



# ACAI NEWSLETTER

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## ASSOCIATION OF CHURCH ARCHIVISTS - IRELAND

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### From the Chair:

*Gentle Readers,*

Greetings to you all! Although I am writing this during Holy Week, it will be well into Pentecost before you read it. You will then be in a different state of mind!

Since my last communication with you we have had a very enjoyable and informative Archival Day in Galway, visiting the Augustinian Abbey, the Collegiate Church of St. Nicholas, the largest medieval Parish church in Ireland, and the Heritage and Archives Centre of the Western Province of the Mercy Sisters. Beside all the 'learning' of the day there was the added bonus of a glorious day of sunshine in Galway and in spite of the "water contamination" we were looked after admirably in Park House Hotel, thanks to our editor and her companion, Majella!

I share with you a few items of archival interest that came across my desk in recent weeks. First of all the amazing Bodmer Papyrus presented to Pope Benedict XVI in January for the Vatican Library. Dated between 175 and 225, and written in Egypt, possibly for a small Greek-speaking parish. It contains about half of each of the Gospels of Luke and John and was probably used as a liturgical book. The oldest transcription of the Our Father, as recounted in Luke, is found in this papyrus. This ancient document demonstrates for us Scripture's historical reality.

Louvain 400 or Leuven, the politically correct name now, is being celebrated this year with numerous events commemorating this important medieval university. Many of our members have been privileged to attend some of these events already. St. Anthony's College, the Irish Franciscan College, was founded in May 1607. Due to its position in one of the most important university cities in Europe, and one central to the Counter Reformation movement, it became the epicentre of influence in seventeenth century European intellectual, cultural and political manoeuvrings. It had a very strong influence in Ireland's historic relations with Europe. The founder Florence Conry OFM, was aide to Red Hugh O'Donnell and was well known to Hugh O'Neill. Louvain became a centre of immense importance in seventeenth/eighteenth century Irish political history, while also becoming an active source of writing and preservation of Ireland's cultural heritage. From here Micheál Ó Cléirigh was sent back to Ireland, (from 1626 to 1637) to collect material for the compilation of the "Annals of the Four Masters", the book which most readily comes to the minds of Irish men and women today when Louvain is mentioned.

I am happy to record that ACAI will also commemorate this event in conjunction with the Annual General Meeting. Dr. Edel Breathnach of the Micheál Ó Cléirigh Institute for the Study of Irish History and Civilisation, UCD., and Dr. Micheál MacCraith OFM, UCG., will address our meeting on aspects of this rich cultural heritage.

.....and the European Parliament has difficulty in recognising the Christian Heritage of our continent.....!!

I leave you gentle readers.

Sincerely: *Dominique Horgan op*; Chair

**Fr. Theobald Mathew, OFM Cap. 1790 - 1856**  
**Social Reformer**

Background: Cork was pretty typical of Ireland – drink was causing havoc, and the temperance promoters were not reaching the majority poor. The organisers, mainly Protestants, Dissenters, Quakers, felt the need for a credible front man who could appeal to the masses. They needed a celeb, the hottest thing around for drawing crowds. Fr. Mathew fitted the bill. He had the track record with the people; the poor, the un employed, the labourers and their families. He knew their problems and they trusted him. He was a generous, good-hearted, down to earth guy, pragmatic, into all kinds of social reform on the ground. He was also famous for his charity sermons. And, even if he wasn't a gifted orator, his sincerity, earnestness and fervour moved people's hearts. Besides, he was educated, of gentrified background, good-looking and he had presence. He could move easily between the rich and poor. In 1838, under pressure from the above group, Fr. Mathew was finally recruited and signed the temperance register, exclaiming as he did: *Here goes in the name of God*, which became a slogan of the movement.

Once he took the reins, the temperance campaign took off in leaps and bounds. 1838 he devoted to Cork and the towns around. In 1839, he started to move out, first to Limerick and its surrounds, then to Waterford, criss-crossing the countryside from Kerry to Tipperary, up to Galway, over to Kilkenny and Wexford, up North to Belfast and Donegal. He had a soft spot for Clare. Always on the go, always drawing the crowds in multiples of thousands, tirelessly visiting and revisiting the parishes, administering the pledge to people in all kinds of weather. His crusade spread like wildfire, each spark igniting another, rolling out wave after wave of wannabees, until it engulfed the whole country, north/south and east/west.

The more people who took the pledge, the more it spread out to the next venue. As the momentum grew the drums beat out the message: DRINK IS OUT! THE MEETINGS ARE THE PLACE TO BE..... SOBRIETY IS WHERE IT'S AT. The people began to reclaim their self-esteem. This mass embrace of temperance by millions of people beggars explanation. It signals a sea-change in the mind-set of ordinary people. Socially, it was a seismic shift, away from that psychic displacement (caused by drink) which had locked up their energies for years in their misery, dislodging that grip and releasing the psychic energy in a new, re-imagined direction, giving it a positive goal in a newfound confidence and self-respect,

It worked – God knows how! How do you inveigle literally millions of men and women to give up their favourite pastime in the space of three to four years, without using modern means of communication. Commentators generally say little about the HOW. They range from saying it was "*an emotional mass response to one man's appeal*" (Eliz Malcolm, *Ireland Sober, Ireland Free* 101), to pinpointing a revivalist element here, or what anthropologists call 'magical thinking'. I don't doubt that there was an element of that superstitious attitude to miracles and the healing powers of Fr. Mathew and the talismanic power attached to the medal. Those elements were there and they helped to spread the cause. But that can't be the whole story. Any recovering<sup>2</sup>-alcoholic will tell you about the huge and radical uprooting of attitudes that has to

precede the weaning away from drink, or that precedes recovery. To reject drink is to reject a whole pattern of life that surrounds it – like, where you socialise, with whom, traditions, sacred drinking rituals like buying your round, domestic violence maybe. For one person to reject habitual drunkenness, it demands *a huge emotional displacement and rearrangement*. (*Alcoholics Anonymous, 3<sup>rd</sup> edit. 27*)

Suppose we project that individual picture on to the collective national psyche. Okay, the morale of the people was low; they had been mistreated and made feel inferior. There was humiliation at being a subjugated people, as well as disaffection at being a colonised population, which had lost its footing in the land, as well as its self-respect as a people. They were mad for drink, for their *nirvana*, and mad from drink. You could say that their psychic energy had been displaced (side-tracked) by drowning their sorrow in drink. They were certainly ripe for some psychic release from this downward destructive spiral.

The call to temperance suddenly awakened national consciousness to a new destiny, a moral destiny to which the people could realistically aspire. If they could stand together and rid themselves of the slavery of addiction, they could hold their heads high *en masse* and move on to further freedoms. This may have been why so many people readily bought into the temperance movement – it gave them an intuitive glimmer of hope that it was going somewhere towards bettering their life. For some it was a step in the direction of political change; for others, with a tad too much credulity perhaps, it was the revivalist element and the special powers ascribed to Fr. Mathew that turned them on.

Whatever their motivation, and however grotesque it seemed to some, Fr. Mathew tapped into a psychic energy that had been displaced by a pathetic drunkenness. He managed to dislodge it and to re-focus this energy on a massive scale that caught the public imagination. The masses were ready for it: they had been mobilised for different causes like Catholic Emancipation (1829), the Tithe movement (1831 – 1833). O'Connell's repeal movement was just starting. The ground was ploughed. There was movement afoot, a heightened awareness of possibilities; energies were being tapped, mobilised in different directions. But there was no clear, visible social and moral goal. Into this vacuum rides Fr. Mathew's charismatic leadership and his message, which was a simple, straightforward teetotal one that equated sobriety with economic and social advancement. It was humanitarian. The masses were susceptible to his message. He was able to reach out to them and persuade them that it was attainable. There was no force, no threat of legislative coercion, none of the religious blood-and-thunder they were accustomed to – but simple non-judgemental, moral persuasion. The masses rallied. People were less cynical then; and there was no aggressive advertising to boost their yearning for drink. Fr. Mathew projected and promoted the civic value of temperance; and the masses responded.

The sign of his signal success was the **dramatic drop in the production of whiskey and beer within 5 years**. In 1838 the distillers produced 12 million gallons of spirits annually; by 1843 this had dropped by more than half to 5.5 million. Likewise the breweries dropped from one million barrels in 1838 to 500,000 in 1843. (*Colm Kerrigan 'The Social Impact of the Irish Temperance Movement' in Irish Economic and Social History, 14 (1987) 24-27*)



## Mapping the artistic heritage of Religious Orders

Last year, the Augustinian Archives at St. Augustine's, Ballyboden (Dublin), had a visit from Dr. Malgorzata D'Aughton, of the Mícheál Ó Cléirigh Institute for the Study of Irish History and Civilisation at UCD. She came to examine, photograph and catalogue on computer our collection of old chalices, dating from the 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries. This is part of an ongoing research project by the Mícheál Ó Cléirigh Institute to map and record the religious artefacts of the older Religious Orders in Ireland, e.g. Franciscans, Carmelites, Dominicans, Augustinians and so forth.

Malgorzata, a native of Poland and married to an Irishman, spent about three hours in our archives recording details of our collection. Her visit had been arranged beforehand at the request of Benedictine historian, Colmán Ó Clabaigh OSB, Glenstal Abbey. Malgorzata is currently engaged in a study of early 17<sup>th</sup> century Franciscan chalices, which is particularly appropriate for the year that is in it, with the celebration of *Louvain 400*, marking the four hundredth anniversary of the Irish Franciscan foundation of St. Anthony's College, Louvain in 1607. That same year, the event that has become known to us as the Flight of the Earls also took place. The celebrations to mark *Louvain 400* in Ireland, England (Cambridge), Belgium (Louvain), France (Irish College, Paris), and Italy (Irish College, Rome), are also a project of the Mícheál Ó Cléirigh Institute in partnership with the Irish Franciscans. *Louvain 400* will also commemorate the death in 1657 of noted Irish Franciscan, Luke Wadding, founder of St. Isidore's College, Rome.

Apart from the extremely important and valuable Franciscan archive of manuscripts that emerged from St. Anthony's, Louvain in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, religious artefacts from that troubled period of our history are also an important physical connection with that time. Hence, the importance of chalices and other similar artefacts with their Latin inscriptions and ornate artistry. Mapping these items is yet another way of recording our history, one that is shared with continental Europe as *Louvain 400* clearly demonstrates.

David Kelly OSA



Notice: Our Secretary – Sr. Marie Bernadette O'Leary hopes to produce an updated mailing list which can be sent out with the post AGM material. She would be very grateful for information re. any members who have changed address, or if names need to be deleted or inserted. It would also be helpful if members who have email; could let her have such, as it is so much more convenient than postage.  
The editor would also very much appreciate articles and/or items of information for publication in the Newsletter.

### Searching for an Elusive Lady

Sooner or later, every archivist comes upon an insoluble problem or at least one that resembles a jigsaw puzzle with most of the pieces missing. My current one is about a mysterious Cork woman. Several years ago, Fr. Francisco Lage CSSR, a member of the Redemptorist Historical Institute in Rome, mentioned to me that he found an entry relating to the clothing and profession of an Irish woman in the Italian monastery of the Redemptoristines at S. Agata dei Gotti near Naples. In early 2006, I met Fr. Lage in Rome during my sabbatical leave and inquired if he had found anything further. Although I was pursuing research in the Old Testament, my main academic field, I found the time to do a little digging in both the Redemptorist General Archives and those of the Irish College. Although the lady is still elusive, the bare bones have gathered a little more flesh and some of the readers of this newsletter may be able to help me add a little more.

According to the entrance and profession book entries, Anna Maria Morphy (=Murphy) was born in the city of Cork and baptised in the church of St. Mary and Anne on 6 March 1814. She was the daughter of Stephen Murphy and Catherine Heffernon. Her family seem to have left Cork as she was confirmed in the Convent of St. Agatha in Florence in 1825. Florence was something of a 19<sup>th</sup> Century Mecca for well-off foreigners, especially those searching for a milder climate for reasons of health. Anna Maria continued her education in Bordeaux and the nuns at S. Agata record that she was fluent in French, English and Italian, could paint and draw with some talent and had fairly considerable private means. By the time of her entrance in 1860, Anna Maria was already 46 years of age. She took the religious name of Maria Addolorata del Cuore e Lagrime di Cristo (Mary Addolorata of the Heart and Tears of Christ – quite a *predikat!*). What brought her to this unknown convent? The only explanation possible is that she was attracted to the Redemptoristine Sisters from reading the life of St. Alphonsus Ligouri, one of the major spiritual writers of the period. Alphonsus had been involved in the foundation of the Order in 1732, and when he became Bishop of S. Agata, he brought them to the monastery of Our Lady of Constantinople there.

By the time of her profession in October 1862, storm clouds were gathering. The movement of Italian unification had a strongly anticlerical tone and was beginning to lean heavily on religious communities, especially contemplatives. The profession of this foreign sister was a low-key affair. The convent chronicle records that it was conducted behind closed doors, without the ringing of bells, fireworks and festive meal for the attending clergy and guests that were customary. The convent records run cold at this point and Fr. Lage was inclined to believe that she had left the monastery. My search in the Roman archives show that Maria Addolorata did in fact leave S. Agata, but that she came to Rome with at least one companion. Writing to Mgr Kirby of the Irish College on Good Friday 1872, she informs him that they are living in the accommodation attached to the little French church of S. Nicola dei Lorenesi near the Piazza Navona. Three years later, she writes to say that they will shortly be taking residence virtually next door to the Irish College in the Via S. Agata dei Gotti. The sisters may have taken the strange coincidence of names of their new address with their home monastery as a sign of the blessing of providence.

Short letters in both the Kirby collection and the Redemptorist General Archives make it clear that the women had a continuing problem in making ends meet. The home monastery sent occasional gifts of money when their straitened circumstances permitted, and on one occasion, the Prioress asked the Redemptorists to check that Maria Addolorata is in good health, as she has not had a reply to her last letter.

It is quite likely that this handful of women (we do not even know exactly how many there -6- were) continued to observe their Rule and went on quietly living a contemplative life in



## CARE OF CHURCH VESTMENTS

### Some useful guidelines

Textiles (including church vestments) vary in date and style as a rule and are made with a wide variety of techniques. This will affect the methods to be employed in their conservation. Textiles of all kinds can be damaged by light, damp, dirt, insects, when in storage or on display. The following are some guidelines towards the care of church vestments.

- **Light:** Never leave the vestments in direct sunlight or strong light of any kind. Both natural and artificial light causes dyes to fade and fibres to weaken. Use blinds, shutters and curtains at the windows to keep out as much light as possible.
- **Damp:** Keep vestments at even temperatures, cool rather than hot. The air should not be too damp. Dampness of air is measured as its 'relative humidity' and the reading should be about 50-60%. A free flow of air around the vestments will help prevent condensation or mould.
- **Dirt:** Any vestments that are exposed are liable to attract dust and dirt and will be vulnerable to harmful air pollution. Vestments in storage should be checked and advice sought on suitable methods of cleaning.
- **Insects:** All vestments (especially old vestments) should be checked regularly for signs of moth or other insects. Mothballs wrapped in muslin or tissue can be used, but the best safeguard is regular inspection and good housekeeping to ensure that the vestments and their surroundings do not get dirty.
- **Handling:** All vestments are fragile; very old vestments exceedingly so. Handle them as infrequently as possible. When handling a vestment, try to support the weight overall, never picking it up by one corner or by one edge. Lift, don't drag, is a useful motto in this regard.
- **Storage:** Whenever possible, keep vestments *flat* in a drawer or box. Wrap and interleave them with acid-free tissue paper. Larger objects may have to be folded. In this latter instance keep the right side of the vestment to the outside. Pad every fold with tissue paper to avoid permanent creases, which could cause the fabric to split. Don't pile one vestment on top of another, otherwise embroidery and velvet could be crushed. Use separate drawers, boxes or shelves for each object. Vestments should only be hung if they are in good condition and the hangers should be specially shaped for each object.
- **Rolling a Vestment, Frontal or Textile Furnishing:** Use a strong cardboard or plastic tube. Lay the front out flat, face downwards on a clean surface. Cover the roller with tissue. Roll the object up carefully, interleaving with tissue paper. Cover the roll with cotton covering. Store horizontally, never vertically or leaning against a wall.



- **Disposal of Church Vestments or Furnishings:** It is advisable to seek advice from local conservation specialists. Donating to a Local Museum or Archival or Library Display Unit in your area would be the most reasonable thing to do.
- **Display:** Ideally, vestments should only be displayed for a limited period and should be protected in a frame or on a display board. Never display an object in strong light or near a source of heat. Showcases can be covered with a curtain so that the vestment is only exposed for viewing. Take care that damp cannot be transmitted to the case from the floor or walls.
- **Cleaning:** Most modern textiles can be cleaned by ordinary methods and much of the white linen can be washed. Washing should entail soft water and a liquid non-biological detergent. Avoid bleaching. With multi-coloured or embroidered fabrics or old or fragile vestments and some white linen, special cleaning methods are needed. Always seek expert advice so as to avoid extensive damage.

*Dominique Horgan, OP*  
*David Kelly, OSA*



### **The Actor**

A famous actor was invited to a function where he was asked to recite for the pleasure of the guests. Having recited some verses, he asked if there was anything in particular they wanted to hear. After a moment or two, an old pastor asked to hear Psalm 23, "The Lord is my Shepherd." The actor paused for a moment and then said, *"I will, but with one condition – that you will recite it also, after I have finished."* The pastor was taken by surprise. *"I'm hardly a public speaker but, if you wish, I shall recite it too."*

The actor began quite impressively. His voice was trained and his intonation was perfect. The audience was spellbound and when he finished, there was great applause from the guests. Now it was the old pastor's turn to recite the same psalm. His voice was not remarkable, his tone was not faultless, but when he finished, there was not a dry eye in the room.

The actor rose and his voice quavered as he said, *"Ladies and gentlemen, I reached your eyes and ears: he has reached your hearts. The difference is this: I know the Psalm but he knows the Shepherd."*

## Civil Registration

Registration came relatively late to Britain and Ireland. Civil Registration was introduced in Ireland in 1845 – initially for the registration of non - Catholic marriages. A Registrar General and other registrars were appointed. From 1864 a comprehensive registration system covering, in addition the registration of births, deaths and RC marriages - was established. The framework and rules of the service were set down mid 19<sup>th</sup> century and there had been little change to the basic registration procedures in the last 150 years, while there have been many changes in our society, e.g. major developments in technology and increased expectations on how public services should be delivered.

Civil Registration is "*the continuous, permanent and compulsory recording of the occurrence and characteristics of vital events.*" We need to satisfy the need for evidence which will have a bearing on rights, liabilities and status in formal contexts. It is recognised that accurate and comprehensive recording of key life events such as births, deaths and marriages is essential to the state. At the macro level the data which is aggregated by the Central Statistics Office is an essential tool for governmental planning. It establishes our identity as individuals. It provides evidence in the form of certificates, which have significance for civil status and for a wide range of rights and entitlements – benefits, driving licences, passports etc. It enriches our cultural identity by providing a key source of information for genealogists and family historians.

Lack of a comprehensive system of registration meant that there were repercussions in Britain where many emigrants had gone to find work. Increasing laws regulating employment, public health conditions and rights of inheritance meant it was necessary for the ordinary citizen to prove matters of fact such as age and legitimacy. The Presbyterian community complained that its absence made it difficult to establish rights of inheritance and noted that those of its members seeking commissions in the Indian Service could not show proof of age or origin. The Irish Poor Law Commission could not impose compulsory vaccination against smallpox because of the absence of information about births and deaths.

Dispensary doctors were the most appropriate persons to act as local registrars. In 1863 a bill was passed and Boards of Guardians of the Poor Law Unions were appointed as Superintendent Registrars. 163 unions of Parishes had been set up under the Poor Law Act of 1838. The Board had to check and certify the returns of the Registrars quarterly and they had to establish an Office with fire-proof strongroom to take into custody all Registers completed by the local Registrars. They had to compile indexes for completed registers and to issue certificates of all events registered to the public. There were 798 dispensary based registration districts, each headed by a Registrar. There were 130 registrars of Protestant and civil marriages who reported directly to the Registrar General. The Registrar General supplied registrars with iron boxes, two keys, special registration ink – all of which was strictly regulated. Deputies were appointed and penalties designed to protect the integrity of the records from fraud. To produce a certificate the information had to be repeated laboriously. It was essential that each Registrar had a GOOD HAND! It was not consumer friendly; it was inefficient.

The establishment of Saorstát Éireann in 1922 provided for separate registration systems for each of the two new states of Ireland, with the Adaptation of Enactments Act 1922 ensuring the continuance of the legislative base for registration in the south. Responsibility hitherto exercised by the Lord Lieutenant was transferred to the Minister for Local Government and Public Health and in 1946 to the Minister for Health. Historically dispensary doctors were appointed as registrars as they were considered the best able to ensure registration of events through their local knowledge. Since the introduction of the choice of doctor scheme in 1972, the policy has been to appoint Health Board clerical staff as registrars. The Regional Health Boards are now the Superintendent Registrars. They appoint nominated officers to carry out duties. The 1972 Act terminated the rights of District Medical Officers as Registrars. Other Developments over the years were:

- 1953 – Short Birth Certificates were introduced for civil purposes. Register of adopted children was introduced.
- 1956 - Format of marriage – omit profession of father and added the mother's maiden name.
- 1972 – Marriage minimum age 16; consent of both parents for those under 21
- 1986 – Domicile and Recognition of Foreign Divorces Act
- 1987 – Status of Children Act to equalise the rights of children born within or outside marriage in the area of guardianship, maintenance and property rights.
- 1994 – Stillbirths Registration Act
- 1996 – Registration of Births Act / Family Law Act
- 2004 – Civil Registration Act.  
GRO decentralised to Roscommon.

The original service was made available at a time when people were often born, married and died in the same place, but with time, changes in society, new developments in technology and changes in peoples' expectations necessitated a radical overhaul in the registration system and the legislative framework. At present with modern technology it is proposed to introduce electronic registers and to create national life event databases. It is envisaged that each person will have a PPS Number as Public Sector identifier and enable the sharing between public sector bodies. The burden on the citizen will lessen when this information is shared by a range of Departments and Agencies within Government, e.g. Passport Office and Department of Social Affairs. This will reduce demand for certificates; provide timely access to data for fraud control and vital statistics; and enable such bodies to provide a more pro-active service to customers. It is also proposed to link life events pertaining to a person, thus creating a single life record. In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century customers want quality services supplied at a place and time of their choice. The new legislation opens opportunities in this regard.

*(Adapted from a talk by Eileen Crehan, Galway.)* –11-

## The Trip to Galway

Approximately 20 members assembled at Heuston Station in Dublin for the 9.10 train, to be met on arrival by Teresa Delaney and Majella O'Keeffe our hosts for the day. We were also fortunate in having another expert on Galway with us, David Kelly OSA. Our first stop (once suitably refreshed), was the refurbished Augustinian church, entered via Buttermilk Lane in the heart of the old city. Here we were welcomed by Fr. Dick Lyng PP, who gave a first-hand introduction to the architecture of the church and the thinking behind its refurbishment, pointing out the work of stone mason Ken Thompson in Cork, and the Menlo limestone font which when polished (by a Latvian stonemason,) comes up like marble. This baptismal font (c. 1750) makes a fitting centrepiece for the entrance to the church, welcoming the newly-baptised into full communion, and reminding the long baptised of their own baptism. The antiphonal or choir layout of the church makes for the full participation of all the faithful. The eye is drawn to the stainless steel crucifix by Angela Godfrey over the altar, echoing the stained glass crucifixion window behind (George Walsh). The success of the refurbishment (at least, from this reviewer's perspective), lies in its ability to be a living, welcoming, warm and bright place of worship, while truly appreciative of its historic character. All those interested in historic buildings and living liturgy are encouraged to visit, and to see what lessons might be learned in the sensitive area of church reordering.

The visit to the Augustinian church and associated friary was complemented by David Kelly's historic input (and valuable notes) on the Augustinian sisters and priests in Galway, as he led us onwards to the renowned St. Nicholas' Collegiate church which works in close co-operation with neighbouring St. Augustine's. Much of the history of the town of Galway can be traced (literally) in the lineaments of this medieval building (c. 1320), extended in the sixteenth century and little changed since. The principal end of the field trip was reached when we arrived at the Western Province Archives of the Mercy Sisters in Forster Street, across from Eyre Square, where Sisters Teresa Delaney and Majella O'Keeffe organised the welcome cuppa before giving us an introduction to their work. As a bonus we were treated to an informative Powerpoint presentation on the first superior of the Galway Mercy community (1840) Sister Teresa White, a contemporary of Catherine McAuley.

The Western Province Archives is a model of its kind and the envy of many members for its generous display areas and substantial storage. Located in a converted chapel (built 1952) of the old asylum, its focal point is the Evie Hone window, which the archives now uses as its logo. Opened officially on 1 June 2000, it acts as the central archive for the Mercy communities in the dioceses of Achonry, Ardagh & Clonmacnois, Clonfert, Elphin, Galway, Killala, and Tuam. A world map on display gives a stunning illustration of the rapid spread of the Mercy houses worldwide, and the complications that this creates for historic record management. The artistic gifts of Majella O'Keeffe can be discerned in the interior design, including the glass panels depicting the coats of arms of the various dioceses on the iron stairway and landing. For those members interested in the intricacies of computer cataloguing (including members newly appointed to this task), Teresa Delaney explained the system employed in this archive, where each diocese is catalogued separately (in accordance with accepted archival principles of provenance and original order), and sectioned into eight 'arrangement levels'. Information on how the Mercy sisters here ensure annals are still created, and deposited, and the format in which sisters' details are kept, were also most helpful. Indeed, many of the issues discussed over the course of the visit have direct applicability to the work of fellow church archivists elsewhere, including responding to requests for artefacts for public exhibition, managing school visits, and keeping copies of materials that are to be forwarded to another archive (in this case, to Baggot Street). It is (to the relief of the visiting members) still a work in progress, with recent acquisitions awaiting cataloguing, as the slow but steady work of transferring materials continues.

The city wore its brightest spring colours throughout the day, and members who had not been in Galway before, or not for many years, were particularly struck by the lively street life and bustling prosperity. The day was full but not frenetically so, and there was the chance both travelling and in Galway to chat with fellow members about matters of mutual interest, particularly welcome as most members work in 'solo' or small-scale settings, with limited opportunities for professional networking. Warm thanks must be extended to all involved in planning and hosting the day, most especially to Teresa Delaney and Majella O'Keeffe (Mercy Sisters), and to Dick Lyng and David Kelly (Augustinians).

*Jacinta Prunty, chf*