

IRISH AUGUSTINIAN NEWS

“HOLLY BOUGH” EDITION - 2011



*Dear Brothers and Friends in
Augustine,*

May your Christmas, whether at home or abroad, be filled with joy and peace. We are bidding farewell to yet another difficult year and our thoughts and prayers go with all who are journeying towards Christmas with heavy hearts. Rarely have the great gifts of joy, peace and hope been more sorely needed. May we all receive them in

abundance during the days and weeks ahead.

The old year also brought its blessings, for which we are grateful:

- The fraternal spirit in which the Mid-term Chapter was celebrated and the positive atmosphere which characterised our Assemblies and Cluster Meetings.
- The consensus which is evolving around the need for change in response to the demands of our times. **Please forward local community and individual submissions in respect of the future to the Provincial office no later than February 15th.**
- The generosity and commitment of so many friars, who continue to provide such great service in our public churches, parishes and schools. Credit is also due to those who serve the Province in other apostolates, whether at home or abroad.
- Other highlights of the year include:
 - the Vocations Drive launched in January,
 - the annual SOSAD commemoration going national from Drogheda;
 - the On-going Formation gathering at Horse and Jockey in February, as well as the April trip to the Holy Land;
 - Colm's diaconate ordination in May;
 - the Missions Thanksgiving celebration in John's Lane in July;
 - the Silver Jubilee celebrations in Rivermount in October.

A sad feature of the year was the large number of our brothers who returned to the Lord. May they all rest in peace!

Already, some significant issues have been placed on the agenda for 2012:

- The latest on-going formation initiative, which will begin in the Spring.
- Colm's priestly ordination, scheduled to take place in Cork on April 26th at 4.00 p.m.



- Further exploration in respect of the future, in terms of ministries, locations, etc.
- The voting process to elect a new provincial which will begin in early autumn, along with preparation for Chapter 2013.

I wish to thank the members of the Provincial Council for their service throughout 2011. On behalf of the Council, I offer sincere gratitude to all who have ministered on behalf of the Province during the past 12 months, friars and lay folk alike. Particular thanks go to Pat Moran and his team for faithfully recording the significant events which occur in the Province from month to month.

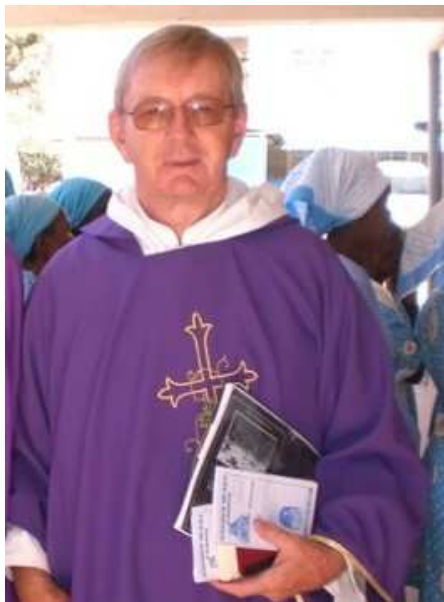
For now, I invite you to reflect again on the words spoken to us by St. Augustine in Sermon 196,3:

The one who regulates the movement of the stars is suckled at his mother's breasts. He is silent in his mother's womb but he is going to speak and create the gospel story for us when he reaches the right age. Look at the child lying in the manger. He made himself small but did not lose his divine identity. Choosing to become human, Jesus-God took on what he was not, but remained what he was. There you have it. On Christmas we see Christ as an infant. Let us grow up with him.

With fraternal greetings for Christmas and the New Year.

Gerry Horan





ALL IN A GENERATION

I left Ireland for Africa in October 1979, one week after the historic visit of Pope John Paul. During that visit it is estimated by some that about two thirds of the population moved in some direction to meet or greet him amidst the national excitement that gripped the country. I returned to Ireland in early November 2011, the day after the closure of the Irish embassy to the Vatican. Those 32 years represent a 'tsunami' in the religious conscience of the Irish nation.

During that time we have lost probably not one but two generations of people from the Church. It might be added that in the mid seventies, a few years before my departure, it was normal for our Cork church to be crowded out on a Sunday evening for the Folk Mass, usually presided over by the late Fr. Sean Coffey. This Mass was usually animated by, and attended by, university students of UCC. On many occasions it was standing room only.

This was a popular gathering point for the young people as they returned from the country to begin a new week. Now as we look down the church at any Mass we see the grey heads and the wrinkled faces, the faithful generation who still have Christ at the centre of their lives. But the young ones have gone. We might ask WHY? The facile answer might be the scandals, but that is only part of the answer. The slide had begun long before the Ryan or Murphy Reports highlighted the many clerical scandals that hit the Church throughout Ireland and the world. Perhaps we have to look elsewhere.

The comment of one notable friar many years ago, who is now with the Lord, was "Get them in and get them out before you're found out!" I am afraid we have been found out as our churchgoing was founded mainly on obligation and when that broke down the crowds departed. Somehow we failed to emphasise or facilitate the building of a strong personal relationship with Christ among our people.

We probably missed our chance immediately after the Vatican Council when we still had the people crowding into our churches. It will not be easy to get them back, though we cannot be without hope. The Lord is still with us!

Tom Sexton, OSA.

DROPPINGS FROM FINGLAS SOUTH

On the home front – Finglas was good. Kathleen Sherlock made us all young as she told the story of a hundred years of her life. On the 25th October the Parish celebrated 25 years with the Augustinians and it was fun. We celebrated the life in the Community and the heart and spontaneity of the Parish. This was real Eucharist – because we moved easily from Prayer; to Chat; to Food; to Song and Music and we fed each other!

The morning came and Mick Peelo turned up (Would you Believe? T V) for the usual Mass. He was most impressed. He couldn't believe how at-home people were in their Faith and Church. He was delighted by the links everyone could make, between ordinary life and God; their honesty and easy chatter. The Parish should be proud.

Our next special moment was the 2nd November where the Dead were remembered. It was a most incredible time when everyone was united in faith; in a search to make sense of loss and death. To hear the names called out; to watch as people gathered around those names and the photos, touched us, with the goodness, humanity and faith in our Community. Many were not Church-goers but something bigger than all of us, was happening.

In Church life – we push that boulder up a very steep hill. Cloyne is one aspect of it. But generally and officially, the Church is very tired and fearful of real reflection. The new Missal sums it up. The words are clumsy, unfamiliar, foreign and awkward. They make few connections with the poetry of the English language. Above all the Missal displays a misunderstanding of God (theology) which seems to neglect the Incarnation (the Word becoming flesh and soaked in human experience). God is alive in the local Church. Somehow we must overcome further obstacles from the Official Church (in its stupidity) which can drag us into the museum of the past, rather than inspire us to become the living Body of Christ in our World.

Seamus Ahearne OSA.

ST AUGUSTINE'S COLLEGE



"The 'O'Donnell' Classroom block was officially blessed on Monday (5 December) by Fr C. O'Donnell, OSA. The classroom block is dedicated to Fr O'Donnell, OSA, former school Principal, and more recently the much loved Home/School Liaison Officer".

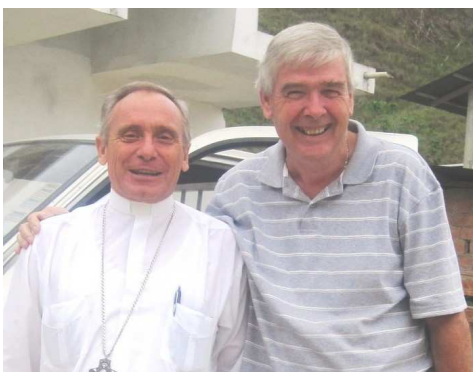
Both Dungarvan papers - **Observer** and **Leader** - carried a photograph and an account of the blessing and dedication, on 5/12/11, of a Classroom Block in St Augustine's to Fr Columba O'Donnell, OSA. Fr Columba was a former School Principal, and of late the loved and highly appreciated School Liaison Officer. Present at the ceremony were Fr O'Donnell himself, who blessed the Block, his brother, Bishop Louis O'Donnell, OSA, Brother Patrick Lennon OSA, and representatives from the Staff and the Student Council.

WELCOMING THE BELL



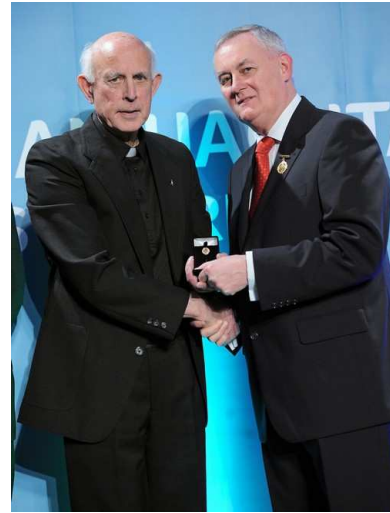
Pat Moran and Tom Sexton OSA.

The Eucharistic Congress Bell, which is meant to generate enthusiasm for the forthcoming congress scheduled for June 2012, made a visit to the diocese of Cork and Ross in the early days of December this year. This bell started its journey on St. Patrick's Day, 2011, and is being transported around Ireland by a volunteer from Drogheda. It made a short stop in the Cork City centre parishes on December 9 and 10. We had it for the regular Mass at 4.00 pm on Friday 9. At the beginning of the Mass we processed with it from the back of the church and installed it in the sanctuary. There it was welcomed and rung by Pat Moran, the Prior. Later all the congregation joined in the accompanying prayer that had been distributed. At the end of Mass people were invited to come and ring the bell and most availed of the opportunity. So for about half an hour after Mass the church was filled with the Ding Dongs of the varied efforts at chiming. From St. Augustine's the bell journeyed on to the South Parish for 6.00 pm and to Turners Cross for 7.30, where Bishop John Buckley was among those welcoming it. On Saturday it travelled through the English Market, made famous by the visit of Queen Elizabeth, on its way from Holy Trinity to the Franciscans. However, that was the only public display of the presence of the bell. Sadly also, the young generation was missing from among the eager bell ringers in our congregation. Hopefully, the congress itself will not be as quiet an affair next June. **Tom Sexton OSA.**



Papal Nuncio and Declan Brennan OSA

ST AUGUSTINE'S COLLEGE DUNGARVAN



16 March 2011; Br. Finbar Spring, St Augustines College, Co. Waterford, is presented with his GAA President's Award for 2011 by Uachtarán Cumann Lúthchleas Gael Criostóir Ó Cuana. Since the late 1980s Brother Spring has been passing on his passion for GAA Handball in Dungarvan through St. Augustines

College and the Friary Abbeyside Ballinacourty Club he founded. He has helped Waterford's Handballers become a formidable underage outfit who have won All-Irelands across almost every age group. Br. Spring has been responsible for the funding and building of several alleys in Waterford.

On the 19th November at a Banquet in Croke Park, Bro Finbar received another trophy for his great contribution to handball over the years. (See photo on the back page).

ECUADOR

Hi, Pat, Towards the end of the month we got a phonecall from the Curia that the Papal Nuncio, Giacomo Ottonello, would arrive the following morning.

In the photo on the left below, to record the visit you'll see that the right order of importance is being respected. In the centre, the Revd. Fr. Declan Brennan O.S.A., with the Archbishop of Portoviejo, Lorenzo Voltolini and the Nuncio, in supporting roles. On the right wing the Pastoral Vicar of the archdiocese, Fr. Manuel Cedeño: I got to play on the left.

The two archbishops had to stand on a higher step -- upgraded a bit -- to be on the level with with the priests.

It seems that the Nuncio was 'walking the land' to see how our twenty two thousand square kilometre diocese may be divided into three. They had hoped to visit Ted in Convento but, when contacted on his mobile, Ted said he was twenty kilometres from Convento and could not receive Nuncios. A change in plans had us heading for Novillo to Declan's parish where the new PP got closer to his Archbishop.

The dry season is holding out which is a blessing for us on the country roads but it has our people worried for their cattle.

We are looking forward to the arrival of our Irish Mission Director: in fact, a new room is being built for him in Flavio which has become more central for us now that we are in three adjoining parishes.

Paul O'Connor OSA.

HEADSTONES AND HISTORY



Tom Sexton, Francis Aherne and Pat Moran OSA.

As Monica lay dying at Ostia in 387 she noticed the distress of her son, Augustine, because of ending her days far from home, with the prospect of not being buried with her husband, Patricius. She reassured him with the immortal words "Do not worry where you lay this body of mine. The Lord will know where to find me on the Last Day for the resurrection of the dead". What she asked of him was to remember her at the altar. None of us will be able to do much about our grave when we have gone, but the living like to honour the dead in a special way. In Cork the local community purchased graves in the new cemetery of St. James' near the Viaduct on the Bandon road, because the Augustinian plot in St. Finbarr's cemetery is almost full. St. James was opened in 2005 and we are in a special corner, close to the graves of the Mercy Sisters from St. Mary's of the Isle. During the summer months it is much favoured by the rabbits in the evening as they stray from the nearby woods. Two of our men, Michael Oliver Flynn in May 2007 and Michael Sexton in May 2008, are the only members buried there so far. Only recently have headstones been erected to mark their graves. On the afternoon of December 8 we held a little ceremony of dedication for the new headstones, as well as a prayer for our dead. Nine Augustinians, and almost a similar number of the Sexton family attended. It is hoped to have a similar ceremony later with the Flynn family, who could not be contacted at this time. The graves were again blessed before we retired to the nearby Viaduct Inn to share a coffee and our stories. **Tom Sexton.**



Presented to Bro Finbar Spring OSA, in Croke Park.

OSA LAITY CONGRESS 11-17 July 2012 (ROME)



**ON THE WAY WITH SAINT AUGUSTINE:
Being the Body of Christ in the world today**

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

The programme will include two presentations on the theme from Mon. Giovanni Scanavino (Italy) and Joseph Kelly from Merrimack College, USA. Each presentation will be followed by discussion groups and questions. There will also be three panels focusing on family, youth and lay Augustinian organizations. After these presentations there will be small group discussions and questions. Liturgies will be held in three languages and there will be an outing to visit the Augustinian Sisters at Cascia. Also displays from Augustinian Groups from around the world are invited. Questions for consideration in preparation for the Congress are:

1. What is your local context?
2. What is your vision of being the Body of Christ in this context?
3. What will help to bring this vision alive in your reality?

It will be important to invite laity to meet in gatherings at national level.

The Conference fee is €620 full board (excluding flights) and there is an extra 100 euro single supplement. The Conference fee with lunch only is 300 euro.

All groups working with Augustinians can be invited although it would be important to send people who are involved in a group/ministry so that they can report back to the group.

Contact person for England/Ireland is Bernadette Toal: b5toal@eircom.net

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Greetings from Cork. On behalf of staff, David Moran, Peter Galus, John O'Connor, Francis Aherne and myself, a big thanks for the many contributions I received over the last few days. At this busy time of year all your efforts are deeply appreciated and made this edition possible. Thanks to Tom Sexton, John Byrne, Paul O'Connor, Matt Cooney, Bernadette Toal and John O'Connor for photographs.

Wishing you all an abundance of peace and joy.

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