteen occasions. He also said that Vincent wanted to be buried there but that the confreres in Saint-Lazare objected. I have never come across any tradition in the Congregation about such a desire on Vincent's part. We concelebrated at the high altar in the church, and the curé took out of the safe for our mass the chalice which the Duchess d'Aiguillon, Cardinal Richelieu's niece, had presented to Vincent.

When we took our final departure from Tours we had to make an unexpected change to our plans after missing a connection at the station in Saint-Pierre-des-Corps. We took another train to Limoges, which we had not planned to visit, and spent the night in the Salle de Repos in the station. This cost only 5 francs and was excellent value. We left the next morning for Périgueux, where we arrived at 07.24 and went to the seminary. Some French seminaries let rooms to visitors during the summer holidays. We spent the 28th in the seminary planning our journeys for the next few days. The 29th was a Sunday and, as there was no suitable train, we took a bus for the 9 km journey to Château-l'Evêque. The chapel in which Vincent was ordained a priest is now a transept of a more recent larger church. A Daughter of Charity, whom we met by chance, drove us to Chancelade to visit the Augustinian house of which Alain de Solminihac was superior before becoming bishop of Cahors. From there we took a bus back to Périgueux. On the 30th we travelled to Toulouse, changing trains at Brive-la-Gaillarde, 288 km. We stayed with the confreres in Toulouse.

On the 31st we went from Toulouse to Cahors, 113 km. In the cathedral we saw the tomb of Alain de Solminihac, whose body was

transferred there from Chance lade in 1791 (sic). A priest at the cathedral directed us to the former seminary building, now the Maison d'Oeuvres. The receptionist there confirmed that it was the 17th century seminary. There are statues of John Gabriel Perboyre in the seminary grounds and in a side chapel of the cathedral. (See below, 12 July 1980, for a second visit to Cahors).

On 1 August we took the train from Toulouse to Castelsarassin, 70 km. Next came a walk of 5 km to Saint-Aignan where we found the church locked. In Vincent's time the confreres in **Nôtre-Dame-de-Lorm** had charge of the church in Saint-Aignan. We walked on a further 4 km or so to Castelferrus, where a signpost directed us to Nôtre-Dame-de-Lorm. The priest there told us that the original church had been about half a kilometer away but had been totally demolished. The original statue, which had been the focal point of the pilgrimages, had been transferred to the 19th century church. The statue is only about eight inches in height, the work of a local farmer. Crowds still come on pilgrimage in September. In the 17th century the confreres used to walk between their two churches along the banks of the Garonne. On 20 September 1658 Vincent wrote to Firmin Get, superior in Marseilles, that he was worried about his (Get's) health and that he needed a change of air, which he would get in Nôtre-Dame-de-Lorm, in the diocese of Montauban, where the air is good, the countryside is lovely and the Garonne, a beautiful river, flows through it (VII 267, ET 7:282). The curé drove us back to Castelsarassin station.

On the 2nd we took the train from Toulouse to **Agen**, 121 km. The present Lycée Technique is the former seminary, but not as far back as Vincent's time. We went to the Archives Départementales and discovered where the 17th century seminary had been. It had been at the corner of Rue Paulin and Place Paulin, now re-named the Rue and Place des Droits de l'Homme. We were unable to determine, though, whether the building now on this site was from the 17th century.

The next day we went to Carcassonne, 91 km, and changed trains for the further 35 km to **Alet-Ies-Bains**. In Vincent's letters it is referred to just as Alet. The second train journey was a very scenic one and Alet itself is an attractive little town with many beautifully preserved 15th and 16th century houses. When we asked for information we were directed to some nuns who were able to show us some remaining parts of the 17th century seminary and also the unmarked grave of Nicolas Pavilion. He was bishop of Alet in Vincent's time and figures prominently in his correspondence. The former chapel of the seminary has been demolished and its altar is now in the church in Esperanza in Italy.

On the 4th in Toulouse station we boarded 'Le Capitole', an all first class Trans Europe Express. We had to pay a supplement as well as the

difference between second and first class. As it was a Saturday there were very few people on the train, and I took a photograph of Stan as the only passenger in the entire coach. As we had made a rather early start from the house we went along to the snack car for our breakfast. The man in charge informed us, with regret, that he had forgotten to bring the key of the press so he was unable to give us breakfast, but we could, if we wanted to, go along to the restaurant car and have full breakfast. When people tend to criticise *Iaranród Éireann* or British Rail I like to trot out our experience on an all first class Trans Europe Express! We went along to the Wagon Restaurant and had quite a luxury breakfast served by a waiter. We alighted at Brive-la-Gaillarde, 214 km from Toulouse.

We waited here until we could board a local stopping train and go 78 km back along the line to Thedirac, a small station at which the express did not stop. From there we walked about 5 km to Montgesty. There we asked the way to Le Puech, the farm where John Gabriel Perboyre was born. We walked for a further three or four kilometers in the direction indicated, and then went in to a farmhouse to ask for further directions. The farmer told us that the woman with him was a great-great-grand-niece of John Gabriel, and that she was just leaving to return to Le Puech, so he drove us back with her. The Perboyre surname has become extinct in the locality. The farmhouse is more or less as it was in John Gabriel's time. The man then drove Stan and myself back to Montgesty, where we visited the church in which John Gabriel was baptised.

The biographical note in the English language CM supplement to the breviary says that John Gabriel was born "near the city of Montgesty". That is a most misleading statement, as the village of Montgesty is far from being a city, and it has not even a bank, as we found to our dismay. We had been counting on changing some travellers' cheques there in order to have enough francs for a meal. Since there was no means of changing the cheques there we had to confine our eating to one bar of chocolate, all that we could purchase with our remaining French money. Fortified in this way we set out on our 5km return walk to the railway station at Thedirac. During our walk a car with British registration plates overtook us and we decided that if we came across it stopped later we would ask the driver to change a British £5 note into francs. This in fact happened and we had our delayed lunch in Thedirac before boarding the train for Toulouse. We spent the following day in Lourdes.

On the 6th we took the train from Toulouse for the 31 km journey to Saint-Sulpice-sur-Tarn. From that station we had a very pleasant walk of about 4 km into the hills to bring us to **Nôtre-Damede-Grâce**, where Vincent said his first mass. We said mass there and then walked on a further 5 km to **Buzet-sur-Tarn** where we were shown the house in which Vincent lodged and ran his small school in the period before

his ordination. We were able to go into some of the rooms in the house, which are now used for storage. Another walk of about 5 km brought us back to the station. We had walked about 15 km that day.

The following day we made the 425 km journey from Toulouse to Marseilles. We left our bags at the station and went to the Rue du Tapis Vert where the Congregation had its house in the 17th century. We were able to go into parts of the house, but neither then nor subsequently was I able to get into the former chapel of the house which was being used as a place for storing furniture. This was a great disappointment, as some of the more prominent confreres of the early days are buried in it. Since my last visit I have heard that the chapel has been restored for use by the followers of Archbishop Lefebvre. We phoned the confreres in La Tour Sainte, where we were expected, and Pierre Camau, a confrere whom we had known in our student days, picked us up at the local station, Sainte-Marthe, when we arrived on a train from the main Marseilles station. We spent the following day as ordinary tourists in Marseilles and took the night train to Paris, where we also spent the next day as ordinary tourists.

On the 10th we took the train to Sedan, 274 km. In a bookshop we consulted a history of the town and got particulars of the location of the former Saint-Laurent church, which the Congregation had in Vincent's lifetime. For a lot of that period Mark Cogley, from Carrick-on-Suir, was superior there and there are quite a number of letters from Vincent to him. The site of the church is now a yard between the houses on Place de la Halle, Rue de Mulhouse and Rue des Voyards. A glass-cutter working in the yard indicated the outline of the foundations of the former church, and told us that there were still burial vaults beneath. The vaults had been re-opened some years previously but then closed up again. The house across the street, opposite the entrance to the yard, No. 43, formerly the Hôtel des Trois Ecus, had been the CM house after 1666. It is not known where the confreres lived before that year. We returned to Paris for the night.

The following day I set out by myself for **Montmirail**, but when I got as far as Château-Thierry by train I discovered that there was no way of going on to Montmirail that day. I returned as far as Meaux and asked in the museum about the 17th century seminary; I was referred to the sacristan, but he was not to be found. See below for subsequent visits to Montmirail on 21 July 1980 and Meaux on 2 June 1982. I went on to **Crécy-en-Brie** and discovered that not a trace remains of the château, which had been a CM house for a very short period during Vincent's lifetime. I returned to Paris after a not very satisfactory day.

On the 12th we went to **Troyes**, 167km from Paris. Nothing remains of the 17th century seminary buildings except the transept of the church.

The church was part of an older abbey and the transept is now the chapel of the present seminary. It is also used by the local Russian Orthodox community. In Vincent's day there was an Irish connection with Troyes. John Ennery, more probably correctly McEnnery or even McHenry, from Limerick, was on the staff there 1653-55 and was asked by Vincent to minister to the Irish regiments and their families who were in winter quarters there (V 75; ET 5:82). In 1658 Philip Dalton, from the diocese of Cashel, was there and Vincent asked him to look after Irish refugees hi the town (VII333; ET 7:348). In 1657-58 Gerard Brin, also from Cashel, was superior. In 1781 Louis-Joseph François became superior there at the age of thirty, and remained until he was called to Paris to become Secretary General three years later. He was martyred during the Revolution.

The next day we went to Toul, 320km from Paris. We found Rue Saint-Amand where the CM house had been, but did not see anything resembling the 13th century building which had been given to the Congregation in 1635. We were unable to get any local information as the Syndicat d'Initiative, the equivalent of a Bórd Fáilte office, was closed and we got no answer when we rang the door bell at the presbytery. See below for a subsequent visit to Toul, 26 June 1982.

We spent the 14th as tourists in Paris and on the 15th we were driven from the Maison-mère to Villebon by Pierre Camau, who had driven us hi Marseilles a little over a week earlier. Villebon had been the summer house for the students and seminarists when Stan and I were hi Paris in 1949; it is now a retreat and conference centre. He then took us on to Orsigny, which had been one of the farms belonging to Saint-Lazare and had been the subject of a famous law suit. In the oldest building of the farm there are some rooms called *les cellules*, apparently reflecting the fact that it had been a religious property in the past. This was our last visit of the 1979 tour.

1980

I arrived at the Maison-mère in Paris hi the early afternoon of 2 July and met Philip Walshe. We went to **Nôtre-Dame des Vertus** in Aubervilliers, now in the Paris suburbs. Coste says that Vincent went there on pilgrimage. The following day we went to **Chartres**, where he also went on pilgrimage, and then we went on to Le Mans for my second visit and Philip's first, and from there up to Rennes where we stayed with the confreres, as Stan and I had done the previous year.

On the 4th we went to Vannes. Since my visit the previous year I had discovered some more facts about Pierre-René Rogue's time there. No. 31, Place des Lices, was the second house of the Rogue family, the one

they moved into after the father's death. No. 11, Rue des Tribunaux, was a later house again. When Pierre-René was on the run he was able to avail of several safe houses, including No. 14, Place Cabello (Cabelleau), at the corner of Rue du Four and Rue de la Tannerie; this house has 1680 on its facade. Another safe house was No. 9, Rue de Trussac, now Rue de la Salle d'Asil.

The next day we went by train to **Angers**, 247 km, and found Rue Valdemaine. Jean-Henri Grayer, another of the beatified confreres who were martyred during the Revolution, had been a diocesan priest before entering the CM and had done his seminaire in the CM house in that street, the former Hôtel des Granges. It is a short street and none of the houses seemed to be of the 18th century or earlier. We went along to the Hopital Saint-Jean, the first hospital given to the Daughters of Charity in Vincent's lifetime. We rang at the door and explained to the sister who answered that we were looking for information about the former CM house in the town. She brought us in and left us waiting in the hallway while she went upstairs to make enquiries. After a rather long interval she returned and brought us up to the sisters' community room to meet the community and have a cup of coffee. The sisters had no information on the location of the former CM house but one of them drove us to see the place where two Daughters of Charity, Odile Baumgarten and Marie-Anne Vaillot had been shot during the Revolution; they had not yet been beatified in 1980. We then had a quick visit to the old hospital, where Vincent had stayed in March 1649. An extremely fast walk across the town got us to the station just in time to catch the train back to Rennes. When we got back to the house the Provincial Director of the Daughters told us that one of the sisters in Angers had phoned him to know if we were genuine. That explained our prolonged wait in the hallway. Apparently some time previously the sisters had been deceived by two men claiming to be Dutch confreres.

Sunday the 6th was spent on the 806 km train journey to Lyons, which took eight hours. Stan Brindley met us there and we stayed in the CM house.

The 7th was a day of glorious weather and we headed off by train to **Annecy**, 115 km. We saw the former grand séminaire but were unable to ascertain whether the building was the actual one which the confreres were given in 1639. Mark Cogley was superior there in 1659. While there was doubt as to whether it was the building in which he worked there is no doubt that it is the one in which Francis Clet taught moral theology and was superior. It is on a beautiful site overlooking the lake, and he must have received quite a shock when he was asked to remain on in Paris after the 1788 General Assembly as director of seminarists and students. The location of old Saint-Lazare and that of the seminary in

Annecy were rather different from the scenic point of view. We also saw the house in which Francis de Sales lived. It was pouring rain when we got back to Lyons, a big change from the weather in the morning when we had left.

Still on the tracks of Francis Clet we took the train the next day to **Grenoble**, 129 km. He was born in N0 14, Grande Rue and was baptised in the church of Saint-Louis, where there is a commemorative plaque at the font. A subsequent visit became necessary when we discovered later that the house numbers had been changed and that the present 14 was not the house in which he was born. See below under 22 June 1982.

On the 9th we went by bus to Chatillon-les-Dombes, but as this place is well documented and a usual place of pilgrimage for confreres and sisters, there is no need to say anything here. In the afternoon we were back in Lyons, once again on the track of Francis Clet. N0 28, Montee de Saint-Barthelemy was the former CM house in which he had done his seminaire. It is now a house of the De La Salle brothers and two brothers showed us over the parts of the buildings which were there in Francis Clet's time.

The following day we went to **Avignon**, which figures in Vincent's account of his return from North Africa. He mentions the church of Saint-Pierre, but we found it closed. We visited the Papal Palace where Pietro Montorio, the vice-legate mentioned by Vincent, would have lived. We then went on to Toulouse, having travelled 567 km that day, and stayed in the CM house as we had done the previous year.

On the 11th we took the train on the 158 journey to **Tarbes**, where Vincent had received the sub-diaconate and diaconate in the cathedral.

On the 12th we travelled the 51 km from Toulouse to **Montauban**. The Congregation was given charge of the seminary in the diocese in 1652. The seminary started in Montech, moved then to Nôtre-Dame-de-Lorm and finally into the town of Montauban itself. The 17th century building in the town still stands. Edmund Barry, from Cloyne, a doctor of theology, was on the seminary staff from 1653 till his death there in 1680 at the age of 67. He had two terms as superior, 1657-64 and 1675-80. Donat Crowley, from Cork, was on the staff for a short period from 1657 and was superior 1664-65. In Paris he had been director of students and taught, successively, dogmatic and moral theology. Jacques Perboyre, John Gabriel's uncle, was a Vincentian who worked in the area before, during and after the revolutionary period. After the Revolution he opened a boys' boarding school in a former Carmelite house in Montauban. John Gabriel received his secondary education there and later did his seminaire there. We located a former Carmelite house but, because we were thinking in English rather than in French it was the wrong house. In English the word Carmelite can refer to either the friars

or the nuns. In French Les Cannes are the friars while Les Carmelites are the nuns. We went to the former house of the nuns rather than that of the friars. Later on, back in Paris, Raymond Chalumeau alerted us to this mistake. I returned subsequently, on 26 July, to take the correct photographs.

From Montauban we went on to **Cahors**. During the previous year's visit we had seen the seminary but had not adverted to the fact that the confreres were also in charge of the church of Saint Barthélemy, which still stands. After seeing it we returned to Montauban, from where Philip left us to go back to Paris and Stan and I returned to Toulouse, having done 226 km.

On the 13th we took the train the 150 km to **Narbonne**, and experienced the first day of real south of France weather. A year before his death Vincent agreed to the request of François Fouquet, archbishop of Narbonne, to send three confreres to take charge of his seminary. We could not find any trace of the old seminary building, but visited the cathedral, which was never completed. François Fouquet figures very prominently in Vincent's correspondence, having been bishop of Bayonne, bishop of Agde, coadjutor of Narbonne, and finally archbishop of Narbonne. We did not see any mention of him in the cathedral, but there was a side altar with a statue, a painting and a stained glass window of St Vincent.

The 14th of July is the French national holiday and we spent it wandering around Toulouse. We had been told that no university building from Vincent's time remains. On the 15th we became ordinary tourists and enjoyed a train journey, through beautiful mountain country to Andorra, one of Europe's smallest states. The following day we made the 466 km train journey from Toulouse to Vichy, where we stayed overnight in the CM house, to be in position for the next stage of our Vincentian travels.

On 17 July we took a train from Vichy to Clermont-Ferrand, then a second to Neussargues, and a third to **Saint-Flour**. The third sector of this journey was through very impressive scenery. In Saint-Flour we found, on a map of the town, the location of the grand séminaire, where John Gabriel Perboyre had been a professor. The boys' boarding school, which he directed, had been located in a former Dominican house and a Daughter of Charity identified it for us as the later petit séminaire. The room in which he lived in the grand séminaire is identified by a plaque, but as it is still in use it is not open to visitors when it is occupied, so we could not get in. From the outside we could see that one of its windows was a stained glass one of John Gabriel. A publicity leaflet informed us that the design of the seminary was based on that of old Saint-Lazare. One sector of our return journey was by

SNCF coach over a lovely mountain road. The total journey that day, though rather complicated, totalled only 270 km. The next day was spent on the 475 km journey back to Paris, where we spent the 19th in the Maison-mère.

On the 20th we went to **Beauvais**, a short 156 km round trip by train. The first ever preordination retreat in France was given there by Vincent in 1628. The former bishop's residence is now a museum and its chapel, in which the retreat was given, has been demolished. However, by going into the museum and cathedral we were certainly treading in Vincent's footsteps. In the afternoon, on our way back to the station, we got thoroughly soaked in a torrential downpour, for which we were certainly not properly clothed.

The following day we left the Maison-mère at 06.15 in order to get to the Gare de l'Est in time for the train to Chateau-Thierry, from where we took the bus to **Montmirail**; this bus runs only on Mondays. The de Gondi chateau is still intact. When Vincent lived there his room was the one with the window over the entrance. At that time the present external steps up to the door were not there, nor were the salon to the south-east and the library. There is a short straight avenue from the gate to the house, but the construction of the gate does not allow a photograph to be taken through or over it. When we tried to go just inside the gate the gate-keeper would not allow us. A lady was walking down the avenue towards the gate and she asked us what was going on. We explained who we were and why we were interested in the house. She told us we could go up to the house and take photos of the exterior, but we could not go inside. Later on, back in the town, we discovered that she was the Duchess de la Rochefoucauld, the present occupier. We also visited the parish church, which backs on to the chateau. In the church there is a tribune which can be entered from the chateau. On the return journey we persuaded the bus driver to stop long enough for us to get photos of the church in **Marchais-en-Brie**, the scene of the dialogue between Vincent and a child explaining, for the benefit of a Huguenot gentleman, the place of statues in Catholic devotion (L & L: I, 103-104).

On the 22nd we took the train from Paris to Maisse, 65 km. This was followed by a seven km walk through beautiful countryside to **Fréneville**, another of the former Saint-Lazare farms. Vincent spent various periods there, often sent by the infirmarian, Brother Aléxandra Veronne. Subsequent research led to a second visit later, on 6 August 1982. A further two kilometres brought us to **Valpuseaux**. In February 1649, Vincent was trapped in Fréneville by snow, so he decided to give a mini-mission in Valpuseaux (L & L: II, 449). We saw the church but it was locked and we could not go inside. On the 23rd we separated and each did his own thing in Paris for the day.

On the 24th we took the short train journey to Trappes, just beyond Versailles, and walked on, again through attractive countryside, to the site of the former abbey of **Port-Royal-des-Champs**, so closely associated with Jansenism. The buildings were literally razed to the ground and all that remains is the outline of the foundations of the abbey church and some former outbuildings. There is an interesting little museum. I have been there several times, and the quality of the guided tours has greatly varied.

On the way back to Paris we stopped off in **Versailles** and visited the cathedral. This was formerly the parish church and was staffed by the CM up to the Revolution. Jean-Henri Gruyer spent most of his life as a Vincentian there. The former CM presbytery is now the bishop's residence. There is a commemorative plaque to Jean-Henri. In passing, it should be noted that in the CM supplement to the breviary, in the biographical note for 2 September, in die Latin, English and the new (1993) Italian versions, most of the details mentioned about Gruyer should, in fact, refer to François, and those for François should refer to Gruyer. Also, the English and Italian versions, following an error in the Latin, say Gruyer was ordained in Saint-Cloud; this should be Saint-Claude. The former is in the Paris suburbs, the latter is in Gruyer's native diocese. The French supplement has corrected these errors.

On the 25th Stan opted to join a coach-load of Spanish Daughters of Charity for a pilgrimage to Fain-les-Moutiers, the birthplace of Catherine Laboure. I took the 722 km round trip by train to **Dôle**, the birthplace of Jean-Henri Gruyer. In the church of Nôtre-Dame he is mentioned first in a list of names on a plaque in memory of the martyrs of the Revolution. I called at the presbytery to try to find out some details about his actual place of birth and whether he was baptised in that church. The priest I spoke to promised to do some research and write to me; he never wrote.

On the 26th I took a morning train from Paris to **Montauban**, having booked a couchette for the overnight return train; the round trip was 1342 km. The purpose of the journey was to rectify the mistake made on the previous visit to Montauban, when we had visited the incorrect former Carmelite house. The correct building is on Rue Sapiac beside the Eglise Réformée de France. This church is the former chapel of the boarding school run by John Gabriel Perboyre's uncle. It was in this chapel that John Gabriel, following the suggestions made by staff members to his father and uncle, came to his decision to become a priest. On this visit I was not able to get into the chapel, but did succeed in doing soon a third visit. See below under 8 June 1982.

The overnight train got me in to the Gare d'Austerlitz in Paris at 05.25, and I took the M6tro over to the Gare du Nord, which is on the old Saint-Lazare property, to catch a train to Amiens where I arrived at 08.18

and rejoined Stan at the confreres' house. Jean-Jacques Briant, the local superior, took us later by car on a circuitous journey which would have been impossible by public transport. We first went to **Folleville**, and then on to **Gannes**, where Vincent had heard the general confession of the farmer which led to the famous sermon in Folleville on 25 January 1617. We then went to **Montdidier** where John Gabriel had taught before his ordination. The gate of the Collège Saint-Vincent was locked and it was not possible to take a photograph of the building from any point. In 1774 Edward Ferris became superior of the major seminary in Amiens and was the elected delegate of the Province of Picardy at the general assemblies of 1780, 1786 and 1788. At that of 1788 he was elected third assistant general. The seminary is now a military barracks and is not open to casual visitors.

On the 28th we went from Amiens to **Le Câteau** by train, changing at Saint-Quentin and Busigny. In Le Câteau we saw the Lyce which incorporates parts of the former Jesuit college in which Louis-Joseph François was educated. From there we went back to **Busigny**, his birth-place. There is only one church there so he was, presumably, baptised in it. There is a statue of him, holding both the palm of martyrdom and a copy of his famous booklet *Man Apologie*. At the base of the statue is the inscription "Bx. François" with no further information about him, leaving the misleading impression that François was his first name. Our travelling that day covered only 278 km even though we travelled in six trains.

On the 29th we went to **Arras** and located the former Hôtel de Beaufort in which the martyred Daughters of Charity Marie-Madeleine Fontaine and her companions were imprisoned. A Daughter of Charity, whom we met by chance, helped us to find the former DC house in Rue des Teinfuriers. We also visited Rue de la Charité but could not identify which buildings had been the former DC houses. We also tried to locate from a modern map the places mentioned, under their former names, in Lucien Misermont's book on the martyrs. From Arras we went on to **Cambrai** and visited the former seminary building where the tribunal met which sentenced the Daughters to death. They were guillotined on the Grande Place. There is a commemorative stained glass window in the cathedral. We spent the following day in Rouen as ordinary tourists.

On the 31 st, the last day of our 1980 tour, we took the train for the 73 km journey from Amiens to Serqueux, and then walked about 3 km to the famous spa of **Forges-ies-Eaux**. Vincent went there on some occasions to take the waters, as did other confreres of his time, including Mark Cogley.

1982

From September 1981 to August 1982, I was on a sabbatical year based in the Irish College in Paris. I used a one-month 'France Vacances' ticket from 30 May to 29 June, but only part of its use was devoted to travelling with a Vincentian theme. I did quite a lot of non-Vincentian touring, and also while away from Paris on many occasions I had to return there for various commitments. These facts explain the gaps between the various dates given below.

On 30 May I went from Paris to Bordeaux, 581 km, and stayed in the house in Le Bouscat which at that time was the residence of the Toulouse Provincial. The next morning I went to **Agen**, 138 km. In Vincent's time the CM had the seminary there but I was unable to discover any details about it either beforehand or actually in the town. The next day I took the train from Bordeaux to **Saintes**, 123 km, where I had a similar experience. I returned to Paris that evening.

On 2 June I took once more the short train journey to **Meaux** and did some research in the Musée Bossuet. I discovered that the chapel, dating from 1356, of the Hôpital Jean Rose was that of the seminary which the CM staffed in Vincent's lifetime.

On the 5th I went to Toulouse and stayed once again in the community residence there. The next day I went by train to **Rodez**, where Louis Abelly had been bishop, 158 km. An added interest was the chance of seeing and travelling across the famous steel railway viaduct designed by Gustave Eiffel, better known for his tower in Paris. Contrary to what has happened in most other dioceses the pre-Revolution Eveché has remained the bishop's residence, but neither there nor in the cathedral did I find any reference to Abelly.

On the 8th I set out from Toulouse for yet another journey to **Montauban**. From the station there I took a bus to Montech, 14 km. In Vincent's time the seminary for the diocese began in Montech, moved to Nôtre-Dame-de-Lorm and finally was established in Montauban itself. In Montech I could not find any priest at the presbytery, and there did not seem to be any other possibility of obtaining the sort of historical information which I was seeking. There is a Rue du Collège and also a 15th century church. I returned to Montauban and re-visited Rue Sapiac and was able this time to get in to the Protestant church which used to be the chapel in John Gabriel's time.

On the 9th I went by train from Toulouse to Marmande, 178 km, and then 56 km by bus to Sainte-Livrade. In Vincent's time the CM house of **Nôtre-Dame-de-la-Rose** was situated about one kilometre south-west of this town. I walked more than that on D 911. There were many buildings and orchards along the road but I did not see any ruins such as described by Félix Contassot in his notes on that house; there is no

indication in the typescript as to when he wrote.

The next day I took the train from Toulouse to **Agde**, 197 km, where the CM had the seminary up till 1670. I could not find anything ecclesiastical from the 17th century, apart from the cathedral which is, of course older. It is a rather remarkable one.

I returned to Paris and on the 12th went to **Poissy**, a Parisian suburb, to look at what remains of the former Dominican convent in which Louise de Marillac was educated. Some of the buildings seemed to me old enough to have been there in her day.

On the afternoon of the 13th I took the train to Dax, and stayed in the CM house. On the 16th I took the train from there to Bayonne, 51 km, and then the bus for 27 km to Guiche. Then came a 7 km walk to **Bidache**, where Vincent received tonsure and minor orders. The original church has been demolished but there is a commemorative plaque in the new one. A further 9 km of walking took me to Peyrehorade where I got a bus for a further 9 km to Puyoo and then the train back to Dax. It was a most enjoyable day.

On the 18th I took the train back from Dax to Paris and then a TGV from Paris to Lyons, and stayed once again in the confreres' house. On the 22nd I took the train to **Grenoble**, where Francis Clet was born in 14 Grande Rue. As I mentioned earlier, the numbers of the houses have been changed and the present 14 is not his house. The correct house is close to it but, through an unfortunate oversight I did not note the present number and it is not decipherable from my photograph. The house is on the corner, with its main front on the Grande Rue. The ground floor, of stone, is a pharmacy and the four storeys above that are painted. I think the new number is 12.

On the 26th I took the train from Metz, where I was staying with the confreres, to **Toul**, 90 km. The former Hôpital du Saint-Esprit was given to the CM in Vincent's time to be the seminary. I had a long talk with a man in the Syndicat d'Initiative but we could not find any information on the former seminary in any of the books available. An album of old photos had many pictures of former colleges and military barracks, but none of the former seminary. Unlike many French towns Toul does not have a Rue du Séminaire. Toul suffered badly in several wars and many old buildings were destroyed. As well as the seminary the CM also took care of the church of Saint-Amand in the town and that of Ecrouves outside it. From 1771-74 Edward Ferris was superior of the seminary in Toul before moving on to become superior in Amiens. He may also have been a vicar general of the diocese of Toul.

On 6 August I made a return visit to the former Saint-Lazare farm in, Fréneville, this time with Paschal Scallon who was a student then. On this occasion we went into the minute chapel of Nôtre-Dame-de-

Varenne, which I had not done on my previous visit, and to our surprise we saw a plaque commemorating the fact that Vincent used to say mass in it when he came to Fréneville. We also discovered that the present Collin farmhouse is the one in which he stayed. His room was the one with the window beside the sundial.

On the 12th I took the train from Paris to **Joigny**, 147 km, and saw the former de Gondi chateau. I went into the town library and consulted a history of the family, published in 1705. Philippe-Emmanuel de Gondi died in the château in Joigny but was buried in front of the high altar in the Oratorian house of Saint-Magloire in Paris. Rejoined the Oratorians in this house after his wife's death and lived in a *pavilion* which he had specially built. This word could mean either a bungalow or a wing on to the existing building. This property was on the corner site where the Rue de l'Abbé de l'Épée meets the Rue Saint Jacques. The site is at present occupied by an institute for the deaf; the Abbé de l'Épée was a pioneer in the education of the deaf. On the opposite corner is the church of Saint-Jacques, in which is the tomb of Jean Duverger de Hauranne, the Abbé de Saint-Cyran. It is not normally included as a stopping place on Vincentian tours of the city.

My final trip before returning to Ireland was on 22 August was to Moutiers-Saint-Jean, near the birthplace of Catherine Labouré in Fainles-Moutiers. The pharmacy from Vincent's time has been retained intact and in it are kept his ewer and basin and also an unusual piece of crockery combining a plate, a salt cellar and two egg cups. One of the original paintings of Vincent hangs there.

Postscript 1998

I had not expected to have to add anything to the foregoing account of my travels through Vincentian France, but I was able to make a trip to a previously un-visited site in 1998. At the end of April and the beginning of May I was in Paris giving talks at the Centre International de Formation (GIF). On 25 April John Rybolt invited me to accompany him on a trip by car to **Durtal**, where Vincent fell into the river. The river was swollen after heavy rain and when he was fording it on horseback the horse slipped and Vincent was thrown into the water. The confrere with him pulled him out, and they went to a farmer's cottage to dry out their clothes. This is described in Letter 1079 to Louise but the relevant lines are scratched out, as Coste explains in note 3 on page 424 of Vol. III (ET 3:4 19,n.3).

There are two interesting details about this event. The farmer told Vincent that he suffered from a hernia, and Vincent promised that on his return to Paris he would have a truss sent to the man. Unlike many

promises given in such circumstances this one was kept (L & L: II, 451,456). We know from Abelly that Vincent also suffered from a hernia (Liv. I, ch. 50, p 246; 1664 ed.).

The second detail concerns the confrere who pulled him from the water. Abelly tells us that this man later on left the community, against Vincent's advice. After about a year he wished to return but Vincent repeatedly refused to allow him. The man eventually reminded him that years previously he had saved Vincent from drowning. Vincent immediately wrote to him and said he would be welcomed back with open arms (Liv. III, ch. 17, pp 266-7; 1664 ed.).

John had located on a large-scale map the most likely river, and we headed for that; it has a bridge now instead of the ford. A nearby ruin is pointed out as the farmer's cottage and in the local church there is a stained glass window showing Vincent catechising the farmer while the farmer's wife dries out the clothes in the background. We also visited **Saumur**, which is mentioned in letters dealing with the travels of Louise de Marillac. I suggested to John that we return via Richelieu, as it was nearby.

Reflections on Fifty Years of Priesthood

Diarmuid O'Hegarty CM

Last February my elder sister, Eileen, died and for several weeks afterwards, she and other deceased members of my family were much in my thoughts and prayers.

It was during this time of grieving that I was asked by the Editor to write 'A Piece on Priesthood.' It may sound strange to say it, but deaths and funerals have been for me important experiences of priesthood.

My father died in 1958, my sister forty one years later. But what a contrast between the two funerals.

At my father's Requiem Mass, I stood alone at the altar in black vestments, my back to the congregation and I read the Mass in Latin. No concelebrants, no homily, no prayers of the faithful, no offertory procession, no lay readers of the Word of God and no lay ministers of the Eucharist.

At Eileen's funeral, I wore white vestments, I stood at the altar facing the congregation. There were about 20 priests concelebrating with me, four of them flanking me at the altar. Mass was in English, my sister and my brother 'did the readings' and two cousins brought up the bread and wine at the offertory. My homily was based on St. Paul's statement that we would all have to render an account of ourselves before the judgement seat of God (Rom. 14.7-12) and, in my homily, I touched on the account of her life and work that I thought Eileen might give to God.

My father was buried with full military honours. As the Last Post was sounded, the haunting and heart-rending notes hopped over the grave-stones into the distant corners of the cemetery. As the last notes died away, there was a brief silence and then the trumpeter sounded *Reveille*, the awakening call of the army. The first conductor of the Irish Army Band, Colonel FitzBrase, from Germany, introduced this addition to the Last Post in recognition of the Irish peoples' belief in the Resurrection, the awakening to new life after death.

Some years later, at the funeral in West Cork of my father's eldest sister, I wore white vestments and said a Mass of the Resurrection. In the churchyard afterwards one of the local priests said to me "That was fine, but you know we are very strong on the mourning in this part of the country!"

Since early childhood a first cousin and I have been more like brothers than cousins. I officiated at his wedding and baptised his three children. Less than ten years later I stood beside him as his wife's coffin was lowered into the grave. She died four days after being told she had leukaemia. With three children under the age often, my cousin married

again a few years later. He had one daughter by the second union.

Seven years later tragedy struck again. His wife was in hospital for tests. Early one morning he phoned to tell me that his wife had died unexpectedly and would I be able to collect his four children and bring them home. His eldest daughter had just begun work in the Civil Service, his son was a final year student in Belvedere College, and the two younger girls were at the Loreto school in Foxrock. I still have nightmares about that journey and the reactions of the children as I broke the news to them.

I stood with them and their father at the graveside, and when I had said the final prayers of the burial service, he turned to me and asked “How could God do this to me a second time and why?” And I didn’t have any answers for him. It is not of much help to say ‘Life and death is a mystery’.

It has been said that God never closes one door without opening another.

I have officiated at the weddings of those four children and have baptised my cousin’s ten grandchildren, and I have seen him happily married for the third time.

During nearly twenty years as chaplain to St. Vincent’s Centre for people with a mental handicap, I have been present at many deathbed scenes and have conducted an average of three funerals each year. Trying to put together homilies to suit each situation, and giving a message of comfort and consolation to the mourners has been a challenge.

The older I grow the more aware I am of the mystery of life and death. The Irish word for ‘mystery’ is RUN DIAMHAR – literally, A Divine Secret. Each day at Mass the priest says ‘Let us proclaim the mystery of faith – Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again’. The divine secret!

St. Mary's, Lanark

Taken from The Motherwell Golden Jubilee Record, 1998

By kind permission of Frank McMorro CM

It was St. Kentigern who first brought organised Christianity to Lanark. He built the original Church about 560 A.D. It is not surprising therefore that the splendid 12th century church was dedicated to him. It continued as a place of Catholic worship until it was suppressed in 1668. 175 years were to pass before Mass was publicly celebrated again in Lanark. Fr John Scanlon was the first resident priest in Hamilton since the Reformation. As best he could he ministered to the few Catholics living in Lanark who had emigrated from Ireland, driven out by poverty and persecution.

From 1835-1843 about once every six weeks, a priest came from Glasgow to Hamilton. From 1843-1849 Lanark was served from Hamilton in conjunction with Carluke, Carnwath and Auchengray by Fr John Scanlon (1843-45) Fr John Purcell, (1845-48) and Fr James Smith (1848-49).

In 1849, Lanark was made into a separate Mission and comprised Carluke, Carstairs, Lesmahagow, Biggar, Shotts, Crofthead and Newmains. From 1849-1857, Fr John Black ministered unaided to the needs of this extensive area. He thereby became the first resident priest in Lanark since the Reformation.

He lived in the old manse on the site now occupied by the Royal Bank of Scotland. In 1857, he was given Fr John McKay as an assistant. During these years, a small wooden building situated at the back of the present St. Mary's Presbytery served as Parish Church.

By this time, work had begun on a new splendid stone building. Goldie was the architect. The foundation stone was laid by Most Reverend Doctor John Murdoch, titular Bishop of Castabala and vicar-apostolic of the Western District. On November 10th, 1859, the Church was formally opened for worship, the High Altar having been consecrated the previous day. Dr Murdoch was responsible for confiding the care of the new Church to the Congregation of the Mission, founded by St Vincent de Paul and commonly known as Vincentian Fathers. They took possession on the feast of Our Lady's Nativity, September 8th, 1859. Meantime, Fr Black was transferred to a new mission in Wishaw and Fr McKay went to work in Carluke. The new St Mary's Parish included Carstairs, Kirkfieldbank, New Lanark, Ponfeigh and Douglas. From 1892-1898, the Lanark Priests provided Mass in Tarbrax and Haywood at least once per month. In 1908 Carnwath was included within St Mary's Parish.

The building of the new Church was due to the splendid charity of Robert Monteith. He was converted to the Catholic Church in the late 40s as part of the Oxford Tractarian movement. Conscious of the fact that his Carstairs estate was originally Catholic property before confiscation under Penal Laws, he decided to perform a grand act of restitution and of thanksgiving for the gift of Faith. As well as that, in 1854 death robbed him of his beloved daughter, Caroline Agnes, aged four years, so he decided to devote her intended dowry to the building of a new Church. The problem of finding a site was resolved when Thomas Bowie, who was also a convert to the Catholic Church, came to the rescue, donating a fine open field at the top of the town.

The first Vincentian Superior was Fr Matthew Kavanagh, CM from 1859-1867. He had one assistant, Fr John Genouvie, CM, a French refugee from the revolution of 1848. At the time the Catholic population of the town and outlying district scarcely numbered more than 100. In subsequent years, the Community continued to expand. By 1910, there were eight Priests on the staff, Fr John Ward CM being Superior. From St Mary's the Priests went out to preach parish missions throughout Great Britain and Ireland.

Tragedy struck when on the morning of April 13th 1907, fire broke out which destroyed the whole Church, with the exception of the Chancel and Lady Altar. The origin of the outbreak was never discovered, but it is surmised that it began in the roof space between the ceiling and the outer roof. A spark from the furnace embedded itself and was fanned into flame by the draught. Following the tragedy, arrangements were immediately put in train to replace it. The architects chosen were, Ashlin and Coleman of Dublin. It was decided to build on the existing foundations, but the length was increased by 12 feet. All the masonry was pulled down. Only the Eastern gable containing the beautiful Rose Window and the High Altar were embodied in the new building. In this new design the tower with spire was to stand on the North side, instead of the South as formerly. Messrs Loudon and Inglis of Coatbridge were chosen as builders. The foundation stone of the new (present) Church was laid on Saturday 4th July, 1908, by the Most Reverend J A McGuire, Archbishop of Glasgow, and was solemnly opened for worship on September 22nd 1910. The cost of this new building was £17,969, about half of which came from insurance, the remainder from fund-raising and donations.

The new St Mary's has been Lanark's Parish Church for 89 years. It has retained its youthful image. During those years it has been generously blessed by God.

As we look forward to the Millennium, we can look to the future with every confidence.

Celebrating the Memories of Twenty-Five Years and More

Michael McCullagh

Of the twenty-seven young men two successive Directors welcomed to the seminary to prepare for priesthood between 1966 and 1968 only three were ordained. One of those Directors has died; the other left the community. It is as if we are the only ones left to tell the story so far, and, what better time to tell it than, on this, the occasion of the silver jubilee of priesthood which I share with Fr Aidan Galvin.

Our time of preparation for priesthood was certainly a time of upheaval and transition. A month or so after arrival in the seminary the first public departure from priesthood was that of the theologian, Charles Davis, and from then on, especially from the mid seventies to the mid-eighties, many priests, some of whom were our Vincentian mentors and retreat givers began to drift from us. Exemplary seminarians also left so that there were two vacant years without ordinations prior to our ordination in '74.

The upheaval and change was also reflected in our varied study locations – there being six in all during those years. Starting off in St Joseph's as our home base we travelled either to UCD, Mater Dei, All Hallows, or Clonliffe. In 1967 St Joseph's became a Retreat House and the Seminaire was transferred to the Theologate in Glenart, Arklow. One year later all the students (including the student theologians) return to St Joseph's as Glenart now becomes a retreat house!

Vatican Two, in the sixties, proudly proclaimed that the church had found a place in the modern world. However, looking back, I think that while we did genuinely 'leave the world' the world had, in fact, found a place in our church. Students staged what they called their 'gentle revolution' in University College, Dublin and issued a letter from offices they occupied and re-named the 'liberated area of UCD!!'. (The main organizers are now mostly professional journalists and political analysts!) Mao Tse Tsung's little red book had found its way into the hands of many seminarians intent on toppling unjust bourgeoisie capitalist institutions. (Later – much later indeed, we would learn from the biographical novel, *Wild Swans*, and other personal testimonies of the awful reality of a Maoist state). Revolutionary dress styles (these had less effect as we were mostly in clerical black), hair styles (note ordination photos of that era!) and music, as popularised by the Beatles and others, certainly had an impact. It was the decade of John F Kennedy speeches, Martin Luther King marches, Moon Landings, Civil Rights Movements,

emerging independent nations and republics and the beginnings of our present European Union in the form of the Common Market. It was also, of course, the decade of Vatican Two, but for the students of our generation it had perhaps less impact in that we had never exercised ministry in pre-Vatican Two days.

Through all of this time of change I feel, in retrospect, a great sense of gratitude to those who were our mentors. Without naming it, they had an innate sense that a time of change had come. We were no longer Vincentians being formed in isolation. We studied alongside seminarians for various dioceses and religious and apostolic congregations and there was much inter-seminary activity in terms of debate, justice projects and sport. We were taking part in the life around us, going on Peregrinatio pro Christo with the Legion of Mary, working in youth clubs, attending classes to communicate with the hearing impaired, doing manual labour on summer work-camp projects, working with the Legion of Mary and the St Vincent de Paul Society, teaching in schools and working in the neighbourhood. (We were also hosts to many seminarians from Continental Europe who came to learn English – at that time it was not visualized that we too would require languages which would have facilitated us on the world-wide mission today.) The world had truly come into our church – even our community Mass each Sunday was now shared with the local youth.

In this milieu there had to be mutual trust. Earlier this year I was shocked on reading, in a recent publication, clerical memoirs of seminary days in another religious congregation. The author's recollections were that his contemporaries certainly engaged with the world – perhaps in more senses than one – but it was, it seems to me, a 'them and us' situation. *We* were trusted and, in turn, were led to trust. We were in it together. We had to take responsibility for our actions and if these were not quite in accord with what was expected then it was understood that we had the initiative to bring them out into the open with our Director or Superior and discuss them. Years after ordination we were still able to have that level of trust in those who had responsibility for our on-going formation and priestly ministry. The other great spin-off was that we had also learnt to trust our contemporaries, to have the freedom and confidence to name whatever experience we were going through and know that there would be a listening and understanding ear.

In our introduction to Christian spirituality we also had the best of both worlds – the world of the classics of Abbot Marmion, Edward Leen, Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross – these were truly a diet of Lectio Divina for us – but we also had the writings of Van Kaam, Van Bremen, John Dalrymple, Rene Voillaume and Ladislav Boros.

They were the forerunners to the late Henri Nouwen, Catherine de Huick Doherty, Jean Vanier, Ruth Burrows and their contemporaries who provided us with a spirituality relevant to our times. (As I write I believe that there is a strong movement back to the classics or at least to a representation of them. Note, for example, the emergence of new works on St Therese of Lisieux and St John of the Cross.) (1). As yet we were not aware of a truly distinctive Vincentian Spirituality but we did have many confreres who embodied the spirit of St Vincent and later, when it came to discovering our charism, it was interesting that each of the three regions of our Province came up with a similar statement.

As student observers at our Provincial Assemblies we were acutely aware of two camps within the Province: Education versus the rest. At the time those in the Education lobby were not happy about the anti-education bias among the students and would have expressed this publicly at Assembly time. I believe a real opportunity for a re-orientation to the poor was lost at this time. Fr James Cahalan was the prophet, pointing to the restless St Vincent, murmuring the dying Saint's last sentiments, 'D'avantage', Later James would speak of the confreres tugging at Saint Vincent, asking for his blessings on new missions. Translating that to the contemporary scene, James imagined the dying Saint tugging at us and asking us to be daring in taking on new works among the dis-empowered (2). Those of us who knew James in a post Conciliar Church are still challenged by his energy and indeed by his tugging at us and urging us to follow the restless Vincent dePaul. At a subsequent Assembly, after Fr James's time, the Province expressed the need for a "radical re-orientation to the poor". (Within a year an immediate response to a request from the Archbishop was to send personnel to work for the pastoral care of the Travelling People of the diocese of Dublin.)

The last twenty five years have seen a movement from works to mission and, more recently, to the understanding that all of our apostolates are about evangelization. However it has been a slow, painful and tedious movement. Our charism statement in 1981 got us thinking of our shared heritage and of what we had in common (A Vocations brochure we had at the time showed three clerics of different ages, and, perhaps, outlooks, with the caption: "It is what we have in common that makes us different"). In retrospect our charism statement was too cosy, putting community rather than mission to the forefront. In 1984 we got a clear directive in our new constitutions that we were to have a "clear and expressed preference for the apostolate among the poor..."(3). This in turn influenced our mission statement (1985) which now, for the first time, put evangelization through missions and retreats at the top of the

agenda and used a new language in relation to the poor, addressing their alienation from society and their victimization as a result of structural injustice.

The Convocation in Clongowes in 1989 and the lead up to it was the most exciting time in terms of community and mission over the last twenty-five years. We had a year's preparation guided by Task Forces which focussed on ministries – to youth, to priesthood, pastoral ministry and ministry of the word. (For the first time we got away from works and this laid the foundation for the thrust towards evangelization in the nineties as including all our ministries.) The purpose of the task forces was to: “develop an action programme for our apostolates, community life and ongoing formation”(4). This action programme found expression in the Provincial Plan published in 1991 and revised in 1992.

These plans allowed us the initiative to pursue new forms of evangelization. Now, all of our works, as we once defined them, were to be missionary in character, reaching out beyond their limiting spheres of influence. We were called to serve the “urban poor”(5) and have, as the constitutions asked us, “some sharing in the conditions of the poor”(6). This eventually happened in Harryville (in Northern Ireland) in a way few could have foreseen. (In 1991, an audit was done on parishes to see which did not meet the criteria of serving the urban poor.) From 1994, we were hearing that the Vincentian call on a worldwide scale was to be mobile rather than be settled in parishes. This too was the expressed wish of the Provincial Plan.

In 1992, the revised Provincial Plan had three goals, Evangelization of the Poor, Community for Mission and Formation of Mission. Of these goals our evangelization of the poor or by the poor has been the most difficult to implement. Writing to us from the General Assembly of '92 which focussed on New Evangelization, New Men, New Communities, Fr Maloney spoke of our ‘weaknesses’, one of them the difficulties we had in reaching out to the poor: “We know that we are advancing towards the poor, but it is more often we who say it of ourselves than perhaps the poor who say it of us. So, there are difficulties, we are weak.”(7)

At our last gatherings in Marino in '95 and All Hallows in '98 we were aware of great changes in our Province. No longer were we interested in our own apostolates but in the work of Evangelization, whether of youth, in parishes or among those caught up in poverty traps in our society.

So, I look back at our radical and revolutionary dreams of the sixties at how they were addressed at various Assemblies over the years and are now being implemented by a diminishing band of confreres. The following picture emerges:

1. We are involved in the worldwide mission in China, Tanzania and the Solomon Islands.
2. Nigeria has become an independent Vice-Province.
3. Our mission team is a collaborative venture which continually re-visions its future. (Britain has re-launched its mission team of the seventies.)
4. We have returned to Northern Ireland where the confreres now work in Belfast.
5. While still involved in formation for priestly ministry we are also engaged in formation which anticipates an era of lay-administered parishes both in Ireland and Britain. This is in accord with our Mission 2000 plan.
6. Structural injustice is being addressed in collaborating with the Vincentian Family in setting up our own Justice desk, in our investment of personnel in the collaborative ministry among the Travelling community (whose offices are currently in the former Provincial House), in our centre for Refugees and in our work in providing housing for, and working with the homeless in Britain and Ireland.
7. As we have moved from the administrative responsibility in most of our institutions we still maintain an evangelizing presence through chaplaincy and pastoral care.
8. A new shoot of growth has been made possible in the appointment of a confrere to co-ordinate and develop work for, and with, young people in the Irish Region.

So, we are all eighteen years older since many of our plans for new ministries and new evangelization came to light. Is it all too late? It certainly would have been preferable if decline in personnel alone had not brought about the changes. However we are still in re-founding times and the poor are still waiting for us to advance towards them. We also have to face the inevitable. We are not going to have the personnel in five years time to have administrative responsibility for all the houses in which we are presently engaged. We have before us the plans to which we gave vocal assent but we are naturally fearful of anticipating and providing for change. Others can continue and develop the work we have begun while we can still find new and neglected pastures. In this, I am reminded of a poster in the home of the Maryknoll Missionaries in New York:

Go, where you are needed but not wanted and
Leave when you are wanted but not needed.

On a personal note I am grateful for the last twenty five years of Vincentian priesthood in which I was offered wonderful moments in the work of evangelization with young people and on parish missions, countless opportunities to work with people on the margins and in prisons, opportunities to work alongside the Daughters of Charity in Ireland, Britain and Ethiopia in their ministries, of worthwhile opportunities for personal formation and, above all, from my first days in the seminary until now a supportive community for the various missions in which I found myself.

I still believe and hope that there can be exciting and life-giving days ahead, as a Vincentian, in the work of evangelization.

Notes

1. Note Iain Matthew's, *The Impact of God on St. John of the Cross*, H&S, 1995; Chris O Donnell's, *Love at the Heart of the Church* and Patrick Ahern's *Maurice and Therese*, DLT, 1999 on St Therese of Lisieux)
2. James Cahalan was speaking at the first gathering of the triple Vincentian family in All Hallows exploring the theme: Is there a Vincentian Way of Doing Justice based on the lives of Louise, Vincent and Ozanam and on our common traditions.
3. Constitutions: 12-1.
4. Bulletin CM. an internal newsletter prepared for the Convocation in February 1989, no. 19.
5. Provincial Plans Easter 91 (page 6) and June 92, (page 5) Pastoral Ministry, Mission Teams.
6. Constitutions 12,3.
7. Letter from the Thirty-Eighth General Assembly of the Congregation of the Mission, Rome, 25th July 1992.

My Ordination: 50 Years On

Frank McMorrow CM

As the Golden Jubilee of my Ordination approaches, I have been invited by the Editor, to set out briefly my most significant experiences, spiritual, theological, experiential.

At the close of the Council of Trent, Pope Pius IV published a Papal Bull “INIUNCTUM NOBIS” in November 1564. While confirming the decrees of the Council, he ruled out any comment, much less debate. This was the discipline that controlled all theology in the Church for 400 years. It was in this context that St. Vincent wrote our Common Rules.

When I entered the Seminaire in 1942, there were 34 students senior to me. Everyone of these was subsequently ordained. 22 have passed to the Lord, 12 still happily with us.

Fr Bernard Maguire was beginning what turned out to be his final year as Director. As we would expect, he was strictly traditional. From time to time, he would say to us: “Remember, ‘toujour seminariste’”, implying that when we departed this life, we would leave the Province as we found it (we couldn’t improve it anyway!).

Fr James Cahalan succeeded him in 1943. While equally strict, with his enormous energy and youthful demeanour, he was like a breath of fresh air! A philosopher by training and with his Cistercian background his conferences were deeply spiritual, Christocentric and focused on priesthood. The favoured authors of the time were Marmion, Leen and Boylan, among others.

For Dogma, Fr Michael O’Callaghan was our professor. Tanquerey and Herve were the text-books, with Garrigou-Lagrange for reference. A good memory was a great asset, rather than a discursive mind. I recall receiving an “*OPTIME*” one day when I gave a long definition from Trent without blinking!

For Moral, our professor was Fr Tom Donovan, Superior. In those days the paramaters dividing a “*VENIALE*” from a “*MORTALS*” were pretty well defined.

“Genicot” was our text-book, but there were other authors at hand, especially when we needed a solid, probable opinion, to avoid law!

For Sacred Scripture, we had Fr Donal Herlihy, later Bishop of Ferns. We loved his lectures and a great gloom descended on us when he left for Rome about 1947.

During all this period, there was tremendous emphasis on Missions as the real work of the Province, emphasised by the intensive training, both in the Seminary and St. John’s Church.

As a founding member of St Paul’s, I recall very clearly that the Provincial of the time, Fr James O’Doherty was most reluctant to become

involved (pressure from the Archbishop!) He would say: “We are getting too involved in education: the Missions will suffer: Castleknock and Armagh are enough”. I must say I have very happy memories of my years in Blackrock (and one in Glenart). There was a marvellous spirit of fraternity and sharing (allowing for the occasional ‘blow-up’ on the rugby field).

After ordination I spent 16 happy years in St. Paul’s and Castleknock. I well remember the day in Castleknock when we heard on the radio that Pope John XXIII was about to call a Council. Nobody could suggest a reason why! After all, no heresy was being preached! And the rest, as they say, is history!

When I finished in Cork in 1972, aged 49, Fr Cahalan, Provincial, suggested I go to St John’s University. So off I went, only to experience a cultural shock of monumental proportions! However, in retrospect, I am very grateful because the experience has coloured my pastoral work since then.

I find it difficult to accept that so much change has happened in one lifetime. The consequences of a shift in theology from priority of the common good and a negative view of the world to the needs of the individual and a positive view of the world, needing dialogue and redemption, are profound. As far back as the Provincial Assembly of 1968, I remember the call for RENEWAL, but I don’t think there was any common understanding of what this meant. Certainly I can’t recall any pause for assessment. Maybe it was asking too much – merely a “*DESIDERABILE*”. Years later we drew up a Provincial Plan and more recently, the “Wider Vincentian Family”.

While monastic communities seem to manage change reasonably well because their purpose, rooted in the Gospel is perennial, we are an apostolic community founded at a particular time for a particular need and therefore more rooted in history. Therein lies our dilemma and our challenge. In common with similar religious communities, we are searching for a new vision. If only we could steady the “pendulum” to combine the best of the old with the new! Is that possible? Who can answer? Certainly it would call for deep prayer and humility. Are we willing to make the sacrifice that would be necessary?

The future looks bleak. But “*nil desperandum*”. As Harry Lauder used to sing “keep right on to the end of the road”. Who knows what the Holy Spirit may have in store?

I conclude by quoting from the Provincial’s address to the Irish Regional Meeting in 1996:

“I feel that... there is still a tendency to keep the darkness and the dying in our own region at a distance”

This a possible theme for next Provincial Assembly?

A Time to Keep – Musings

Frank Mullen CM

Our resident expert in Personnel analysis told me recently that my CV operated in exact decades: i.e. Ordained '50: Nigeria in '60: out of Nigeria '70: Provincial in '80 and a heart attack in '90. The omens for 2,000, he said, were not good.

It was way back in '45 that I first thought of leaving Maynooth and joining a Community. I mentioned this to Fr Charlie McGowan who was my Spiritual Director at the time. When he asked me which Community, the best I could do was dig out a recent Capuchin Annual, which, I knew, carried full page photographs of all the Religious Order Provincials in Ireland. I suppose I was hoping to size them up that way. In the event I found them all pretty formidable, not to say off-putting. As it happens, I do believe that a notable absentee was the Vincentian Provincial, which would have been either Harry O'Connor or James O'Doherty. If either was there I'm afraid I didn't notice him.

Maybe it was all meant to be for me a providential introduction to that pleasing Vincentian attribute... anonymity! Fr. Charlie, going on the offensive a little, suggested that I join a community closely related to the secular Priesthood. It was only much later that I recognised his tact... not to say adroitness hi contriving to get me into St Joseph's without even mentioning the name Vincentian! May his name be ever in benediction!

Shortly after Ordination in 1950 Des O'Connell and myself set out for a week's holiday in Glenart, of which we were the first fruits. On bicycles... Raleigh Sports Models... priced at £10... Ordination presents. On arrival in Glenart we were greeted with the news that the Provincial, James O'Doherty, was looking for us... more, that he urgently wanted to see us and give us our Appointments. He was in Phibsboro'. Mindful of the qualities of obedience as set out in the Common Rules, our course was quite clear... get back on the bikes straightaway and head for Phibsboro'. With the resilience of youth I remember we made a detour en route and had a dip in the Forty Foot.

At the subsequent interview James O'Doherty asked me where I would like to go and I said... Rome, to continue (begin?) Theology. As part of what we would now call consultation or on-going dialogue he said "well, you're not going!" St Paul's it was to be. Like myself it was new.

There followed fifty years of priesthood, and reflecting on them, I'm reminded of George Bernard Shaw's remark that an Irishman has two eyes; with one he appreciates the sublime, with the other he winks at the

reality of the dream.

History, I notice, is not being particularly kind to the forties/fifties period. God was in his heaven... all was right with the world... complacency all round. In our own little cloistered world in St Joseph's there was, it has to be said, more than a little of same... I know it's easy to pillory the past, but it does beggar belief to recall some of the goings-on in Theology at the tune... solemn discussion about important question like knitting on Sundays... how many hours of it would constitute grave matter; in the Justice Tract on theft, would £10 be absolute grave matter? But there was another side to it all. We were fortunate to have Father T. K. Donovan for Moral Theology. His piece in the *Christus Rex* journal on the "Shape of Things to Come" opened up new and exciting horizons. Personally, I still remember how I thrilled to the riches of *De Gratia* (Tanqueray).

We had to leave the fifties and wait for the new winds of change to blow in the Sixties. Like every other Community, we were asked to reflect on how as Vins we could and should adapt to the vastly changed circumstance of our tune. To quote a distinguished contemporary, Tom Lane: "the Church, and Communities within it, had now to be emptied of baggage from another culture, another age", an amount of decommissioning was clearly to be done. Mary Purcell, in her book *The Story of the Vincentians*, quotes from an article in *Evangelizare* '72: "the writer voiced his fear that some were failing to envisage the massive changes ahead... a danger of secretly hoping that things would settle down to be followed by business as usual, when the truth was that if we're to continue in business at all, then a new approach was inevitable".

So what in fact ensued? What does the record show? "All life is in meeting" as I once sagely observed at an Assembly, quoting Martin Buber. And meet we certainly did, and I think it has been our salvation. They say there is nothing so brilliant as spotting the obvious. That particular process began with Vatican II but it did filter down. And so we entered the era of .General and Provincial Assembly, Convocations, Charism and Mission Statements. I believe that these became a forum where a quiet revolution took place in our thinking and action. The going could be difficult and there was plenty of cut and thrust... but we did continue to meet together, pray together... and stay together. It was all very like the Gospel seed that was sown, then quietly and mysteriously grows... the sower not knowing how.

Maybe a powerful factor all along was the reality in our lives of that characteristic admired so much by the late Fr Flann Markham MSC when he facilitated one of our Assemblies, encapsulated in the Common Rules... living together after the manner of dear friends.

Nothing spectacular in any one of all these meetings, but together

they formed a series of stepping stones to the present day.

“Si monumenta requiris circumspice “.

Just imagine someone thirty years ago reading our present ‘99 Personnel, and reading there of a Nigerian Vice-Province with 7 Houses, 31 priests and 58 students! In our life time, our Province has given birth; Deo Gratias! Milestones abound bearing witness to progress made. To cite a few... Travellers’ Parish: Vincentian Partnership for Justice: North William Street Project: The Passage in Westminster: The Refugee Centre in Phibsboro’ etc, the involvement of the Province in the International Foreign Missions. Underpinning much of our progress were the newly forged links with the DCs and the Vincent de Paul Society which has in Ireland 10,000 members who refer to themselves as Vincentians. To ensure the continuance of the Vincentian charism it behoves us all to be close to them.

In 1950, I suggested a motto for the nascent St Paul’s... *Perfecti stare*. It was because I liked the new Knox Translation; “Found still on our feet, when the smoke of battle has cleared... It was rejected for St. Paul’s but, maybe, it could be resurrected now for the Province today... in a special way for the 7 Golden Jubilarians of 2000. For Des, Frank, Vinny, Gearoid, Diarmuid and Sean and to all the confreres who were our companions these past 50 years my humble thanks to God.

By the Lord has this been done
 And it is marvellous in our eyes.
 We thank you, Lord for the greatness of your love
 which excels everything we ever knew of you.

Priesthood – Some Reflections

Desmond O’Connell, CM.

Shortly after entering CM Seminary in 1942, our stern-visaged and kindly spiritual director, Fr Bernard, enquired: “Mr O’Connell, why do you want to become a priest?” “So that I can say Mass”, I blurted out. Sufficiently PC to pass muster, I suppose, since there was no comment.

My ‘image’ of priest was born of early encounters with such as Fr Jack Roe SM, at my first school; Fr Pat Devine CSSR who always seemed to hang about the church and eagerly engaged us in friendly chat when a few of us nipped in for a visit on the way home from a summer swim or biking in die Cooley Hills; Mgr Toal, the kindly Adm. at St. Patrick’s Cathedral in Dundalk, always a welcome house visitor; Fr Bill Meagher CM, who eased my way into the Vins, and to whom I owe a great debt of gratitude.

These were but a few; each one’s happy relationship with my parents served to reinforce my impression of a caring and courteous man whose devotional offering of the Mass was central to his priestly life. The rare, but very real, encounter that any one of our family might have had with the boorish, domineering, type of cleric was also part of the learning process. My ‘image’ of priest was developing, subconsciously for the most part; the priesthood had its attraction. However, it was in no wise a preoccupation. I was never asked by parents, priest, or teacher, if I would like to consider a priestly vocation. In fact it was only during my final summer term that I began to give serious thought to Vincentian priesthood.

During the next eight years, my contemporaries and I were singularly privileged in having enlightened and mould-breaking guides. To name a few; Fr James Cahalan who, from his wealth of spirituality deeply rooted in St Vincent’s life and teachings, served up to us a rich no-nonsense ever-encouraging menu, always spiced with his engaging humour and optimism; Fr T K Donovan (moral & pastoral), so gifted as teacher and prophet, with a wealth of experience and commonsense untrammelled by lofty academic decorations, a priest of enormous humanity joined to total integrity in adherence to moral principles which guided his superbe approach to the sacrament of penance and all else; then there was the universally loved Br Charlie Boyle, a joyful and luminous example of religious service whose never-ending “bless the Lord” echoed through the grim corridors to our delight, dispersing the ‘spiritual gloom’.

These were but a few of the influences encountered during the years of formation, and which have stood to me as a beacon and source of strength through fifty-eight years of Vincentian living.

When I can say in all truth that I have never had a single day or hour in all these years when I had the slightest regrets in regard to sharing in priesthood and CM life, it may give some indication of my eternal debt of gratitude to those far-sighted and kindly guides who graced my seminary days; also the supportive and patient part played by my confreres at every level in the communities where I have been privileged to serve.

By May 1950, my reply of '42 might have read: "to celebrate and administer the sacraments and to preach the gospel", or the like. But I have to acknowledge that for many years after ordination I knew little or nothing of the role of laity in evangelisation, common priesthood of the baptised which, with the reinforcement of Confirmation must be the dynamic source of that participation while underpinning the ministerial priesthood; nor of charisms, the missionary Church etc.

Yes there were green shoots of an awareness, e.g. 'Catholic Action' in the pontificate of Pius XI, the ground-breaking encyclicals of Pius XII, such as *Mediator Dei*, *Mystici Carports Christi*, *Divino Afflante Spiritu*. The Spirit had to struggle mightily against the counter-culture. Catholic Action movements and societies were mere adjuncts to the work of a predominantly clerical church, strictly controlled, not yet recognised as a 'connected' and legitimate pastoral sharing by the people of God. The solid traditional teaching in vogue in 1940s seminary formation, despite the gains mentioned above, was still entrapped within such arthritic notions as e.g. all pastoral activity pertained exclusively to the ordained (ministerial) clergy (deacon, priest, bishop); I seem to recall during theology (circa 1948) the term Holy Order (singular) was adopted to emphasise the singularity of sacrament and constituent 'character'. Now abandoned?

Then came Vatican II. That same autumn, after twelve years ministering to handicapped folk, saw me engage in a first parish mission in Dundee. I launched out on three years' retreat and mission work in the UK & Ireland, from St. Mary's, Lanark, in September 1962. Vernacular liturgy had soon to be wrestled with too. I must always remember Vat II if only for the following episode. Shortly after the introduction of the English language Mass, I happened to find myself facing the congregation on Low Sunday, the start of the second week of the parish mission in Ireland, and emitting the following: "the hireling leaves his sheep and fleas" from the gospel of the Mass. At least it sounded like that! Then I thought I'd better mend my fences, and began to rephrase inserting a pause/comma after sheep. The barely muffled tittering scarcely abated, so I just abandoned ship and skipped ahead. I made a mental note: 'translators and preachers, beware the vernacular'.

Much has yet to be realised, even tried. But the net gains of Vatican II must be enormous. With a more educated and vocal laity in the

vanguard, the church is striving to enable the spiritual energies of a christened people of God to release and flourish. Some in Holy Orders still tend to grasp the reins of pastoral function too tightly, denying the layman or woman the God-given right to develop and exercise the gifts and charisms emanating from the indwelling Spirit of Christ.

While some of my contemporaries speak of a Vatican III around the corner, I find it refreshing that a young priest, Thomas M Kocik, in a recent article 'Priestly Identity Crisis' (HPR Apr.'99) says: 'The liturgical renewal has been a disappointment... precisely because priests and laity have failed to appreciate their respective roles'. And quoting the 1965 Decree on Ministry & Life of Priests, refers to the imbalance in the theology of priesthood since Trent and earlier, which "placed too narrow a focus on the priest's cultic role'.

Lumen Gentium set out to restore the balance. It defined the priestly role anew: 'ad evangelium praedicandum, fidelesque pascendos, et ad cultum celebrandum', also stating clearly: 'the pastors know well that they themselves are not established by Christ to undertake the whole message of the Church'.

It would seem to me that many of the role-confusion and identity problems which have affected many priests, and ex-priests, in our day are due in large measure to a development over many centuries whereby clergymen tended to take too much to heart their assumed exclusive right in all pastoral functions (deriving from a deficient theology of priesthood) so that it became common for the pastor to go over the brink in considering himself the final word and arbiter, a kind of Poo-Bah in all matters, sacred and profane. He had to be at the centre of everything, if not the chairman, in market-place and parish. At its worst and ugliest this clerical subculture spawned the domineering, bullying, arrogant, clergyman. If he were only the jokey ecclesiastical clown, then people with more charity than sense tolerated it or even back-slapped this buffoon who was incapable of serving them with what their parched souls really thirsted for. If he was the entertainer playing at 'liturgy', or the know-all in politics, sport, etc., they tended to play along with this, despite their disappointments and disgust. Fortunately for the Church, the laity in our country today, whom I think of as having an enormous and long-suffering loyalty, are less prepared to remain passive and silent in face of the controlling and domineering or the tricky and dishonest. They have an admirable capacity to refrain from tarring all clerical with the same brush.

If we are not yet rid of this cancer from the body of the Church, I feel that with all the progress in formation of our younger brethren, and their less hide-bound and legalistic approach to evangelisation, and their greater willingness to share this role, as of right, with the laity in

ministry, the outlook for priesthood and assurance of his proper role by the priest of today gives great hope of young men entering the ministry totally given to serving the most needy, and not to being served, following our Divine Master; also less preoccupied with propping up the 'institution' or establishment.

Hopefully they will not suffer from the role-confusion which has overtaken too many brethren during the past three decades; these have suffered a sense of let-down from their lofty perches, and have fled when unable to come to terms with a more dependant & co-operative role as ministerial priest.

I think the new breed will live at ease with the job description from "Directory on the Life and Ministry of Priests" (1994): 'If the service of the Word is the foundational element of the priestly ministry, the heart and vital centre of it is constituted without a doubt in the Eucharist which is, above all, the real presence in time of the unique and eternal Sacrifice of Christ'. Pope John Paul II, in his Pastoral Exhortation "Pastores dabo vobis" (Intro, par 2) speaks of the laity's role in the ecclesial mission which is shared by all' and adds:

'The more the laity's own sense of vocation is deepened, the more what is proper to the priest stands out'.

In the same document, par. 17, the Pope adds: 'because their role and task within the church do not replace but promote the baptismal priesthood of the entire people of God, leading it to its full ecclesial realisation, priests have a positive and helping relationship to the laity'.

One final quote from *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, par. 49, quoting 'Decree Df Council on Priestly Formation': 'Students must clearly understand that it is not their lot in life to lord it over others and enjoy honours, but to devote themselves completely to the service of God and the pastoral ministry'.

I believe that when the awful itch to dominate and dictate no longer attracts, then the worst characteristics of this sub-culture, the desire to control and manipulate, will finally wither on the clerical vine. I sense that our younger brethren have little difficulty in grasping this truth, and feel only sadness and revulsion when reflecting on past abuses. I think their training, and on-going formation programmes, have enabled them to acquire the facility of praying with greater freedom of spirit, giving greater depth to their prayer-life, adherence to the wise provisions of community rule, and engagement in mission.

Pastores Dabo Vobis (par. 5) quotes the 1990 Synod thus; "there is in essential aspect of the priest that does not change; the priest of tomorrow, no less than the priest of today, must resemble Christ. There is no substitute for it". And (par. 4); "Brother priests, your priesthood is absolutely vital. There is no substitute for it... you are ministers of the

Eucharist and ministers of God's mercy in the sacrament of Penance".

Along with Vatican II and the 1988 Priestly Ministry course, there was one other landmark on my priestly pilgrimage which had a profound influence and turned my appreciation of CM priesthood in a new direction.

In 1985, I had met Sr Briega McKenna OSC when she and Fr Kevin Scallon CM conducted the first of their Intercessions for Priests in Great Britain; directing a retreat for 30 diocesan and religious priests in Mill Hill. Her whole approach to priesthood, her burning desire to strengthen us in our priesthood, interwoven with her life experience of suffering and prayer, made a lasting impression. My conviction and resolve in regard to the importance for the priest of fidelity to a life of prayer were rekindled. Subsequent if sporadic visits to the Intercession month in Dublin and retreats have served to rekindle the grace of that first experience (2 Tim. 1:6). St Vincent's idea of the priest might be summed up thus; "Give me a man of prayer and I can do anything with him".

As every priest knows all too well, to share Christ's ministry as his disciple means sharing also in distress and sufferings which emanate from a variety of sources. 'Dying and Rising' daily. 'Maximo mortificatione vita communis' is one; do I sufficiently realise the tremendous source of strength and growth contained in that expression? One other is the daily criticism of clerics in newspapers and other news media.

None of us, clergy or laity, enjoy reading about the indiscretions or more gross crimes attributed to priests. But I think that people who are prone to condemn "The Media" in general for "attacking the Church and the clergy", even exhibiting a touch of paranoia betimes, might reflect on this question; "back in the 50s when our daily newspapers regularly published pictures of this or that cleric, sometimes four or five in one issue, and always in an approving context; how many of these who now feel persecuted ventured at that time to voice the slightest objection to this sycophantic attitude, or even felt at all uncomfortable in the face of this sometimes sickening adulation?" I believe that our media operators here do their job objectively and fairly in the main, however uncomfortable it might make you or me feel. Of course, the odd one goes over the top now and then.

The common life; I could never overvalue the worth of support from my confreres during fifty years and more – the unfailing consideration, patience and generosity of all my superiors, provincial and local, has been magnificent. Many a diocesan priest has expressed to me, as to you I am sure, his envy on beholding this aspect of our religious life and the evident strength it affords us in good times as well in times of misfortune.

I think it was in reference to the present Pope's portrayal of the Father without the white beard, when promoting preparation for Jubilee

2000, that some wag bestowed the accolade that John Paul II was 'into a slow modest process of enlightenment' – perhaps giving a whole new meaning to the word 'patronisation'

Be that as it may, my 'slow modest process' came at last when Fr Mark (Noonan), then Visitor, and to whom also I owe a lot, encouraged me to undertake the 'Priestly Ministry' course in Marianella (CUSP) on return to Ireland in 1987; I did so in the Spring of '88.

This course, along with Vatican II, are counted as landmarks in my priestly pilgrimage; the opportunity to update, if belatedly, and to have the privilege and joy of crossing swords, albeit clumsily at times, with some of the best minds in the business, such as Fr Sean Riordan CSSR, Fr Sean Kiely CSSp, etc. A wealth of enlightenment, however slow and modest. Among key revelations came the discovery that charismatic gifts had continued to flourish in the Eastern Church throughout the Middle Ages; while the constriction of the pastoral role of the laity in the Western Church would seem to have contributed in no small way to the lack of encouragement to develop and exercise charismatic gifts, and, in turn, led to the inflated and dominant role of the ordained cleric as pastor. The course has had a lasting effect on my concept and conduct of priesthood. Some ten years later, when we learned of John Paul's Pentecost '98 address to a Congress of some 400,000 members of fifty-six new ecclesial communities and groups in Rome, declaring that they were an 'expression of the Church's charismatic dimension' comprising eighty million people worldwide who had found their way into the mainstream of catholic faith and practice, it was with an understanding and joy that I would otherwise not have had.

The Pope addressed the Congress: "Church has two dimensions: the institutional dimension is the structured sacramental aspect linked to those who are ordained. The charismatic dimension is linked to outpourings of the Spirit in persons, movements, and communities... these are co-essential to the making of the Mystery of Christ and his saving work present in the world..."

And Cardinal Ratzinger says: "these new movements "recognise the Church without hesitation as the ground of their life, without which they could not exist"; and speaking of Bishops' obligation to allow freedom to the Holy Spirit to act in the Church, he adds "better less organisation and more Spirit".

Finally, John Paul II remarked that these movements and communities, and those participating in them "are the response, given by the Holy Spirit, to this critical challenge at the end of the millennium." In Ireland at Pentecost 1999 a large convention of these new ecclesial movements and communities took place in Dublin, and was addressed by Archbishop Desmond Connell.

The two dimensions of the Church, referred to by the Pope above, mirror the two priestly roles, baptismal and ministerial. There is now world-wide and universal recognition of this cooperative pastoral function, exercised by virtue of the indwelling of the Spirit of Christ. I think I would have to count these developments as affecting church and priesthood as the most profound to have surfaced during my fifty years of priesthood; the shock-waves of this ecclesial earthquake will surely rumble on for many decades to come, by the breath of the Spirit who is 'Best gift of God... the living spring... the living fire...'

Jean Vanier, a prophetic voice in the Church today, has much to say about lay participation in evangelisation and pastoral activity – no matter how limited or restricted by handicap. In my daily chaplaincy to 45 retired deaf and deaf-blind people, I am conscious of being evangelised by the residents – through their living faith, patience in bearing the sufferings of handicap and aging, joy, friendship, – in a word, the exercise of priesthood of the baptised through a wonderful variety of gifts and charisms. One example, to illustrate: My lasting memory is of a former resident, in her nineties and stooped low, entering our little chapel, already wagging her finger at Him as she approached the tabernacle, scarcely halting in making her bow, arrived to sit in front of the Lord when the full flood of her prayer broke forth. This was a daily encounter – added to her Holy Communion at the morning Mass.

The difference in my appreciation of such faith-examples now, compared with 50 years ago, perhaps illustrates in some measure what has preoccupied me in the course of this brief article; viz. then I would have said 'what a wonderful example of faith'; now, fifty years on, I see such episodes as living evangelisation by one who shares the divine life and mission of Christ, filling up what is wanting to the sufferings of Christ through exercise of her God-given talents and charisms.

So it is with the greatest joy and hope that I look forward to celebrating Golden Priesthood, as one of our G7 in Jubilee Year 2000, the last year of this millennium and final year of the 20th century; I share the optimism of a great Pope for the future of an ever-self-renewing Church, more ready than ever to serve rather than to be served; a priesthood renewed and attractive to the young. Even as I write this piece (May '97) John Paul is making a giant step towards Orthodox reconciliation, and surely 21st century will see unity among all Christian churches. Today, the sharing in Priesthood, and its exercise in chaplaincy work and all that touches on Community living is, more than ever, a source of joy and a reason thank and 'bless the Lord' a la Br Charlie.

Even more at ease with my priesthood than formerly, precisely because many false and illusory expectations on the part of a devoted and loyal laity in respect of their priest have at last been all but dispersed;

and a better informed and educated mature laity are taking their rightful place within the body of a fully active missionary church in partnership with those ordained to ministerial priestly office.

In his work *Our Saviour and His Love for Us*, R Garrigou-Legrange OP, reminds us: 'Our Lord gave three gifts to St John: His Sacred Heart, His Mother, and His Cross'. The reverse of our Miraculous Medal has this same message for St John's fellow priests especially; The Sacred Heart, the Immaculate Heart, and the Cross.

I pray St John will secure a great love of this triple gift for all our confreres who share priestly state and ministry.

Laudetur Jesus Christus

The Little Vincentian Volunteer

Simona Botezatu

Simona is from Romania and is with the Vincentian Volunteers for 1999-2000

“Everyone who loves is begotten by God and knows God”

As with any story that wants to be read and understood, I want to write my story – but a real story. My story does not begin with – “Once upon a time...” But it is happening now in the present, here in our time. Maybe, you will ask: “What does she want to write about?” I want to tell you why I came to the Vincentian Volunteers and what it means for me to live in the Vincentian spirit. In order to do something new from the beginning, you must first ask what you want to do and for whom you are doing it. So, as a human being I asked myself “Why am I here?” If I want to give a simple answer I will say, “I don’t know, only God knows”. But that is too easy to say, that is why I will describe what happened.

To be honest, it is a long story which began last year. I worked for an organisation that helped children infected with HIV/AIDS, and after that I worked for one year in the same organisation but in a different Project, the purpose of which was to protect the single mother and her children. In this Project I met and started to work with a Daughter of Charity. Working together I realised that she was doing something special, something different. I observed, and I was very impressed with her devotion, love and care for other people, especially those in need. In those days something happened to me – something like a big flash came and I felt a mastership of my life. During the following days we started to talk more about religious things, and after that she gave me some religious books. That was the beginning – this was for me a big start, a big step. With time, I started to understand and to ask more questions, like – “Who is Monsieur Vincent de Paul? – What did he want to do? – Where does his power come from? – Why did God choose him?”

A lot of questions came into my mind and I had to find the answers. As I began to read “*The Faith of St Vincent*” the answer came quickly: God wanted St Vincent to be an instrument of His love in the whole world, but he was sent to serve the poor people – to make God known, and to be an image of God (to reflect the face of God). Reading that passage I asked myself how would I be able to do that? Am I able to do what God wants me to do? In that book, St Vincent said: “*God is an inexhaustible source of wisdom, light and love: we need to go out of ourselves in order to come to Him, our God: we have to be guided by*

Him in learning His language... “, this means that we must ask God for everything to help us because God knows everything before us, and He will act in our thoughts.

And another question was how could somebody love totally? And the answer came: love with all of your heart and then try to understand, God will always be with you – “go and do what you can on your part and God will do the rest”. It is the difference between love of God and love of people, which is the first? Is there something wrong if I love God more than I love people? Through reading I realised that I must love God and my neighbour at the same time – we don’t make distinctions between them, and we can’t ignore any of them – and you know why? Because God is LOVE, and that way there is no intermediate step. “For the one who lives in love lives in God and God lives in him”. That means that we must do with our love something real, something active; in that sense St Vincent is an example.

Following Jesus, St Vincent came to serve not to be served. All through his life St Vincent was dedicated to helping poor people and now he invites us to follow the example of Jesus, and everything we do for our neighbour to do it in the name of Jesus Christ. In the Bible (Matthew 25: 35-37) it says: “*I was hungry and you gave Me food, I was thirsty and you gave Me drink, I was a stranger and you took Me in, I was naked and you clothed Me, I was sick and you visited Me, I was in prison and you came to Me ...as you did it to one of these My brethren you did it to Me.*” That passage must remind us that God is everywhere, He lives in everybody. Moved by these words I decided to come to England, to be part of the Vincentian family and to work for the Depaul Trust.

So here I am ready to begin a new life, a new story, which requires a new experience, meeting new friends, facing a new culture, a new outlook. Here in Newcastle, we live in community, we live together with sharing, learning, support, acceptance and prayer. Living in community, every day is a celebration, it means happiness, it means enjoyment; every day we learn something new to add to our experience and at the same time for the good of our soul. Here we are to be images of Jesus Christ in our work and in our behaviour; we have to reflect, to be a good example. That is my story, but there will be other stories.

Now at the end of my article, I would like to quote St Vincent:

“When a person needs a light, what does he do? He takes his lighter and at the same time brings the wick into the spark and so lights his candle. When he has done that he is satisfied. He does not keep on striking his lighter or go off looking for another one to get a light. He has one and does not need any more. The thing is already completed; the light he has is enough to show him his way.”

OBITUARY

Fr. Killian Kehoe CM

A few days before he died – as he floated in and out of consciousness – Fr Killian was asked if there was anything he would like to do. “*To teach*” came the reply. The phrase encapsulated much of Fr Killian’s experience of life. He was born into a world of teachers, for both his parents were teachers. Two of his sisters were lecturers in Carysfort College. Another sister, Sr Gonzaga, a Loreto nun (who died tragically in a fire in her Community house on St Stephen’s Green) was also a teacher. Fr Killian himself, after gaining his degree in Irish (of which he had a great love) and English at University College, Dublin, was ordained in 1933, and then appointed to teach in Castleknock, where he worked for 15 years. Then in 1948 he was appointed Superior and Principal of the Teacher Training College, Drumcondra. In 1957, he would resume teaching for almost 20 years – this time in St. Paul’s. The numerous notebooks found in his room into which he had painstakingly and in a very neat hand copied the finer points of Irish and French grammar, testify to his conscientious dedication to his vocation of teaching during his long tenure of years here in St. Paul’s. For a decade after his retirement from teaching he would devote many hours of his day to securing covenants from boys’ parents and past students to facilitate the financing of St Paul’s College. In July 1997 we had a double celebration in our community for Fr Killian: his 90th birthday and his 40th year of presence in St. Paul’s.

His presence in community was a delightful one. It is a happy detail of English usage that we speak of ‘*growing old*.’ If the whole of life is a becoming, and if we do not cease to grow as persons even when our powers are declining – Killian exemplified that truth gracefully and graciously. In community he unselfconsciously disclosed to us the gifts reserved for age, *To set a crown upon your lifetime’s effort*. Indeed he was one of those people who seemed to grow old without his being aware of it. So when he had a fall during the summer of 1996 that necessitated his going to Rickard House, he did not seem to see his accident as a possible consequence of hardening arteries, but rather in the nature of a passing injury – somewhat like one he might sustain on the rugby field eight decades earlier. (He was, I understand, a skillful out-half player and when studying at UCD was chosen for its rugby team.)

During the three years that he spent in Rickard House, I cannot recall his complaining about his increasing number of physical diminishments. He did repeatedly and earnestly question me – and others – on

what was the cause of his tendency to fall, and when on one occasion I accompanied him to the surgeon who had removed a cataract from one of his eyes, he expressed surprise to her that, successful as was the operation, he still could not read what he called 'the small print' ... Driving in the car with him, on the way to or from Rickard House he would invariably ask – usually near the toll bridge – “Now, do you know what is to be my future? Am I to remain in Rickard House for good ?” “Well, I think, Fr Killian, that that is the Provincial’s idea... He wants you to remain there, while also being a member of the St Paul’s community with the opportunity of coming over to us every two or three weeks for some hours and on other special community occasions.” “I see,” he would say. Then after a pause: “Of course, Rickard House is a great place. Sister Carmel and the nurses are wonderful”, and with even deeper conviction he would add “You know, it is a great house of prayer.”

A man and a priest of prayer he undoubtedly was. A life’s habits made him gravitate very easily and frequently to the oratory in Rickard House. An Eucharistic man in the fullest sense of that word – he expressed gratitude for the least of kind gestures offered to him. On his visits here to St Paul’s he would – having read the papers after lunch – be found in the oratory, rosary beads in hand, patiently awaiting his driver to bring him back to Rickard House to celebrate the five o clock Mass for the Sisters. He incarnated in a special way that virtue to which St Vincent gives the primacy among those which he wished would distinguish the members of his Congregation – evangelical simplicity. For he was a man who invariably gave

a straightforward opinion about things in the way we honestly see them, without needless reservations... remembering that God likes to deal with the simple, and that he conceals the secrets of heaven from the wise and prudent of this world and reveals them to little ones. – R.C. 2:4.

It was with such simplicity and humour that Killian liked to recall how as the youngest in his family his mother would pray in the evening time, often with him alone, the final rosary (she prayed several) of her day. Often at the third or fourth decade the young Killian would nod off to sleep. Roused and startled by his mother he would immediately resume saying “Holy Mary, Mother of God...” On one occasion his mother during the night had to go down to the sitting room. Unable to find the matches to light the oil lamp, she went upstairs to Killian now in bed and deeply asleep. “Killian, Killian, where did you leave the matches?” The only response from the pillow to the repeated questioning and shaking of his mother was “Holy Mary, Mother of God...”

Killian is now, I am sure, in a home of which the Lamb is the light and where there is no need of matches, and from which he is gently inviting us to *Look for me in the nurseries of heaven.*

Richard McCullen CM

KILLIAN KEHOE CM

Born: 8 July, 1907 in Dublin.
 Entered the Congregation: 4 October, 1928
 in St. Joseph's, Blackrock.
 Final Vows: 7 October, 1930
 Ordained: 10 June, 1933
 in St. Mary's Pro-Cathedral, Dublin
 by Bishop Wall,
 Auxiliary Bishop of Dublin.

APPOINTMENTS:

1933-'48: St. Vincent's, Castleknock
 1948-'57: St. Patrick's, Drumcondra
 1957-'99: St. Paul's, Raheny

Died: 25 August 1999
 in Rickard House, Blackrock

Buried: St. Vincent's, Castleknock