COLLOQUE

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Contents

Editorial

This edition of Colloque comes at a time of change for its editor and for the province. I type it at my desk in the DePaul community residence in Chicago and the move here has necessitated that most of the work be submitted before Summer of this year. Yet, it follows also on the closure of Damascus House and the General Assembly of 1998. Both of these are themes which will be returned to in future issues. All of this has made the editor personally aware of how much we depend on one another in order to carry out our ministries. Were it not for a lap-top kindly lent by Scan Farrell, I would have been without means of hounding the authors throughout the month of July when I was translating at the General Assembly. Yet the production of this issue has also reminded me of the skills and kindness tended to a technophobe by Una Groarke at the Provincial Office, Níall Funge and his team at Diskon/ ELO and my sister, Margaret Byrne, who handled some of the work for me; to them all, my grateful thanks.

In keeping with the editorial policy, there are articles on Vincentian history, the interests of confreres and other members of the Vincentian family; in this case, the Vincentian Volunteers in England. Once again, I encourage readers to submit articles on matters of interest to them or on matters Vincentian. Articles should be submitted by post either care of the Provincial Office in Dublin or to me at:

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The Deaf Leading the Deaf

Bill Clarke CM

On May 5th this year 1998 three deaf people entered the University of Cork as full-time students on a two-year course which will qualify them as sign-language tutors. This is the first time in the history of our University that it has taken on deaf students using sign language as their medium of instruction and communication.

Up to recently we have been used to the idea that the able-bodied people made all the running for the disabled. But that has all been changing. The disabled always made very important contributions in the past, however little these were recognised. Now there is a new leadership emerging from among the ranks of the disabled themselves.

In the academic field we have deaf people like Pat Matthews who has authored an important work on the history of the deaf community in Ireland and who has graduated from Trinity College with an M. Phil, in Linguistics. He will be the principal tutor for our course in Cork which will train ten able-bodied people as sign language interpreters as well as the three deaf people I mentioned already. The University of Bristol will accredit the course from its Deaf Studies Centre.

Ministry

From the chaplaincy point of view, England has had another deaf priest ordained to join Peter McDonagh, who is known to a lot of us already because he spent some time in DePaul House, Celbridge. The new priest is Paul Fletcher, a Jesuit, ordained by Archbishop Patrick Kelly of Liverpool last year. He is a trained librarian and will take up his ministry at Loyola Hall in Rainhill. No doubt his work will be with both deaf and hearing people as is generally becoming the case with all work for and with deaf people. Communities and structures in which deaf and hearing people make their contribution according to their abilities – these are the norm.

A liturgical actualisation of this ideal was seen at Paul Fletcher's ordination described by Sr. Frankie Berry D.C.,

> "Archbishop Kelly of Liverpool has shown great interest in the Deaf Ministry over the years. He read and signed part of the Mass. The hearing members of the congregation were very impressed. It was a wonderful occasion. There was a great sense of bringing

together people from both the Deaf and Hearing Communities at different stages during the ceremony.

The deaf leading the deaf
The ordination was a visual, prayerful and happy occasion. Paul's family and the Deaf Community were among those who attended. Also in the congregation were old and new friends who supported Paul in his first mission as a priest. There were friends from the past who travelled from as far as the USA, Spain and the four corners of Britain." *Link Magazine,* Christmas 1997, p. 12.

All this is a long way from 1952 when St. Mary's School for the Deaf in Cabra, run by the Dominican Sisters, was first approved as a Primary School. Before that no deaf person took any public exam in a deaf school in Ireland, not even the good old Primary Cert. The deaf schools came under the Department of Health, not the Department of Education! They were regarded as remedial rather than educational.

Sr. Nicholas Griffey O.P. describes the miserly conditions attached to this vital step forward,

"In September 1952 we became a National Special School for the Deaf. We were allowed one teacher to every fourteen children. I, as Principal, was paid the first salary. It was the basic salary of a student leaving training college, even though I had qualified ten years previously. In time, other members of the staff were paid salaries. The deaf teachers were not included and this was a great disappointment to the deaf people as well as to the Dominican Sisters. I made representation and was told that they did not have the necessary qualifications. Yet, I had learned so much from them. From then on I was determined to bring some of our pupils to entrance to college level." *From Silence to Speech,* Dominican Publications, 1994, p.58.

Since that time indeed many deaf people have trained in different jobs and professions, including teaching, for which the Department will now pay them a salary according to their qualifications.

Justice

Time has passed but issues of justice for the deaf and for disabled people generally are always with us. Any priest or chaplaincy worker is going to get involved in this area or risk allowing the gospel to become empty words spoken by salaried false prophets!

This is not just another William Clarke patent opinion.

Here are the words of the Government's *Commission for the Status of People with Disabilities* which interviewed such people at venues all over Ireland before publishing its excellent report in 1995!

> "People with disabilities are the neglected citizens of Ireland. On the eve of the 21 st century, many of them suffer intolerable conditions because of outdated social and economic policies and unthinking public attitudes… People with disabilities are angry, and their justifiable anger was evident in submissions to the Commission and at listening meetings which the Commission held throughout the country over the past two years. The picture that emerged was one of a society which excludes people with disabilities from almost every aspect of economic, social, political and cultural life. People with disabilities and their families made it clear that they want equality, that they want to move from a reliance on charity towards establishing basic rights. They want, and are entitled to, equality and full participation as citizens."
>
> *A Strategy for Equality,* p.5.

Signs of The Kingdom

Sometimes I think it's a strange thing that I'm the only priest at a lot of meetings I go to which involve disabled people and their families, friends and co-workers. I find that I'm welcomed and I engage in good conversations which sometimes lead to new initiatives in our own work in Cork. New partnerships and strategies are greatly encouraged by our national and European agencies dealing with disability. I see here something of the coming of God's kingdom as Jesus described it to the disciples of John when they came to ask him if he was the one to come or did they have to look for another.

> "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them". Luke 7:22.

A modern chaplain to the deaf can be part of this new scene and I find it the most refreshing part of my work to be involved in it, mainly through the activities of Cork Deaf Enterprises and its engagement with national and European agencies.

What Jesus gave to the followers of John the Baptist could be called, in present parlance, a profile of what the Kingdom of God is: a place where love shows its true face in reaching out to anyone who might be excluded or neglected by the general mass of society. I see a chaplain to

the deaf as engaged in the thick of issues where genuine love and friendship are involved, giving and receiving within a community, a Church, a society where the struggle is on, a struggle of peace rather than of war, to share with and respect each person as Jesus wishes us to do. In that way the deaf will hear, the blind will see, the lame will walk and the poor will have the gospel preached to them. The present age gives us new means to do this including especially bringing disabled people into third level education where they can become leaders in the field of disability ministry themselves.

Since we Vincentians have a solid tradition in the field of disability and we've been part of many important initiatives since Fr. McNamara's day, we can contribute in this new scene again. I was a youngster of forty-three when I started so don't think it's too late at that age. There are many different ways of being a chaplain with deaf people, according to the circumstances of the time and the gifts of the person himself (or herself – we have Daughters of Charity in the Chaplaincy too.) In the long run there is a challenge for everyone in parishes, educational institutes or missions as the Commission's section on Religious Practice shows:

Religious Practice

19.1 Religion plays an important part in the lives of many Irish people, including people with disabilities. At present, however, barriers of attitude, communication and architecture prevent many of those people from participating fully in worship, services and social activities of their respective congregations.

19.2 For those with a mobility problem – and this includes many older people – getting to the place of worship of their choice may not be physically possible. Even when they do get in, they may not be able to negotiate narrow doorways, heavy doors or stairs or find print too small to read and not available on tape or in Braille. Sound Systems may be inadequate, with no sign language interpretation for those who need it. Toilets, where they are available, may not be usable by wheelchair users.

19.3 For many, the biggest barrier may be the attitudes of others. Feelings of being ignored, isolated or rejected may be reinforced by not being included in activities in which others members of the congregation take part, by the language used by religious leaders, or in printed materials, by a general lack of awareness of the needs of people with disability in the community.

19.4 People with disabilities should be made to feel welcome and should be fully involved in every aspect of congregational life. To this end, the commission recommends:

- that every religious community should set up a small task force or working group, which should include people with disabilities, to look at anything which could be a barrier to the inclusion of all in worship and to develop an action plan to eliminate those barriers;
- disability awareness should be included in the formation of religious leaders at every level.

Harryville

Eamonn Cowan CM

The afternoon of Saturday September 14th 1996 was bright and sunny. Father Frank Mullan was due to say the usual vigil Mass at 6 p.m. At about ten minutes to five I was standing in the kitchen of the parochial house looking out into the car park. A group of about thirty men closed the gate of the car park and then formed a barricade in front of the gate to prevent anyone approaching. As time passed the crowd grew in number and became very noisy. A number of cars tried to get into the car park but were prevented from doing so by the crowd. I remember walking from the front door of the house to join Frank Mullan at the front door of the church. The crowd shouted abuse and obscenities at us as we stood talking to some of the small number of RUC officers present. The police asked what we wished them to do. Frank and I said we wanted no violence or bloodshed outside the church and we decided that Frank would continue with the Mass as arranged. Instead of the usual congregation of around six hundred there were nine parishioners present that evening and Mass was said to the accompanying songs, shouts and jeers of the crowd outside the church. After Mass the parishioners waited with us in the living room of the house until the crowd dispersed and we were all free to go.

That evening was to set a pattern for the following thirty-eight Saturday evenings. The siege of Our Lady's Church, Harryville had begun.

After the first few weeks, the Saturday afternoon scenario became familiar. At around 4 p.m. a police van would arrive with dogs and handlers to search for explosives in the church and surrounding areas. Shortly after that the first of the armoured Landrovers would drive down the street and take up position around the church – anything between thirty and sixty vehicles. Numbers of RUC officers varied between eighty and five-hundred depending on the size of the protest. The police estimate of the crowd on the first night of the protest was between five and six hundred. In the course of the year the number of protesters varied greatly – at times as low as fifty, sometimes several hundred. There was always an air of menace around the church on those evenings accentuated on occasion by the presence of masked men.

The protest outside Our Lady's Church came about partly as a result of Orangemen being prevented marching through a number of nationalist areas earlier that summer; one such place being the small village of Dunloy, some twelve miles from Ballymena. Our Church was chosen because of its location in a strongly loyalist part of the town – the Rev.

lan Paisley is MP for the area. At the beginning of July, in the aftermath of the Orange march at Drumcree, the parochial house in Harryville had come under attack in the middle of the night. Frank Mullan's car was set on fire, the house was stoned and a large concrete slab thrown through the front window into the living room. Attacks on the house had been quite 'normal' over the years though not quite on such a scale. During the four years Frank and I lived there , the house was stoned quite often. In fact, shortly after the protest began that September , we were advised by the RUC not to sleep in the house. For the remainder of the year we slept in the parochial house at the "safer" end of the town.

On the Friday following the first protest, an RTÉ camera team arrived in Harryville. They talked to us about the experience of the previous Saturday, took some footage of Frank and me in the church and then asked each of us to say something on camera. At short notice I was asked about the reaction of local people to what had happened; I remember feeling very uncomfortable and quite determined to say very little – the truth was there had been no support from local people and we were apprehensive about what the next day might bring. As things turned out, people were able to attend Mass that Saturday evening with the help of very heavy police protection. The media lost interest in what was happening even though parishioners continued to suffer abuse, insults and harassment as they made their way to and from the Vigil Mass. Around Halloween people had eggs and fireworks thrown at them entering and leaving church – causing deep distress especially to the elderly and very young children. Representations were made on behalf of parishioners by two councillors on Ballymena Borough Council but the response was muted in the extreme. At a much later stage the Mayor did come one Saturday to the church to express support for the right of parishioners to attend Mass.

At the beginning of November the media returned to Harryville when they discovered the protest had continued and pressure began to grow for a church response to what had been going on for some two months. All requests for such a response were referred to the Press Office for the Diocese of Down and Connor in Belfast. There was an explosion of media attention when on Saturday 30th November there was serious violence near the church as people were leaving Mass. A bus was burned, a woman dragged from her car before it was vandalised and other cars were stoned. That night also brought petrol bomb attacks on the homes of parishioners. This represented a fairly serious escalation in the protest and raised huge questions regarding the future. At the prompting of Frank and me, Canon Sean Connolly, the parish priest, called a meeting of some parishioners on the following Wednesday evening to discuss what had been happening. At that meeting it was decided to issue a state-

ment on behalf of the parish. As far as we were concerned, the core issue found expression as follows;

> "when any congregation gather for worship their right to be there is deeply sacred and demanding of respect. To disrupt or seek to intrude on an act of worship does violence to a basic human right and is an affront to Almighty God".

Next morning the statement was approved by Bishop Paddy Walsh during his visit to St. Mary's School which had been set on fire the previous night. For three months parishioners had been exposed to verbal threats and physical danger; with the issuing of the press statement we found ourselves at the centre of a media storm, but to have remained silent in such circumstances would have been an evasion of pastoral responsibility.

Looking back and with the benefit of hindsight a number of matters come to mind. The motivation of the protesters was complex; political, economic, cultural and religious. It has to be said that among a large number of Protestants in Northern Ireland there is deep suspicion and hatred of Catholics. To see that hatred on the faces of so many people outside the church each Saturday evening was a frightening experience. In the early stages of the protest one of the leaders was an ex-police officer who had already served a life sentence for the murder of a Catholic. One might wonder how such hatred has been sustained and nourished over the generations – and by whom? Questions too about how Catholics might have contributed to that themselves?

During the four years we worked in Ballymena we were part of a small inter-church clergy group which met once a month and which proved a great source of strength over this period. Through them we became aware of how threatened and anxious the Protestant community was about the future and how many of them were critical of what had been taking place outside our church. In Northern Ireland it is not easy for Ministers of other Christian churches to be ecumenically involved with Catholics and, in the course of the year, we came to respect greatly the courage of both ministers and laity who came to stand outside Our Lady's Church each Saturday in support of Catholic parishioners. There was also an active inter-church group of clergy and laity which provided a forum for dialogue and understanding. Such small groups are very effective in promoting understanding and mutual respect and are an essential part of the healing process.

The Harryville event highlighted the need for some forum where priests and people had a chance to come together, discuss what was happening, and discern what might be an appropriate response. In the course

of the year three or four ad hoc meetings were called which proved invaluable both as channels of communication and support in the midst of very great difficulty. A great pool of knowledge, experience and sheer professionalism was present in the parish and people were happy to be involved. It seems a pity that so much talent remains underutilised in our parishes and church.

The attitude of the media was a mixture of interest, sympathy, curiosity, disbelief and some shock at what they were seeing. In particular, foreign journalists could not believe what they saw and heard outside our church. If what had been happening had been re-enacted outside a mosque, synagogue or church in any part of the civilised world it would never have been tolerated by any civic authority. Could one imagine, for example, such behaviour being tolerated outside a mosque in Bradford, a synagogue in Golders' Green, or any Christian church in Dublin? It was much deeper than "being bad for the public image, or possibility of inward investment or provision of jobs" important as such things are. Something deeply sacred was being violated; when any congregation gather to worship, they stand on holy ground – the ground of conscience; the place where God touches the heart and lives of people. In the face of what was happening silence was not an option. For nearly one whole year we found ourselves under the unrelenting attention of both national and international media. A great deal of professional help was required and would have been very welcome. Certainly, it provided a working seminar on how the modern media operate and on the need for the church to be proactive in dealing with that facet of the modern world.

The usual congregation at the Saturday vigil Mass would have numbered about six hundred before the protest began. In the course of that year the attendance would have varied between two hundred and five hundred people. Each Saturday, hundreds came prepared to face verbal and physical abuse as they made their way to and from Mass. That so many came quietly and with great dignity and courage spoke eloquently of their faith. For both priest and people it was no easy task to preach and live a Gospel of love in the midst of so much hatred. In that task we had the support of many Christians in Ballymena who equally showed great courage in gathering week after week in support of the rights of Catholic parishioners.

As summer approached and with tensions rising because of the 'marching season', a parish meeting was called in the third week of June to consider the situation. More accurately, it was a meeting to which representatives of all parish organisations were invited. Word had come from the RUC that there were one or two Saturdays when it might prove difficult to provide the usual level of protection for parishioners during the months of July and August. After a good deal of discussion, a

decision was made to suspend the vigil Mass for the summer months and the following statement was prepared for release;

> "For the past forty-one weeks, our parishioners have been subjected to sectarian abuse, insults and, at times, physical violence and have needed heavy police protection as they sought to attend the Saturday Vigil Mass in the Church of Our Lady, Harryville. This has been a terrible experience for them. When people gather to worship their right to be there is deeply sacred and demanding of respect. To disrupt or seek to intrude on an act of worship is an affront to Almighty God and denies the basic human right to worship. However, in exercising any human right it is necessary to accept the responsibility those rights bring with them, both to ourselves and the wider community. Because of this, and with great sadness, the priests, in consultation with a representative group of parishioners, have decided to suspend the Saturday Vigil Mass at the Church of Our Lady from to-night and for the duration of July and August. As a consequence of this decision, parishioners will not be exposed to danger, the burden on the police will be diminished and the whole community in Harryville given some respite from the stress which has affected them. At this time of greatly heightened tension let us recall Christ's command to love one another".

At the time the decision was widely welcomed in the media as an example to the wider community. The Vigil Mass resumed on the first Saturday in September 1997 – as did the protest which is still continuing. Perhaps with the recent Good Friday Agreement we are looking at the blueprint to reconciliation and peace for the future but much will depend on willingness to make it work.

Margaret Aylward and the Sisters of the Holy Faith

Eugene Curran CM

This was originally the text of an extended essay submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements for my history degree in 1983. In the light of our reflections on the Vincentian Family, I thought it would be useful to present it to the reader. Some changes have been made but, in the main, it remains as it was 15 years ago.

Margaret Aylward, foundress of the Sisters of the Holy Faith, left little behind her when she died. Her memory was perpetuated by oral tradition and few have read her extant letters. Two of those who have read the letters were Margaret Gibbons and Br Romuald Gibson, who produced, respectively, the Life (1) and *Tomorrow began Yesterday* (2) a study of Margaret Aylward's spirituality. Yet it seems to me that in these studies of Margaret Aylward an important facet of her history has been neglected – she was a woman of a particular period in history, influenced by contemporary ideologies and movements, sharing many prejudices with her contemporaries. One of the drawbacks of Gibbons' Life is that it treats of Margaret as a saint from the cradle and fails to relate her to the broader historical context. Br Romuald's book, while it relates her to the traditional spiritualities of Catholicism, does not take cognisance of the Devotional Revolution (3) which was then sweeping much of Ireland and had a particular influence in convents.

Indeed, it was the attitude of mind inspired by this 'Revolution' that coloured our vision of Margaret Aylward for many years. The Sisters of the Holy Faith sought in their foundress the conventional piety of the period and found it wanting. Hence, the oral traditions, which have influenced her sisters far more than the written biography, picture her as cold and aloof and turned to her collaborator in founding the order, Fr John Gowan C.M., as a more suitable 'holy founder'. The oral tradition has been very strong as it is just over one hundred years since her death, and sisters who knew her have lived until as recently as the late 1960s. Also, the community is quite compact, with well over half of the sisters working in Ireland, and the majority of them in Dublin. Thus, as a com-

munity it has remained remarkably untouched by the bureaucracy that affects more worldwide communities. In such an atmosphere the verbal accounts of Margaret Aylward's life have had a potent effect on the way her spiritual daughters have envisaged her.

Yet the question that arose was: Was Margaret Aylward really so atypical of foundresses, and indeed religious women of the period? It is primarily for this reason that I undertook this study: to see in what way Margaret conformed to the general trends, and in what ways she was unique. Space dictated that this examination of general trends be limited to certain comparisons; it would be impossible to deal with the foundress of every community founded in the nineteenth century. For this reason I have chosen to compare Margaret Aylward with three contemporary foundresses, living and working in the British Isles: Cornelia Connelly of the Religious of the Holy Child Jesus; Mother Magdalen (Fanny Margaret) Taylor of the Poor Servants of the Mother of God: and Sr Mary Francis Clare (Margaret Anna) Cusack, the 'Nun of Kenmare', of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace. Much work could be done on the debt owed by Margaret Aylward to the earlier Irish foundresses; Mary Aikenhead of the Irish Sisters of Charity, Teresa Ball of the Loreto Sisters, Nano Nagle and the Presentation Sisters and Catherine McAuley and the Sisters of Mercy.

Another problem in dealing with the foundresses of the nineteenth century is the lack of material. Although the number of nuns in Ireland increased from 120 in 1800 to 8,000 (4) a century later (a trend that was common world-wide; from 40 to 40,000 in America (5) which, even allowing for immigration, was a phenomenal increase) little work had been done into the role of nuns in society. For this reason I am particularly indebted to Dr Tony Fahey of Maynooth for allowing me to make use of an unpublished work of his on the subject. In the end the most helpful work was Bonnie G. Smith's case-study *Ladies of the Leisure Classes; the Bourgeoises of Northern France in the Nineteenth Century* (6) which has much to say on the attraction of Catholicism for nineteenth century women. She links it with the procreative cycle of women; as they became more confined in their fields of activity, they emphasised their procreative powers in dress and surroundings. In essence they pictured themselves as pure earth-mothers, fertile and bountiful. As the centre of the domestic world they felt attracted to God, whom they saw as the bountiful father at the centre of the cosmos. Catholicism, with its order and ritual, attracted these women who were coming to ritualise their daily tasks. (7) Catholicism was for them the religion of natural order which they opposed to the pragmatism or humanism of their husbands, who were increasingly attracted to the values of the industrial revolution. Religion was not merely a means of social action for these

women, rather it was a cosmology. As I shall show in a later chapter I believe that much of this theory is applicable to Margaret Aylward.

Those who have written on the foundresses of the nineteenth century have done so merely with reference to the events of their subjects' lives; they have not, in general, attempted to treat of them in their historical context. The attitude has been to examine the subject minutely, as though it were a specimen under a microscope, uncontaminated by the atmosphere of the period. The growth of individual communities has not been examined in the light of the general upheaval and change of the century, their growth has been solely attributed to the work of the Spirit, as though that were in conflict with socio-economic theories. Yet to acknowledge secular influences in such foundations is not to belittle their religious nature, but it is rather to see how such communities answer the specific needs of their time, in a fashion adapted to the requirements and modes of that period.

The final problem that faced me was the fact that few of Margaret Aylward's letters remain. (8) Those that do remain deal, in the main, with the minor practicalities of daily life, not with the major events of her life. The correspondence with Fr Gowan, surely the single most vital file, was destroyed by his wishes at the time of his death. Thus, even her letters do not give the complete picture of Margaret Aylward. Indeed, this is the great pleasure of working on her life, there is no one correct vision of her. In his book Br Romuald writes of his desire to "coax out of the shadows of the past, this mysterious, elusive woman of another age, this Margaret Aylward" (9). He acknowledges that what he finds may not be the real Miss Aylward, yet it may help the reader to come to know her. The hope I harbour is that more studies will be done of this remarkable woman, to enable us to know her better. Yet the wonder of Margaret Aylward is that the person who emerges as a result of the study must still be only a pale shadow of the person who emerged as a result of the life.

Margaret Aylward is a person, not an historical event, and to claim to have presented the real Margaret is to claim to have mastered her uniqueness and individuality. I can claim to present, without, I hope, prejudice or bias, only one interpretation of this woman, only one facet of a many-faceted person. As with those around us, so we must accept the basic mystery of Margaret Aylward; we cannot categorize her. The major events of her life are well documented and chronicled, the motivation that led her to them is ultimately ineffable.

Finally, I believe, from my work on Margaret Aylward , and on other foundresses, that one must be wary of envisaging them as early feminists; it is strange to find that Miss Aylward makes no mention of the general attitudes to women or their role in society. These women tended to accept the social 'status quo' in relation to women as a group, while

transcending it in their own lives. But it is only from the shared experience and consciousness of the individuals who comprise it that any group with coherent ideals and objectives can form.

The tragedy was that as Cornelia Connelly, Fanny Taylor and Margaret Aylward were expanding (in their own lives) the fields of activity for women, pressure was being brought to bear on their followers, the nuns who comprised the new communities, to conform to a uniform view of the nun and her role. It was the early manifestations of this pressure that finally drove M. A. Cusack, though not Margaret Aylward, out of the Church.

The Formation of a Future Foundress or the Emergence of a Dedicated Woman?

On 23rd November 1810, at Thomas Street, Waterford, Margaret Louise Aylward was born, the fifth child of William Aylward, a prominent merchant of the town. She was born into a family of ten children, of whom six were girls. Eight of the Aylward children attained their majority. Yet so little is known of Margaret's early years that biographers are unsure even of her mother's Christian name. Although it is unlikely that her circumstances or home-life were exceptional, or that Margaret was a prodigy, it is possible to make some suppositions about her formation.

Margaret's family were of the Waterford bourgeoisie and the children were reared as socially-conscious Catholics. Her early years have much in common with those of the young bourgeoises of Northern France, delineated in Bonnie G. Smith's case study, *Ladies of the Leisured Class.* She was trained to have an enquiring and exploring mind and to assist in her parents' charities – for in charitable work Mr Aylward and not his wife, as one might expect, seems to have given the lead to his children. However, their work for charity was not merely the result of an awareness of social injustice or humanist 'do-gooding', for the Aylwards were extremely conscious of their Catholicism, 'though without being religious bigots. Margaret – like the young Paul Cullen, later Cardinal Archbishop of Dublin – attended a Quaker day school during her youth. No doubt the family shared the common contemporary view of Waterford as a cosmopolitan centre, a view which persisted even as trade began to decline at about the time of Margaret's birth. They seem also to have

been intensely aware of their Irish identity as is indicated by her brother John's later involvement with Young Ireland and her own constant emphasis on service of the Irish Poor.

The fact that, in later life, all the daughters of the Aylward family formally entered religious life ("though only one, Catherine, consistently persevered" (10)) and that their brother John was prevented from joining the Society of Jesus only by his father's need for him as an associate in the family business, indicate that their upbringing was staunchly Catholic, in which religious life was seen as a viable, perhaps the only, alternative to marriage for a well-educated young woman of substance. This is borne out by the fact that, by the terms of his will, the daughters of William Aylward would inherit their share of the property only if they married or 'took the veil' (11) – though Mary and Ellen remained unmarried lay-women all their lives, and Jane fulfilled both requirements by entering the Holy Faith as Sister M. Scholastica Pagan.

From about 1821 onwards Margaret attended the Ursuline Convent school in Thurles which had a notable reputation at that time. Its praise in *Histoire de Sainte Angèle* by Abbé Parenty (circa 1840) and its extensive curriculum, with strong emphasis on moral education, is in stark contrast with the general level of women's education at the time, as described by Barbara Corrado Pope in *Leisured Women in the Nineteenth Century.* In the 1820s the future Duchesse d'Agoult, attending the best and most aristocratic school in Paris (12) was surprised to find that many of her fellow pupils could not spell. Such young women, in Ms Corrado Pope's words, were obliged to make their place (in society) just as they had made their education. Frances Power Cobbe, an Irishwoman, is also mentioned in this article and she found that "everything was taught to us in the inverse ratio of its true importance. At the bottom of the scale were morals and religion, and at the top were music and dancing". (13) In her chapter "Education: Innocence versus Enlightenment", Bonnie G. Smith quotes "one slightly disgruntled alumna of the Sacré Coeur" who complained that "classes were so short and the curriculum so full that we could never become engrossed in any thing". (14) But the schools of the continent were intent on training the ladies of the bourgeoisie and nobility. Their objective was to enhance the myth of the "Great Earth Mother". Thus their alumnae were to be graceful yet the centre of domestic authority, fecund in producing offspring yet preserving a spiritual innocence, acquainted with many branches of knowledge but not so much that they would neglect the home or challenge the authority of their menfolk. Although St. Ursula's was the "only young ladies' school then in Ireland" (15) and its range of subjects seems rather too extensive for young women to have anything like a thorough appreciation of their subjects, it does seem to have aimed at developing the mind as

well as the domestic skills of its pupils. And it seems surprisingly aware of its location, including Irish in its curriculum, though also, strangely, Elementary Astronomy. Indeed, even with this scant information we know more of Margaret's education than that of Fanny Taylor, Cornelia Peacock (later Connelly) or M. A. Cusack. Their parents seem to have kept to the old notion that girls should be educated at home, which led to sporadic and irregular 'doses' of learning. Again, we are reminded that Margaret's upbringing was such that her sex was not looked upon, by her family at any rate, as a liability.

William Aylward's obituary notice in the local *Chronicle* of 1840 indicates that he was a man much concerned with charitable works and institutions and aware of the needs of the poor. Thus, unlike Cornelia Connelly, it is most probable that Margaret was encouraged to participate in charitable works. This is also likely from her relationship with 'Uncle' Murphy, her mother's brother who was Director of the Christian Brothers' schools at Mount Sion, a close friend of Fr Mathew's though, in contrast to Gibbons' description of him, "an outspoken critic of Edmund (Rice) during the days of acrimony" (16).

Yet he was close to the spirit of Br Rice, although differing from him as to the means of implementation. Under his guidance Margaret assisted the Presentation Sisters in their schools and in their work for the poor.

Thus Margaret seems to emerge from her youth and early adult years as a well-educated and intelligent young woman, aware of her capabilities and seeking a means to express them, and deeply Catholic. In this she differs from her contemporary British Foundresses, who were all reared as Protestant humanists – for Margaret, her deepest concern was always with the soul of the poor and the danger of their lapsing into heresy, whereas for M. A. Cusack the denomination of the immigrant girls for whom she worked was not of prime importance. Margaret also emerges as one deeply aware of her Irish identity, hence her later reluctance to accept overseas foundations, while the idea of an American convent delighted the expatriate Mother Connelly and the other Irish foundations, the Christian Brothers (1825) and Presentation Sisters (1836) soon spread to England. Also, perhaps aware of the limitations society in Ireland was coming to impose on women in general, Margaret could be headstrong, as headstrong as either Connelly or Cusack if required.

Margaret is next encountered on May 10th 1835, when she entered the fledgling community of the Irish Sisters of Charity taking the name of Sr Mary Alphonsus Liguori. This was a period of crisis for the young community, a period referred to in the 1924 *Life of Mother Aikenhead* as the period of "Troubles from Within", troubles that found their root in the nature of Margaret's Novice Mistress, Sr Ignatius, Miss Ellet Augustine

Bodenham. (17) Though older than Margaret, the novice mistress had much in common with her. She came from an educated lesser gentry background, a 'cradle catholic' and she thought herself to have a certain sense of vision. From what remains of her correspondence she seems to be of a type with many nineteenth century religious; a woman who entered more as a means of self-development and expression than out of a deeper sense of calling. As she was to remain for a long time in communication with Margaret Aylward, and had an undoubted influence on her, it is necessary to consider her career in some detail.

Her letters of application to Mother Aikenhead requesting permission to join the new Order are extremely tortuous in their phrasing – she applies on behalf of a 'friend'. Indeed, the foundress was warned against this "authoress" (like M. A. Cusack, Ignatius was a religious pamphleteer) who, with her grandiose ideas, seemed likely to pose a threat to the peaceful existence of the new community. However, she was allowed to take the veil and soon rose to become Mistress of Novices. She, from this position of power within the community, came into conflict with Mother Aikenhead who was, to a great extent, "a nun of the old school". Her sisters occupied their free time in sewing and other useful occupations. Sr Ignatius preferred to siphon off the more intelligent novices in order to pursue intellectual studies. It was her aim to open a house in England where these more gifted sisters, including Liguori Aylward, would be separated from those of lesser ability and lower birth. To Mother Aikenhead this was a return to the old choir/claustral divisions of the monasteries, and soon she and Sr Ignatius found themselves heading opposing factions. The problem was only resolved when the Pope, Gregory XVI, directly intervened and, the norms for the election of a Superior General being wanting, appointed the Foundress to that position. Almost immediately the Novice Mistress was deposed and sent to the Convent at Sandymount, Dublin, from whence she later applied for dispensation from her vows. But, by that time thirteen of her twenty-two novices had withdrawn from the community, among them Margaret Aylward.

From their later correspondence it appears that Miss Bodenham (in her usual 'sub rosa' manner) planned to found a community with Miss Aylward at Hastings in England. In the event the plan never materialized and the house later became the Mother-house of Cornelia Connelly's Sisters of the Holy Child. (18) After a period in a Visitation Convent in France Miss Bodenham again withdrew, though "the fear of losing poor me would give (Reverend Mother) too great pain and uneasiness."(19) She died as a member of the Canonesses of the Royal Chapter of St. Anne of Munich, a confraternity of laywomen of noble birth (each was required to present a list of armigerous forebears on application) which

entitled her to the honorary title of Countess. The Chapter had no bonds amongst its members, nor did they participate in pastoral visitation. In many ways she had much in common with the Nun of Kenmare; seeking an outlet for her own ability and talents within the narrow field of activity allowed to such women in the nineteenth century, yet patently unsuited to the confines and restrictions of religious life.

Yet, although influenced by Miss Bodenham, Margaret did not share her romantic and unrealistic dreams. Indeed, as the letters from her spiritual directors show, Margaret suffered from scruples and difficulties in accepting her very real limitations. She does seem to have envisaged the convent as the ideal way of expressing her own vision and hope, and was to return to it ten years later. Unlike M. A. Cusack who, on leaving Miss Sellon's Puseyite Sisterhood (where Mother Taylor's sister, Emma, was already admitted as Sister Phoebe) immediately on being received into the Catholic Church entered the Newry Poor Clares, Margaret spent a decade before again attempting the religious life. In October 1845, nearing her thirty-fifth birthday, Margaret was admitted to the Ursuline Novitiate at St. Mary's, Waterford. As we know so little about her at this time, her motives must remain obscure, but her sojourn there was so short that a letter from her director, John Curtis S.J., (a memoir of whose life was later written by Mother Taylor in 1889) exhorting her to stay and attempt to conform to the community life, arrived after Margaret had departed from the Novitiate.

Between her two novitiates we know little of Margaret's whereabouts or actions. From a letter written by Miss Bodenham it is likely that she attempted, though whether successfully or not is unreported, to set up a Mont de Pieté in Waterford – this was a form of Catholic pawnshop which exacted no interest. Almost certainly she returned to helping the Presentation Sisters in their schools. Yet, it seems she was never quite able to shed the influence of religious life, and on Good Friday 1851 Curtis writes:

> Consider well with yourself whether you can now live in community and work your way towards heaven without being disturbed by the imperfections of others (20).

As well as indicating the attraction the religious life held for Margaret this letter also shows one of her great weaknesses: an inability to accept limitations. Perhaps, and again it is only surmise, this is the reason behind her apparent 'failure' as a religious; her sense of the value of her goal was such that she felt human frailty keenly.

As indicated by Dr Fahey's thesis, this period of 'apprenticeship' was not uncommon amongst the nineteenth century foundresses. Mother

Taylor, following her period as a nurse in Scutari with Miss Nightingale, was converted to Catholicism in 1855, as was M. A. Cusack in 1858, following her period as an Anglican Sister. In 1851 Cornelia Connelly had fought and won her famous court battle against her husband. He reverted to the Episcopalian faith of his youth while she remained a Catholic Nun. When he had first begun his studies for the Catholic priesthood, she had been trained as a novice with the Sacred Heart nuns of Trinita del Monte, Rome. What is unusual about Margaret Aylward is the length of this period as it can be said to have lasted until the foundation of St. Brigid's Orphanage in 1856 and her congregation was not formally erected until 1867 when she was fifty-seven years old. Cornelia Connelly, on the other hand, had been called on to found the new congregation of the Holy Child Jesus before she had even finished her novitiate with the Sacred Heart Sisters.

What I think one notices in Margaret's life and in those of the other three foundresses is a growing sense of awareness of their aims in life, religious, social and personal, allied to a recognition that the existing structures were not sufficient to encompass them. The view expressed by Pierce Connelly in 1853 that:

> hierarchical subordination, whether in church or state, in a kingdom or in a family, I still consider the only basis for a community to be built upon, the tranquillity of order, the only tranquillity that deserves the name… (21)"

would have found nodding assent among the male population, particularly in post-famine Ireland, as J. J. Lee indicates in "Women and the Church since the Famine" (22) The women who proceeded Margaret in the new Irish communities – Mothers Nagle, Aikenhead, McAuley and Ball – appear to have worked in harmony with their bishops, accepting the subservient role of women in general, and in the Church in particular, and willing to bow to episcopal pressure. The women who were Margaret's close contemporaries were not. Margaret herself faced bishops as equals and refused to be browbeaten by Bishop Niall Donnelly or Bishop Brownrigg of Ossory. Cornelia Connelly was willing to protect her young congregation against the incursions of her bishops Wiseman, Grant and Danell of Southwark. The Nun of Kenmare raised the ire of Cardinal McCabe of Dublin (although Margaret did not) and was forcibly evicted by his orders from the Poor Clare Convent at Harold's Cross and forbidden ever to re-enter his diocese. Still, it must be admitted that this was not solely because of their sex. As the bishops began to re-assert their authority they began also to try to gain authority over autonomous religious communities.

Yet, apart from the Nun of Kenmare, these women could not be described as feminists. They saw restrictions on women only in as much as they infringed on their personal undertakings; they did not give this a general application. Unwilling to accept an inferior role merely because of their sex, they did not attempt to unite with others to attain their ends, nor did they attempt to awaken the consciousness of others to these injustices and inequalities.

Notes

1. Margaret Gibbons *The Life of Margaret Aylward,* Foundress of the Sisters of the Holy Faith, London, Sands & Co. 1828 hereinafter referred to as Life.
2. Romuald Gibson F.M.S. *Tomorrow began Yesterday: Reflections on Margaret Aylward,* Dublin, Sisters of the Holy Faith, 1982
3. See the studies by Emmet Larkin, "The Devotional Revolution in Ireland, 1850-1875", *American Historical Review* LXXVII (1975) and David W. Miller "Irish Catholicism, and the Great Famine", *Journal of Social History,* IX No. l (1975)
4. See unpublished Ph.D thesis by Dr Tony Fahey of Maynooth, p.l.
5. Mary Ewans O.P. "The Leadership of Nuns in Immigrant Catholicism" in Radford Reuther & Skinner Keller (eds) p.101 *Women and Religion in America* Volume 1, San Francisco, Harper & Row, 1981
6. Bonnie G. Smith *Ladies of the Leisure Classes: the 'Bourgeoises of Northern France in the Nineteenth Century.* Princeton, N.J., University Press, 1981,Ch.3&5.
7. Bonnie G. Smith, ibid. Ch.4 especially.
8. In this work I have used several abbreviations when dealing with these letters:
   HFA – Holy Faith Archives, Glasnevin
   MA – Margaret Aylward
   JG – John Gowan
9. Romuald Gibson, F.M.S. op.cit. p.21
10. Life p. 9.
11. "The Family of Margaret Aylward" in *The Irish Genealogist* (No dates available).
12. Barbara Carrodo Pope, "Leisured Women in the Nineteenth Century" in *Becoming Visible,* Bridenthal & Koonz (eds). Boston, Haughton Millfin Co., 1977.
13. ibid. p. 306.
14. Bonnie G. Smith *Ladies of the Leisure Classes,* Princeton, University Press 1981, p. 170.
15. Life p. 28.

16. Desmond Rushe *Edmund Rice, the Man and His Times,* Dublin, Gill & McMillan 1981 p. 148.
17. Anon. *The Life and Work of Mary Aikenhead,* N.Y. Longmans Green & Co. 1928.
18. Juliana Wadham *The Case of Cornelia Connelly,* London, Collins 1956 p.139ff.
19. Life p.51.
20. Letter of Curtis S.J. to MA (HFA) 'Good Friday 1851'.
21. Juliana Wadham *op.cit.* p. 27.
22. J. J. Lee "Women and the Church Since the Famine", in MacCurtain & O'Currain *Women in Irish Society.* Dublin, Arlen House, Women's Press 1978.

Archival Ramblings

Thomas Davitt CM

Some years ago the Editor was present at an informal talk which I gave in Paris during which I ranged fairly freely over matters archival and historical connected with the Congregation. He has asked me to do something similar in the form of an article. It is not, of course, possible to do exactly the same in writing; the informality is inevitably lost.

Not so long ago an elderly confrere asked me: "What exactly does an archivist do?", with a distinct emphasis on the final monosyllable. The answer to that is quite simply: "He maintains the archives". Perhaps what the questioner should have asked, or meant to ask, was: "What is the point of keeping archives?" The answer to that question provides the answer to the first one.

To understand itself a group must have some appreciation of its origins and history. The present day Irish province of the Vincentians is the successor to two groups in the past. In 1625 Vincent de Paul and three companions set themselves up in the Collège des Bons Enfants in Paris as a group for giving missions. In the late 1820s James Lynch and, initially, three companions decided that after ordination they would set themselves up as a group for giving missions. In 1833, as a slightly enlarged group, they opened St Vincent's Seminary at 34 Usher's Quay in Dublin. Less than a decade later this group decided to join the successors of Vincent de Paul's group. (In parenthesis I might add that in recent years I have wondered whether this was a wise decision).

Archives in Dublin, Paris and Rome hold documents, letters, books and articles which throw light on the origins and development of both groups, and of the later amalgamated group. Official documents and printed material have a key place in all this, but very often letters from individual members of the groups are more interesting and revealing.

At this point it would probably be useful to outline what is in the provincial archives in Dublin. First of all there is correspondence between the administration in Dublin and the central administration in Paris, and in Rome after the transfer of the curia. It is necessary to point out here that what is actually in this section is what the various provincials retained, and not what theoretically should be there. Next, there are files on all deceased and departed confreres. Each file, in theory, contains a summary of his biographical data, along with any surviving correspondence. I have tried to find photographs and in memoriam cards for as many confreres as possible, and to put those which I have found into the

files in question. Next, there are files on each house, present and past, of the province. These contain documents, correspondence and photographs. Finally, this section also has files on certain ministries such as the deaf and spiritual direction in seminaries. Going back to the question of what an archivist does, the answer is that it is up to him to keep all this material in some sort of order, knowing what is there and where to put his hand on it. He also needs to be on the lookout for further material of interest to his institution. And finally he is available to answer questions from bona fide enquirers.

That latter point needs clarification. The Vincentian archives, in Dublin, Paris, Rome or anywhere else, are private. No one has a right of access for research. Even when a bona fide researcher is permitted to consult material there remain certain restrictions. First of all there is a fifty year moratorium, which means that in 1998 no one may be allowed to consult any non-published material later than 1948. Secondly, over and above this, the archivist may judge that some material is confidential, no matter what its date. Lastly, enquirers who are not confreres are asked to present a letter of recommendation, for example, from their professor or tutor in the case of students.

In that connection I had an interesting experience in Rome. I received a letter from a man, with Dr before his name, requesting photocopies of certain documents about a college which had been staffed by the confreres, as he was writing a history of the college. He did not provide any letter of recommendation, so I wrote to the provincial of the province involved, enclosing a photocopy of the doctor's letter, asking for information. The provincial replied that he knew nothing of the proposed history and that he did not know anything about the writer of the letter. On receipt of this I wrote to the man and asked him to make himself known to the local Vincentian provincial and get a letter of recommendation from him. I never heard anything further from him.

Confreres also pass on to the archivist various items, for example from closed houses or deceased confreres. The archivist has to make a prudent judgement on what should be retained in the archives; obviously not everything can, or need be, kept. He always has to defend the archives from being turned into a junk room. I think all archivists are surprised both at what has been kept from the past and what has not. Again and again, in connection with a house or confrere, I find that important letters or documents which should have been there are not, and ones which are of little or no importance are. For example, I have no idea why one bill from the Armagh Gas and Light Company, (Ltd), "To 1 Oct 1892", to St Patrick's College, has survived while other more important material has not. The bill was for " 15,000 feet consumed" for the sum of £3/2/6d (£3.12p) with meter rent of 2/3 d (1 Ip)

I have done a fair amount of research on Irishmen who joined the Congregation either before 1833 or in provinces other than Ireland after that date. During my year in Paris, 1981-82,1 compiled a dossier on all the Irishmen who joined the Congregation before the French Revolution. There was some material in the archives of the Maison-mère, but most of what had been in the archives of the old St Lazare is now in the French National Archives. I spent many hours there checking out and copying what they had. It was interesting to find, for example, Edward Ferris's evidence to the tribunal of enquiry set up to investigate the sacking of St *Lazare* the day before the sacking of the Bastille; Francis Clet also gave evidence to that tribunal. On the track of further material on Ferris, I also visited the departmental archives of Meurthe-et-Moselle in Metz and the municipal library in Nancy.

In the 1980s Wiel Bellemakers was provincial in The Netherlands and he sent me photocopies of material that he had in Panningen on the four Irishmen who had studied there before the first world war, asking for clarification of details. They were Richard Judge, Denis Nugent, Michael McKiernan and James Feely. Several years later some of this information enabled me to deal with a query from J Anthony Gaughan, a priest of the diocese of Dublin, who was writing a biography of Olivia Mary Taaffe, the foundress of St Joseph's Young Priests Society. The first student the society had financed was known to have been a Vincentian who studied abroad and worked in the Orient after ordination; they did not, however, have his name on record as things were not too well organised in the early years. From what Tony Gaughan gave me I was able to identify the man in question as Richard Judge (1883-1960), from Mountshannon, Co. Galway, who had spent all his life since ordination in Lebanon and Egypt. When I was in Beirut last year I found additional information on him. There was another Irishman who spent all his life from subdiaconate onwards in one house of that province, St Joseph's College, Antoura. He was Richard Hogan (1840-1924), from Cuffe's Grange, Co. Kilkenny.

What people expect from an archivist is often surprising too. In Dublin some years ago I received a letter from a nun. She thought that a Vincentian who had been ordained towards the end of the last century might have been a cousin of her grandfather, or something like that. I get a fair number of requests for information of that sort, and answering them is a routine part of an archivist's work. What was peculiar about this nun's request was its second half. She asked for a list of all the guests at the man's ordination.

There are associations of archivists, some specifically religious, which provide a forum for exchange of ideas. In Ireland there is the Association of Church Archivists of Ireland (ACAI), in Britain the

Catholic Archives Society (CAS) and in Rome the Association of English Speaking Archivists (AESA). At some meetings I have asked if others had the same experience as myself, namely that enquirers hardly ever thank an archivist for the work done in researching the answer to the enquiry. The answer was that they have all had the same experience. In some cases finding the answer may involve several hours of work, even if the answer is only a page or less in length. It is annoying when neither acknowledgement nor thanks is returned. There can be a humorous side to such enquiries as well. A Japanese enquirer wrote to me in Rome. He obviously realised that an answer to his question would need some researching, so he asked me to get "one of my assistants" to do it. Although my answer was negative he did thank me for it.

Another unpleasant aspect of enquirers is that they often ask for photocopies but seldom offer to pay either for the copies or for the postage. There was one outstanding exception to that in my time in Rome. An American man, with an Italian surname, had come across in a book a reference to a priest in the last century with the same surname as himself who was referred to as being an Italian Vincentian who had come to the US. He enclosed two international Postal Reply Coupons, plus $20.00 for our Congregation's work. Unfortunately my answer to him was that the book in question was in error, as the priest was not a Vincentian.

In Rome I had one experience of another type of researcher. It was very early on in my period when the door of the archives was visible from my desk; the line of vision was broken later by additional filing cabinets. Some slight noise attracted my attention and I looked towards the door. The handle was moving slowly and stealthily, and when the catch was disengaged the door began to open in the same way and revealed a confrere who was a visitor in the house. He said something like "Oh, sorry; I was just wondering what room this was". A rather poor excuse, that, as the word ARCHIVIO was on a metal plate outside, well within his range of vision. When I was not in the room it was, of course, always kept locked, but after that I tended to lock it even for short absences like for my elevenses, at least if there were visitors in the house.

When archivists meet each other they often, naturally enough, "talk archives" to some extent. I met one confrere who had been the archivist of his province a number of years previously. He told me that when a new provincial was appointed he took the key of the archives from him, and for the entire duration of that man's period as provincial the archivist never got into the archives. At an archivists' meeting, once, a nun told us of an earlier archivist in her community who had to request the key of the archives from the mother general any time she wanted to work there. She discovered, on many occasions, that the mother general had been in during her absence and had removed material without telling her and

without leaving any written memo that she had removed these items.

It is a basic archival rule that nothing is ever removed from the archives, except in very exceptional circumstances. If what is necessary cannot be done by consulting the material in the archives then a photocopy should be made.

In most archives there is a collection of photographs. They create problems for the archivist, because many of the photographs cannot be readily identified as regards subject, date and location. This is easily understandable because the original possessor of the photograph knew these facts and did not see any need to write the details on the back. In our archives in Dublin there are hundreds of photographs, and most of them have no indication of subject, date or location. Many of those kept by the late Leo O'Mahony are an exception to this. After Patrick Kilty's death, Leo kept his photograph album and identified many of the photos in it. Paddy O'Leary was a great help to me in identifying many of the confreres in old photographs, and he passed on to me a few group photographs of historical interest which he had, with the members of the group identified in writing on the back. About six or seven years ago Hilary Hopkins, who was a student in Blackrock and Glenart from 1944 to 1949, passed on to me a large collection of photographs which he had taken during that period. There is nothing written on the back of any of them, but as I was a contemporary of his I know who most of the persons are; I just have to find time to write in the details. It is an interesting collection, and contains what may be the only existing photos of some persons and events. For example, there are some in which Francis Drennan figures; he was a brother from 1943 till 1950. There are also some of the blessing of the "Stella Maris" and its launching on the lake in St Joseph's, very low in the water because Vincent McCarthy was in the stern. He had won the prize for choosing a name for the boat. There is also a photo album which had belonged to Michael Howard, containing several photos taken during his period in China. The photo album of Malachy O'Callaghan (1825-1913) is in the archives of St Vincent's, Sunday's Well. It contains photographs of many of the early confreres of the Irish province, but it is too late now to have them identified. It also contains photographs of his voyage to Australia in 1886 and of his period there.

There is a story in archival lore about an archivist who came into possession of a photograph of a small group of people. It was on a cardboard mount, and when holding it under a light he thought he could detect marks suggesting that there was writing on the back of the print. He carefully steamed the print away from the cardboard mount, and sure enough both the identity of the group and the date were inscribed on the back: "The whole lot of us last summer".

There is always a problem for archivists in deciding what printed books to keep in the archives. The library is where such books should normally be kept, but there are certain books of CM interest which are reference works and to which the archivist or persons doing research need to refer. Some examples of such works would be the 14 volumes of the Coste edition of St Vincent's writings, the same editor's Catalogue of all confreres from 1625 to 1800, published in 1911, back issues of the annual catalogues, and the Annales de la CM. From about 1860 till 1914 a large number of important books were produced by the general secretariat in Paris for private circulation within the CM. During my years in Strawberry Hill, 1974-77, I developed my interest in things of Vincentian historical relevance, which had begun back in the seminaire in a small way. I made contact with Raymond Chalumeau, archivist and librarian in the Maison-mère, and was over in Paris several times. He had an annexe where he kept duplicates of books of the type I referred to above, and I was able to acquire a very good collection of them, encouraged by the then provincial Richard McCullen. Some years later, as such interest grew throughout the Congregation, Fr Chalumeau told me with some glee that he had to tell many hopeful applicants for such duplicates: "Sorry, Fr Davitt got the only one I had".

One particularly interesting set is the nine volumes of "Memoires" published in the 1860s; Volumes IV to VIII dealt with the CM in China. Some Jesuits read them and took violent exception to the way their Society was dealt with in them. The Jesuit superior general formally requested his Vincentian opposite number to withdraw the volumes from circulation or face being denounced to the Holy See. Our superior general, Jean-Baptiste Etienne, gave in and wrote a letter in Latin dated 12 April 1872 to each provincial asking for the return of all the offending volumes to Paris as soon as possible. Not all provincials obeyed this request literally. The Roman provincial, for example, kept them and in 1884 wrote a memo saying that he had received permission from the Superior General to retain them on condition that they were kept in the archives under lock and key. It is not clear whether 1884 is the date of the memo or of the permission. If it is the latter then it was from Etienne's successor Antoine Fiat; perhaps Etienne would not have given it. I also noticed recently that there is a complete set of the nine volumes in Beirut. In Ireland I had found volumes IV and VIII, the latter with a Phibsboro library stamp on it. I acquired volume VI from Fr Chalumeau and then had to wait until I discovered some archivist with duplicates of volumes V and VII. When visiting the archives of another province I noticed duplicates of both, and started negotiations. He needed several early issues of the "Annales". I told him that I had a large number of duplicates of early issues and on my return to Dublin, I discovered that

I had the ones he needed. I sent them to him and in exchange got the missing volumes of the "Memoires", so that we now have the full nine volume set. I should also add that earlier on Fr Chalumeau was able to supply me with any issues of the "Annales" missing from our archives, so that we now have a complete run of them. We were in the happy position of having all the scarce issues and missing only ones which were easily replaced. In passing I might also mention that I was able to supply the archivist in Bogotá, Colombia, with quite a large number of issues of the "Annales" which he lacked.

Two very interesting experiences fell to my lot during my period as archivist at the general curia in Rome. In June 1996 the newly appointed bishop of Reykjavik, Iceland, requested an appointment with the Superior General. He asked Fr Maloney to allow me to go to Reykjavik to help organise the diocesan archives. He was also kind enough to ask that the period which I would spend in Iceland would not be regarded as part of my holidays. Fr Maloney consented, and I spent a fortnight in Reykjavik in June and July of that year. I had been in Iceland many times since 1965, at first availing of 48 or 72 hour stopovers offered by Icelandic Airlines going to and from New York. Starting in 1983,1 had done summer ministry there on a number of occasions. The new bishop in 1996 was unknown to me, as he had come in from Holland, but I had known his three predecessors. The parish priest of the cathedral parish in Reykjavik is a Dubliner, whom I have known since he was a student in Thurles in the early 1980s. He knew I was an archivist and suggested my name to the new bishop. It was a very interesting fortnight, and during it the diocesan archivist and myself were brought "behind the scenes" in the Icelandic National Archives.

The second interesting experience was four weeks in Beirut, Lebanon, in November and December 1997. In February and March of that year I had accompanied Fr Maloney on a visitation of that province, and before we left the provincial asked him to let me return later in the year and help the new provincial archivist organise the archives.

I want to end this article by paying tribute to the late James H Murphy, the first archivist of the Irish province. He did an enormous amount of meticulous work in setting up the archives in 4 Cabra Road and getting them into some sort of systematic order. Before that all the material had been in a couple of presses outside the provincial's room in the old St Joseph's. It is only someone like myself who is involved continuously with the archives who can really appreciate what the province owes to James in this matter.

A year with the Vincentian Volunteers

i. Two Packed Suitcases

Melissa Monheim

A year ago as I pondered what to pack into my suitcases, space and usefulness served as my primary guidelines. Only if something was small, light, and versatile was it admitted to my 'can't live without' pile. I'm not even sure why I incessantly laboured over my luggage as I prepared for my year as a Vincentian Volunteer. Perhaps it served as an outlet for me to avoid the bigger questions; how I would survive in Newcastle as an American; how I could possibly imagine making a difference to the people I went to serve; or how I should justify my decision to baffled friends and family. Or perhaps it was to ensure that I was as well prepared for the year as possible, or that I didn't leave anything behind. Overall, I spent very little time wondering if I had made the right decision, especially compared to the agony of deciding which jeans I should bring.

Only during the flight to London did I begin seriously to doubt that I was doing the right thing. Unfortunately the lump in my stomach was compounded by the continuous bucking of my seat as the little rogue behind me kicked his way home. My nervousness expanded to include my racing heart when I met the strangers whom I would be living and working with throughout the year. One girl was a fellow American, but the other two English folks were as incomprehensible to me as cucumbers in sandwiches. How would I ever be able to relate to and help the marginalised youth if I couldn't even understand my own colleagues? Despite all the cultural and individual differences that we had, my new community members were as eager as I was that the year ahead would be worthwhile, even if it had its struggles. With a little hesitancy, I journeyed to Newcastle with hopes for a good year still intact – although I did wonder whether I would need a foreign language class to understand the Geordies.

After a few weeks, and a lot of patience from the local residents, I realised that I wouldn't need a course in "Geordie Speak" after all. I slowly began to understand what people were telling me, both the words and the meaning. My job placement working with homeless youth illustrated just how universal the language of need is. I quickly realised that although I didn't speak English but American – as one resident pointed out – I did comprehend the pain and turmoil that the residents faced

daily. Eager to jump in and solve all their problems. I was enraged by the limitations around them. One of the hardest challenges for me was the housing crisis that I found myself in when I first arrived. The house in which my community members and I were to live ended up not being an option at the last minute, leaving us in a housing crisis ourselves. Being shuffled around Newcastle caused my work and attitude to suffer enormously. I was completely distracted at work and horrified that no one appreciated me enough to arrange stable accommodation for us. Truly 'they' didn't value us or the work that we did enough!

Although at the time I was utterly disturbed by the upheaval in my life, it probably was one of the best introductions to what I would encounter later. Being so dependent on others for basic needs, encouragement and stability amidst the constant chaos of that first month was an incredible challenge. I underwent what the young people who came to us for help experience every day. The only difference was that I still had a built-in support network and the self-confidence inherent in having options. I could always choose to speak out, to protest or to return home – unlike most of our residents.

Through that experience I learned how important it is to be listened to, to be supported and to be valued as an individual. The security of a home proved much more than a mere roof over my head – it was a place to retreat to, to relax in, and to be secure in. It represented the peace of mind, spirit, and body which I sought after wearily every day. And I am thankful for the opportunity of experiencing that insight.

Eventually my community's housing crisis was resolved successfully and it provided us with many entertaining stories, tender memories and enriching moments together. However, the experience never failed to bring the poignancy of the struggle of the young people we worked with to mind. During our weekly community night, we constantly reflected on our own good fortunes, the struggles we continued to endure living and working on-site with the young people, and the hope we shared in our residents. The support that I experienced there enabled me to continue during the difficult days and to rejoice during the rewarding. This communal caring and compassion enabled me successfully to manage the daily routine as well as constructively confronting the harder ones.

The Holidays were a particularly devastating time for all of us involved, especially for me since it was the first one which I spent away from my family. Covering shifts, for 72 hours straight with only a few hours a night to sleep, I was completely worn down and taxed. I'll never forget trying to learn the German alphabet from a resident at four in the morning on Christmas Eve. We were waiting to receive news of another resident who was rushed to hospital after an attempted suicide hours

before, and could not bear to be alone with our thoughts anymore. Since I expressed an interest in learning whatever German he could teach me, I found myself in front of an easel repeating the alphabet to distract him from his distress and me from my fatigue. Little did I know how much I would cherish those moments six months later. Now whenever I encounter German I think of the endless German lessons, homework, and tests that he would give me in the following months. *Ich heisse Melissa und ich wohne in Newcastle.*

Slowly the cold winter rains of Northern England subsided for the warmer Spring monsoons. With the first budding flowers came my family from the States. I couldn't wait to show them where I worked and the residents who filled my days with laughter, joy, and worry. After eagerly shuffling the weary travellers in and supplying them with the obligatory cups of tea, we settled into our kitchen to have a rest. Within minutes I was astounded by one of the feistiest and hardest residents we had at the time. As our kitchen windows faced each other, she saw me with my eighty-year-old grandmother drinking our tea. As soon as we made eye contact she jumped to her feet and quickly closed the curtains of all the windows on that side of the house. When I encountered her later, she shrugged and said that she did it to 'protect' us from the curiosity of the other residents and to provide us with some privacy. Of everything which transpired during her tenancy, that display of her thoughtfulness and empathy will always remain with me. Perhaps I was too focused on giving to her to realise how important it was to receive what she could offer me.

At times it seemed to me as if the majority of our young people only had to offer teenage angst, abuse, break-ins, attempted suicides, self-harm, violence, and hopelessness. I often felt ill-equipped to deal with the turmoil and pain which they suffered and were seemingly too eager to share. How could I communicate my concern to those who saw themselves as not being viable human beings? People who have experienced almost twenty years of abuse and neglect would land on our doorstep expecting more of the same. A couple of them appeared to fail at our project as they could not cope with supportive and positive staff responses. Who can experience befriending which incorporates challenging inappropriate behaviour while accepting the individual, without believing themselves worthwhile at least in some slight degree?

Fortunately most residents have responded very positively to the services which we provide. I think one of the most powerful testaments of this is the number of residents whom we've asked to leave who return to us for help. We always leave the door open for people who need our help and support and the young people have responded well. Although it saddens me to have to refuse people certain access or privileges, seeing

them grasping that they are accepted and supported regardless is wonderful. I think the inherent respect in truly listening is one of the greatest services and gifts which we can bestow on each other. Perhaps it doesn't begin to solve all the horrors of life, but it at least begins by recognising and understanding what they are.

Personally, the highlights of my year with the Vincentians have consisted in being with people as they finally glimpse a fraction of their potential, worth, or accomplishments. I can't consider myself successful in terms of monumental transformations or revolutionary changes but I do consider this year to be phenomenal in regard to the daily lives of the people I've encountered, including myself. I'm leaving, understanding the importance of taking the time to exchange a few words with others, smiling at people in the street and listening to peoples' stories. I arrived wanting to change the world (and part of me still does) but I see the world now through smaller lenses. The world to me has shrunk, not because of global overcrowding, but rather because I perceive the world more as someone's immediate environment and experiences. If I can bring a sense of comfort, stability or joy to someone desperately seeking it, then I am successful.

I now prepare to leave England with the two suitcases which I brought with me a year ago. However, instead of being packed with clothing and purely practical things, my suitcases are overflowing with mementos and memories … memories of the pain, the laughter, the growth and the relationships. Now I can't live without the late night German lessons, conversations in the passage, practical jokes and tears. How can I possibly begin to fit it into two small bags?

ii. Light at the end of the tunnel

Dana Kubalova

I work in Christopher Grange which is a rehabilitation centre for blind adults who are losing their sight and somehow have to cope with this situation. They often find it very hard – and I'm not surprised at all. To know that you are no longer able to do what you liked and enjoyed so much before – reading, driving, walking, painting, woodwork, modelling, shopping. Just simple things, and you realise how much you miss them.

It's so nice to see that there's help in our Day Centre. This is a place where there is no longer "I can't", but only "I can". And of course there is the terrific support of the other clients who have faced the same

problems and the understanding and service of the staff members who are really performing miracles. But that's not what I want to talk about. I want to focus on my own experiences.

Early on I experimented as to what it was like to do something without seeing anything. With my 'sleep shade' on my eyes I had to bake some scones. Everything was handed to me so I had no real problems stumbling around the kitchen and trying to find stuff. I had exact directions so the biggest difficulty I found was not baking but the darkness. I concentrated on it and longed to have my shade off. I was so disappointed when my boss told me to wear it during the tea-break. It was so strange! The world around was suddenly reduced to my immediate surrounding. I was aware of only those persons who personally approached, touched or spoke to me. Only they existed for me. The rest was nothing but darkness. I couldn't watch through windows. I didn't know what the weather was like. I couldn't observe people sitting at the next table. I couldn't even take a biscuit without assistance because I simply couldn't see it!

The experience itself was very short. It didn't last longer than 30 minutes but it has had a long lasting effect on me. I was not the only one to have passed through this experience. Here are a few words from the diary of my colleague (she had to wear a sleep shade, but also ear plugs because a lot of people who are blind are also deaf).

"It was quite frightening. Not only could you not see but you could not hear. I found myself shouting a lot and smelling for things. There were muffled voices behind me – I needed to know who or what was there. This is not a nice situation to be in … I really need help, but no one will help me. I felt very frustrated, maybe that is why I am shouting, as well as not hearing things properly. But I can take these things off and go back to normal… but what is normal? "

Besides giving me a better understanding of the people that I deal with, it set me thinking. Very often I rely so much on my sight and on my other senses. I had somehow forgotten to use and train them.

I remembered my decision to use my ears, nose and hands while walking on the cliffs by the sea. I lay down for a couple of minutes on the grass and just closed my eyes… and suddenly I discovered a new world.

The sound of the water was so remarkable – the waves hitting the rocks, sometimes exploding, others becoming calm whispers. Have you already listened to this sea symphony? Were you as surprised as I at how many different tunes you could have heard? And how about the smell of the flowers and the wet touch of the grass?

Thanks to my clients I learned not only to be more sensitive to others, but they also enriched my life without knowing it – they awakened my forgotten senses … and I must thank them!

iii. My Vincentian Year.

Anthony McMahon

This year has meant a lot to me, and I believe it has taught me a great deal about life. It has shown me to value the things I have, and most of all it has allowed me to touch the lives of the poor.

It is very easy, especially in our society today where people are encouraged to get the best of everything, to keep up with the Joneses as the saying goes, to forget our poor brothers and sisters. This year has brought me into close contact with people who are emotionally, socially and materially poor. There have been hundreds of experiences during the course of the year where I have seen a great need to help my 'neighbour'. Vincent said that it was the loving hand of God that had led him to work with the poor. I feel it has been the same for each one of us in the Vincentian Volunteer programme, whether we are aware of it or not.

The parish of St. Gregory's in which I have been working is the poorest in the Archdiocese of Liverpool. However, the people are great and I love them. It has been a difficult task trying to bring Jesus into their lives, but I believe I haven't done too badly. Working with the poor has been a great inspiration to me and it has shown me how much I have when compared with others. It has taught me to value people and things a great deal more.

St. Vincent once said, "To love another person is to see the face of God". From the number of people I have met who are sad, lonely, fed up or even happy, I feel it is true that I see God there. Each of us is made in the image and likeness of God, which means that I should see God in everybody. Sometimes when I think about the work that I have been trying to do this year, I imagine that Vincent would be quite pleased with me. Certainly this year has convinced me that I should give myself to God, serving Him through the priesthood. There are some 7 years ahead before I make the grade (if I can manage the studies), but I believe that this year has revealed to me what it is like to be a good and loving person to all and, through this, what it will be to be a good priest.

It is with such joy that I will be able to return to Campion House Pre-seminary in Osterley at the start of September. This year serving the people in the parish has given me a strong feeling of peace, joy, contentment, love and happiness. I believe that the Lord has now shown me the right path.

The parish Sisters have been great. There are a number of things that I have taken from them, but the thing that strikes me most is their commitment to their vocation. I feel that this is because they always make time for God, through prayer in their community and through their own

private prayer. Similarly my own community of other volunteers has taught me much about the needs of others.

The year has been fantastic and I believe I will return to Campion House having grown in experience and confidence. It is often heard in our churches that the Lord loves a cheerful giver. I pray that the Lord will accept me into his harvest and whether I make it as a priest or not, that I will always give without counting the cost.

Studying the Bible in the Land of the Bible

Michael Prior, CM

The Editor, aware of my interest in the Arab-Israeli conflict, has asked me to write about how I got interested in it, and why I see it as significant. My contribution coincides with the Fiftieth Anniversary of the foundation of the State of Israel. Palestinians refer to the same event as the *Nakba* (the Catastrophe, or Tragedy). Victors rejoice and the vanquished lament (1). The moral issues involved in the subject of Israel-Palestine have absorbed much of my energy for some considerable time. I consider my engagement with it to be both a moral imperative and a vocation to cry with the poor. I would have been spared some pain had Providence, acting through the late Fr James Cahalan in 1969, not dictated that I engage in postgraduate biblical studies, and that significant portions of that study be undertaken in the Land of the Bible.

Although my engagement with the Holy Land began with an enquiry into 'the biblical past' through the means of historical-critical investigation, it stimulated also an interest in the contemporary life of the region, in which political interpretations of the Bible constitute such a critical ideological component. My studying the Bible in the Land of the Bible, then, stimulated perspectives that scarcely would have arisen elsewhere, making me particularly sensitive to the present context of the land, without dimming my interest in the past.

In places, the style of this piece is anecdotal, or, to give it a more academic spin, narratological. By way of *apologia,* I invite those who, like myself, are distrustful of the elevation of personal experience into universal assertions, to consider Patrick Kavanagh's aphorism, 'the self serves only as an example'. However, while presuming that my personal journey has something of the character of the universal also, it does involve particular experiences, to the most significant of which I allude.

Had my most recent stay in the land, as Visiting Professor in Bethlehem University, and Scholar-in-Residence in Tantur Ecumenical Institute, Jerusalem (1996-97) proceeded with more tranquillity, I might even have emulated Frs Myles Rearden and Joseph Loftus in writing regular progress reports from Tanzania and China, respectively. I trust that my chronicle of some of the events of the academic year, framed in a rather ideological context, will go some distance to meeting the request of the Editor. Since I approach the larger question somewhat autobiographically, and, in a decidedly unVincentian fashion, I give

extensive bibliographical references to my own writings – never leave your obituary-writer short of copy – perhaps a word about what I consider to be my relevant personal background and education as a Vincentian is in order. (2)

Politics, Religion and the Vincentians

For me, as a boy and young man, politics began and ended in Ireland, an Ireland obsessed with England. From an early age I assimilated my parents' interest in modern Irish party politics. While I recognized the distinctive origins of the political parties within the culture of the struggle for national independence and its aftermath in the Civil War (1921-22), I was not sensitive to that culture's dependence on a particular reading of Ireland's past. It was much later that I recognized that the history I absorbed so readily was one fabricated by the new nationalist historiographers, who refracted the totality of Ireland's history through the lens of nineteenth-century European nationalisms. Although my Catholic culture also cherished Saint Patrick and the saints and scholars after him, not least the founders of Irish religious orders and the Irish missionaries of the nineteenth and present century, the real heroes of Ireland's history were those who challenged British colonialism in Ireland: Wolfe Tone, Robert Emmet, and, above all, Padraig Pearse. I had sucked from two breasts, one of Catholic piety, the other of revolutionary nationalist idealism. I had no interest in the politics of any other region – except that I knew that Communism, wherever, was wrong. Anyhow, the priesthood beckoned.

The intensive training programme in the Vincentian Community (1960-69) prided itself in its detachment from 'secular affairs'. Being deprived of newspapers during the earlier years, and with only the most modest access to radio and TV, coupled with the injunction not to engage in 'the affairs of princes', ensured that one's development in political astuteness would be stunted. Moreover, being portrayed as of a somewhat metahistorical order, piety and theology were above any set of particular social or political circumstances. In any case, much of my time was taken up with the study of Experimental Physics and Mathematics: indeed on the showdown day of the Cuban crisis in 1961, while Kruschev's missiles were speeding to Cuba, I was working in the laboratory in University College, Dublin.

The spirit of the Vatican Council allowed 'the world' into the seminary, if somewhat timorously. Modest engagement with the media helped to give our studies a social context. By and large, however, theology was still very much a history-of-ideas discourse, with little place for social analysis. However, with the prompting of Fr McCullen, I do

remember being excited by Pope Paul VI's *Populorum Progressio* with its bold analysis of contemporary polity and its advocacy of a transnational world-order. Liberation Theology was gestating in the womb of Latin America. Meanwhile, what passed for a distinctive Irish Theology operated within a static ideological framework, reposing in the jaded marriage between a triumphalist and self-assured Irish Catholicism and a revolutionary nationalism which by then had become totally 'routinized'. All the while, social unrest was simmering in 'the Six Counties' of Northern Ireland, but I had not been 'up north' up to that time.

Fr Brian Nolan's courses on the Old Testament first sensitized me to the social and political context of theological reflection. We enquired into the real-life situations of the Prophets, and considered the contexts of the Wisdom Literature. Beyond the narratives of Genesis 1-11 and the Exodus, however, I do not recall much engagement with the *Torah.* Moreover, the atrocities recorded in the Book of Joshua made no particular impression on me. The monarchy period got a generous airing, noting the link between religious perspectives and changing political circumstances. All together, my study of the Old Testament introduced me to a historiography, which from fragmentary evidence attempted to portray 'the past'. Just as I was not sensitive at that stage to the fact that Irish nationalist historiography had fabricated an idealisation of Ireland's rich past, imposing a rigid ideological framework on everything that preceded the advent of interest in the nation state, it never crossed my mind that the biblical narrative also might be a fabrication of a past, reflecting the distinctive perspective of its later authors.

The Six-Day War

I had no particular interest in the State of Israel until the 5-11 June 1967 war, in which Israel conquered the West Bank, the Golan Heights, Gaza Strip and Sinai. In addition to stimulating my first curiosity in the conflict, the war introduced me to international political realities. I rushed through supper in St Kevin's, Glenart Castle, each of the evenings of the war to see how tiny, innocent Israel was faring against its rapacious Arab predators. The startling, speedy, and comprehensive victory of tiny Israel produced surges of delight. The 'liberation' of the Old City of Jerusalem resonated with my studies of Israelite history – 1 was then completing my second of four years of theology. I do recall Fr Nolan saying at some stage that all the reporting from Jerusalem, for *Time Magazine* and *Newsweek* etc., was by Jews who had no sympathy for the Arab position. Later that summer in London, I saw billboards in Golders Green, with quotations from the Hebrew prophets, assuring readers that those who trusted in biblical prophecy would not be surprised by

Israel's victory. I was amazed that people related contemporary events to Hebrew prophecies.

Biblical prophecy, scholarship was insisting, related to the period of the prophet, and was not about predicting the future. The prophets were 'form-tellers' for God, his mouthpieces, rather than foretellers of future events. Nevertheless, I was intrigued that others thought differently. I was to learn later, in the 1980s and 1990s, that the 1967 war inaugurated a new phase in the Zionist conquest of Mandated Palestine, one which brought theological assertions and biblical interpretations to the very heart of the ideology which propelled the Israeli conquest and set the pattern of Jewish settlement. After two more years of theology, ordination, and three years of postgraduate biblical studies, I made my first visit to Israel-Palestine in Easter 1972, with a party from the Pontifical Biblical Institute, Rome, and some guests, including the late Fr James H. Murphy, then secretary to Fr Richardson.

Seeing and Believing

Albeit one enquiring exclusively into the archaeological remains of ancient civilizations, the visit offered the first challenge to my favourable predispositions towards Israel. I was disturbed immediately by the ubiquitous signs of the oppression of the Arabs, whom later I learnt to call Palestinians. Clearly some form of *apartheid* operated within Israeli-Arab society. The experience must have been profound since, when the Yom Kippur War broke out in October 1973, my sympathy for Israel was much diluted. However, I showed no particular interest in the area for the remainder of the 1970s, except I watched on TV the visit of President Sadat to the Israeli Knesset in November 1977, an initiative which would culminate in a number of Israel-Egypt accords in Camp David in 1978 and a formal peace agreement in 1979. Things changed for me in the 1980s.

In 1981 I went with a party from St Mary's College, Strawberry Hill to visit Bir Zeit University in the Israeli-occupied West Bank. Because the campus was closed by the military just before our arrival, carefully planned programmes had to yield to Palestinian *'ad-hocery'*. Bir Zeit put a bus at our disposal, and equal numbers of its and our students constituted a university on wheels. The experience was an eye-opener. I was profoundly shocked when I began to see from the inside the reality of land expropriation, and the sufferings of the Palestinians, and the creeping Jewish settlement of the West Bank. I began to question the prevailing view that the Israeli occupation of the West Bank was for security reasons, but even with such obvious evidence I could not bring myself to abandon it.

Although I was working almost all the time on the Pauline Epistles, my year-long stay in the *École Biblique* in Jerusalem in 1983-84 made a strong impression on me. I was becoming convinced that the Israeli occupation was not for security reasons, but was an expansion towards the achievement of 'Greater Israel', which, I was to learn later, was the goal of mainstream Zionism – the 'Revisionists' of the Likud party had wanted the east bank of the Jordan also. The silence of the cloister was broken several times each day with series of sonic booms from military aircraft flying north, to Lebanon or Syria. Although a daily occurrence, they never failed to jolt me from my chair as if a bomb had gone off outside my window. During that period, I was certain that Israel would attack Syria, if only to unify the Israelis, who, it seemed to me, were showing signs of serious social disharmony. Mercifully, I was proved wrong.

My memory of an incident records for me how disenchanted I was becoming with the Jewish state at that time. Fr Rom Barry of the Australian Province brought a group of pilgrims (including two confreres) to see me in the *École,* and asked me to give an account of my research into the Pauline letters. They invited me to dinner that night in a plush hotel in the Jewish part of Jerusalem. I was thrilled at the prospect of a change from the regular institutional fare, and very touched by their kindness. Although the Australians were delightful company, I began to feel decidedly uneasy in my surroundings. I was in an elegant dining room, in which guests at nearby tables were being pampered lavishly, while a couple of hundred metres down the road, where I lived in Arab East Jerusalem, the Palestinians were bending under the oppression of occupation. I felt as if I were at a banquet in a Paris hotel, soothed by chamber music, and sipping wine besides groups which included coteries of German occupying troops. I felt deep resentment, even for the waiters, the most immediate representatives of the occupiers. To my chagrin I learned, at the end of the meal, that the waiters were Palestinians!

I can date to that period also my unease with the land traditions of the Bible, which appeared to mandate the genocide of the indigenous inhabitants of 'Canaan'. At the end of his Public Lecture in Tantur, I suggested to Marc Ellis, a young Jewish theologian who was developing a Jewish Theology of Liberation with strong dependence on the Hebrew Prophets, (3) that it would be no more difficult to construct a Theology of Oppression on the basis of other biblical traditions. I was thinking of the narratives of so-called Israelite origins, and of the traditions that demanded the destruction of other peoples.

I had more pressing academic demands when I returned to London after my sabbatical, (4) but I did record some reflections on my year

in the journal of the Catholic Biblical Association of Great Britain, of which I was then editor. (5) But soon after his visit to Palestine in the autumn of 1984, my colleague in St Mary's, Duncan Macpherson, told me of the plea of Abuna Elias Chacour to Christian pilgrims from the West to meet the Christian communities, 'the Living Stones' of the land, and not be satisfied with the 'dead stones' of archaeological sites. Soon a group of interested people in London established the ecumenical trust, *Living Stones,* which promotes links between Christians in Britain and the Holy Land, and appointed me Chairman, a post which I still hold. In 1985 I co-led a study tour to Israel and the Occupied Territories, and led a group of confreres on a 'Retreat through Pilgrimage' in 1987, (6) and made other visits in 1990 and 1991.

Walking for Peace

Earlier in 1991, I had participated in an International Peace Walk from Jerusalem to Amman, and although I did not reach the destination, I gained the acquaintance of groups of Israeli soldiers and policemen, enjoyed military detention twice, and faced into what appeared to be an inevitable spell in prison. Officially, my crime, in the first instance, was to have trespassed into 'a closed military zone' on the outskirts of Ramallah, and in the second, to have refused to leave a similarly designated area above Jericho. The real purpose of such designations, of course, was to halt the silent walk of some thirty 'peaceniks' from about fifteen countries. Our presence was having a decidedly enervating effect on the Palestinians, who could not dare to protest so forthrightly.

The day after the first bout of arrests, we arrived unannounced in the Christian village of Taybeh. The villagers 'exploded' in enthusiasm, and declared an immediate festive gathering in the *piazza* in front of the Latin Church. After speeches and sophisticated political debate with the young, we slept on the floor of the parish hall, and rose early, not leaving before we planted a number of olive trees in memory of the *shahid al intifada,* the village's first martyr of the *intifada.* While the child's father was digging the hole, I sang the Gaelic resurrection hymn, *Ag Críost an Síol,* which I translated into English for the priest, who in turn translated it into Arabic for the dead boy's father. On the way out of the village, we processed to the tomb of the martyr, (7) and walked silently over the Judean hills, before beginning our descent into the Jordan Valley.

After a few hours we were informed by the military that we were inside 'a military zone'. While our negotiators were engaging the Commanding Officer of the district, we sat on the side of the road and sang peace songs. I opened with a rendition, in my *bel canto* Irish-accented Hebrew, of Psalm 119 (118). My singing of this Passover song

of deliverance had an obviously disturbing effect on the young soldiers 'guarding' us. Formal arrest and several hours detention in Jericho followed. My comportment during the day-long detention – insisting on the group being fed, being polite but firm under interrogation, refusing to sign my 'statement' of incrimination, but proffering my own statement, which I would be very pleased to sign, etc. – left the police in no doubt about whom I considered the criminals. To the policeman who informed me that I could make one phone call, I replied that I wished to speak to the Pope… 'I am sorry, it cannot be international.' (8) After a long, wearying day in detention in sunbaked Jericho, we were driven 'to prison', as we were assured. This was not good news. Fr Desmond Beirne, the Principal of Strawberry Hill, might not be pleased to read: 'Sorry I cannot be in College for the time being – am in prison in the Holy Land! Your devoted confrere, Michael.' In the event, the police brought us to a police station in Israeli-occupied East Jerusalem, and even having refused to sign another declaration, we were released. The peacewalk experience demonstrated how the noble discourse of jurisprudence, designed to protect the vulnerable, can become a legitimizer of oppression, something I had experienced already in London while I *engaged* in the struggle for the human rights of gypsies. (9)

Nevertheless, it took some time for my experiences to acquire an ideological framework. Gradually I read more of the modern history of the region. In addition to bringing a group in 1992, I spent August in the *École Biblique,* and while there interviewed prominent Palestinians, including the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, the Greek Orthodox Archbishop Timotheos, the Anglican Canon Nairn Ateek, and the Vice-President of Bir Zeit University, Dr Gabi Baramki. During the month I worked on Luke 4.16-30, in pursuit of my determination to write a monograph on 'Evangelizare pauperibus misit me'. (10)

I made three visits in 1993, one at Easter to prepare the Cumberland Lodge Conference on Christians in the Holy Land, (11) one for study in August, and the third to bring a group of students. While working on Luke 4.16-30, responding to my growing unease about the link between biblical spirituality and oppression, I began to examine the land traditions of the Bible, simply moving through the Pentateuch focusing on the question. Already I had written a number of articles on the Holy Land. (12) I sent a draft of the manuscript on Luke 4.16-30 to Sheffield Academic Press in March 1994, and the revised, final manuscript on 22 July 1994. (13) With that work completed, I could give my whole attention to the land traditions of the Bible. While in the *École Biblique* in August I read through the Bible, noting all the relevant parts.

Yahweh and Ethnic Cleansing

I was struck by the fact that in the biblical narrative the divine promise of land was integrally linked with the mandate to exterminate the indigenous peoples, and had to wrestle with my perception that those traditions were inherently oppressive and morally reprehensible. (14) Even the Exodus narrative was problematic. While it portrays Yahweh as having compassion on the misery of his people, and as willing to deliver them from the Egyptians, and bring them to a land flowing with milk and honey (Exod 3.7-8), that was only part of the picture. Although the reading of Exod 3, both in the Christian liturgy and in the classical texts of liberation theologies, halts abruptly in the middle of v. 8 at the description of the land as one 'flowing with milk and honey', the biblical text itself continues, 'to the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites'. Manifestly, while the promised land of the narrative flowed with milk and honey, it had no lack of indigenous peoples, and, according to the biblical narrative, would soon flow with blood.

After the King of Heshbon refused passage to the Israelites, Yahweh gave him over to the Israelites who captured and utterly destroyed all the cities, killing all the men, women, and children (Deut 2.33-34). The fate of the King of Bashan was no better (Deut 3.3). Yahweh's role in the conquest is reassuring:

> When Yahweh your God brings you into the land that you are about to enter and occupy, and he clears away many nations before you – the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites … and when Yahweh your God gives them over to you … you must utterly destroy them … Show them no mercy… For you are a people holy to Yahweh your God; Yahweh your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on earth to be his people, his treasured possession (Deut 7.1-11; see also 9.1-5; 11.8-9,23,31-32).

In the rules for the conduct of war, if a besieged town does not surrender, the Israelites shall kill all its males, and take as booty the women, the children, livestock, and everything else in the town (Deut 20.11-14). The narrative, then, presents 'ethnic cleansing' as not only legitimate, but as required by the divinity:

> 'But as for the towns of these peoples that Yahweh your God is giving you as an inheritance, you must not let anything that breathes remain alive. You shall annihilate them – the Hittites and the Amorites, the Canaanites and the Perizzites, the Hivites and

> the Jebusites – just as Yahweh your God has commanded, so that they may not teach you to do all the abhorrent things that they do for their gods, and you thus sin against Yahweh your God' (Deut 20.16-18).

The book ends with Moses' sight of the promised land before he dies (Deut 34.1-3). Although Moses was unequalled in his deeds, he left a worthy successor, Joshua, who, after Moses had laid his hands on him, was full of the spirit of wisdom (Deut 34.4-12).

Having had my moral being sensitized by Deuteronomy's mandate to commit genocide, it was with some amazement that I detected among biblical scholars a high esteem for the book. Commentators conventionally assess it to be a theological *book par excellence,* and the focal point of the religious history of the Old Testament. Indeed, in the 1995 Lattey Lecture in Cambridge University, Professor Norbert Lohfink, S.J., argued that the book provides a model for a Utopian society in which there would be no poor. In my role as the formal proposer of a vote of thanks, I invited him to consider whether, in the light of that book's insistence on a mandate to commit genocide, such a Utopian society would be possible only after the invading Israelites had wiped out the indigenous inhabitants of the promised land. (15) However highly one esteems the theological thrust of the Book of Deuteronomy, one ought to notice that while it stresses the chosenness of Israel, the narrative requires the genocide of the indigenous population of Canaan. So much for the preparation for entry into the Promised Land.

The first part of the Book of Joshua (2.1-12.24) describes the conquest of the land, concentrating on the capture of a few key cities, and their fate in accordance with the laws of the Holy War. Even when the Gibeonites were to be spared, the Israelite elders complained at the lapse in fidelity to the mandate to destroy all the inhabitants of the land (9.21-27). Joshua took Makkedah, utterly destroying every person in it (10.28). A similar fate befell other cities (10.29-39): everything that breathed was destroyed, as Yahweh commanded (10.40-43). Chapter 11 describes the northern campaign, in which Israel left no one remaining: Joshua utterly destroyed the inhabitants (11.1-23). Yahweh gave to Israel all the land that he swore to their ancestors he would give them (21.43-45).

The legendary achievements of Yahweh through Moses, Aaron, and Joshua are kept before the Israelites even in their prayers:

> You brought a vine out of Egypt; you drove out the nations and planted it (Ps 80.8; see also Pss 78.54-55; 105.44). (16)

Christians also turn to the Bible for inspiration. (17)

By modern standards of international law and human rights, what these biblical narratives call for are 'war-crimes' and 'crimes against

humanity'. Readers might seek refuge in the claim that the problem lies with the predispositions of the modern reader, rather than with the text itself. One cannot escape so easily. One must acknowledge that much of the *Torah,* and the Book of Deuteronomy in particular, contains menacing ideologies and racist, xenophobic and militaristic tendencies. The implications of the existence of dubious moral dispositions, presented as mandated by the divinity, within a book which is canonized as Sacred Scripture invited the most serious investigation. Was there a way of reading the traditions which rescues the Bible from being a blunt instrument of oppression, and acquits God of the charge of being the Great Ethnic-Cleanser?

By good fortune, in that August of 1994, the *École* library had just received a *Festschrift* consisting of studies in Deuteronomy. In addition to articles covering the customary source, historical-critical, and literary discussions, it contained one by F. E. Deist, with the intriguing title, 'The Dangers of Deuteronomy', which discussed the role of that book in support of *apartheid.* (18) It dealt with the text from the perspective of its reception history, especially within the ideology of an emerging Afrikaner nationalism. During that month I also read A. G. Lamadrid's discussion of the role of the Bible and Christian theology in the Iberian conquest of Latin America. (19)

The Bible as Instrument of Oppression

The problem, then, went beyond academic reflection on the interpretation of ancient documents. It was clear that some biblical narratives had contributed to the suffering of countless generations of indigenous peoples. The traditions of Deuteronomy had provided intellectual and moral authority for the Iberian devastation of 'Latin America' in the late mediaeval period, for the Afrikaner exploitation of non-whites in southern Africa right up to this decade, and was continuing to do so today for Zionists in their ongoing exploitation of the Arabs of Palestine. Being already aware of the way the Bible had been used in support of Zionism I began to consider the implications of the fact that the biblical narrative of land had fuelled virtually all Western colonial enterprises, resulting in the sufferings of millions of people, and loss of respect for the Bible. The evidence was mounting up. Not only did the biblical traditions of promises of land to Abraham and his descendants, and the consummation of the promise through the military achievements narrated in the Book of Joshua, have the capacity to infuse exploitative tendencies in their readers, but my research was confirming how in practice they had fuelled virtually every form of militant colonialism emanating from Europe.

These biblical narratives, then, are not only potentially corrupting in themselves, but have, in fact, contributed to war crimes and crimes against humanity in virtually every colonized region, by providing allegedly divine legitimation for Western colonizers in their zeal to implant 'outposts of progress' in 'the heart of darkness'. The ongoing identification in subsequent history with the warring scenes of the Hebrew Bible is a burden the biblical tradition must bear. When I got back to England I wrote an article, 'The Bible as Instrument of Oppression', giving the three case studies of Latin America, southern Africa and Palestine. (20) I was determined to write a more substantial monograph.

But somebody must have addressed that question before. Back in Jerusalem for August 1995,1 realized that this was not the case. Even though Gerhard von Rad lamented in 1943 that no thorough investigation of 'the land' had been made, (21) no serious study of the topic was undertaken for another thirty years. But surely W. D. Davies' seminal studies had compensated for the neglect hitherto! (22) I was intrigued by the tone of the preface to *The Gospel and the Land* (1974). He informs readers that the study was written at the request of friends in Jerusalem who, just before the June 1967 war, urged his support for the cause of Israel.(23) Moreover, he wrote *The Territorial Dimensions of Judaism* (1982) under the direct impact of that war, and its updated version because of the mounting need to understand the theme in the light of events in the Middle East, culminating in the Gulf War and its aftermath. (24) Researching in a land conquered by Israel, from which she resolutely refuses to withdraw in accordance with the requirements of international law and numerous UN resolutions, I was intrigued by the frankness with which Davies publicized his hermeneutical key: 'Here I have concentrated on what in my judgement must be the beginning for an understanding of this conflict: the sympathetic attempt to comprehend the Jewish tradition.' (25)

While Davies considers 'the land' from virtually every conceivable perspective, no attention is given to broadly moral and human rights' issues. Indeed he explicitly excluded the question of what happens when the Promised Land in Judaism conflicts with the claims of the indigenous peoples. He excuses himself by saying that to engage that issue would demand another volume, (26) without indicating his intention of embarking upon such an enterprise. I wondered whether Davies would be equally sanguine had white, Anglo-Saxon Protestants, or even white Catholics of European provenance been among the displaced people who paid the price for the prize of Zionism. Reflecting a somewhat elastic moral sense, Davies, although perturbed by the aftermath of the 1967 conquest, takes the establishment of the state of Israel in his stride. He shows no concern for the foundational injustice done to the

Palestinians, and, despite the *Nakba* of 1948, Davies writes as if there were later a moral equivalence between the dispossessed Palestinians and the dispossessor Zionists. The rights of the rapist and the victim were finely balanced.

Walter Brueggemann's *The Land (1977)* brought me no further. While he saw land as a central, if not 'the central theme' of biblical faith, he bypasses the treatment to be meted out to the indigenous inhabitants. (27) By 1994, however, he was less sanguine, noting that while the scholastic community had provided 'rich and suggestive studies on the "land theme" in the Bible… they characteristically stop before they get to the hard part, contemporary issues of land in the Holy Land.' (28)

It was becoming clear to me, then, that Western scholarship and the discipline of biblical studies over the last hundred years had reflected the Eurocentric perspectives of virtually all Western historiography, and had contributed significantly to the exspoliation of native peoples. The benevolent interpretation of biblical traditions which advocate atrocities and war crimes had given solace to those bent on the exploitation of native peoples. This was true most recently of the Arabs of Palestine, in whose country I had reached these conclusions as I studied the Bible.

Amalekites in Solly Street

By the Autumn of 1995 I was well into a book on the subject, and in the university mid-term in November I went to see Sheffield Academic Press with a draft MS on The Bible and Zionism'. Before I visited the press, however, I was very pleased to celebrate Mass in St Vincent's Church on the 29th Sunday (Year C). To a congregation hoping for spiritual nourishment the lector read from Exod 17.8-13:

> Then Amalek came and fought with Israel at Rephidim. Moses said to Joshua, 'Choose some men for us and go out, fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the staff of God in my hand.' So Joshua did as Moses told him, and fought with Amalek, while Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. Whenever Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed; and whenever he lowered his hand. Amalek prevailed. But Moses' hands grew weary; so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it. Aaron and Hur held up his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side; so his hands were steady until the sun set. And Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the sword.

Almost before I had time to wonder what they made of it, the people responded with Psalm 120 and its antiphon, 'Our help is in the name of

the Lord …' The second reading (2 Tim 3.14-4.2) reminded the congregation 'how from childhood you have known the sacred writings that are able to instruct you … All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.' Mercifully, the Gospel treated us to the narrative of the widow whose persistence in prayer wearied a certain judge (Luke 18.1-8). To my relief, rather than being fired up to visit vengeance upon enemies, members of the congregation greeted me. Mercifully, the 'Amalekites' in the neighbourhood of Solly Street were safe for another three years at least.

At the Academic Press, the editor, being somewhat apprehensive at my concentration on Zionism, persuaded me to use three case studies. This would require further immersion in the study of southern Africa and Latin America, and a change of provisional title to 'The Land of Israel, God and Morality.' I sent a draft to the editor and the anonymous reader with what was to become the final title, *The Bible and Colonialism: A Moral Critique.* I hoped to have the final MS with the press before I left for Bethlehem on 1 September. As it transpired, much more time was required.

The Little Bantustan of Bethlehem

The final revision of *The Bible and Colonialism* was undertaken in Bethlehem University and Tantur. My context was a persistent reminder of the humiliation, degradation and oppression which colonizing enterprises invariably inflict on their indigenes. Working against a background of bullet fire and in the shadow of tanks added a certain intensity to my research. My journal reminds me that I worked academically throughout Wednesday, 25 September, on the religious dimension of Zionism, paying particular attention to the late Rabbi Meir Kahane, and the major ideologues propelling the notion of religious settlement in the Occupied Territories, Rabbis Kook, father and son. I was struck by the elder Kook's capacity to see 'the holy sparks' in everything, and by his professed universalism: he, more than anyone else, integrated traditional Jewish messianism with the altogether secular programme of political Zionism. He clothed the secular aspiration to establish a Jewish state in a garment of piety, referring to the infamously unjust Balfour Declaration of November 1917 as 'divinely inspired', etc.

I was to celebrate Mass for the Brothers in the University at 5.45 p.m. that evening. After queuing, I was turned back at the Tantur checkpoint, and tried the settlers' road. When I got to Bethlehem, groups of young Palestinians had gathered ominously on the footpaths. It was dark. I feared a little for my safety. I arrived late, and added the prayers of the

Mass to the Brothers' Evening Prayer. I would have to leave immediately after supper, as there was a fire, 'near Rachel's Tomb'. Soon after I got back to Tantur shooting broke out in Bethlehem. There was quite a bit on the following morning also, with several bullets landing on the flat roof of Tantur. Two Palestinians, one a graduate of the University, were killed in Bethlehem, and many more, Palestinians and Israeli soldiers, were killed in the West Bank. I rang the Swedish Christian Study Centre in Jerusalem to know whether my lecture was on or not. With no bullets flying in Jerusalem, I was able to deliver my advertised lecture with its title, 'Does the God of the Bible sanction Ethnic Cleansing?' Afterwards, at the invitation of Fr Brian Magee, who was with a group from Fr Gerry Threadgold's Dublin parish, four of us anticipated the Feast of St Vincent with a delightful dinner in Notre Dame Centre. I returned to Tantur, and meddled further in the affairs of princes.

Life was palpably tense, even before early rising. The helicopter hovering overhead each morning, and the intrusions of police and soldiers outside and inside the Vatican property were most offensive. The reason for such unsolicited attention? Tantur has its very own *Via Dolorosa,* a rocky track through the grounds, bypassing the checkpoint outside. It was a heart-rending sight every day. An Irish Sacred Heart missionary in South Africa watched the procession of people for over an hour one day: women in village costumes balancing impossible loads on their heads, and people of all ages going to their work, all stealthily evading the checkpoint. His heart sank: 'I was back in the townships of 15 years ago.'

My life was to change dramatically after I returned from speaking at a Conference in Amman (4-9 October 1996). (29) A bout of *angina pectoris,* (30) emergency hospitalization in St Joseph's and a subsequent angiogram in the Hadassah hospital revealed that I had developed one 'total closure' and one 'partial closure' in the arteries of my heart, as if mirroring the externals of my day at the Tantur checkpoint. Fr Fergus Kelly came out to oversee my second hospitalization and, as it turned out, a successful angioplasty operation. Although concentration on recuperation slowed down the pace of application to my book, I was able to e-mail the MS to the press on 20 December. (31)

On Christmas Eve, from the rooftop of Tantur, I watched the ceremonial entry of the Latin Patriarch into Bethlehem. I preached at the Midnight Mass in the University, presided over by Mgr Montezemolo, the Holy See's Apostolic Delegate, a key player in the signing of the Fundamental Agreement between the Holy See and the State of Israel on 30 December 1993.1 reflected with the congregation that, not withstanding the Christmas rhetoric about the God's Glory in the highest heaven and Peace on Earth, the reality of Bethlehem brings one down to

earth rather quickly. I told them that passing by the checkpoint between Bethlehem and Jerusalem twice a day made me boil with anger at the humiliation, degradation and oppression which the colonizing enterprise of Zionism had inflicted on the people of the region, and wondered how long the tyranny would last.

I asked on the night when Christians commemorate the advent of the Messiah, 'Where is the Glory of God in all of this, and where does one taste some of God's peace?' Yet, I reminded the congregation, in the thinking of many religious Jews, Zionist settlement will speed up the coming of the Messiah and the redemption of the whole world. Such sacral discourse, I assured them, was undermined by the reality of the catastrophe for the Palestinians in the past and in the present. Already in 1913, the bad behaviour of Zionists towards the Palestinians made the cultural Zionist, Ahad Ha'am, fear for the future if Jews ever came to power: 'If this be the "Messiah": I do not wish to see his coming'. I suggested that in the event of the birth of Jesus, God was beginning to free the people from domination and exploitation by the powerful.

Christmas assures Christians that life cannot be controlled by forces of domination and exploitation, but that God is acting to save us. The emperor and local rulers are not divine: their empire, like all tyrannies, will collapse. The Christmas narratives, in which the ordinary people are the heroes and the rulers are the anti-heroes, assure us that the mighty will be cast down, and that God is working for the oppressed today. The story of the Christ-child invites us to participate in God's liberation 'today'. Ultimately, and probably soon, the tyranny which began to reign in Palestine fifty years ago would collapse, as all tyrannies do. The grace of God will appear, bringing salvation to all. Then we shall sing to Yahweh … tell of his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the nations …When our deliverance comes, there will be "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours!'" The Apostolic Delegate, I understand, was not beaming approval. (32) He would hear me again soon.

By the time Fr Kevin Rafferty arrived on 27 December (7.45 a.m.), I had almost got myself arrested, having had a nasty altercation with soldiers who had entered Tantur yet again. I told them they were trespassing, violating international law, etc., and, forgetting for the moment the exhortations of the Teaching on the Mount, returned bullying for bullying. After lunch Kevin and I drove to Kiryat Arba, where we visited the tomb of Baruch Goldstein, the religious murderer of 29 Palestinians in the Ibrahimi Mosque in February 1994, and Hebron itself.

On Monday 30 December, the Third Anniversary of the Fundamental Agreement between the Holy See and Israel, (33) I went to the Montezemolo lecture in Notre Dame. The audience was composed exclu-

sively of expatriate Christians and Israeli Jews, with not a Palestinian in sight. Well into the question time, I violated the sycophantic atmosphere of mutual backslapping: 'I had expected that the Fundamental Agreement would have given the Holy See some leverage in putting pressure on Israel vis-a-vis the Palestinians, if only on the matter of freedom to worship in Jerusalem – Palestinians have been forbidden entry into even East Jerusalem, whether on Friday or Sunday, since March 1993.' With the self-assurance of a schoolmaster putting an impertinent boy in his place, His Excellency replied rhetorically, 'Do you not think that the Holy See is doing all it can?'

At the reception afterwards, a certain Ambassador Gilboa, one of the architects of the Agreement on the Israeli side, berated me in a most aggressive fashion. I took the attack to him on the matter of the Jews having 'kicked out' the Palestinians. 'No, they were not kicked out', he insisted. 'In fact helicopters dropped leaflets on the Arab towns, beseeching the inhabitants to stay put, blah, blah …' I told him I did not believe him, and cited even the Israeli revisionist historiographer, Benny Morris, whom he dismissed as a compulsive attention-seeker. It was obvious all round the room that a not insignificant altercation was taking place. I told him that he should have remained a soldier, because he had the manners of a corner-boy, and not what I expected from a diplomat. I went home righteous.

It was time to go to Galilee. Father Visitor and I checked in at the Scottish Hospice in Tiberias, and made up a table of eight for supper. I heard the man opposite tell an English couple that he was a Palestinian. An Israeli to my right began to disgorge the stereotypical fabricated myth of Israel's origins: how the innocent Jews were massacred by the Arabs, etc. The Palestinian gazed resignedly at the ceiling. Since no one else was going to challenge the Israeli, I decided to have a go. 'Would Israel survive?', I asked for openers. Before he could answer, the Englishman piped up that Scripture foretold that it would. I assured the Israeli that his fabrication distorted history. Kevin was listening attentively. It emerged later that the Israeli was the guide of an American College group, and the Palestinian the driver. Some trip!

Frs Bob Maloney and Tom Davitt would arrive in Jerusalem on 23 February. Tom had asked me to check out the details of an Arboretum in the Galilee, dedicated to the memory of his grandfather, Michael Davitt the Irish land-reformer. Alas, the *Jewish National Fund* official was not able to trace it. I hoped that the irony would not escape Tom, that the *Jewish National Fund,* responsible for massive colonial plunder of the indigenes, might have honoured in this manner one who had striven relentlessly for the land rights of the native people. Tom looked uncharacteristically perplexed.

With the year running on, I had another first: inhalation of tear-gas around 'Rachel's Tomb' on the way to Easter Mass in Bethlehem. Fr Philip Walshe arrived on 24 April, having drawn the curtain on the Vincentian community's presence in Sheffield. On the third day we availed of the invitation to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre for the Orthodox Easter Fire. I found the ceremony revolting. A fight broke out between two groups of zealots – 'the Syrians are always like that', we were assured by our Armenian host. I felt like the Protestant pilgrims in the last century on seeing the 'liturgical monstrosities' there.

I delivered a lecture, The Liberation Theology of the Lucan Jesus', at the International Conference in Jerusalem on Christology, 'Iesus Christus… heri et hodie' (29 April-4 May), and later took out to dinner Philip and friends from the *École Biblique:* Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, O.P. (former pupil of St Vincent's, Castleknock), Justin Taylor, S.M., and Tony Axe, O.P. On 2 May I went with Philip to *Sabeel,* the Palestinian Liberation Theology Centre, where I took part in a briefing for a delegation from Sweden. We went to see the place from where the Jahalin bedouin were evacuated to make way for 'the irresistible progress of our race' in Maale Adumim, and visited them in their new site in 'container city' – the families live in containers on the side of a hill, well out of sight of the up-market Jewish settlement. In their poverty, they gave us tea.

We went to the peace camp overlooking Jabal Abu Ghneim – the renowned mountain (Har Homa, for the Jews) destined to complete the ringing of Jerusalem with Jewish settlements – and to Jad Isaac's Applied Research Institute Jerusalem, ending up in Bethlehem. We visited the Basilica and went to the Greek Catholic parish house, where I gave a 10 minute presentation, followed by dinner. On 16 May Philip and I drove to Eilat and crossed into Aqaba, where we were met by Sr Stephanie, a former student of mine in Strawberry Hill. We went to Petra and stayed in Jordan until 19 May. Philip left for home the following day.

Tantur's Silver Jubilee

Stars from the West studded the sky over Bethlehem for the celebrations of Tantur's 25th anniversary (25-28 May). Under the light of the plainly visible Hale-Bopp comet, a frail Teddy Kollek was introduced at the opening ceremony as though he were the founder of the Institute. A choir from the University of Notre Dame sang, one song in Hebrew. Palestinian faces looked decidedly out of joint. But they were not altogether forgotten, being thanked profusely for their work in the kitchen and around the grounds.

Moreover, after the lecture on 'Christians of the Holy Land' which

was given by a Belgian White Father, Fr Frans Bouwen, prominent Palestinian savants, including the Liberation Theologian, Canon Nairn Ateek, were invited to speak from the floor. Fr Bouwen had given a typically urbane historical perspective on the subject, having excused himself from dealing with the political context. After the indigenous Christians spoke from the floor, and interventions from two rabbis, I made two points, the second of which was that the Jewish-Christian dialogue had been hijacked by a Zionist agenda. Another half-sentence escaped before Tantur Rector and Chairman, Fr Tom Stransky, stopped me. I had violated the Solemn Silence. I stood dramatically at the microphone in silence before a stunned audience, thanked him and walked to my seat. Soon afterwards I had to leave for the university. That was the third time the Rector had cut me off in public. The two previous incidents were a result of my posing pointedly moral questions to silver-tongued, American Jewish intellectuals who were well into clothing Zionism – in my view an immoral and corrupt nineteenth-century-like colonialist enterprise – in the garments of piety.

Rachel's sleep was restless throughout the year. Day after day the ritual of stone-throwing and counter tear-gas firing broke the monotony around the tomb. And Jabal Abu Ghneim nearby, despite its prominence in the UN General Assembly and Security Council, was losing its green crown under the imperative of colonial rape – or was being prepared for the coming of the Messiah, whichever you prefer.

Why important?

It is a truism that human motivation is multifaceted. It can flow from the highest levels of idealism or from less noble personal needs and dispositions. Israel-Palestine is my consuming academic and moral passion. Had my biblical studies not confronted me with the turbulence of Middle East politics perhaps I might have been steered in other directions. At the higher level of my motivation I detect a concern for the victims of oppression. The Palestinians are the sole victims of the Zionist element of Europe's perennial victims. Few care that they pay for the crimes of others. Moreover, Israeli propaganda, thanks to one of the most successful disinformation campaigns in modern times, has masked the fact that the creation of the state resulted in the dispossession and dispersion of another people. While not unique in the history of human civilisation, the injustice to the Palestinians is passed over in most Western discourse, including biblical and theological scholarship, and in some religious circles is accorded religious significance.

The only plausible validation for the displacement of the Palestinians derives from a naive interpretation of the Bible, 'the soul of (Christian) theology'. Biblical literalism sweeps away any concerns deriving from

considerations of morality. Moreover, in some traditions of Jewish and Christian eschatologies, the ingathering of the Jews is related to the coming (for Christians, the Second Coming) of the Messiah. Fidelity to the literary genre of the biblical traditions and respect for the evidence provided mainly by archaeological investigation, demands a rejection of such simplistic readings of the biblical narratives of land, and of the prophetic oracles of restoration. To these academic perspectives, one must add one of faith, namely, that God is fundamentally moral, and, for those espousing the Christian vision, loves all his people, irrespective of race, etc. The Israel-Palestine conflict, then, raises the question of the moral integrity of the Deity.

More immediately, I situate Zionism, the ideological movement which resulted in the dispossession of the Palestinians, within the category of xenophobic imperialism, so characteristic of the major European powers towards the end of the last century. I consider the espousal of it by a majority of Jews worldwide to mark the nadir of Jewish morality. Because I trust in a God before whom tyranny ultimately dissolves, and because one learns something from history, I have no doubt that a new generation of both diaspora and Israeli Jews will repudiate its presumptions, and repent for the injustices perpetrated on the Palestinians by their fathers and grandfathers – Israel, as the fortress, ghetto Jewish state, will not last much longer than that.

While I regret the descent of Judaism into the embrace of Zionism, there is little I can do about it. However, the degree to which a thoroughly Zionized Judaism infects the so-called Jewish-Christian dialogue – which I prefer to designate as 'a monologue in two voices' – is a matter of grave concern. I am perturbed that concurrence with a Zionist reading of Jewish history – that Jews everywhere, and at all times, wanted to re-establish a nation state in Palestine (with no concern for the indigenous population), etc. – is virtually a component of the credo of the dialogue. In that fabricated scenario, the planned and systematically executed dislocation of the Palestinian population, far from incurring the wrath of post-colonial liberalism, becomes an object of honour, and even religious significance. While most Jews worldwide – there are notable exceptions – allow themselves to be deluded by such perspectives, I see no reason why Christians should.

Western theological scholarship, while strong in its critique of repressive regimes elsewhere, gives a wide berth to Zionism. Indeed a moral critique of its impact on the Palestinians is ruled out. My *The Bible and Colonialism* breaks the silence. It is the first book to explore the actual links between the Bible and colonialism in general, and the moral question of the impact which colonialist enterprises, fuelled by the biblical paradigm, have had on the indigenous populations, most prominently the

Palestinians. It is an exploration into terrain virtually devoid of enquirers and an attempt to map out some of the contours of that terrain. It subjects the land traditions of the Bible to an evaluation which derives from general ethical principles and criteria of human decency, such as are enshrined in conventions of human rights and international law. Such an enterprise is necessary. When people are dispossessed, dispersed and humiliated, not only with alleged divine support, but at the alleged express command of God, one's moral self recoils in horror. Any association of God with the destruction of people must be subjected to an ethical analysis. The obvious contradiction between what some claim to be God's will and ordinary civilized, decent behaviour poses the question as to whether God is a chauvinistic, nationalistic and militaristic xenophobe.

Biblical studies and theology must concentrate on the real conditions of people's lives, and not satisfy themselves with comfortable survival in an academic or ecclesial ghetto. I am concerned about the use of the Bible as a legitimization for colonialism and its consequences. The recognition of the suffering caused by these enterprises requires one to re-examine the biblical, theological and moral dimensions of the question. My academic work addresses aspects of biblical hermeneutics and informs a wider public on issues which have implications for human well-being as well as for allegiance to God. While such a venture might be regarded as an instructive academic contribution by any competent scholar, to assume responsibility for doing so is for me, who has witnessed the dispossession, dispersion and humiliation of the Palestinians, of the order of a moral imperative.

It is high time that biblical scholars, Church people, and Western intellectuals read the biblical narratives of the promise of land 'with the eyes of the Canaanites'. Such a project is consistent with the vision of Vincent de Paul whose interpretation of the Scriptures was significantly influenced by his encounter with the marginalized, 'our lords and masters', to whose needs he attended indefatigably. My study of the Bible in the Land of the Bible introduced me to one such context. Others may not have to go so far.

Notes

1. I offer some reflections on this ambivalent commemoration in "Go from your Country": Israel Fifty Years On', *The Month* (2nd n.s.) 31 (May 1998): 186-91. I had the privilege of 'orchestrating' the major ecumenical Remembrance Service in Westminster Cathedral on Saturday 2 May – see 'No celebrations for the Palestinians', *The Tablet* 9 May 1998, p. 609.
2. The academic argument is laid out in my *The Bible and Colonialism: A Moral Critique* (Sheffield Academic Press, 1997).

3. It was published subsequently as *Toward a Jewish Theology of Liberation* (New York, Maryknoll: Orbis, 1987).
4. I had to write up my doctoral thesis (Second Timothy: A Personal Letter of Paul), and I devoted the following two years to writing *Paul the Letter-Writer and the Second Letter to Timothy* (Sheffield Academic Press, 1989).
5. 'Israel: Library, Land and Peoples', *Scripture Bulletin* 15(1984): 6-11.
6. See my 'Living Stones: A Retreat with Palestinian Christians', *New Blackfriars* 70: 119-23.
7. The inscription (in Arabic) reads, 'Here is fame, here is height, here is dignity. Sing together young men, and sing you beside them, young women. It's the martyr of the *intifada,* the hero, Ibrahim Hosam Haranki. He was born on 25 July 1973, and was martyred on 29 June 1988.'
8. To my horror, the policeman checking passports on crossing the Allenby Bridge on a Study Tour some months later was the very one who had overseen my detention in Jericho! 'Haven't I seen you somewhere before?', he asked. I assured him I was a regular visitor.
9. See my 'Evangelizare Pauperibus', *Colloque* No, 8(1983): 134-39.
10. I determined at the Provincial Convocation of 1989 to expend my exegetical energies on the key Vincentian text. After preliminary work, I realised the task required three parts, the first two of which were published in *Colloque:* 'Evangelizare Pauperibus Misit Me': Jesus in the Synagogue at Nazareth', No. 22(1990): 50-62, and The Poor in Luke's Gospel', No. 23(1991): 349-69.
11. I co-edited the proceedings with William Taylor, *Christians in the Holy Land* (London: World of Islam Festival Trust, 1994).
12. 'A Christian Perspective on the *Intifada', The Month* 23(1990): 478-85; *'Living Stones:* Christians in the Holy Land', *Doctrine and Life* 42 (1992): 128-34; 'Palestinian Christians and the Liberation of Theology', *The Month* 26(1993): 482-90; 'Christian Presence in the Occupied Territories', *Living Stones Magazine,* no. 9 (1993): 3-4; 'Living or Dead Stones? The Future of Christians in the Holy Land', *Living Stones Magazine,* no. 9 (1993): 4-6.
13. See my *Jesus the Liberator. Nazareth Liberation Theology (Luke 4.16-30)* (Sheffield Academic Press, 1995).
14. See, for example, Exod 3.8; 6.2-4; 23.23-33; 33.1-3; 34.11-15; Num 21.1-3, 21-35; 31; 33.50-56; Deut 2.33-34; 3.3; 7.1-11; 9.1-5; Deut 20.16-18; Josh 6.21-27; 8.2, 19-29; 9-11; Ps 78:54-55; 80.8; 105.43-44.
15. Professor Lohfink's Lattey Lecture is published in *The Laws of Deuteronomy. A Utopian Project for a World without any Poor?* (St Edmund's College, Cambridge: Von Hiigel Institute, 1996), and in 'The Laws of Deuteronomy. A Utopian Project for a World without any Poor' (without the question mark in the title), *Scripture Bulletin 26* (1996): 2-19. See also my own Lattey Lecture (1997), *A Land flowing with Milk, Honey, and People* (St Edmund's College, Cambridge: Von Hiigel Institute, 1997), and in *Scripture Bulletin* 28(1998): 2-17.
16. Already in 1984 while I was researching in Jerusalem, Israeli settler terrorists tried to blow up Jerusalem's Dome of the Rock. The newspapers published a picture of a culprit wearing the typical dress of the (religious) settler

movement, *Gush Emunim.* He had the Book of Psalms in his hand as the judge read out the verdict (see my 'Israel: Library, Land and Peoples', p. 8).

17. President Clinton, unable to sleep on the night before the Rabin-Arafat meeting on the White House Lawn (13 September 1993), and fearing that his speech required more work, reached for his Bible, and reread the entire Book of Joshua. On the day itself, the President introduced Prime Minister Rabin and President Arafat, and announced to the world that both peoples pledged themselves to a shared future, 'shaped by the values of the *Torah,* the Koran, and the Bible'. One might reasonably question whether the *values of the Torah, the Koran, and the Bible* – especially the values of the Book of Joshua – could be relied upon to promote justice and peace, and underpin the imperatives of human rights. See my 'Clinton's Bible, Goldstein's Hermeneutics' in *Middle East International* 16 December 1994: 20-21.
18. The Dangers of Deuteronomy: A Page from the Reception History of the Book', in Martfnez, F. Garcfa, A. Hilhorst, J.T.A.G.M. van Ruiten, and A.S. van der Woude, eds., *Studies in Deuteronomy. In Honour of C. J. Labuschagne on* the *Occasion of his 65th Birthday* (Leiden/New York/Köln: Brill, 1994), pp. 13-29.
19. 'Canaan y América. La Biblia y la Teologia medieval ante la Conquista de la Tierra', in *Escritos de Biblia y Oriente.* Bibliotheca Salmanticensis Estudios 38 (Salamanca-Jerusalen: Universidad Pontificia, 1981), pp. 329-46.
20. *Scripture Bulletin* 25 (1995): 2-14. See also my 'If the Torah is from Heaven…', *Living Stones Magazine,* no. 12(1995): 8-12. The former article brought my message and photo to the front page of the *Catholic Times,* and the latter brought me a letter of commendation from a prominent Anglican divine. Could my fifteen minutes of fame be upon me so early?
21. 'The Promised Land and Yahweh's Land in the Hexateuch', in *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays* (repr. 1984) (London: SCM and Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966, pp. 79-93), p. 79.
22. Especially his *The Gospel and the Land. Early Christianity and Jewish Territorial Doctrine* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974); *The Territorial Dimensions of Judaism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982); and *The Territorial Dimensions of Judaism. With a Symposium and Further Reflections* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991).
23. *The Territorial Dimensions of Judaism* (1982) p. xiii.
24. *The Territorial Dimensions of Judaism. With a Symposium.* (1991), p. xiii.
25. *The Territorial Dimensions of Judaism* (1982) pp. xiii-xiv.
26. *The Territorial Dimensions of Judaism. With a Symposium.* (1991), p. xv.
27. The Land. Place as Gift, Promise, and Challenge in Biblical Faith (Overtures to Biblical Theology). Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977, pp. 3, 48.
28. Brueggemann in the Foreword to March, W. Eugene, *Israel and the Politics of Land. A Theological Case Study* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994), p. vii.
29. I subsequently edited a selection of the papers under the title, *Western Scholarship and the History of Palestine* (London: Melisende [Fox Communications and Publications], 1998).

30. In some pain, I phoned a Palestinian doctor, who advised me to come immediately to his house in Beit Sahour, since he did not have permission to come to me in Tantur – the checkpoint prevents Palestinians, even doctors, from entering Jerusalem.
31. I received the proofs on Good Friday, and saw the first published copies in June 1997.
32. I learned during my visit to Bethlehem University in February 1998 that the Apostolic Delegate had taken steps to ensure that at last year's Midnight Mass he would be spared that kind of exegesis! In fairness to my message, I was overwhelmed by the reception my preaching had from the battered congregation.
33. See my The Vatican-Israel Fundamental Agreement', Living Stones Magazine, no. 10 (1994): 2-4.

Father Alphonsus Hayes

This is not the usual type of obituary because I never knew Alphie Hayes.

After a meeting of the Provincial Council in Dublin on 3 May 1935 the Minutes recorded: "Mr Hayes, a young student from Mungret College, to do his novitiate in St Joseph's for Australian Prov. The Provincial of Australia to be responsible for fees &c". At that time he would have been eighteen and a half years old so it would seem he was a pupil at the secondary school in Mungret rather than a student in the philosophy department. The Minutes of a meeting of the Council on 2 July record the names of those accepted for St Joseph's. The list is preceded by "Messrs" and no first names are given; Hayes is in the list. At a meeting on 8 August 1937 there is a list of those accepted for vows, and Patrick Hayes is named among them, the first time in the Minutes that a Christian name is given for him.

Patrick Alphonsus Hayes was born in Feakle, Co. Clare, on 7 October 1916. His father was Michael, and his mother Julia, nee Moloney. He entered St Joseph's on 7 September 1935, took his vows on 8 September 1937 and having finished his philosophy left for Australia on 15 August 1938.

He was ordained in Eastwood, NSW, on 13 September 1942. During the war no Catalogues were published after that of 1940. In the first post-war one, 1947, he is shown as having been stationed in Eastwood since 1946. According to subsequent Catalogues he was bursar in Malvern 1947-52, curate in Eastwood 1952-58, in Ashfield 1958-61, in Malvern 1961-66. He was on the mission staff in Ashfield 1966-68, superior there 1968-72. He was a member of the Provincial Council 1969-72. The final appointment listed for him was curate in Wandal 1972-73. For the years 1973-79 the Catalogues list him under Eastwood as *abs.* For the years 1979-89 he does not figure in any house in the Australian Province, but in the index each year AUL appears after his name. This is the code to indicate that he belongs to the Australian Province but is not in fact active in it for some reason. He does not appear even in the index of any Catalogue after that of 1989.

There is an unsigned obituary on him in the 1998 *Galway Diocesan Directory;* one paragraph reads:

> In 1977 Fr Alphie came home. It was a time when Vatican II of the 60s was beginning to make itself felt. The winds of change it gen-

> erated gave rise to new questions, doubts and fears. The old order was questioned and new ways of being and living were being researched. It was in such a climate that he began his next and final 20 years. His ministry over these years was in the Cathedral, Galway.

The opening sentence in the obituary had said that life is a mystery to be lived and not a problem to be solved.

He died in University Hospital, Galway on 29 September 1997, and he was buried in Feakle.

The funeral was from the Cathedral, and the Irish Province was represented by the provincial and two other confreres; they were among the seventy concelebrants. (This is *not* a mis-print for seven or seventeen). The Bishop of Galway presided and preached, and expressed appreciation for Alphie's ministry in the Cathedral as well as his pastoral impact in the Golf Club. In the death notice in the papers CM appeared after his name; this, apparently, was at his own request. The final sentence in the obituary in the Galway Directory is:

> Fr Alphie leaves behind him lovely memories of goodness, gentleness, freedom and peace. The mystery lives on; a legacy like that will live on through others and forever.

During his period in Galway he lived with his sister. He did not have many contacts with the Irish Province during that time. He visited All Hallows a few times, including participation once in the August Intercession for Priests. He also attended the funeral of Fr Jimmy Murphy in Phibsboro in April 1982.

Thomas Davitt CM

John O'Kelly CM

This is the text of the Homily given by the Visitor, Fr. Kevin Rafferty, at the funeral Mass in St. Stephen's, Warrington, on 6th August 1998. It was chosen as the obituary as it contains John's own thoughts and reflections on his life and priestly ministry.

I would like to welcome all of you to St. Stephen's Church for this funeral Mass for Fr. John O'Kelly:

- On behalf of everyone here I would like to extend our sympathy to the members of Fr. John's own family who are present and who travelled long distances to be here. To his nephews, Dick, Tom,

Anthony and their families; to his nieces, Cecelia and Helena who were so good to Fr. John in his final illness. We pray especially for Fr. John's brother, Henry, who lives in Melbourne and who, because of ill health, cannot be with us this morning.

- To Bishop Vincent Malone and priests from the Archdiocese of Liverpool.
- To Vincentian Priests from various communities in England, Scotland and Ireland.
- To all the parishioners of St. Stephen's who worked and supported John in the last nine years.

We come together this morning to give thanks for Fr. John and for all the goodness he brought into our lives. As we begin this Mass this morning we commend Fr. John to God's merciful love and we ask pardon for our own sins.

When we were baptised in Jesus Christ we were baptised in his death. We believe that having died with Christ we shall return to life with Him.

In these words of St. Paul we proclaim and celebrate our belief; our faith this morning that Fr. John now shares in a special way in the resurrected life of Jesus Christ.

When John was born in Mitchelstown, Co. Cork on February 22nd, 1926, he was baptised two days later in the local parish church – baptised into the death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. His 72 years of life have been a living out of this saving mystery of his baptism. He went to school to the Christian Brothers in Mitchelstown – both the primary and secondary schools. He entered the Vincentian novitiate in Dublin in September 1944 and, after seven years, was ordained to the priesthood on May 19th, 1951.

Most of his 47 years of priestly ministry were spent in England and Scotland. He worked in, or was based in, seven different parishes. About one year ago I wrote to him to ask him what he would like to do when he retired eventually from his work in Warrington. He wrote quite a long letter which I am going to read to you because it gives such a marvelous picture of how he saw his own life:

- *My first appointment was to Mill Hill and I really loved it. I enjoyed every moment of the four years living in this busy parish in North London.*
- *From there I went to Hereford and again I enjoyed it. Life was much more ordinary.* What he does not say is that one of his main tasks was to drive the Parish Priest around because he could not drive…

- *From there I went to Lanark in Scotland and I travelled all over England, Scotland and Ireland giving Parish Missions. I followed Celtic. It was a good life.* And of course, John's wade-ranging knowledge of the nature of parish life came from the 14 years he spent as an itinerant missionary. It included two visits he made to Australia for lengthy periods to give parish missions there.

- His letter goes on – *My next stop was St. Peter's, Phibsboro in Dublin where I was Chaplain at Kevin Street Technical College.* I am not sure that John was very much at home in an academic institute, but his task here was to give religion classes to young students who were preparing for many different kinds of practical skills.

- My *next appointment in 1972 was as Parish Priest in Cork. I had over seven wonderful years there. I enjoyed mixing with the university students who lived in one section of the house. During my time there we did a lot of work on the house and on the Church and we built a new school. I was really happy there.* So well he might, back in his native Cork! He put all that so modestly. In fact, he built a beautiful school and managed, before he left Cork, to find all the money required to pay for it.

- *From there I made my way to Dunstable where I had eight wonderful years. It is a wonderful parish.*

- *From there I came to St. Stephen's, Warrington. The people have a goodness in their hearts and I have really enjoyed working here.*

- And he summed up his life's work with a final comment – *I have had a wonderful run.* He saw his life in terms of a good run on the soccer or Gaelic pitch.

You will have noticed the refrain running through John's own account of his various activities: After all his major appointments he says *"I really enjoyed it"* or, "*I loved it.*" John was very much at home in parish life. He loved the give and take of parish life. He loved being with people. He was an optimist. He always saw the best side of a situation. He was an encourager and affirmer.

He was indeed a very happy priest and he always brought humour into a situation. He would shrug his shoulders, take another puff of his cigarette and give you that smile with a twinkle in his eye – to disarm you! I am sure many of you experienced it.

Fr. John had his own unique style. In an article he wrote in a *Colloque* about 10 years ago (and the editor must have done great work to get

him to write it because he would have been reluctant to put his ideas on paper), he said:

"*I think it is a wonderful time to be in a parish, a time of challenge for parents, a time of challenge for the men and women preparing for marriage, a time of challenge for the teachers in the schools, a time of challenge, above all, for the priests.*

And then he went on to say:

"It is not a question of taking a hard line or a soft line with people. It is easy to lay down the law. People who come do so because they have a spark of faith. Do not quench that spark, but help it to grow into aflame.

He ended the article by saying:

"Pray with people. Listen to people and share, if possible, a mug of tea with them. It may mean missing your favourite TV programme or the news, but it may also mean that a family is on the way back to God, or a young couple could have determined to be good members of the Church.

Many of the people in this parish will have shared a mug of tea with John and possibly, a cigarette or two.

He was kind and compassionate. He was approachable. He welcomed everyone who knocked on the door. He learned well and lived out well in his life the words of Jesus in today's Gospel:

Come to me all you who labour and are burdened and I will give you rest.

John brought comfort and compassion and care to many people in this parish and the other parishes he served in.

About 4 months ago John learned from the doctors that he had a serious illness. As always, he was optimistic that he could overcome his illness. His great fear was inactivity – that his illness would incapacitate him to a point where he would not be able to work in the parish.

As always, he spoke very kindly and gratefully of all the doctors and nurses who had looked after him throughout his illness. He was, I know, particularly grateful to Dr. Brendan O'Colmain, his own doctor, who was so good to him in his illness and grateful too to the nurses who looked after him in the Warrington General Hospital – the nurses in ward A2 and A3.

- Gratitude, I believe, was one of John O'Kelly's abiding virtues – gratitude to his own family, his nieces, his nephews – their very presence here today is a testament to it.

- Gratitude to the people he served in parishes over the years.
- Gratitude to his fellow priests and Vincentian priests, which he expressed in little notes and letters which would always end in a word of encouragement about taking a holiday; taking a break.
- Gratitude : Thanksgiving. It was Chesterton, I believe, who said that the greatest form of giving is thanksgiving.
- In this Eucharist this morning we express our gratitude. We give thanks for the life and ministry of Fr. John O'Kelly and commend him to the Good Lord, whom he served so generously.

Kevin Rafferty CM

JOHN O'KELLY CM

Born:	22 February 1926 in Mitchelstown, Co. Cork
Entered CM:	7 September 1944
Ordained Priest:	19 May 1951 in Clonliffe College, Dublin by John Charles McQuaid, Archbishop of Dublin

APPOINTMENTS

1951-'54:	Sacred Heart, Mill Hill
1954-'56:	Hereford
1956-'70:	St. Mary's, Lanark
1970-'72:	St. Peter's, Phibsboro'
1972-'79:	St. Vincent's, Sunday's Well, Cork.
1979-'87:	St. Mary's, Dunstable
1987-'98:	St. Stephen's, Warrington.
Died:	3 August 1998 in Warrington
Buried:	Lanark.

Father Francis Maher, CM

Father Frank Maher died on the 19th March, 1998, the Feast of St Joseph, as he had lived, at peace and without fear or fuss. His funeral liturgy was a most moving experience and celebration of his life. It was also a reflection of the amazing number of people Frank touched during his lifetime. He now rests with his Vincentian confreres in the surroundings where he lived most of his life.

Frank came as a boy to Castleknock in 1940 and, apart from eight years preparation for the priesthood and three years in St Patrick's College, Armagh, he was to fulfil his entire apostolate in Castleknock.

His school days there were happy times both in class and on the playing field. The first time I saw Frank was a small diminutive figure on a wet, miserable day at Lansdowne Road, playing in the final of the Senior Rugby Cup in 1947. It was to be a "Roy of the Rovers" sort of day for him for he got both the scores that brought the senior cup back to Castleknock. Reading the account of the match in the *Castleknock Chronicle* one is surprised at the little mention he receives until, at the end of the article the name of the author is recorded. It was Frank himself! But all who knew him in later life as an outstanding rugby trainer, whose influence for good on the boys he coached was accepted by all, would not be surprised at such self-effacement.

Leaving school, Frank entered the Vincentian seminary in Blackrock and was ordained in 1955. He was appointed to St Patrick's College, Armagh and it was with a sad heart he received his appointment back to Castleknock in 1958. He really enjoyed those years in the North of Ireland, sharing life with members of a delightful community, training the senior Gaelic team, (Frank was nothing if not catholic in his taste for sport), teaching class and a member of the local orchestra, much influenced by the late Father Hederman, and with unbounded admiration for the President, Father Sheridan. Frank had many heroes during his life!

Soon, however he was once again completely involved in his new apostolate here in Castleknock. Frank was a dedicated teacher who won the respect of his pupils. He was keenly interested in history and much of his enthusiasm was passed on to the pupils. He prepared his work thoroughly and achieved excellent results for his students in their examinations, including a first place in history in Ireland.

As the years passed, it was in teaching religion that his personality was at its strongest. Not always the easiest subject to teach, with Frank it was integrated into his whole priestly life. His prowess as a player and trainer, his sermons with their constant theme, 'Jesus is your closest friend' (as with St Vincent he preached the one sermon in a thousand ways), his preparation, his use of visual aids and anecdotes, and his sincerity – all combined and were evident to the boys. They trusted him implicitly and sought him as confessor, counsellor and friend. Even when during the last years of his life his health was in decline he still retained his religion classes and organised the retreats of all the class forms in the school. Sometimes he came from class despondent and frustrated but soon his mood would revive and 'so-and so' was not too bad really! For many years Frank was the musical director of the liturgy

in the college. Himself a fine musician he demanded a high standard from the boys – and he usually got it.

What was evident from the large attendance who came from all walks of life to his funeral, was Frank's enormous apostolate beyond the walls of the college. Fr Donal Sullivan, who is now a P.P. in Florida, wrote about Frank for the *Castleknock Chronicle:*

> *I feel myself in a rather uniquely privileged position in the different ways that 1 have known the late Frank Maher. We were close friends, (this is not a claim to be unique, as Frank had very many friends); we were colleagues on the staff at Knock for 24 years, (again others can claim a similar relationship); but when to those two, I add the knowledge I had of Frank's 'other life', as he liked to call it, I am a jump ahead of most others. Frank's 'other life' was the time he spent in priestly ministry in Florida during the summer months every year.*
>
> *Frank found that working in Florida gave him a wonderful opportunity to use his extraordinary Christ-like compassion and concern (my description, not Frank's) for people in a parish setting. The people of Ponte Vedra looked forward to Frank's arrival each summer, not just because he was such a genial and warm person, or because he was an enjoyable golf partner, but more especially because of the impact he made on their lives through his conversations, preaching and spiritual guidance.*
>
> *After the news of Frank's death percolated to Florida, Fr Danaher arranged a Memorial Mass at which I had the honour to preach. Fr Seamus O'Flynn also concelebrated the Mass. Fr Frank's sister, Mary, had rung me the previous evening and told me about the Funeral Mass in Castleknock. My ability to share this with the parishioners present was something they welcomed and needed. It gave them, and me, an opportunity to celebrate the life of Frank Maher and to thank God for the effect he had on our lives.*
>
> *At the lunch afterwards in the parish hall, different parishioners told me stories of the impact that Frank had in their lives. I could only marvel at the wonderful way that this man of God, whom I have been blessed to call my friend, could be used by the Lord. One young woman, whose family was very close to Frank, told me of how she and her boyfriend talked to Frank about getting married. He was quite definite that they should not do so; she followed his advice and later married someone else. She is quite certain that her first choice would have been disastrous. Having spent many an hour late at night in Castleknock, with Frank, as he*

agonised over changing his scrum half or tight head prop before a Cup match, it was remarkable to know how decisive he could be in matters of the spirit!

Frank's involvement in the Charismatic Renewal movement from its beginnings in Ireland was quite total and had a profound influence on his spirituality. He was certainly in constant demand by Prayer Groups and at Charismatic Congresses, and he was sought out as a spiritual director by many religious and lay people. His widespread influence was due to the fact that he lived what he preached. Jesus was his intimate friend – he based everything on that.

His large library reflected his spirituality, books on Christology, Mariology, prayer, scripture, charismatic writings, centres of pilgrimage, liturgical music and lives of the saints, St Theresa of Liseux especially. 98% of his library was devoted to such material, the other 2% were books on rugby, rugby coaching, golf, the spy novels of Helen Maclnnes and videos of films of John Wayne! One can understand why he so much admired John Wayne. The good guy always overcame the bad!

In his community life Frank was much loved. Suffice it to say that he was an excellent companion, a man of prayer and always available to his confreres. It is doubtful if he was ever uncharitable, – as already stated, there were only heroes. During the last years of his life he suffered much bad health but his faith and closeness to Jesus never faltered. His death was certainly the going home of a beloved son.

As I write I look out on the pathway up the hill that leads to the little Castle graveyard. Since Frank's death many people, on their own or in small groups, have made their way up to his grave to pray for him and, perhaps, to pray to him. May he rest in peace

John Doyle, C.M.

FRANCIS MAKER C.M.

Born:	27 June, 1929 in Dublin
Entered CM:	7 September, 1947.
Final Vows:	8 September, 1949
Ordained Priest:	4 June, 1955 in Clonliffe College by John Charles McQuaid, Archbishop of Dublin.

APPOINTMENTS:

1955-'58:	St Patrick's, Armagh
1958-'98:	St Vincent's, Castleknock
Died:	19 March 1998, Castleknock
Buried:	Castleknock.

This poem was left on Frank Maher's coffin in the College Chapel in Castleknock.

To Father Maher

You never had any children
But you were a father in every way
You were a dear friend to so many
You devoted your life to us

Everyone around you felt happy and loved
You were a genuine person who
Had an abyss of love for everyone
For this reason we respected you so much

We gave you the guard of honour
You gave us your life
We will never forget you
As your memory will live with us
Father may you be rewarded in heaven
Your home.

A junior student.