

# IRISH AUGUSTINIAN NEWS



## Three Ecuadorean Musketeers

25 years ago, Mike Donnelly, Ben Sinnott, Declan Brennan and myself were given a special fare from Nigeria by KLM Raptim and went to Ecuador for over a week (also included was Buena Park). Mike and Ben have passed on to a better world. Declan is now based in Ecuador.

A few weeks ago, I arrived there at midnight. Declan met me at Quito airport. Also there to welcome was the Ecuadorean Provincial, Patricio. We stayed with them that night in their famous Monastery. Five in the community plus three O.S.A. seminarians. Great to witness the comradeship and banter between Declan and themselves. Next morning a 4 hour drive south, down the Andes, to Flavio where Paul O'Connor happily runs a self-supporting parish. The main roads were very good. Beautiful scenery. Flavio is now the centre of our presence. That afternoon, another hour's drive south to Chone. Ted McCarthy was there to meet the three of us. They all come together in Chone, with a 78 year old Cork Presentation Sister Margaret, every Monday night. She is involved in a number of excellent projects in Chone.

I spent some days with our missionaries in each of their parishes. My visit coincided with the first rains. So landslides, bridges down, muddy roads were the order of the day. Ted looks after Convento, Declan is in Novillo. Each of these is about 45 minutes from Flavio, and all three have many outstations, with churches. A two day stay in San Vicente was also thrown in. The mighty work that so many of our people did in all of these parts of Ecuador over the past many years is plain to see.

Ted was, as ever, able to tell me what happened on any day in any year. And the particular hour. I was also amazed at Declan's Spanish. Able to preach without notes! And his Sunday mass had the children doing drama of the relevant gospel. Better than any sermon.

Manchester United fans will be pleased to note that their scarves and shirts were well to the fore. Antonio Valencia, United winger, is from the Nueva Loja, based in the Amazon rain forest of Ecuador.

I renewed acquaintances with the mosquito; shaved without the mirror; electricity went off at critical times.

But a big difference today is that the mobile and Internet are available almost everywhere I went. So our missionaries are able to read 'DIndependent' or 'Dexaminer' every morning and keep up to date with all that is happening elsewhere. Sending e-mails is not quite so easy.

All three were in fine form, doing great work, most hospitable, and I am sure, would appreciate a visit from any of us based in the 'first world.'

Francis Aherne O.S.A. (Mission Director).

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Ted McCarthy and Paul O'Connor OSA



Declan Brennan OSA



Francis Aherne OSA visits Castro !

## **“BRINGING FAITH TO LIFE”**

As a result of the Mid-Chapter suggestion, the above mentioned is offered to Augustinians, and to those who work with us, and has completed the first of three sessions.

### **REPORT FROM DUBLIN**

#### **Bringing Faith to Life - Augustinian Adult Faith Formation**

Spearheaded by Kieran O'Mahony OSA, the Irish Augustinians have launched a new initiative aimed at Faith Formation for adults. This is called Bringing Faith to Life. The programme takes advantage of the preparations for the Eucharistic Congress which will take place next June in Dublin. Initially, the programme will take place in three sessions with a fourth one proposed for September.

The Augustinian communities around the country have been clustered with their closest Augustinian neighbours for the events. Each session takes the format of Podcasts which are led by John Byrne OSA, Sean Goan, Kieran O'Mahony OSA and Bernadette Toal - better known to many of you as the "Orlagh Team".

On Saturday the 21st of January the Dublin - Drogheda cluster gathered in Rivermount for the first of the sessions. We were all delighted with the turnout. 118 people packed the Jubilee Room in the church and participated in the sessions which were led by Kieran. Group work was marked by much conversation and people from Orlagh, Rivermount and Meath St. John's Lane learned from each other as well as from Kieran. Rivermount provided the catering and was very pleased to host the event.

This initiative marks a big effort on behalf of those involved and on behalf of the whole province of Augustinians. The Eucharistic Congress provides the spring board for us to embark on the project of Adult Faith Formation in a new way. Well done to all involved. Possidius (Augustinian Youth Website).



Dr Kieran O'Mahony OSA.

## **Reflection on Augustinian Faith Formation Day in Finglas by Seamus Ahearne OSA**

### **FINGLAS - A TOURIST ATTRACTION**



Question Time in Finglas.

'Bringing Faith to Life' was the topic. The venue was Finglas South, Rivermount Parish. Some of us in Finglas expected forty to fifty. By the evening of Wednesday (18<sup>th</sup> January), we were shocked (delighted) and fearful – the numbers had risen to almost 100. In fact, I believe 118 turned up on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> January to Oliver Plunkett's church.

What was it about? It was above all an opportunity to bring people together from the Augustinian houses/Churches in Dublin and Drogheda. They came to be led into a Reflection on Faith today. The Eucharistic Congress added to the idea and suggested a focus on the Eucharist. The challenge was to 'inspire' the group through the programme, led by the Orlagh team, into a sharing of our own experience and into a reflection on our way ahead.

The situation is obvious: Many people in Ireland are tired with the state of the Church and Country. Most of us hang in there by the strength and companionship of the people in our Community. That supportive community happens around our Churches. We sometimes want to close our ears, eyes and minds to what is happening more widely in the Church and simply celebrate where we are. But Church and life is always bigger than ourselves.

People came from Orlagh, Ballyboden, John's Lane, Meath Street, Drogheda, Rivermount (Finglas South) and we even had a few spies from Limerick. In a strange way, the setting in the church in Finglas was appropriate. Why? The room where we met is a section of the Church cut off from the main church. While we were meeting in the cut-off section of the Church, a funeral was happening in the main Church. And then later in the day – Baptisms were happening in the main Church. The sound outside didn't bother us or our sound within, didn't really distract those in the main church. However the two points are interesting – we were in a sense, a crowd gathered, almost cut off from main-line Church and yet not allowed to do so! That is also right. We can always go away a little while, to think or talk, but we cannot ever see ourselves as a separate clique. The Room was packed (we call it the Jubilee Room). But the place and the gathering was very homely. Kieran O Mahony with his team, led us into our Reflection through the podcast. This worked very well with inputs of 25 minutes. These were presented by Kieran, Bernadette Toal, John Byrne and Sean Goan. Then we broke into groups as best we could and shared with each other and spoke back to the floor. The Inputs were based on what we know.



There was nothing overly highbrow. They related to what we are used to and were in the language most of us speak. They provoked us into thinking of our own lives and how we approach Mass. The three sessions – took up the early part of Mass. Why do we gather? How do we forgive or what does this part of Mass mean? And then we centred on the Gloria and what is going on at that stage of Mass. It stirred up much in all of us and the chatter was intense and lovely.

Dinner then occurred. The locals here wondered and worried how this would work. But everyone cooperated and Kathleen (our cook) with her helper Paddy was brilliant. Food was served and eaten with great enjoyment and quick movement. The hospitality was excellent. All the locals helped. We believe here in Finglas that the Community is host and hostess always – people see what has to be done and do it. That has to be the core of Eucharist. We returned to work then in the afternoon – possibly overfed and less able to listen more and talk. But it was good.

It was a delightful gathering. It was great to meet with people from all our Communities. It was good to listen, learn, share and laugh. It was a great occasion. We look forward now to the 11<sup>th</sup> February which will talk about the **Readings at Mass**. My last word – we even managed to cope with the toilet needs of everyone and that was in itself a mighty challenge. We thank Kieran and the Orlagh Team for their excellent work and of course all the Company for their presence. It was most encouraging for everyone. The inspiration happened.

Seamus Ahearne osa. (Rivermount).



Fethard group in New Ross



Good Counsel College Chapel.

## GOOD COUNSEL COLLEGE



### Dining Room Good Counsel College

The ongoing formation meeting for the South East took place in Good Counsel College New Ross, on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> January. It was attended by about sixty people from New Ross, Fethard and Dungarvan. The community and dining room staff of Good Counsel College made us very welcome and catered generously for the large group with tea, coffee, soup, rolls and dessert. Well done to them.

We assembled in the College Chapel for the talks. The day was introduced by Kieran and it followed the set pattern: Topic 1. 'Pilgrim People'. 2. 'Forgiving people'. 3. 'Called to praise'. Each input was followed by discussion in small groups and then an open forum. People seemed to engage with this process very well both in the small groups and with the questions they asked during the open forum. These questions were expertly and tactfully answered by Kieran. The feedback from the Dungarvan group was very positive. They appreciated the new insights into the Eucharist which they felt they received in a language they could understand. They also appreciated the opportunity to meet and share with the other lay people from Fethard and New Ross who are involved with us. Though they appreciated the content of the podcasts, one or two of them wondered if it would have been better if Kieran delivered the content of the first podcast himself. I smiled to myself as I recalled an incident with Ned McGrath when he was a member of the New Ross community. Ned was asked to give a day of recollection to a group of nuns in Wexford. Ned pre-recorded his talk on a cassette tape. He went to the convent. Placed the player on the altar, pressed the start button and said to the sisters, 'I'll see you in half an hour' and went off. Creid é nó ná creid.

Well done Kieran and the other members of the Orlagh team who put the podcasts together. We are looking forward to our next gathering on February 25<sup>th</sup> here in Dungarvan.

Flor O'Callaghan OSA.



Group from Dungarvan

## **GATHERING IN LIMERICK – Liam Ryan OSA.**

The members of one small group could not contain themselves! Kieran was about to gather the last fragments of “conversation” when they broke into a spontaneous song of praise! Given that the venue was the concert hall in Mary Immaculate College and the focus question was about times when we were moved to give glory to God. We should not have been surprised when the place erupted into an impromptu rendering of “Holy God We Praise Thy Name”. That perennial hymn from a devotional repertoire reflected the age profile of the assembly and the spirituality of the majority of the participants. They appreciated Kieran’s introductions to each of the presentations. The fact that the modules were grounded in human experience made an immediate link for them. Being faithful Mass goers they liked the connection with the Eucharist and the forthcoming Eucharistic Congress. The podcast format with four voices lent itself to focused and attentive listening. The small groups wandered away from the suggested reflections provided on the podcast into personal anecdotes and faith witness. Some admitted to being out of their depth with the scriptural dimension. Those who were part of “Lectio Divina” groups were more at home with the Bible. On the day we missed the presence of those who are involved in a four year pastoral and biblical programme which is held in the Limerick Biblical Centre on Saturdays.



Representatives from Limerick, Galway and Cork.

### **WELL RECEIVED**

The “cluster” gathering embraced Augustinians and laity from Cork, Galway and Limerick. People who count heads told me that the number there was just short of one hundred. A few who had not booked came along on the morning. All three communities had strongly promoted the event since the 1<sup>st</sup> January. As expected, the majority came from the home venue Limerick and it turned out to be an excellent location with plenty space for presentations, sharings, and catering. People left in a good mood, happy with the nourishment they had received in body, mind and spirit, happy to be able to sit down as equals with Augustinians who kept quiet for the most part. They were looking forward to the next session in Cork. Among those who gave feedback, there were no critical voices apart from a disappointment with the absence of Mass from the schedule -- one voice from the southern capital, seconded by a predictable one from Limerick! Friars received some affirmation but we remained at a safe distance from the urgent issues raised in Ballyvaloo or in recent assemblies.

## **EMBRACING THE MESS**

Walking around the campus at the University of Limerick recently I met a searching Christian who had parted company with the church. He recalled a time when he was part of something new and different in the Augustinian church. With some sadness he said: “we re-designed a church for the new Millennium, a place which welcomed me in spite of the mess I was in at the time. That church reached out to everyone and God became more real for me”.

The Augustinians invited us into their dream and they built it with us. Then they took it all away from us! You withdrew from us. You retreated back into the 1950’s. You gave us hope for a while and then disappointed us. You were not well served by your leadership in there. Over the Christmas I rambled into your church for my annual visit. Mass was on at the time and I heard a strange antiquated language being spoken, distant and remote from my world and further away still from my children’s world.

We need to hear and listen to voices like his. He is not alone! Far from it! Liam Ryan OSA, Limerick.

### **DURING THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY**

**Please remember in your prayers the following members of the Irish Province who have gone home to God.**

- 01 1971 Fr K O’Flynn
- 02 2004 Fr P Killian
- 04 1961 Fr N Fitzhenry
- 04 1990 Fr H Sheehy
- 09 1969 Fr T Hoyne
- 11 1969 Fr TL McCabe
- 11 2006 Fr L Lyons
- 13 2007 Fr F O’Shaughnessy
- 13 2000 Fr FX Martin
- 16 1982 Fr L Meagher
- 18 1982 Fr C Roche
- 20 2006 Fr B Baldwin
- 25 1989 Fr J Anderson
- 26 2004 Fr P Tinney
- 27 1995 Fr D Treacy
- 29 1960 Fr PG Byrne
- 29 1992 Fr T Cooney

**Please remember Fr Michael Alipius Roche OSA who died in Birmingham on 11.2012.**

### **FROM THE EDITOR’S DESK.**

Welcome to Vol. 5 No. 8. Thanks to all who have contributed to this edition of IAN. Special thanks to Peter Galus, David Moran, Francis Aherne, John O’Connor, for their invaluable help, and Paul O’Connor, John Byrne and Kieran O’Mahony for photos.

All past editions of IAN available on: Cork Web page: [www.staugustinescork.ie](http://www.staugustinescork.ie)

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