



# ACAI NEWSLETTER

## ASSOCIATION OF CHURCH ARCHIVISTS - IRELAND

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### Contents

Message from the Chair <i>Dominic Horgan</i>	1
Treasures of Waterford Museum <i>Cecilia English RSM</i>	2
Fr. Joseph Kennealy <i>Unseann Ó Maidín</i>	3 - 5
Holy Trinity Abbey Kilnacrott <i>Killian Mitchell O Praem</i>	6
Annals – Past & Future <i>Teresa Delaney</i>	7
Soupers and Jumpers <i>Book Review</i>	8
Treasures Lost and Found <i>Angela Bugler RSM</i>	9
Trócaire Dé agus Danta Eile <i>Goretti Ní Fhéinne</i>	10
Presentation Convent, Lucan <i>Frances Crowe PVBM</i>	11
Coming Events	12

### Gentle Reader,

Our editor has been pursuing me for my contribution to this edition. I have been delaying, as I knew that I would be attending the Opening of the new Archive and Research Centre of the OPW- NUI MAYNOOTH, in Castletown House as your representative and I wished to tell you about it.

President Mary McAleese performed the ceremony. There was a huge attendance of professionals, archivists and academic staff of Maynooth College and representatives of the State organisation, the Office of Public Works. The Opening ceremony was in the 80 foot Long Room, a magnificently restored room in the House. Amongst the most eminent present was the Honourable Desmond Guinness of Leixlip Castle who bought the property in 1967 and with the assistance of the Irish Georgian Society was responsible over a period of three decades and a tireless fund-raising, campaign for the restoration of the House and the preservation of its contents.

Castletown House is the first classic Palladian mansion in the country. Commissioned by William Connolly (1662 – 1729), Speaker of the Irish House of Parliament, he engaged a Florentine architect, Alessandro Galilei to build it. Building commenced in 1722. After Connolly's death a grandnephew and his wife, known as Tom and Louise Connolly were responsible for the exquisite decoration of the interior. It remained in the Connolly family until 1965 when it was put up for sale. The buyers were only interested in the land for modern housing. Unfortunately the house fell into disrepair. It was then that Desmond Guinness came to the rescue. In 1994 the House and estate came into the care of the State and since then both have been undergoing extensive restoration thanks to the OPW. In 2007 it reopened as a major cultural and community resource.

The combined venture of the OPW-NUI MAYNOOTH Archive and Research centre will have facilities for storage and a study area in Castletown House and will be open for scholars in 2009. At this ceremony President Mary McAleese officially accepted the archives of Strokestown House for deposit in the Centre. This deposit consists of approximately 6,000 documents. The deposit relates largely to the Pakenham Mahon family in County Roscommon, providing a birdseye view of an Anglo-Irish way of life. The papers are rich in pictures of the many facets of Irish life of the period.

It is in this wonderful ambience that future researchers will make available to us our rich inheritance. Perhaps at a future date, one of our members, Sr. Jacinta Prunty of Maynooth College, will agree to lead us on a visit to the Centre.

Meanwhile – The joy and peace of Christmas to you all  
Dominique Horgan, op  
Chair

## Visit to the Treasures of Waterford

On the 27 September I set out from Doon, Co. Limerick to travel to Waterford. There I was meeting up with a group of Church Archivists, who were travelling by train from Dublin. On my way through Limerick, Tipperary and Waterford, I saw the beautiful Galtee Mountains between Limerick and Tipperary and then the Knockmealdowns in Waterford. They looked splendid in the sunshine, and I could not help humming to myself "*How lovely on the mountains are the feet of Him who brings good news!*" Then I came within sight of the river Suir, and little did I think that this river had played such an important part in the history of the City of Waterford – the oldest City in Ireland.

On finding the Granary Building on the Quays where the Museum of Treasures is situated, Mr Eamon McEneaney, Director, met us and made us feel very welcome before taking us to the Museum, which is now the home of many, many treasures of Waterford's historic past. The Museum is both a treasury and a treasure trail that takes one through thousands of years of Waterford's history. We first encountered glass panels depicting the different ages from 7000 B. C. – the Mesolithic era, the Stone Age when the hunters and gatherers came along the banks of the river Suir, and the harbour which was one of the Gateways to Ireland. Each panel depicted a different era – Bronze age, Iron age, Pre Christian, Early Christian and the Anglo Norman invasion right up to the present day. The whole lay-out of the museum was magnificent. Each era had a self-explanatory section as we progressed through the building.

We were acquainted with the beginnings of the city. All the treasures and artefacts which have been collected were displayed strategically. The excavations which have been done in the city over the last thirty years or so were visible and explained. The art and craft works of the Norman period are depicted in stone and metal, and the wonderful Manuscripts are an enduring silent witness to the positive contributions which all groups have rendered to the cultural history of Ireland. Each section had an audio-visual programme but Eamon took us through, and gave a marvellous personal commentary on everything.

If I were to single out any one of the treasures, it would have to be those preserved from the early Churches, which were magnificently preserved and displayed. These consisted of a number of vestments which belonged to the Dean of Christ Church Cathedral in Waterford; the Magi Cope which was made of very heavy cloth-of-gold and embroidered with scenes from the life of Christ and the Virgin Mary. This was typical of the 15<sup>th</sup> Century Flemish painting of Van Ecyk. A number of altar vessels were also on display – a silver Chalice dated 1646 of Spanish origin, and probably made for a church in Waterford. It was engraved with images of Sts. Catherine and Bridget, with a scene of the Crucifixion on its base. This chalice was discovered at an auction in Manchester, and was purchased in 1845, and brought to Waterford by a priest. With other church vessels on display there were a crucifix, thurible, candlesticks – all inscribed by the donors, one of whom was Thomas Walsh, an emigré in France and this was dated 1752.

Another item deserving of mention was the Great Parchment Book 1361- 1650. This very large tome was well displayed in a glass case. It provides anyone with a unique insight into the medieval City during a period of 300 years. Its pages testify to the first recorded use of the English language for official purposes in Ireland. Another item was a bust of Luke Wadding 1588- 1657. The success of the counter reformation owes much to him. He studied in Portugal, Spain and Italy. He influenced Papal appointments of Bishops to the Irish see. He founded two Irish Colleges, wrote a large number of books, and had St. Patrick's Day made an official feast of the Church.

There was a very good photographic display of scenes from 1800 to the present day. The struggle to create an Irish state during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century was well depicted in Waterford as it became the hallmark of Ireland as an educational, cultured and democratic society. So much more could be written, but all of us agreed that it was a magnificent display, and were ever so grateful to have had the opportunity to visit and view the Treasures of Waterford.

*Cecilia English. R.S.M.*

## Fr. Joseph Kennealy – Monk of Mount Melleray

The year 1829 saw the passing of the Catholic Emancipation Act, so Catholics in Ireland, though they had been practising their faith openly, but in a very discreet fashion for some years, were at last allowed to publicly express their love of religion and of God. A concerted effort was made to provide public places of worship for all. Parishes which could afford it built, both before Emancipation and in the following years, fairly modest structures. Because of the sad state of the country many of these churches were of a low standard architecturally, aesthetically and from the point of comfort. One such church, built in 1814, was that of Churchtown South in the parish of Cloyne, Co. Cork, and in the diocese of the same name.

For centuries the Catholics of Ireland were denied ownership of property, but in the late 1800's they began to acquire some small semblance of ownership. The land in the parish of Cloyne is fairly rich, but it all belonged to the landed gentry, and the native Irish were merely tenants-at-will. (A lease existed but it was not a proper lease as the tenant could be evicted at the will of the landlord.) Thus it was that 100 acres of the Montford Longfield estate in Ballylanders, parish of Cloyne, was divided between four tenants. Maurice Kennealy, the father of the subject of this article, was one of those four tenants-at-will. On this little plot of approx. 25 acres there stood a house, and offices which were valued at £14.5.0. per annum.

Maurice Kennealy married Margaret Cronin, a daughter of one of the co-tenants of the property. The Baptismal Register of Churchtown South lists their children as follows: Michael 28.8.1835; Daniel 23. 2. 1838; Mary 14. 2. 1841; John 29.6.1843 and Martin 17. 12. 1850. It is interesting to note that all the sponsors were either co-tenants with the Kennealy family or at least near neighbours. Martin was educated in the local school of Ballintemple, Churchtown, which at one time had been under the control of a man of the same name Kennealy, but the present family is of the opinion that there was no relationship. Higher education was then confined to the upper classes because of cost. When Blackrock College, Dublin was founded (1860) the President, Fr. Lemond, used a number of stratagems to recruit students for the school. One method was to write to priests and teachers round the country outlining the facilities available. It would seem that young Martin Kennealy heard of the facilities available from his teacher. He applied and was accepted. There is no record of financial arrangements, but it is difficult to visualise his parents being able to contribute towards his expenses, but money would have to be found to convey him by train from Youghal to Cork and thence, on the recently constructed railway line to Dublin.

Martin remained in Blackrock from 1865 to 1869 and nothing is known of visits home. He was an excellent student and soon mastered the intricacies of Latin and Greek. In 1867 Martin was awarded a scholarship to the Catholic University, and in 1870 won a prize for Greek verse there. While attending the University he also acted as a prefect in Blackrock. The young student was sent to Paris to continue his studies and to begin courses for the priesthood. The Franco-Prussian war ended this sojourn and he returned to Ireland, this time to Rockwell, where he read Philosophy. Fluency in languages was a hall-mark of his life, so he had no difficulty in communication when he returned to France to continue his studies in 1872. He was ordained in 1875 and moved to Chevilly, near Paris for his novitiate and was then professed a member of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit. He taught Theology to the students of the congregation in Langonnet, a former Cistercian Abbey in Brittany.

Next we find him labouring on the mission fields of Trinidad, where he found the manner of life of his brothers very distasteful. To his mind they were not exact enough in their observance of the rules and customs. It is interesting that he never made perpetual vows in the congregation, merely renewing his temporary vows as occasion demanded. Soon he asked permission to leave the Congregation of the Holy Spirit and join the Cistercians. His superiors in Paris accused him of being unable to live with his brethren and he, in more than one

strongly worded letter, pointed out that his salvation was all that mattered – “*For me the salvation of my soul takes priority over everything else.*” This blunt outspoken manner of communication was evident all his life.

Abbot Bruno Fitzpatrick accepted him into the community of Mount Melleray 1 April 1883, a short time after his return from Trinidad. He was given the Cistercian habit on 1 July that same year and then took the name of Joseph. Solemn vows were not allowed in the Order and so Fr. Joseph made perpetual simple vows 2 July 1885. At this time Dom Stanislaus White had been serving in Rome as secretary to the Procurator General, representative of the Order in Rome, and on the death of the incumbent was elected by the General Chapter to succeed him. He asked for a secretary from Mount Melleray and Fr. Joseph was chosen and left for Rome 27 July 1889. The Holy See allowed Solemn Vows to be restored to the Order so Fr. Joseph made his vows in the Abbey of Tre Fontane, Rome, the abbot of that monastery, Dom Joachim, being delegated for the occasion.

The Cistercian Order was divided into many congregations at that time and in 1892 Pope Leo XIII invited the congregation of the strict observance to unite. This was accomplished after long negotiations. Dom Stanislaus was not happy with the arrangement, so he resigned as Procurator and retired to the Abbey of Casamari which did not join the union. Fr. Joseph accompanied him and remained there for about a year before returning to Mount Melleray. Here he was soon plunged into the turmoil caused by the antics of Fr. Isidore Mooney, a former priest of the Archdiocese of Armagh who had joined Melleray in 1893. Fr. Isidore who was appointed confessor to the public, was a man of brilliant mind but extremely eccentric. Fr. Joseph’s appointment as confessor in the public church soon had him in dispute with the aforesaid Fr. Isidore, who made all kinds of absurd accusations against him even to the Abbot General. Abbot Carthage, an exceptionally holy man but as was said “*obstinate in his opinions and lacking in pastoral understanding*” sided with Fr. Isidore even to the extent of being forced to resign as Abbot of Mount Melleray.

The situation became unbearable to Fr. Joseph. In a very blunt letter defending himself to the General, he refuted the accusations and asked to be dispensed from his vows as a Cistercian. Through its Abbot visitor, Rome soon realised where the blame lay and refused Fr. Joseph’s request. Before this decision was taken, in a second letter to the Abbot General he asked to be allowed return to Casamari “*where charity was observed*” but that too was refused.

Citeaux, the cradle of the Cistercian Order, was founded in 1098 and monastic life flourished there for centuries, but it had been suppressed at the outbreak of the French Revolution. In 1898 the abandoned monastery was discreetly re-purchased by the Order and an appeal was made to all monasteries of the Order asking for volunteers to form the new community there. Fr. Joseph saw this as God’s solution to his difficulties, and being fluent in French offered himself for the newly established community at Citeaux. He was accepted, joined it in 1903, and made a vow of stability there one year later. In 1911 he was appointed Prior of the monastery and remained in this position until his death in 1927.

Throughout most of his life in Citeaux Fr. Joseph taught Theology to the community, in fact one of them said “he ran most of the courses.” His room was small, and sparsely furnished but had a wealth of books. These were used and quoted at frequent intervals. One of his prized possessions was a copy of “*Mysterium Fidei*” by Fr. De la Talle, S.J., which was the gift of an English Benedictine Abbot. When consulted Fr. Joseph would pick up a book and very quickly open it at a relevant page and then read a passage which would answer the query put to him. Theology was highly regarded by him at all times and among moral theologians he favoured St. Alphonsus de Ligouri. He was the intellectual of the community. Towards the end of his life he suffered from some kind of somnolence and used fall asleep in class. On one such occasion, after his students had difficulty in rousing him, he said “*if this ever happens again tell Fr. Nivard immediately.*” One must assume that Fr. Nivard was the infirmarian.

Life in a busy community was no mere speculative exercise, and Fr. Joseph never spared himself in contributing to the life of the monastery. He was at all times calm and recollected, never allowing anything to disturb his tranquillity. In the refectory one day, Fr. Joseph was presiding as the Abbot was absent, one poor brother, not quite right in his mind, threw all his dishes on the floor. Fr. Joseph quietly took him outside and remained with him until he had calmed down. When Abbot Fabian returned, he immediately packed off this brother to the mental hospital. The old man, finding these new surroundings very much to his liking, refused to return to the monastery ever again.

Fr. Joseph never lost his great love of Mount Melleray and indeed of things Irish in general. Once while on a visit to Melleray in the 1920's he spoke to the community and said that he was still a monk of Mount Melleray. Yes, he was in spirit, though juridically he belonged to the Citeaux community. His family relate that he did not visit his ancestral home on this occasion. His brother travelled forty miles by horse and car to visit him at the abbey. Irish cows and Irish beer got favourable mention from time to time from him. He would say "*Irish beer is the nourishment of the people.*" Only rarely did he get a taste of Citeaux's beer to make a comparison!

What kind of man was Fr. Joseph? He was tall, emaciated with a birthmark on his face, his neck engulfed in a white muffler, somewhat stooped. He began to lose his hair at an early age and so his head was permanently covered with a black cap. He had a continual cough and so his neck was engulfed in a white muffler almost at all times. In the guest house as master of retreatants he was found to be quite pleasant. A guest would soon notice that he was a well educated man with large open views of the world, not the worldly world but rather the world of the church and above all would note his charity towards the neighbour. He was always a great lover of Ireland and its aims. The hunger strike of the Lord Mayor – Terence McSweeney, seemed to embarrass him but he would never say a word of criticism against the British. He would soon change the conversation when questioned on this subject, or say that theology condemns faults against charity even where an entire people is concerned. This was very difficult for some postulants as they arrived fresh from the hatred and strife of war.

In community Fr. Joseph was noted for his personal austerity, confining himself to a bowl of milk for his evening meal, but he never imposed this on others. Br. Charles (94) a monk of Citeaux, speaking in 1998, said that his memory of Fr. Joseph was that of a monk who was a model of regularity and community living, hard on himself but very considerate towards others. He loved his daily Mass and continued with this practice to the very end even though in his last few months he paused for rest on a chair every now and then. Ejaculatory prayer he loved and recommended it to all. As a child in Ireland he would have been reared on devotion to Our Lady, particularly to the Family Rosary, yet his contemporaries say he did not manifest any particular emphasis on this in his life. He never wished to draw attention to himself, and so his devotion to Our Lady would have been unostentatious.

To quote the Abbot of Citeaux, Dom Oliver Quenardel, "*It does seem that Fr. Joseph, a very fine Cistercian, was indeed a notable foundation-stone in the re-establishment of the community of Citeaux. Brother Charles, while still a very young monk, considered him a model monk. Better knowledge of him should certainly be gratifying for the whole Cistercian Family, beginning with the community of Citeaux.*"

In conclusion a note from Fr. Raymond: "*Father Joseph was the worthy Prior of an exceptionally fervent community.*" A final commendation is that of Dom Camillus Claffey, Abbot of Mount St. Joseph, Ros Cré 1944 – 1956 : "Fr. Joseph was worthy of canonisation."

**Fr. Uinseann Ó Maidín, o.c.s.o. Mount Melleray Abbey, Cappoquin.**

## **Holy Trinity Abbey Kilnacrott**

The Abbey of the Most Holy Trinity and St. Norbert which belonged to the Norbertine Community has been sold to **Direction For Our Times – Ireland**. It will continue to be a place of prayer and spiritual help as it has been since 1924. The Norbertines are moving to a smaller building, more suited to their needs and economy, a short distance from the present building.

The Abbey was an ambitious undertaking, planned and built in the 1940's and early 1950's for a community of thirty five when there was a plentiful supply of vocations. During its eighty years it has grown into a fully fledged Abbey with outreaches in Perth, Western Australia and Kilmarnock, Scotland. The Order withdrew from the parish in Kilmarnock in recent years because of a drop in manpower.

From 1924 the Religious house, although not in a built-up area, like other Religious houses throughout the country, became a centre for those in spiritual need of help in times of illness and worries, and this ministry continues to the present time. Daily administration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, daily Masses and Eucharistic Adoration has been and still is a very important part of the ministry. People, young and old, come from a wide area to avail of these.

The Community suffered from the publicity of one of its priests being the first to be publicly accused and imprisoned for Paedophilia. The Community has striven to help and recompense the victims and will continue to look after them.

**Direction For Our Times – Ireland** have signed a contract to purchase the Abbey. Closing is scheduled for 8 December 2008. Their ministry is the Apostolate of the Coming King. Once the purchase is completed their Board of Directors plan to refurbish the buildings as needed and the refurbished Abbey will be renamed **Holy Trinity Centre for Prayer**. All activities at the Centre will be developed around prayer and adoration. Holy Mass, Confession and Eucharistic Adoration will be available to the public. Large events such as Eucharistic Days of Renewal, will be held on a scheduled basis. This Apostolate is undertaken with the permission of the Bishop of Kilmore, Most Rev. Dr. Leo O'Reilly.

The Norbertine Community welcomes 'Direction For Our Times', wish the undertaking every success and are happy to have been invited to continue their ministry in this Apostolate. The European office for Direction For Our Times is at Virginia Road, Bailieboro, Co. Cavan and can be contacted at: T: 042 – 9694947 Email: [dfotireland@yahoo.ie](mailto:dfotireland@yahoo.ie)  
**Kilian Mitchell, O.Praem.**

Fr. Kilian has also compiled an impressive book entitled "**The Missionary Priests and Bishops of the Diocese of Kilmore.**" The blurb reads as follows: 'The Diocese of Kilmore stretches from Kilmaimhamwood in Co. Meath northwest to the sea at Tullaghan, Co. Leitrim, roughly the territory of the ancient kingdom of Breifne. It includes practically all of the counties of Cavan and Leitrim and parts of counties Fermanagh and Meath and one parish in Co. Sligo. I am happy to record the names of 1,250 priests from this rural diocese for whom no journey was too far to heed the call of the emigrant and the convict, or later still the needs of the unchristianised world. They came from every parish in the diocese and contributed to the establishment of the Church in USA, Australia, Africa, England and Scotland.

In his foreword to the book Bishop Leo O'Reilly acclaimed Fr. Mitchell's book as a piece of original research. 'For more than ten years he has been traversing the length and breadth of the diocese, listing the names of all those courageous priests, born in the diocese, who have carried the message of the Gospel to the ends of the earth. I congratulate and thank Father Mitchell on his valuable contribution to the history of the diocese. It will be welcomed particularly by the families of the 1,250 priests whose names are recorded. I am happy to recommend this book to all Kilmore people at home and abroad as a record of the finest hour in our history.'

**Leo O'Reilly, Bishop of Kilmore.**

## Annals – Reading the Future of Our Past

For this article I make bold to quote from Sr. Margaret MacCurtain's book "Ariadne's Thread", as Sr. Margaret is a renowned historian who appreciates the unique value of the archives of religious congregations for researchers today. I quote "*All convents are obliged by ecclesiastical law to appoint an annalist who may also be the archivist of the community. Many communities have an unofficial or even a published history of their convent. Convent annals are mainly a chronology of the main events that occur in the life of that community; they also chronicle personal details of the Sisters and their relatives, benefactors, distinguished or unusual visitors to the convent. Where a convent is responsible for the management and staffing of schools, asylums, custodial institutes, hospitals, hostels and halls of residence, occasionally letters and less formal observations find their way into convent archives.*"

That quotation emphasises for us the importance of congregational annals as each generation enfleshes anew the charism as it is lived out and there should be a record of the living, if only to edify and more importantly – to interest and to maintain the bonds of love in the congregation. History has a meaning that matters for us. If we do not treasure our history, we are like leaves that say they have nothing to do with the tree – but can you have leaves without a tree? How many who write annals are convinced that they are tracing the passage of Christ through our religious houses? There is a theology of narrative in annals. We write in faithfulness to those who have gone before us, and who transmitted the charism to us. Even if the religious who will follow us are few and far between, - and we never know what the future may hold – we know that there are lots of people – students of history etc who will be only too glad to have our histories to help with research.

The Mercy Sisters had Annals Days at the end of September. All who attended were loud in praise of all the helps they received at those sessions. Input was enlightened by examples from written annals which illustrated events from the distant and the recent past and the following two interesting examples of the benefit of Annals were cited. The curator of the Knock Museum had told one of the Sisters that when a researcher was writing a life of Archdeacon Kavanagh, the only record of his ministry as a priest in Westport was obtained from the Convent annals there. The other example concerned the finding of the Ardagh Chalice in County Limerick in 1868. Dr. Philip McEvansoneya is presently researching early Irish silver in Trinity College and he found a reference to the Limerick Convent Annals which made him more curious to read the originals. After a lot of searching through boxes etc the original annals were found and an important reference which was omitted by a copyist somewhere, proved of invaluable assistance to him.

A great Anglican historian said "A church which has lost its past has lost its way." So preservation of the present through written annals is a sign and product of an enlightened society. We rely on previous generations who preserved our heritage, and handed on a rich legacy for our use and enjoyment. Speaking of enjoyment the above reference sent me back to peruse the annals of Westport Convent, (which closed last June) and there I found the following rather droll entry for 14 May 1860 – Feast of the Purity of the B.V.M.:

*Sr. Ellen Cox joined the community. The family then resided on The Mall and the daughters – Ellen and Mary were no less remarkable for their beauty than for their*

*bashfulness and retiring disposition. An amorous gentleman who serenaded in hope of getting a glimpse of the fair sisters, on one occasion, casting prudence to the winds, cried out "Fire, Fire!" Windows were thrown open and the terrified ladies screamed: "Where, Where?" The gentleman, nothing daunted, made a profound bow and clasping his hands over his heart replied: "Here, Here." It was probably this incident which hastened Ellen's entrance, and some years later Mary joined the Mercy community in Limerick.*

Entries such as that can raise a smile even at the remove of 140 years. It is a far cry from some of the telegraphic entries we sometimes receive, e.g. 'Voting in the referendum today.' Reading that entry a few months later in the year I had to search my brain as to what the particular referendum was about, so what enlightenment would a future historian gather from it? I am of the opinion that there is a class of people who should not write Annals. They are those who do not wish to impart any information, to anybody for whatever reason, but sadly for reasons of their own they volunteer to write. They must be adherents of Thomas Carlyle who said "*Happy the people whose annals are blank in the history books.*" Unlike them, we should all take to heart the advice of whoever said: "*Write it down, the worst ink survives the best memory.*"

It has been said of common sense that it is not as common as one might think. We all have different powers of perception, recall and interpretation. We all recount stories after our own fashion. If three individuals witnessed an accident, there would be three different accounts of it. That is why court cases cost time and money in proving something beyond "reasonable doubt." In recent times we know of books and articles written by people who spent time in institutions. Their writings are presented very persuasively as telling the truth about the past, while others of their contemporaries do not recognise the reality of that past. That in itself proves the necessity of keeping records, for without evidence nothing makes sense – common or otherwise.

So if your congregational annals are preserved – rescue them, add to them as each year goes by. Ensure that they are kept in a suitable conditions and if you are doing the laudable work of annalist, rest assured that you are performing a worthwhile service for your congregation in the present and your work will be a veritable goldmine for the future. To end this effort I refer to Deuteronomy: IV. 9. "*Take care and be on your guard not to forget the things which your eyes have seen, nor let them slip from memory as long as you live.*"

Teresa D.

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#### **Book Review:**

#### **Soupers and Jumpers:**

**"The Protestant Missions in Connemara 1848 – 1937" by Miriam Moffitt.**

Published by Nonsuch Publishing, 73 Lower Leeson Street, Dublin 2.

This worthy publication received support from the Heritage Council under the 2008 Grant Scheme. It chronicles the establishment of Protestant Missions in Connemara during a crucial time in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It is beautifully produced, carefully researched and draws upon a wealth of archival sources. It details the origin and impact of the Mission in Connemara from its first effort near Oughterard in 1846 to the death of its last Scripture Reader in 1937. There is much to recommend in this book as its author had access to the entire archive of the Irish Church Missions and history is blended with wider issues of poverty and famine. Statistics are plentiful and should prove of interest to people, particularly students of family history from the region. It surely deserves a wide readership



## Treasures Lost And Found

The Earl Of Dunraven, speaking to the Fellows of the Royal Irish Academy on 22 February 1869, described an archeological finding as "*This magnificent cup, which combines classical beauty of form with the most exquisite examples of almost every variety of Celtic ornamentation.*" He was of course speaking of the Ardagh Chalice, which had been unearthed a short time previously by the young son of Mrs Quinn, while he was digging potatoes in their tenant farm, part of an estate near the little known village of Ardagh in west Limerick. That village soon became known throughout Ireland and beyond, especially when the Gaelic Athletic Association chose the chalice as the prototype for the Sam Maguire Cup.

The young man felt his spade strike something metallic, so he carefully then cleared the earth and first produced a long pin of a brooch and afterwards the silver cup dented by the thrust of his spade. The Quinn farm was situated on lands which in 1858, Helena Heffernan had settled on the Sisters of Mercy, Limerick. The find was eventually taken to the Limerick Convent and studied by Rev. Dr. Butler, Bishop of Limerick and Lord Dunraven, a keen student of archaeology. The items were then sent to the Royal Irish Academy in Dublin for further examination. They were carefully cleaned and repaired, and later restored to Dr. Butler, who finally acquired them for the sum of £50 from Mrs Quinn on 21 June 1871. In 1873 the British Treasury asked for the articles in accordance with the terms of Treasure Trove regulations. Dr. Butler replied that he had been told that the metal was not silver but an alloy of tin and silver. but he agreed to have it assayed. This was done by Donegan, watchmaker of Dame Street, Dublin who determined the material to be silver but of inferior quality. In fact it is an amalgam of gold, silver and copper.

Then about 1980, an Englishman and his son, who were using a metal detector, unearthed another wonderful find in Derrynaflann, in the parish of Kilaunaule,

Co. Tipperary. Many local people at the time had been aware of the tradition of buried treasure in that locality, but they were content to leave it undisturbed.

In the ACAI Newsletter, No. 29. 2003, Dr. A.J. Claffey of Tuam gave an account of the "*Corpus Missal*" one of the treasures of the Bodleian Library in Oxford. Little is known of its provenance in Oxford, beyond the fact that it was discovered in an Irish bog. It is a small bulky volume of 212 folios in vellum measuring about 17cm x 12cm and its medieval leather satchel also survives.

Thoughts such as these come to mind when we are reminded of the famous find by Mr. Eddie Fogarty, who was operating a JCB machine in Fadden More bogland in Co. Offaly, near the Tipperary border a few years ago and he came on the wonderful find of a Psalter which must have lain there for centuries. Luckily that young man was alert and aware of his responsibilities and contacted the National Museum. Dr. Pat Wallace said recently in a radio interview that he considers that find the most exciting of his career as curator of the museum.

Bogs and related places have long histories – some even going back to the Druids of old. One likely theory is that chalices and other sacred vessels were hidden or buried to preserve them from marauding Vikings or other invaders. Perhaps those who fled in fear, buried their treasures in the hope of returning some fine day when they hoped to recover and reclaim their treasures. Alas! those people never returned and it was left to people of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries to unearth such treasures.

It behoves us all to be careful and perhaps we should recall Christ's words about the treasure hidden in a field, when we read of such remarkable finds: "*The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field which someone has found; he hides it again, goes off happy, sells everything he owns and buys it.*" (Matthew 13: 44–45) J.B.

(Many thanks to **Angela Bugler R.S.M**)

## Trócaire Dé agus Dánta Eile

Maria Goretti Ní Fhéinne

Sr. Maria Goretti Feeney was just 52 years of age when she fell victim to Parkinson's disease. At the time the consultant advised her that it was progressive and not to read up about it. That advice however, fell on deaf ears, as all through her life she was an avid reader and possessed a keen curiosity. Very soon she had learned all that was to be known about her condition and knew when her dyskinesia became evident that she should retire from school. She was a native of Castlegar, a village renowned for hurling and Fenian traditions, just beside the Galway race-course. The Irish language was used a lot in her home and was certainly the medium in her Primary School sa Caisleán Gearr. Most of her own teaching career was spent in Spiddal which she loved – the people, their culture, their language of course, their stories, the sea and its beauty. So Gaeilge and anything related to it occupied a primary place in her life.

For a number of years after retirement she served as Parish Sister. All the time her illness progressed. She went to the Radcliffe Memorial Hospital in Oxford for two separate operations - a Pallidotomy and Deep Brain Stimulation. These enabled her to have a fairly independent existence but eventually she moved to a Nursing Home. Before she went there she admitted: *"The days are long and the nights are longer, and I still keep hoping for a cure. I don't know what the future holds, because the past is history and the future is mystery. The present is all I've got."* She has confounded members of the medical profession as she must be the longest living patient who has battled with this disease for so many years. She was determined to use the present beneficially, so she took up art, and against all odds she tatted pictures for her nieces and nephews weddings. She makes Christmas cards for the missions. All these efforts are not perfect, but they are products of determination and tenacity.

Over the years she had written a number of poems when 'féith na scríobhnóireachta' struck her. Some years ago Fr. Tom Russell O.F.M. advised her to get them published. He must have contacted publishers in Dublin, but it was almost completely forgotten when they contacted recently to say the book was ready. At this stage she would not be able to travel so the launch will happen in her beloved Spiddal on Friday 14 November. There are 21 poems in the little book. They are simple but profound and range through all of life's experiences. Here I quote one which is particularly suitable for this time of year.

### Machnamh

Trathnóna fomhair  
im'aonar  
Sheas mé i mbéal na reilige  
ar an gcnoc ag macnamh.  
Chonaic mé duilleoga ag titim  
ceann ar cheann,  
ag rothlú, ag casadh, ag luascadh  
go grástúil agus go modhúil  
agus fios maith acu cá raibh a dtriall.  
Smaoinigh mé ar mo thuras féin  
go dtí Cathair na nGrást.  
An mbeidh sé chomh mín réidh le  
turas na nduilleog?

An mbeidh Dia liom?  
An sífidh Sé amach a lamh  
le me a stiúradh slán abhaile?  
An bhágfaidh mé aon rud fiúntach don  
ghlúin atá le teacht?  
Tháinig an freagra chugam i leoithne  
bheag gaoithe –  
Sáraíonn grá Dé drabhlás, olc is saint.  
Sin a chuala mé  
agus mé i mbéal na reilige  
liom féin i m'aonar  
i gciúnas an trathnóna.

## Lucan Presentation Convent

On Sunday 12 October last the priests and people of the parish of Lucan welcomed Bishop Field and the Presentation Sisters for the blessing of the refurbished Nuns Chapel. I quote from the introduction in the Newsletter by Fr. Joe Coyne, P.P. He said *"This occasion provides an opportunity for the people to meet again Sisters they have known over the years, and who contributed enormously to life in Lucan. It is fitting that the Sisters gather in the newly furbished room where they 'attended' Mass celebrated on the nearby high altar of St. Mary's. Think of the thousands of Masses attended and the countless hours spent in prayer! The prayer and meditation groups using the room now are surely treading on 'holy ground.' The Convent is now the Mission House. One day you can meet a Sister back from Pakistan for a break, and the next day have a conversation with a Sister working in Zimbabwe. The missionary spirit of Nano Nagle still flourishes."*

The following is the account from the Presentation Annals of the Lucan foundation.

The Presentation Convent, Lucan, was opened on the 19 March 1867 and was the thirty-second house established in Ireland since the foundation of the Order by Nano Nagle, in Cork ninety years before. The circumstances under which it was opened were unusual. Ten years earlier Captain Robert La Touche Colthurst and his brother Major (afterwards Colonel) David Colthurst of the family of Vesey Colthurst of Lucan House who owned nearly all the land in Lucan at the time became converts to Catholicism quite independent of each other. When serving during the Crimean War, they witnessed the skill, devotion and self-sacrifice of the Mercy Nuns, some Irish, others English – who at the wish of Bishop Ullathorne went out to nurse the poor wounded soldiers, who were suffering not only from their battle wounds, but from the bitter cold of this region. They were edified also by the resignation of the Catholic soldiers in the face of death.

During his frequent visits to the family mansion in Lucan Captain Colthurst observed the want existing in the neighbourhood of proper facilities for the education of the children of the poor. He had ample means and part of his fortune he resolved to devote to the erection of a Convent and school where God's little ones might receive a good Catholic education. Death however snatched him away before he had an opportunity of putting his good resolution into effect. He bequeathed, however, a sum of £2,000 for the fulfilment of his design. He requested that his body should be conveyed from London, where he died in 1864 at the age of 34 years, and interred in the village graveyard attached to St. Mary's Church at Lucan, in order that 'he might not be forgotten in the prayers of the poor', and furthermore, that naught but a plain black cross should be erected over his grave.

After Captain Colthurst's death, his brother, Major Colthurst hastened to fulfil his brother's pious intention, which was also his own. Two acres of land adjoining the Church in Lucan was chosen as a suitable site for the Convent. Mr James Quigley, the landlord, finding that the ground was wanted for a Convent, generously offered the two acres as a free gift, rent free for ever. Soon the work of building began. Major Colthurst added whatever the Convent and school cost, over and above, out of his own resources. He performed many generous acts, and allowed the Foundress a small income towards the expenses. He left a sum of £1,000 to the Convent at his death. It was invested in the name of the Archbishop and three Diocesan priests.

Meanwhile, Mother Magdalen Kirwan, Superioress of the Sisters of Mercy, Bagott St. was applied to for Sisters to take charge of the new Convent. The Colthursts preferred that Order, that the poor might have the benefit of visits to their homes by the Sisters, as well as good schools for their children. Before giving an answer Mother Kirwan visited Lucan to see for herself if the place would suit her Order. She declined to take up the foundation, as the village was too small, and the dwellings of the poor were too scattered for Visitation to their houses, and she was unwilling to take charge of the Church. Mercy nuns from Goldenbridge came and stayed for a while but found it was not profitable.

Major, now Colonel, Colthurst being over with his regiment in February, saw the newly built Convent and heard that the Sisters of Mercy had not accepted the invitation to come to Lucan. He expressed himself quite pleased and satisfied with the proposal of V. Rev. John Moore, Parish Priest of Clondalkin, Lucan and Palmerstown, that the Presentation Nuns of Clondalkin be invited to come instead.

\*(The Vesey Colthursts were descendants of Patrick Sarsfield to whom Lucan House was granted by James II after the Treaty of Limerick.)

**Frances Crowe PVBM.**

*Take down your lantern from its niche and go out!  
The need calls loudly in the winding lanes and you must seek Christ there.  
Your pilgrim's heart shall urge you still one pace beyond  
And love shall be your lantern flame*

(The Life of Nano Nagle).



### **Dates for your Diary**

Saturday 4 April 2009

Visit to the historic town of Drogheda

Attractions include the Millmount Museum, Highlanes Art Gallery and St. Patrick's Church, where the head of St. Oliver Plunkett is venerated.

Saturday 9 May 2009

AGM in All Hallows College, Drumcondra, Dublin.

Details of both events will be sent later.

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## The Trip to Galway

The 2007 Spring outing of the Association of Church Archivists of Ireland was held on Saturday 24 March 2007 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 of the Sisters of Mercy, Western Province, 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, whose name I did not catch) 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

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). The formation of Mercy Ireland in July 1994, and of the Western Province in 1995, has created opportunities for large-scale, professional archive management, as this visit demonstrated. 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

*Apologies to Jacinta who was so very willing to write this article, and who accomplished it so well. Sadly I had not calculated on its present length and had only left one page for it. However, I do think it merits a full reproduction, so I am inserting it in its entirety here. Editor.*

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