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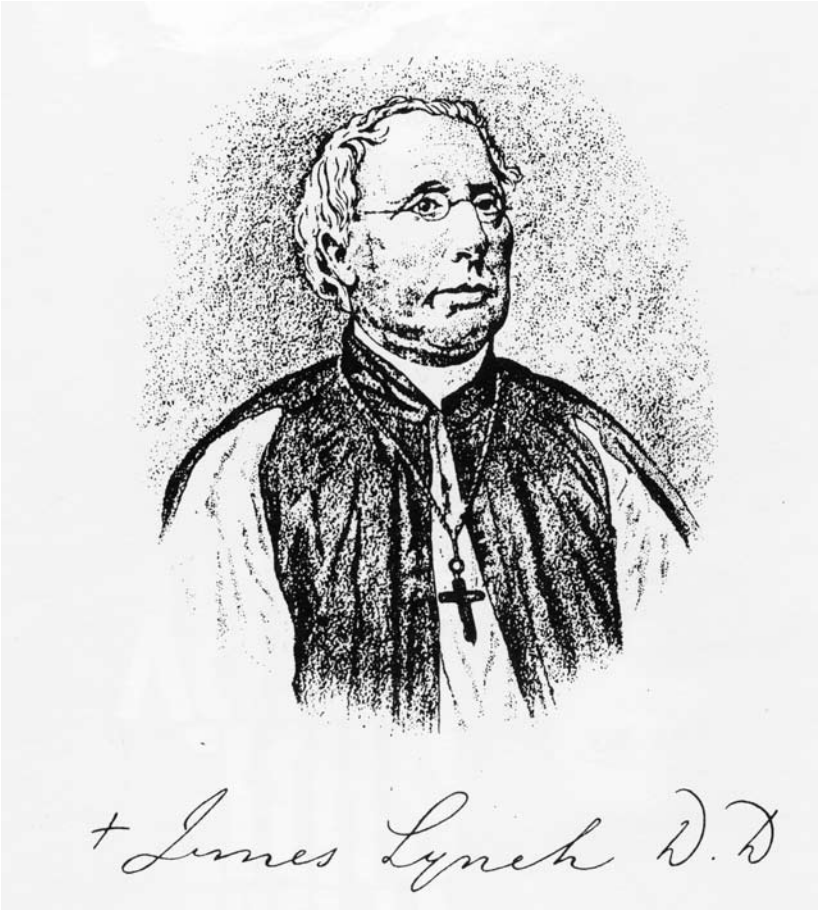

The Right Rev. James Lynch. DD
Coadjutor Bishop of Kildare and Leighin

Contents

Editorial

19 December 1996 is the 100th anniversary of the death of James Lynch, the man from whose original idea the Irish Province of the Congregation of the Mission evolved. This issue honours this centenary with an article which is more of a portrait than a biography.

The text of the talk by the late James Cahalan was supplied by Michael McCullagh.

Because the issue for Autumn 1995 contained the talks given in Dublin at CEVIM 95, and that for Spring 1996 was mainly on St John Gabriel Perboyre, some material which would have been in those issues had to be held over until this issue.

Salvation Revisited 1945-1995

Thomas Lane

Fifty years ago [1945] I made a decision about the future shape of my life. I was going to become a priest. I was going to join the Vincentians. Why a priest? Why the Vincentians? I cannot account for the mysterious designs of providence, but it was easy to decide on priesthood when a large number of my contemporaries did. As for the Vincentians, I had first heard of them nine years earlier when two of them preached a mission in our parish. One was the young, vigorous Fr Christy O'Leary. The other was the aging, frail, Fr Bob Wilson. In 1945 the Vincentians came to our parish again. This time it was Fr John O'Connell who, ahead of his time, told the people about the mother-love of God, and Fr John Gill whose bursts of zeal and eloquence were like a fallout from the big bang with which our universe began. And Vincentians like Fr Paddy O'Leary and Fr Tommy Slaven were our kindly confessors and retreat directors at the diocesan seminary.

That was my little micro-world. But 1945 saw more important happenings in the bigger world. *The Cork Examiner* and the local radio, both graphically mediated for us by our priest-teachers, told us of the horror of the events of February 13-14 when Dresden became a charnel-house for 35.000 people made in the image and likeness of God. We remembered enough to compare and contrast with what had happened in Coventry in 1940. When D-Day came in May even the youngest of us had tasted enough of the war to be able to say "thanks be to God".

By September I was knocking at the Vincentians' door at St Joseph's, Blackrock. Before the year officially began on the birthday of our Lady, September 8, the prospective seminarists, seed-people, had three days of initiation in the form of a retreat. It was directed

by the ebullient Fr Tom Cleary. Early on I decided that he wasn't too scary on topics like sin and its consequences. But he advised us that, in the interests of our eternal salvation, a general confession would be in order. After a day sizing him up I decided to take the plunge and tell him all. He was kindness itself and I was amazed that nothing I told him seemed to cause him any surprise. For some years my last prayer each day had been: "O my God, I know I must die; I do not know when, how or where. But if I die in the state of mortal sin, my soul will be lost for ever. O good Jesus, have mercy on me". I said it with extra fervour that night, but I felt so renewed in grace that I thought it highly unlikely that I could ever die in such a state of loss.

In the course of my first year in seed-land I learned that CM was short for Congregation of the Mission. I came to realise that the mission in question was the continuation of the movement of mission inaugurated by St Vincent when he founded his community of priests and laymen, and that the seeds of this movement were his own experience of hearing the general confession of a man who became convinced that, were it not for the coming of St Vincent into his life, he would have been doomed to eternal loss. In the seminary we were taught to see the mission of Vincentians as the continuation of the mission of Christ who was missioned by his Father to bring good news to the poor. Our sense of mission was nurtured by conferences, retreats, and by various forms of study of the Vincentian tradition. From the start there was a good deal of emphasis on the five characteristic Vincentian virtues. The first four made a lot of sense to me. One of the words that remained over from the Gaelic in my home parish was *dúbalálaí.* It described the two-sided two-faced person. I saw simplicity as an insurance policy against ever deserving such a name. When I came to recognise my pride I welcomed a programme of humility that would make me lowly in a short time. I saw meekness as the sure way to control my bad temper. I saw mortification as the killer of all my bad habits. But I must confess that I found zeal for souls to be far too nebulous as an ideal. I did realise that one day I might hear the confessions of many people who would be very near to the gates of hell. The ideal was helped for a while by the comment of my father when I showed him the community cemetery: "What a lot of souls they must have saved", he said. I'm sure it must have reminded him of his own life's work of saving his hay and saving his crops. But the ideal did not impact much on my daily life in the seminary. This remained true even when the three "ends" of the Congregation of the

Mission began to unfold: perfection of ourselves, the Gospel for poor country people, knowledge and virtue for ecclesiastics. Even at ordination time I cannot say that I was burning with zeal for souls. Though I had my secret preferences I was ready to go where obedience would lead me.

Truths necessary

And yet, in the fifty years since 1945, I can say that I have never been so convinced of the urgent need of preaching the good news of salvation as I am now. In my efforts to put my conviction into words I have been very much helped by re-reading St Vincent's conference to his priests and laymen on December 6, 1658, less than two years before his death (1). In a sense, it was his last will and testament. He read and commented on the opening words of the rule. He explained the call to Gospel perfection. He talked of the lofty call to evangelise the poor. Before going on to highlight the importance of instructing priests and seminarians, and to justify the diverse ministries to the poor and the call to missions abroad that had already found a place in the Congregation, he dropped what, for me, was a real clanger. He stated, as something they should well know, that there is no salvation for people who do not know the Christian truths necessary to be believed. In this, he said he was following the teaching of St Augustine, St Thomas, and others. According to this teaching a person who does not know what Father, Son and Holy Spirit means, and who knows nothing of "the Incarnation and other mysteries" cannot be saved. St Vincent admitted that some theologians found this teaching too strict, but it is clear that he was out of sympathy with their teaching, and he reminded his listeners to follow the principle that, in a doubt like this, it is wise to follow the safer opinion. He backed up his exhortation with the assurance that there is nothing in the world that ranks higher than teaching the ignorant the truths necessary for their salvation. He then gave the credit, not to himself, but to his "Saviour, Lord and God" for founding a community for this purpose.

As I re-read this part of the conference I realised that my own preaching of the Gospel hasn't been coming out of such clearly defined parameters. Indeed I envied St Vincent his certitudes. He was very clear on what he meant by salvation. It meant the beatific vision of God, for all eternity, in heaven. He was also clear on what he meant by damnation. It meant being condemned for all eternity

to all the pain of sense and the pain of loss that comprise hell. In his certitudes he was heir to a long tradition of colourful preaching that was not afraid to play on people's fears and bring them on conducted tours of hell. It was a preaching laced with apocalyptic imagery from the scriptures, as well as with imagery from poets like Dante, artists like Michelangelo, and from the rich, popular story-making that was the common possession of medieval European Christendom. St Vincent was heir to all the Church teaching that has recently been so well charted for us by Fr Francis Sullivan in *Salvation outside the Church?* At the centre of this teaching was the conviction that outside the Catholic Church there is no salvation. In telling the story of how this conviction was shaped, Francis Sullivan highlights the teaching of medieval popes and councils, most notably in the bleak statement of the Council of Florence, in the Decree for the Jacobites, in 1442. The Decree left no place for the salvation of even the best intentioned, the most almsgiving and the most martyrdom-loving, pagans, Jews, heretics and schismatics. Francis Sullivan outlines the influence of some Church fathers prior to St Augustine, and the stark teaching of St Augustine himself and of his followers. He deals with the questions that arose after the discovery of the New World, which shattered the smug assumption that the world was practically co-extensive with Christendom. It is in this setting that theologians began to distinguish clearly between culpable and inculpable unbelief, between explicit and implicit faith in Christ, and between what is necessary for first justification and for final salvation. These distinctions, and new variations on and combinations of them were developed by Jesuit theologians who drew on the missionary experience of some of their brethren. But any milder teaching on the possibility of salvation for unbelievers had to contend with the new phenomenon of John Calvin's doctrine on predestination and the Jansenist variations on the theme that Christ died only for those predestined to be saved.

By the time St Vincent came on the scene theology had become heir to all the questions about salvation that had surfaced in the two hundred years that followed the Council of Florence. There were questions about the salvation of the unevangelised and questions about the salvation of the evangelised. In spite of the nuancing which various schools of theology had been giving the expression, the official teaching that outside the Catholic Church there is "no salvation" remained strongly in possession. We know of St Vincent's stance against Jansenism and the arbitrary divine selectivity which it implied. He must have known

of the personal agony about predestination that his hero St Francis de Sales endured in his younger years. But, even with his own deep convictions about the boundless mercy of God, we can assume that he shared the view of the majority of theologians of his time that most of the human race, whether the Gospel has been preached to them or not, are doomed to eternal perdition. And yet he was clear that God's boundless mercy saw to it that no human being is excluded from his will to save. How precisely he blended this conviction with his other conviction that all those saved must have some knowledge of the mysteries of the Trinity and the Incarnation it is hard or impossible to work out. As in other areas of his understanding of the mystery of the Church, his contribution was not one of speculative theology but one of providing a motivation for the teaching and preaching of the Gospel which, following the language of Trent, he saw as the breaking of the bread that saves.

New horizons

In the three centuries that separated the time of St Vincent from the last half-century, there was no major development in the Church's understanding of salvation and damnation. Only half a century ago Bishop Poskitt of Leeds used to say at All Hallows that he was clear that all his non-Catholic ancestors and relatives were lost. One could say that the first dawning of a new era in our understanding of both salvation and damnation came with the publication of Pius XIIs encyclical on the Mystical Body, in 1943. In itself, there was nothing revolutionary in the encyclical. It taught that only the Roman Catholic Church is the Mystical Body; only Roman Catholics are really members; one can be inculpably outside the membership of the Body; those outside the Body can be related to it "by a certain unconscious desire and wish". The encyclical left many questions unanswered, including some questions which it had itself implicitly raised. Its message about the salvation of non-Catholics became clearer in the furore that surrounded the movement initiated by Fr Leonard Feeney SJ. Simply put, his message was that, to be saved, you must live and die in the Roman Catholic Church. In his expounding of that message, he left no room for any shades of grey. The letter of the Holy Office, in 1949, was that, yes indeed, there are shades of grey. The letter named some of these shades and it cited the encyclical on the Mystical Body as its principal authority.

While the teaching of Pius XII provided some glimpse of the shape of things to come the real Copernican revolution about salvation topics came with the Second Vatican Council. The charter of this revolution could be said to be the description of the Church as the universal sacrament of salvation (e.g. in *L.G.* par. 48), the statement that the one Church of Christ "subsists in" the Catholic Church *(L. G.*, par. 8) and the very far-reaching statements in the Constitution on the Church, pars. 14, 15, 16. In these, Catholics are described not as the only people who are really members of the Church but as those who are "fully incorporated into the Church"; catechumens are, by desire, joined to the Church; Catholics are joined in many ways to other Christians; those who have not yet received the Gospel are related to the Church in various ways. The links, the joinings and the relationships in question are spelled out in the Decree on Ecumenism which recognised different levels of communion, and speaks of other "churches and ecclesial communities" (ch. 3), and in *Nostra Aetate* which placed other world religions in a saving perspective in which Catholics had never before seen them. Among the contributions of theologians towards the topic of salvation since the Second Vatican Council has been Karl Rahner's writing on the "anonymous Christian". Perhaps the best known critique of his position is that provided by Hans Urs von Balthasar who gives us much of his own positive thinking about salvation in *Dare we hope that all be saved?* It is at the end of his assessment of what theologians and popes have been saying about salvation since the Council that Francis Sullivan explicitly states his own conviction that there is nothing in Christian revelation which obliges us to believe that any human person has been or will be condemned to hell, and that, on the contrary, there are good reasons for *hoping* that all will be saved. He goes on to speak of the "atrocious formulation" which the Council of Florence gave to the doctrine of the necessity of the Church for salvation. He describes "no salvation outside the Church" as "only one way, and a very imperfect way at that", in which Christians have expressed their belief that God has given his Church a necessary part to play in his plan to save the world.

A far cry

All this seems a very far cry from the perspective of St Vincent in 1658, and from the time when the majority of theologians were convinced that the majority of the human race would end up in eternal

perdition. Questions about the salvation of both the evangelised and the unenvangelised have been put in a very new setting. The emphasis today is on the effective will to save all by the God who is love. Many theologians wonder whether the God of infinite love could allow anybody to be punished for all eternity. They wonder how one could talk about the complete and ultimate victory of Christ if even a small section of the human race, or indeed even one member of it, could end up in eternal perdition. Even allowing for the crucial importance of human decisions, and their consequences, they wonder whether anybody, believer or unbeliever, can do evil in a way that is definitive. They feel supported by the probings into the workings of the human mind that are taking place in so many disciplines today. They are convinced that, even if eternal loss is a possibility for anybody, it is an unlikely possibility. Their optimism with regard to universal salvation could be said to arise out of their understanding of the nature of God and the nature of human decision-making.

In the meantime, the traditional language about hell is alive and well in the new *Catechism of the Catholic Church.* But the catechism is careful not to attempt to tell us who or how many, if any, will be finally lost. Where does all this leave today's priest of the mission? Is there any longer a place for any real fire in his preaching? Even if he has already made the commandment of love the underpinning of all his preaching, is there still a real place in it for hell and damnation? However one answers the details of these questions I am convinced that there is more need than ever for preaching the reality of all the eternal truths. Even with the new optimism, the mystery of evil remains. The old imagery about the last things speaks as eloquently and as truly as ever. What is called for is a new starting point in our preaching about salvation.

The ongoing mystery of evil

The new optimism about salvation should not close our eyes to the mystery of evil at work in the world. If anything, this mystery has received a whole new poignancy in the last fifty years and in the events that immediately preceded them. The abuse of the poor and of the weak continues unabated. Though our Christian religion is the only one in which God is defined as love, bad things continue to happen to a good universe and to good people as well as bad people. There have been times in recent history, as well as in earlier history, when the God

of loving providence seemed to stand idly by in the face of human disaster. The development of doctrine about salvation that has taken place in the last half century provides us with an optimism that should be anything but naive. In the past, we may have been too facile in our answers as to why the providence of God allows the good to suffer and the wicked to prosper, but we have not yet got an answer that satisfies. It is salutary to remember that the Spirit of the God who is love gave us the New Testament which has many strong things to say about judgement. We know, of course, that Christians believe in a judge whose goodness knows no limits and who shared our human existence and whose will to forgive goes infinitely beyond even seventy times seven times. We also know that, in a way infinitely beyond our understanding, even the one little sparrow does not fall to the ground apart from the Father (Mt 10:29). And yet, though we are confident that, in the words of Julian of Norwich's *Showings of Divine Love,* the Lord "shall make everything well", we remain in the dark about many salvation questions. More than ever, we know what it is to identify with the Lord who said "No one knows" (Mt 24:36) and who, instead of answering the question "Will only a few be saved?", said "strive to enter through the narrow door…" (Lk 13:24).

The old symbols still speak

In our hope that, somehow, all will eventually be saved, our preaching would be emptied of much of its seriousness and urgency if we abandoned the scriptural imagery of hell and much of the imagery that has surrounded it in the course of history. I would not now be as sure as our dogma teacher, Fr Michael O'Callaghan, was that there is "real, corporeal, fire" in hell. And, though it may be true that St Alphonsus learned some of his imagery of judgement and hell as he listened to a Vincentian preacher in Naples, it might be wise for his community and ours to change the uses to which we put that imagery. But both Fr Michael and the Naples preacher had something important to bequeath to all of us. So had the retreat preacher in James Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.* The basic symbols of fire, outer darkness, separation, and the undying worm have immediate impact in every culture. We may have learned a lot about human psychology and the diversity of literary forms in which the words of salvation have been transmitted to us, but self-delusion and self-destruction, and the family-destruction and the society-destruction that can flow from them, remain painful

realities in our world of monstrous addictions. The people whose eyes become opened to the real process of self-destruction at work in their own lives are quick to acknowledge their personal experience of a death that seems to know no ending. From what they have themselves experienced, they do not see the traditional hell-symbols as an exaggeration. Rather than speculate on how many might end up in hell, they can say to us "hell is something that has been happening to me; it is happening to me; it could continue to happen to me". This is true whether we talk of "suffering the loss of your own soul" or "forfeiting your life" (Mt 16:26). The destruction does not stop with individuals or families. We have experienced infernos like Dresden and Rwanda. In each, we got a glimpse of the seemingly endless consequences of bad human choices and bad human decisions. The preacher of the Good News does not have to invent any new infernos. In a spirit of faith and hope and love, he helps people to recognise God's hand saving them in the ones that already exist.

It is the same hand of God that helps us through all life's purgatories. While we might have problems today about the likelihood of an eternal hell, the continual purgatorial nature of human existence makes more and more sense. For long, Catholics were defensive about the doctrine of purgatory. But the doctrine can be a wonderful context for seeing all of life's purifications. The active and passive purifications of which St John of the Cross wrote are not just for a small category of holy people. They describe the experience of all of us in our continuing need for decontamination. In the Catholic understanding, the purification that can continue after life is the first loving glow of the beatific vision, bringing light into our pockets of darkness. Or one could envisage it as the divine artist putting the finishing touches to the damaged face which was made in his own image, in a way that finally undoes the ravages and cracks that the years have brought to the canvas. Maybe the various infernos in human history would be better named as the purgatories of the human family on their journey. In his unchanged decision to make humans out of the earth's dust, God sees the need to keep purifying us of our continuing tendencies to revert to what is sub-human and pre-human. The fire of God's love is not a different fire from the fire of purgatory and the fire of hell. However we name the purifications of the human family, they are all expressions of the agony which Christ's body and all that it is drawing to itself must endure till the end of the world, for the salvation of the whole human family and of the whole world. It is significant that visions of hell and

of purgatory have a recurring place in the experience of saints and of visionaries. They are all part of an urgent invitation to wholeness rather than a message of ultimate doom.

A new starting point

There is need for a new starting point in our talking about salvation. My own starting point is to envisage the Lord of love who, by his Paschal Mystery is our one Saviour, appealing to each of us: "Come, help me to build a new world". This is one way of summarising one of the clearest messages of the *Constitution on the Church in the Modern World.* The Constitution sees us as "partners in the Paschal Mystery" (par. 22). As a consequence of the partnership we can be assured that:

– when we have spread on earth
– the fruits of our nature and our enterprise
– human dignity, brotherly communion, and freedom
– we will find them once again,
– cleansed this time from stain of sin,
– illuminated and transfigured... (par. 39).

Since the rise of Ecumenism, Catholics have been shy about speaking of human activity as an expression of real partnership with God. At the time of the Reformation, there was so much emphasis on human merit and good works that Catholics could easily be accused of thinking that they could somehow add to or improve on the work of our Saviour. The Reformers' emphasis on "Christ alone", "faith alone", and "grace alone" provided a salutary corrective. But we can now see more clearly that both Catholics and Protestants inherited a common tradition in which Christians saw themselves as fellow-workers with God. Christians are called to be partners in a "wonderful exchange" in which we come to share in the divinity of Christ who shared in our humanity. They should be at ease both with our Lord's statement that "apart from me you can do nothing" (Jn 15:5) and with his loving assurance that "the one who believes in me … will do greater works than these" (Jn 14:12). In my seminary days we asked "if humans had not sinned, would the Son of God have become incarnate?" We were told then that, though a few theologians like Scotus and a few saints like St Francis de Sales had thought yes, the majority view, led by Aquinas, was "no sin, no Incarnation". In the world view that people like Teilhard de Chardin have helped to image for us, there would appear to be a certain inevitability about Incarnation, as God's

ever-creative action moves from alpha point to omega point. In this incarnational world-view, no work of God is yet completed. Though the once-for-all saving action of Jesus Christ has taken place, its effects must seep into every human being and into the whole of creation, until the end of time. A result is that what the innocent abroad said on seeing the Grand Canyon is true of everything in creation: "it should be beautiful when it's finished!". The Incarnation is a call to all of us to a partnership in finishing God's work. God made the first creation without the help of a partner. He wishes to involve all of us as partners in shaping the new creation. The gardener who, on being praised by the priest and told that it is wonderful what God and man can do when they work together, replied: "you should have seen the place when God was on his own" spoke a word of incarnational wisdom.

Jesus came to inaugurate the new creation. He preached the imminent coming of the Kingdom of God. He described the kind of attitudes and relationships that God wanted in the kingdom. In his own ministry and miracles, people both heard and saw the coming of the kingdom: "the blind receive their sight…, the poor have the good news preached to them" (Mt 11:4, 5). It is clear that he wished his disciples to continue and help to complete this work. His decision to involve all of us has many profound implications:

– *Firstly,* even though it is God and God alone who can make the kingdom come, we are all invited to be co-operators with God in a way that does full justice to both his sovereignty and our freedom – topics that seemed so academic in the old Molinist-Thomist debates but that are as alive and crucial as ever.

– *Secondly,* we have to find continually new ways of imaging heaven. It will not be just seeing God in a kind of monochrome way. Heaven will be a whole set of renewed relationships, with each other and with a transformed universe, all pervaded by the glory of the God who is love, in a way that is the full flowering of everything Jesus said about the kingdom. It will be a *nunc stans,* a standing now, but it will also be that continued ecstasy which is the standing outside of time and of our self-centred interests, in a way that will make us fully and consciously present to the God of love, to ourselves, and to the whole creation.

– *Thirdly,* every decision, every prayer, every action that each of us will have performed on this earth will be part of the new creation. Heaven will be a richer place as a result of each of our efforts. Each of us will recognise our own part in the making of heaven and others

will recognise it too. Far from being a reason of self-glorification, the recognition of our own parts will be a reason for saying to the God of love "how great thou art". Fr John K Murphy used to tell of the Persian potentate who said he would reward the visiting orchestra by giving each member an ornament of gold the size and shape of the instrument he was playing. The pessimist who was the piccolo player complained afterwards "there was I with my little piccolo!". In heaven, he will see that his contribution cannot be measured in gold. In the same setting, the widow's mite will be part of the eternal treasury. The cup of cold water will be part of the torrents of delight.

– *Fourthly,* perhaps the most helpful images of salvation are provided by the Gospel parables and stories that speak of seed sown, trees growing and bearing fruit, harvests ripening, good measure, pressed down, running over. Christianity is in many senses a seminal religion, in which every little good deed is a little seed. As Jesus himself taught us, there is no more lovely image of salvation than the language of the good farmer who spends his life saving. He may not know that the basic Greek word for saving means "to make healthy", but his daily programme of work is one of making healthy, preserving from destruction, saving.

– *Fifthly,* our co-operation with the God of love is in the shaping of a civilization of love. As scientists give us a glimpse of the trajectory of our universe from big bang to final breakdown, we may feel "a stranger and afraid, in a world I never made" (A E Housman). But, as we experience the Lord of love, he reassures us and says: "I made it, flaws and all; I entered it anew in the Incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and promise of return of my Son; please be his partners in the making of a new heaven and a new earth and in draining the world of the evil and sin which have entered it". This draining can take many forms. It can involve our urgent daily calls to peace-making and justice-making, as agents of the Lord who came in the prophetic tradition and brought good news to the oppressed poor. It can involve the daily work of reconciliation, of the kind so beautifully symbolised this year [1995] in the shared building of a golden orb over the restored Frauenkirche in Dresden. In heaven, each of us will be able to say "I am not a stranger; I am not afraid; I am in the new world which I helped to make". This very world which we are daily helping to make is the one which the Lord will transform at his second coming.

– *Sixthly,* though the Lord who saves invites all of the human family,

believers and unbelievers, into the making of the new creation, those who comprise his believing Church are the "universal sacrament of salvation". These are three words that contain a whole programme for the Church and that need continual unpacking. They remind us that the Church must be always in the business of saving – saving every person and every thing, and thereby being the sign and sacrament of Christ the one Saviour. As we share in the saving activity of the one Saviour, both the parable of the talents and the parable of the eleventh hour workers have a continual message for us. As we keep trying to harmonise the two parables we realise more keenly that "from everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required" (Lk 12:48), that salvation is both God's gift and our endeavours in response to it. This would be a good setting for a renewed theology of merit.

– *Finally,* St Irenaeus has left us a great programme for Christians by telling us that the glory of God is a human being fully alive and that to be fully alive is to see God. The question for the Christian is not how many of the human race will finally see God but how many human beings are fully alive now. Each of us is called to be an agent of God in making each other fully alive and keeping each other fully alive. It is not enough for me to aim, in a self-centred way, at "getting to heaven at all costs". Each of us has a precious part to play in the making of heaven, for others as well as for ourselves. If heaven is beatific vision, the visibility there will be improved as a result of the good that each of us will have done on earth. This good we do as members of the "whole body, joined and knit together" (Eph 4:16). To be an inactive member of the body is the one tragedy for the Christian. To help motivate people to be fully alive is the work of the "little Company of the Mission" and of all evangelisers. It is a work that needs a lot of new fire.

Conclusion

St Vincent shared the limitations of his contemporaries in his understanding of many of the details of salvation. But his over-all vision of the source and purpose of salvation was profoundly in focus. He could not even begin to speak of salvation except in the context of the Trinity and the Incarnation. Recent explorings of the mystery of Father, Son, and Spirit and of the mystery of God Incarnate indicate that without them nothing else in our religion makes sense. The Trinity is the mystery of persons in relationships of knowing and loving, in

ways that are infinitely creative and fruitful. The Incarnation draws us into that mystery in ways that we could not have dreamt of. As today's preacher motivates people to be partners in the Paschal Mystery, there is a continual need for confessing the sins that keep us and others from seeing God. There is place for good preaching of both personal responsibility and of God's continuing judgement. There is place for my way and your way. In the preaching of the good news of salvation there is place for the mother language of John O'Connell, the blaze of John Gill, the youthful vigour of Christy O'Leary, the autumn gentleness of Bob Wilson. As each of us comes to recognise what should be our distinctive contribution to the final showing of divine love, we will learn to say "not to us, O Lord, not to us but to your name give glory" (Ps 115:1).

Editor's Note

1. A new translation, printed in *Collogue* No. 30, Autumn 1994, pp 379-392, gave the initial impetus for this "reply" to St Vincent.

St Vincent and Community Life

Jack Harris

It is good for us to be here

After a community celebration at which there was a meal and the sharing of many good stories and memories, a confrere commented that money couldn't buy the sort of companionship that life in the Congregation brings to us, and he wondered why so few were joining us. It felt a bit like St Peter's comment: "Lord, it is good for us to be here!", and he set me thinking about community life, and the lack of community that besets so many people to whom we minister. Many of the ills in our society in this Irish region of the Province find their origin, I think, in loneliness and lack of real human communication. The Irish culture accepts drink as a social lubricant, and among the young today drugs are seen as open doors through which one can escape the harsh realities of life to relaxation and happiness. But, in fact, addiction to either or both of these substances brings nothing but isolation and misery. Happiness is an elusive butterfly that many chase after without ever catching it. I have listened to the stories of people whose lives and relationships have been wrecked by their need for heroin; this need was so intense that they wouldn't even stop short of armed robbery to satisfy it. They have talked about settling down, but after a stay in prison they are back to square one. For them, community seems to have a perverse way of working to their disadvantage, because the prison "community" seems to confirm them in their criminal ways and makes them less able to build real community when they are released.

They are not the only ones, however, who deep down want what real community sharing can offer. I find the word *community* turning up in all sorts of strange contexts, because it is a good emotive word and everybody agrees that it is a desirable thing, without being altogether clear on what exactly it means. Europe is supposed to be an economic *community,* and people who share political views, skin colour or country of origin, are regularly described as a *community,* even though they may be hundreds of kilometres apart and have never met one another. There is *community* policing, and people with mental illness are being

discharged into the *community* from specialised institutions. In Ireland at present more and more radio stations call themselves *Community* Radio. Two of them cover an audience of over a million, which could hardly be described as a *community.* The word sounds good, though, and is much more user-friendly than *commercial or public service.*

So, are people really searching for something that we have already found and had at the heart of our Vincentian way of life for over three centuries? Have we a lesson for a lot of people who seem to be saying "Lord, it is good for us to be here!"? Indeed, as the means of electronic communication become ever more technically effective and universally available, there seems to me to be less rather than more real communication. I find it remarkable that while we can engineer genes to take the bend out of bananas and make strawberry-flavoured tomatoes, and we have the technology to link people anywhere on the planet, yet we seem unable to make the slightest change to motivation and behaviour of the humans who wish to engage in the said link-ups. "Remember who your teachers were" said St Paul to Timothy, and good teachers are the ones who have life-experience and good sources of material, both of which we find to a superb degree in St Vincent.

St Vincent's main source was the sacred scriptures

Our founder was away ahead of his time in his use of sources. Yet he didn't use the word *community* the way we do today. He considered the word too closely associated with religious life, in the technical sense of religious orders like the Jesuits or Carthusians. Vincent preferred to speak of *vie en commun* or *vie commune,* and saw us as a group or body energised by a spirit or common vision that put us in the mainstream of the Church's apostolic work. He wanted us to be men of deep spirituality and prayer, but not hidden away in monasteries. Abelly puts his own words in Vincent's mouth when we are described as "Carthusians in our community houses and apostles in the countryside", but as with all such catch-phrases this one has elements of both truth and falsity. It underlines the two poles of our lives, but the danger lies in the balance between them that we achieve as individuals, or try to impose as a general norm on everyone else.

Vincent was a first-rate psychologist when it came to dealing either with groups or on a one-to-one basis with people of all walks of life, but he didn't base his thinking on the philosophical trends of his day. He firmly rooted all his ideas of community in the books of the New Testament, especially the gospels. I say Vincent was ahead of his

time because we tend to think that the Second Vatican Council made it fashionable for Catholics to root their spirituality in the sacred scriptures. A confrere of the Southern Province of the United States, Warren Dicharry, has shown that Vincent, like the ancient doctors of the Church, lived and breathed the scriptures (1).

Fr Dicharry has used the research of another confrere, François Gamier, who found 428 direct quotations from the bible in the works of St Vincent, along with over two thousand indirect quotations or allusions. This contrasts strongly with the emphasis placed by Pierre Coste on Bérulle, Francis de Sales, Luis of Granada and Alphonsus Rodriguez as sources of St Vincent's spirituality. Coste describes scriptural quotations in Vincent's work as "rare enough". Dicharry has found that in our Common Rules alone, without mentioning letters or conferences, Vincent uses 18 direct quotations, 75 clear allusions, and 80 vague allusions in the space of twelve short chapters, making a total of 174 uses of verses from the scriptures. I have checked the chapter on Community Living and found that nearly every paragraph has an allusion, clear or otherwise, to a part of trie New Testament.

To do and to teach

Vincent saw the small community of apostles and other disciples of Jesus as a model for the life-style of his missioners. They would share a life of prayer and apostolate together; but he goes further, and sees the foundations of community in the Trinity and the Incarnation. Jesus had a great vision of a kingdom in which there would be peace and justice, and where those on the margins would be as welcome as those at the centre. Dicharry sees a significance in the fact that Vincent starts the first and last chapters of our Common Rules with the same quotation: "Jesus began to do and to teach". I notice that our new translation puts the idea even more strongly than the old Latin *coepit facere et docere;* it says: "Jesus I did not begin by teaching; he began by doing". This quotation is mistakenly assumed to be from the start of one of the gospels; it is, in fact, from the Acts of the Apostles, and there is special meaning for St Luke in the word *began.* We tend to see just the "do and teach" part of the verse, but Luke saw the life of Jesus on earth as just the beginning of what would be taken up and continued by the Church. Luke's gospel was the beginning, and his second book was the story of the continuation. For Vincent the continuation goes on in the Congregation of the Mission. So, community has a very deep scriptural meaning tracing its origin right through from the intimate

life of the Trinity to the taking of our flesh and dwelling amongst us, and on to the missioning of the twelve, the seventy-two and, in later years, to the setting up of the Congregation.

I intend to trace the development in Vincent's thought from the time of the foundation contract with the de Gondis, through Folleville and Châtillon to the Bull *Salvatoris nostri,* and on to the presentation of our Common Rules. For St Vincent this was one continuum which gave community a firm foundation in faith and raised it above the ambit of psychological analysis which is so popular today in the board-rooms of big business enterprises which need to brush up on corporate image, or sales, or both. Yet even large businesses are losing their community dimension. Numbers are cut back to the bone, and often a single member of staff with a mobile phone carries the company flag. We tend to assume that more is better, and the old Latin adage *quod superabundat non vitiat does not* necessarily apply. If you boil an egg in three minutes, you don't boil it better in six minutes, and if a community of three can take charge of a ministry, do six necessarily do it better? Ivan Illich maintains that they wouldn't (2). When asked if we need married clergy in the Catholic Church he said we already have too many unmarried ones. So why community? Are we a luxury?

Why a community?

The Church has many technical definitions of apostolic groups of people like ourselves, but following St Paul's recommendation to Timothy about knowing who his teachers were, I went back to the one Vincent gave:

> I think I told you some time ago what the general of the Oratory said to me about our Company. Among other things he told me: "Oh! Monsieur Vincent, you should be happy that your Company has the hallmarks of Christ's own institution. Because when he set up the Church he was pleased to choose poor people, idiots, and sinners, to found it, plant it, and spread it through the world by such chosen instruments in order to show the superiority of his power; allowing poor fishermen to challenge the wisdom of the philosophers, and overcoming the power of kings and emperors by the weakness of those who when injured humbled themselves, and when persecuted prayed for their persecutors; when they were assailed they became victors by turning the other cheek. In

> the same way most or all whom God calls to your Company are either poor or of lowly condition or not very well educated".
>
> Nevertheless, my brothers, the whole kingdom is aflame and filled with the spirit of this little Company, to such an extent that the king, just before he died, did me the honour of saying that if he recovered he would not allow a bishop to be appointed until he had spent three years with the Mission (XI 132).

This was a great compliment to Vincent from Olier, and it was obviously appreciated. He was trying to push the frontiers of religious life beyond what the Church of his time had experienced and was prepared to approve. His idea of having nuns working in the streets seemed preposterous at first, but we take it for granted today. His plans for a permanent community of missioners also seemed too novel for his time, because the secular clergy resented them and Rome was very reluctant to approve them.

Two confreres, Jean-François Gaziello (3) and Miguel Perez Flores (4) have done extensive research into the history of our Rules and how the Congregation was originally approved, and I would like to summarise their findings as they throw light on the frequent discussions we have today as to which comes first, work or community?

The hen or the egg?

There were plenty of religious communities around in the late 1500s and early 1600s, yet Vincent found it necessary to shift the goal-posts and find a new structure, not as *an end in itself but* as a *means of mission.* There were vast numbers of people who were untouched by the structures of the time. The Folleville experience had underlined two things: the state of religious practice of the country people, and the ignorance of many of the clergy. Along with Châtillon, Folleville was like Vincent's road to Damascus. A deep personal renewal took place, and the fourth chapter of St Luke's gospel became his plan of action:

> Filled with the Holy Spirit, Jesus left the Jordan and was led by the spirit through the wilderness… He taught in their synagogues…; he has sent me to bring the good news to the poor…; this text is being fulfilled today…

Gone were the ambitions to have good benefices and retire early; gone was the desire to have fine clothing and live the high life in a well-

heeled part of the city. Vincent saw that if the gospel meant anything at all, it meant going out to the countryside and saving the people who faced spiritual death as well as bodily starvation.

The work of the twelve apostles needed to be re-incarnated in the France of the 1600s, and since neither the diocesan clergy nor the existing orders were prepared to leave their cities and go out to the country poor, a new group of men was needed. Rome had a clear idea of what a "Mission" was; it was a small group of priests assembled to give missions in either Christian or non-Christian countries. They would not form a recognised community, society or congregation and their approval was for a specific purpose and for a limited time. Rome also had a clear idea of what a "Religious Order" was; it had superiors, vows, cloister and permanency. The Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith had decided there were enough such communities in the Church and wanted no more groupings that were not under the direct control of the bishops.

Vincent asked *Propaganda fide* to approve his community by describing it as a "Mission", and got a positive response on 5 November 1627 based on this very narrow conception of mission as Rome defined it. The Foundation Contract arranged by the de Gondis and signed on 27 April 1625, however, had something more permanent in mind, and so Vincent refined his ideas and applied to *Propaganda fide* again. He got two firm rebuffs from Rome, but by making some modifications, arranging to have in Rome a permanent confrere François du Coudray to fight his corner, and applying through a different branch of the Vatican (the Congregation dealing with bishops and regulars) he managed to get our Congregation accepted in January 1633. We can only conjecture as to why Rome relented. Perhaps a bit of deference to bishops in our rules, or just fresh minds at the Vatican, or did Vincent simply use "contacts" in high places and "play the system"? As with the steward in the gospel who "adjusted" the accounts of his master's debtors, or the rogues in the genealogy of Christ, Providence works in strange ways. Pope Urban VIII promulgated his Bull *Salvatoris nostri* in which he decrees:

> …the principal object and special aim of this Congregation and its members is by the grace of God to work both for their own salvation and for the salvation of those living on farms, in villages, on the land, and in the poorer localities and towns; but in the cities and urban areas they will give retreats to those about to be advanced to orders and instruct those preparing for orders.

Why in community and not as individuals?

No doubt the work of converting the poor people of the de Gondi estates could have been done by individuals but Madame, her husband and Vincent realised that something of a more lasting nature was needed. Vincent already had some experience of community living with the Oratorians, according to Abelly who says Vincent "lived at that retreat for about two years". Gaziello says it is difficult to get any more information on this assertion of Abelly, but he believes that Vincent came to understand that community was a sure means of perfection and priestly sanctification. Bérulle said to the early Oratorians:

> God has re-established in these days, in various religious families, the spirit of fervour of their first institution, and he seems to want to give the same grace to the priestly state, renewing in it the state of perfection. It is in order to renew within us this grace from heaven that we are assembled together in this place and in this life-style (5).

St Vincent had a clear view that community as we call it, or the *vie commune* as he called it, was a means of priestly perfection. We first find him promoting a common life at Châtillon. He started as Parish Priest on 1 August 1617, and when he arrived there were six elderly parish chaplains whose life was anything but sacerdotal. They spent most of their time in the taverns, kept young women in their houses and let the church go to ruin. Vincent won them around and formed them into a community who divided their time between work and prayer. Without personal holiness it was not possible to do the work of mission *Nemo dat quod non habet* was a principle well understood, so community was the crucible of an apostolate which was nourished on personal union with Christ and a life energised with the power of his teachings in the gospels. So it is a sort of hen or egg question to ask which comes first: apostolic work or community?

Vincent sees our apostolate and personal spirituality as inseparable, and both of these need the common life, just as a fire needs oxygen.

A community is born

His Châtillon experience of *vie en commun* confirmed what he had in mind when he reported on the earlier event at Folleville. On 25 January 1617 Madame de Gondi asked Vincent to preach a special

sermon in Folleville, which he did, and huge numbers came for confession. Vincent gave them instruction in the faith, and so many people came that he found that even with the help of another priest he could not cope. Madame got some temporary help from the Jesuits , but they could not make any long-term commitment. Priests could not be found to help, principally because they preferred the city life and many of them didn't even know the words of absolution for confession. There was a vast harvest out there to be harvested and it struck the de Gondis and Vincent that existing Church structures could not cope. The Jesuit provincial, Fr Charlet, on the instructions of his superior general, turned Madame de Gondi down, on the grounds that work of that type did not come within the scope of their Institute.

No individual or collection of individuals could do it either. What was needed was an entirely new apostolic community. Following Folleville Vincent found that *ad hoc* groups called in to give help in giving missions had limited success, and some sort of permanence was needed. Madame de Gondi wanted Vincent to stay at her house and guide the new community by proxy. A building became available when Vincent got the benefice of Principal of the Collège des Bons Enfants. Three priests formed the nucleus of the new community, Antoine Portail, François Du Coudray and Jean de la Salle, and with Vincent they signed a contract with the de Gondis to live together in community to give missions to the people on their estates. They were to be:

> … men of proved doctrine, piety and learning, free of all obligations in regard to benefices and ecclesiastical charges and dignities, so that they might devote themselves unreservedly to the salvation of the poor country people, going from village to village, preaching and hearing general confessions.

From this it is clear that the *vie commune* was an essential means of securing the future of the mission. Private individuals would be attracted by benefices and the independence they provided. Commitments to parishes would limit men's availability to travel on missions. The parish clergy naturally saw the missioners as a financial threat, so it was stipulated that the missioners should charge nothing for their work and be of no expense to the parishes they visited. This meant that they had to live economically together on a common fund derived from the endowment provided by the de Gondis. There would be no private practice. Stability and availability were to be the hallmarks of the new missioners, necessitating a community of work and of possessions.

> …they must apply themselves entirely and purely to the salvation of poor people, going from village to village, supported by their common purse…

In the Foundation Contract made with the de Gondis Vincent agreed to remain in the de Gondi house to take care of Madame's spiritual needs, but he left it to Providence to help him over the problem of not living with his newly formed community. As it happened, he did not have long to wait. Madame de Gondi dies just two months after the contract of foundation was signed. He was able then to be personally involved in the growth of the fledgling Congregation. As soon as he moved into the Collège des Bons Enfants the community began to grow, and

> …God did what he had foreseen from all eternity. He gave many blessings to our works. Seeing what was happening, good ecclesiastics came to us and asked to join us…

From this we could conclude, and Gaziello does conclude, that in the mind of Vincent recruitment to the first community was based on our *works,* not on the community for its own sake.. It was the mission that attracted apostolically minded priests. From the three who co-signed the civil Act of Association with Vincent on 4 September 1626 the numbers grew to nine in 1628. There was still a lot of correspondence moving between Paris and Rome about the approval of the Congregation, and the line being taken was to set down five clear fundamental characteristics of the new mission:

> 1) It would be left to the bishops to send missioners into whatever parts of their dioceses they thought needed them.
>
> 2) During missions in the parishes the confreres would be subject to the Parish Priests.
>
> 3) Missions would be entirely free.
>
> 4) There would be no preaching, teaching, or hearing of confessions in important cities.
>
> 5) The superior of the company would have complete jurisdiction over it.

Saint Lazare – new men – a new house

As the Congregation grew the premises became too small and another became available when the prior and canons at St Lazare offered their

priory to the new missioners. At first it would be a sharing arrangement, and we can see Vincent's concern for the identity of his little community in such a large premises where the canons had a fairly free and easy life-style:

> …because we observe silence from after night prayer until dinner next day, when we have an hour's recreation at the close of which we again observe silence and do not speak in that period save on necessary matters, and even then in a very low tone of voice… There is much reason to fear that these gentlemen would not care to bind themselves to that and if they did not, we would utterly ruin an essential observance (I 137-141).

Vincent was also worried about the question of attending the divine office in choir. The canons of the priory would continue to do so, but he did not agree to his missioners being compelled to join them wearing special canonical regalia. He insisted that his priests were there primarily for mission, and their job was to be constantly available for the poor people of the countryside. We could easily misread the happenings at St Lazare and dismiss Vincent as a bit too fussy about details like choir-dress and silence in the house, but there was always in his mind the fundamental principle that community is for mission. The work of mission is paramount; the poor come first; the poor people give our *vie commune* its whole *raison d'être.* The sort of house the early confreres lived in, the order of day and the general lifestyle had all to be compatible with that over-riding norm. Eventually the property was given over to Vincent and a whole new phase of community life began.

It soon became clear that the work of the Mission would not have lasting effect unless the formation of good clergy was undertaken. Vincent started retreats. Then he worked on the alleviation of hunger, sickness, unemployment, and homelessness when he helped set up the Ladies and Daughters of Charity along with the Confraternities and other associations. His zeal was enormous and he found men even for the foreign missions. Throughout all this expansion the Congregation was developing its community life and refining what Vincent had in mind. Right from the start our community life was different to anything the Church had previously sanctioned. Vincent said of St Lazare:

> The mission of St Lazare is the original on which all other houses should model themselves and persons who come to it should imitate.

It took thirty years of experience at St Lazare and throughout France before our rule of life was finally put down on paper and presented to the confreres on 17 May 1658:

> All these rules will help you avoid sin and imperfection, to procure the salvation of souls, to serve the Church and give glory to God.

Vincent had consulted the rules of the Jesuits and other orders, but he gave our rules a particular thrust in that they were all directed towards the mission and towards the the service of the poor. Rules were important, but at times we would have to "leave God for God" if the poor called, and there had to be flexibility in interpretation of rules. Francis de Sales had rushed his rules into print and ran into problems; the Jesuits had taken their time and so did Vincent:

> There are two reasons for this. Firstly I wanted to take our Savior as a model. He put things into practice before making them part of his teaching. Secondly, delaying their printing has avoided many problems which have almost certainly arisen if they had been published too soon. There could have been difficulties in living up to them later on, as they might have seemed too difficult or not so relevant.

By the time our Common Rules were written our Community had become a very coherent entity and three powerful elements gave it this cohesion according to Gaziello, quoting Corera and Perez Flores: 1) the superior-subject relationship; 2) uniformity, and 3) sharing of goods in common. Corera maintains that our Rule elevates these three elements to the role of a sort of cement that bonds our communities together. The superior is mentioned 63 times and is in total command of the situation. He gives orders, permissions, admonitions, decides the order of day, adjudicates on who does what work, and even supervises the spiritual lives of the confreres, recommending their spiritual reading and handling their personal problems. No one is to question his decisions or complain about anything. Vincent sees this as the only way to ensure total dedication to the poor and to the stability of the mission. He was a far cry from what many today see as "consensus administration". Unfortunately, with human nature as it is, such administration will find the lowest common denominator and fail to challenge people to give of their best. Vincent knew how to get the best out of people, like a conductor with an orchestra. He also liked uniformity.

Today, however, uniformity is another bad word. We value initiative and flair, welcoming imaginative and individual approaches, but Vincent favoured a united front when it came to mission. Private practice would have destroyed everything he stood for, and he knew his missioners were often walking on egg-shells when they went into parishes. Again, if there was to be a "corporate image" or "company style" as we'd say today, then it had to be across the board affecting not only the way of preaching, teaching, and giving spiritual direction, but also how we lived at home and while out on mission. Vincent realised this would be difficult and he tempers his rule with the words "as far as possible", a phrase he uses regularly. So exceptions are permitted if they are for the good of the mission and the service of the poor requires them. Uniformity is not some mechanical quality that turns us into a

> sort of Fabergé egg on a brass stand, in the middle of the world, untouched and untouchable, a pristine work of such sanctimonious art whose intentions alone vindicate its existence. Such communities turn into museums and die of mildew, unnoticed and unnoted by the world around them, benignly useless, and innocuously ineffective signs of nothing.

These are the words of Joan Chittester OSB (6), and I think they echo Vincent's fears for the CM.

The sharing of possessions is the third ingredient in our Rules to give cohesion to the community. Members of the Congregation

> individually and collectively should understand, that following the example of the first Christians, all our belongings are common property.

It saddened Vincent to find that some communities were in very poor circumstances while St Lazare was faring well indeed. He said so to Georges des Jardins on 6 October 1657:

> What you said about the inequalities among our houses confirms me in the fear that St Lazare is too well catered for with good bread, meat, and fresh air to breathe, along with open spaces for walking – things not found in all other houses and which make it appeal to the senses. (VI 516)

In addition to these three pivotal points in community living as he saw it, Vincent added many more that are straight out of the gospels, in chapter 8 of the Common Rules he begins:

> Christ… formed apostles and disciples into a community… Now our little Congregation wants to follow in the footsteps of Christ… For this reason there should be great mutual respect, and we should get along as true friends… The priests should even try, in the Lord, to anticipate one another in showing … mutual respect… We should take great care to avoid being stubborn or argumentative in conversation… We should… try… to prefer other people's opinions to our own…Above all… everyone… in conversation should avoid… bad temper, or showing he is annoyed…, and no one should hurt another in word or deed… Everyone must consider it a matter of prime obligation to maintain confidentiality… No one should damage the reputation of others…

When Vincent comments on all this in conferences he speaks of a warmth and friendliness *(cordlalité)* that should permeate our communities. In French he speaks of *amis intimes,* close or intimate friends. The Latin version of our Rules uses the words *carorum amicorum* from the word *carus* meaning high-priced, costly, of great value; hence the English word "dear". The present translation of our Rules uses the anodyne and spineless "good friends". On the feast of St John the Evangelist he told his community.

> Charity is the soul of the virtues and it is heaven in community. The house of St Lazare will be paradise if there is charity in it, for paradise is nothing other than love, union, charity, and the principal happiness of eternal life consists of loving; in heaven the blessed are fully absorbed with the beatific love, because there is nothing more desirable than living with those one loves and who love us in return.

Community in our modern Constitutions

During four hundred years we had no other rules than those given to us by St Vincent himself. Then came the 1917 Code of Canon Law, which demanded a revision of all rules and constitutions, and we had the 1953 Constitutions. These were revised again in 1980 when Vatican II and Pope Paul VI insisted that all constitutions reflect the spirit of the Council's documents, provided the purpose, nature and character of the Congregation be safeguarded. Fr Jesús Cavanna CM traces the various proposals and discussions that took place (7). He

explains that there was division on what precisely our end is. One group pushed strongly for defining our end as the evangelization of the poor. Many were opposed to putting in "our own perfection" as an end at all. Others wanted the three ends mentioned by Vincent in the Common Rules. Then it came down to actual words, when a distinction was drawn between "Christ who evangelised" and "Christ evangelising" the poor. The attributive noun "evangeliser" limited our scope to actually doing evangelical work like preaching, teaching and ministering sacraments, while the present participle "evangelising" opened the way to evangelising by the wordless witness of our lives without being literally preachers and so on.

This swung the emphasis back to Vincent's idea that the work of evangelization is done by first practising all kinds of virtues ("striving for one's own perfection") and then, if we are so gifted and talented, by literally going out on missions and preaching, teaching, etc. Diogenes once put up a sign on his tent saying "Wisdom for sale here". When a customer arrived, offering money, he was told: "In all things look for the end". Our end or purpose is what determines everything else, and Vatican II was at pains to ensure that, with each order and congregation, the founder's "aims or ends be recognised and preserved".

Our present Constitutions, presented to us on 27 September 1984, mention that Vincent devised a "new form of community life" which was "to prepare its apostolic activity" and also "encourage and help it". So the spirit is the same as in the days of St Lazare: our community is for mission. The ultimate source of our life is in the Trinity, so we "announce the Father's love and express it in our own life"; we "follow Christ who… shared fraternal life… to evangelise the poor" and "under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit we build up unity… to achieve our mission". The norm for us, according to C 21§2, is to actually live in a community house as a group together. Community doesn't work by chance; it has to be worked at, and we didn't choose our partners; we are all chosen by the Lord, so we are his gift to us, but what we become in community is our gift to God: "It is by the gift of ourselves and of all that we have, that will make us truly present to the Community". At the same time, personal privacy and individual worth will be respected, and initiative should be encouraged, but "evaluated in the light of the purpose and spirit of the Congregation". The animating force of our community life will be "the five virtues" so as to "support the apostolate" and be a "sign to the world of the newness of evangelical life", this will be brought about by "co-responsibility"

and "active obedience" where mutual dialogue will "overcome an excessively individualistic style of living". Confreres will "pay close attention to the opinions and needs" of other confreres, while creating "conditions necessary for work, rest, prayer and talking together, making moderate use of communications media" and ensuring that some part of our house is reserved for community privacy.

A community is a living organism, so it must develop or die. The kiss of death is on any community that becomes centred on itself, becoming its own *raison d'être,* having its wagons drawn into the proverbial circle which becomes vicious and self-consuming. So the Community Plan has to be placed under regular review so that "hearing the cry of the poor" and reading "the signs of the times" we may keep ourselves fresh in our mission. All this will be supported on a firm foundation of community prayer. We are first and foremost people of faith and, as C 41 says

> according to the mind of St Vincent, prayer is the living source of the spiritual life of a missioner; through it he puts on Christ, becomes steeped in the teachings of the gospel and remains always in God's love and mercy. In this way the Spirit of Christ will always make our words and actions effective.

The chapter on Community Life aims at having us "truly a community of friendship, work, prayer and goods". An old-fashioned approach to promoting good community virtues was contained in the *Regulae* or rules of the internal seminaire as it was known. This document identified a number of "spirits" that were inimical to good common sharing, among them being *spiritus nimis levis* or *nimis gravis* (too flippant, or too ponderous), *spiritus scholaris* (childish), *spiritus dicax* (sarcastic), *spiritus mordax* (bitter and biting), and a host of others, each more community-unfriendly than the one before it. Taking a leaf out of Fr Bob Maloney's book I have tried a bit of horizon-shifting on the spirits and re-incarnated them into a set of birds.

Spirits of the seminaire re-visited

There are many types of birds, but ten of them seem to match up particularly well with personality types frequently met in community life.

There is firstly the PIGEON, which lives in a lofty place and comes down to earth only periodically. You know the confreres are really

there somewhere, but you're not sure where as you can't see them and they appear just when food is served. They prefer to remain aloof and don't like to be challenged by changes in society or in the community. They scoff at community meetings and processes, and they never fail in their relationships because they haven't tried any. Many such a person has indeed tried and failed. Maybe he has been passed over, either in reality or in his own estimation, and the result is cynicism. Disillusion brings pain, and often this pain is alleviated by inflicting it on others with a withering wit that pours scorn on their well-meaning efforts. There is often a sad and lonely person lurking in that loft.

Then there is the CUCKOO. He comes out of his clock, says his piece which has been well rehearsed and time-tried, and goes back in again, only to emerge later saying the same again, only more so. There is a rock solid predictability in everything he does. Nothing changes. "Sorry, but that's the way I am. I was this way in the beginning, I am now, and I ever shall be…". This is a handy motto if you want to avoid having to be "continually responsible for the community's development" (C 25).

The OSTRICH firmly believes that Vatican II ruined everything. The faith is gone; parish missions are outdated, and scandals have undermined the credibility of the clergy. Batten down the hatches. Keep the community flag flying, and keep outsiders out of the oratory and community room. Collaboration is a dangerous and dubious concept, especially if we're going to be sharing our apostolates with Daughters of Charity and members of the St Vincent de Paul Society.

PARROTS love to natter on regardless of whether anyone is listening to them. They have to repeat everything; it doesn't matter if it is true, because truth shouldn't get in the way of a good story, or a bit of scandal. Benjamin Franklin once said that if you want to know someone's faults, praise him to one of his peers. Gossiping can often be a cover-up for guilt feelings. We like to recite the faults of others so that, by comparison, our own misdeeds do not look quite so bad. The same sort of thing happens in prisons where sex offenders are jeered at as the scum of the earth by good clean murderers and robbers.

Every house should have one – an OWL. This is the strong silent type who listens carefully to everything and then sighs and comes in with the devastating remark: "I told you it wouldn't work". The owls have, in fact, a curious common factor with the parrots, because there are two ways to prevent communication with others. One way is to say little or nothing, and everyone thinks you are very profound. "Silent

rivers run deep" and all that sort of thing. The second way, however, is to say so much that no one really knows what you are saying. You fire words like buckshot in all directions, so much so that after a while people become immune to them and don't really notice them.

The ROBIN has a warm red image and he brightens up the winter snow, but he is the most aggressive little bird of the bunch. He's like the person who must win every argument, even when the facts and the evidence are stacked against him. He may be wrong but he is never in doubt! Even the most innocuous remark is turned into a "win-lose" situation. He doesn't discuss, he debates and his motto is "nice guys get nowhere; they finish last".

When it comes to collecting things the MAGPIE is hard to beat. It may be the community car, or the phone, or useful books, or current magazines, but they seem to be always needed for his mission. He is always meshed in a web of complex and fluid arrangements that make co-operation and proper advance-booking or planning impossible. Worse still is the man who sets up all sorts of ministries and isn't around to deal with them when the heat is on and the phones ring and the door has to be attended to.

The PEACOCK is a bird which is very big into projecting an image. Self is all important. Conversation will always be steered around to his little repertoire of interests, and everything compared with and evaluated against a few focal points of his experience. His physical health will also figure in conversation even to the point of hypochondria. St Vincent's greatest fear was of getting above ourselves. He didn't want to accept St Lazare and had to be nearly forced to do it for the good of the mission, and he put tight reins on all who wanted to rush ahead with projects which would improve our public image and standing.

The PELICAN is full of heart and is seen in blood transfusion symbols opening its breast to give of its own blood. It is a worthy bird and reminds me of the "getters-in-touch-with-your-feelings". "We're too cerebral" they cry, "open up your heart. Let it all hang out!". Maybe they're right. Perhaps community life is too clinical. On the other hand, when some people follow their heart you wonder if their head is operative at all. In some cases a person can be very "fragile" and take offense easily, so that others have to tip-toe warily around him. Remarks and gestures that seem straightforward can often be misrepresented because the fragile person has a tender ego.

The tenth type of bird is an unpleasant and unwelcome sort. He is the VULTURE and he stands for those who use and abuse other

people. The psychology writer John Powell SJ has said: "It is a law of human life, as certain as gravity: to live fully we must learn to use things and love people... not love things and use people". Sadly, there are those who do not seem to believe this. Recent news reports from the law courts of many parts of the world testify to the fact that there are many who have chosen to serve God in special ways, but have not also chosen to respect youthful creatures made in his image. Vincent believed there was nothing more calculated to destroy our mission than the kind of preying that is sadly so common today.

Conclusion

I am sure there are plenty more birds that illustrate human traits, but as a symbol of community there is one female bird that gets honourable mention in the gospels while her male partner figures in a great repentance scene. Jesus likens himself to a hen gathering her chickens, and the cock crow reminds Peter of assurances rashly given but quickly forgotten when the pressure was on. Maybe we're too "macho" to liken God to a hen, or see any comparison between a brood of chickens and a community, but St Vincent wants us to have a warm spirit of brotherly love *(charité fraternelle)* in all our houses. We don't have to like one another, but we do need to rise above natural likes and dislikes to love one another with a love that is truly Christian. I'll leave the last word to him:

> Brotherly love is a sure mark of their predestination, because it makes them recognisable as disciples of Jesus.
>
> The Congregation of the Mission will continue as long as charity reigns in it.
>
> Christian love that is formed in our hearts by charity is not only superior to any attachment based on sensory appetite, but is also better than any rational love. With Christian love we love one another in God, according to God, and for God; it makes us love for the same reason that motivates God to love us, that is to make us saints in this life and blessed in the next. It makes us see God and nothing else in all those we love.
>
> Anyone who would try to live in community without charity would be like a ship without anchor or tiller, amid rocks and

> at the mercy of the wind and waves which buffet it from every side.
>
> …by such mutual support the strong will protect the weak, and the work of God will be accomplished.

Notes

1. In *Vincentiana* 1990/2, pp 143-154.
2. *Celebration of Awareness,* 1973.
3. In *Vincentiana* 1984/4-5-6, pp 616-653.
4. In *Vincentiana* 1983/4-5, pp 349-354.
5. Migue 1270.
6. "Religious Life Review", 1991 March-April.
7. In *Vincentiana* 1982/3-4, pp 135-146.

The Perennial Challenge of St Vincent

James Cahalan

(This is the text of a talk given at a Summer School in All Hallows, Dublin, in 1991. It was the last formal talk he gave on St Vincent before his death)

Introduction

When I was trying to reflect on what I would do at this workshop on St Vincent I was reminded of a very great confrere of this province who died a few years ago, Fr John Oakey. He was both a natural and a professional philosopher. He had a prolific imagination and was an expert mimic. One of the scenes from the life of St Vincent which he loved to depict was, in fact, the scene of his death. Vincent died sitting in his chair. People kept rushing in to ask him to bless this society or that, the Daughters of Charity, the Ladies of Charity, etc. According to Fr Oakey, Vincent was heard to mutter under his breath: "Tell them, for God's sake, to go away and let me die in peace".

Today I want to reverse the situation and to picture Vincent himself tugging at me, in fact shaking me violently, urging me to throw myself into the ever expanding field of the marginalised. What I have to say are reflections on my own life against the background of Vincent's astonishing life of dedication.

The interconnectedness of todav's world

It is, of course, a truism to say that the world is constantly shrinking. Everyone is a neighbour. The terrible cyclone in Bangladesh, the famine in Ethiopia, the distress of the people in the Sudan, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and so on; all these are brought right into our living rooms. There was a time when many people did not even know where these places are. I remember a few years ago, when the earthquake

took place in Russia, Mother Teresa of Calcutta had four sisters on the scene within a week. People warned her that there would be no convent to house the sisters, and, in fact, that their whole mission might easily be misunderstood. Teresa replied that she was not interested in what people would say; she was interested in the unfortunates who were buried under the rubble. A few years ago an English journalist visited Mother Teresa in Calcutta to see for himself what was happening there. He remained for about a week and observed very closely what was going on. At the end of the week he said to Mother: "Of course I greatly admire what you are doing, but you have no hope of success". Mother Teresa tapped him on the chest and said: "Young man, I am not interested in success, I am interested in fidelity". I feel we are picking up sounds of Vincent in the Mother Teresas, the Vaniers, the Romeros – these, surely, are the incarnation of Vincent.

What the world is presenting to the Church today

Recently when I was recovering from a little fever I had the good fortune of getting a book by a South American theologian, a book I am sure that many here have read. I would like to quote something from that book which I feel is very relevant to our topic here today: "What does the world give to the Church today?" The answer came loud and clear:

> It gives to the Church a sense of urgency and relevance that she had never had before. If the 20th century Christian lives his/her life with eyes and heart, he/she will not be called upon to be a witness once. They will be called upon to bear witness over and over again in every action that they perform.
>
> Despite our deficiencies and cowardly feelings we stand before a lofty challenge. To put it in another way, Christ is fulfilling the promise he made long ago: "I will draw all men to myself when I am lifted up from the earth". More and more, Christ is taking the centre of the stage in history, if only to judge it.
>
> Again, what is the world giving to the Church? It offers to the Church a wondrous and terrifying presence of Christ, one that is far more suitable for the universe than is continuing physical presence to the earth.

The author goes on to ask the reason for all this. He answers:

> Because it represents the deepening universalization and recapitulation of the Lord Incarnate in our history. Everything that the Christian receives is turned into a responsibility. (From *The Community Called Church,* by Juan Luis Segundo).

I am sorry for the length of the quotation, but I feel it is very relevant to our reflections on Vincent and the community responsibility. We all know the famous statement of Augustine on love: "Love God and do what you will". A modern theologian has made a very brief commentary on that sentence. I quote: "Yes, that is true, but do not be so sure that you know what love really means". This very brief reference to the interconnectedness of our world seems to me to hint at what love really means. Vincent's life teaching, and above all his practice, show quite clearly what love really means.

Vincent's astonishing neighbourliness

I think the new translations of the correspondence of St Vincent have done a great deal to alert us to the staggering breadth of vision, the astonishing outreach, of Vincent to the world of the marginalised. I realise that what I am saying is not new for this audience, but I for one have taken a long time to internalise Vincent. I suppose one knows a lot *about* him, but do I know him? Do I experience Vincent? I certainly do not for a moment think I do. What enormous space there is in the mind and heart of this amazing man. One minute he is describing in detail how to approach the sick:

> She [the Lady of Charity] will settle the table over the bed, put a cloth on the table, with a platter, a spoon, and bread... She will then invite the patient charitably to eat, for the love of Jesus and his holy mother, and she will do all this lovingly as if for her son, or rather for her God, who will accept as done to himself the good she does to the poor (XIII 428).

The next minute we find him in deep conversation with a bishop who has problems in his diocese. From here he sets out to preach a mission in a poor country parish. Again, we find him walking the streets in Paris at night collecting abandoned children.

But his vision is not restricted to France. He is appalled at the condition of the poor in Madagascar, or in Poland, or at the wretched state of the Irish during the Cromwellian wars. From his simple unadorned room in Paris he is in touch with the whole world of the poor. He is obsessed with "the abandoned". One modern commentator says of him:

The Christ of Vincent was the evangeliser of the poor, the missionary, the envoy of the Spirit, the abandoned Jesus, the despised Jesus the countryman, the marginalised – this was the Christ of Vincent.

The "how" of this outreach

We have said that the world has grown to be a very small place because of the benefits of modern technology. But Vincent had none of these helps. Radio, television, etc. were not even heard of in the 17th century, and yet here was a man who seems to have found himself all over the marginalised world, not as a social worker but as one who was deeply in love with the abandoned, irrespective of nationality or culture. One is reminded of St Paul's exhortation to the Philippians: "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil 2:5).

Yes, Vincent did let the mind of Christ Jesus take over. He saw with the eyes of Christ. He spoke so often about "the states of Christ" that one can become so accustomed to it that the phrase means nothing. But there is no doubt about it that Vincent immersed himself in the state of Christ's love. The words *everywhere* and *everyone* were constantly on his lips. Love is a boundless entity, it cannot be confined within limits. If this happens, it is not love. Even the love between husband and wife must in some way be boundless, and so it is; it reaches out to the children, and through them to the whole world.

Unfortunately, Vincent has sometimes been thought of as a marvellous organiser, and I think it may be for that reason that sometimes one finds people saying that they do not have devotion to Vincent; it is not easy to be devoted to an organiser. There is something too efficient, too impersonal, too cold almost, about an organiser.

Vincent was a lover first. Organising came as a way of channelling that love. Vincent did not sit in his room planning. He went into the market place, came face to face with human need, and then tried to find the most efficient means of meeting that need. The late Fr Jean Morin, who was regarded as an expert on the heart of Vincent, wrote:

> In the eyes of Vincent there was a great quality of attention and observation…, a very great goodness.

The eyes manifest the presence or the lack of relationship. Vincent was deeply related to people on a one-to-one basis. Again, Fr Morin says in this context:

> For Vincent the poor will be, above all, this poor man, this poor woman, or this child, who is living in a situation which is characterised by misery and injustice.

It is this quality of total attention to the individual, and not just to the mass of the poor, which was outstanding in the whole philosophy of Vincent.

Experience was Vincent's school

I said something early on about internalising Vincent. I feel very strongly that it is not information about Vincent that I need so much as the experience of Vincent. Can I experience the experience of Vincent?

We all know that for at least the first twelve years of Vincent's life as a priest he was simply what we call today a career priest. His horizons were desperately limited. At that time he was himself the centre of life; an honourable retirement summarised the height of his ambition. God took him in hand and gently began to disempower Vincent. At the height of his popularity he was accused of theft. He was denounced at least twice from the pulpit as a thief. This was a new experience for him. It was the beginning of that great transformation which is signalised by the word "space".

The second stage of his disempowerment was the crisis of faith through which he went for the space of four years. We are not interested so much in the "how" of this cross as in the crisis itself. Some doubt today if the crisis was the result of his volunteering to take on the temptation of the professor of the Sorbonne. That does not matter. It is certain that he did have a serious crisis of faith while he was with the family of de Gondi.

These two experiences were experiences of brokenness which are so important if, in fact, one is to enter into solidarity with the poor. Vincent had three other experiences which completed his conversion.

In Clichy he met the poor for the first time since he had left home to go to school. He loved Clichy, but it is often said that the Clichy experience, while it was important, was still a kind of external experience. The year 1617 was certainly a most decisive experience year. He heard Bossuet's famous sermon on "The dignity of the poor", but he came face to face with both material and spiritual poverty in all their rawness that year. The story of Folleville and Châtillon is well known – these were, respectively, experiences of profound spiritual and material poverty. Seeing for himself was the final step in to total conversion of Vincent to the poor. To see for oneself, to actually experience poverty, is the only sure way of forming disciples of Jesus the poor man. His famous words written to the Pope emphasise the importance of "seeing":

> It is of little value to hear and read these things; one must see them and come face to face with them (VI 367).

From all these experiences Vincent learned two great lessons. In the first place, one cannot evangelise the poor without becoming effectively involved with improving their conditions of life. It was the invariable practice of Vincent to tackle the human condition of the poor before undertaking any direct evangelization. Above all things, his policy was to help the poor to help themselves.

The second lesson Vincent learned was that the laity play an essential role in the work of evangelization. Vincent read no treatises on the theology of the poor. But he linked the description of the Suffering Servant in Isaia 53 with the misery and deprivation which he saw in the poor.

Today's world is the ideal field of Vincentian evangelization

Earlier on I gave a long quotation from the South American theologian on what the world is presenting to the Church today. Let us allow some sentences from that quotation to sink into our minds and, above all, into our hearts. For example:

> Again, what is the world giving to the Church today? It offers to the Church a wonderful and terrifying presence of Christ.

In that context the author reminds us of the words of our Lord: "I will

draw all men to myself when I am lifted up from the earth" (Jn 12:32). I am sure the author had in mind the thinking of Pascal, who said "that the passion of Christ goes on to the end of the world".

Fr O'Collins has the same kind of thought when he writes: "The passion of Christ is an unfinished piece of business". We are the Veronicas and Simons who clean the face of Christ in the poor, or lift the burden of the cross from them by even a kind word. We are called on today to become aware of our *responsibility* to the poor of the world, and not just to those in our immediate vicinity. "The economic fate of all is putting the fate of all in the hands of all".

I realise, of course, that a statement like this can give rise to great confusion and frustration. How on earth can I be responsible for the poor of the world? In my mind *sensitivity* is a most important dimension of the character of those who profess to follow Christ, the evangeliser of the poor. For example, I read the following statement somewhere recently, which is relevant to this matter of sensitivity:

> It is said that because of the economic situation in Japan there can be less and less children born. But if I decide myself, or encourage someone else to decide, to buy a Japanese car I may very well be helping to increase the birth rate in Japan. Whereas if I buy an American or a German car I am just boosting the economy of already well-lined pockets in the industrialised society.

I feel that what Paddy McCrohan called "the restlessness of St Vincent" *(Colloque* No. 4) is essential if I am to internalise Vincent.

The need for a certain "recklessness"

So our present age is surely the age of Vincent. We need great courage, great depth of thinking, and continual experience of the tragedies of this world, if we are to be the Vincent de Pauls of this time. Like the Lord himself, Vincent needed to *see* – to gaze at, and to touch Christ in the poor before he could be set on fire. He was set on fire because he saw and he touched.

Even as I was preparing this, it became more and more clear to me that I was hiding myself from the real impact of this extraordinary giant. Some of our moderns tend to think of him as a workaholic. He was very far from that. His activity had its roots in his contemplation

of Christ the poor man or the poor woman. His prayer was fed from the market place of life. The Christ of the poor *pressed* on Vincent, and they filled his mind at all times.

It seems obvious that to be a modern disciple of St Vincent one needs to be wide awake, courageous and not afraid to take risks. In this connection I came across a very impressive statement of the late Fr Arrupe, superior general of the Jesuits, which he made to his own confreres the day before he got the stroke which disabled him:

> Don't get into a rut, don't become slaves to routine; be adventurous, be bold. Don't be afraid to make mistakes. As long as we pray and seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit we can be as adventurous and as bold as we wish.

In his little book *Tears of Silence* Jean Vanier expresses the same sentiments:

> More than security, life needs adventure, risk, dynamic activity, self-giving, presence to others.

I have to confess that it was only after reading these statements that I remembered a still more powerful statement of Vincent on this very same topic of risk. When he was seventy-nine years old he made this very powerful statement to a group of his confreres:

> Who will be the people who will turn us from the good we have started? They will be the lazy ones. The lazy ones, who merely want to amuse themselves and, provided that they have a good dinner, they will not bother about anything else… Again, they will be comfort-seeking people, people who have a very limited horizon, people who confine their vision to a very restricted area; they settle themselves to live comfortably. They do not want to move out from there, and if they are introduced to some project which is outside that area, and if they venture to consider the proposed project, they withdraw immediately to their safe haven like snails creeping back into their shells (XII 92-3).

This is a very powerful statement, and a very disturbing one too. We often say that Vincent researched proposed projects very carefully before undertaking anything. That is true, but it is equally true that once he was reasonably sure that the project came from God nothing

could prevent him from pursuing it. The mission to Madagascar is a very powerful example of this determination of Vincent, this recklessness of Vincent.

Conclusion

It is very encouraging and refreshing to reflect on the spirit and character of Vincent, especially in times such as the ones through which we are now living. He fits into our times so perfectly that we must feel that he is really tugging at us, that he is, in fact, shaking us. Vincent seems to be saying this is our world, this is a Vincentian world, this is the kind of world in which I lived and died, the world of the abandoned, the marginalised, and the totally neglected.

James Lynch (1807-1896)

Thomas Davitt

Introduction

In the late 1820s, when he was a student for Dublin diocese in Maynooth, James Lynch gradually came to the conclusion that he would like to be a member of a group of priests who would give parish missions. This idea germinated against the background of the state of the Church in Ireland just before and after the granting of Catholic Emancipation in 1829.

He floated the idea with three of his fellow-students, all of Dublin diocese, Peter Kenrick, Michael Burke and Anthony Reynolds. He later broached it with someone he had known before he entered Maynooth, John McCann. After the deaths of their parents the five Lynch children had been raised by a maternal uncle and his wife. While studying law in Dublin John McCann had lodged with them. Lynch's example in giving up his medical studies and entering Maynooth decided McCann also to go on for the priesthood, and he enrolled in the Propaganda Fide College in Rome. His health, however, broke down and he returned to Ireland and enrolled in St Patrick's College, Carlow. Lynch contacted him there and won him over to the new project. Lynch also seems to have wished to recruit another student named Lee, but he was hesitant about the project and finally decided against joining. Lynch recruited Thomas McNamara in his place, as mentioned below (1).

Anthony Reynolds and Peter Kenrick were ordained in 1832 and, pending the ordination of the others and the establishment of a house for the new group, took up appointments in the diocese (2). Michael Burke had completed his studies but had not reached the age for ordination, and was assigned to the Dunboyne establishment in Maynooth for further studies. James Lynch was appointed a monitor in Junior House, and there came into contact with a fellow-monitor Thomas McNamara of the diocese of Meath, whom he also recruited for the new project (3). The Dean of the college, Philip Dowley, resurrecting

an earlier inclination he had had towards the ministry of missions, agreed to be their superior.

They decided that if they were to be an effective missionary band they would need to live in community. They thought that operating a school would provide an excellent framework for community living, so they made arrangements for opening a school at 34, Usher's Quay, Dublin. They were also given reason to expect that they would be put in charge of the little chapel in Phibsboro, dependent on St Paul's, Arran Quay.

This little group was the nucleus of the Irish Province of the Congregation of the Mission, though Kenrick left and Reynolds died before it joined the parent body.

The Lynch Family

Joseph Lynch was a doctor in Dublin, married to Mary Anne Scurlog (4). His eldest son, James, was born on 12 January 1807 (5), when they lived in 163 Great Britain Street, now Parnell Street (6). In 1810 the family lived in 48 Rutland Square, now Parnell Square, and were still there in 1813. After that year Dr Lynch's name does not appear in any records (7). When the family had expanded to five, three boys and two girls, the father died, followed shortly afterwards by the mother (8).

After the parents' deaths the children were raised by a Scurlog uncle and his wife. The three boys were sent to Clongowes Wood College (9). When James left Clongowes he enrolled in the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, and pursued medical studies up till 1826 (10). In 1826 he entered St Patrick's College, Maynooth, as a student for Dublin diocese (11).

His two brothers also entered Maynooth (12). His two sisters entered the Presentation Convent in Galway, taking the religious names of Sister Stanislaus and Sister Angela. In 1833 Sister Stanislaus was one of four Presentation nuns who went to make a foundation in Limerick. She returned to Galway at some stage, being appointed bursar there in 1858 (13).

Usher's Quay and Castleknock, 1833-1858

James Lynch, Michael Burke and Thomas McNamara were ordained priests on 18 June 1833. The arrangements provisionally made for the members of the group were as follows: Philip Dowley would have to

remain on in Maynooth for a short while as dean, so Peter Kenrick was appointed superior ad interim; James Lynch was appointed to the chapel in Phibsboro, while the other four, Michael Burke, Anthony Reynolds, Thomas McNamara and John McCann were appointed to the school.

They experienced two disappointments right at the start. The school was to open on 28 August 1833, but when the small community came off retreat on the 27th Peter Kenrick told them he was not continuing with them, but going to join his brother in America. The second blow was that their hope of being given the chapel in Phibsboro did not materialise; they did get it, though, later. They soon found, however, that the school was itself enough to occupy all their time. James Lynch was put in charge of religious instruction, which was regarded as of supreme importance (14).

A year after the opening of Usher's Quay a property in Castleknock was purchased, and after a year's work renovating and equipping it it opened on the second anniversary of the opening of Usher's Quay, 28 August 1835. For four years both institutions operated together, with some of the priests from Castleknock going in to Usher's Quay each day. This proved to be too much of a burden and in 1839 their connection with Usher's Quay was severed.

Malachy O'Callaghan (1825-1913) was a pupil at both Usher's Quay and Castleknock, and later a prominent Vincentian. He wrote some memories of his schooldays many years later, in which he has several references to James Lynch:

> Father Lynch was Dean; but he also divided the Latin and Greek classes with Father McNamara in the Rhetoric division... Father Lynch, as well as the rest of the Community, gave special attention to Religious Knowledge and Sacred History; but Father Lynch's instructions, especially those on Wednesday mornings, were long remembered by his hearers…
>
> The discipline of the College was admirably looked after by Father Lynch as Dean and Prefect of Studies. As he had taken out a course of medicine before becoming a priest, he was naturally made "Prefect of Health". He always retained a love for the medical profession, and under his watchful eyes, the health of the boys received the utmost attention and care…
>
> Father Lynch founded the Boys' Library at an early date… The Excursion Day was quite a Castleknock fixture in the early days…

> Father Lynch, full of the importance of the occasion, sat in the study hall. He gave his directions to the boys, and called out the names of the occupants of each car. He of course led the way on the first car (15).

As well as being Dean and Prefect of Studies (which seem to have been one job at the time) James Lynch was also Vice-President, Philip Dowley being President.

Although Lynch's original idea had been to give missions I have not come across any references to his ever having given one at this time; his work in Castleknock seems to have taken up all his time, though he did give clergy retreats. In a letter dated 15 November 1843 Dowley tells the Superior General that Lynch had given the annual retreat to the Dublin priests, and in a later one of 20 November 1845~that he had given the Cashel retreat and was going to give the Glasgow one (16).

On 24 April 1844 Dowley wrote a hurried note to The Superior General; it is in French, and after the conventional start continues:

> I've only a moment to let you know that we are threatened with a misfortune. The Archbishop of Dublin has just told me that there is question in Rome of appointing three of our confreres – Fathers Kickham, Lynch senior and McNamara – bishops for the English colonies in India. Propaganda has asked for a report on these confreres, about their episcopal qualities. The archbishop, with his fatherly care for us, with his ever constant and tender goodness, agrees completely and decisively with me that this attempt would be the ruin of the burgeoning family of St Vincent in Ireland, and he is actually writing to Propaganda today to prevent this calamity with all his power and influence.
>
> But this admirable bishop has given me permission to tell you everything, so that all your authority and influence may be exerted immediately in Rome to make the cardinals abandon their plan. I know well whence this movement against us stems. It flows from the misapprehended affection for us of the Irish bishops in Calcutta and Madras. They have, no doubt, a sincere respect for my confreres. But it has proved almost impossible to find priests for the Indian missions, and it is believed that *missionary* bishops would always have a succession of plants from the Irish nursery. The post is about to leave. I apologize for this badly written letter. The archbishop and myself keep this affair secret. It must be kept absolutely so. No one here knows it (17).

The reference to "Lynch senior" is to make it clear that it is James who is in question, not John Joseph who later became archbishop of Toronto. The opposition to the plans for India was successful.

The next reference to Lynch is in a letter dated 10 January 1846. In the letter, which is in French, Dowley tells the Superior General, Jean-Baptiste Etienne, that James Lynch has long wanted to go to the Maison-Mere to pay his respects personally to Fr Etienne, to see how retreats and studies are organised there, and to get to know other superiors. Dowley, however, was unable to allow him go because he was so much needed in Ireland. Because the Vincentians were asked to accompany the Dominican nuns from Cabra who were going to Caen to learn about education of the deaf the opportunity to accede to Lynch's request presented itself. He is also to report, in more detail than Dowley could do in a letter, on "proposals which have been made to us as regards directing ecclesiastical and lay colleges" (18). From a letter in May 1849 it is clear that there had been a proposal that the Vincentians take over the running of St Patrick's College, Carlow (19).

In late 1845 or early 1846 he visited the maison-mère in Paris, and wrote back to a confrere there on 3 March 1846. As the letter starts "My very dear Confrere" it is not clear to whom it was written. Lynch refers to a few hours of seasickness on his way home, to a visit to the Honourable Mr Spencer and his Lordship Dr Wiseman in Liverpool, to a proposed visit of Etienne to Ireland, to the expansion of the Society of St Vincent de Paul in Ireland, including a branch in Phibsboro. He adds:

> There are considerable alarms for the approaching season, in consequence of our Potato crop being now nearly exhausted: but the Government appears determined to [do] all in its power to relieve us.

It would appear from this letter that in addition to his other work in Castleknock Lynch was also responsible for the Vincentian students' formation.

In July he wrote to Médard Salvayre, the Procurator General (who was probably also the recipient of the previous letter). He refers to the visit of Etienne which has taken place, but has no reference to the potato crop (20).

In a letter, in English, to a confrere in Paris, probably Salvayre again, dated 7 April 1847, he gives a description of his experience of the winter of 1846-47:

> We have put over an awful winter. The spring promises to usher in at last a season of less calamity to our poor country. The government have made a fair provision for the destitute & we hope that when all of their measures shall have been brought into operation that we shall not be again exposed to the scenes of terror you must have heard of. Our parish was comparatively well off. No one died in it of starvation, but still very many were in extreme distress. We were obliged to keep open house for all the poor for some time & during the last week of lent which we selected for the distribution of our Jubilee alms no one was refused a meal. We have been now obliged to reduce our charity & I thought when we announced our intention to the crowd who were collected in unlimited number on the last occasion of their receiving of our charity in this manner, that we should be obliged to employ the Police for our protection; but wonderful to say the poor creatures have stopt away & have shown scarce a sign of discontent for I believe they understood we did as much as we could. But you are not to infer from this that we have closed our gates to all. We mean still to take according to our means a fair share in the distribution of charity. Mr Dowley has regulated to give to relief £30 3 times a week. (2i).

When the Vincentians of Castleknock and Phibsboro joined the Congregation of the Mission in 1838 they became part of the Province of Lille de France. Ten years later, on 24 January 1848, Ireland became a separate Province with Philip Dowley as Provincial. In a letter to Etienne, 21 February 1848, he says that James Lynch and Thomas McNamara are his council. Also, because of his illness, he himself cannot go to visit the Daughters of Charity in Manchester so he is sending Lynch (22). A year and a day later Dowley reports that the Daughters are faring better than when he had seen them, according to Lynch, and that they are no longer mocked and insulted in the street because of their habits (23).

On 21 March 1848 Lynch wrote to Paris again, probably to Salvayre, and referred to the revolution which had taken place there:

> I have no words to express our anxiety about all our dear confreres during the late events which occured [sic] in your city. I am also unable to express our joy & gratitude to our good God in finding that he has watched over you with such special and paternal care & protection. We are all praying for you & would

> deem ourselves happy in sharing with you our last morcel [sic] should affairs have assumed the dire features they did on former occasions. You will be glad to learn that there is no fear at all of disturbances in our poor country…
>
> "We have just finished the interior decorations of our church at Phibsboro', it is really beautiful considering Ireland. Some think there is nothing to surpass its interior beauty in Dublin. The character of its decorations is the illuminated Gothic…
>
> Our Cork house is already hailed by the bishop & many of the clergy & people of that City as a great blessing & the happy harbinger of many future blessings…
>
> Altho' provisions are very cheap in Ireland there is great distress & many die of hunger in some parts of the country… (24).

He was, of course, incorrect in saying that a rebellion could not break out in Ireland since the Young Irelanders attempted one four months later. On 10 August he wrote again to Paris:

> Here we are all safe & sound after an unsuccessful effort on the part of a few insane young men to get the people to rise in rebellion. A great number of them have been put into prison & the country is becoming quite tranquil…
>
> Our mission in Skull [sicl you will be glad to hear is doing much good. A great number of the poor who were perverted in the time of our famine by the relief given for that purpose by the protestants, have returned already. The chapel even on week days is not able to contain the congregation & the confessional is crowded far away beyond the power of our confreres to accomplish its work. For all this & a great deal more has poor Ireland to thank your generous charitable & sympathising country. Our potatoe [sic] crop is in danger again this year. Should it fail the consequences will be awful indeed (25).

The first Provincial Assembly of the new Province was held in Castleknock in May 1849. Lynch was elected secretary, and McNamara and himself were elected first and second delegates for the General Assembly (26). On 22 July Dowley informed Paris that for reasons of health he would be unable to go to the General Assembly and was appointing Lynch as his representative (27); that is interesting, considering that McNamara had been elected first delegate. Two months earlier, on 25 May, Dowley had written to a confrere in Paris, in English, asking him to put some points before Etienne:

> I beg to submit to our most reverend superior & father the advantages of releasing me from the office of Local Superior and leaving me only that of Visitor. My growing infirmities and the many dispensations I am compelled to take to myself prevent me from giving that constant & close attention to the exercises of the community that a Local Superior ought to give to them. This is not orderly nor comfortable to our feelings. The office & duties of Local Superior have been admirably discharged by my most worthy assistant Mr Lynch. He has been for a long time Superior "de facto". I earnestly pray he may be named as such "de jure". Then I wish to have Mr Lynch Local Superior of St Vincent's House, at Castleknock… Mr Lynch, I need not tell our beloved Sup. Gen., enjoys the respect & the confidence of *all* (28).

In a letter dated 12 June 1850, written in English to a confrere in Paris, Lynch gave his opinion of the new Queen's Colleges:

> Tell Mr Martin (29) we are greatly obliged to him for not allowing Mr Burke who left him last autumn, to come to us. His Father who was connected with the Colleges, now the source of much misery to Ireland cut his throat & died in the house while with a priest who was president of one of them. It is looked upon as a judgement, as the Holy See has condemned the colleges (30).

On 25 April 1851 Lynch wrote again to Paris:

> We have just brought to a most happy conclusion a very important mission in the town of Maynooth. where our great Ecclesiastical College for Ireland is situated. We have all our missionary work laid out for the year & as usual are unable to satisfy the demands on our little labours. I dare say we shall [get] a good share of the retreats for the clergy. We have already engaged for 2 archdioceses the two others are likely to fall to our lot (31).

On 2 December 1851 Dowley reports to Etienne that Lynch had given the Armagh priests' retreat, and also, in response to a call from the Pope for higher standards in religious communities, a retreat for all the Carmelite friars of Ireland (32).

In the surviving correspondence between Dublin and Paris Lynch's name does not occur between the end of 1851 and 25 May 1858 when he wrote in French to Etienne:

> As regards the affairs of our Province we very much regret that we are unable to respond to the urgent requests for missions and clergy retreats. In 1840 we were the only ones giving missions in Ireland, now there is a body of other missioners, and yet this year we were forced to refuse 15 applications for missions and every year we are obliged to refuse clergy retreats. Vocations to our little Company have become rather scarce in recent times, it seems to me that missions in this country were their great attraction because vocations to the other orders have increased in proportion to the number of missions they give (33).

Towards the end of that year Lynch left Castleknock to become the first Vincentian rector of the Irish College in Paris. Thirty-eight years after he had left the college the *Freeman's Journal* in its obituary on him said:

> Indeed we may say that to Dr Lynch more than to anyone else Castleknock is indebted largely for its development and especially for that spirit of discipline and that high tone of morality which the college quickly acquired. His great aim was to train the heart no less than the mind (34).

The Irish College, Paris, 1858-1866

A plan to ask the Irish Vincentians to take over the running of the Irish College in Paris was mentioned nine years earlier in two letters from Dowley to Etienne in 1849. There is no further reference to it in the surviving correspondence between them. Patrick Boyle in his book on the Irish College says:

> In 1858 certain disciplinary difficulties arose, and the bishops of Ireland, with the sanction of the sacred Congregation of Propaganda, decided to entrust the government of the college to the Irish Vincentian fathers. This change was carried out in the autumn of 1858 (35).

James Lynch was appointed as rector, and went to Paris, initially to the Maison-mère. He wrote from there to Paul Cullen, archbishop of Dublin, that he was encountering difficulties with both the archbishop *of* Paris and the Minister of Public instruction. Apparently the former had not heard about the the Vincentians being given charge of the college, and the latter was annoyed because this was done without the knowledge of the French Government and with interference from

Rome (36). Four weeks later he reports to Archbishop Cullen that everything has been sorted out and that he has moved in to the college, with help from the lay brothers from 95, rue de Sèvres (37).

Boyle says very little in his book about Lynch's rectorship. Under him discipline and piety flourished, and he inspired the students with "the most dutiful sentiments towards the Holy See". He also successfully petitioned the Holy See to have St Patrick declared patron of the college and its chapel.

In the archives of the CM curia in Rome there are no letters from Lynch during his rectorship, nor does he figure much in the letters from Dowley or his successor, Thomas McNamara, to the superior general. In the summer vacation of 1862 he gave two clergy retreats, though Dowley does not say in which dioceses (38).

The obituary in the *Leinster Leader,* in the issue after his death, said:

> When Dr Lynch assumed the reins of authority the destiny of the college had fallen… on very critical and troublous times. Yet, such was his tact and wisdom, and so smooth and harmonious was his term of office there, that in after lire he was able to look back to the eight years he spent there and declare them to have been the happiest years of his life,

In a letter to Etienne dated 11 October 1866 McNamara says that it is unlikely that James Lynch can escape being made a bishop, and that the Irish hierarchy will be looking for another rector for Paris. As there is no mention of what place Lynch was destined for, nor anything further in the letter about him, it would look as if there had been an earlier letter giving more details which has not survived (39).

Coadjutor to the Vicar Apostolic of the Western District of Scotland, 1866-1868(40).

The background to Lynch's appointment to Scotland is complex, and the interpretation of the Scottish situation at the time is still .argued about by historians. The majority of Catholics in Scotland lived in the Western District, and after the Famine years of 1846-47 there was a large influx of Irish. There were many Irish priests in the District as well as Scottish ones. A simplified view of the situation in the early 1860s would be that the Irish clergy and laity felt that they were discriminated against, especially by ecclesiastical authority, whilst

the Scots, clergy and laity, were afraid of the Irish gaining too much power and influence. They also feared that the immigrant Irish, clergy and laity, were importing and spreading Fenianism. There was a weekly Glasgow paper, the *Free Press,* which was widely regarded as being the voice of the Irish in Scotland. In fact it was merely the mouthpiece of a strident minority.

It would be more accurate to say that the Irish clergy and laity wanted to see themselves treated more fairly, in view of their numerical strength, in the matter of ecclesiastical appointments. The clergy, in particular, wanted a better ecclesiastical administration in Scotland in general. In the 1860s over half the priests in Scotland were in the Western District, as was the majority of Catholics, yet it had less churches than the rest of Scotland. The Irish there wanted a commitment to expansion and growth whilst the Scots wanted the maintenance of the status quo. In the hope of achieving these aims the Irish clergy also advocated the establishment of a regular Scottish episcopate with dioceses replacing the vicariates apostolic, and the appointment of some. Irish priests as bishops in Scotland. The Scots vicars apostolic and priests were against this as they feared there would be too much Irish influence in such an arrangement.

Bishop John Murdoch of the Western District died in 1865. He had had a good coadjutor from 1847, but he died in 1861. In 1862 John Gray was appointed his coadjutor and he succeeded on Murdoch's death in 1865. Even before 1865 Gray had had health problems so the appointment of a coadjutor for him was a matter of some urgency. The vicars apostolic of the three Scottish districts sent an agreed list of three names to Rome. Later, one of them unexpectedly wrote to Rome that he could not support the three names. This lack of unanimity posed a problem for Rome, and they jumped at a solution offered by Paul Cullen. archbishop of Dublin. He had been approached by some of the Irish priests ministering in Scotland and asked to use his undoubted influence in Rome to get a suitable man appointed as coadjutor. Cullen had used his influence in Rome for the appointment of bishops in Ireland, Australia and New Zealand. Many of them were his relations and friends. He suggested that Lynch, as rector of the Irish College in Paris, would be a suitable compromise candidate for the coadjutorship in the Western District, and Rome accepted his suggestion. He does not seem to have told Rome that the Lynch and Cullen families were old friends.

Apparently Lynch indicated in some way a reluctance to accept the

appointment. There is a letter, dated 7 September 1866, from Cardinal Barnabò, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation *de Propaganda Fide,* to Etienne in which he says that the Pope, fearing that through humility Lynch might make difficulties, orders him to accept the appointment (41).

The announcement of the appointment was greeted in Scotland with amazement bordering on disbelief. Unfortunately right from the start Lynch did many things which did nothing to help to ease the situation. For example Bishop Gray wanted Lynch's episcopal ordination to be in Glasgow, but it took place in the chapel of the Irish, College in Paris, on 4 November 1866. It was a completely Irish affair. His title was Bishop of Arcadiopolis *in partibus infidelium,* coadjutor with right of succession to the Vicar Apostolic of the Western District of Scotland. He was two months short of his 60th birthday. The ordaining prelates were Bishop Keane of Cloyne, Bishop Gillooly CM of Elphin and Bishop O'Hea of Ross. One of the new bishop's brothers, Gregory, who was a canon of the Dublin chapter, and Jean-Baptiste Etienne, Superior General, were among those present.

Lynch arrived in Glasgow on 3 December, dined with Bishop Gray, and then went to his new residence in the West End of the city. Like the location of his ordination this was also a show of insensitivity to Scottish feelings. Gray had re-decorated the late Bishop Murdoch's quarters in the chapel-house of St Andrews. but Lynch opted for living in a better-class area; this immediately lost him the support of the Irish poor in the city.

As well as suffering from the effects of his own insensitivity he also had to put up with the effects of untrue allegations or suspicions. For example, in spite, of much clear evidence to the contrary, he was regarded as supporting the extreme views of the *Free Press.*

Graves physical and mental health deteriorated in 1867, at least partly because of the strained relationship between himself and his coadjutor. In some matters Lynch appealed over his head to Rome. In July Gray, one of the other vicars apostolic and Lynch were in Rome together, and the Congregation *de Propaganda Fide* had the opportunity of questioning them about the Scottish situation. Here again Lynch showed insensitivity by staying at the Irish College, whilst the other two stayed at the Scots College.

The Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation reminded Lynch that his jurisdiction depended entirely on Bishop Gray, and he was ordered to give up his residence in the West End and live with the other clergy in

St Andrew's chapel-house.

They were no sooner back in Scotland than more differences arose, this time over who was to give the clergy retreat. The other bishops had invited a Passionist, but Lynch wanted a Vincentian. Lynch tried to involve Rome in this affair. He also used it as an excuse to get out of the chapel-house and take up residence with his fellow-Vincentians in St. Mary's, Lanark, where he remained for the rest of his time in Scotland. The minutes of the Provincial Council, 9 March 1868. record:

> The Consultors unanimously advise, in reference to Dr Lynch's residence at Lanark, that, regard being had to the posture of the Bishop's affairs, the Visitor take no step for his removal at present (42).

In a letter from Lanark on 5 December 1867 he told Dr Tobias Kirby. rector of the Irish College in Rome, that he staged there by what he considered "wise advice" (43).

There was another matter which also was causing problems in Catholic affairs in Scotland at the time, and that was finance. Here, however. Lynch was the advocate of sensible, prudent, measures, and revealed a far better grasp of administrative and financial affairs than his fellow-bishops had.

In general, though, things were so bad in Scottish Catholicism that some drastic remedy was urgently needed. The bishops, excluding Lynch, appealed to Rome and it was decided that a special Apostolic Visitation should take place. It was to be carried out by Henry Edward Manning, archbishop of Westminster; all the bishops, including Lynch, agreed to this.

The visitation was short and intense, in late October 1867. Manning was already well acquainted with the situation in Scotland. He interviewed the bishops, representatives of the clergy in groups and individually, and prominent laymen. He spent several hours in St Mary's, Lanark, with Lynch, he also looked into the matter of the *Free Press.*

Manning's report of his visitation is dated 2 December 1867. He recommended the removal from office of both Gray and Lynch and the appointment of a new vicar apostolic for the Western District. He also recommended the establishment of a normal hierarchy in Scotland. He recognised that the Irish Catholics in Scotland had a valid point of view. His report mentioned

> a certain national arrogance of theScots and lack of fraternal charity… The reserve of the Scots does not react sympathetically to the Irish temperament and the clergy of Scotland being in their home territory have held themselves aloof as if affronted by the Irish invasion. The active, expansive, zealous and sometimes more heated than calm temperament of the Irish clergy has given some annoyance to the less active and perhaps less zealous Scottish clergy (44).

In his recommendation about the establishment of a Scottish hierarchy Manning totally ignored Lynch's suggestion that such a hierarchy be dependent on the see of Westminster. There is a letter from Lynch to Kirby in which he sets out his reasons for this. It is dated 14 November 1867, and written from St Mary's, Lanark:

> I suggested to Dr Manning the union of the Scotch with the English church in one great Hierarchy. Because 1st the two countries are by position & civil relations one. 2d There are not. I think, elements in this country for a distinct hierarchy. Except in the north & Highlands, where the Catholics are few, religion was & remains almost totally destroyed. 3d We should come in at once for the fruits of the experience acquired in the restoration of the English church by the Councils, Synods, &c, &c. 4th The business could be effected with comparatively little fuss, a matter of importance in this Calvinistic country (45).

James Lynch's original idea, when a student in Maynooth, was to devote himself to giving missions. He does not appear to have given any while in Ireland, but gave several as a Bishop in Scotland, In a letter to Dr Kirby, written from the Catholic Church, Ayr, 26 October 1868, he says:

> I have employed myself since Christmas last in constant missionary work. I have preached continually & worked in the confessional day & night in missions I gave in the North, in the center at Glasgow & in the South in this Parish… (46).

In the following February he tells the same correspondent:

> I took part in a mission given by our. Fathers in the parish where I now reside, last summer, & I thought I could not devote my time during lent more profitably than by stirring up the fervor elicited by the mission. I therefore engaged to preach 3 times a

week & to hear the confessions of the people to prepare them for their Easter duty (47).

In 1868 Gray resigned, going into retirement and early death at the age of only Fifty-five. Lynch discussed his position with Cardinal Cullen, and apparently sent him a draft of a letter he intended sending to Rome. In a letter of 29 December 1868 Cullen advised Lynch what to do:

My Dear Lord,
I think it would be better to send your letter divided into two parts. Put the 1st and last paragraph in a letter to the Pope and enclose the other parts marked 1 – 2 – etc. as a memorandum. You can refer to the memorandum in the letter – and write the letter to His Holiness as you would to any one else but put *Most Holy Father* at the top of the sheet, and then begin about 3 inches lower down.

No seal will be necessary. Send the letter & memorandum to Dr Kirby and get him to put them in Italian.

You might begin your letter by saying that the difficulties you are placed in have induced you to write to His Holiness, and that in order not to encroach on his time you enclose a memorandum briefly stating the circumstances of your case – You may then add that it was by the express order of His Holiness you went to Glasgow, and that you are now ready to leave it at his orders, and that in all things you are disposed to do whatever he wishes or prescribes – although you foresee that your leaving Glasgow will give great dissatisfaction to the great body of the Catholics who are nearly all Irish, and will tend to promote dissensions and disturbances – However, "I put myself altogether in your hands confident that I cannot do wrong or go astray whilst obeying the Vicar of C."

You need scarcely say more in the letter. The memorandum may consist of the letter as far as numbered.

Send them immediately.

I regret that I have not had a moment to write.

I am still unable to move with rheumatism or sciatica in my hip.

Your faithful servant

+ P. C. Cullen (48)

Lynch's simultaneous removal from the coadjutorship of the Western District and appointment to the coadjutorship of Kildare, and Leighlin were made on 5 April 1869. Depending on whom one reads, Lynch went to Kildare and Leighlin against the wishes of bishop and priests, or was received there with open arms by the bishop.

Fr Edmund Scully wrote to Kirby, on 10 July 1869:

> You will be glad to hear that our good friend Dr Lynch, late coadjutor of Glasgow, has got so well out of the unpleasant position he held in Glasgow – by being translated to such a well regulated diocese as Kildare (49).

Kildare and Leighlin, 1869-1896

The bishop of Kildare and Leighlin in 1869 was James Walshe. He was born in New Ross in 1803, and was ordained a priest in 1830 and a bishop in 1855. In June 1867 he wrote to the Holy See that he needed a coadjutor, for the good of religion in his diocese, because of his own failing mental and physical powers. He said he was unable to carry out some of his episcopal duties.

On 6 April 1869 Propaganda Fide wrote to Walshe acknowledging his letter asking to be allowed to resign, and saying that although the Holy Father had turned down that request a year previously he had now reconsidered the matter and was appointing James Lynch as coadjutor with the right of succession (50).

Cardinal Cullen wrote to James Lynch on 23 April 1869:

> I heard from Carlow that the Cardinal has written to the Bishop that you will be appointed coadjutor to him. This would be a very happy termination of affairs if once carried out – but I suppose some of the young and ardent spirits of Leighlin & Kildare might consider themselves injured if there were no election for the coadjutorship, or no meeting of the clergy. Probably you may have got a letter ere now on this matter. When you come over and the sooner the better we can speak over this matter.

There was some matter not relevant here before and after that paragraph. There was also a P.S.:

> I sd have said that Dr Walshe has applied repeatedly for a coadjutor (51).

Walshe acknowledged Propaganda's letter on 26 May and said that

Lynch would reside with him in the bishop's house in Carlow (52). Lynch's early letters are from Carlow but later he took up residence in Tullow.

On 4 August 1869 he wrote to Kirby in Rome:

> It is now a good while since I had the pleasure of writing to you. All has been changed since in my regard. Temporally the very reverse of what I was in Scotland in every way. In the spiritual order my hands full to overflowing of all kinds of works the best & most agreeable to my taste: Retreats, visitation, confession duty & preaching without limit. Notwithstanding all I would prefer, in the supernatural order. the mission of Scotland, in consequence of its dire destitution.

He then asks Kirby to draft a letter in Italian requesting the Pope to allow him to absent himself from the coming Vatican council, since he is so new to his work in the diocese (53).

In a later letter to Kirby, on 16 September, he mentions that the Pope replied to him personally but did not deal with his request to be excused from the Council. He asked Kirby to find out if the Pope wanted him to go (54). I have not found subsequent correspondence on this matter, but Lynch did attend the Council.

In December 1883 Cardinal Simeoni, of Propaganda, replied to Walshe acknowledging his request to resign as bishop of Kildare and Leighlin. In view of his long episcopate and his age (he was 80) he says the Pope has granted his request, but that before he resigns he is to make financial arrangements with Dr Lynch for his maintenance, and to notify the Holy See of such arrangements (55). Walshe acknowledged this letter, saying he had shown it to his coadjutor "who is such a help" to him, and the coadjutor consulted the Vicar General, and Cardinal McCabe of Dublin, and other priests noted for knowledge and prudence. All these did not agree with the idea of Walshe resigning, and suggested resignation should be postponed and some means worked out for lightening Walshe's workload (56).

In a letter dated simply "September 1883", from St Joseph's, Blackrock, and starting "My dear confrere" Lynch wrote, apparently to the Provincial:

> A resolution was unanimously passed at a general meeting of the Archbishops & Bishops of Ireland to beg of our Most Honoured Father to send to our great National College another confrere with Father Myers to act as Spiritual Directors to the students number-

> ing about 500. The objection to appoint any of our confreres to act in this capacity with a secular priest as Director I think is very reasonable: now that this difficulty is removed I, in common with all our Bishops earnestly beg that our Most Honoured Father will accede to our request. We are all desirous that the injunction of the Holy See shall be carried out in the most efficient manner. This we think will be effected by the appointment of two priests of our Congregation for the first year at least. They will form a system of Instruction & Direction which will render the work easy of accomplishment by secular priests afterwards in case it would be found inconvenient to continue our confreres in the office. In offering this most important duty to our Congregation is surely the greatest proof that the Bishops could give of the confidence they repose in our exertions for good of religion.
>
> Your ever most devoted confrere in Xt
>
> + J Lynch (57)

In 1888 Bishop Walshe died and Lynch succeeded as Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin. He continued, however, to reside in Tullow and did not move to Carlow. He was already 81 years old. Around his 89th birthday he applied for a coadjutor, and Patrick Foley was appointed in April 1896 with right of succession.

For a long period Lynch had been in very feeble condition, but a serious change for the worse began at the start of December. He got gradually weaker, but free from all pain and enjoying the use of all his faculties up to a few hours before his death. On Saturday 19 December, less than a month before his 90th birthday, at 3.30 in the afternoon, James Lynch died in his house in Tullow (58). He was buried inside the church in Tullow, "in accordance, we believe, with the express wish of the late lamented prelate" (59).

In the obituary in the *Freeman's Journal* of Monday 21 December it was said:

> In his old age it was his delight to revert to these early times and he seemed to feel especial delight in narrating for others the way in which they had been led by Providence, and the striking proofs of His love and protection which they received…
>
> By one class especially – by the religious communities – his death will be particularly felt. These were the object of his special care. He had the interest of every convent in his diocese

> especially at heart.

The same obituary quotes his successor Dr Foley as having said before the eight o'clock mass on Sunday, the 20th:

> He was not a man of brilliant parts, but he was what is infinitely rarer and infinitely better, he was a true *homo Dei,* a man after God's own heart.

In his will he left all his property to Fathers Thomas Morrissey and Joseph Geoghegan of St Joseph's, Blackrock, "to be applied by them to charitable purposes in Ireland".

Notes

1. In the *Annales de la CM,* vol. 62 (1897), pp 187-199, there is an unsigned obituary on JL in which the material about Lee is given. The author almost certainly was William Byrne CM (1860-1922), as in a letter to the Superior General, dated 2 February 1897, he says that he has been asked by the Provincial to write an obituary on JL and send it to Paris. In Thomas McNamara's manuscript *Memoirs* there is no mention of Lee. Byrne, however, was in the ICP in McN's last years there and also in St Joseph's, Blackrock when he died there, so he could have learnt this detail from him. Byrne's letter is in the archives of the CM curia in Rome, henceforward abbreviated to ACMR.
2. There is no information in the archives of the diocese of Dublin about these appointments.
3. The priority of Lynch and the sequence of his recruiting his fellow students are clear from McNamara's *Memoirs.* Reynolds died on 8 January 1835 (See *Colloque* No. 21, p 212). Kenrick left the group the day before Usher's Quay opened and joined his brother in America, where he died as archbishop of St Louis. His brother died as archbishop of Philadelphia.
4. Comerford, M: *Collections Relating to the Dioceses of Kildare and Leigh/in,* three volumes. Dublin 1883-86, Vol. I p 161.
5. ACMR.
6. *The Treble Almanack.* 1807.
7. *The Treble Almanack,* 1810. 1813.
8. *Annales de la CM,* vol. 62, 1897, p 188. (See note 1 above).
9. I have been unable to find out either from the records of Clongowes or those of Maynooth, the names of JL's two brothers. In Comerford (see note 4), p 163, it is said that Canon Lynch, brother of the bishop-elect, was at the episcopal ordination in the ICP. At that time there was only one Canon Lynch in the Dublin diocese, and his first name was Gregory. There was no Gregory in the information I received from Clongowes, though there is in the Maynooth records.
10. This information is in the archives of the Royal College of Surgeons in

Ireland, where a middle name, Joseph, is also given.

11. This date is in both the Maynooth College records and McNamara's *Memoirs.*
12. Mcnamara says the two younger brothers also entered Maynooth, but I have been unable to verify this. See note 9 above.
13. These few facts form the total information available from the archives of the Presentation Convent, Galway. The record of receptions and professions for the years 1815 to 1861 is missing, so the baptismal names of the Lynch sisters are not available.
14. *Castleknock College Centenary Record,* Castleknock 1935, p 60.
15. Ibid, pp 72-75.

16 to 28. All these letters are in ACMR.

29. Pierre-Jean Martin (1802-53) was director of the seminaire in Paris at this time; he had been assistant director from 1836 and would have been known to all the Irish confreres who had been to Paris.

30 to 33. All these letters are in ACMR.

34. *The Freeman's Journal,* 21 December 1896.
35. Boyle, P: *The Irish College in Paris, AD 1578-1901,* Dublin and New York, 1901, pp 89-90.
36. This information is in the CM archives in Dublin, summarised by the late James H Murphy from documents in the archives of the diocese of Dublin, 319/3 (Priests and Nuns).
37. Ibid.
38. ACMR.
39. ACMR.
40. There are three lengthy articles which deal in part with JL's period in Scotland. "The Restoration of the Scottish Catholic Hierarchy in 1878", by David McRoberts, in *The Innes Review* 1978; "Roman Catholics in Scotland in the 19th and 20th Centuries", by John ,F McCaffrey, in *Scottish Church History Society Records,* 1983; "The Irish Clergy and Archbishop Manning's Apostolic Visitation of the Western District of Scotland 1867", by Vincent Alan McClelland, in *The Catholic Historical review* (Washington, DC), Part I in Vol. LIII, 1967, Part II in Vol. LIV, 1967.
41. ACMR.
42. In the CM archives, Dublin.
43. This letter is in the archives of the Irish College, Rome. The advice was probably from Cardinal Cullen, as JL, in a letter to the rector of the college, Tobias Kirby, dated 21 December 1868, says that he has "taken no step in this crisis without his advice".
44. McCaffrey, art. cit. p 285.

45 to 48. In the archives of the Irish College, Rome.

49. This letter is in the archives of the Irish College, Rome. Edmund Scully was from the diocese of Cashel and joined the community in Castleknock on 31 October 1839, being number 7 in the Register of Entries. He was 27 at the time, already a priest. He left the following year but always kept in touch with the Vincentians and had a part in bringing them to Sheffield. In later life he retired to live with them in Castleknock and is buried in the commu-

nity cemetery there.
50. A rough draft of this letter is in the archives of the diocese of Kildare and Leighlin, Carlow.
51. Ditto.
52. Ditto.
53. This letter is in the archives of the Irish College, Rome.
54. This letter is in the archives of the diocese of Kildare and Leighlin, Carlow.
55. Ditto.
56. There are two rough drafts of this letter in the archives of the diocese of Kildare and Leighlin, Carlow. JL's letter to Kirby, on this subject, is in the archives of the Irish College, Rome.
57. ACMR.
58. *The Freeman's Journal,* 21 December 1896. *The Catholic Directory for Scotland,* 1979, pp 36-37, says he died "at Blackrock", but the contemporary newspaper is more likely to be correct. The details of his last days are from the *Leinster Leader,* 26 December 1896.
59. It has always been known that he was buried in Tullow church, but when I visited there some years ago I found there was nothing to mark his grave. When I enquired locally about its location I was told that it was not known precisely. The obituary in the *Leinster Leader,* however, says he was "interred on the gospel side of the altar, beside his apostolic predecessor, Dr Corcoran and Dr Delaney… The coffin, which was nicely mounted, was the work of Mr J Dempsey, Tullow, and was certainly an exquisite specimen of the undertaker's art". This obituary, about half of a full-sized newspaper page, is very hagiographical in tone, though it gives several interesting and important facts. In the extensive list of those attending the funeral there is no mention of any relatives. As his two brothers were priests and his two sisters nuns he would have had no nephews or nieces. Although he was the oldest of the five he apparently outlasted the other four.

Acknowledgements

In writing this article I received help in various ways from the following, which I would like to acknowledge:

Rev. Bruce Bradley, SJ, Clongowes Wood College;
Rev. Joseph Cunningham, CM, Glasgow and Maynooth;
Mgr John Hanley, archivist of the Irish College, Rome;
Dr JB Lyons, Dept. of the History of Medicine, The Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland;
Sister M. Patrick, Presentation Convent, Galway;
Rev. Myles Rearden, CM, Maynooth;
David Sheehy, archivist of the diocese of Dublin;
Mary Sheehy, Diocesan Secretary, Carlow.

Ministry among Australian Aborigines

Padraig Regan

A sabbatical year

In 1988 I had finished ten years as director of the seminaire; I was due a sabbatical year. One option was to study; the other was to work among the poor. I preferred the latter. Because of air fare structures out of Nigeria I decided to travel directly from Nigeria (via India) to Australia. There I would spend my time. But I had to find appropriate activity among the poor in Australia.

I decided to fend for myself and not be dependent on financial support from home. I hope that I might be able to get voluntary work. It would be easy, I soon discovered, to get paid supply work in a parish. But I held to my preference for work among the poor. I also proposed to myself to try to work aside from institutional Church structures. (I had spent fourteen years in the structured and remote world of the seminary). My quest was, therefore, to find a work location that would fulfill both of these objectives. Time ticked away. I got a bad dose of 'flu and was looked after by the Vins in Malvern. I visited Expo in Brisbane. I took six weeks to coach up the east coast (Pacific Highway) and down through the Red Centre of Australia, including Alice Springs and Ayres Rock (Stuart Highway). Wherever the Vins had houses I was graciously received. After this adventure I found myself with two offers that interested me.

The first was as a volunteer in a lay Vincentian community (Vincentian Community Aid) which worked (mainly) among poor immigrants in the city parish of Ashfield. The second was as leader of a project with the Arrernte tribe of Aborigines in and around the town and parish (the only one run by the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart) of Alice Springs.

I decided to accept these two offers as my sabbatical project. I was ready for work in Australia.

The Australian Aborigines

The Aborigines of Australia are an ancient, deeply spiritual, and mysterious people. They came to Australia under unknown circumstances from south-east Asia forty thousand and more years ago.. It is conjectured that there may have been a kind of land-bridge that facilitated their huge journey in that earlier geographic era. This unorganised nomadic people was broken into about five hundred tribes and about as many languages. They were hunter-gatherers with few political, social or legal institutions. There were frequent wars between tribes. They had almost no concept of individual ownership. But there was a keen sense of tribal lands and sacred sites. That they were able to survive and thrive in the inhospitable outback of central Australia on the "bush tucker" of the desert is remarkable. The Aborigines are a very resourceful people.

When the English fleet arrived at The Rocks at what is now Sydney harbour on 26 January 1788 with its landing party of 1,446 people there were about 300,000 Aborigines on the continent. Officially English government attitudes towards the black native people were benign. However, one of the officers surveying the land, seeing only these natives, infamously judged the entire continent to be *terra nullius,* i.e. no one worthy of a title to humanity was here, and therefore the land was possessed by no one.

But soon a cavalier colonial view brought about the systematic dispossession of Aboriginal lands by the settlers. This was well expressed in the New South Wales court decision of 1836 which declared that Aboriginals were too few and too ill-organised to be free and independent tribes who owned the land they lived on. The ex-convicts, needing an underdog to make them feel canine, grew to despise, mistrust, and detest them. Eventually, with official connivance, the Aboriginal people were hunted and killed with impunity. Although classified as English subjects they were found to be un-teachable and virtually useless for building up the colony. Governor King's judge-advocate gave judgement that since they had no grasp of English law or the basics of evidence, guilt or oaths, the best course in the event of a clash of interests (which was frequent) would be "to pursue and inflict such punishment as they may merit" without the formalities of a trial.

Even the dullest of the coarsened, brutalised, ex-convict ticket-of-leave settlers could take that point. Dispossession was followed by a virtual policy of extermination.

Later there was a paternalistic policy of assimilation (unsuccessful). More recently there has been a policy, neither very enlightened nor very clear, of integration. In 1967 Aborigines were awarded full rights as Australian citizens, entitling them to all the social services of the Commonwealth. In September 1987, on the eve of the Bicentennial Year, Premier Bob Hawke owned that many injustices had been done to the Aboriginal people. He proposed that a "treaty" or "compact" (not defined) be made that would acknowledge these injustices.

Today there are about 150,000 Aborigines. Their number and morale are in decline. Alcohol, never developed in their nomadic culture, causes moral and physical devastation. The outlook for this mystic, wondrous, people is not good.

The Arrernte Tribe

My project was with the Aborigines in and around the town of Alice Springs. This land, Mparntwe, is the traditional home of the Arrernte people. On their tribal lands are found the mystic, sacred, sites that belong to the Yeterenye, or Caterpillar Dreaming.

> "God gave us the Dreaming". Because land is given, and comes from God, it is cherished and respected. It is understood properly and used with respect. For the Arrernte Aboriginals of Alice Springs the sacred nature of the land must be preserved and strengthened. All those who live on it must be "at home" in the land and live in harmony with the environment and with their fellow countrymen. If the Dreaming is not passed on, and if the right laws are not understood and followed, the people's spirit will die, and they themselves will pass away. The young people must learn and follow the Dreaming. Like the Yeterenye Caterpillar, they must grow up into the butterfly and become whole and free. The Caterpillar Dreaming is like that; like Jesus Christ. From the struggle and limitations of the cocoon come the perfection and freedom and beauty of the butterfly ("Celebrate", August 1987, p. 16).

For the Aboriginal people land is a dynamic notion. It is something creative. Land is not bound by geographical limitations placed on it by a surveyor who marks out areas and declares: "This is your plot". "Land is the generation point of existence, the maintenance of existence, the spirit from which Aboriginal existence comes", wrote

Patrick Dodson, the only Aboriginal ordained to the Catholic priesthood, but who subsequently left, in *A Just and Proper Settlement,* in "Social Justice Statement 1987".

There are about 26,000 inhabitants in Alice Springs; about 5,000 of these are Aborigines. They occupy twelve camps in, around, and outback of Alice. I was leader of a team of seven: two religious sisters, two young lay women, and two MSC seminarians. We were targeting the Catholics living in these camps. The project was set up as a response of the Aboriginal people to the visit of Pope John Paul II in November 1986. In his address John Paul said:

> The gospel enriches, uplifts, and purifies, every culture. Aboriginal people are to strengthen their cultural heritage and share their gospel perspective with others.

A four-week programme of meetings with the Aborigines arrived at seven *Ideas* and six *Action Steps:*

1. We have to make our families and our world holy;
2. We have to pray as family;
3. We have to seek God's harder way;
4. It is our Lord, our Lady – God is with us;
5. We need a strong Catholic committee;
6. We have to give life to the "dead ones" (viz. the many alcoholics);
7. We have to have good housing.

The vote for "making families and the world holy" was almost seven times the demand for good housing. Aborigines live more in the spiritual than in the material or practical world. The Action Steps were:

1. We shall devise ways so families can pray together;
2. We shall talk with the people in each camp and work out some way of taking away those who are compulsive in the Drinking and really want to have relief;
3. We shall organise meetings with representatives of each camp so as to strengthen the organisation of the Catholic committee;
4. We shall continue to encourage the kids to go to school;
5. We shall encourage the talented young people to do courses in IAD, YIPIRINYA, ACCESS, or RATE (viz. training institutions);
6. We shall begin to prepare people for marriages – for ceremonies that respect Aboriginal and Catholic traditions.

These *Ideas* and *Action Steps* were the guiding principles of our Summer (and, boy, was it a hot one!) Programme at Alice Springs, January and February 1989. Our final objective, with the ending of the exercise, was to have selected, prepared, motivated, and dispatched sixteen of the Aboriginal Catholic community for training in Social Development, Teacher Training, Catechetics, and Mutual Skills – four people for each programme. In a word, the project was intended to empower the Aboriginal community in the south of the Northern Territory to take more responsibility for itself.

The programme

The programme began immediately after Christmas 1988. Our team of seven had resources (a swimming pool, a video room, a 20-seater bus) and objectives. We planned to involve the families. This meant running a sort of Summer Camp for the children alongside of the programme. Each day began with a planning session, including prayer. Then, visiting or collecting the families from one or some of the Catholic camps, with names like Amoonguna, Charles Creek, Hidden Valley, Ilpi Ilpi, Larapinta, Mount Nancy, Walpri, White Gates. These camps, with their *humpies* and the general living conditions were appalling. We brought the families out for the day, sometimes to the town (difficult, with so many distractions); sometimes to one of the Aboriginal sacred places; sometimes to a recreation spot such as a water hole for swimming. Each session included some form of catechesis. On some days we had a eucharist at the place of outing. No day was complete without its generous BBQ meal expertly prepared by Sisters Carmel and Cecily. This was well, if mutely, received. Aborigines show few feelings, and these only to the few. Job-satisfaction was rare. Otherwise we celebrated mass in one of the camps in the evening. After each day, tired as we were, we had a meeting to review the day. Twice weekly we had a plenary meeting with the parish priest, Fr Phil Hoy MSC. All the while, in and out of the camps, and in any contact with the Arrernte people, we kept a weather eye open to spot suitable talent for training.

There were high points during that hot Australian summer. I recall with joy the celebration of Epiphany with a large group of our people and a group from Port Keats, near Darwin, who were visiting. We celebrated at one of the Aboriginal sacred sites, Emily Gap. We remembered the star which brought the message of God present to his people. We resolved to look up each night and see in the sky the star which tells us that God is with us.

There were low points too. There was a sense of decline, decay and desolation. It often felt like the Christmas message: "Down from the heavens leapt your all-powerful Word; into the heart of a doomed land the stern warrior leapt (Wisd. 18:15). The degraded conditions, the abuse of women, the neglect of children, the destructive influence of alcohol (frequently I celebrated the eucharist with one or two "dead ones" laying, drunk, beside the altar; this was awful). Morale with these mystical people was low; very very low.

Assessment of the project

We completed the project at the end of February 1989. We had contacted all the camps and met most of the Catholics. Outings and visits were a daily event. We had found our sixteen candidates for training.

There were good aspects: that the Church cares for the Aboriginal people, the visits to the camps and discovery of faith deep within these people; and from those same depths (for they show for the most part little or nothing of their hidden sanctuary) some indications of acceptance of us and our fumbling expression of the gospel of Jesus. Before I left, a remarkable lady called Margaret gave me a set of beads she had made, and Harry Boomerang presented me with one of his splendid boomerangs. I treasure both of these gifts.

There were poorer aspects of the project: there seemed to me the whiff of paternalism about the exercise (I often wondered – aloud and sometimes close to tears) whether we seemed much different from government agencies; there seemed so little apprehension of the basics of the Christian teaching, but at the same time such a reservoir of faith and spirituality, untouched by us, so it seemed to me, and a profound sense of God; I often wondered at the wisdom of celebrating the eucharist each day for a pre-catechetical people; and the pain of the apparent passivity of the people, so little effort to prepare or welcome the ministers of the gospel (or was all of this only an expression of my own spiritual blindness?).

For all that, the experience of working among the Arrernte Aboriginal people in Australia's Northern Territory was joyful and fruitful and memorable.

> What makes the desert beautiful
> is that somewhere deep inside
> there is a spring.
>
> *Antoine de Saint-Exupéry*

Father James Tuohy CM

Jim Tuohy was teaching dogmatic theology in Glenart when we first met in September 1965. He was a good teacher, was approachable, pleasant, and always well prepared. Teaching theology in those days must have been difficult in the aftermath of Vatican II. Latin textbooks were no longer relevant and seminary teachers had to make do without textbooks. Nothing daunted, Jim set about compiling class notes from the different theological authors with great zeal and enthusiasm. The sound of a typewriter coming from Jim Tuohy's room at all hours of the day and night is one of my memories of Glenart. The notes had extracts from different books, which resulted in our favourite leg-pull: "Schillebeeckx says 'Yes', Schmaus says 'No', and we say 'We don't know'". Another version runs: "We say 'Yes' and 'No'". In some ways the ambiguity was symptomatic of the times.

Jim spent a lot of his life working with students for priesthood, teaching dogma in Glenart, director of the seminaire in Blackrock, spiritual director in Maynooth, and teaching spirituality in All Hallows. He seemed to be very suited for seminary work. He fitted easily into the structured seminary life, was gentle in his relationships, and his commitment to the priesthood, to the Vincentian Community, and to the Church was obvious to all who knew him. In Maynooth Jim was a very effective and popular spiritual director. His easy manner, buoyant sense of humour, and natural interest in people were some of the ingredients that contributed to that popularity. The students found his talks helpful, and there were occasions when he felt overwhelmed by the number looking for spiritual direction.

Jim gave himself generously to many ministries in our Province apart from formation for priesthood. It says something for his adaptability and flexibility, as well as his willingness to try new ministries. He taught religious studies in our former grammar school in Coventry, and served on the mission team. He was Parish Priest and superior in Warrington before taking up his last appointment as Director of the Daughters of Charity of the Irish Province, and superior in St Joseph's, Blackrock. The fact that he was willing and able to minister in all these different areas with much effectiveness is an indication of his giftedness and generosity. He served, too, on the Provincial Council for a number of years, and brought to Provincial Council discussions

a sense of fun and humour which relieved the seriousness of some of the discussions. At Council meetings he was full of stories, full of fun, and great company.

Jim loved a game of golf, and we played many times over the past ten years. Jim lined up every shot with as much care as a professional in the British Open. I can still see him walking back quite a distance from the ball, pausing for a few seconds to survey the direction of the ball – (Sometimes I used to think he was scanning the horizon for any low-flying aircraft that could get in his way) – and then, with great deliberation begin the process of preparing to hit the ball. As a result, he nearly always won. Jim was a good competitor, and the game of golf was always a challenge.

While he tended to play the cards close to his chest about his personal life, he occasionally talked about growing up in Phibsboro. Jim was very attached to Phibsboro, to the church, the family home, and especially to his sisters Marie and Nora. He felt at home in Phibsboro and was very proud of his Phibsboro roots. He admitted that his first inspiration to be a Vincentian came from serving on the altar in St Peter's with the late Fr James Crowley. Providentially, a school friend from his altar-serving days in St Peter's, Fr Frank O'Gara, a Carmelite who was chaplain in St James's Hospital, gave Jim great support in his last illness.

Jim was a great man for the prayer. He discovered the inner world of the Spirit in a new way during his time in Maynooth, when he did a course on spiritual direction. The course was a real turning point in his life. When he was in hospital, Jim remarked how difficult he found it to pray when he was sick, and how he had to rely on the prayers of others. He felt supported during that time by the prayers of his friends, and especially by the prayers of the Daughters of Charity. He also remarked how important it was to have one's praying done before a serious illness became a problem.

I said goodbye to Jim on a Sunday evening in the middle of February, before returning to the United States after a short visit home. He was in St James's Hospital and the news was not good. Somehow, both of us knew it was a final goodbye, but neither of us was able to put words on it. He spoke about his illness and the future. He was keeping the bright side out, but talked about the possibility of the worst happening. The following day he got word from the doctors that the treatment wasn't working. Living with this realisation must have been a Gethsemani situation for him. Ten days later I was shocked and

saddened to hear of his death. To Marie and Nora, his sisters, I offer my very sincere sympathy on their loss. May he rest in peace.

Mark Noonan CM

JAMES TUOHY CM
Born: Dublin, 20 January 1934.
Entered the CM: 7 September 1951.
Final vows: 8 September 1956.
Ordained a priest in Clonliffe College, Dublin, by Dr John Charles McQuaid, archbishop of Dublin, 23 May 1959.

APPOINTMENTS
1959-1961 Casa Internazionale, Rome.
1961-1968 St Kevin's, Glenart.
1968-1972 St Joseph's, Blackrock.
1972-1975 St Vincent's, Coventry.
1975-1985 St Joseph's, Blackrock (Maynooth).
1985-1988 All Hallows.
1988-1992 St Stephen's, Warrington.
1992-1996 St Joseph's, Blackrock.
Died: 6 March 1996.
Buried: Glasnevin.

Father John O'Hare CM

(Homily at funeral mass)

"Very truly I tell you; unless the grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies it bears much fruit" (Jn 12:24).

My Lord Bishop, Reverend Fathers, and Friends: Let's put it another way. If you want a grain of wheat to fertilize and bring forth new growth, you must allow it to die first, to cast aside its previous existence. Keep the seed in a glass case, and ultimately it will decay. Commit it to the cold inhospitable earth and it will bring forth new life. I suggest that these words of Jesus give us a beautiful metaphor to describe the process of life through death. Here I speak not just of physical death, but of the more important death to sinfulness and selfishness in all its different forms, as a pre-condition to life in the Spirit with Christ.

Soon after Fr John's death a parishioner asked me was I shocked.

My answer was "Yes and no". Yes, in the sense that his death was unexpected. No, in the sense that he had died a beautiful death and must assuredly have entered into the Resurrection. Some weeks ago we planted lawn seed at the back of the church. I find it fascinating, even inspiring, to go out in the morning to see evidence of new growth. On the farms around Lanark we see evidence of spring, evidence of new life, but all preceded by death. Ultimately, of course, we are in the presence of the Mystery of God.

As we heard in our first reading today, St Paul writing to the Romans was well aware that life in Christ can come only through death. He says: "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death?" (not into his life), "so that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father we too might walk in newness of life".

Each of us is like a seed dropped by God's hand into the field of life. For each of us, that took place in our baptism. At that moment our destiny was linked to Jesus Christ. Each of us became a child of God, not j ust as an individual but as a member of the Pilgrim People of God. The process of entry into the Kingdom of God is thereby begun. Each of us carries the seed of eternal life in a fragile vessel of clay that will one day die. Let no one imagine that this process happens easily. It can be painful and demanding in the extreme.

For Fr John that process of death through baptism began in August 1915. His subsequent life bears witness to the death of the seed within, and its transformation to new life.

Let me tell you a little about his career. He attended Barr Primary School. He received his secondary education in St Colman's College, Newry. In 1934 he entered the Vincentian seminary and was ordained in 1941, on June 7. His first appointment was to St Patrick's College, Armagh. Later he served in different parishes, in Sheffield, Hereford, Dunstable, Phibsboro in Dublin, St Mark's in Glasgow, and, of course, here in Lanark. He served as Parish Priest on two occasions, in Hereford and Dunstable. While in Dunstable he was involved in a horrific car-accident. Though critically injured, against all the odds he came through it, owing, perhaps to an indomitable will to survive that was part of his make-up.

If you ask me how I will remember him, my answer will be that it was the sheer enthusiasm, the *joie de vivre,* that pervaded every facet of his life. He had the gift of always looking at the bright side; he always searched for what was positive. For him the glass was always half-full, never half-empty.

Yesterday a Glasgow priest called to express his sympathy. He told me that he once asked Fr John to preach a parish retreat. On the Wednesday night it was raining very heavily, so naturally the attendance was small. When he came down from the pulpit his first remark was : "Wasn't that a great crowd tonight?".

In community he was never prone to criticise or complain. He was most grateful for what we tried to do for him. All he ever said to me was "I didn't have a good night last night".

I have spoken about his enthusiasm and exuberance. On what was it based? He was first and foremost a devout spiritual man. His trust in God was total and unconditional. He knew what was important in this life and he never deviated from it. It was obvious to everyone that he was at peace with himself, and he communicated that to others, at peace in God's love. His close relationship with his own family, and especially with his brother Fr Mattie, was a supportive factor throughout his life.

Was there any "dark cloud" in his life? I can think of only one. I refer to the fact that Celtic failed to win a major trophy this year. However, Tommy Burns & Co. can rest assured that they have a new patron in heaven. So, look out for next season! Incidentally, he did his own bit for the game with a team known as Smyllum Rovers who achieved much success under his guidance. Lanark people will surely remember him as a man of the people. His knowledge of the parish was unsurpassed; for that alone I will miss him very much.

On Tuesday of last week he was present for the Mass of the Sick to receive the Sacrament of Anointing. On Sunday he celebrated mass as usual in St Mary's Hospital. Then he hurried back to take up his usual place to meet people coming out from the 11 o'clock mass. We had lunch at one. I asked him if he would like to come with me to Carfin for the Lourdes Mass. He declined, saying the walking would be too much for him. So he sat down to read the paper. He dozed off to sleep and without awakening he slipped into the sleep of death. He died as he had lived, at peace with himself and with God.

There is a short passage in St Paul's letter to the Galatians, chapter 5, that I would like to read for you. He is speaking about the fruits of the Spirit that are the result of the grain of wheat having died. They are "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control". We were all privileged to know someone who gave us such example.

Finally, as I stand before you I ask myself what he would want me to say to you. I'm sure I know: "Say thanks for me to the people of

Lanark and St Mark's, Glasgow, for giving me twenty years of happy priesthood. I'm happy to be buried among my own people in Lanark. And when you visit St Mary's Cemetery, please stop by my grave to say a wee prayer".

In the words of Cardinal Newman, "May God grant him a safe lodging and a holy rest".

Addendum (not in the homily): I was quite mistaken in my belief that Fr John was educated in St Patrick's College, Armagh, and that he was a nephew of the late Fr Tom Rafferty CM. I am indebted to his brother Fr Mattie for putting the record straight. He was, in fact, educated at St Colman's College, Newry, where he spent five years as a boarder. His original intention was to join the diocese, but not having studied Greek he would not be accepted. So his mother approached her second cousin Fr Rafferty for advice, and he recommended the Vincentian Community to the young John (something I'm sure he never regretted). When, after ordination, he was appointed to Armagh there was a common perception among the boys that he was a nephew of Fr Rafferty, who later became President. This was the reason for his nickname "Chips".

Francis MacMorrow CM

JOHN O'HARE CM
Born: Newry, Co. Down, 15 August 1915.
Entered the CM: 7 September 1934.
Final vows: 8 September 1936.
Ordained a priest in St Mary's Pro-Cathedral, Dublin, by Dr John Charles McQuaid, archbishop of Dublin, 7 June 1941.

APPOINTMENTS
1941-1949 St Patrick's, Armagh.
1949-1955 St Vincent's, Sheffield.
1955-1957 Our Lady's, Hereford.
1957-1963 St Mary's, Dunstable.
1963-1969 Our Lady's, Hereford.
1969-1973 St Mary's, Lanark.
1973-1977 St Peter's, Phibsboro.
1977-1981 St Mary's, Dunstable.
1981-1990 St Mary's, Lanark.
1990-1994 St Mark's, Glasgow.
1994-1996 St Mary's, Lanark.
Died: 12 May 1996.
Buried: Lanark.