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ASSOCIATION OF CHURCH ARCHIVISTS IRELAND

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Gentle Reader

The Editor has been pursuing me for another word from the Chair. Greetings to all of you from the committee. We had a meeting recently and were happy to record the very satisfactory reports received about the success of the Summer Course. We have assembled a "Workshop Day" for the Association to take place in February 2010. It will be held in Clonliffe College. It is still being 'firmed up' so to speak, so you will hear more of this from Sr. Marie O'Leary, the Hon. Secretary in due time.

We were delighted to read in the September issue of the Newsletter of the *Irish Society for Archives* the report of the ACAI Summer Course by Brigid Cleham. Congratulations to Brigid on a detailed and excellent record of the week's training course.

In the same Newsletter, the building of new Archive Repository for PRONI is noted. It will be a state of the art building in what was formerly the Harland & Wolff shipbuilders' site. PRONI will be able to transform the breadth of their existing services and introduce new processes and procedures including more digitised material, on-line databases and multifunctional space for public use. We offer them our sincere wishes for every success in the onerous task of moving 40 kilometres of material to the new site. They hope to be installed by 2011. This is an Archive that the Association might keep on the Agenda for a visit later.

Another archive of interest has come to our attention, that of Knock, Co. Mayo, where a new archival building was commissioned and archivally furnished. The documents have been accessioned by a professional contract archivist and contain among them a small collection of a number of letters from 'the nun of Kenmare', Sr. Frances Clare Cusack; the history of the village of Knock at the time of the Apparition written by a local man; the monies which had been paid to Harry Clarke for two stained glass windows and to Sarah Purser for the Rose window in the church. Records of other Building projects are also listed and boxed, e.g. the building of Knock Airport fifty years ago, which many will remember and the controversies that surrounded the project.

If you want a good book to give as a Christmas present, or perhaps to read yourself, think about buying "The Lives of Eliza Lynch" by Michael Lillis and Ronan Fanning, published by Gill & Macmillan, 2009. It is the story of an amazing woman, now remembered as a national heroine in Paraguay. She was from Cork of course!

Very best wishes to all;

Dominique Horgan op.

Quaker Faith and Practice

Quakers, over the three and a half centuries of their existence, have regarded themselves as the closest followers of the ideals of Jesus Christ. In the eyes of the larger Christian denominations they would be seen to make a fair bid to be the most heretical group, if not totally outside the fold.

In England in the 17th century there was a ferment of religious thinking. Besides the theological and savage physical fighting between Catholic and Protestant, a great many individuals were wrestling with their consciences and trying to make sense of the spiritual traditions that surrounded them. Amongst these people was George Fox who, after years of mental turmoil and endless disappointment when he sought advice from many members of the clergy, had a visionary experience in which he heard the words "*There is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition.*" This led him to the belief that a direct approach to God, without the intervention of a priest, was the way forward.

Many other like-minded people at the time were searching for a more meaningful religious life and went under the general description of 'Seekers'. Fox became a leader amongst them. His charisma led to a large following and they formed a Society of Friends which expanded under his leadership. In time it would change its name to 'Religious Society of Friends' and this remains the official title, but the nickname 'Quakers' quickly became widely used and universally accepted. While Fox's powerful personality and faith meant that he did indeed lead the Society, equality of all and the priesthood of all believers, both men and women, was an essential feature. In the absence of priests, business meetings became the basis of the administration of the new denomination and their Minutes became an essential part of the structure. As a result these minutes, and other archival material, were preserved meticulously and Quaker archives contain a truly remarkable collection of records.

At an early stage in the development of Quakerism William Edmundson, a former Cromwellian soldier turned pacifist, settled in Ireland. With some like-minded people he established the first Quaker Meeting in Lurgan in 1654 and the movement spread over the country in the course of the next fifty years.

A central tenet of Quakerism is, to paraphrase the words of George Fox 'to walk cheerfully over the world, answering to that of God in every person'. This requirement led quickly to pacifism and an unbroken commitment to peaceful resolution of all differences. It also demanded integrity from all. Quakers refused to take an oath because they believed that the words of Jesus 'Let your yea be yea and your nay be nay' implied truth at all times and that swearing an oath could not add to any person's veracity.

These strictures led to persecution and frequent imprisonment in the early decades. They may perhaps go some way to explain why Quakers remained a minority denomination, albeit with thousands of 'convinced' followers.

For many generations, Quakers were something of an inward-looking and exclusive group, though naturally having business dealings with people of all religions. Their

integrity was not without material reward and Quaker businesses flourished. Such Quaker establishments and Barclay's and Lloyd's banks, Cadbury's chocolate and Jacob's biscuits (established by a Waterford family) was a tribute to their trustworthiness. Quakers set up schools, first to teach their own young people but later for pupils of all backgrounds. In the 19th century they were to the forefront of such ideals as the anti-slavery movement and the contribution of Quakers to famine relief in Ireland was truly remarkable.

In the twentieth century Quakers in general became less rigid and more open to people of other persuasions than previously. The desire for improvement of the world remains strong and is manifested in very effective, though low-key, peace initiatives, in encouraging prison reform, alleviating poverty, promoting alternatives to violence and many other fields. But with a membership of only 1,500 in Ireland, the scale of operation is small. These interests have continued unabated into the 21st century and a recent incursion has been made into environmental matters.

The centre of Quaker life is the Meeting for Worship which takes place on Sunday mornings in Meeting Houses or, for smaller groups, in homes or available public rooms. The Meeting begins at a set time and lasts for about an hour. The essential feature is quiet contemplation. The meeting begins when the first person enters the room and sits down and ends with handshakes around the room. Any person present who feels that he or she is prompted to do so by the Holy Spirit is free to share their thoughts with the meeting – but there is a convention that such 'ministry' should be brief because the essence of Quaker Sunday worship is silence.

While Quakerism is a Christian institution and the great majority of Quakers hold a traditional view of the centrality of the Gospels and the teaching of Jesus Christ, an essential is that all are free to find their own belief. The Sunday Meetings for worship are public occasions, welcoming people of all faiths – or of none. There are a great many Quaker theological writings and an anthology of these is currently being published in book form, the latest in a succession of such volumes. There are also rules for procedure and a central office. Quaker business meetings are conducted in the spirit for meetings for worship and the ideal is that all decisions reflect the will of God. An essential feature is that decisions are made by consensus of those present and a vote is never taken.

No person can tell a Quaker what is Right or what is The Truth. Such acceptance that, while many *believe* and may hold firmly to their own interpretation, nobody actually *knows* the nature of the divine. Is a source of great strength and comfort to members of the Religious Society of Friends.

Details of the structure and contact points for the religious Society of Friends in Ireland, together with a steadily growing selection of writings by Irish Quakers, are available at www.quakers.ie.

Christopher Moriarty



ACAI Summer Course 2009

The Association of Church Archivists' Ireland summer course was held at Holy Cross College, Clonliffe Road, Drumcondra from 29 June to 3 July 2009. Twenty persons attended mainly representatives of religious congregations. On the first morning we were welcomed by Dominique Horgan, the Association's Chairperson and the course began with a lecture on the management of archives by Kerry Holland from the UCD School of History and Archives. Kerry outlined the aims of an archive service – namely the acquisition of archives and then the establishment of physical and intellectual control over them so that they can be made available for use by internal and external researchers. She explained why archives should be preserved and the role of an archivist within an institution, especially the importance of having organisational authority to carry out the functions of an archivist.

Marianne Cosgrave, Congregational Archivist, Sisters of Mercy, covered The Pastoral Function of Church Archives as outlined in the circular letter from the Pontifical Commission for the Cultural Heritage of the Church, dated 2 February 1997. There has always been recognition of archives as part of the historical memory of the Church but they are now not just seen as static objects, but something that can be utilised to promote the mission of the Church. Marianne said that the realisation of the importance of the preservation of records is something that has been lacking in Ireland in past generations, but that now there are legal, civil, canonical and cultural reasons guarding the preservation of archives. She stressed the importance of archivists working with administrators to foster a feeling of the value of archives.

Ellen Murphy, Senior Archivist at the Dublin City archives, took us through the challenges in providing a reader service for users of archives. She based her talk on her experience as an archivist working in the Dublin City Archives, where there is a large reading room, a number of staff members and a purpose built archive in contrast to her work in a smaller archive where the reading room was open one day a week and storage was off site. Ellen spoke about all the aspects that would need to be considered in the setting up of a reader service – the physical structure of the reading room including disabled access, hours of opening, registration procedures, document retrieval procedures, document handling procedures, reprographic services and outreach activities.

The first day ended with a visit to the Dublin Diocesan Archives' new premises situated in the old Seminary Library at Holy Cross College. Noelle Dowling outlined the changes made to the room so that it was secure for the storage of archives. She had on display various documents, photographs and volumes which she used to demonstrate some of the physical problems encountered in the preservation of archives. The new archive was very impressive with its spacious room and smooth running mobile shelving which was the envy of a number of viewers!

The rest of the week was filled with interesting and informative lectures. Kerry continued each day to give us direction in relation to the management of archives. She took us through the various key tasks involved in collection management – acquisition, appraisal, accessioning, cataloguing, arrangement and coding. The final goal is the production of a descriptive list or catalogue, a tangible body of evidence,

which gives the archivist physical and intellectual control over the collection and allows researchers access when appropriate. Kerry recommended the use of ISAD(G) standards or Irish Guidelines for Archival Description when compiling catalogues. Catalogues can then be uploading on to Web portals and the fact that they have been compiled to a common standard facilitates 'interoperability'. Interoperability, a new word in archive jargon, is defined in the Irish Guidelines as "the ability of different systems to use and exchange information through a shared format. Standards facilitate interoperability."

Marie Stuart gave us a lively introduction to Oral Archives. She spoke about how the human voice can give quality and depth to an event or story which would not be apparent in the written word. She emphasised that it is important to focus on the purpose of the recording, to be well prepared in advance and to have policies in place with regard to release. Tom Quinlan from the National Archives brought the rather dry subject of records management to life. Records management is a discipline that has only developed in the last 50 years with the explosion in the volume of records being produced and with the growth of duplication. He illustrated his talk with references to various questions that have arisen in his many years of working in association with civil servants in the management and preservation of records. Fr. Ciarán O'Carroll, author of *Paul Cardinal Cullen: Portrait of a Practical Nationalist* (Veritas, 2008), concluded our second day with an entertaining talk on religious archives and the historian. His perspective was slightly different from that of the archivist. He spoke of the challenges facing historians who wish to access religious archives, for example many of the Vatican archives are in Latin or Italian and many archives are kept in 'unwelcoming' accommodation such as attics or basements. He spoke of the importance of catalogues and of using the original document and of the jigsaw of piecing together information from different collections, possibly located in different countries, to give the full picture.

Zoe Reid, Conservator at the National Archives, took us through the basics of record conservation. The quality of paper has deteriorated since the 1840's when wood pulp began to replace cotton and linen as its main constituent. As paper is very susceptible to fluctuations in humidity and temperature the importance of a stable clean environment was highlighted. Good air circulation, metal shelving and making surrogates when appropriate were all recommended. Documents could be preserved in house by the removal of metal clips, staples etc and basic cleaning, followed by storage in archival folders and boxes. Zoe's message was "*If it isn't damaged preserve it, if it is damaged conserve it.*" She used images from the National archives collections to illustrate her talk.

Marianne Cosgrave's second lecture was entitled "Access to Church Archives". Nowadays citizens have a civil right to access public records usually after a period of 30 years. The rights of the individual in this context are now balanced by the provisions of the Freedom of Information and Data Protection Acts. Church archives are private records and Marianne stressed the importance of religious organisations having an access policy with regard to their archives. This should be drafted with the involvement of the archivist, should reflect archival best practice and should always be sanctioned at the highest level within an organisation. It should have a

predisposition towards openness while protecting the rights of the individuals by withholding access to sensitive material.

The whole group was impressed by our visit to the new archive of the Christian Brothers in Griffith Avenue. Michelle Cooney, the archivist there, showed us around their fine new purpose built premises which contains reading and processing rooms, three store rooms and an air conditioned photograph storage room. The store rooms were built into the side of a small hill and the temperature and humidity is maintained by the building itself, very environmentally friendly! Sophisticated fire and water controls were installed and a large amount of mobile and static shelving.

On Thursday morning Pat Reidy opened our eyes to the many aspects of electronic records' management. An electronic records' management systems computer programme should be used to track and store records and to provide the organisation with structure, security, consistency and control over the information assets in the organisation. Some of Pat's statistics with regard to legal cases taken about data breaches, particularly in the USA, were quite scary! A number of times he reiterated the importance of having proper policies, procedures and practices within Information Technology systems to protect both the organisation and its staff from inadvertent release of information.

Our final day began with a stimulating lecture on film archives and the work of the Irish Film Institute from Sunniva O'Flynn. She informed us as to the background and establishment of the archives, its holdings and storage facilities and strongly encouraged anyone who found films in their care to deposit them in the Film Archive as they have the most ideal storage facilities for long term preservation. She told us about the different sizes of film reel and the dates they covered and the dangers of nitrate stock in any 35mm film pre 1952. At the conclusion of her talk Sunniva showed us some clips from the film archives, including a number from films made by priests who often documented their local community or places they visited.

Penny Woods, Russell Library Librarian, NUI, Maynooth, spoke to us about the care of books, particularly those pre 1840. She took us through the various stages of sorting a collection, making minor remedial repairs and taking essential details of author, title, place of publication and date. She also spoke about the importance of provenance and tracing provenance, for example many books in the Maynooth library came from religious houses on the Continent. We were given a very good grounding in the history of printing and the growth of Catholic printing in Ireland especially after the Catholic Relief Act of 1829. The first Irish Catholic Directory was produced in 1836.

Sincere thanks are due to Sister Marie O'Leary and the committee of ACAI for organising such an interesting, diverse and informative week long course and to Noelle, Dublin Diocesan archivist, for looking after all our needs. Thank you all very much.

**Brigid Clesham, Archivist & Researcher,
Landed Estates Database Project (www.landedestates.ie)
Moore Institute, NUI, Galway.**

A Melancholy Truth The Travels and Travails of Fr. Charles Bourke

It is a truism that Catholicism has been a major influence in shaping the social landscape of Ireland. Yet the history of this experience remains inadequately recorded. Hugh Fenning, the Dominican priest and historian has written that diocesan histories are the second building blocks of the religious history of the country'. Until our twenty six dioceses provide their histories, no definite synthesis of the story of Irish Catholicism can emerge.

Some diocesan histories exist. For the most part they were written in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, a kind of golden age for priest historians. The study of local history was a leisure-time pursuit for priests before they discovered golf. These volumes are now difficult to obtain, their rarity reflected in the high prices they command in antiquarian book shops.

Older diocesan histories require up-dating in light of modern research. Often they are written in a hieroglyphical tone which also limits their value. Bishops and priests are generally presented as paragons of virtue. Awkward facts are either obscured or excluded. A flavour of the tone is conveyed in a *Western People* report which described the then Bishop of Killala, Dr. Naughton as 'the most beloved Bishop who has ever had *the charge of this ancient diocese*'. He merited this syrupy adulation merely because he had authorised the celebration of an extra Mass in the cathedral.

One is reminded of Ambrose Bierce's definition of a saint – 'a dead sinner revised and edited.'

In recent years three volume histories of the dioceses of Killaloe and Achonry have been published. The late Ignatius Murphy and Liam Swords, respectively deserve credit for their work. These volumes set the standard by which future diocesan histories will be judged. They evoke the religious experience not just of priests and bishops, but the entire Catholic community. They are well researched, comprehensive in detail and judicious in tone.

For the past few years Fr. Brendan Hoban has been working on a history of the diocese of Killala. The first fruits of his labours, *A Melancholy Truth, The Travels and Travails of Fr. Charles Bourke 1765-1820* has just been published. In this book he painstakingly pieces together the story of a mercurial priest who had an unusual career.

Apart from giving substance to one who had until now been a shadowy figure, the book is notable for its insight into life in the diocese of Killala as it emerged from the penal days. Killala, a small diocese of twenty two parishes, from Ballycroy in Mayo to Skreen in Sligo, was in the 18th century remote and impoverished. In winter time some parts of it were inaccessible. Mary Delany, whose gregarious letters vividly illuminate the opulent world of ascendancy Ireland, claimed she 'never saw a greater appearance of misery' than in the village of Killala. It made her heart ache, though not for long. John Brett, who served as Bishop of Killala in the 1730's, did not find it a comfortable billet. He felt he had been consigned to a 'western Siberia'. Dominic Bellew, the diocese's longest serving bishop in the 18th century, spent most of his episcopate seeking a transfer to more prosperous pastures. Before his appointment to Killala he had been parish priest of Dundalk. During his lengthy incarceration in the marshes of Mayo, he ruefully reflected it was worth 'five Killalas'. Shades of Dean Swift who, on reluctantly accepting the post of Dean of St. Patrick's Cathedral, mused his fate could have been worse – it could have been Killala.

It was into this world that Charles Bourke was born in 1765 in Ballycastle. He belonged to a comfortable family who could afford to educate him. By the mid 1780's he had started his studies for the priesthood at the Irish College at Salamanca in Spain. Here his penchant for controversy asserted itself. He was one of a group of students who protested to the King of Spain and the Irish bishops about the draconian regime in the seminary.

Ordained in 1792, he opted not to return to his native diocese, but to join a Spanish mission to Louisiana where he became the first parish priest of Baton Rouge. He made a significant contribution to the organisation of the parish. However, he got into trouble with the bishop after he was involved in an altercation following an alcohol fuelled Christmas dinner in 1796. As a result he thought it better to return to Ireland where he worked in the diocese of Killala for ten years. In 1811, desirous of more adventurous travel, and without the permission of his bishop, he joined Sir Thomas Selkirk's expedition as chaplain to a proposed colony of Irish Catholics and Scottish Presbyterians in what is now Manitoba, Minnesota and North Dakota. Quarrelsome and addicted to alcohol, he was found unsuitable for the post and sent home before the expedition reached its destination.

On his return to the diocese of Killala he and others opposed the appointment of Tuam priest, Peter Waldron, as bishop. Later he excoriated the administration of Waldron in a pamphlet. Hoban concludes that he may have finished his career as a Church of Ireland clergyman.

Historians are detectives of the past. In this book Brendan Hoban proves himself an able sleuth. No doubt we can look forward to further volumes on quirky clerics from his prolific pen.

Kevin Hegarty, Carne, Belmullet, Co. Mayo.

This review was first published in The Furrow, April 2008. Permission to use it here has been graciously given by Fr. Brendan Hoban, Fr. Kevin Hegarty and The Editor of The Furrow.



Recessionary Reminder

Now that the R word has become part of everyday life, people will readily understand why in July 1941 when 'Emergency' was an 'in' word in Ireland, a certain Bishop sent a letter to the convents in his jurisdiction with the following directive:

"As supplies are running very short and cannot be renewed owing to the war, it has become absolutely necessary to make provision for all contingencies. I shall be grateful if you kindly see that the regulations given below are carried out until further notice.

1. *.For all low masses, two and only two candles are to be lighted.*
2. *For solemn Benediction of the Most Holy Sacrament and for Exposition, twelve candles are to be lighted, but not more than twelve.*
3. *Exposition of the Most Holy Sacrament is allowed for the present only on the 17 March, Corpus Christi and 8 December.*
4. *No votive light of any kind is to be kept burning except the lamp before the tabernacle in which the Blessed Sacrament is reserved*

Nano Nagle's Ursuline Friends

The Presentation Sisters are this year hosting celebrations to mark the 225th anniversary of the death of Nano Nagle which took place on the 25 April 1784. Minister Eamon Ó Cuiv opened the Heritage Room in Ballygriffin, near Mallow on that date this year. A wonderful Eucharistic celebration was aired on television the following day and no doubt other significant celebrations have marked this year.

Here we are sincerely grateful to Sr. Sheila Kelly PVBM for supplying this interesting article and for getting permission from the author Sr. Assumpta O'Neill PVBM for permission to use and adapt it for our purposes here. It has the added attraction of including information about the early Ursuline Sisters in Ireland.

Sincere thanks to all concerned.

Nano Nagle is nearly always referred to as the person who founded the Presentation Sisters and the pioneer of free education for the poor. The fact that she also introduced the Ursulines to Ireland is seldom mentioned, even though it was an important milestone in our history and was a project on which Nano expended time, money, energy and love. Moreover the letters written by Nano to her first Ursuline friend, Eleanor Fitzsimons, are a source of great riches for all her followers. Many of our most cherished "sayings of Nano" are found in those letters. So is her own account of how she began her work in Cork, including the well-told little drama of how her brother found out where she was every day when he assumed she was at the chapel. All the elements of Nano's personal spirituality are to be found there. The fact that the letters are available for the past 240 years (the first was written in 1769) is due to the care that Nano's Ursuline friends took of them.

About the year 1765, it was evident that Nano had lit a lantern but a question remained. Who would carry it into the future? The most obvious solution would be to find a religious order who would be willing. St. Angela Merici founded the Ursuline Sisters in 1535, to dedicate themselves to Christian education, so on the advice of Fr. Patrick Doran SJ lately returned from France, she decided to approach the Ursuline Order. Many convents in France at the time had a number of Irish religious whose only option had been to go abroad if they wished to become religious. As it happened one of these was a cousin of Nano's – Margaret Butler, who was the same age as Nano herself, so she seemed the obvious choice to lead a new foundation if the Superiors would agree.

In the New Year of 1767, Nano travelled to France and joined her cousin in the community of St. Denis, hoping to learn French and receive training in the different exercises, and of course cherishing hope for a foundation in Cork. When applied to, Archbishop Christophe de Beaumont of Paris granted permission for Margaret to leave her convent, wearing secular dress, and accompanied by a certain other young woman, to go to Cork in Ireland, there to establish a convent of Ursuline Religious and never to lose sight of the vows of St. Ursula. "The vows of St. Ursula" included a fourth vow – that of instructing young females, a reason why Nano and her advisers favoured the order's introduction.

Nano's hopes were high as she and her cousin sailed from Le Havre. Already a young Dublin woman – Eleanor Fitzsimons had decided to join the new foundation, having been told that she was sorely needed in her own country. Things were promising. Nano had Uncle Joseph's legacy, so she would build a convent in Cove Lane and her seven little schools, scattered here and there in the city would be taken care of. Sadly her hopes and dreams were not fulfilled as it was decreed that instead of training novices in Cork they should go to France for their formation. This was probably that Paris just did not have anyone to spare. The novices were to be trained in the Rue St. Jacques, one of the strictest of the Paris houses. Nano later expressed in a letter that she felt that as soon as one problem was solved another popped up.

Here the letters from Nano to Eleanor who was in the Rue St. Jacques tell much of all the trouble that Nano endured during those years. Her cousin Margaret Butler had returned to France, so to say that all these worries caused Nano suffering and anxiety would be an understatement. Eventually by 1769 there were four novices ready to form the nucleus of a new community, so Fr. Laurence Kelly, superior of the Irish College in Paris, took decisive action. He approached Mother Margaret Kelly of the Ursuline Convent in Dieppe, who rather reluctantly was ordered to return to Ireland as superior of the Ursuline foundation in Cork. She remained till 1775, by which time there were seven professed Sisters in the community.

Once again all seemed settled. By the end of 1771 two postulants had joined the community, and at the beginning of 1772 school opened with the admission of 12 boarders. One of Nano's schools for the poor lay within the enclosure and was cared for by the Ursulines. She herself lived in her small cottage, consisting of not more than three rooms and a garret. The Sisters tried in vain to prevail on her to live in the convent as was her entitlement as foundress but to no avail. The best they could do was provide her with dinner each day, but as she austere fasted on Wednesdays and Fridays, no doubt some of those dinners found their way to a poor and hungry family.

We wonder if Nano had expected the Ursulines to be dispensed from their rule of enclosure. She knew that not all French Ursulines were bound by it. However, it seems that it was to be adopted in Cork and the Ursuline annalist recorded "This discovery was a disappointment to Miss Nagle, yet it did not lessen her zeal for the interests of our institution". In 1775 the Ursulines had built a house at right angles to their original house built by Nano, and it was there that Nano and her own companions lived at first until 1780. The Gordon Riots had taken place in London and anti-catholic feeling was running high. Nano was afraid that like riots might spread to Ireland so she and her sisters changed at dead of night and took up their abode in another house on the street. So there were two religious communities, both founded by Nano Nagle, working side by side in the same street, and all living in mutual harmony and support.

Less than four years after moving to the new convent, Nano died. Sometime before her death she had consented to be laid in the Ursuline churchyard on condition that her own Sisters should also be buried there. This condition was agreed to, whence the two orders have a common burial-ground. Over the past two and a half centuries, thousands have visited the little cemetery and seen not only the grave of Nano herself but those of the Ursuline and Presentation nuns side by side. We owe the account of Nano's last illness and death to her friend Eleanor Fitzsimons who wrote of it to Teresa Mullaly. The letter is much too long and full to quote in its entirety but it expresses Eleanor's love and veneration for her old friend, Nano Nagle.

Easter Sunday 1784 fell on 11 April. The following day, Nano visited her friend Eleanor. "She told me last Easter Monday (when I enquired how she was after Holy Week) that she never remembered to have been so strong as the last Easter Saturday, and that though she had read the Passion of Our Lord three times at different schools the Monday and Tuesday before, she did not perceive the least fatigue." Only eight days after this, on Tuesday 20 April, Nano "went as usual to all her schools, and was penetrated with rain, as of late she walked so slow." The following day Nano set out for one last time but had to return home. Even then she would not allow her sisters to send for a doctor. Her Ursuline friends heard nothing till next day. When Eleanor heard that she had been out that day she became alarmed. Miss Fuohy confirmed her fears and asked Eleanor to get a doctor. On the following Monday Nano died. "Her strength had been visibly declining these twelve months, particularly this last and severe winter. Her limbs were so feeble she was obliged to use a stick in walking, and had been seen to stop frequently to get a little strength to proceed. Her fervour increased so much towards the end of her course that I believe she lost all sense of bodily pain or suffering."

(Sadly the letter and indeed the whole article is much too long to quote in full.)

La Bocca

Some people may recall the film "Roman Holiday" with Gregory Peck and Audrey Hepburn inserting their hands into a carved mouth and pretending that they were unable to withdraw them. Such carvings today are often found in shopping centres or seaside resorts, where visitors are invited to hear their futures if they have money to spare! It might interest us to be aware of its origin.

In the centre of Rome, at the corner of a very old building, there is a stone carving of a face surrounded by wild hair. Its eyes are wide open – staring into the eyes of the person who approaches. The mouth appears laughing but it is a wide open hole, just big enough for someone to insert his or her hand. The carving is called 'La Bocca' or 'The Mouth'.

Two thousand years ago La Bocca was in regular use, not for tourists, but if people were thought to be telling lies. If they wanted to exonerate themselves they would come to La Bocca, surrounded by witnesses. The person concerned would then insert his/her hand inside the mouth. The understanding was that if (s)he were a liar they would be unable to withdraw the hand. Everybody would then know if the person were a liar or not. We can wonder if La Bocca were reliable. People with large hands might be in difficulty. Perhaps liars were so afraid that they were induced to confess, before being put to the test.

We depend a great deal on truth in our daily lives. Without truth there cannot be trust. There cannot be unity and co-operation between individuals, families, countries. Truth and falsehood can have serious consequences. Pilate asked: "*What is truth?*" But he did not want to hear the answer. Jesus said: "*I am the Way, the Truth and the Life*". **Are we today prepared to listen?**

For the attention of all email users

A deadly virus has been discovered, which even the most advanced systems from Norton or Kaspersky have been unable to handle. It appears to affect mainly those who were born prior to 1965.

Symptoms:

1. Causes you to send the same email twice,
2. Causes you to send a blank email.
3. Causes you to send email to the wrong person.
4. Causes you to send it back to the person who sent it to you.
5. Causes you to forget to attach the attachment.
6. Causes you to hit 'SEND' before you've finished.
7. Causes you to hit 'DELETE' instead of 'SEND'.
8. Causes you to hit 'SEND' instead of 'DELETE'.

It is called C-NILE virus. How many can you identify with?