COLLOQUE

Journal of the Irish Province of the
Congregation of the Mission

No. 5 **Spring 1982**

Contents

Editorial

Impossible to write an editorial for this issue of *Colloque* without immediate reference to the death of Father James Murphy. This issue is six months late — impossible to imagine that happening in his lifetime. For some two years much of the arrangements for the production and distribution of *Colloque* was conducted over the phone with him. His willing and easy availability beside the phone facilitated matters. His industry in assembling the material of the provincial archives, and his boyish enthusiasm when anything of interest was uncovered, made the publications of aspects of the history of the province a simple one. The present issue contains material on which he was working at the time of his death. Other items too had been mapped out by him but were not sufficiently developed for publication. Yes, this provincial journal has lost a steady and well-informed contributor to its pages. More important, the Editor has lost an admirable confrere and a warm friend.

The Poor Country People of Seventeenth Century France

Brian M. Nolan

During the past forty years French historians have shifted their attention from the great personages and political movements of their country's past to the ordinary people among their ancestors. Their key interests include diet, health, education, housing, wage and price scales, commerce, technology, agronomics, climate, parish registers, wills, court records, diaries, peasant and urban lifestyles, and social mobility. Ephemeral popular literature, songs. and broadsheets have shed light on the mentality and concerns of the day. Consequently even a total amateur such as the present writer can glean some interesting information on "the poor country people" so beloved of St. Vincent. Authorised publishing during the 1970s have been consulted in order to profit from recent research. A list of them is appended to place responsibility for the content of these pages where it belongs.

I. The Country People

First, what overtones had "countryside" and "country people" for the contemporaries of Vincent de Paul? Contrary to the situation in Europe and North America today, almost ninety per cent of the French were rural dwellers during the seventeenth century. More surprisingly, scarcely ten per cent of the population was engaged in industry, and much of that activity was based in the countryside, for example, the widespread manufacture of coarse cloth. By 1600 Europe had only forty-two towns with more than 40,000 inhabitants. The figure had risen to a mere fifty-two by 1700. Paris was Europe's largest city with a population of over 200, (XX). London and Naples exceeded 100,000; and by 1600 Rome. Milan, Venice, Messina. Amsterdam, Antwerp, Lisbon and Seville had reached 100,000. Lyons and Marseilles were near that figure. The towns were centres of royal administration, law courts, commerce, and luxury trades. They provided non-productive services for their rural hinterland, on which they were parasites — and viewed as such by the farming folk. Towards 1640 the population of France had risen to twenty-two millions. Thirty years later it was down to eighteen millions. In comparison, around 1640 England and Wales had 5 millions, Spain 6, The Netherlands 3, Germany 12, and Italy 12. By 1600 France

had thirty-four inhabitants per square kilometre. Its open spaces gave the traveller a feeling of immense loneliness. To the French of the time their country was vast. Although a letter could reach Naples from Paris in three weeks, the travel of ordinary citizens was slow, expensive; highly uncomfortable, and often risky due to incessant wars, marauding mercenaries, professional brigands, poor highways and bridges, unhygienic inns, and sporadic revolts in the provinces over excessive taxation. It is not surprising that Vincent counselled Louise sometimes to take the safer river barge.

Most French people of the time lived and died within sight of the church where they had been baptised. They thought in terms of the *pays,* the ten or twenty villages of their immediate area. The great majority of marriages was between persons of the same or a neighbouring village. The rural world was a closed one. It presented a united front against such outsiders as soldiers, townspeople, travellers, tourists, plague-carriers, and vagrants. These were immediately recognisable by their speech and dress. It may be significant, in this light, that the Daughters of Charity and the Congregation of the Mission were grouped mainly in towns, or in the shadow of institutions like the Benedictine monastery of Moutiers-Saint-Jean. When the peasants raised their eyes to wider horizons, it was to their province — Normandy, Burgundy, Picardy, Gascony. Vincent lodged with a judge who was a fellow Gascon. Louis XIII, so conscious of his roots in Béarn, south of Gascony, would presumably have considered Vincent as a neighbour. Rarely did rural dwellers look to France as a whole. Indeed, royal authority was weak in the provinces until Cardinal Richelieu in the 1630s. What population mobility there was came from seasonal migration to help in the harvests, relocation to acquire professional training, and migration to towns, where the newly arrived commonly lodged among those of their *pays.* Of course the wars and famines of 1635-1659 produced floods of refugees and pauperised peasants. Thieves and vagrants controlled the forests and highways around Paris, and were masters of the streets after nightfall.

The upper classes had their own epithets for the farming people: “state mules” (Richelieu, 1585-1642); “rabble” (Cardinal Mazarin, 1607-1661); “savages” (Madame de Sévigné, 1626-1692); “wild animals” (Jean de la Bruyère, 1645-1696). With the exceptions of Rembrandt and Louis Le Nain, seventeenth century artists depicted the peasants and the poor as inebriated boors. Despite such urban disdain and misunderstanding, there remained a certain mystique about the country people. European literature of the period enshrines many versions of, “When Adam delved and Eve span, who was then the gentleman?” The peasant

was sensed to be the fountainhead of all society, and the ancestor even of the aristocrats. They were recognised as the indispensable producing class, and the mainstay of the economy, of society (replenishing the population of towns), and of the state. In 1601 Sir Robert Cecil made a declaration which would have been accepted in France: "Whosoever doth not maintain the plough destroys this Kingdom." As will be seen in the second section, the old order was changing. The country people were viewed as the repository of traditional values: sturdy industry, patient endurance, subordination, piety, contentment with their daily bread, independence. In the hungry, brutal France of the seventeenth century, this was largely a myth, but it was a benign and comforting myth.

II. Rural Poverty

The notion of rural poverty will be tackled as physical, economic, and spiritual: *physical well-being* (diet, health, and life expectancy); *economic status* (land ownership, taxation, climatic and other disasters); *personal development* (education; popular culture, religion, and the role of the Church; the advance of pauperisation).

Peasant diet consisted mainly of black bread, vegetable soups with perhaps some lard or offal, milk, cheese, crude pastries, porridge, peas, beans, lentils, and chestnuts. Fruit was rare and vegetables of poor quality. On feast days this may have been supplemented with coarse bacon or poultry. The great majority would have found it difficult to reduce their intake during Lent, since they were chronically undernourished. Lack of vitamin C led to scurvy, and low resistance to cold, infection, and heavy exertion. A deficiency in vitamin D resulted in bony joints and spinal curvature.

The general health of the country (and poorer town) folk was deplorable. They died in great numbers of cholera, smallpox, typhoid, typhus, dysentery, tuberculosis, influenza, and puerperal fever. The death rate of the poor was two to three times that of the rich. In some warmer areas with stagnant water malaria was debilitating. Attacks occurring every two days mark the tertian fever, and those every three days are the quartan fever. A bout of malaria is characterised by high fever with an abrupt onset (usually in the late afternoon), headaches, chills, delirium, muscular pains, nausea, vomiting, and, in extreme cases, fits and coma (Dr. Paddy Neustatter). Louis Abelly records in 1664 that Vincent suffered his "little fever" for periods of three to fifteen days, but did not interrupt his schedule. He sweated it out between jars of hot water, under three blankets even during summer. He refused to compensate his lack of sleep by taking a siesta, but often dozed off even while talking to

people of importance. The quartan fever struck him once or twice each year. Yet during these fevers he did some of his best work (Abelly, 1891 edition, Volume 1, pp. 350-352). The bubonic plague carried off one fifth and more of the population of some regions. It has been calculated that in France at least two millions were killed by it between 1600 and 1670. Almost five per cent of the populace perished from it during 1628-1632, even though the great cities of northern France were spared. People died in such numbers in the South that crops could not be harvested, and many survivors later died of hunger. Between 1659 and 1673 Molière based four of his plays on the inability of the doctors to cure. Paris and Lyons may have had one doctor for every five thousand citizens, but the countryside had to depend on local wizards, wise women, herbalists, and fair day quacks.

One in four children died before their first birthday, and half did not reach the age of twenty. The statistics for a prosperous area near Beauvais over 1656-1735 are: out of one thousand live births 712 survived the first year. Five years later there were 567; ten years later 529; and twenty years later 489. Men were old at forty. Marriage was postponed until the ages of twenty-seven for men and twenty-four for women by about 1650 — with a consequent drop in fertility. The average family size in seventeenth century France was four children. During the last twenty years of Vincent's life his fellow countrymen were literally decimated by war, starvation, and disease. In the vicinity of Paris during the civil strife of 1648-1653, the Fronde, there was a succession of seven years of very heavy rainfall. (Vincent nearly drowned in a river in spate at Durtal in 1649). The population loss there was perhaps one third. During the summer of 1652 it was quite common for these villages to lose one quarter of their inhabitants. Nobody could cope with such misery.

How well off financially were the country people? The fact that fully half the land was owned by peasants seems reassuring. In 1663 at Roquevaire in lower Province the clergy owned one per cent of the land, twelve bourgeois owned 19 per cent, nine nobles owned 23 per cent, and one hundred and fifty peasant proprietors owned the rest. Roughly speaking, the bourgeois had three times as much land as the farmers, and the aristocracy had nine times more. Whereas the Church could own ten and even twenty per cent of the land in Normandy, it possessed much less in the South, where there were more peasant proprietors. Jean Jacquart notes, "M. Vincent was realistic enough to endow his congregation with magnificent resources in real estate, whose nucleus was the 345 hectares (about 850 acres) of arable land on the plateau of Saclay" (p. 259). Few of the farmers were freeholders. They had to fulfil various obligations of

labour and kind to the lord of the manor. To be economically independent a farmer needed thirty acres in years of plenty, and sixty-five acres in years of shortage. Only one peasant in ten owned sixty-five or more acres. Most farmers had to buy food at inflated prices during lean years.

Another burden was the multiform taxation, which increased dramatically after Richelieu plunged into war against the Catholic Hapsburgs in 1635. The government levied 31 million livres in 1610, 39 million in 1635,44 million in 1641, and some 55 million in 1655. It has been calculated that the taxation roughly tripled between 1630 and 1648. Towards the middle of the century the monarchy was taking one eighth of the gross annual agrarian income, a sum equal to fifteen per cent of the national food supply. Any margin of safety which may have existed in what was at best a subsistence economy was wiped out. By the mid-seventeenth century the small farmer was supposed to pay 20% of his income to the crown, 8% to the Church (in practice the tithe came to one eleventh of the cereal production), 4% on other taxes, 20% for running costs — and on top of this 52% came the rent to the landlord. They were terrorised into paying by seizure of their goods and animals, by deeming the local community responsible for the debts of individuals, and by the billeting of troops. It is no wonder that tax riots were a recurring feature of 1630-1660, particularly in the South and West of France. Without reciprocal loans and services the whole agricultural system would have collapsed. During the seventeenth century the village assembly lost its democratic character, and became dominated by the handful of strong farmers who were better able to cope with the harsh economic conditions.

A final contemporary calamity was the little ice age that set in over Europe about 1580 and petered out towards the middle of the last century. Particularly chilly, and often wet, conditions were experienced between 1620 and 1710. The analysis of tree rings reveals prolonged bad weather in the 1590s, 1620s, 1640s, and 1650s. A fall of one degree centigrade in average summer temperature restricts the growing season of plants by three to four weeks, and reduces the maximum altitude at which crops will ripen by 500 feet. Currently in Europe every day's delay in ripening diminishes the cereal crops by sixty-three kilos a hectare. Allied to bad weather and shortage of land for and increased population were the primitive agricultural techniques. Fewer beasts — and these two thirds to a half the size of their modern counterparts — meant less manure and less power to work the land. Restoration of the soil was achieved by the wasteful system of allowing a field to lie fallow for one year in three in the north of France, and one year in two in

the South. Yoke-oxen represented affluence. (Did Vincent's father have more than one pair of oxen when he sold "a yoke" to pay for his son's clerical studies?) Swing ploughs only scratched the surface of the earth, without actually working it. Most of the work was done by hand with spade, hoe, sickle, and flail. When crops were poor rural employment dropped. Simultaneously that half of the adolescent population which hoped to amass enough capital by going into service found less opportunities in the villages and squires' manors due to the fall in revenue from the fields. About every twelve years there were bad harvests, and consequently greater malnutrition and higher mortality. Actual subsistence crises seem to have occurred on a thirty year cycle in 1597,1630, and 1662. There were intermediate smaller-scale crises in 1622 and 1649-1651. The periods of widespread death in France were 1629-1630, 1636-1637, 1648-1651, and 1660-1662. Vincent worked in a cold, wet, agriculturally depressed France, with a population declining from the ravages of war, plague, and famine.

Moving lastly to what may loosely be described as personal development, the general character of rural culture may be sketched. Parish schools were few until the middle decades of the seventeenth century. Counter-Reformation forces such as the Company of the Blessed Sacrament founded village schools in order to promote lay participation in Church life, and to combat Protestantism, by spreading a more personalised and enlightened, even dogmatic, faith. People from the South had the additional hurdle of having to master official Parisian French. Thirty years after Vincent's death only 29% of French men and 14% of French women could sign their name.

The rural people saw their environment as hostile and mysterious. They were afraid not only of hunger, but of darkness, forests, brigands, wolves, eclipses, comets, almanac predictions, mad dogs, plague, and Satan. Nature could produce anything — ghosts, changelings, outlandish beasts. Travellers' tales and oral traditions about violence fed their imaginations. Undernourishment rendered them hypersensitive. They were quarrelsome, but easily reduced to pity at the sight of a column of galley slaves or a mourning wife or mother. Village ceremonies (including the licensed violence of ritual pitched battles), and often bacchanalian festivities and dances, provided a minimum of entertainment and fostered a community spirit. Privacy and individuality were almost unknown. Those who stepped out of line were subject to brutal and long-lasting reprisals. Never did they question the superiority of other social groups.

A certain rural communism springing from common land, and shared rights to water, woods, and wasteland for grazing, was compounded by a

naive evangelistic sense of being the children of God. There was a vague Christianity of the poor propagated orally during the long evenings at home, the communal recreations after work, and the parish meetings. However, the old institutions and creed were not catering adequately for the people in these dislocated times. Their religious outlook was tinged by magic and semi-Manicheanism. The devil and the saints fought over them. The clergy protected them. Superstitious rituals with consecrated hosts, holy water, and gibberish prayers were common. Confraternities assuring a good funeral and prayers for the dead flourished. Nevertheless, it is hardly surprising that for quite a few sorcery had become a substitute religion and a counter-culture. Jean Jacquart hazards a sketch of what religion meant to the average small farmer and vinedresser: "A very genuine attachment to Christianity, a series of obligatory customary practices which no one thought of omitting. In addition, some naive but sincere devotions, more or less mingled with superstition and an astonishing familiarity with the sacred, which sometimes descends to the grossly material. Bursts of fervour impelling some to set out on distant pilgrimages … In short, an almost total ignorance of dogma, of the very essence of religion, and a radical disregard for Christian morality. The situation was such that doubt has been expressed whether that 'Christianity' was ever Christian, despite the Easter communions, the new churches and images of the saints, and the invocations in wills" (pp. 319-320).

The numerous country priests should have been pioneers of renewal. Monastic life had been reformed to a notable extent by 1600, but the diocesan clergy required another century of effort. The Concordat of Bologna (1516) gave the king almost a free hand in appointing bishops to the more than 120 sees. These were normally from the families of nobles or officials, with about a quarter being sons of well-established bourgeois. But a bishop could be anyone from the awkward youngest son of a penurious noble to a zealous royal confessor. At all events the bishop had little control over his pastors, since a good half of the benefices were in the grant of the laity. Too much can be made of the incidence of priestly concubinage. The basic drawbacks were that commonly priests were ignorant and wholly untrained, and that sometimes they were avaricious absentees. The dress of a priest was the insignia of a little-respected profession, which was plied like a routine trade, retaining nothing of the apostolic life save its poverty — and that unwillingly. The lord of the manor often employed the local curates as agricultural day-labours for carting, waxing, milling, or thatching. The clergy numbered perhaps 100,000 in almost 30,000 parishes, and practising Catholics were one

hundred times as many. Nevertheless the Church was weak in institutions and trained manpower in the rural areas. Parishes were electoral wards and fiscal districts. The parish priest had to make public announcements from the pulpit, and to issue legal summonses and fill out questionnaires for administrators. Thus he was in some sense a government agent. The parish was the sole known world of most of the landed peasantry. Lay persons were responsible for the upkeep of the body of the church (but not of the choir), and the furnishing of the presbytery. Most priests learned their trade by a brief apprenticeship to a barely literate ordained relative. The parish priest was usually a bourgeois, not a country man. Often he was not a local, and sometimes was an absentee. The least clerical of clerics, he frequently raised animals and went to fairs and taverns. He kept bees, and sometimes a concubine and family. Significantly, in 1645 many parishioners of Autun were surprised to learn that priests were not supposed to keep mistresses. In many dioceses, but by no means all, the parish clergy were undisturbed by their ordinary until about 1620. So they continued to wrangle over tithes, and to offer a truncated Mass on Sundays. There was widespread abstinence from preaching, catechising, and administration of the sacraments of Penance and the Anointing of the Sick. The visitations that did take place revealed no more than three or four books in the average presbytery: a breviary, *The Golden Legend, The Imitation.* The archbishop of Sens in 1658 was the first of many prelates to order his priests to buy seventeen books and show them to him on his visitation. These included the Bible, Roman Catechism, Summa of St. Thomas Aquinas, Borromeo's *Instructions for Confessors,* and Francis de Sales' *Introduction to the Devout Life.* The situation had improved since the last-named could complain, "In seventeen years I have only been able to form three priests such as I wish them all to be, and out of those three I have really formed only one and a half."

A final factor in rural disintegretion was the creeping pauperisation of the seventeenth century. War, plague, and famine, added to technological stagnation, lack of investment in agriculture, insufficient size of farms, increased population, soaring food prices, and snowballing taxation made debtors and then vagrants of many of the peasant proprietors. In sum, the basic taxes could be paid out of funds in 1615, out of borrowing in 1625, and out of the proceeds of selling the farm after 1630. The solid farmers and town people bought them out. Towns were inundated with homeless rural beggars since there was nothing left to scavenge in the countryside. Cannibalism came to within one hundred miles of Paris. Vincent de Paul had to agree with the stern policy of confining the "undeserving" poor in workhouses or hospitals. Public order was

invoked to get them off the streets. In 1656 his more humane parallel policy of outdoor crisis relief and distribution of alms was forbidden by the government. Charity itself entered the Iron Age.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Robin Briggs, *Early modern France 1560-1715.* Oxford University Press, 1977.

P. J. Coveney, editor, *France in Crisis, 1620-75.* London: Macmillan, 1977.

Jean Jacquart in H. Neveux, J. Jacquart, and E. Le Roy Ladurie, editors, *Histoire de la France rurale, II.* Paris: Le Seuil, 1975. Pp. 185-350. (Series directed by G. Duby and A. Wallon).

Henry Kamen, *The Iron Century. Social Change in Europe 1550-1660.* Cardinal Series. London: Sphere Books, 1971, revised 1976.

Catharina Lis and Hugo Soly, *Poverty and Capitalism in Pre-Industrial Europe.* Hassocks: Harvester Press, 1979.

Robert Mandrou, *Introduction to Modern France 1500-1640...* Translated from 2nd French edition 1974. London: E. Arnold, 1975.

Roland Mousnier, *Les institutions de la France sous la monarchic absolue, 1598-1789, I, Société et Etat.* Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1974.

Geoffrey Parker, *Europe in Crisis 1598-1648.* Fontana History of Europe. London: Fontana Paperbacks (Collins), 1979.

Some Less-Publicised Facets of Saint Vincent

Thomas Davitt

"Saints must not be reduced to plaster statues, to colourless figures always first in the class and never singing a wrong note".[1] This idea is now generally accepted, but there is another way in which an author can convey, perhaps unconsciously, the impression that there is not much common ground between his subject and his readers. In the case of St. Vincent it is the barrier-like effect of the titles Founder of the Congregation of the Mission and the Daughters of Charity, Apostle of Charity, Great Saint of the Great Century, or, even more grating, The Holy Founder. These verbal walls tend to suggest that we cannot come too close to the late Rev. V. de Paul, CM, our deceased confrère. Louise provides the corrective to this. On 6 June 1649 she wrote to Sister Jeanne Lepeintre in Nantes:

> Fr Vincent says you may go to confession to him. But remember, no matter how good he may be — even if he were a saint raised up by God — you must be careful about becoming too familiar with him. My Sisters, you know how dangerous this is and what trouble it can cause in the community, and how difficult it is to be rid of the evil once it has entered through the door.
>
> (Letters of St Louise, No. 249)

Vincent was sixty-eight at the time but Louise thought it necessary to remind the Daughters that he was still a man, and like them we also need to be reminded of this. Behind the Saint there was a man, behind the Founder a confrère. Keats in one of his letters wonders what position Shakespeare was seated in when he began to write *To be, or not to be…;* he was trying to reach the man behind the Famous Author. There is plenty of material to let us get to the man behind the Saint and Founder but authors and anthologists don't seem to publicise it. Abelly mentions an occasion when Vincent and a companion were served tasteless fish in an inn and Vincent called for some oil to give a bit of taste to the meal. Then, thinking he may have scandalised him he apologised to his companion.[2] Abelly relates this because he thinks it interesting that Vincent apologised, but it is far more interesting that Vincent wasn't going to put up with tasteless fish. He could be annoyed with people also; in 1638 he

wrote to Louise:

> I'm annoyed with Fr Dehorgny that he went off down the country without letting you have any money. Send word to me if you need any. I have the key of the safe but have no time to go and get it. I've never been busier ... (1518)

In a letter to François du Coudray in 1634 he refers to simplicity as

> …the virtue which I love most and to which, it seems to me. I pay most attention in my conduct. (1284)

Five years later in writing to Louise about her son Michel, who was at the Bons-Enfants, he says he will send over there to see how things are but without letting it be known that that is what he was doing (I 584). The following year he writes to Lambert aux Couteaux that Louise would like Lambert to make a detour to Angers and under the guise of a casual visit conduct a visitation (II 67). Two years later he was making a visitation of the Ursulines in Beauvais and wrote from there to Bernard Codoing in Rome. He mentions that funds for the work of the ordination retreats in Rome were being provided by the Duchess of Aiguillon but that it would be better if Codoing did not let their origin be known since her uncle Cardinal Richelieu was not then popular in Rome (II 271). In the 1634 letter referred to he had added that he had made progress in this virtue of simplicity.

He had quite a share of scepticism about people. One of the reasons he wanted something like a vow of stability for the Congregation was to save it from those who joined in order to get educated at its expense and left it after ordination (IV 133). In 1658 he wrote to Edme Jolly, superior in Rome:

> I'm glad you always have plenty of people on retreat. You should be aware that quite a number of people, on pretext of making a retreat, come only for the food. There are those who are quite content to put in a quiet seven or eight days at no expense (VII 376).

A student in Saint-Lazare had a brother in Le Mans who showed interest in joining the Congregation. Vincent when writing to the superior in Le Mans suggested that perhaps the young man wanted merely to see his brother, or to see Paris, or both (VII 227).

He recognised that confrères needed from time to time to be jolted back to reality. In November 1658 he refused an attempt as "passing the buck" by Edme Menestrier, superior in Agen:

> It's not through humility that I decline to see the Bishop of Agen about your house but in order to do things properly, in other words the superior of each house informs the bishop of the diocese in which it is about its temporal needs… (VII 335).

At the opposite end of the scale was Jean Thibault, whose thirst for power was "beyond imagination" (II 292). In 1659 he mentions something similar in a letter to Jacques Pesnelle, superior in Genoa:

> …you are right in saying that those who take over in his (the superior's) absence have difficulty on his return in yielding, and in giving up the habit they've got into of running things and giving orders… (VIII 48).

In his diary, under the date on 15 September 1660, twelve days before Vincent's death, Jean Gicquel gives an account of a Council meeting about the appointment of a successor to Louise as Mother General. He quotes Vincent as saying to Jean Dehorgny, who was Director of the Daughters:

> Fr Dehorgny, you will assemble them together, and after the conference you'll announce to them the choice God has made of our sister (Marguérite Chétif) as superior, telling them beforehand that they will kiss her hands as a sign of acceptance and she will embrace them; and you will keep an eye on the faces and expressions of the community, above all of the two or three office-holders who were, perhaps, thinking that they would be appointed (XIII 180-181).

All his life he had been realistic about people. In 1655 he wrote to a confrère who was a professor in Le Mans:

> There are some people so warped that even if they had a St Thomas to teach them they would still show their real selves (V446).

A week earlier he had written to another confrère:

> We must never be surprised when the men on whom we counted most let us down (V 436).

On a lighter note, in 1658, he told the superior in Saintes:

> In future missioners who stop off at your house are to stay only

> one or two days if they have not been told, or if they have no reason, to stay longer, and you'll do well to let them see after that that they should move on to where they are supposed to be going (VII 57).

His attitude to the poor is famous, but what is not so well-known is that he was not indiscriminate. In 1650 he wrote to the Daughters of Charity in Valpuiseaux:

> That poor man came yesterday morning to collect his things at the door without either coming in or speaking to anyone except the porter. You can rest assured, Sisters, that you'll never see him down there (in Valpuiseaux) again with my consent; and if he is so unthinking as to go back I ask you to let me know immediately so that I can see to his removal. I don't think he'll ever come to see me again, for which I'll be very grateful (V 594).

Crowds of poor people used to come to Saint-Lazare each day and Abelly says that sometimes one could see up to five or six hundred. Two or three years before his death Vincent stopped giving out alms or food at Saint-Lazare when the city authorities forbade it after the founding of the General Hospital, in an attempt to rid Paris of beggars. Some of the poor complained to Vincent, saying "Didn't God command that alms be given to the poor?" His answer to that was "True enough, my friends, but he also commanded us to obey the civil authorities". During a subsequent very severe winter he relented in the case of some extremely poor families.[3] Also, he did not think that the locals should be allowed to plunder the Saint-Lazare crops, and in 1644-45 he applied to the civil authorities for permission to cut down and sell some timber on the Rougemont farm in order to raise some money to finance the rebuilding of the ruined walls of Saint-Lazare so that the locals could be kept out. They used to come in at night at harvest time and steal up to one third of the crops (II 539, text and notes, and 555). In July 1652 he made two requests for a military guard for the Rougemont farm (IV 431-2). In July 1648 he was seeking a different kind of protection for Saint-Lazare, protection against unauthorised encroachment of house-builders on one side of the property (HI 339-40, and XIII 848).

On 15 May 1658 he wrote to Edmond Barry, from the diocese of Cloyne, who was superior in Notre-Dame de Lorm:

> The people of Brial and Falquières are right when they complain that they never see you except when there is money to be collected (VII 152).

But Vincent knew that money was necessary and had to be properly used. In 1637 he told Louise that a foundation had to be properly funded because in fifty years time inflation would have cut the value of money in half (I 194. VIII 623). In 1649 he wrote to Antoine Portail in Marseilles about the difficult financial situation of both the Orsigny farm and Saint-Lazare. saying that Saint-Lazare was unable to come to the aid of the Marseilles house and wondering whether more confrères in Marseilles should sign on as chaplains to the galleys in order to bring in the salaries (III 417). Eight years later he wrote to Jean Chrètien. superior in Notre-Dame de la Rose:

> Isn't it right that Saint-Lazare. which forms men in order to supply them to other houses when they are needed, should be helped to bear the expense of this? (VI 162).

Guillaume Delville was staying in Arras in 1657, apparently in connection with some works of the Daughters of Charity. He also seems to have been in contact with young men who were showing interest in joining the Congregation, but he told Vincent that he has taken a resolution not to send any such men to Paris unless they have earned some certificate of education. Vincent told him to keep to that, and to add to it

> …anyone who cannot initially equip himself, for we cannot supply all who enter the seminaire with soutanes, dressing gowns, cloaks, hats, slippers, etc. (VI 533).

So. he adds, when Le Grand, Masson, Caron and the other two have their certificates "valid and approved", and at least 20 *écus* for their clothing, they can be sent on to Paris if suitable.

There is an earlier letter to the same confrère the previous year, and in a footnote Coste gives a long passage which he says is not in the original but appears in one copy:

> The least they can do is to bring sufficient to clothe themselves for the first time, and we make a great effort to assume all the rest of their expenses up to the time they are ready to be of some use, which are not too heavy. You couldn't believe the expenses we have and the difficulty we have in carrying the burden. I have the bursar of the house on my back telling me what he owes and what he has not got. But the fact remains, Father, what we cannot make the reduction you ask for, except in favour of the less well off from whom we will accept 20 *écus* (60 *livres);* but as regards the rest, they must bring not less than 100 *livres* all told, for their clothing.

> It is right that they should make this effort; it's not certain that they will stay with us. as frequently some leave after having been supported for five or six years in their seminaire and studies, in this way making such expenditure profitless for the Congregation (VI 70, n 5).

Shortly before this, in the same year, he had written to an unnamed confrère about postulants for the Daughters of Charity; they were to bring enough money for their first habit, and also enough to pay their return fare home if they were judged unsuitable for the community (V 635).

As well as Saint-Lazare the Bons-Enfants had money problems of a slightly different sort, as Vincent wrote to Louis Thibault in Saintes, "if he is still there", in 1646:

> There is no place at all in Paris where the fees are lower than ours, nor is there anywhere the boarders are better treated, and as a result of this we have to put up with great inconvenience, God knows (II 603).[4]

One of the aspects of the use of money about which Vincent held rather strong views was any attempt to bind any house of the Congregation to submit an account of its financial affairs to a bishop or anyone other than the Visitor. In 1652 a senator in Genoa was willing to give money to the house in the city, but with such a condition attached to the gift. On 5 July Vincent wrote to the superior in Genoa, Etienne Blatiron:

> ... to give an account to anyone other than the Visitor of the money he (the senator) will give you is something we cannot do, and I have never been willing to accept such a condition, not even for the Saint-Lazare property. When we took that over the Archbishop of Paris brought us there and wanted to oblige us to give him an account, as the former religious used to do, but I told him we'd prefer to leave the place; and no matter what anyone could say to me God gave me the grace to stand my ground. My reason was that as we go on missions from one place to another it's almost impossible to note down in detail the different expenses we incur, and in view of this difficulty, in order to draw up an account it would be necessary to suppose payments which we had not made, in place of the actual ones which we had not written down… (IV 417).

Three weeks later he wrote to Patrick Walsh,[5] who had been stationed in Genoa since 1647, on the same subject and went over the same line of

argument about Saint-Lazare, ending up with:

> The idea, Father, of missioners when they are down the country on missions keeping an exact account of all the small things they buy! (IV 437).

Ten days before his death Vincent is still maintaining the same line, this time with the Archbishop of Narbonne who wanted to hand the running of his seminary over to the Congregation; once again the argument about Saint-Lazare is used. The archbishop also wanted to reserve to himself the right to dismiss members of the Congregation from the seminary staff, but Vincent told him that other bishops were content to leave that matter in the hands of the Congregation's superiors, and he added:

> Your Excellency would greatly oblige us if you drew up the deed of agreement in the same way as the other French and Italian biships have done (VIII 451).

Towards the end of 1659 Denis Laudin, the superior in Le Mans, was considering some scheme about obtaining a better income from rents or leases and asked Vincent for his advice. Vincent replied that he cannot advise him to act in one way or the other, there being reasons for and against. The point at issue seems to have been the exclusion of some third party so that Laudin could deal directly with the tenants, and Vincent warned that if the latter

> …indicate that they would prefer to deal with you rather than with him it is because they expect you to deal with them more leniently, that you will give them a reduction, that you will not press them and will not cause them any expense. However, you will be able to obtain satisfaction from them only by dint of threats and seizures, and the easier you are with them the less they will pay you. And if you exert some force, no matter how little, they will say that you are treating them more cruelly than a *fermier général,*[6] and they will spread it around that you are avaricious, and pitiless merciless tyrants. That is how ordinary people, especially the poor, treat priests, imagining that the clergy should not look after their own interests (VIII 200).

In June 1656 Louis Rivet, superior in Saintes, is told:

> We cannot give you any brother for your garden; make use of

> workmen, as we do here (V 628).

A year later, almost to the day, Firmin Get is given the same advice, and told that in Saint-Lazare there are workmen employed in the kitchen and in other jobs, and

> The Carthusians have several, and a Barnabite Father was telling me yesterday that in their colleges they have the humanities classes taken by outside teachers whom they hire (VI 316).

He adds that it is also very expensive to send a brother from Paris to Marseilles, and anyway he hasn't got a suitable one to send. In 1659 and 1660 he mentions in letters that he is not accepting any more young men who want to become brothers because there are too many brothers in the Congregation (VII 483, VIII 287).

As well as priests and brothers Vincent also had seminarists and students to deal with. In 1642 he dismissed a seminarist who then threatened to kill him and set fire to Saint-Lazare. Vincent told this to Bernard Codoing in Rome, adding:

> Our Lord gives me strength to run this risk rather than to accept into the Congregation someone who had led the sort of life in it that he did (II 323).

In 1658 Denis Laudin, superior in Le Mans, had a troublesome student who was taking liberties, unspecified. Vincent commented that tolerance towards him would encourage others to do the same, so he suggests something like depriving him of wine at table, or something else which he will feel; if that has no effect he could be locked up in a room, if there is a suitable one like there is in Saint-Lazare. He cannot be dispensed from his vows because there is no real reason to do so, since his problem might be mere youthful high spirits. Vincent then adds:

> Perhaps, seeing himself under pressure, he will break down completely; if that happens I'll be very sorry, on the one hand because of the good he would be able to do in the Congregation and the danger he will be in if he leaves it against his vow. But, on the other hand, it will be a relief for it to be rid of someone incorrigible (VII 210).

A seminarist was dismissed on completion of his seminaire because he had no aptitude for study (II 323) but the normal word employed by Vincent in similar circumstances was "incorrigible". In the letter in

which he refers to dismissing the seminarist for lack of academic ability he also mentions that there are 36 to 38 in the seminaire, seven having entered the previous month, and adds:

> I think that our Lord grants this because he sees in the Congregation some determination in purging the incorrigible (II 323).

Two years later, 1644, he wrote:

> We have purged and re-purged our seminaire again (II 489).

Students and seminarists were not the only ones dismissed; in 1651 he dismissed a priest who was too fond of the drink (IV 295).

Another priest deserves a somewhat longer mention. Achille Le Vazeux joined the Congregation in 1639 at the age of 19. He was ordained in 1649 and sent to Rome. He was superior in Annecy from 1653 to 1659, and was then stationed in the Bons-Enfants. In 1658 Vincent wrote to Edme Jolly in Rome that there was an annoying incident in Annecy. The trouble was a legal wrangle about a house which the Congregation had acquired. Le Vazeux, who was very hot-headed, entered into the fray with great vigour and apparently accused an opposing lawyer of being a perjurer and a forger. Unfortunately this lawyer was a friend of the Bishop of Geneva, Charles-Auguste de Sales, who, according to Vincent, was never able to stomach Le Vazeux, and the bishop turned against the Congregation. Some mutual friends brought the lawyer and Le Vazeux together in an attempt at reconciliation, but the lawyer annoyed and insulted Le Vazeux who then called him *archisot,* which might be rendered "superclot". The thing escalated from there on, with Vincent sending in Thomas Berthe[7] to handle the Congregation's interests (VII 79-82). Some months later Le Vazeux was replaced as superior by Mark Cogley, from Carrick-on-Suir (VII 255, n 2). In 1652 he had claimed in a letter to Vincent that the Congregation's vows were null and that it was a mortal sin either to take them or to renew them (IV 347). Jean Gicquel in his diary, under the date of 19 September 1660, eight days before Vincent's death, has an account of a Council meeting. Jean Watebled, superior of the Bons-Enfants, asked for the removal of Le Vazeux because he was a source of trouble all the time, being undisciplined, slanderous, constantly complaining and always going out. Vincent suggested that he should be prayed for and that he should be invited to come and join in the Saint-Lazare retreat which was just beginning. He was told that Le Vazeux was surprised that others less troublesome than himself had been dismissed, and he had become suspicious. He had asked Watebled to bring Vincent a letter

asking to be allowed to leave the Congregation because his father was very old and the family was being ruined because it had no defender; secondly, because he always had "a horrible aversion to our vows which he believed must be the ruin of the Congregation"; his third reason was that he couldn't keep the rules and that he had had no peace for the previous eight months. Vincent agreed to his departure so that he could find his peace. Gicquel adds:

Fr Vincent for the next four or five days repeated several times at each meeting "What a reason for thanking God for having rid us, etc!" (XIII 186-7).

Notes

1. Franco Molinari in the Introduction to Mezzadri & Nuovo: San *Vincenzo de' Paoli—Pagine Scelte.* Roma, 1980, p. 4.
2. Abelly, livre III, ch. XII, sect. I.
3. Abelly, livre III, ch. XI, sect. HI.
4. In February 1657 Vincent wrote to Jean Martin, superior in Turin, a letter containing a passage which will awaken echoes in former deans in Castleknock and other colleges; he is writing about the increase in numbers in the Bons-Enfants:

   > We no longer know what to do to accommodate others who are applying. We are putting beds in places where they have never been before and contriving new ways of placing them (VI238).

5. Patrick Walsh was born in Limerick in 1619 or 1621. He entered the Congregation in Paris in December 1644, was ordained in 1646 and from 1647 to 1652, and from 1656 to an unknown date, he was in Genoa; his other appointments are not known, nor is his date of death.
6. A *fermier général* was one of a group of forty men whose business was "to make a forecast of the yield (in taxes) and, if their estimate was accepted, pay the State accordingly, after which they dealt directly with the taxpayer, retaining the balance for themselves". (Ritchie: *France — A Companion to French Studies,* London 1961, pp. 155-6).
7. On Thomas Berthe see *Colloque* No. l, pp. 12-13.

Louis-Joseph François

Thomas Davitt

Louis-Joseph François was born in the small town of Busigny, near Cambrai, on 3 February 1751, the son of Joseph François and Anne Legrand, the eldest child to survive of this farming family.[1] He was educated by the Jesuits in nearby Le Cateau. On 4 October 1766, not yet sixteen years old, he was received into the Congregation in Saint-Lazare, along with another lad from Busigny, Jean-Jacques Dubois, who was a year older.[2] There does not seem to be anything on record indicating why he chose the Congregation.[3]

At the time he entered the seminaire the Congregation had in France more than forty mission-houses, twelve parishes, fifty-three major and nine minor seminaries. This figure represents more than half of all the seminaries in France. It also had charge of the royal chapels and parishes of Les Invalides in Paris, Versailles and Fontainebleau, and the chaplaincy of Saint-Cyr, the famous girls' school. It also ministered on the two French islands in the Indian Ocean, Mauritius and Réunion.

Louis-Joseph finished his seminaire in October 1768 but had to wait till 4 February 1769 to reach the minimum age for taking his vows. He finished his studies at the end of the first term of 1773 but apparently had to wait some further time before ordination, as dispensations from the minimum age would not be given for less than twenty-two years and six months.[4] The exact date of his ordination is not on record.

During his last year in Saint-Lazare one of his younger brothers, Jean-Baptiste, entered the seminaire on 25 August 1772 aged nineteen and a half. Seven years later, on 16 May 1779, another brother Jean-Jacques also entered, on the day after his nineteenth birthday, and one of their sisters joined the Daughters of Charity.

It seems likely that even before his ordination he was sent to teach in a seminary. In 1790, during the period of the Revolution, he was Superior of Saint-Firmin, Paris, the former Collège des Bon-Enfants, and he had to draw up an account of the seminary and its personnel. In this account he referred to himself as having worked in seminaries for eighteen years, either as professor or Superior.[5] It is not known, however, in what house or houses he spent the early years of his priesthood. On 13 October 1781, at the age of thirty, he was appointed Superior of the seminary in Troyes. This had been in the care of the Congregation since

1638, having been the fifth house founded outside Paris.[6]

At the time he became Superior there were certain abuses needing correction. Several of the students were allowed to go to Paris to follow courses at the Sorbonne, and some of these stayed in digs without any supervision. With the support of the Bishop of Troyes he made new arrangements. Such students would now need the permission of the Bishop to go to Paris and while there would be allowed to stay only with religious communities, and they would have to make known as soon as possible where they were staying and what courses they were following. They were forbidden to change residence without permission from the Bishop or from the Rector of the seminary. Louis-Joseph was entrusted by the Bishop with seeing to the implementation of these new guidelines.

In July 1786 at the end of the 15th General Assembly the Secretary General, Marc-François Bourgeat, tendered his resignation for reasons of age and health, as he was seventy-five. Antoine Jacquier, the Superior General, appointed Louis-Joseph to succeed him.

That same month Louis-Joseph was also in the news for another reason, as one of the preachers at the centenary celebrations of Saint-Cyr. This school had been founded by Madame de Maintenon for the education of 250 girls of the nobility who were in reduced circumstances, preferably the daughters of noblemen who had died in the service of the king. Four years after its foundation Louis XIV forced the Congregation to assume its chaplaincy. Edme Jolly, the then Superior General, set up a house where missioners could reside with the chaplains. On the 25, 26 and 27 July 1786 the centenary celebrations took place, and Louis-Joseph was the preacher on the second day. He delivered a eulogy of the foundress, which when published later ran to 78 pages of print.[7]

On 23 December 1787 Sister Marie-Thérèsa de Saint-Augustin died in the Carmelite monastery in Saint-Denis outside Paris. She was the daughter of Louis **XV** and was formerly known as Madame Louise de France. Her Carmelite life was an expiation for the misconduct of her father.[8] On 25 April 1788, in the Carmelite monastery in the rue de Grenelle in Paris, Louis-Joseph delivered the official funeral oration. This was also published, and ran to 95 pages.[9]

As Secretary General he was resident in Saint-Lazare and when he was to speak at the Tuesday Conferences “all the clergy of Paris” turned up, according to a note referred to in the collection of the Superior Generals’ circulars.[10]

On 6 November 1787 Antoine Jacquier, the ninth Superior General, died. The sixteenth General Assembly opened on 30 May 1788 and

ended on 18 June. Francis Clet, Superior of the seminary in Annecy, was present. Edward Ferris, from Kerry, Superior of the seminary in Amiens was elected Third Assistant to the Superior General.[11] The new Superior General was Jean-Félix Cayla de la Garde.

On 28 July 1788 the Superior of Saint-Firmin, Jean-Humbert Cousin, died at the age of fifty-seven. He was a native of Le Cateau, near Louis-Joseph's native place, and had been Visitor. The new General appointed Louis-Joseph to replace him as Superior in Saint-Firmin. In the past this seminary had not done too well. It attracted very few students and the buildings were in poor repair. It was thought that perhaps its name, Collège des Bons-Enfants, was not one likely to attract students, so at some stage during the 18th century the name was altered to Saint-Firmin, after the Bishop of Amiens who was titular of the seminary chapel. There had also been a long drawn-out lawsuit about the Congregation's title to the property. When this was finally settled in favour of the Congregation the fourteenth General Assembly decided in 1774 to undertake a large programme of reconstruction.[12] This was started, but the final part of it, a new chapel dedicated to St Vincent, was not proceeded with because of the political situation.[13] Louis-Joseph was chosen as Superior apparently because he was thought to be the sort of man who would carry on the policy of renewal decided on by the 1774 Assembly. He was thirty-seven years old, the oldest priest on the staff. Jean-Louis Dessessement was thirty-six, Etienne de Langres was thirty-four and the Bursar Joseph-Mansuet Boullangier was thirty-one. There were three laybrothers also in the community.

The Estates General opened in Versailles on 5 May 1789, and in about six weeks became the National Assembly. On 14 July came the fall of the Bastille. The previous day, however, at about 2.30 in the morning, a mob of about two hundred attacked Saint-Lazare and wrecked the place, breaking windows and doors and smashing furniture. Once the place had been broken into the mob increased to about four thousand. The famous collection of paintings was hacked to pieces and so were books in the library. The grazing sheep in the grounds were slaughtered and the out-buildings set on fire. About a hundred of the mob got drunk in the cellars and were drowned in the wine which they had let spill out on the floor.

Others who broke into the dispensary were poisoned.[14] Cayla and two of his Assistants were able to climb over the back wall and make their escape, taking refuge in Saint-Firmin. Edward Ferris did not fare so well, as "having gone out to fetch help he was followed and beaten up, and covered with blood he succeeded in escaping from such cruelty only by hiding in a succession of houses, each of which offered him

asylum".[15] The following day Cayla and some other confrères were able to return.

Shortly after this Cayla became a member of the National Assembly when one of the elected priests resigned; he had been elected first substitute. In spite of some advice to the contrary he took his seat in the Assembly, and took part in at least two debates including one on Church property. In November 1789 it was voted, that all Church property be confiscated by the State, which would then undertake to pay what was necessary for maintaining religious services, pay salaries to priests and take care of the poor. The vote was that this should be done; the actual carrying out of the decision did not take place for some time. In connection with this vote Louis-Joseph brought out a pamphlet *An Opinion on Church Property.* It may have been in answer to one by an ex-confrère Adrien Lamourette.[16]

On 14 April next year, 1790, the Assembly put into practice its decision on Church property. Hand in hand with this went a policy of doing everything possible to discredit the Church and the clergy in the eyes of the people. It is against this background that the matter of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy arises.

Discussion on the Civil Constitution of the Clergy began on 29 May 1790 and lasted nearly two months, it being finally passed on 24 July. Article IV was a key article and it laid down that the Pope had no authority in France, that bishops and priests were to be elected to office by a panel of citizens (not necessarily Catholics). During the Revolutionary period there was a great fashion for demanding oaths of various kinds from different classes of people. On 27 November 1790 it was decided that an oath of fidelity to the Civil Constitution of the Clergy would have to be taken within a week of the decree receiving royal approbation. January 9, 1791, was the day for the priests of Paris to take it. They were to swear "to look after with care the faithful entrusted to them, to be loyal to the nation, to the law and to the king and to uphold with all their power the Constitution decreed by the National Assembly and accepted by the king".[17] Louis-Joseph was against the taking of the oath from the start, although at first he was not sure what exactly the wording was supposed to mean. No priest in Saint-Firmin took the oath; for some reason it was not asked of the priests in Saint-Lazare.[18] Before the end of January Louis-Joseph was in print again with a pamphlet called *Mon Apologie,* which has to be understood as *Apologia* in the sense in which Newman used it and not as *Apology.* He began like this:

> I have not taken the civil oath prescribed by the decree of 27

> November. Reason and honour demand that I give an account of my behaviour to all my confrères in the priesthood whose thinking differs from mine. I owe this account also to the people, to erase from all minds even the shadow of scandal. I am going to give the account just as I read it in my heart and just as I would wish to present it before God's tribunal at the moment of my death.[19]

Quite a large proportion of the work had to be given over to the rebuttal of arguments which had been put forward in an attempt to get as many of the clergy as possible to take the oath. One such argument was that a great many clergy had already taken it. To this he replies:

> There are a great many who have taken the oath, but a still greater number have refused to do so, and a comparison of the number of those refusing with the number of those accepting should be enough to clarify all doubts.

Another argument is approached this way:

> The Assembly claims that it has not interfered with spiritual matters. That is too old a trick to deceive even the simplest of men.

Earlier on he had touched on this same point:

> Canonical institution and the Church's mission have always been regarded as the source of jurisdiction. Persons receiving their call or appointment only from the people or from a magistrate, and who with lay authorisation arrogated to themselves sacred functions have always been regarded as intruders and thieves.

Another argument used was "Think what will happen to you if you don't take the oath". Louis-Joseph takes up this challenge too:

> If you don't take the oath look at what you expose yourself to — you will be struck from the register of active citizens; you will be dealt with as disturbers of public order; you will have no salary; you will be condemned to die of hunger…
>
> "You'll have no salary". I will rely on the charity of the people. I will continue to give them my work, my attention and to lose my night's sleep for them.

Shortly after this, up in Brittany, Pierre-René Rogue was writing letters to the local authorities to claim his full salary as professor and curate, which he was not receiving. He claimed that even though he had not taken the oath he was entitled to these by law.

One final extract from *Mon Apologie* is a eulogy of those priests who did not take the oath:

> Jeered, slandered, heaped with insults, and with nothing ahead except the horrors of a violent death with which they were threatened every day by a mob whom nothing could restrain, they could expect only to be stripped of all they had, together with a life of want and suffering. They were branded as bad citizens, traitors to their country, yet one single word from them would have spared them all this. But how could their mouths utter a word which their consciences could not accept? How could they betray the interests of God to give in to those of men?

This pamphlet ran through at least seven editions. On 24 March 1791 Henri Gregoire, a constitutional bishop, in a pastoral letter on taking possession of his see, attacked it. Louis-Joseph came out with an answer to the attack, on 4 April, entitled *The Defence of "Mon Apologie" against Monsieur Henri Grégoire.* This also quickly reached seven editions. Between *Mon Apologie* and *The Defence* Louis-Joseph brought out five other pamphlets.

The numbers refusing to take the oath completely surprised the Assembly. They had badly miscalculated, thinking that the threats would have been enough to get the majority to take it. The numbers refusing also caused a change of mind in some who had taken it. These men tried to hand in to the Assembly a written retraction of their oath, but these letters were not accepted. They then published their retractions in the newspapers, where they did even more good.

These, together with the pastoral letters brought out by many bishops, had the effect of keeping many people on the right path during these confused times. To counteract all this the Assembly decided to draw up a pastoral letter of its own to be read in all churches in France and the writing of it was entrusted to Mirabeau. His draft was rejected after discussion in the Assembly. Louis-Joseph had prepared a reply to Mirabeau, but it was not needed. When the Assembly's new pastoral letter was published he had a reply ready for this too: *An Examination of the National Assembly's Instruction on the Constitution of the Clergy.* It is a refutation of the main points of the *Instruction,* and it ends with a quotation from the *Instruction* neatly turned against its authors:

> Frenchmen! Now you know the thoughts and principles of your representatives; don't allow yourselves to be led astray any longer by lying claims.

One of the arguments constantly repeated by those in favour of the oath was that refusal to take it would lead to schism. Louis-Joseph brought out another pamphlet: *Reflexions on the Fear of Schism.* He briefly explained what schism meant:

> You are guilty of schism when you cut yourself off from your lawfully appointed bishop, when you question his authority, when you refuse to accept him as your superior and instead accept someone else.

Since that is the case then obviously to take the oath is to go into schism, rather than the other way around as the defenders of the oath would claim. He showed that what the defenders of the oath were really saying was that one should go into schism in order to avoid going into schism!

The Assembly were still annoyed and surprised that so many clergy, and the most important and influential were among them, consistently refused to take the oath. They were similarly affected by the retractions. What annoyed Louis-Joseph was that the published lists of clergy contained the names of many who did not swear. They also listed those who took the oath with reservations, but these reservations were not mentioned.

The Assembly's next attempt to deal with the non-swearing clergy was to suggest that they voluntarily resign their posts. In the case of bishops who resigned there would be a reasonably large pension. In February 1791 a decree was published giving the pensions to be paid to other clergy who would resign, linked to the scale of their former income, and with a fixed minimum. A number of bishops and priests were tempted by this offer as it seemed to provide a way of letting themselves off the hook. By not taking the oath they could salve their consciences, and by resigning they thought they could avoid compromising the Church. Louis-Joseph did not see it that way, and he took up his pen again and brought out *No Resignation.* It contained two basic theses: We do not have the power to resign, and even if we had we should not do so. He argues that a resignation is valid only if accepted by the superior authority, and continues:

> The resignation which the Assembly demands does not depend on us, is not within our power. As long as the Church has not spoken, as long as it has not released us, resignation on our part can be nothing but an invalid act.

He then sets out to demolish four main arguments advanced in favour of the resignation scheme:

1. The people no longer want priests who have not taken the oath;
2. Such priests can do no good by resisting the law:
3. They will be hounded down no matter where they go and their stubbornness will lead to schism;
4. Their resignation could spare France this misfortune.

He addresses the civil powers:

> It is not within your power to take from us something which we did not receive from you. Truth and the ministry of the word come from God. He commissions us to proclaim his promises and threats, his punishments and rewards. He strikes us with his anathema if we fail him. He orders us to speak, you forbid us. He is our judge and yours, and we must obey him rather than you. You speak to us of resigning and giving up our responsibilities. You have the power to deprive us of our incomes, our honours and our privileges; we will let you have them all, but leave us the people. No human authority can withdraw them from our jurisdiction, nor snatch them from our zeal and love.

All these publications had great effect on those members of the clergy who were hesitant and uncertain, enabling them to see the issues involved and to make up their minds correctly as a result.

Louis-Joseph next turned his attention to those who had already taken the oath, especially those who had taken it through fear or through having been deceived by the schism argument. He wanted to let them see that what they had done was not final and that they could still retract. He published a twenty-page booklet called *There is Still Time,* its title indicating it contents.

Reference was made above to a constitutional bishop. The first of

these were consecrated in Paris on 25 February 1791. Among them were two confrères, Nicolas Philibert who had been Superior in Sedan and Visitor of Champagne, and Jean-Baptiste-Guillaume Gratien who had been Superior of the seminary in Chartres.

Louis-Joseph brought out a refutation of Gratien's defence of the Civil Constitution of the clergy but no accurate details of it seem to be available.[20]

On 10 March Pius VI sent a letter to the bishops of France and on 15 April another to the clergy and faithful of France, and he explicitly condemned the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. As might have been expected this was attacked by the authorities, and that attack was in turn counter-attacked by Louis-Joseph.

His next work was of a totally different kind. He thought very highly of a work entitled *Antidote against Schism* by Pierre-Grégoire Labiche, a theologian in the Sorbonne. Louis-Joseph brought out a popular abridged edition and called it *At Last the People See.* It refuted twenty-eight of the arguments most frequently advanced in favour of the Civil Constitution. It ran into four editions, with some additional arguments refuted in the later ones.

In October 1791 a new Assembly came into power and took a much more hostile attitude to the Church, including new measures against clergy who had not taken the oaths. On 29 November it drew up a new formula for an oath. New penalties were also introduced including the possibility of a year's inprisonment for those refusing to take the oath and two years for provoking disobedience to the law. On 19 December Louis XVI refused to sanction the proposed law, and Louis-Joseph brought out a new pamphlet *Apologia for the King's Veto.* Faced with the threat of penalties he strikes a new note:

> The penalties announced for refusal to take the oath are therefore a real persecution, and today the refusal of the oath is a profession of faith.
> Those who suffer for refusing to swear suffer for truth and justice. The glory of confessors shines around them and the martyrs' crown rests on their heads.

That was his last venture into print, although he lived on until the following September. Most of his writings went through several impressions or editions. Joseph Boullangier who was Bursar in Saint-Firmin and who survived the massacre wrote later:

> Fr François was one of the most zealous and best defenders of the Catholic, Apostolic and Roman religion against the oath demanded from priests by the French National Assembly, and also against the writings of those in favour of the oath.

In the civil administration of the city of Paris Saint-Firmin was in the section of the Jardin des Plantes. Louis-Joseph was on very good terms with the local authorities, and because there were no seminarians in the college he let one wing of it, with some other accommodation, to the local administration in February 1792. From the previous November he had begun taking in priests who sought asylum from the persecution they experienced in their own localities. Also because there were no seminarians to occupy his time he spent much of it until mid-August away on pastoral work, mainly in the diocese of Versailles.

During this year of 1792 there occurred a succession of events which had their effect on the clergy of France. On 6 April a motion for the suppression of all secular congregations was introduced into the legislative Assembly in Paris, and on the 28th there was a prohibition of the wearing of clerical dress except during religious ceremonies. On 27 May it became possible for priests who had not taken the oath to be deported if twenty citizens of a canton requested it. It could also happen without such a request if a priest was denounced for causing trouble.

During the early summer of 1792 the parents of Louis-Joseph up in Busigny were getting worried about their three sons who were priests, especially the eldest who was in the thick of things in Paris. They sent their youngest son, Pierre, down to Paris to ask Louis-Joseph to return to the less dangerous area of Busigny, a suggestion which he could not, of course, accept. On 11 July their father died. When word reached Busigny later on about the massacres in Paris, Pierre made the journey once again, only to discover this time that his brother had been among the victims.

On 10 August there was a take-over of the municipal power in Paris by a small radical group, and they got their take-over ratified by the Assembly. That same day officials were nominated to go all over Paris and to invite the citizens to take their own means to see that lawbreakers were punished. On the evening of the 10th a list of all bishops and priests who had not taken the prescribed oaths was drawn up and it was decided to arrest them all and to imprison them in the Carmelite church in rue de Vaugirard or in Saint-Firmin. The following day citizens were invited to denounce conspirators and suspects to the authorities. Both terms were extremely wide. The day after that, the 12th, there was a special denun-

ciation of priests as troublemakers. Arrests had started around 11 o'clock on the morning of the llth and continued all through the following days.

On the morning of the 13th a guard was placed on Saint-Firmin and all those inside automatically became prisoners, including Louis-Joseph. By the evening of that day there were sixty-three prisoners there. Joseph Boullangier, the Bursar, survived the eventual massacre and wrote an account of conditions there based on his personal observation. Because of his duties he was one of the prisoners who was allowed to move freely around the house. The others were severely restricted in their movements and there were armed guards stationed at intervals all through the house. People from outside brought along food, but letters were not allowed in or out without first being seen by one of the officials. One of the weirder aspects of the situation was that some priests who had taken the prescribed oaths took their turns as guards outside the seminary.

Boullangier tells us that at the beginning of his imprisonment Louis-Joseph made a retreat and general confession, and provided the same facilities then for all the others. There was Mass every day, but it is not clear whether each individual priest could celebrate, or even whether all could be present, each day.

On 18 August the Congregation of the Mission was officially suppressed in France. On 6 April a motion for the suppression of all secular congregations had been introduced into the Assembly and on 18 August it was brought into effect:

> The National Assembly, after having three readings of the project of the decree on the suppression of secular congregations... decrees the following: (1) the corporations known in France under the name of secular ecclesiastical congregations, such as those of the Priests of the Oratory, of Christian Doctrine, of the Mission or of Saint Lazare, of the Eudists, of the Holy Spirit, of Saint Sulpice… and generally all the religious corporations and congregations of men and women, except those devoted solely to the service of hospitals… are extinguished and suppressed from the date of the publication of the present decree.[21]

Up till the end of August new prisoners were still arriving at the seminary. By the 31st there were definitely ninety-seven there, and probably about four more.

On 1 September an official came to take the names of all those who were in Saint-Firmin. On the following morning an official copy of a decree of deportation was delivered to the seminary. This was discussed

by Louis-Joseph and the others and they interpreted it as indicating that they would soon be released. They had been threatened several times with death, but were inclined to think that it was just to frighten them. What they did not know, though, was that already on that same Sunday, 2 September, a group of prisoners in the Conciergerie prison, and about two hundred priests imprisoned in the Carmelite church, had been killed. The September massacres had already begun.

At eight o'clock in the evening Boullangier went down to the kitchen. The butcher's boy was there and he told Boullangier that all the prisoners were to be murdered that evening. Boullangier went up to Louis-Joseph to let him know about this, thinking that perhaps it might be a trap. The Superior was surprised, but not inclined to take it too seriously. However, he sent one of the seminary servants to try to find out more, while Boullangier went back to the kitchen. The boy was still there and this time he told him of the massacre at the Carmelites church and that a delay of even fifteen minutes could be fatal. Two other youngsters had arrived with this news. Boullangier mentioned that the seminary was under guard, but one of the boys said that that was of little use against a mob of 4,000. Boullangier went back up to Louis-Joseph and told him all this, and this time they were inclined to take it more seriously, especially as the servant had not returned. Louis-Joseph began to prepare for his departure, while Boullangier returned to the kitchen. There the three boys grabbed him and dragged him out into the street and got him away safely. Then the butcher's boy went back into the house but this time was met by a reinforced guard and he couldn't go in any further.

Word quickly spread that Boullangier had escaped and a few others decided to make their own attempt. Two got away across the roof into a neighbouring property, and two more hid in the lofts. One priest on the point of escape went back for his breviary and was unable to get out again.

At 5.30 on the morning of Monday 3 September the mob arrived and broke in the gate of the seminary. Nicholas Gaumer, a confrère who had sought refuge there before 13 August, was the first to notice what was happening and he rushed to warn Louis-Joseph. Some of the mob saw what he was trying to do and followed him to kill him, so he had to change his plan. He knew the layout of the property and ran across a small yard and got up on a roof. A shot from his pursuers knocked off his hat and he left part of his clothing on a spiked gate as he climbed over, but he succeeded in escaping. He was the first of seven confrères who succeeded in escaping being murdered that day. In all, about thirty-five of the prisoners in Saint-Firmin escaped death, including seven who

were officially spared.

The seven confrères were: Boullangier and Gaumer, already dealt with; Etienne de Langres, who was on the staff of the seminary. He sprained an ankle while getting over a wall but fortunately was picked up by a friendly man who gave him shelter; Philippe-Bernard Adam who had come to Paris in July 1789 in connection with a lawsuit and had remained on in Saint-Firmin ever since; he hid in a loft and on 3 September was by official decree given into the care of a gentleman, though the reason for this is not recorded; the three laybrothers of the community, Louis Danois, Jean-Baptiste Ducroux and one surnamed Leroy, were able to effect their escape, apparently because of their knowledge of the layout of the property.

The group of people who actually first broke into the seminary had the idea of turning some of the prisoners out into the street so that the mob there could finish them off, but surprisingly the mob indicated that they did not want to kill priests, so they were brought back inside. This group was led by a labourer-porter and they went into the hall which was being used as a refectory by the prisoners. The leader grabbed one of the priests and threw him out the window, and then the others set upon the rest of the prisoners, beating some of them to death with hunks of wood and dragging others out into the yard. Louis-Joseph, who had been making his preparations to get out (according to Boullangier) heard of the first killings and went in to the section of the building which he had let to the local civil administration in February. This was the ground-floor and first floor of the short leg of the L-shaped buliding, the part along the rue Saint Victor. He pleaded for the lives of the priests but the officials were divided among themselves, according to Gabriel Perboyre: "The good he had done in the area, the reputation he had because of this, his exceptional even-temperedness, spoke in his favour and some members of the committee wanted to save him from death. But his writings against the oath were too well-known and had been so effective that the persecutors-in-chief had him specially marked out for their assasins".[22] While the discussion was going on some of the mob broke into the room and threw Louis-Joseph out of the window, either into the street or into the yard, depending on which window was used. On the ground he was finished off by a group of women with heavy wooden clubs used for pulverising plaster. As the massacre proceeded others were thrown out from windows on all floors, some left dangling by their feet before being let drop. On the ground there were the women with clubs already mentioned, and others with scissors who gouged out the eyes of some of those thrown out. Inside the seminary others were killed with sword-

thrusts, while others who were thrown out the windows were caught on pikes by those below. The details of how they died are available for only six of the victims, including Louis-Joseph. Seventy-two were killed in Saint-Firmin that day, and the bodies were buried in different places of which no particulars are now known.

Misermont thinks that the September massacres were not spontaneous but were planned and organised by five or six persons, well-known to many. They organised and paid a band to carry them out, and while a number of others joined in the vast majority of the people of Paris were not involved.[23]

Over the next few years there were some attempts to bring the guilty to justice, but of the fifty or so arrested only three were found guilty and sentenced to twenty years imprisonment. The judges were reluctant to sentence those who were not the primary culprits. The latter were dead, or in exile or simply safe in their homes.

Notes

1. The main printed sources for the life of Louis-Joseph Francois are: Misermont: *Le Bienheureux François* (Paris 1929); Coste, in *Annales de la CM,* vol. 91 (1926), pp 802-842; *Notices sur les Prêtres, Clercs et Frères Défunts de la CM,* vol. V, pp 47-51. *Recueil des Principales Circulates des Sup. Gen. de la CM,* vol. II pp 605-6. Extracts from Boullangier's memoirs and Louis-Joseph's writings are from Misermont, and Coste except for *Mon Apologie* (cf note 19).
2. After the Revolution Dubois became Parish Priest of Sainte-Marguérite in Paris. He had somehow managed to rescue four of the eleven large paintings from the chapel in Saint-Lazare which were done for the canonisation, together with another painting of St Vincent. In all there were twelve paintings in the chapel and many houses of the Congregation have the set of engravings of them. The five paintings are still in Sainte-Marguérite and another one is in the church of Bourg-la-Reine in the Paris suburbs.
3. The confrères did not come to Cambrai seminary till 1773. *(Répertoire Historique,* p. 15).
4. Misermont p. 19.
5. Misermont p. 21. In the Proprium CM for the Divine Office, both Latin and English versions, in the biographical notes before the office for 2 September, some items of information under Louis-Joseph Frangis should refer to John Henry Gruyer, and vice-versa: "... was assigned mainly to the formation of the clergy" and "... where he was superior" should refer to LJF, and "... devoted himself mainly to the parish ministry" should refer to JHG.
6. In 1654 two Irish regiments with their dependants were in Troyes. John McEnnery, from Co. Limerick, was on the staff of the seminary and Vincent

asked him to take pastoral care of them (V 75). Gerald Brin was Superior there in 1657-58 (VI 360). Philip Dalton, from the diocese of Cashel, was also there in 1658 (VII 332).

7. (Rosset): *Notices Bibliographiques sur les Ecrivains de la CM,* (Angoulême, 1898), p. 111.
8. Coste, p. 806.
9. Rosset, p. 111.
10. *Recueil*... (as above), vol. II, p. 606.
11. Acta of the Assembly (CM Archives, Rome).
12. *Recueil*... (as above), vol. II, pp. 96-99.
13. Misermont, p. 37.
14. *Recueil*... (as above), vol. II, pp. 221ff, and 562ff.
15. *Annales de la CM,* vol. 72, p. 304.
16. Lamourette was born in 1742 and after working in the Congregation for some years returned to his own diocese. He took the required oath and was elected a constitutional bishop. In spite of this he was later arrested and imprisoned. In prison he retracted his commitment to the new system. He was executed in 1794. (Rosset, pp. 276ff).
17. Coste, p. 810, quoting from the Archives Nationales.
18. Coste, p. 811, note 1.
19. *Mon Apologie* is printed in full in *Recueil. . .* pp. 577-578.
20. Coste, p. 817, note 1.
21. Poole: *A History of the CM, 1625-1843,* (1973), p. 354.
22. *Annales de la CM,* vol. 73, pp. 665 ff.
23. Misermont, p. 214.

Province of Ireland 1980

A. **Personnel.**

Entries:

Celbridge:	Byrne, Peter (Castleknock).
	Scallon, Paschal (Castleknock).
Nigeria:	Gbodi, Hyacinth
	Ochu, Austin
	Kuewa, Nicholas
	Nwagwu, Dominic
	Tyungu, Joseph

Withdrawals:

Kame-Keusson, Joseph (1979) 15.2.1980.
Kelly, Maurice (1978) 2.3.1980.
Lyons, Jim (1978)3.8.1980.
Ezenne, Emmanuel (1978) 8.1980.
Nkwocha, Godwin (1978) 8.1980.
Farrelly, Joseph decided to take a year's leave of absence.

Vows:

Diala, Richard 27.9.1980. Edem, Michael 27.9.1980. Gallagher, John 1.11.1980.

Deaths:

Brother Seán O'Dell (19-54-60) 24.6.1980.
Father Christopher O'Leary (4-24-29) 30.11.1980.

B. **Events.**

1. On the feast of St Benedict, the llth of July, the Visitor, Father Richard McCullen, was elected Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission, (cf. *Colloque,* no. 3 pp. 5-10).

   A Mini-Assembly for all the English-speaking delegates to the General Assembly was held in Damascus House, June 2-6. The General Assembly opened in Rome on June 16.

   The two delegates from the Province to the General Assembly were Fathers Frank Mullan and Michael Prior.

   In September-October Father McCullen, accompanied by Father James H. Murphy, visited all the houses of the Province in Great Britain and Ireland.

2. Having consulted the Province, the Superior General — on November 4 — appointed Father Francis Mullan as Visitor. Father Mullan was Director of the Daughters of Charity of the Province of ireland and Superior of De Paul House, Celbridge.

3. A new mission team — Fathers Kevin Scallon (Superior), Scan Johnston and Aidan Galvin — was established and took up residence in St Joseph's, 44 Stillorgan Park, Blackrock.

4. Father Michael McCullagh was appointed by the Archbishop of Dublin personal Parish Priest to the travelling people of the diocese.

5. Father McCullen returned to Ireland to preach at celebrations in St Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh, on December 7, to mark the 150th anniversary of the revelations of Our Lady to St Catherine Labouré.
   A very successful essay competition on Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal, sponsored jointly by the Vincentians and Daughters of Charity and open to students in their final two years in Secondary Schools, in Seminaries, Colleges of Education and other third level institutions throughout the country, was organised by Father Thomas O'Flynn. The prizes were presented by Bishop Dermot O'Mahony, Auxiliary Bishop of Dublin, in St Peter's, Phibsboro.

6. A special seminar on Community Discernment, directed by Father Futrell, S.J., was held for the Superiors of the Province.

7. The first number of *"Nigerian Newsletter C.M."* was published in November.

8. The four Community Retreats — based on *Lectio Divina* — were planned and directed by members of a special Commission.

Irish Vincentians in China

I. *Before the establishment of the Chinese mission of the Irish Province:*

(All dates in this section and in section III below are taken from van den Brandt: *Les Lazaristes en Chine* (Peking 1936), except for that of James Milner.

		Birth	Arrival in China
1	Robert Hanna	1762	1788
2	Michael Dowling	1820	1850
3	Thomas Fitzpatrick	1835	1862
4	Patrick Moloney	1846	1871
5	Denis Nugent	1885	1913
6	Michael McKiernan	1888	1915
7	James Feely	1887	1917

Note: Frs Nugent and McKiernan never worked with the Irish Province mission; Fr Feely transferred to it in 1920.

II. *Excerpts from letters in the archives, compiled by James H. Murphy:*

(a) *Patrick McHale, Third Assistant, to François Verdier, Superior General, November 1919;*

Fr Patrick O'Gorman, superior of St Joseph's, Peking, asks urgently that one or two of the Irish confrères already in China should be appointed to his house for at least a year. The reason for this is that neither Fr O'Gorman nor his companion has a sufficient fluency in the language for either preaching or catechising.

(b) *Joseph Walshe, Provincial, to Verdier, 6 April 1920:*

Mgr Ciceri, to whom I had sent a telegram asking him to be good enough to lend Fr Feely, an Irishman, to our little Irish mission in Peking, wrote to Fr O'Gorman, superior, who also had written about Fr Feely: "If you wish to have him I won't make any objection, both for his own sake since he has obvious good qualities, and for the sake of your work which needs a third Confrère". In view of Fr O'Gorman's great need, for

their school, of a confrère who knows Chinese I request, Father, that you authorise the loan of Fr Feely for a year.

(c) *Walshe to Verdier, 28 July 1920:*

I have the honour to inform you that at the Provincial Council yesterday all its members were agreed that we should accept the Vicariate in China which Progananda, through you, has offered to our Province. I hope we shall be able to send three missionaries there before long. At the moment we cannot really spare three confrères for this work, but I really believe this little sacrifice will draw many blessings down on our poor Province.

(d) *Walshe to Verdier, 2 September 1920:*

My Consultors and myself are in agreement that Fr Richard Ryan would be very suitable as superior of our section of Mgr Fabrégues' vicariate. It is only a few months since you appointed him superior of Malvern in Australia, but both before and since his appointment he expressed to me his desire to go to China. Besides, he is good and intelligent and a confrère who in our opinion would later on be a worthy head of the autonomous region. I am going to write to Mgr Fabrégues to send him a small offering for his poor people stricken by the terrible famine.

(e) *Walshe to Verdier, 8 October 1920:*

I am afraid I did not express my thoughts about China clearly in my letter on this matter. I merely wish that our mission be *postponed,* not by any means abandoned. A confrère is at present getting ready to set out for Peking where he will work with our Irish confrères in Tung Tang and will learn Chinese, until we are able to send 2 or 3 confrères, next year probably.

(f) *James Bennett, Provincial, to Verdier, 26 April 1922:*

After much consideration I see no possibility of being able to send any confrère to Mgr Jarlin for six years to come. Five of our houses here are understaffed and we are employing secular priests and laymen where we should have our own confrère.

There are also demands from Australia and Peking which we cannot concede. It would not be right to undertake further work in these circumstances. It is with regret therefore that we cannot accede to your expressed wish.

(g) *Bennett to Verdier, 11 July 1926:*

I expect Fr O'Gorman's resignation from the post of Curé at St

Joseph's Church, Peking, will be put into Monsignor Fabrégues' hands when he arrives at the Petang, Peking. For the present we are retaining Fr O'German as Local Superior there.

(h) *Bennett to Verdier, 31 July 1928:*

Owing to deaths and disablements amongst the confrères during the past year we cannot allow Fr Murnaghan to go to the Argentine. We have also from Peking a very urgent demand for a confrère from Mgr Fabregues. My predecessor, Fr Walshe, accepted Fr Murnaghan for the Chinese Mission and they therefore have a claim on his services before any other Mission.

(i) *Bennett to Verdier, 5 November 1930:*

At a meeting of the Provincial Council yesterday it was unanimously agreed that the name of Fr Maurice Kavanagh be sent to your Reverence, recommending him as Superior of the community at St Joseph's, Morrison St., Peking, China.

There has been no superior appointed since Fr O'Gorman left two years ago. Fr Daniel O'Connell, his assistant, took his place in his absence. Now it is evident that Fr O'Gorman is unable to return, and so a vacancy arises.

III. *Confrères of the Irish Province who worked in China:*

		Arrival in China
8	James Mullins	31-01-1919
9	Patrick O'Gorman	17-06-1919
10	Patrick Barry	22-07-1921
11	Michael Howard	22-12-1923
12	Daniel O'Connell	19-03-1925
13	Maurice Kavanagh	28-11-1926
14	Michael Crowley	28-11-1926
15	Kevin Murnaghan	16-11-1928
16	Andrew Kavanagh	24-12-1932
17	Thomas Rice	18-12-1933
18	James Milner	1937

IV. *Excerpts from EVANGELIZARE:*

1. *From Patrick O'Gorman's diary:*

13th August 1919: Taking Possession. After some flying visits Father Mullins and I took up our abode at Tung Tang on August 13th 1919. On Friday I celebrated Solemn High Mass, Fr Tchas being Deacon and Fr Mullins Subdeacon. Fr Tchas said a few words of introduction after the Mass. This was our first formal meeting with our new flock. They appeared very pleased to have us in their midst at last and we were certainly very glad to be there.

15th August 1919: After Mass this morning I had a visit from the Catechists of the parish, headed by Mr Ly who spoke French and acted as their interpreter. I hope (DV) that it will not be too long until I myself will be able to speak to them and to all the good people of Tung Tang in fair Chinese. We are very fortunate in having, according to all, a good Christian people as a whole. We visited the Sisters at the Hospice. Naturally they are very glad at the prospect of having morning Mass henceforth ... they and their old fogies and children and grown girls. Here in Tung Tang we are fortunate in having a really fine church, schools and plenty of ground for building if ever needed.

8th September 1919: Today we opened our new school at the request of Mgr Jarlin. For the present we hold our classes in what formerly served as an oratory, in the verandah and salon. We started with eight Europeans and eight Chinese. Fr Mullins' great scholastic experience is invaluable in dealing with both classes. Fortunately, being in Peking since Feb. 1st, he had learned sufficient Chinese to make himself understood by both the Chinese boys from the start. The weather which had been very hot in the months of July and August has now become pretty cold, though sunny, throughout the day. Hitherto we have been able to hold some classes out of doors… We are fortunate in having a suitable playground for our students. Dr Anheuser presented us with a football which is greatly appreciated.

*Christmas 1919:*1 sang Midnight Mass. Several hundreds went to Holy Communion altogether between Midnight Mass and the Masses on Christmas morning. A good mail arrived and revived many home memories. During the day we had many visits from well-wishers. In the evening Fr Phoo entertained us with some Chinese music on the flute. Altogether we had a most enjoyable time this, our first, Christmas and New Year in Peking.

1920: This year nothing eventful happened until the arrival of Fr J. E. Feely from Kiang-si on March 17th. Fr Feely, already three years in China, has been lent to us for a year or two by Mgr Ciceri CM. Mgr de Vienne, the new co-adjutor, just back from Europe, has been a frequent visitor, much interested in us and our work. From time to time he and many others, French, Dutch, Belgian, Italian and even some German missionaries have dropped in on us to see our school and occasionally to join us at dinner. On March 17th we celebrated St Patrick's Day as worthily as we could. We had a good number of Chinese priests to give us all good wishes for the feast. We had an impromptu concert and tried to make ourselves mutually understood as best we could in Latin, Chinese and French. During Lent and the months of May and June we noted the fervour of the poor people in chanting their prayers before, during and after Mass, Benediction, Stations etc. In Holy Week we had the ceremonies. Fr Mullins gave a retreat to the boys, before breaking up for Easter. As spring advanced to summer the weather became more agreeable though, unfortunately, at this season the rather pleasant climate of Peking is marred by great winds and consequent dust storms.

June 1920: Fr John Rossiter (of Enniscorthy), Superior General of the Sacred Heart Fathers, called. He was returning from a visit to Australia. His stay of three weeks was a little break in our lives here and a very pleasant distraction. He had much news from Ireland, America and Australia. A very courteous, well-informed and saintly man.

July 1920: Early this month Frs Blowick and Galvin, who had arrived in Shanghai and Hanyang to inaugurate the Maynooth Mission, came on a visit. They were delighted to experience the comparatively cool climate of Peking after the broiling temperature of Hankow and Hanyang. Like Fr Rossiter's visit, their coming was a little distraction for us. They had recent Irish and American news. On July 19th the Civil War between the Chi-li faction and the "Anfu club" broke our. There was some fighting at several places around Peking. Frs Blowick and Galvin luckily got away to Tien-tsin on the very last day on which railway communication was open. They reached Shanghai on a crowded boat. Owing to the danger of looting all our classrooms and spare rooms were filled with the furniture and merchandise of our Christians and even some pagans. Moreover, we had all arrangements to give shelter and food as far as possible to the faithful and others… for some months to come there were all sorts of rumours of new wars, revolutions, lootings etc. Not having much time since my arrival I naturally made the most of this long break to get a working knowledge of the language. I have had Yao Sien Sheng engaged

since February. He is good for conversation though his general education is limited.

Autumn 1920: For a time we were excited by the rumour Mgr Fabréques of Pao-tin-fu wanted the Irish Vincentians to take up missions also in central Chi-li with a view to a future vicariate. The idea was subsequently dropped. The American confrères are said to be coming to south Kiang-si. Summer and lovely autumn have again given way to winter. We lit our fires about the middle of November. About this time we had a visit from Fr McPolin, the Bursar of Hanyang. He gave us a lot of news. Fr McPolin has written an extremely interesting account of his visit to be published in *The Far East.* Young Mr Ying, recently married, again did the needful as cicerone and shortly afterwards started for Dalgan Park in company with a fine young Chinese convert, Mr Patrick, going to Clongowes. Christmas passed with the usual round of ceremonies, visits and receptions. We are now preparing for the coming of Fr Barry, already christened Boh Shen Fu. It was at Christmas that we heard the good news.

January 1921: Fr Barry arrived at Shanghai on the S.S. *Armand Pehu.* He appears to have had a most interesting and enjoyable passage from Marseilles to Shanghai. He arrived in Peking on the evening of January 30th. It was a sight and a joy to hear his uproarious merriment when the train steamed in, and he first caught sight of Moo Shen Fu and Gao in their fuzzy-wuzzies. Naturally we had a lot of news to learn from Ireland, France etc. And so the early days of February passed pleasantly. The Chinese new year gave us a little break on February 2nd. We had the usual crackers, fireworks, salutations etc. Meanwhile Fr Barry, determined not to lose a moment of time, plunged into the study of Chinese in a most resolute fashion. From the very first he has been exceedingly welcome to us. With his turn for languages we feel that he will make great progress in the fascinating and venerable language of old Cathay. Besides his very welcome self and heaps of news, grave and gay, about Ireland and Sinn Féin, about the confrères, friends etc., Fr Barry brought us quite a lot of warm underclothing and a good many useful books… Since the summer of 1920 famine has been raging in the five northern provinces of China. Fr Mullins, who represented Mgr Jarlin on the Famine Relief Committee, paid a short visit to the famine districts in early February. On his return, and at his suggestion, I went down myself to Pao-ting Chen-sing-fu on Feb. 15th. On this occasion too I went to Hankow where I visited, with great interest, the beginnings of the Maynooth Missions. I got a real Irish welcome from Frs Galvin, McPolin and O'Doherty.

(From EVANGELIZARE, August 1949).

2. *Last Days in Peking,* by Kevin Murnaghan.

There are three of us in this. Fr Kavanagh, the Superior, at the big church in Morrison St., Fr Crowley at a big foreign building near one of the city gates (dispensary and little chapel) and Fr Murnaghan (myself) at another place where we own some property (school and chapel attached), the idea being to have a foreigner at each place.

October 1st (1948): I see they've put the currency question back a month so we can keep our dollars a while. Also notice I am out 7 millions in my daily accounts: I must have given it to some beggar and forgotten to inscribe. Superior wants me to give a big mission next Lent, so I must start in and read up with two Chinese priests we have. Refugees arrive from the Polish CM Vicariate. Superior intends keeping them. Give them some work to do!

October 6th: My Chinese curate back from the retreat at the Cathedral. He says clerical opinion is veering round now and the talk is "those Lazarists didn't do such a bad job when they were running Peking, judging from the situation now that they are out". Fellow comes looking for charity and at present they don't take the answer that you have got no money. They want "clothes, paper, bottles, medicine etc." Rumour that the Chinese are going to loot Cha-la seminary — too rich. When they want to take church property they accuse you of cutting down a tree in 1900 and thus owing "the people" millions on account of the fruit which didn't grow. Same applies to a hen which you prevented from laying thousands of eggs! They are beginning to talk of looting USA property here. USA Consul counsels his people to leave. But the old-timers say "the consul always tells his people to go". Some say the communists will be here for Christmas. Others hold not at all. Our young USA confrères who are learning Chinese are divided.

October 30th: Fr Crowley comes along and says Manchuria is in full rout — and no gasoline for planes to evacuate even from here. But the Generalissimo is here, which to me looks bad.

Feast of Christ the King: Exteriorly a great day for the Catholic Church here. Never did we have such face. Solemn Benediction Service in the Central Park's most symbolic spot. Bishops, clergy and people were there and loudspeakers relayed the sermon by the Vicar General Fr Lee. I stood beside Fr Kelly, Columban, and thought how at last we had

got so deep into Chinese intimate circles, but what was waiting round the corner? Would the Communists get in? Of course the authorities said they would, and we were here by special permission to pray for peace, etc., but then most of these foreign priests were on their way out of the country and were asking "When are you leaving?" We said "We're the local clergy". British Consul wants to know by circular "Do you want to leave?" They tell me Manchuria was "given away". But of course Roosevelt gave it away at Yalta… But Peking, *Never!*

November 2nd: Superior says it is very bad. What do I want to do? We can go south if we like. I said I'd think it over. He and Fr Crowley are staying. The Chinese are shouting it's a shame the way the foreigners are deserting. The General says it's a "new one" from priests. So I suppose we shall just stay put, we, the local clergy, I mean. USA priest says he saw my name on the list for the plane. Bit of a thrill, but I'm sure it'll be a let-down. (It was). My Chinese curate was once tortured down the country and he has been telling us about it ever since. I admire him for what he suffered, but just the same, I have to try and keep our courage up: result, we fight verbally every day. He believes every rumour that is printed while I refuse to believe them on principle. Sometimes he scores and then we have to be miserable for a while; other times I can come and say "Rot", and then he says "You'll see later on. They always start quietly until they are quite ready. Then they swoop." So he remains miserable.

November 5th: USA men leave by plane. See them off and say "Nothing will happen here. We know these people, etc.". Some say the USA army will be here soon. Others say the Communists will be here first. They say so too.

November 13th: Train leaving with foreigners. Many Sisters of Charity. They got orders from Shanghai. Some say they'll be sorry because Shanghai will get it first and fall first. Poor Sister Gilmore and Brother Faust, a Marist, and Irishman who has been in China since 1900.1 see everybody is going crazy. "Father, are you going?" Priests even are saying "These foreigners that go now will never be let back to China. We don't want them anymore". They don't seem to see the joke about the foreigners having lately lost this place to them (Chinese seculars) and now, why shouldn't they go away? My Chinese curate is thinking of selling any presentable clothes he has, or of putting them in different people's houses; wants to be like a beggar when they get here. Has known them…

Curate optimistic for a change … He believes in the great victory at Shu-chow (road to Nanking). Superior say it's a great rout.

Others are saying US Tigers to help again. Airmen hurrah. Papers in the USA already have it that the C are already in the city. No wonder our friends abroad get all worked up if this is a sample of the way they are educated. British Consul in Nanking says we shall not evacuate. That's not the way we built Empires! My curate is a great fellow. I prefer him talking about his mission experiences. Says he was trying to drive out a devil once and he got all worked up and at last told the devil straight "If you don't get out right now then the Catholic religion is false". The devil got out! We asked him wasn't that a little bit dangerous and unprofessional. He said "Yes, but I felt inspired to do it". Another time he was in hospital and made the acquaintance of a general, a Catholic, but of course as a general his religion was only a handicap; he had four wives. They chatted all night. The curate said the general wouldn't let him leave. (Others say he was only being polite). Anyway, it was the wife (I don't know which of them it was) who eventually got tired of waiting. And the curate admits the general said later "That priest can preach. Even when the listener is tired, he isn't".

Don't like my curate today; he has a yarn that already at Mukden they're torturing like they did down the country ... I don't know how it feels to hear this when you are miles away from these people; but here, with the probability of their arriving…

November 20th: The Chinese are becoming more fed-up and more unreasonable. They say now that the USA is to blame for everything we suffer. Gave "old clothes" and wanted to boss the place… Didn't give enough help to win; it would be better to go over to the Russians. Less people would be killed. They also say "The English fleet is coming", and they say "Must be going to steal more territory while China is weak".

December 5th: My curate has stopped giving Catechism lessons in the Junior School. The kids don't want to go anymore. Fear they will be punished for even listening. Priests don't want to preach. Fear they want to hide among secular people. It is being said "All those Catholics will be killed". So most catechumens fall off. I give a kind of "free for all" religious class at the gate-house of the big church on Sundays after Benediction. All the questions now are how to hide from persecution, take down holy pictures, etc. Some say "Prepare to be martyrs". I say no one knows what will happen. Pray God for grace and leave the actual planning until things start happening. Permission is given to say Mass without vestments or chalice… in case.

December 12th: Fr Kelly, Columban, who had gone to Shanghai to attend a meeting of his order, being told to make up his own mind promptly came back to Peking. And so the Irish had the honour to be coming in when most people were clearing off. I have been told that in Ireland the papers give him due credit (which he deserves) except that by only mentioning the two Columban Fathers who stuck it out here they give a wrong impression as regards the poor Vins. Anyone knowing that we have a church in Peking must have concluded that we were gone… Some Chinese priests preparing to fade away into homes... If asked they will say "This is my father... This is my wife ..."

December 15th: Horrible day. Cannons roaring. Stomach upset. Packed things against the possibility of looting. I see Fr Kavanagh's place, the big church, is occupied by soldiers. Sentries won't let anybody in. I have to ride away quickly to see what's doing at my own place… But then it is too small to invite such attention. My curate insists on coming and walking around the yard with me, and with good Chinese fatalism says "You're afraid, eh?". This time I know I am going to be killed, bayonetted most likely. I feel it. Can't escape these Communists. I go to bed with clothes on.

December 17th: Rotten morning. School breaks up on sudden orders. Hear there are soldiers coming to my place. They are everywhere. Curate tactfully remarks "What's wrong? You don't talk so much or laugh so much".

December 18th: Chinese houses all threatening to fall from bombarding. Am glad to hear the Reds are being polite in Pao-ting-fu city. Schools are to be turned into hospitals. Churches respected. Curate says all priests should go out and help the Nationalists. One bright spot on the horizon is that we won't be suspended *ipso facto* if we dare appear without full clerical regalia.

December 20th: Soldiers come into my place and want to put a lot of people here. Fr Kavanagh is supposed to be putting our schools as military hospitals, thus putting them into the hands of responsible people. I take in more refugees, police guaranteeing that no more will come.

Christmas Day: Very little religious activity but at least no guns. The soldiers had marked off our sacristy as a building for themselves. That would never have done. They relented.

December 29th: Wounded soldiers have come at last. They threw stones into our yard when we rang the bells for Mass, and knocked down one of the doors we had put up to keep them out. My curate says "Be high-handed with them… Only way". He says when he was travelling once under the Japs a Chinese official was being nasty about the Catholic Church. So the curate immediately knocked him down, and to the Jap officer who came over said "This man insults me as Catholic priest". Upon which the Jap beat him up too. Curate says: "Jap could see I was no coolie, etc". Police say all foreigners must put their names on their street doors for protection. Superior tells police "All these years we have worked with and for the Chinese. We are not businessmen".

January 4th (1949): Horrible night. Soldiers bang at the door and say they are coming in. We say place given over to the hospital; nothing doing . . . Still a question whether the Reds want to take the city. A whole army marches in the next day.

January 17th: Each of us three makes the retreat in his own place as best we can between intervals. The curate here preaches on the situation; says it is just like the case of Saul the persecutor who became an Apostle. Goes on to say that when ordinary prayers to Our Lord won't work we must try St Anne and say to Our Lord "If you won't hear me you must hear her; she's your grandmother". For the respectful and dutiful Chinese this is a cinch. Now they are all saying "St Anne, pray for us".

January 25th: Fr Kelly says they don't know where the different armies are. He says that during the fighting north of here there was a case where each side tried to encircle the other, so they ended up being in five circles round a place, and it took five days to sort them out again. "Which side do you belong to? … Then you are all wrong here. Go over there". A truce was declared to get the thing straight.

January 31st: I preached the Sisters' retreat at the Morrison St convent. The Vicar General got mad with the Chinese priests for trying to use the faculties which had only been given for emergency cases. Fr Tichit, Visitor, is holding out. Of course he has been long since told he is in for torture and shooting on account of his dealings with the Japanese. He just shrugs.

February 7th: Go back to my residence to find curate has removed tablecloth, blinds, and stopped the stove so as to appear poor if the Communists walk in. Fr Matthews of the University dies suddenly. We

go to funeral outside city. It was a tonic to see so many foreign priests at the funeral Mass, and the University still running. A parade of the Red Army shows all the USA equipment. There was one very big cannon in the parade. I am told a mule kicked it and then it was discovered to be wooden.

February 16th: Soldiers again break into the sacristy. They have removed a wooden shutter for firewood, so I get an interview with the chief. This time they also took six big candles, but we are so glad they respected the chapel that we don't want to make trouble. Many refugee priests here from all parts are engaged in different trades trying to tide themselves over difficult times. Some are even working in a macaroni factory. The boss knows they are priests. They say Mass early and work all day; this is because everyone is expected to have a trade; and refugee priesthood is no trade to the Communists. So if you don't want to be sent off to fight Nanking it is better to be well occupied somewhere. Curate says "The crowd that tortured us down the country is here now and ready for action; so, look out..." Cheerful cuss.

March 17th: At Fr Crowley's place we have dinner with the two Columban Fathers (McGoldrick and Kelly) … Hear there is one little gate of the city through which foreigners go out. However, who wants to go now. Many yarns these days about the mishaps of the Chinese country soldiers in the big cities… Try to turn on the light and it may be the electric fan, which they can't turn off. They then wrap it round with a blanket. Some are said to have electrocuted themselves by touching the wrong parts of switches. Three of us gave a mission at the big church in Morrison St. Our Chinese CM refugees have had a visit from the Communists asking how much property their mission has here, and who are the responsible persons. Idea being that before they were released from prison their Bishop Krause CM had to sign for millions which he was supposed to owe the people. The usual charges were of having cut down a tree in 1900 and thus preventing the people from having eaten the fruits thereof for forty years; or killing a pig and thus depriving the people of all the litters she might have had.

April 6th: I start to make arrangements about leaving, seeing that Fr Crowley doesn't intend to stir now. He had the priority option over me. Now, as we can't teach in the schools the idea seems to be that all unnecessary men get out. I've been in China twenty years… The answer to everything one suffers round here is "You're too rich". I get a shock of realisation of the change going on here ... It hurt a lot when on giving to each of the two servants a cigar one of them said "You know by right

we shouldn't accept. It's not allowed any more to let the boss get on our good side by bribing us with gifts". French Hospital here has been having trouble with the servants. There is a story of certain doctors who knew that the workmen had had a protest meeting because the doctors had got three bags of flour against their one. The doctors turned up next morning and started to do the coolie work, and when the others turned up they told them to go in and do the operations. Upon their objecting that they couldn't the doctors said "We can do our own and your work too. We are worthy of three bags". (Fact).

April 18th: Police connect with me again and want to know did I build the big church on Morrison St. (Built in 1905; KM born in 1905). We had a mad woman in here who would not leave and was throwing bricks about so we called the C. Police. They fixed her by pulling their guns and saying "Must shoot her; she's a public nuisance". She left hurriedly… Recently a Communist stopped an old lady in a rickshaw and said it was bad to make a man sweat so. She said she couldn't find her way home and was paying the man for the work. He said he wanted to pull her anyway, so the Communist said "You're all hopeless" and left them alone.

May 3rd: At a sports event at our Middle School to which we were invited by the pupils (to give Face) some servants brought us a bench to stand on as we were very far back; but after a few minutes someone sent two pupils to say "That bench is our property; you might break it". We got down and left immediately. (Lost Face)… I see Fr Tichit CM, Visitor; he hopes to last out till better times. Point is, can it be done? If they go after property it will be impossible to live. And so, I left Peking on May 7th (1949).

(EVANGELIZARE, January & August issues 1950)

3. *(The story is continued with extracts from letters from Fr Maurice Kavanagh and Fr Michael Crowley).*

November 10th, 1950: Fr Crowley and myself are keeping well and things move along as usual. The Legion of Mary is the chief organisation for advancing the cause of Christ. We have five praesidia in Tung Tang (Parish church), three in Chao Yang Men (a chapel of ease), two at Hur Cho Ssen (another chapel of ease) and two at Santiao, the convent of the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of Mary. One Curia for members under 18 has its headquarters here. The Legion is well established in the city.

December 8th, 1950: We are both keeping well, thank God. Just now

we are making preparations for Christmas — a Pontifical High Mass each Sunday of Advent at 2.30 p.m. We also have evening Mass on holydays of obligation for people who cannot come in the morning, so the people have no excuse for missing Holy Mass.

December 16th, 1950: Well, the little bit of shamrock which fell into China so long ago in the person of Maurice and myself still cries "present" at the roll-call. We have plenty to do during these Sundays of Advent in preparation for Christmas. The 1st Sunday we really had what you might call a busy day. Here is the *ordo diei* to give you some idea: Rising at 5 a.m. Meditation at 5.30. Brush-up on my sermon at 6.30. Confessions at 7 o'clock. Mass and sermon at 7.30. After Mass a glance over my ceremonies and a touch-up on my lecture to the Legion of Mary. Confessions during second Mass at 9 o'clock, followed immediately by the weekly meeting of the Legion which lasts at least an hour and a half. Then I went to Tung Tang for dinner. After dinner there was a rehearsal for the ceremonies of the Pontifical High Mass at which I was Assistant Priest. Meeting of the Curia of the Legion at 1.15. Ceremonies in the church commenced at 2.30 on the dot. As I said, the church was crowded but they had reserved places for us near the altar. The prophecies of Isaias and Malachias relating to the coming of the Redeemer were read, followed by the sermon. It is really impressive to see the number of priests and servers; Bishop, Assistant Priest, two Deacons, two Subdeacons, Master of Ceremonies etc. The singing of the Mass by the students of the Catholic University deserves special mention. It was delightful and would have done credit to any church even at home. As it was nearly dark when the ceremonies were over I beat a hasty retreat and cycled back home. After I had completed my Office I had the rest of the evening to myself.

Many of the Christians are making their Holy Year visits before the closing of the Holy Door. We tried to engage a bus or truck for the Legion and some Christians to make our final visits today. We were still hoping up to the last minute, but we were informed yesterday evening that it was impossible to get one without paying for the whole day which would have been too much for our slender resources. So we had to tell the Christians at Mass this morning. They were very disappointed. Many had perforce to make them in small groups by tram or bus. Four of us set off on bicycles at 10 a.m.

The members of the Legion are making their bi-annual retreat the last three days of this year. Perhaps you are wondering why I mention the Legion so often. I cannot help it. They are the life of the parish and are doing really splendid work under the leadership of the Blessed Virgin,

keeping the Christians up to the mark as regards the attendance at Holy Mass and the reception of the sacraments, etc. They enter into every phase of the work and give a very edifying example.

For the first time in living memory the Catholic school children have to go to school on Christmas Day. We have to arrange for an early Mass for them before they go to school. Midnight Mass is still doubtful. Say a special prayer for us.

(EVANGELIZARE, February 1951)

4. In the August 1952 issue of *Evangelizare* Fr Michael Crowley wrote an article on the Legion of Mary in China. The last paragraph is as follows: (The Communists entered Peking at Christmas 1948). From then on things gradually began to change. The meetings of the Legion continued without interruption, at some of which a delegation from the Communists was present to listen in to the proceedings. Our praesidium suffered its first blow in January 1950 during my annual retreat. Our Secretary disappeared without a trace when on a shopping expedition for the Reverend Mother of the convent. The police were informed, but after one visit for enquiries failed to return to make a report. From this we concluded that our Secretary had been arrested by the Communists. This proved to be only too true, for after about three months a letter was received by his wife asking for clothes to be sent to him in prison in Manchuria. The Legionaries persevered in their meeting and visits in spite of difficulties put in their way by the police on instructions from the Communists.

In 1951 the Legion of Mary had increased in Peking alone to a regional Senatus with 16 curiae and 240 praesidia, a splendid, one might almost say miraculous, achievement in the space of a little more than two years. In the whole of China the Legion was organised in 90 dioceses with almost 2000 praesidia. It was impossible to conceal such an expansion from the Communists. Charges were brought that the Legion was engaged in political activities. In spite of protests and denials the Legion of Mary was officially banned in March 1951. I left Peking in July 1951 bound for Ireland and so ended my connection with the Legion of Mary in China.

List of Spiritual Fathers at Maynooth

JohnMyers	1886-1896
Patrick Boyle	1886-1889
Michael Maher	1889-1892
James Carpenter	1892-1902
John Ward	1896-1898
Daniel Walsh	1898-1905
Robert Rossiter	1902-1918
Anthony Boyle	1905-1916
James Downey	1916-1922
Michael P. Brosnahan	1918-1935
Peter O'Leary	1922-1942
Joseph McDonald	1935-1937
Thomas Cleary	1937-1950
Charles McGowan	1942-1948
Patrick Travers	1945-1952
Daniel Costelloe	1950-1954
James O'Doherty	1952-1970
William J. Meagher	1954-1965
Thomas O'Hynn	1965-1967
Patrick Travers	1965-1968
Richard McCullen	1967-1975
Diarmuid O'Hegarty	1969-1973
Peter Gildea	1973-1978
James Tuohy	1975-
Desmond Cleere	1978-1981
Francis Murphy	1981-

Fathers John Myers and Patrick Boyle were the first Vincentian fathers in Maynooth. They took up office in 1886. Father Boyle drew up the following list of students of Maynooth, either before or after ordination, who joined the Vincentians since that date. (I have added the year of ordination).

	Entry to CM	Diocese	J.M. Ordination
O'Donnell, Thomas	1887	Killaloe	1888
Walsh, Daniel	1887	Cork	?
O'Farrell, Michael	1887	Meath	1890
Gallagher, Joseph (O.Cist.)	1887	Elphin	1891
Nolan, Martin	1888	Killaloe	1890
O'Reilly, Maurice	1888	Cloyne	1890
O'Sullivan William	1888	Cork	1892
Furlong, James	1889	Meath	1892
Flynn, Michael	1890	Tuam	1890
O'Gorman, Patrick	1892	Cloyne	1896
Donovan, Timothy	1894	Kerry	1896
Carr, John	1895	Down and Connor	1899
Downey, James	1896	Armagh	1899
Dinneen, Charles	1896	Cork	1899
Russell, John	1896	Meath	1898
McKenna, Patrick	1896	Down and Connor	1899
Ballesty, John	1897	Meath	1899
Gorman, Bartholomew	1897	Kilmore	1901
O'Connell, John	1897	Cloyne	1901
Murray, James	1897	Kilmore	1901
Mullins, James	1900	Galway	1903
Murphy, Cornelius	1901	Cloyne	1903
Shanahan, John	1901	Waterford	1900
Rafferty, Thomas	1911	Armagh	1917
Purcell, William	1916	Cashel	1918

Students of Maynooth who entered the CM *after ordination:*

O'Regan, Patrick	1892	Cloyne	1891
Flood, Patrick (O.Cist.)	1901	Clogher	1896
Kinsella, Laurence	1903	Ferns	?

Completing Fr Boyle's list of students who entered the CM since the CMs became Spiritual Fathers in Maynooth.

	Entry to CM	Diocese	Ordination
Barry, Patrick	1904	Cloyne	
O'Connell, Daniel	1918	Armagh	1924
McDonald, Leo	1920	Kilmore	1925
O'Doherty, James	1921	Raphoe	1923
Rodgers, James	1922	Tuam	1924
O'Keeffe, William	1927	Cloyne	1932
P. O'Mahony, Leo	1927	Cork	1927
McDonald, Joseph	1928	Kilmore	1915
McGowan, Charles	1928	Kilmore	1932
Sheridan, Augustine	1929	Tuam	1926
J. Finnegan, Thomas	1933	Clogher	1924
O'Neill, Seamus	1938	Dromore	1945
Mullan, Francis	1945	Derry	1950
McCullen, Richard	1945	Armagh	1952
Gallagher, John	1978	Achonry	1981

Forum

DE PAUL HOUSE: CELBRIDGE

Of Fourteen Good Men And True…

Similar to the previous year the seminaire of 1980-'81 began with less than what was expected to be the full complement. This state of affairs served the powers that be very well. The two men who did arrive were less than informed on what the procedure would be. However, as will always happen a bewildered looking Vincentian student at any stage full advantage was taken by the authorities and we were informed that following our reception into the Congregation, the seminar, as yet an extremely vague phenomenon would commence. In the early days when simplicity has not had time to work within the young seminarist he soon learns to abandon looks of bewilderment or that vacant look that pleads for guidance. With such asture men as Fr Moran and acres of what are euphemistically termed gardens but which will never be called 'pleasure grounds' it is a dangerous thing to appear lost or dare I say it... idle.

On the eve of the feast of St Vincent Peter Byrne (Malahide) and Paschal Scallon (Castleknock) were received into the Congregation. With arms outstretched we watched with painful vigilance as the cinctures were tied around our waists and we received the first of what is to Vincentians as their secret greeting is to the Masons, the handshake. The reason for our discomfort at the tying of the cinctures was that we were informed that the knot was all important. As will always be the case second lessons were sought which cast considerable doubt on the knot used by the director.

Fr McCullen visited the house that same evening and was encouraging in his comments to us. They were greatly appreciated by the two new men.

Not much time was wasted following this. Classes began and Maynooth opened. De Paul saw the departure of James Murphy and Joseph Loftus for London where they began their theological studies at Heythrop College.

The winter term also saw the departure of Fr Mullan for higher office as Visitor. His installation was a grand occasion attended by the local superiors and representatives of the Daughters of Charity.

On December 8th Eamon Devlin and Jay Shanahan took Bon Propos in the parish church in Celbridge. Fr Moran gave a homily on Our Lady

which was much talked about at De Paul and from what one heard in Celbridge during Advent. The students continued to participate in the Celbridge parish by arranging house Masses in a nearby neighbourhood which the ordained brethern celebrated. The pastoral work of the seminarists took place in Stewart's Hospital which served to increase our appreciation of our vocation.

Advent, Lent and Paschaltide served to prepare and immerse the community in the spirit and atmosphere of these great Seasons of the Church calendar. Our preparations were intense always culminating in ceremonies which heightened the symbolism and mysteries of our faith. Memorable facets of these celebrations were the Paschal fire, the hymns and other things ranging from flower arrangements to liturgical art. Our preparations were of a distinctive domestic quality which allowed us to fully appreciate what we were celebrating.

During the Christmas holidays the seminarists were told that the community at Sunday's Well was waiting to greet them with open arms. We are grateful to the Cork confrères for a most enjoyable week.

After Christmas two new undertakings began to take up a lot of the seminarists' time. These were the Irish Missionary Union course for novices and what has become known as the courtyard.

Our attendance at the I.M.U. at Dartry was both enlightening and enjoyable. Among the courses we attended were courses on the mass media and Christians, faith and revelation, value clarification, the Church, the sacraments, and the Old Testament. This lasted until June by which time both seminarists thought it wise to claim they had acquired something of benefit.

The 'courtyard' is that central space around which De Paul is built. Looking extremely bleak with its carpet of grey pebble and crying out for a change it had gone ignored. But now one seminarist with alacrity he would later regret heard that cry and conveyed his wish to do something about it to the director. The other seminarist being of sound Vincentian stuff grinned painfully through gritted teeth and said, "yes let's". Now many months later and many many barrow loads of clay and pebble later we hope to be able to sow some grass in that place. Yes we have made a "Heaven of Hell", and down by the tennis court, a "Hell of Heaven", and none of that is in the mind. Fr Regan is to be highly commended for his support. His handling of the wheelbarrow was breath-taking. He didn't even slip one disc.

1980-81 of course saw the celebration of two great Vincentian days, the 150th anniversary of the Miraculous Medal apparitions to St Catherine and the 4th centenary of the birth of St Vincent. The com-

munity at Celbridge went to Phibsboro' where we took part with others from both Vincentian families in ceremonies to mark these two occasions.

It was with great regret shortly after the anniversary of St Vincent's birthday that we heard of the death of Fr James Murphy. He was a great friend to all the students and a good confrère. He is missed, may he rest in peace.

The seminaire retreat took place in early June. It incorporated the ordination retreat for John Gallagher. All involved found the retreat most beneficial, crowning as it did our formation to date and preparing us for what lies ahead. John was ordained to the diaconate and priesthood in 1981 having taken vows before Christmas.

And so to the holidays. James Murphy, Joseph Loftus, David Phipps and the seminarists went to Rossnowlagh in Donegal. Jay Shanahan, Eamon Devlin, Jerome O'Driscoll and Eugene Curran went to France. The seminarists spent a very rewarding three weeks at Corrymeela outside Ballycastle in Antrim, "a centre of reconciliation in a divided community". The holidays were completed with a short period at home.

Confrères of the Glenart era will be interested to know that the Kilcoole binge has been revived. This year it included a tour of Glenart led by Fr Regan who tried hard to keep his composure but eventually broke down overcome by nostalgia. He was escorted off the premises sobbing inconsolably and muttering some gibberish about when he was a student, which was some time before he was in Nigeria. We were also introduced to Jock whom Fr Regan refused to take back to Celbridge because Jock had fallen into bad company . . . woodworm.

Unlike a financial report I do not think it would be appropriate to say whether or not the year was a success. The facts are that the students look forward in their formation confident that what is past will prove solid foundation for what lies ahead. We appreciate the interest confrères show in us and we know that our interest in them is not less. Christmas day is looked forward to in no small way.

The new year is beginning with a course on the Constitution of the General Assembly of 1980. These are being introduced to us by Fr Michael Prior who was a delegate at the Assembly.

Paschal Scallon

MEETINGS OF SPIRITUAL DIRECTORS AND FORMATION PERSONNEL

Spiritual Directors 28-29 August

At the invitation of the Provincial the first ever meeting of the confrères engaged in spiritual direction took place at De Paul House. Present were Fathers F. Mullan, T. O'Flynn, J. Cahalan, E. Cowan, P. Regan, B. Doyle, P. Me Crohan, E. Flanagan, M. Barry, Ro. Crowley, S. Brindley and F. Murphy. The key-note talk, *How does a director's personal dynamics and religious experience affect his direction?* was given by Frank Murphy. He said, firstly, that to be the best servant of contemplation in our directees we need to know ourselves. What is going on in us can creatively foster or effectively block the directees' communication with God. And, secondly, that only the director's own experience of God will give him the conviction that will enable him to give that most important gift to his directee: of believing that God will act in his life if he keeps praying.

Later, the group prayed for an hour on a Gospel text and came together for a repetition of prayer. This was facilitated by members of the group acting in the role of director. The difference between an older form of direction and a more contemporary model was illustrated by means of a role-play. Much enthusiasm was generated by the meeting and it activities. We agreed to meet annually. The next meeting will be at De Paul House, 2-3 September 1982.

Formation Personnel29-30 August

The meeting of confrères concerned with formation of our students was well attended. Besides the priest confrères of De Paul House, there was representation from St Vincent's, Mill Hill, St Justin's, Ogobia, Bigard Memorial Seminary, Ikot Ekpene and Enugu campuses.

Padraig Regan read a paper on *Principles of Formation Today.* The paper was based on the work of Paul Molinari, SJ, professor of Spiritual Theology at the Gregorian University, Rome. Padraig spoke about contemporary principles guiding formation, on development of vocation (pre-Seminaire), the period of Seminaire formation, and the making of the first commitment (bon propos). There followed a discussion on pre-Seminaire, Postulancy, duration of and programme for the Seminaire, training of our formation personnel and on Vincentian spirituality.

On Sunday morning, after Prayer and breakfast, the other four "houses" of formation reported on their practice and progress in catering for their seminarists and students. The atmosphere of "common purpose

and common mind" (Phil, 2,2) was symbolised by our being together at De Paul House and meeting in St Justin's Hall (main feature of the recent extension) in order that the charism of Vincent de Paul might live in Europe and Africa. The meeting ended with the Eucharist. It was agreed to hold regional meetings of spiritual directors and regional meetings of formation personnel during the year. Next meeting of the group is planned for 4-5 September 1982 and again to be at De Paul House.

Frank Murphy, CM.
Padraig Regan, CM.

Father James Murphy, C.M.

One evening in Autumn 1945, Fr T. K. Donovan surprised the community at St Joseph's by giving a talk at supper. "Fr James Murphy", he said, "has got his doctorate in theology: *tu autem Domine miserere nobis"*. The newcomers among us were told that we were celebrating the success of a man who had put all his energy into any work he had ever undertaken. This was to be the story of his life and it could be his epitaph.

In summer 1945 he was appointed to All Hallows. His early years there had their moments of light and shade. As dean of the philosophy students, he could be fussy about details, and he had a reformer's zeal not unknown in men new to that office. When he came to teach theology, he had to succeed Fr John Shanahan who had already been deified by the students and who had his own magic blend of medium and message. But in the 1950s and into the 60s, there was no doubting James Murphy's high standing with the student body. They saw him as a just and fair man and as a living expression of the universal law of work. With his confrères, he was human enough to admit that in his heart he had a warmer spot for some students than he had for others. If you played football, if you were diffident about academics, if you had difficulty with your provincialisms, you were very likely to qualify for one of the warm spots. If you were impeccable in speech, if you were interested in the arts, if you showed an independence of outlook, it could take a while before you got on his honours list. He liked to deal with people and situations that fitted into a programme. Men with creative leanings puzzled him and made him uneasy. But, if any student was not on the orders list at the end of the year, he knew that he himself had to take all the blame. It was the time when the seminary was what some sociologists would call a "total" institution. The rhythm of a student's daily life was monitored from rising bell to lights out. From his place at the back of the college chapel, Fr James surveyed and controlled every liturgical move of every student. Each afternoon he was on the sideline as students played their league games. He kept a vigilant eye on student societies, amateur dramatics, and all extra-curricular activity. In his class, every sentence had been carefully prepared, every note organised. For hours every day, he

could be heard at his typewriter: preparing his classnotes, filing the elaborate documentation for every candidate for orders, writing hundreds of letters.

The students of his time were blessed in the men who prepared them for the first Mass. Fr Purcell spoke to them about the eucharist in the language of the poet and the mystic. Fr Meehan taught them the theology of the eucharist in classes that were affectionately known as the "holy hours". James Murphy was no poet, no mystic. He was reserved in his expression of devotion. But the care he expended on every detail of ceremonial was a constant reminder that if a man is to spend his life preparing for others the food that endures unto life everlasting he must truly labour at it. As one recalls his work, an image that comes to mind is of the plough in Hopkin's poem, the sheer plod of which makes it shine as it moves down along the ridge between the furrow.

For the most part, his dealings with students were formal and official, even stilted. But, before ordination, and certainly after it, they discovered a man whose human concern for each of them was as real as his principles were sterling. They got intimations of this concern when they were in any form of need, and they knew of the hours he spent playing host to his former students or replying to their letters. Normally the written or spoken work did not come easy to him, but his letters were a delight to read. In two well packed pages — no more no less, in case he might ever be suspected of partiality! — he gave them the latest news in words that were chatty, alive, entertaining. His addresses to the students were predictable in format and content. When his former students gather, they like to reproduce his talks, maxim by maxim and counsel by counsel; the process is helped by those with a gift *of mimesis,* and sometimes the rafters are made to roar in a way reminiscent by his own famous laugh which activated every muscle in and around his vocal chords. The image of the furrow should not suggest that his daily work was a drudgery. He enjoyed his work and he enjoyed any simple comforts that came with it. He liked a room that was cosy and a meal that was well prepared. His game of bridge was precious to him, whether he was playing in *schola prima* where the rigour of the game was the first law, or in *schola secunda* which was an exercise in charity to old confrères and slow learners. Dalymount and Lansdowne Road had places of honour in his diary, and, during the summer he missed nothing of what was happening at Wimbledon or the Oval.

In 1961-62 he re-wrote the whole of *The Sacred Ceremonies of Low Mass,* but the book was to enjoy only a short life-span. And then came the unrest of the middle sixties. Students felt that something big was

happening in the Church at large and that not enough was happening in the seminary. Father James sensed that life was not as secure as it had been and he tried valiantly to adjust to a new situation. But, being the structured person he was, he still believed in following the book and implementing the system. But a time had come when there was no book and systems were under fire.

In 1967 he was appointed Superior in Glenart. The change was a big uprooting for him but it also brought him a sense of relief. Somehow he felt he was going to an oasis of quiet and peace. But the seminary near the vale of Avoca turned out to be a more concentrated form of all that he had left. Armed with whatever provisional constitutions and interim directives were available, he did his homework for every community meeting, but more than once he was to find himself out-argued and out-voted in the cut and thrust of staff-student discussion. He had never been quite at home in the higher levels of abstraction, and he was ill at ease when he heard some articulate students hold forth on their vision of a renewed Vincentian community. There were times when he was mesmerised; and there must have been some painful moments. But he always insisted that he was very happy during his year in Glenart as he was during the two subsequent years in St Joseph's.

In 1970 he was appointed secretary to the Superior-General. The eternal city was a new world to him, but the indications are that his stay there was not his finest hour. He was second to none in his regard for Father Richardson who quickly came to recognise his real worth at his desk and in the journeys they made together. The members of the Vincentian curia said he was *simpatico* and pleasant to live with. But he was lonely. He was removed from the company of the people who had shaped his life for over forty years. Like the boy at school, he kept an eye on the calendar and ticked off the months that remained before the next home-coming. But he was to gain precious knowledge of all that concerned the Congregation worldwide and he developed his gift of remembering the needs of confrères who in various ways were experiencing alone-ness. Many English speaking visitors to the Generalate have happy memories of his hospitality; going out for a meal as his guest was as much a diversion for him as it was a delight for the guest.

In 1975 he was back in Ireland. Challenged with giving shape to a whole new assignment, he worked out his own structures and developed his own style. He was, at the same time, secretary and archivist; in his own words he was "full back" for both provincial and province. Whoever sought his help received his full attention and felt he had first rights on that attention. The extent and quality of his preparatory work

for the assembly in 1980 could not be overrated. And as he delved into the archives, he became more and more interested in the history of the province. As readers of Colloque well know, he was fascinated by the human foibles and fumblings of some of the well known and less well known men of the past — and by battles long ago and not so long ago.

It would be pointless to suggest that he was a fully integrated man. He had to cope with the limitation to which his particular flesh was heir. He was a sensitive man. He could be solemn and tiresome about matters which others might consider to be of little importance. But, when you got beyond the surface, you found a friend who was always kind, with a word that was always true. Indeed, if I were to search for a word to describe him, I would say that he was "true". What he said, he meant. What he said he would do, he did. Like the traveller who became part of all he had seen and met, James Murphy became part of the life of a very large number of people. When the news of his death was announced, many people were very sure that something precious within them had died and that it could never be replaced.

On the morning of his death, he was about to spend a few weeks in England. On the previous day, he had handed a fully revised set of notes on the celebration of Mass to each of the deacons he had been teaching; the notes included last minute marginal glosses in his own copper-plate hand. He planned to be present at a conference of archivists; he would attend to some business for the provincial and go to a reunion of his former students. Before returning he would spend a few days with one of them — he used to say that the men who were the "scallywags" in the seminary often turned out to be his most staunch friends; these were the men with whom he often chose to stay; and he loved the interludes!

As we reflect on the richness of his life and the tragic manner of his death, we might leave the last word with the poet whose lines on the shining plough are followed by the lovely picture of the blue-black embers that "fall, gall themselves and gash gold vermilion". The life and work of James Murphy are already shining in the priestly ministry of the men he instructed unto justice. His heritage to the community is richer than any gold.

T. Lane.C.M.

The next issue of *Colloque* will contain our Obituary of Father Gerard Galligan.