

# IRISH AUGUSTINIAN NEWS



Colm O'Mahony with nephew Eoghan on Ordination Day

As most of you know by now, I have been appointed the Vocation Director of the Irish Province; Francis Aherne has agreed to assist me in this work with Niall Coghlan offering whatever support we may need.

Vocation promotion in the current climate is not easy but neither is it impossible and we should not be afraid to encourage potential candidates to reflect on whether our life offers something unique and attractive to them. Vocation promotion is the responsibility of every friar in the province as unless we show and believe that our lives have meaning, how can we hope to encourage anyone else to believe in it?

Over the past couple of months I have been attending various youth gatherings, promoting our Augustinian charism and identity. I have attended the Youth 2000 Summer Festival, The Ploughing Championships as well as various University Fairs at the RDS, to name just a few. These encounters have demonstrated a number of things, namely that the Augustinians as a group are not known or recognised by a lot of young people. People know and can identify the Franciscans, Dominicans, etc but not the Augustinians; we need to ask ourselves why this is.

Most of you by now have heard what young people are looking for when discerning a vocation; it is the quality of the community prayer and the sense of community that attract them most. Most are also attracted to the sense of



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identity that the habit provides as well as the traditional prayers and devotions. None of these are essential for a vocation; none of them constitute a vocation in its totality but it is what young people are looking for and if we as a group have issues with these, then we need again to ask ourselves who it is we are seeking to attract.

I hope to visit each community over the next few months to be of any assistance I can be to the local communities in vocation promotion. Any suggestions any individual friar or community has for vocation promotion please don't hesitate to contact me on

[augustinianvocations@hotmail.com](mailto:augustinianvocations@hotmail.com)

Over the next couple of weeks I hope to work on our website to make it more attractive and informative to people.

Finally, there is some good news – currently there are 2 men showing interest in joining the Province. One is based in Cork and the other in Dublin. Both are at the early stages of discernment but I ask that you keep them in prayer as they journey with us.

God bless. Colm O'Mahony OSA, John's Lane.



**John Hennebry OSA New Irish Provincial**

## **The Irish Church: 'We need to talk'**

The Independent (Monday 4th February) had a column on the Meeting of the Priests' Council (Dublin) and the leadership of the ACP. It was a sloppy piece of journalism and a distortion.

We met. We talked. There is nothing extraordinary about that. We shouldn't be surprised or excited or euphoric. It is what adults do! This is Communion. The Church doesn't belong to the Bishops or to Rome or to anyone. We are the Church.

It is good that the ACP and the Council of priests meet. It also is a problem: It creates something the ACP never wanted: It spawns administration; More meetings; more travelling; more is dumped on the Leadership. They get sucked into this Bureaucracy of life. It can mean the kiss of death.

People need to talk. The Bishops and the ACP need to talk. Bishops need to talk to each other. Priests need to talk. There needs to be talk all across the Church. There isn't an Us and Them. The ACP isn't about dissident priests. They are by definition priests who love the Church; who find their Inspiration in Vatican 2 and who want the Church to face today's world and not hide away in the past. The catch word of the Council was: Aggiornamento. This bringing-up-to-date is an evolutionary process and never ends. The Incarnation means that the Word has to become Flesh in everyday life but there is a problem.

The Mission Statement of the ACP is a commitment to Vatican 2 whereas Rome is rushing back to the past and seems committed to unravelling the heart of the Council. This retrenchment can put Roman church at odds with the ACP. That can also mean that the College of Bishops is reticent to get involved except in a piecemeal manner – via the Priests' Councils (The deferential model is still around). Are they put off by the tag of dissidents? John Wilkins wrote an article recently – 'Bishops or Branch Managers?' (Doctrine and Life). We call on Bishops to be Bishops and our Bishops to be a College.

There are no heretics lurking around the ACP. It may be convenient to dismiss the 1000 priests if there was a hint of heresy. (Tony Flannery is also

not a dissident or a heretic but only an ordinary thinking priest who is alive in his faith and is in touch with the Irish world). The ACP is a place of encouragement; a place really of Evangelisation. In fact, clearly and obviously, all new Bishops should be 'recruited' from the leading ranks of the ACP. The Bishops should be delighted to join the serious banter of theological reflection in the ACP. This is what they most want for a living, throbbing Church. The Nuncio too should be listening and learning. He too needs to be more than a diplomatic puppet from Rome. If he has any chance of understanding the heart of Irish Catholicism – he has to humbly sit and listen among the gathered priests and listen 'attentively' to all who are the 'faithful.' It is also expected and demanded that the same priests are listening to their people where they are and are sharing Communion in their Communities. Many wonder at what is being inflicted on the Irish Church as new Bishops are appointed. How can these poor men cope with the needs of the Irish Church and the expectations of the Roman politburo. Sometimes there is an immediate conflict between the criteria (of Rome) and the real needs of the Local Church.

The Irish church is best known by the Irish. Rome fears, in a concerned way, for the Irish Church. But we don't need static or stagnant theology which oozes out from officialdom at present. The Church of Jesus Christ is not like that. We do need to reclaim our Church and speak up to Rome (The Missal alone tells us of their Theology!). One of new shoots of hope was the strong correction made by our four Archbishops to Tim Dolan of New York on his Report (Irish College). That is the robust manner which should sum up our Irish Church. We must work together; our Community of Faith. We must all become Faithful (full of faith). We must have faith in each other and faith in the Spirit who leads us. Communion is our challenge.

There is no euphoria in the Meeting of the Priests' Council and ACP. It is what the Church is about: Communion, Communication, Community. This is Evangelisation. And we need to be evangelised – the whole Church.

Mulala Yousafzai spoke yesterday from the QE2 Birmingham. She thanked God for getting back her life (even if she still awaits a cochlear

implant – how appropriate too this is for us as a message to ourselves!) and then spoke eloquently of her commitment to fighting the battle for the education of the young girls in Pakistan. The Taliban won't stop her. Can we too be that brave? If there is fear around the Church; if there is a sense of 'watching our backs' (note Doctrine and Life re Dissidents); if some of our Ministers of the Gospel are being shot down in their Ministry – then we must ask why is Jesus Christ and the Gospel being suffocated? How can fear rust the soul of the Church? It can't and it won't. May the ACP do its work. And the Bishops too.

Seamus Ahearne osa



Iggy O'Donovan OSA and John Lonergan

#### NEW E-MAIL ADDRESSES:

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#### SUICIDE SUPPORT SOLIDARITY SERVICE- DROGHEDA



In 2006 an organisation was established in Drogheda in response to the growing problem of suicide in our society. It was entitled SOSAD - Save Our Sons And Daughters. The mission of the organisation is to help reduce the number of suicides in Ireland, through public awareness campaigns, helping those at risk and those already bereaved. The Augustinians have been associated with this project from the beginning. On the first Sunday of February each year SOSAD celebrate their "Day for Life" with us. It is now the largest single liturgical event in Drogheda, something which unfortunately underlines the extent of the problem. A very fine service also takes place in Cork. It is very much a community exercise, a coming together of bereaved families, police and emergency services, public representatives and many others who simply want to be there. Our guest speaker at the mass this year was ex prisoner governor John Lonergan who gave a very thought-provoking address. It was also a very youthful occasion with the local students leading the liturgy, which was a magnificent combination of prayer, music, art and reflections.

Suicide as an issue has had a very high profile in our country in recent times. For the first time people are learning such terms as "cyber bullying" and hearing of the tragic deaths of young people as a result. I met a young priest at a conference some months ago. He has since died tragically. Here in the North-East we lost a very fine senior politician in recent weeks. I refer everybody to the magnificent contribution of Seamus Ahearne on the subject of suicide on the ACP website in recent days.

Iggy O'Donovan OSA Drogheda.

## **WORD ON WEB PROGRAMME**

### **FOR THE YEAR OF FAITH**

Programme 3:

WOW 2013:  
27 February, 6 and 13 March

1. Who was Jesus Then? Who is Jesus Now?
2. Discipleship Then? Discipleship Now?
3. Handing on the Faith: the Challenge of Evangelisation Today  
[www.wordonweb.org](http://www.wordonweb.org)

### **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  
27 1995 Fr D Treacy  
29 1960 Fr PG Byrne  
29 1992 Fr T Cooney

**Please remember in your prayers Brid Sharkey, sister of Martin Nolan OSA who died in Dublin last month. Her funeral Mass was in Ballyroan, Dublin.**

**Also Mary McNamara, sister of Fr Michael Leahy OSA Cork, who died on 10.02.2013 and was buried in St Michael's Cemetery, Blackrock.**

## **FIRST CHRISTMAS IN FETHARD**

My first major function in meeting with majority of the lay community in Fethard was during the Christmas Vigil Mass, 2012.. Gerry Horan was the principal celebrant. Before the Mass started he assigned me the privilege to take the symbolic Baby Jesus to the Crib. He pointed in the direction of the Crib from the sacristy.

When the appointed time came I carried the symbolic child Jesus with full attention and complete decorum in the direction of where the Crib was supposed to be I headed towards the confessional and was almost ending in the confessional box until I was re-directed by a lady standing nearby. This was done with a dramatic facial expression that generated an attractive distraction. I acknowledged her traffic qualities but also pretended as if going towards the confessional was part of the solemn liturgical procession. At the end of my wandering procession, I gloriously ended up in the Crib, as the historical Shepherds and their animals were already in position. In their midst I placed the memorial Saviour. The vigil Mass continued to the end. Yes it was my first Christmas, and first mistake, in Fethard but it was a mistake with demureness.

As always there is a first time in life in things we do or say. If there is no first time, there can never be a second or third to follow. So also our mistakes can be a good source of education if properly acknowledged and explored for the future. The rest is for historians, for now it is: Four Friars For Fethard Friary.

Lazarus Barkindo, OSA.

## **FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK.**

Welcome to Vol. 6 No. 8. Thanks to all who have contributed to this edition of IAN. Special thanks to David Moran, Francis Aherne, John O'Connor, for their invaluable help, and to Iggy O'Donovan and for photos.

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

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