

COLLOQUE

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Congregation of the Mission

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Editorial

This edition is a little unusual – again!

We are very pleased to have been granted permission (by the author and her publishers) to print the introduction to Susan Dinan's work, *Women and Poor Relief in Seventeenth Century France*; The early history of the Daughters of Charity. Permission, however, does not extend to publication on the web, so this will come under a separate cover. Printed copies can be requested from the editor at All Hallows.

The other texts focus, in large part, on works of art. Until Dr Sighle Breathnach-Lynch gave her talk in All Hallows, I am not sure that we knew that we had an art collection. Her talk was enjoyable, informative and illuminating.

Tom Davitt and Tom Lane address other works; the Chapel in Castleknock College and some images of Vincent unique to the Irish Province. Pat Collins explores links between two Saints Vincent.

Finally, there are some reminiscences and a talk by the late Dr John Charles McQuaid (whose name occurs most frequently in our Obituaries as the ordaining prelate).

Church Patronage in the New State: The All Hallows College Collection

Dr Sighle Breathnach-Lynch

Former curator of the National Gallery

Text of talk given at All Hallows on 17 July 2010

This talk centres on a fascinating although relatively unknown topic, that of the art commissioned for All Hallows College in the first half of the 20th century (painting, sculpture and stained glass). In considering these works I'd like to put them into the context of church patronage in general in Ireland with a view to evaluating the quality of the College collection.

All Hallows College was one of Ireland's first missionary seminaries. It was founded in 1842 and first graduates ministered to emigrants who left Ireland during the Potato Famine of 1845-47. In 1892, it was put under the direction of the Vincentians. Up until the 1960s, All Hallows sent more than 4,000 ordained priests to every continent in the world. Today, the college is one of six linked colleges of Dublin City University.

Given the amount of art works now on view in the college it is worth noting an account of the opening day in 1842. Patrick Moran, later to become cardinal-archbishop of Sydney recalled:



On that ... day the first student entered; Mass was celebrated in borrowed vestments; the furniture of the house consisted of a three-legged table and two or three broken chairs; the mansion itself was in the first stage of ruin. Such were the beginnings of the college.

The fact that it went on to acquire some notable works is testament of the appreciation for fine art within the institution. This I learned from trawling through the *All Hallows Annuals*; lectures on art were given here during the period that I'm talking about and an arts and crafts society, as well as a drama and music society, was established for the students. However, one man, above all, is responsible for the quality



of much of the collection; Fr Tom O'Donnell who was the seventh president of the seminary.

He was very interested in the arts and keen to promote a high quality Irish religious art (incidentally, this is not mentioned in the obituary in the 1950-51 as if it was unimportant!) O'Donnell was well-connected, not only with artistic circles in Dublin but also mixed in political circles (he was a great friend of WT Cosgrave, first Taoiseach in the Free State.



The first work I want to talk about is the *Madonna and Child* in the grounds. This was commissioned to commemorate two distinguished past members, Monsignor Sylvester Barry and Dr Fortune. It was paid for from the bequest of the late John D'Arcy who had worked in All Hallows for fifty years. It consists of a half-length Madonna holding the Christ-child. She is wearing a simple, unadorned cloak which falls loosely over the plinth. Her long hair with its centre parting is brought behind her shoulders, recalling a veil. The Christ child is presented as a bonny healthy baby. One hand clutches the collar of his mother's cloak as if needing to feel her protective presence.

It was completed in 1922. The sculptor was a well known Dublin artist, Albert Power, of which more later.

Here is the statue being unveiled by Archbishop Byrne with Fr O'Donnell beside him. Above on the right is a photograph of the sculptor.

What is especially noteworthy about this memorial statue is that it is carved to the sculptor's own design (most likely in consultation with O'Donnell). Because of that, it is quite unlike the usual representations Madonna and child to be found all over the country at that time. Most were painted plaster statues, loosely based on the great images of earlier Italian artists especially the work of Michelangelo or Raphael, both Renaissance artists of the highest artistic calibre. Many of these statues were ordered from catalogues. The catalogues advertised French, Italian and German manufactures of mass-produced religious objects. In spite of the fact that they had to be imported they tended to be much cheaper than statues made in Ireland. Equally there were Irish and Italian firms, mainly based in Dublin, who produced statues as well as altars, baptismal fonts, rails, stations of the cross etc., for the many new churches being built throughout the country since the end of the nineteenth century.





But, again, these works almost always conformed to the style of work in the catalogues. While some were of low quality, others were of quite fine artistic quality; a good example is the sculpted Madonna and Child on the side wall of the chapel here. It is a convincing three dimensional figure which is well carved; it has a sense of real presence unlike the more vapid painted statue we looked at



earlier. There were, finally, works commissioned from an individual artist. Yet usually the patron was happy that this work would be in the conventional Renaissance model. Innovation was not often expected. This can be explained by that fact that in a relatively poor country where art education was almost non-existent, seeking out religious art of the highest artistic quality was not top of the agenda. Most patrons were satisfied with catalogue or off-the-shelf goods. They were also far cheaper than commissioning an individual artist to do work. But in All Hallows thanks to Fr O'Donnell's personal interest in art a hugely innovative statue of Madonna and Child was carved and when it was unveiled it was admired and appreciated.



Let us look at the statue more closely; its most unusual feature is that the Madonna is wearing a Munster cloak. There was a tradition in this part of the country of presenting young women on their marriage with such cloaks. The wearing of these cloaks distinguished the married women from the unmarried and, in doing so, provided them with a distinctive visual status. But the sculptor has added the head of an angel in order to distinguish the Madonna from 'ordinary' Irish mothers.

A second interesting aspect of the work is the choice of stone. The usual choice of stone was an Italian marble from Carrara; a



soft milky white stone from which was quite easy to carve a figure. This statue is carved instead from an Irish limestone from Durrow which incidentally would have been more expensive to get in spite of its being Irish. The choice of location for the stone, Durrow, was deliberate on the part of the artist. It had associations with early Irish Christian art and he wanted his Madonna to directly relate back to this important period in Ireland's religious past.

Thirdly the sculptor used his wife and one of his sons as the models for the group. They were Irish born and bred, so for him represented the quintessential Irish mother and son. This is a *real* mother and her baby.



The gaelicizing of the group was stressed by Fr O'Donnell at the unveiling. He commented, 'As our mothers and sisters have always loved Mary, it was appropriate to represent her as a daughter of Erin, clad in the mantle of the country and bending over her child with Ireland's maternal affection'. These sentiments reveal much about the aspirations of the new state in terms of establishing its own distinctive identity. Ireland was keen to promote itself as a very different nation from its erstwhile ruler, Great Britain. It was perceived as being industrialized, English speaking and Protestant. Not surprisingly the 'new' Ireland promoted

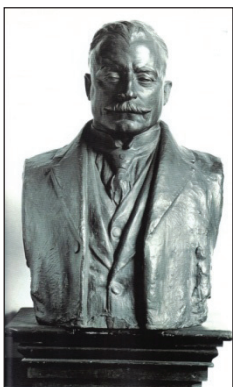
itself (both at home and abroad) as rural, Irish speaking and above all Catholic. Much emphasis was placed on the spiritual nature of Irish society especially on women. They were encouraged to see Mary as their only role model and follow her example in being mothers and homemakers rather than engage in the public affairs of the country. To this end her maternal virtues were actively promoted as also represented in this small virgin and child, in the All Hallows collection and by the same artist, Albert Power.

Albert Power (1881-1945)



He was born in 1881 in the Benburb Street area of Dublin city and showed early artistic promise. After he finished his primary education he was apprenticed to the well known firm of Edward Smyth who was a direct descendent of the 18th century sculptor responsible for many of the fine carvings on the Four Courts and Custom House.

While working in Smyth's he also attended the Dublin Metropolitan School of Art, then in Kildare Street, first as an evening student. Proving

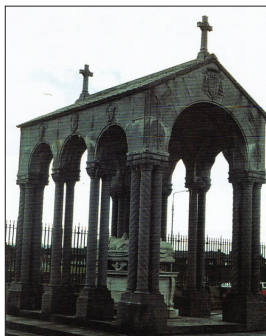


to be a very gifted student he abandoned the day job in 1906 and became a full time student until 1911. During his years at the School he won an impressive number of prizes and medals for modelling and carving.

From 1911 onward Power gained a reputation as a fine portraitist. Many of these were exhibited at the annual Royal Hibernian Academy exhibitions in Dublin and attracted critical acclaim. Among those were literary figures of the calibre of WB

Yeats (see image), *James Stephens* and *Lord Dunsany* and an important early patron was Oliver St John Gogarty.

From 1920, initially thanks to St. John Gogarty, he became the favourite portraitist for both Free State governments. *Arthur Griffith* and *Michael Collins* were commissioned from the Cumann na nGaedhael government and during the Fianna Fáil period a bust of *Austin Stack* was commissioned and medallions of Stack and *Cathal Brugha* joined those of Griffith and Collins in the Taoiseach's office. Already by 1922 when the Hallows 'Madonna and Child' was being carved, Albert Power was not only a successful portraitist but also called on to execute numerous religious commissions.



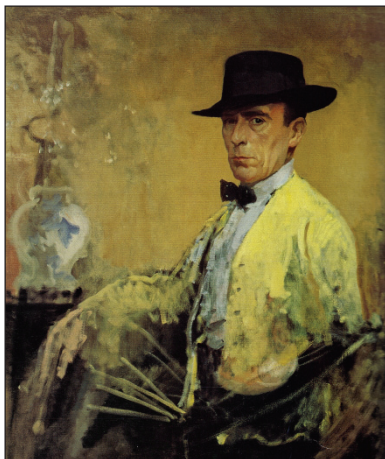
The proximity of Glasnevin cemetery to his studio and yard in Geraldine Street (and from 1930 at Berkely Road) meant a steady flow of commissions for tombstones while the increase in the building of new Roman Catholic churches ensured a continuous supply of religious furnishings; everything from statues to altars, baptismal fonts and altar railings. Power for instance was responsible for the tomb to Archbishop Walsh in Glasnevin.

Interestingly the likeness of the late Archbishop relied on a death mask taken by Power when Walsh died in April 1921 (to be found in Maynooth College). This was at the

instigation of Fr O'Donnell. It is no surprise then to find that after the priest's death a delightful tombstone was sculpted by Power which is in the graveyard here. In comparison to the other headstones it is a most unusual headstone for an illustrious president of an important missionary college. In the *All Hallows Annual* for 1957-8 a Fr Thomas Leen of Sydney mentions it as a 'delightfully chosen headstone informed with that all-prevailing characteristic of his [Fr O'Donnell's] youthful fire and buoyancy and unblemished innocence'.

Leo Whelan

Another important Irish artist involved in commissions for All Hallows from Fr O'Donnell was the painter, Leo Whelan, a contemporary and friend of Power. Like the sculptor, Whelan was born in Dublin just eleven years later in 1892. And, like Power, he too showed artistic talent from a young age and seemed destined for a career as an artist. In 1907 he became a day student at the DMSA and that is where he met Albert Power who became a friend of the painter. Whelan remained there until July 1911. After that he attended as an evening student



until 1915. In 1912 he rented his first studio in Dawson Street. That incidentally was the year that Power set up his carving business. While at the School of Art he won many awards including the prestigious Taylor Art competition which was run and still is today by the Royal Dublin Society.

Like his friend Power, Leo Whelan benefited greatly from the life drawing classes run by William Orpen whose self portrait attests to his prowess as portraitist. Orpen expected complete aptitude, ability and proficiency and encouraged his best students while studiously ignoring the weaker ones! As a result of a sound academic education especially in life drawing, Whelan emerged as one of the most successful and prominent portrait painters from the 1920s onward. As it was customary in Dublin from the 1920s to the 1950s for middle-aged businessmen, academics, politicians, medical and leading churchmen to have their portraits recorded from posterity, Whelan was constantly in demand. By the late 1940s he was charging between 200 and 300 guineas for

individual portraits; an indication of his reputation as these sums were high in this period.



During Fr O'Donnell's tenure at All Hallows, Whelan completed twelve paintings of distinguished people associated with the college, including O'Donnell himself. Indeed, the priest and the artist became firm friends. By 1913, Fr O'Donnell thought it prudent to record

the history of the College with portraits of some of the great men who had originally trained as seminarians at All Hallows and who had subsequently gone abroad as missionaries. The idea behind the commissions was that seminarians would be imbued with a sense of pride and achievement as they looked upon the various portraits of these eminent men which would hang around the walls of Woodlock Hall. Among the portraits are those of the founder Fr Hand; William Fortune, former President; James Moore CM; Joseph Sheehy CM, Professor of the College; as well as seven prominent alumni, namely: Bishops



of Armidale, Australia; Thomas Grace of Sacramento; Richard Scannell of Omaha; Archbishops Patrick Clune of Perth; Edward Roche of St. John's, Newfoundland; Walsh of Dublin and Cardinal John Glennon of St Louis Missouri. All the portraits are characterized by a smooth application of paint which is very reminiscent of the style of William Orpen. The portraits convey not only a convincing physical likeness but also something of the strength of the men's personality. Each portrait is imbued with a sense of power and of leadership. In an interview in 1940, Leo Whelan explained that for him the essence of a good portrait lies in its likeness to the subject because practical experience has shown that a sitter will never come to life unless the



artists has caught those characteristics which delineate the mine. To talk of a good likeness suggests more than a copy of the outer shell. Similarly, a painting which accentuates a certain feature of a man, an emphasis of one of his many facial expressions, will not be a portrait, it will be a caricature.



He also stressed that there needed to be a rapport between the sitter and the painter. 'It is almost impossible for the painter to succeed if he is out of sympathy with the person he attempts to paint'. When the All Hallow commissions are placed side by side it is obvious that the portrait of Fr O'Donnell shows a huge bond of affection between the two men. The priest is so life like he seems to reach out to the spectator. He exudes warmth and kindness and the spectator is made to feel that he was a person of great wisdom and counsel.

Yet this portrait was done after the death of his friend. It is much easier for an artist to produce a convincing portrait of a living person. Whelan must have used photographs as a guide. It is testimony to Whelan that he achieved such a persuasive representation in paint on a flat surface. At the bottom of the painting is inscribed 'In memory of my dear friend Fr O'Donnell from Leo Whelan'. One 'old boy' writing in the *Annual* for 1953-4 described the portrait of being 'so characteristic of him, the smiling eyes, so penetrating yet so kindly. You would almost think he had just welcomed you back and wants to see how the years have been treating you...'

A highly unusual portrait of O'Donnell also in the All Hallows collection is the portrait of him by Leo Whelan's sister, Lilian. Both she and his other sister, Frances, made and sold dolls, modeled down to the finest detail in figure and dressed in hand made clothes. Even O'Donnell's stiff leg (arthritis) is not left out of the depiction! This model along with a number of others including Sean T O'Kelly, Eamonn de Valera, Bernard Shaw, Jack B Yeats and Winston Churchill were exhibited at the United Arts Club in 1958.



Of the formal portraits, his desire to go beyond painted likeness and suggest something of the internal character of the sitter is especially evident in the portrait of Archbishop Walsh (above, with John Hand's portrait). Geraldine Molloy in her most informative thesis on the artist (a copy of which is in the All Hallows Library) suggests that Whelan was unhappy with the portrait which is treated in a very realistic way. He is treated as a down-to-earth type of person with a sharp intelligence and alertness. In fact it is these qualities that make it so memorable a portrait.



John Lavery

Another important Irish painter associated with All Hallows is Sir John Lavery (1856–1941). Lavery, along with Orpen, is regarded as perhaps the finest portraitist of the 20th century. Born in Belfast, he trained initially in Glasgow and London and spent time in France studying



at the Academie Julien in Paris (where a number of other Irish artists trained). It was in France he met his future wife, Hazel Martin, whose face is so familiar to everyone in Ireland over fifty!

Although based in London he and wife were sufficiently interested in their Irish roots to maintain links with Ireland. The rebellion in 1916 inspired Hazel Lavery to suggest to her husband that he become a visual recorder of contemporary political events. This resulted in him painting portraits of the main players on both sides of the political divide in the period covering the War of Independence, the Treaty negotiations and the Civil War.

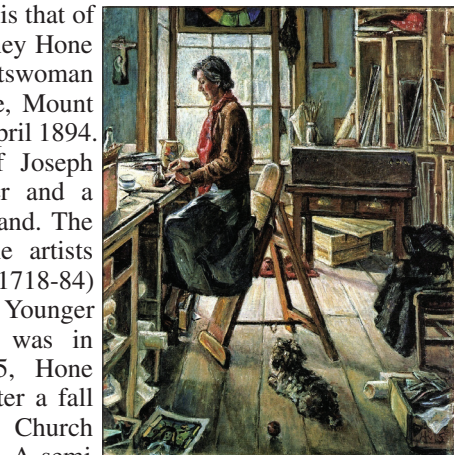
The splendid portrait in the college (of Cardinal Healy of New York) is striking for three reasons. One is the placement of the figure; the sitter faces the viewer directly so he/she is immediately conscious of the magnificent robes and the cross; themselves highly symbolic of his powerful status within the Roman Catholic Church. Next, the eye is drawn to the face (specially the glittering eyes) and the hands that reinforce the personal forcefulness of the man. Last but not least, the portrait is rich in colour and texture.



Evie Hone

The final great artistic name is that of Evie Hone. Eva (Evie) Sydney Hone (1894-1955), artist and craftswoman was born at Roebuck Grove, Mount Merrion, Dublin on the 22 April 1894. Hone was the daughter of Joseph Hone, a successful distiller and a director of the Bank of Ireland. The family lineage included the artists Nathaniel Hone the Elder (1718-84) and Nathaniel Hone the Younger (1831-1917) whose estate was in nearby Malahide. In 1905, Hone suffered partial paralysis after a fall while decorating her local Church of Ireland church for Easter. A semi-invalid for the rest of her life, her childhood was one of prolonged medical treatment and of visits to England, France, and Italy with her governess. In 1911 she was deeply impressed by a visit to Assisi, which fostered her profound interest in Art and the Christian faith.

Hone was determined to become an artist. She trained in London at the Westminster School of Art and in 1920 she travelled to Paris, where she joined her lifelong friend, Mainie Jellett, as a pupil of the radical cubist artist Albert Gleizes, working with him intermittently until 1931. He was absorbed in purely abstract painting and mural decoration. He was a cubist and an ardent evangelist, organising its first exhibiting centre and writing the first treatises on this kind of modern art.



In 1924, Hone and Jellett held a joint exhibition at the Dublin Painters' Gallery. Their paintings were almost indistinguishable from each other. The works were described by critics as 'Cubist' and 'in the modern manner', and there can be no doubt that Hone and Jellett were the pioneers of abstract painting in Ireland. They revolutionised the thinking about art. In November 1925, Hone had been considering religious life and entered an Anglican convent in Truro, Cornwall. Although the nuns of this convent were sympathetic to Hone's talent, they



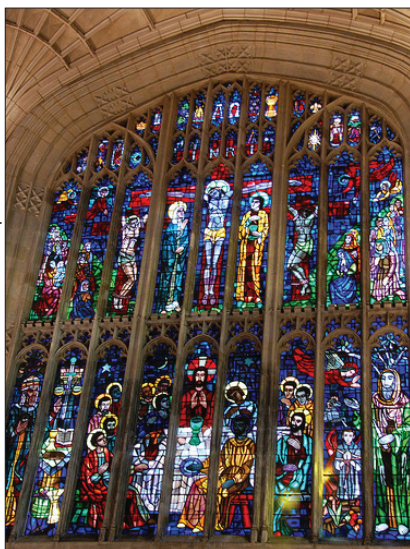
regarded it as a distraction and prohibited her from painting until she became a “sister if she does become one”. Hone remained in Truro for about a year, and decided to leave the convent and resume painting. She had further exhibitions in Paris in 1925, in London during 1926-7 and in a solo exhibition in Dublin in 1929.

At the beginning of the 1930s Hone became interested in stained glass. A stained glass art movement in Ireland had been inaugurated at the turn of

the century by the painter Sarah Purser and by the writer and patron of the arts, Edward Martyn (who founded the Palestrina choir). The work produced in the first half of the 20th century from the co-operative *An Túr Gloine* as well as individual artists such as Harry Clarke and Evie Hone resulted in Irish stained glass becoming widely known and appreciated throughout Europe.

In 1933 she joined ‘An Túr Gloine’, run by Sarah Purser. It was Hone who introduced a new, expressionist intensity into stained glass painting.

Evie Hone was influenced by the strong colours of the windows in Chartres Cathedral as can be seen in her Eton College window (see image) But she was also deeply influenced by the paintings of a French contemporary artist, George Rouault. In his early career he had been a stained glass artist and that remained an influence in the manner in which he painted afterwards. From 1917, he dedicated his life to painting and a deep religious faith informed his work as it was to do for Evie Hone. He was a friend of the philosopher Jacques Maritain and was excited by his existentialism. Rouault’s highly expressionistic religious art perfectly reflects the fervour of his religious beliefs. It is a million miles away from the realistic religious art of the Renaissance which still held sway throughout Europe and especially in Ireland where modern styles like Rouault’s were treated with suspicion and as we shall see, on occasions with open



hostility. It was much easier to relate to the more illustrative realism of the Renaissance.

Other influences on Hone were the medieval Irish carvings and the pre-Renaissance Italian primitives, as well as the glass of her French contemporaries, which she saw on regular visits to the Continent. In 1937 Hone converted to Catholicism and was accepted into the Roman Catholic Church by her friend and mentor, John Charles McQuaid, who was the Archbishop of Dublin. Her work became more religious in character.

In 1938 she was commissioned by the Department of Industry and Commerce in Dublin to design a window for the Irish Pavilion at the New York World's Fair of 1939. The result was a large upright rectangular window on the theme of the four provinces of Ireland, *My Four Green Fields*, which was a great success.

From 1944 all her windows were produced in a studio beside her residence, the Dower House, Marlay Grange, Rathfarnham, Co Dublin.

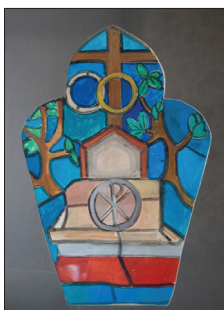
It was Hone's design for the east window of Eton College Chapel that brought her international recognition and ranked her among the best stained glass artist of her time. She also completed windows for Farm Street Jesuit Church, London and the new national Cathedral of Washington D.C. which was built in the Gothic style.



The All Hallows' Rose Window in All Hallows dates from 1954, the year before her death. She died while attending mass in her parish church on 13 March 1955 and was buried at St Maelrun's Church, Rathfarnham, on 15 March. Today her work is on display in Churches and museums in Ireland, England and America.

Soon after the war, All Hallows received a sum of money towards the erection of a stained glass window in the chapel (money left by Rev David Shanahan DD who died in 1944 a priest of Diocese of Pittsburg, PA; he was a relative of Fr John Shanahan CM). The Doctrine of the Assumption of the Virgin was defined on November 1st 1950 by Pope Pius XII. Before the end of that Holy Year, Evie Hone was approached to know if she would fill the Rose window. She was unable to start the work for some time as she had other commitments and was in ill health. But the window was finished and put in position for Eastertide, 1954.

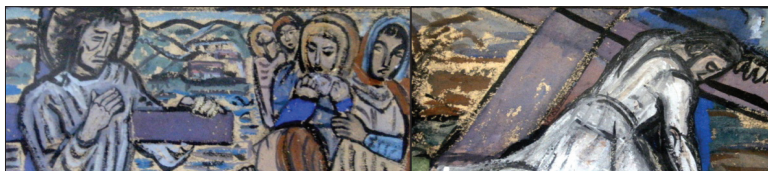
The window honours the Blessed Virgin in the crowning mystery



of her Assumption. In the centre piece she is seen being assumed into heaven. Around the figure are two concentric circles of symbols. The outer circle contains familiar symbols of the Virgin, drawn principally from the Old Testament; the inner circle contains



symbols of the seven sacraments and some pre-figurations such as the sacrifice of Abraham. The general idea behind the design was to show the Blessed Virgin in relation to the work of the Redemption of mankind and in particular in relation to the Priesthood of her own Son.



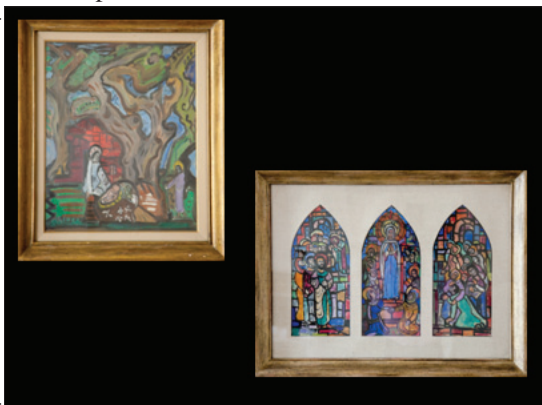
The figure of the Virgin and all the symbols stand out against a general background of blue. Blue is the colour of the heavens and also directly associated with her garments. Her gesture is that of a queen; of someone in command. It is reminiscent of the conductor of a great orchestra. As the newly ordained priests proceeded out of the Chapel each year, they walked towards this window: a reminder that their lives as priests was under the patronage of Virgin.



Hone had already completed three other windows when she went to work on the designs for All Hallows. Here she had certain advantages. The chapel is long and tall, the organ hardly obscures the light. The Assumption implies that upward sweep which banishes all thought of earthly settings. Here the rising figure of the Assumption is shown thus in contrast to a rich claret. The rhythm of tone and form made by the series of trefoils and barrel lights in reds and golds in greens and yellows is a satisfying counterpart for the symbols.

Hone produced over 150 small stained-glass panels and a number of oils and watercolours. A small number of the watercolours are here in the College. But there are a number of other works on paper, not connected with the window. They include drawings for the stations of the Cross series. Two are very probably from the same series, the third one *Christ before Pilate* from a separate commission.

What is particularly noticeable about them is the use of a very strong outline and the lack of academic realism, reminiscent of the art of Georges Rouault. But then both artists shared a deep religious faith which resulted in this very direct, personal interpretation of religious themes.



If Hone's Stations are compared with more traditional art types of Stations of the Cross, you can see instantly how different they are in style and interpretation. The traditional Renaissance compositional form favoured 3-D figures in the round and set in a convincing perspectival space. Many realistic details are included in this Station, down to the grouting between the stones on the wall, the buildings in the background etc., In this way, the viewer is made to feel that they are looking at and participating in 'theatre'.

In the decades that I'm concentrating on, both Irish patrons of religious art and the faithful were more comfortable with the familiar illustrative image and many found the response of Rouault in particular to be 'offensive' or 'crude'. Thus when a painting of *Christ and the Soldier* by the French artist was presented to the Hugh Lane Gallery of Modern Art, the artistic committee who made the decisions as to what would be added to the existing collection, turned it down. What is interesting is that artists of the calibre of Albert Power and Sean Keating believed that the work was an unsuitable religious art image. But then while they produced innovative work it was in no way in a modern art style; unlike the art of Hone and Jellett, for instance. Ironically, the Rouault painting ended up in Maynooth College and only many years later did it come into the Gallery's collection.

It is worth noting that nowadays 'Irish' eyes have become far more accustomed to expressive works of art as evidenced by this powerful image of famine in the College's collection. This expressionist image would not have met much favour in the 40s at the time of the Rouault controversy. It would have been considered too crude a representation.

These two works are also by Evie Hone; *Rest on the flight into Egypt* and a tripartite sketch of the Annunciation.

St Patrick

The last work I want to consider is the statue of St Patrick in the grounds. Although the statue dates back to the 19th century it is one of a huge number of representations of St Patrick, all alike, be it in paintings or sculpture, almost all of them depicting the saint in this way

It is strikingly different from a statue by Melanie le Brocqy which was modelled in the early 1940s. Not surprisingly it was not a commission for a church but rather made by the artist for display at the Royal Hibernian Academy annual exhibition of 1941. It depicts the saint overthrowing Crom Cruach. He was a deity of pre-Christian Ireland whose worship was banished by the saint.



When both images are compared I think you will agree that the Le Brocqy one is the more striking; thanks to her creating St Patrick with over sized hands and feet. The other statue is quite effete in comparison. It supposedly shows the saint banishing the snakes from Ireland. But I think the figure looks more like someone who is pointing to the drains below as being the source of a bad smell!

It is hard to imagine that le Brocqy image would have received general approval in the 1940s from patrons of religious art. Why not? Because as I have already stated, the taste of patrons (priests, bishops, Reverend Mothers etc.) was, in the main, extremely orthodox. The ready-made statue was 'safe'. An artist who might veer from the artistic path was usually regarded as too dangerous to be entrusted with the making of objects connected with worship and church decoration.

In conclusion

The All Hallows collection as you can see is one of considerable merit, thanks to the enlightened Fr O'Donnell, a man genuinely interested in promoting high quality art and who was keen to commission the best artists of the day. That the college was itself interested in ensuring a cultural background for the seminarians also helped.



Gorta by Rev Donie Keohane

Beyond the face of St Vincent

Tom Lane CM

In my early Vincentian years, I was very interested in what St Vincent looked like. When the translation of Fr José María Román's biography of Vincent appeared, in 1999, my search took a new direction. Fr Román reminded us that Vincent never sat for a portrait. He retold the story of Simon François' long stay in St Lazare and of the two portraits that emerged as his watchful eye followed the movements of the aging but very active Vincent. From the two portraits, we have copies by four different engravers. Less certain is the origin of an unsigned seventeenth century miniature and a pencil sketch from the same time.

From all these sources, Fr Román, in the space of two succinct pages, gives us his own verbal portrait of the man whose story he is recounting. He describes the medium or maybe less than medium sized, stockily-built, Vincent. He draws our attention to the large head, the prominent, broad nose, the wide forehead, the big ears, the rather large mouth, the traces of a goatee beard. Interpreting what gave life and colour to these physical features, Fr Román finds a gaze that is gentle and penetrating and that is accompanied by a faint smile. All these details reveal the face of a man who combined strength and tenderness. Here was a face that was "attractive if not handsome". Indeed, to my knowledge, the only person who ever described Vincent as handsome was the eyewitness who looked right into his face as he moved out of this world, in the morning of September 27th, 1660.

From the day I knocked at the door of St Vincent's, Sunday's Well, and asked to be accepted by the Vincentians, I have seen several attempts to portray that face. The very first image of Vincent that met my eye was in the courtyard on the way into the priests' residence in Sunday's Well. In this long black robe and his surplice, I thought he looked rather formidable; but maybe I read my own darkish mood into him. He was lifting up the crucifix, like the kindly Fr Tommy Slaven, CM who directed our school retreat the previous September. I tiptoed past the statue and I nervously rang the doorbell. Within minutes, I was being interviewed by the stately Fr Bernard Maguire. At the end of the table was a large bust of a very kindly Vincent. In fact, he became more and more kindly as Fr Bernard strongly hinted that he would be giving me a favourable reference.

On the way out of the interview room, I saw another bust of Vincent holding close to himself not two but three orphans. The bust is now in 122 Sundays Well Road.

During my four years at St Joseph's, Blackrock, which began some months later, I was introduced to many more images of Vincent. There was a certain predictability about all the statues and paintings and even about the pictures in the biographies, with varying degrees of success, many of them were based on a selective use of the Simon François portraits. Others drew on the popular nineteenth century images of Vincent gently holding orphans close to himself. All these had become the "traditional" ways of portraying Vincent. This "tradition" consisted largely of being in accord with the norms of uniformity encouraged by Fr Etienne. I found traces of the same uniformity later on when I came to visit the *Maison Mère* and the *Casa Internazionale* in Rome. But I was intrigued by the originality of the brother who painted, for the *Maison Mère* dining room, lively figures of Vincent and Louise that tried to interpret what was going on in the hearts of the two saints. I was also intrigued and impressed by the robust canonisation figure in a prominent position in St Peter's, Rome. It doesn't tally well with Fr Román's description, but it does present a strong man preaching the gospel with power.

Learning to interpret

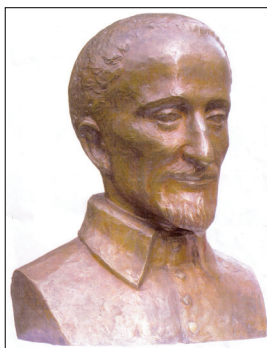


Image 1

I started my Vincentian life wondering what St Vincent looked like. After all the years, I now find myself asking what image helps me most to look beyond his face, right into his heart. I think the seeds of my later search were sown not very long before my ordination. I watched the very successful film *Monsieur Vincent*. In my naiveté I remember saving that surely he didn't look like that. I also remember checking some historical details in Pierre Coste and coming away convinced that the makers of the film took several liberties. As I revisited the film recently, I often found myself saying "what a wonderful interpretation of St Vincent". I thank God now that I had begun to move from the search for physical likeness to trying to listen to the saint's heartbeat. With that change of perspective, I looked again at St Vincent's large hands in the Clichy statue. I stopped asking did St Vincent have such big hands. It was a non-question. Now I see the hands as an entry to the saint's great heart. The imposing figure at Clichy reveals a man who was grateful for the countless gifts that God had put into his hands and who kept giving away all that he had received.

An Irish interpreter

In the Irish province, the man who, in imaging St Vincent, helped us most to move from physical likeness to interpretation, was Fr Donal Cregan. As a boy in Castleknock, he was one of thousands who touched the toes of the large, imposing statue on the stairs that went up to St Mary's dormitory. I often wondered how many of the thousands ever looked up as high as the very distinctive face. Recently I looked straight up and found a pair of sharp and searching eyes. I am told that they are eyes with an interesting history.



Image 2

When it came to the building of what is now called Cregan House, Donal was very original in his portraying of Vincent. It is far from the rather elderly Vincent given us by Simon François. Donal took his inspiration from the account of the young Vincent contributing to the education of the de Gondi children. There is no evidence that he ever looked for light in the accounts of the small school at Buzet in which Vincent did part-time teaching to help with his own educational expenses at Toulouse. The school seems to have lasted for some months. Vincent later moved the school to Toulouse itself. At that stage, there was no ideology of the poor in St Vincent's educational ideals. He was earning a living. The boys were no *scugnizzi*. The school was what we today would call fee-paying. The boys were well dressed and far removed from the world of poverty. Maybe some interpreter will one day provide us with a portrait of Vincent in that setting and help us recognise the touch of a gifted teacher.

At the time of the tercentenary of the death of Vincent and Louise, in 1960; Donal Cregan showed some more creativity. He went to Michael Serraz, a well known Paris sculptor, and commissioned two identical busts of Vincent, one for St Patrick's Drumcondra, and one for his friend and admirer, Archbishop John Charles McQuaid. Vincent is young and elegant, without any of the wear and tear that came with the years (image 1).

In the course of the same centenary year, the past students of All Hallows, at their annual reunion at Strawberry Hill, gave a generous cheque to the College, to be spent in the way most fitting to honour St Vincent. When Fr Tommy Fagan became president in 1961, he decided to follow Donal Cregan's example. I was privileged to accompany him to Paris and to visit, with him, the studio of Michael Serraz. Tommy was a great admirer of Donal Cregan's taste but he wanted a much older Vincent. In his basic but adequate French he kept repeating that he wanted something *plus traditionnel*. The result was the bust that now

adorns the front hall of Drumcondra House, All Hallows. It certainly is traditional in the sense that Michael Serraz drew heavily on the pictures inspired by the Simon François portraits. (image 2)

Two ways

The approach of Tommy Fagan and the approach of Donal Cregan are good examples of the representational approach and the interpretative approach. Both have their contributions to make. Michael Serraz listened carefully to both men, and, to my knowledge, he gave full satisfaction to both. Of the over four thousand images which we have of St Vincent, no one is entirely representational and no one is entirely interpretative. The service provided by CIF in Paris is beyond estimation in this regard. One of its many fruits is Fr John Rybolt's book *In the Footsteps of Vincent De Paul*. It is a treasure trove. In the course of its pages, I counted over thirty images of Vincent. In their great diversity, they give us many glimpses of his hands, his head, his face and, his heart. You never find yourself asking "did he really look like that?" We are treated to plaques, paintings, statues, a bust, a portrait, and the miniature of which Fr Román speaks. You might be surprised by what John Rybolt or his publisher chose for the different parts of the cover. The spine of the book provides a good copy of the miniature that may have come from Vincent's lifetime. As a front cover and as for a full page before the table of contents, there is a large picture of a benign Vincent holding two orphans in his arms. The picture is taken from the impressive statue of Vincent in the church of St Sulpice, Paris. The purists might say that it is unlikely that Vincent ever held orphans in his arms. But we are dealing with an artist's attempt to portray a man who distilled the essence of the biblical call to care for the widow and orphan.

Two men and a carriage

Over the years, I thanked God for every new image of Vincent. So far they haven't all been from the European perspective. I welcome the beginnings of attempts to portray him with the eyes and perspectives of other cultures. My favourite image of all I have seen so far is the panel painted in 1858 by Louis Brisset, in the church of St Nicolas des Champs, in Paris. The church was the parish church of the young Louise de Marillac. It was there she received the "light of Pentecost" in 1623. The painting by Brisset is of Vincent helping a beggar into his carriage. There is no attempt to make the figure of Vincent look like what he was in real life. I am sure Brisset wasn't interested in whether the event he was portraying really took place. Vincent is looking into the eyes and deep into the heart of the beggar. The beggar, in turn, is looking into the eyes of Vincent and somehow he sees more than a

human face. The Vincent we are looking at saw God's goodness in the face of a poor man, as much as he saw it in the face of St Francis de Sales in which he saw a special showing forth of God's compassion. This was a gift of God himself who alone sees beyond the face into the heart (cf 1 Sam. 16:1-16).

With the passing of the years, I have come to love Brisset's panel more and more. When I was stationed in Damascus House some years ago, I got a large copy of the panel and placed it in a prominent position near my room. For several days one year, a workman was doing some repairs in that part of the house. I soon learned that his knowledge of the Christian faith was almost nil. But, at least once every day, I found him looking with fascination at the Brisset panel. One day, I found the courage to ask him what intrigued him so much about the picture. "Each of these two chaps," he said, "brings tears to my eyes; I can't say which of them brings the most tears". I felt this was an opportunity for a little bit of catechesis. Avoiding most of my bookish words, I introduced the workman to my belief that we are all destined to see God face to face; that a saint is one who gets a glimpse of God's face in every human face; that the poor man in the picture was looking into the face of a man in love with God; that saints are convinced that even the poorest and most wretched are made in the image and likeness of God. This is what I tried to express to our dear workman. It brought no tears to his eyes. I am sure he has long forgotten all I tried to tell him. I am also confident that the memory of the picture has not faded from his heart. It has brought him nearer to the kingdom of heaven.

I find that the core of the good news is somehow in the Brisset picture. It puts us in touch with many faces. We are all called to be pure in heart in a way that will make us see God in time and in eternity. We won't tire of seeing the God whom nobody has ever seen. The good news is that Jesus, the only begotten Son of God who is close to the Father's heart has shown us the way into that heart (John 1:18). The glory of the Father has shone in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 4:6) who has gone to prepare a place for us (John 14:5). We get daily glimpses of our loving God but, at best, we see only in a mirror, dimly. The full seeing will come only when we see God face to face (1 Cor. 13:12) In the Brisset picture, the poor man looks into Vincent's face and recognises a man who is seeing beyond what meets the eye. He is somehow seeing God. Vincent looks into the poor man's face and sees somebody who is made in the image and likeness of God and eventually is destined to see God face to face. He takes very seriously the words of Jesus "You did it to me" (Matt 25:40). He is keenly aware of the poor man's call to be a living member of the Body of Christ and to be treated accordingly.

The Brisset panel has layers and layers of meaning. I find that it

provides endless material for praying, for preaching, and for all kinds of sharing. It alerts us to be the inseparable connections between the face of the poor man, the face of the saint, the face of Jesus Christ, the face of the heavenly Father. It puts us on a continual search. It is a loving invitation to keep discerning the body of the Lord. (cf I Cor.XI:29). It is a call to compassion. A colleague recently told me that the Brisset panel is the Vincentian version of Rembrandt's "Prodigal Son". Both pictures plumb the depths of the loving-kindness of God. They are a daily call to a new look at the face of Christ. Our greatest tragedy would be to miss that face. When I first saw the much-lauded tryptic in Graz, Vienna of St Vincent at table with several poor people, I was so intrigued by the variety of faces that I missed the great face of Christ that is the whole *raison d'être* of the tryptic.

In the persona of Christ

Since the Second Vatican Council, the most common description of ministerial priesthood is the call to live in the person of Christ, or, more fully, "in the person of Christ the head". The expression goes back to St Paul. His decision to reconcile or not to reconcile was made in the persona of Christ (2 Cor. 2:10). Paul was not talking about an abstract notion of person but rather about the face. For him, the person is the face. He made a crucial decision before the face of Christ. Ordination is a call to live before the face of Christ, to recognise the face of Christ, in every member of the body of Christ and of those related to it, and to be the face of Christ. The "person" of Christ, the presence of Christ, and the face of Christ are all the same. When we think of being the face of Christ, we tend to confine ourselves to the face of compassion. This is understandable since Jesus expresses in human form the compassion of God who has offered us a covenant of compassion, again and again. But there is a sense in, which, in the gospels, Jesus showed many faces, or rather many looks from the same face. His is the face that looked up to heaven as he began the great prayer for his disciples (John 17:1); the face and look inviting to discipleship (Mark 10:21, Luke 19:5), the face and look that touched the heart of Peter and made him weep bitter tears (Luke 22:61). Our priestly work is to recognise and to be all these and other looks from the face of Jesus, and to keep praying "your face. O Lord is what I seek, do not hide your face." (Ps 22:8,9)

The face of Christ which gives me most consolation in these days of diminishing numbers, of depressing scandals, of abuse, is the one portrayed by Mathis Grunewald, who flourished in the early sixteenth century. He painted it for patients in a hospital in Isenheim. The hospital specialised in caring for people suffering from the leprosy which has significantly been described as the scourge of the Middle Ages. Christ

is depicted as himself suffering from the same disease. His skin is covered with green boils. He is clearly taking on himself the ailments of the patients. It is a realistic and startling portrayal of the words of the prophet: "He has carried our diseases" (Is. 53:4). The painting is one panel of an altarpiece. On a side panel of the same altarpiece, the resurrection of the Lord is portrayed in light more dazzling than the sun. His wounds are glorified. The distortions of his body are healed and transformed. The panels and their story have a place of honour in Sister Wendy's *Thousand Masterpieces*. Looking prayerfully at the panels helps me to take into the depths of my heart the words of St Paul: "He made him to be sin who knows no sin" (2 Cor. 5:21). In the recent humiliation of priesthood, priests are being called to become sin. At ordination, they are authorised to make sacramentally present the once-for all sacrifice of Christ. In the strength of that sacrifice, they keep preaching the saving word, celebrating the sacraments, and being good shepherds. The sacrifice of Christ made continually present, keeps taking away the sin of the world. Each eucharistic celebration is for the whole priestly people. It is an urgent call to all men and women who are washed clean in the waters of Baptism to evangelise and to be evangelised.

Contemplating the face of Christ

In his final year, Pope John Paul II talked and wrote a lot about the face of Christ. In his great letter introducing the new millennium, he presented the contemplation of the face of Christ as a programme for all believers for the whole of the millennium. Since that August day in 1945, every image of Vincent has in some way helped me to get a glimpse of and to contemplate the face of Christ. The panel in St Louise's parish church keeps inviting me to contemplate the face of God whom nobody has ever seen (John 1: 18).

The veil covering God's face has been removed

- by the face of Jesus Christ in which shone the glory of God;
- by the face of St Vincent, for whom the face of Christ was made visible in the face of the poor;
- by the face of everybody made in the image and likeness of God.

In seeing beyond the removed veil, we have a programme for a whole millennium.

How St Vincent Ferrer influenced St Vincent de Paul

Pat Collins CM

When I was reading about the life and works of Vincent Ferrer, whom I admire enormously, I was surprised to find that some of his biographers mentioned that he had a significant influence on St Vincent de Paul. For instance, in his book, *St Vincent Ferrer: The Angel of the Judgment*, Andrew Pradel OP claimed that the Spanish saint influenced “blessed Nicholas Factor, a Franciscan and the great St Vincent de Paul... St Vincent acknowledged St Vincent Ferrer as his own special patron. He made his life a daily study and had constantly in his hands the *Treatise on the Spiritual Life* (hereafter *TOSL*), in order that he might conform thereto not only his own heart and actions, but also those of the priests of his institute. (1) Pradel says that a biographer named Antonio Teoli OP who wrote a major biography of Vincent Ferrer which was published in Rome in 1735, had mentioned that the Spanish saint had quite an influence on St Vincent de Paul.(2)

When I read these claims I wondered if any of them had foundation. (3) Coste says that on one occasion Canon Richard Dognon of Verdun wrote to St Vincent de Paul and said, “For the good of our century, God has passed on to you by a sort of reincarnation, which he alone can bring about, the spirit, affections, and design, together with the name of the great Patron of missionaries, Saint Vincent Ferrer. The apostolic missions he instituted in his time are manifestly more necessary than they ever were before.”(4) These quotations raise two questions. Firstly, to what extent was Vincent de Paul influenced by the life and teachings of Vincent Ferrer? Secondly, did Vincent de Paul refer to Vincent Ferrer in his talks and writings?

It is probable that Vincent had read one or more biographies of Vincent Ferrer. We know that shortly after Ferrer’s death, the bishop of Lucera, Peter Ranzano wrote the first official account of the Dominican’s remarkable life (1455). It was followed by other biographies, such as one which was written in French, by Dominican Bernard Guyard (1634). It is quite possible that Vincent de Paul read this book. That said, it is unlikely that he had access to any of Vincent Ferrer’s sermons. (5) However, we are sure that he did read and re-read the *TOSL*. While we know that people such as Pierre Bérulle, Francis de Sales and Benet of Canfield influenced Vincent’s spirituality, the fact that Vincent Ferrer also influenced him is often overlooked.

Vincent de Paul used to refer to his namesake and quote his words, both in his letters and in the talks he gave to the Daughters of Charity and to the members of the Congregation of the Mission. There are no less than nine such quotations referred to in the general index of the French edition of the *Correspondance, Entretiens, Documents* (hereafter *CED*), edited by Pierre Coste. (6) For example, Vincent de Paul wrote to Fr Bernard Codoing about a business transaction which would require a knowledge of languages. He said, "God will give you the grace, if he wishes, to make yourself understood by foreigners, just as he gave it to Vincent Ferrer." (7) In a conference Vincent gave to the priests of the Mission in May 1658, he spoke about the importance of deferring to the opinions of others in all things that are not sinful. (8) He then referred to the following words in the *Treatise on the Spiritual Life*, "it is more advantageous to rule oneself by the will of another, provided it be good, although our own judgment may appear better and more perfect." (9) In the course of a talk to his priests about seminaries, Vincent said, "If St Vincent Ferrer strove for sanctification so that God would one day raise up good priests and apostolic workers for the reform of the ecclesiastical state and for readying men for working for our perfection to cooperate in such a happy restoration when we see the ecclesiastical state now returning to what it should be." (10) On another occasion Vincent said, "Let us work with a new love in the service of the poor, looking for the most destitute and abandoned among them. Let us recognize that before God they are our lords and masters, and we are unworthy to render them our small services." (11) The striking phrase, "our lords and masters" seemed to have been borrowed from Vincent Ferrer who wrote, "we should have a humble and sincere regard for our brethren, and cheerfully submit to them as our lords and masters." (12)

There is no doubt that St Vincent Ferrer was a remarkably effective evangelical preacher. He described his understanding of this ministry in a chapter entitled, "On Preaching." In it he advised, "Use simple and familiar words in preaching and exhortation. To explain in detail what you mean; and so far as possible, illustrate what you say with some examples, in order that the sinner, finding his conscience guilty of the same sins which you reprehend, may feel as if you were speaking only to him. Do this, however in such a way, that your words, so to speak, may appear to come from the heart, without being mixed with any movement of indignation or pride, and to spring from the bowels of compassion, from the tender love of a father, who is grieved at the faults of his children." (13) When one reads the sermons of Vincent Ferrer it is clear that he put these principles into practice. Furthermore, a number of points will probably strike anyone who reads the *TOSL*. Firstly, it contains virtually no quotations, either scriptural, patristic or contem-

porary. Secondly, the style is very simple and clear, and tends to speak briefly about the nature of the topic under consideration, e.g. Christian perfection, while going on to mention motives and means of practicing it. (14)

Authors such as Abbé Arnaud d'Angel, (15) Jacques Delarue, (16) and José Maria Román (17) include interesting sections on Vincent de Paul's views on preaching. They show how implicit in the various things Vincent de Paul said about the subject over the years, was the "little method," which he said was the method of Jesus Christ himself. He exclaimed on one occasion, "Hurrah for simplicity, and for the "little method" which is in fact, the most excellent method and one that brings more glory because it moves hearts more than all this speechifying which only irritates the listener." (18) The method consists of three interrelated parts which need to be varied depending of the subject under consideration such as a virtue, the life of a saint, a parable etc. Firstly, it deals with the nature of the subject under discussion, e.g. salvation. Secondly, the preacher suggests motives for acting, e.g., why a person should desire to experience salvation, e.g. sorrow for offending the Lord, and fear of losing heaven. Thirdly, the preacher deals with the means of doing something practical and specific, e.g. trusting in the free, unmerited gift of God's mercy, and making a good general confession.

Anyone who reads Vincent Ferrer's *Treatise on the Spiritual Life* will notice that the little method comprising of nature, motives, and means, was implicit in the way he wrote. Furthermore, many things Vincent de Paul said about preaching seem to echo points that Vincent Ferrer had already made. We can look at a few examples. Firstly, as has already been noted, Vincent Ferrer did not quote secular authors. For his part, Vincent de Paul admonished preachers who tried "to cause wonderment by filling their sermons with a great variety of things such as extracts from philosophy, mathematics, medicine, jurisprudence, quotations from Jewish Rabbis, Greek, Hebrew, Syriac, and Chaldaic words... in a vain display of knowledge." (19) On one occasion, Vincent de Paul said, "Do not use quotations from the profane authors, unless you use them as steppingstones to the Holy Scripture." (20) Secondly, Vincent Ferrer warned preachers not to speak in a spirit of pride. Vincent de Paul repeatedly warned against the same danger, "we must remain faithful," he said, "to the simplicity and humility of our Saviour, Jesus Christ. He could have done startling things and spoken momentous words, but he did not do so." (21) Thirdly, Vincent Ferrer said that preaching aimed to help sinners to become aware of their sins in a way that would lead to repentance. Vincent de Paul said, "Let us never desire to satisfy ourselves, but to satisfy God, to win souls, and to lead people to repentance, because all else is nothing but vanity and pride." (22) Fourthly, Vincent Ferrer

stressed the importance of preaching the truth in a spirit of compassion like a loving father or mother. Vincent de Paul quoted his patron when he said, "St. Vincent Ferrer says that there is no means of profiting by preaching if one does not preach from the depths of compassion." (23) Fifthly, Vincent Ferrer recommended preachers to illustrate what they meant by everyday examples. Vincent de Paul said something similar, "Notice how Jesus spoke in an understandable language, using the simple comparisons of a farmer, a field, a vine, a grain of mustard seed. This is how you must speak if you want to be understood by the people to whom you announce the word of God." (24)

While the two Vincents were remarkable evangelists, each in their own distinctive way, there were obvious differences between them. Vincent Ferrer was an eschatological prophet, who focused on the presence of the antichrist and the immanence of the end times and general judgment. Vincent de Paul did not focus on any of these topics. Vincent Ferrer was a remarkable wonder worker, whereas there is very little evidence that Vincent de Paul healed the sick or delivered them from evil spirits. Nevertheless, like Vincent Ferrer, Vincent and his missionaries could be remarkably effective. Here is one example. In 1641 the Duchess d'Aiguillon repeatedly appealed to Vincent to evangelise the faubourg Saint Germain des Près in Paris. It was a very deprived, run down, crime ridden area. As a result of their grace filled efforts, Abelly tells us that, "those who worked on this mission were astonished seeing the disproportion between the means used and the result attained. Besides the large crowds at their sermons and catechism instructions which they presented in the simple and familiar style suggested by Monsieur Vincent, they were filled with admiration at their results. They saw inveterate sinners, hardened usurers, fallen women, criminals who had spent their entire lives in crime, in a word, people without faith in God or anyone, throw themselves at their feet, their eyes bathed in tears, their hearts moved with sorrow for sins, begging mercy and forgiveness." (25)

The findings of this article are intended to be indicative rather than conclusive. The subject of Vincent Ferrer's influence on St Vincent de Paul's spirituality deserves a more rigorous treatment from a methodological and textual point of view. Even so, it is my belief that, taken together, the example of the two Vincents teaches us at least three relevant lessons at this time of crisis in Church and State in Ireland. Firstly, our multiple problems, which are often the result of sinful forgetfulness of God, are a providential call to seek the Lord while he may still be found (cf. Is 55:6). Secondly, while Christians are right to stress the primacy of the loving mercy of God, they also need to refer, not only to the divine justice which will be exercised on the last day, but also to the possibility of eternal separation from God. Thirdly, when we share

the Gospel in different ways, we can expect God to manifest his saving power and presence by means of charitable works, action for justice (the characteristic way of Vincent de Paul) and charismatic deeds of power (the characteristic way of Vincent Ferrer) . In this way we will help to usher in the renewal spoken about by Benedict XVI when he wrote in his *Pastoral Letter to the Catholics of Ireland*, “Holy Spirit, comforter, advocate and guide, inspire a new springtime of holiness and apostolic zeal for the Church in Ireland.”

NOTES

- 1 (Rockford, IL: Tan, 2000), 185-6.
- 2 *Storia Della Vita, e del Culto di s Vincenzo Ferrerio* (Rome: 1735).
- 3 Pierre Coste, *The Life and Works of S. Vincent de Paul*, vol 3 (New York: New City Press, 1987), 305.
- 4 Vincent de Paul, *Correspondence, Conferences, Documents*, vol 1, (New York: New City Press, 1985), 152.
- 5 Some of them are available at <http://www.svfparish.org/svfsermons/index.htm>
- 6 Vol XIV, (Paris: Lecoffre, 1925), 636.
- 7 *Correspondence, Conferences, Documents*, vol 2, op cit, 232.
- 8 *CED*, X, 482.
- 9 *TOSL*, op cit, 3.
- 10 *CED*, XI, 7-8, & quoted by Abelly, vol 2, op cit, 254.
- 11 *CED*, XI, 393.
- 12 *TOSL*, op cit, 38.
- 13 *TOSL*, op cit, 24.
- 14 Cf *TOSL*, op cit, 30-2; 40-1.
- 15 *Saint Vincent: A Guide for Priests* (London: Burns Oates, 1932), 106-33.
- 16 *The Missionary Ideal of the Priest According to Vincent de Paul* (Philadelphia: Vincentians, 1993), 121-8.
- 17 *St Vincent de Paul: A Biography*, op. cit., 348-51.
- 18 *CED* XI, 286.
- 19 Quoted by Delarue, op cit, 123.
- 20 *CED* XI, 50, & quoted in Abelly, vol 2, op cit, 19.
- 21 *CED* XII, 211-27, & quoted by Abelly, vol 2, op cit, 86.
- 22 Delarue, op cit, 127.
- 23 *Correspondence, Conferences, Documents*, vol 1, op cit, 526.
- 24 *CED* XI, 342-51, & quoted by Abelly, vol. 3, op cit, 320.
- 25 *Ibid*, 223-4.

The Chapel in Castleknock College

[Written for the *Castleknock Chronicle*]

Tom Davitt CM

In 1966 Fr Patrick O'Donoghue, the then President, asked me to write an article for the 1967 *Chronicle* on the development of the college buildings and grounds. I decided that two articles would be needed, as there was so much to record. The first article covered the period 1835 to 1902, the second, in the following year's *Chronicle*, brought the story up to 1963. I treated the chapel in a separate Appendix, of just over two pages, attached to the first article. The Headmaster suggested to me recently that I should expand this into a full-length article.

The Vincentians purchased the Castleknock property in 1834. It was forty acres in extent and there were two buildings on it. The larger of the two was a seventeenth-century dwelling house, of two storeys. The other was also of two storeys. The former was known as The Old House, the latter as The Long Building. One of the large ground-floor rooms in The Old House was the first chapel. (1)

By 1837 it was obvious that more space was needed, and a two-storey block was built to the east of The Old House, and it included a new chapel. (2) This block had a central door, known for years as The Trunk Door, with two windows on each side. The two windows on the east side of the door were the windows of the new chapel. This room was later extended eastwards and became the Science Hall and in the mid-1960s, the Junior Library. At present it is the Music Room.

In 1846 this block was extended further eastwards, and included a newer chapel, as the previous one was too small for the increased number of boys. (3) For many years this room was the Junior Library, and is now the Computer Room. Some small reminders of its original use may still be detected. In the Chapel Corridor there is still a disused doorway, which had been the entrance from the sacristy on to the sanctuary. The present Chapel Corridor ended just before the first of the holy water fountains. The end portion of the corridor, with one window, was partitioned off to form the sacristy, and the position of this partition may still be detected in the skirting boards on each side. In photographs in the 1891, 1893 and 1900 *Chronicles* of this room, when it was the library, the tops of the arches which had been over the altars, are visible above the bookshelves.

The new chapel, 1849

The first three chapels had been large ground floor rooms, used as chapels. It was decided that the time had come for a "purpose-built"

chapel. The site chosen was a northward extension from the east end of the building. I have not succeeded in finding the names of the architect and the builder. "Availing of the opportunity [the founders of the college] then had of getting Italian workers in stucco, they erected the elegant ceiling and fine pillars and entablature." (4) I have been unable to discover anything further about these craftsmen. When looked at from below, the elaborate ceiling appears to be solid, but in fact it contains a system of openings for ventilation. The chapel was eight metres shorter than at present. (5) That means there were only five windows, not seven. The walls and ceiling were painted cream. It was "heated by a hot water apparatus". (6)

The side altars

The side altar on the east side was dedicated to St Vincent, and that on the west to the Blessed Virgin. There was a small lateral chapel dedicated to St Patrick off the west side of the sanctuary. These three chapels were the gift of Fr Nicholas Barlow CM (1828-1879), and cost £900. (7) Over each of them was a large appropriate painting. The paintings were done "by a French Vincentian lay-brother who enjoyed considerable reputation as an artist". (8) This can refer only to François Carbonnier CM (1787-1873). He was from Beauvais and his baptismal name was Casimir. He became François when he joined the Vincentians in 1839. He had studied painting under Jacques-Louis David and David's pupil Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres. (9)

The lateral chapel of St Patrick was entered from the sanctuary. Traces of the original doorway may still be detected under the fifth window, above the First Station. In its original form it was almost square, with elaborate plasterwork. The altar was on the west side, and there were windows on the north and south sides; that on the north side later became an opening into the extension which was built in 1914 when the chapel was lengthened.

The 1849 painting over the High Altar was by Barff, a chemist, and was done on zinc by some new process. It was a copy of a mosaic altarpiece in the King's Court Church, Munich. (10)

On the east wall were five panels, corresponding to the five windows on the west side. Sometime in the 1850s the organ was built by Telford & Telford, of 109 St Stephen's Green, "under the constant inspection of Mr Charles Gerrard, brother of the late Lord Gerrard". He lived in the neighbourhood and was organist in the college up till his death in 1860. (11) A plaque above the keyboard shows that the organ was his gift.

"While the chapel was being furnished two ladies, the Misses Reilly from Newry, handed Fr Dowley £100 to erect the carved oak stalls and the Communion railing". I have not come across any indication of who

these ladies were, or why they made a gift to the college. There had not been any [O']Reillys from Newry as pupils in the college. (12)

A photograph from between 1854 and 1878.

There is a large 12"x10" photograph of the sanctuary as it originally was, with wooden altar rails in the foreground, and two rows of choir stalls on each side. Two of the panels on the east wall are visible, and they are blank, which indicates that the photograph was taken before the paintings were inserted into these panels in 1878 (See below). There is no inscription below the frieze where the present LAUDATE, PUERI, DOMINUM is, nor is there any emblem between the frieze and the ceiling where the Apocalyptic *Lamb and the Scroll with Seven Seals* is at present. Over the choir stalls on each side there is one wall-mounted gas lamp with a glass dish. Over the sanctuary, between the altar steps and the altar rails, there is a pendant gas lamp with three burners in glass globes. Outside the sanctuary is another similar fitting. There probably would have been another two similar fittings over the body of the chapel. There is no information about the photographer. The floor of the sanctuary is tiled. The High Altar in this photograph is not the present marble one; it seems to be wooden. In the photograph the paschal candle. (13) is in the sanctuary, indicating that the photograph was taken during Paschal Time. The Blessed Virgin side altar is decorated with an antependium and flowers, so the photograph was probably taken in May. As gas did not come to the college until 1854 (14), when it replaced oil lamps and candles, the date of the photograph can be narrowed down to between 1854 and 1878, probably nearer the later date given the clarity and sharpness of the photograph. This photograph has never been printed in the *Chronicle*.

There is also a slightly later photograph, which was printed as the frontispiece of the 1886 *Chronicle*. It is very dark and it is difficult to make out the details.

The original paintings in the panels on the east wall

From 1849 until 1878 the five panels on the east wall, matching the five windows on the west, were blank. In 1878 five paintings were commissioned in Rome, and each one was an individual gift. (15) *The Sacred Heart* was the gift of Lawrence Gillooly CM, Bishop of Elphin. *St Joseph* was the gift of the Dominican nuns in Cabra, to whom the priests in the college were chaplains. *St Laurence O'Toole* was the gift of Cardinal Paul Cullen, Archbishop of Dublin. *St Aloysius* was the gift of "Dr Lynch". There were two Vincentian bishops with that surname, James of Kildare & Leighlin who had been the man who, as a student in

Maynooth, had conceived the idea of a Vincentian community in Ireland. He was the first Dean in the college, which role at that time also seems to have embraced that of Prefect of Studies. John Joseph, archbishop of Toronto, had been the first pupil and second Dean. I have never come across any indication as to which bishop donated the painting. St Aloysius Gonzaga, a Jesuit, is the patron saint of youth. The *Angel Guardian* was the gift of The Commendatore McSwiney. This was Peter Paul McSwiney, a wealthy Dublin businessman who was Lord Mayor of Dublin on two occasions, 1864 and 1875. "Commendatore" was an honorary title given to papal knights of St Gregory. (16)

On 10 March 1878 a papal brief authorising the erection of Stations of the Cross was issued. (17) I have not discovered the name of the artist who did them, or whether they were bought "off the shelf".

The solemn dedication of the chapel, and consecration of the High Altar. On 1 November 1879 Archbishop John Joseph Lynch CM of Toronto solemnly dedicated the chapel to St Vincent. That fact might suggest that he was the donor of the *St Aloysius* painting. (18)

On 8 September 1880 Bartholomew Woodlock, bishop of Ardagh & Clonmacnois, solemnly consecrated the marble High Altar. This altar replaced the original wooden one, which is shown in the photograph referred to above. The new altar cost £100 and was the gift of Francis O'Beirne CM. A brief Latin inscription on the west face of the altar records this fact: *Dono dedit Franciscus O'Beirne CM. Ora pro eo.* (19)

Fr Malachy O'Callaghan was President from 1873 until 1885, and was responsible for most of the above improvements to the chapel. He also changed the entrance to the chapel, making one central double-door. There had been two separate doorways, which became the present niches which contain the large holy water fountains with the angels. (20)

In a letter dated 29 October 1884 the Provincial, Fr Peter Duff CM, tells Fr O'Callaghan that the Superior General had given permission for him to spend a legacy which he had received on improvements to the chapel. I have not found any indication as to who the legator was nor to the amount involved. It must have been a sizeable amount if the Superior General's authority was needed to spend it on the chapel.

The decoration of the chapel

In 1885 Fr James Moore became president. The following year he asked a Pastman, John Moran, to "re-touch" the painting over the High Altar, because some years previously someone had attempted to wash it, and the colours ran. (21) After Fr Moore, Frs Thomas Hardy and Joseph Geoghegan were president and, in 1902, Fr Michael Fr Brosnahan took over.

In 1905 it was decided to paint the walls and ceiling of the chapel, which were still in their original cream colour. Two photographs in the 1905 *Chronicle* show the chapel before the planned decoration. There is an inscription over the High Altar HAEC EST DOMUS DOMINI, and above the frieze are the Greek letters IHS. I have not found a date for these two items, which were not in the large photograph already mentioned. Fr Brosnahan started a fund-raising campaign for a “carefully planned colour scheme executed by a skilled craftsman” for the chapel. (22) An elaborate colour scheme was planned by a Mr Brennan of the Dublin School of Art, which called for eighteen separate colours. It was executed by a Mr Nugent of Belfast. (23) When this painting had been completed further steps in decorating the chapel were planned. Two ideas which were never carried out were the replacement of the painting over the High Altar with a picture in mosaic, and the replacement of the plain glass in the windows with stained glass.

Two plans which were carried out later were the obtaining of a new set of Stations of the Cross to replace those erected in 1878, and the replacement of the five paintings on the east wall with new “pictures of a high artistic standard, but chosen principally to harmonise with the other features of the chapel, and strengthen the elevating effect of the whole structure”. During the work there was Mass only on Sundays. (24) The words “high artistic standard” would seem to cast doubt on the standard of the five paintings donated in 1878.

Fr Paul Cullen became president in 1907. He had been ordained in 1889, so he would be celebrating his Silver Jubilee in 1914. The Union decided to commemorate this event in some way, and subscriptions to a fund were solicited. The eventual decision was to extend the chapel by twenty-four feet, which meant increasing the number of windows from five to seven. The architects were Ashlin & Coleman, the builder was Mr Mackey and the plasterwork was by Mr Creedon. The work was finished by September 1915. (25) The extension continued exactly the style of the older part, and the new sanctuary was an almost exact replica of the former one, including the two side altars. A photograph in the 1924 *Chronicle* shows that the altar rails were not replaced, and a wooden floor replaced the original tiled one. It had not proved possible to preserve the painting over the High Altar. (26) Also LAUDATE PUERI DOMINUM and the Apocalyptic Lamb with the Scroll with Seven Seals replaced the previous inscription and symbol.

The extension of the chapel involved alterations to the lateral chapel of St Patrick. The window on the north side of this chapel was converted to a door and a flat-roofed extension was built on in that direction. The entrance to this extension was from the sanctuary, with a doorway matching the one on the opposite side into the sacristy corridor. This

new extension also had a door on the east side, giving on to the gravel outside; this was to allow kitchen staff to come for Mass in St Patrick's chapel. (27) At some later stage an altar was put in on the north wall, and named Holy Angels.

When the chapel was extended the sacristy corridor also had to be correspondingly extended, and the extension took the form of a wooden lean-to addition, from the door of the sacristy to the door on to the new sanctuary. This extension ended in a glass-panelled double door into the grounds.

In 1916 an unsuccessful attempt was made to reproduce the original picture above the High Altar. (28) That was the year in which Fr Edward Meehan became president; he died in 1919. Pastmen established a memorial fund and a decision was taken to utilise this fund for the decoration of the extension of the chapel, which had remained unpainted, as is shown in a full-page photograph on page 76 in the 1923 *Chronicle*. The work was scheduled to start in the summer of 1920 but the appointed artist died. In 1923 the work was entrusted to Messrs. J Clark & Sons, of North Frederick Street, Dublin. Dan Garry, the Pastman who had presented the Pavilion, financed the replacement of the original painting in the apse. (29) The artist for this was Monsieur L Beyaert, of Bruges. He included a landscape scene at the bottom of the painting, which had not been in the original. The original painting is clearly shown in the photograph on page 59 of the 1905 *Chronicle*.

M Beyaert was also commissioned to paint a new set of Stations of the Cross. He did them on mahogany panels, in oak frames; they are based on ones painted by Rosier, a disciple of Munkácsy. His drawings for the altar picture and the 11th and 14th Stations are reproduced in the 1924 *Chronicle*. On completing all his commissioned work the artist presented the community with a beautiful portrait of Fr Richard Bodkin CM.

In 1923 a set of new seats was supplied by John Hearne & Son of Waterford to the design of Ashlin & Coleman. (30)

The Congregation of the Children of Mary was inaugurated in the college on 4 June 1874 and the Golden Jubilee of its founding was celebrated in 1924, and past members contributed to a fund to provide some fitting memorial of the occasion. It was decided to implement the still unrealised plan of 1905 to replace the five original paintings on the east wall, though there were now seven spaces to fill. (31) Once again M Beyaert of Bruges was given the commission. The subjects he chose are: *The Annunciation, The Nativity, The Baptism of Jesus, Jesus Healing the Sick, The Agony in the Garden, The Resurrection, The Ascension*.

In 1932 "A frequent – though always anonymous – benefactor" had the organ overhauled and an electric blower installed. (32)

In 1954, a start was made at last on building the long-awaited “new wing” of the college, first proposed in the late 1930s but shelved because of the outbreak of war. A decision in favour of a free-standing building instead of a “wing” was taken, and work began with the demolition of the old swimming bath. It was decided that the new building would not have its own central heating plant, but would be serviced from the boiler room between the chapel and the toilets wing. Lagged pipes would convey the hot water through the chapel and under the driveway to a pumping station in the basement of the new building. In order not to disturb the tiling of the centre aisle of the chapel the lagged pipes were brought up the outside of the wall of the chapel and through the organ gallery and down on the far side. Ironically, after all that, the tiling inside the door of the chapel collapsed under some guests one Union Day, without anyone being injured. (33) It was discovered that the space under the tiling had not been adequately ventilated. This necessitated the removal of the tiling for the entire length of the aisle. The space underneath was filled in and a new woodblock surface was laid in the centre aisle.

The liturgical changes brought in after Vatican II necessitated some changes in the sanctuary. It was decided to retain the marble retable, though the throne above the tabernacle, for the monstrance, was removed. The altar itself was moved forward some metres, to a position where Mass could be celebrated with the celebrant facing the congregation. This meant that the front row of stalls on each side had to be removed.

In the early 2000s some major work was done on the chapel. The roof had to be renewed, but about 80% of the original slates were retained. In the interior an extensive cleaning programme of the ceiling was undertaken, and the result is very obvious in the brilliant appearance of the colours. The Lamb with the Scroll with Seven Seals has had its fleece beautifully cleaned. The walls were re-painted in a new colour scheme, making some visitors try to remember what the walls were like in their times.

At the moment of writing, Spring 2009, the organ is in the course of being re-conditioned. Also, François Carbonnier’s paintings of St Vincent and the Blessed Virgin have been sent away for restoration, as they had suffered from exposure to light over the years leading to some flaking and cracking of pigment. His painting of St Patrick in the lateral chapel, because of its location, has not suffered any deterioration.

NOTES

- 1 *Castleknock College Centenary Record, 1835-1935*, [*Cent Rec*] p 79.
- 2 1894 *Chronicle*, [*Chron*] p 8.
- 3 *Cent Rec* p 81.
- 4 1905 *Chron* p 58.
- 5 1914-15 *Chron* p 5.
- 6 1910 *Chron* p 19 for the heating, 1924 *Chron*, p.41 for the colour.
- 7 1910 *Chron* pp 19 ff.
- 8 1924. p 41
- 9 These details from Fr John E Rybolt CM, in a draft of a chapter in his proposed history of the Congregation of the Mission.
- 10 1890 *Chron* p 15. *Cent Rec* p 82 for Munich.
- 11 1910 *Chron*, in an article by Fr Malachy O'Callaghan CM, who also says it cost £600. pp 19-20. The *Cent Rec* on p 81 says Mr Gerrard lived at Mount Sackville, but the archivist there says that there is no mention of Gerrard in any documents about Mount Sackville.
- 12 1910 *Chron*, p 19.
- 13 This elaborate Paschal Candle holder was in use when I was a boy in the college 1941-46, and still when I was on the staff 1954-68.
- 14 *Cent Rec* p 85.
- 15 1890 *Chron* p 15.
- 16 I am indebted to Fr James H Murphy CM for this information.
- 17 This brief is in the college archives.
- 18 *Cent Rec* p 83.
- 19 *Ibid*. Francis O'Beirne was a Vincentian student who, during his theological studies, decided that he did not want to be ordained to the priesthood. As he had already taken his vows as a Vincentian he continued for the rest of his life working as a member of the Castleknock community.
- 20 1890 *Chron* p 15, 1910 *Chron* p 26.
- 21 1890 *Chron* p15, 1910 *Chron* p 26, 1924 *Chron*, p 41, for "the colours ran".
- 22 1937 *Chron* p 47, in an obituary on Fr Brosnahan.
- 23 I have been unable to obtain information on this man.
- 24 1905 *Chron* p 47 (re Mass) and p 58.
- 25 1914-15 *Chron* p 5, and 1915-16 *Chron* p 4.
- 26 1915-16 *Chron* p. 4 and *Cent Rec* p 83.
- 27 I heard this piece of information from the late Fr Alex McCarthy CM.
- 28 1924 *Chron* p 44.
- 29 *Ibid*. The Preface to the 1920 *Chron* gives the information about the death of first chosen artist. The Minutes of the House Council, 16 April 1922, give Clark(e)'s estimate as £382.
- 30 1923 *Chron* has a full-page drawing of one of the new seats on page 55.
- 31 *Cent Rec* p 180
- 32 1932 *Chron*, in the Foreword.
- 33 I was there that day.

Bishop Daton's Book

Tom Davitt CM

In 1958, M H Gill & Son Ltd published a book to mark the centenary of the firm. It was written by Thomas Wall (1) and was entitled *The Sign of Doctor Hay's Head*, sub-titled "Being some account of the hazards and fortunes of Catholic printers and publishers in Dublin from the later Penal Times to the present day".

George Hay was a Vicar Apostolic in Scotland in the second half of the 18th century and was a well-known writer of Catholic books and pamphlets, which were popular in Ireland. Towards the end of that century Pat Wogan set himself up as a printer and bookseller in Bridge Street in Dublin, and chose Dr Hay's head as the painted sign to hang outside his premises to indicate his business.

Chapter 7 of Dr Wall's book deals with book collectors. One such collector was William Daton, Bishop of Ossory from 1696 till 1712. According to Wall, Daton "had been a student in Paris with St Vincent de Paul". Wall says Daton was one of the group of Irish students in Paris who signed the famous declaration against the Jansenists in 1652, inspired by Vincent de Paul. (2)

In his will Bishop Daton included the following:

I leave my said nephew James (3) all my cloathes and bookes...
I have a book called Eusebius Romanus ad Theophilum Gallum
belonging to St Vincent (4) which I desire may be restored to Pere
Doyen.(5)

The problem in footnote 2 is an historical one. The point about this short contribution to Vincentian Studies is the interesting one that an Irish bishop in the latter half of the 17th century had a book which had belonged to Vincent de Paul, and obviously cherished it.

NOTES

- 1 My contemporaries would remember Dr Wall as Librarian in the National Library.
- 2 See my article *Jansenism & Irish Student Priests in Paris 1650-51*, in *Colloque* 15, Spring 1987. The background to this article was a two-part article by Thomas Wall in *The Irish Ecclesiastical Record* in August and September 1944. The declaration, including the signatories, is printed by Patrick Boyle CM in *The Irish College in Paris 1578-1901*, Dublin and New York 1901, pages 22-24, but the name James Daton does not appear in the list. It should be noted that the date of the document is February 1651, but that is the date in the ecclesiastical year which did not end until 24 March; in the calendar year it would be 1652, as given by Wall.
- 3 James Daton was a sub-deacon at the time, according to Wall.

- 4 As Vincent was not beatified until 1729 nor canonised until 1737, he was hardly referred to as “Saint” in Daton’s will. In an earlier passage in the chapter Wall mentioned that Vincent was known as “Monsieur Vincent”. That is probably what Daton wrote, and that Wall “canonised” him.
- 5 There was no Vincentian with that surname at the time; Wall gives no information on this man. Wall (or Daton?) does not have an accent on the second letter of Pere.

Fr Cahalan

7th-20th December 1991

Sr Bernadette McMahon DC

The Editor is grateful for this piece recording the last days
of Fr Cahalan, former Provincial of the Irish Province

“Our father is dead”. These words of a young Nigerian Sister greeted me when I arrived in St Sabina’s, Lagos, at midnight on Tuesday the 17th December, 1991. They captured the sorrow experienced by all who know Fr Cahalan well and who loved him. In Nigeria, Fr Cahalan is frequently referred to as “Papa Cahalan” by young and old alike. The title of Papa, the former Rector of the Bigard Seminary explained to me, is given to an honoured few. They are people who unconsciously communicate great fatherly concern, care and love for all with whom they come in contact. The Sisters in Eleme were touched to hear some of the distinguished visitors to Fr Cahalan’s bedside address him as “Papa Cahalan”, hoping he would respond to their voice. So many experienced the presence and love of God through him.

Those final days in Eleme

From Sr Alice Daly and Sr Elizabeth Fallon who were with Fr Cahalan when he died, from Sr Bridget, Sr Elma and Sr Nora (Lally) who helped to care for him and from Fr Barry who rarely left him, I learned the details of Fr Cahalan’s last days and hours. As I listened, I sensed behind the sorrow a profound gratitude to Providence that he died in the Regional House in Eleme where he was surrounded by every possible care. Fr Cahalan was never alone from the moment he slipped into unconsciousness around 7 pm on Monday, 9th December, until he died at 2.45 am on Sunday, 15th December. For the Sisters and Confreres, it was a labour of love and respect. Many people on looking back on the events of these days have remarked on the ways of Providence. The final Retreat which Fr Cahalan conducted was originally planned to take place earlier in Umunede. Because of circumstances the dates and venue were changed.

Fr Cahalan had not been feeling well during the Retreat which he directed from 29th November to 5th December. However on 7th December, a Saturday, he insisted on being the principal celebrant and on giving the homily at the Mass during which four young Sisters – Augustina, Cecilia, Agatha and Marie Therese – pronounced their

vows for their first time. Afterwards he joined the Sisters, their families and friends for the celebration meat and for photographs. He was later heard to say that he had never been so tired in his life and that the strength he experienced was not his own. On Sunday, 8th December, Fr Cahalan was glad of the assistance of Fr Seth, a Ghanian priest, to celebrate Mass. He lunched with the Seminary Sisters on Monday 9th and, as the afternoon progressed, it became obvious that he was not well enough to say Mass. As always, he had prepared the day's readings and around 5 o'clock he discussed them with Sr Nora Lally, remarking that the last sentence of the Gospel was very significant: 'They were all astounded and praised God and were filled with awe, saying, "we have seen wonderful things today"'. When Sr Nora referred to some of the events happening in the world of today, he nodded but Sr Nora felt he had something else in mind. Within a matter of minutes Fr Cahalan's speech became slurred and he lapsed into unconsciousness. Two priests anointed him around 8.30 pm.

On Tuesday, 10th December, Bishop Fitzgibbon, Bishop of Port Harcourt, and Fr Barry concelebrated Mass in Fr Cahalan's room in the presence of the Eleme Community. During the remainder of the week, Mass was said on a number of occasions and the prayer of the Church as well the Rosary were recited. Many friends, including Vincentians, Holy Rosary Sisters, Kiltegan Fathers and other priests came to pray. In spite of his weakness, Fr. Cahalan's physical condition was relatively strong and it became evident that he had a brain hemorrhage.

In her fax, Sr Bridget described how the Sisters who took turns in staying with Fr Cahalan shared the daily advent readings. For them, waiting in hope for the coming of the Saviour took on a new richness and significance. On Saturday, 14th December, the Eleme community gathered in Fr Cahalan's room for Evening Prayer and early in the morning of Sunday, 15th December, Fr Cahalan effortlessly and peacefully went to the God he so faithfully loved and served.

Preparation for the Funeral

Later on the 15th, Fr Cahalan's body was taken to a mortuary in Port Harcourt to be embalmed. Arrangements were made for his removal to the Chapel in Eleme, the all night Vigil and Funeral Mass in the Bigard Seminary and the burial in the compound of the Vincentian community in Enugu,

It was in Eleme that Fr Cahalan said both his first Mass in Nigeria and his last Mass, so it was appropriate that he would be brought there for a final liturgy on Thursday, 19th December. Two Bishops, Bishop Fitzgibbon of Port Harcourt (who gave the Sisters a cheque to cover the cost of the funeral expenses related to Eleme) and Bishop Usanga,

Bishop of Calabar and Chairperson of the Commission for Seminaries, concelebrated Mass with approximately thirty priests from the area. A large number of people including Medical Missionaries of Mary, Kiltegan Fathers and Daughters of Charity participated in the beautiful liturgy. In his homily Bishop Fitzgibbon spoke of Fr Cahalan as a humble man who was a man of prayer and a man of action, saying “a saint has died among us”. He also referred to Fr Cahalan’s fidelity to both personal prayer and prayer of the Church as a striking witness to his closeness to God. Bishop Usanga, who knew Fr Cahalan well, remarked on his practical approach to problem solving, expressing the Bishop’s belief that Fr Cahalan’s clarity of vision, which enabled him to grasp essentials, came from his intimacy with God. Bishop Usanga also paid tribute to the service given by the Vincentians to the people of Calabar, Uyo and Ikot Ekpene. All of the homilies we were to hear had understandably areas of overlap. All referred to Fr Cahalan’s personal holiness and his inability to say ‘no’, his interest and commitment to people and his love of Nigeria. Each homilist spoke with affection and reverence for a remarkable priest and friend.

The All-Night Vigil

After Mass, the large congregation availed of the meal provided by the community in Eleme before leaving for the All-Night Vigil in the Bigard Seminary, Enugu. The coffin, accompanied by a number of Sisters and Vincentian students, was transported in the Eleme minibus. Cars and other vehicles followed in procession. Around 5.30 pm, it arrived in the Bigard Seminary and the coffin was received by the Bishop of Umuahia, who was a colleague of Fr Cahalan’s in the Bigard Seminary, and by fifty priests, some of whom carried the coffin into the Seminary Chapel. Mass was said every two hours until 6 am on Friday 20th. Throughout the night, groups of people came to sing and to pray. Sisters and priests snatched a few hours sleep in the Bigard Seminary. The Holy Rosary Sisters, based in Enugu, provided meals from the evening of Thursday 19th until the afternoon of Friday 20th. Fr Cahalan had a special relationship with the Holy Rosary Sisters in Nigeria. He was Spiritual Director to many, worked with their novices and gave Retreats to the community. Their generous hospitality and large attendance at the funeral were expressions of their sorrow and appreciation as well as support for the Vincentian community.

The Funeral Mass – Friday 20th

The Funeral Mass took place in the Bigard Seminary Chapel at 10 am. Bishops – from Enugu, Ikot Ekpene, Onitsha, Ahiaria, Okigwe

and Nsukka – and approximately 130 priests concelebrated, including the Kiltegan, SMA, Holy Ghost, Cistercian and Carmelite Fathers and many former students of Fr Cahalan. Also present were representatives of many Nigerian congregations of women and missionary congregations, including the Holy Rosary Sisters and the Medical Missionaries of Mary. Almost all the Daughters of Charity in Nigeria were at the Mass. We were told that, had the Seminarians not been on holiday, had more priests known of Fr Cahalan's death and had some of the Bishops not been out of the country, the number present would have been much larger. It is difficult to imagine where an extended congregation would have fitted.

The singing and music reflected the Western and Nigerian traditions. Representatives of groups closely associated with Fr Cahalan were directly involved in the liturgy, including Sr Bridget, who did a reading and took part in the Offertory procession, and Sr Stella who, with Sr Arhona, sang the Responsorial Psalm. Fr Rod Crowley gave the homily. He spoke of Fr Cahalan's unfailing presence in the Seminary Chapel for the prayer of the Church and his fidelity to an hour each afternoon in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament with the scriptures beside him. Reference was also made to his love for the Nigerian people, his constantly developing knowledge of spirituality and theology, his avid interest in reading and his particular relationship with the Daughters of Charity in Ireland, Great Britain, Ethiopia and Sierra Leone as well as Nigeria (on his desk in Enugu, Fr Cahalan had a photograph of himself with two young Ethiopian Sisters). Fr Crowley ended his homily by quoting from the Responsorial Psalm.

Who shall climb the mountain of the Lord? Who shall stand in his holy place? The man with clean hands and pure heart who desires not worthless things.

He shall receive blessings from the Lord and reward from the God who saves him. Such are the men who seek him, seek the faith of the God of Jacob.

Before the conclusion of the Mass, messages were read from a number of Bishops who were unavoidably absent and afterwards Fr Barry gave the final commendation. While he thanked all the people who had supported Fr Cahalan in his last illness, and the Vincentian community in their loss, paying tribute to the Bishops, the staff of the Bigard, the priests and people of the parishes in which Fr Cahalan worked, other priest friends and members of religious congregations present, he singled out for attention Sr Bridget, Sr Elma and the Eleme

community for their outstanding care of Fr Cahalan. In conclusion, Fr Barry reminded the congregation of Fr Cahalan's wish to spend his last years in Nigeria, to die there and to be buried there. While Fr Cahalan had a great love for his own culture and country, at a point in time during the last fifteen years or so, he had "become Nigerian" and the people of Nigeria had become his people. His mind and heart were with the Nigerian people. Fr Barry went on to say that this transformation took place in Fr Cahalan because of the acceptance, affirmation, love and respect he experienced from the Nigerian people. They had enriched him immeasurably and had helped him to "become Nigerian". So it was fitting now that he should be buried among them. The intense interest of all the congregation and, in particular, of the Nigerian listeners and their nods of agreement indicated total accord with what was said.

The Burial

The coffin was carried on the shoulders of the Nigerian Seminarians from the Chapel to the waiting vehicle – an ambulance belonging to Ogobia and donated by the Irish Government. The cavalcade of cars, including Bishops, clergy and laity, moved in procession with the police escort to the Vincentian compound in Enugu. In a grave, outside the entrance to the community Chapel, the body of Fr Cahalan was laid to rest. When the final prayers were said and clay thrown on the coffin symbolizing the handing back to God of Fr Cahalan, a Nigerian Barrister spoke for a few moments of what Fr Cahalan meant to the laity. They too had experienced that extraordinary kindness, availability and spiritual guidance. Fr Barry gave me an opportunity to say a few words on behalf of the Sisters I represented at the funeral, not just the Sisters of the Irish Province and Sierra Leone but those of the British Province and Ethiopian Region, over 900 Sisters, many of whom regarded Fr Cahalan as a dear and valued friend as well as a gifted spiritual guide.

The month's mind Mass will take place on 20th January 1992 in the Bigard Seminary. Fr Mark Noonan, the Seminarians back from holidays and others who missed the funeral as well as many present at the final liturgy, will gather to celebrate again the life of this great son of St Vincent. The former Rector of the Bigard, with whom Fr Cahalan spent his years in the Seminary, told us that, although there were other spiritual directors in the Bigard, 90% of the students went to Fr Cahalan. No Bishop, he said, was so honoured as Fr Cahalan was in the Bigard on the occasion of his Golden Jubilee and no Bishop was buried with so much reverence and affection.

Fr Barry and the Vincentian community were responsible for the simplicity and beauty of the final liturgy. They succeeded in creating a spirit and atmosphere which was in keeping with all that Fr Cahalan

represented. They honoured him as only brothers could. It is difficult for those who are not Daughters of Charity to appreciate exactly what Fr Cahalan meant to us. At times he challenged us and at others encouraged, affirmed and supported us in our efforts at discipleship. We believe that he will continue to draw us closer to Christ and the poor.

Robert Browning the poet wrote: “the last of life, for which the first was made. Our times are in his hand who said, “A whole I planned; Youth shows but half”. The ‘second half’ of Fr. Cahalan’s life can be said to have begun in Nigeria and its fullness has been glimpsed by many but is known only to God.

St Vincent De Paul

John Charles McQuaid

Archbishop of Dublin

(with thanks to Fergus Kelly CM for providing the text)

Delivered at the Tercentenary of the death of St Vincent:

Phibsborough, 26th September, 1960

Three hundred years ago tomorrow, an old priest of some eighty years of age, seated in his chair, and fully clothed, in a little room in Paris, gently died. The dawn was breaking over the city and the house was about to begin its morning prayers at a quarter to five. The Paris of Louis XIV knew nothing of the final moments of this very crowded life. It was a lonely death that God reserved for St Vincent de Paul, such as His most active servants. Very many persons of every walk in life, it is true, had been calling at St Lazare, during the last few months, to inquire for the health of the man who for forty years had dominated the life of Paris, and who was obviously soon to die. Increasing and painful illnesses had helped to isolate Vincent from the works that he had founded and the souls that he had directed. St Louise de Marillac, his most faithful collaborator, had been called back to God six months before. Vincent still received the members of his Congregation, but he was more and more withdrawn by God into a silence that resembles the atmosphere of his early life. In these closing months, his memory must have been thronged with a vast procession of persons and events. To the old man they meant little now in a human sense. Their only value was the enormous charity with which he had embraced them.

Today, my Brethren, we have met to commemorate that death. We are not alone. It can be truly said that the whole world has joined together to celebrate the memory of St Vincent de Paul. Is it not in itself a strange event, this living contact of the present day with a person of another race, of a very different period, who died three hundred years ago? This year books have been written about the Saint, sermons preached, celebrations multiplied, in the effort to explain God's meaning in giving to the Church St Vincent de Paul. He is not easy to understand, this Gascon peasant, who bent to his will, in the service of Jesus Christ, so very many souls of every conceivable rank and type. Others have explained to you the marvellous activity of the Saint. You are acquainted with the main incidents of his life, for you have had the privilege in this Church of knowing the Saint through the Vincentian Fathers, his sons, who serve you, who, since he sent them

to assist our distress in the days of Cromwell have faithfully preserved the image of his apostolic zeal. What then, today, in this commemoration does St Vincent de Paul mean to us, this little old priest with the piercing dark eyes that read through men and things, with the broad mouth on which rested a smile of such serenity, with the speech that held an inner flame? Though dead, he speaks to us even in this moment. For the most ordinary and lowly among us, he has, I venture to believe, a special and consoling message.

You will have been astonished at the record of the activity of St Vincent. For forty-three years, since in 1617, he had taken up the apostolate of the poor, he had accomplished a gigantic labour. Not thousands, but hundreds of thousands of poor persons had been assisted in their homes, in the galleys, in prisons, on the field of battle. In his work for those who were preparing for ordination, between 1628 and his death in 1660, he had provided a Spiritual retreat for some 14,000 students. The Fathers from St Lazare and other houses had given at least one thousand missions. In this same Mother House and in the College des Bons Enfants, at least 20,000 had been given the opportunity of making a retreat. It is not inaccurate to say that St. Vincent had rescued from certain death at least 10,000 infants. These are but figures; but how can we estimate the effect of his influence on the spiritual life of France and of the Church? "He has all but changed the face of the Church" declared Mgr du Tour in the funeral sermon. "If I should live", declared Louis XIII on his deathbed to Vincent, "I would have every Bishop first spend three years under your guidance." In the Congregation of the Mission and in the Sisters of Charity he had established a new form of religious life. The monastic framework gave place to the missionary scheme that his own and later times demanded. In the Tuesday Conferences at St Lazare he had gathered about him the most zealous and intelligent priests and bishops of his day. His influence on Seminary training has not been equalled since the Council of Trent. His emphasis on he pastoral ministry in visitation of the sick and the frequent reception of the Sacraments of Penance and the Blessed Eucharist; his insistence, in particular, on the simple preaching of the Gospel, at a level understood by the most unlearned of the faithful, had made of St. Vincent one of the most permanent reformers in the Church.

Yet, this giant of saintly achievement did not quickly give himself to God. We who give ourselves so slowly to God can have comfort in the thought. The writers who stress the worldliness of St Vincent in his early years seems to forget that he had to find, what for many years he did not possess, an assured means of livelihood. Yet it is true to say that in the Providence of God, Vincent waited for years, until he awoke to the absolute claims of the priesthood of Jesus Christ.

Short of a revelation – and in the life of St Vincent there is no evidence of revelations – this Saint, like ourselves, could not have foreseen the plan of God in his life. He had painfully to search out, with the help of others, what was God's will in his regard. Duval, de Bérulle, St Francis de Sales, each in his turn was used by God to guide St Vincent and each in his turn disappeared leaving him to seek, by prayer and counsel, how he could understand the designs of God.

When St Vincent had found what his Director declared to be for him God's will, suddenly the circumstances would demand a change. Like ourselves, he was not allowed to rest in the work that seemed to suit him. For a year he was completely happy in the parish of Clichy la Garenne. Then his director, de Bérulle, obliged him, at the age of 32, to become a school-master to the children of de Gondi in one of the most influential families of France. Vincent had wanted a "respectable retirement"; he now possessed it, but the leisure became to him a torment. *is ends.*

It may not be thought that St Vincent, in being given at last the definite purpose of his life, would meet with any repose. Like ourselves he would never know rest. De Bérulle, who had so decisively guided him, became alienated. St Francis de Sales, who had profoundly changed him, shortly before his death in 1622, gave him the direction of the newly founded Sisters of the Visitation. For forty years he undertook the task. "It has been," he said before his own death, "my greatest cross." His friend, Saint-Cyran, whom he admired and followed, gradually passed to the camp of the Jansenists. Vincent's power of mediating in this conflict was gradually nullified. He found himself obliged to lead the very painful campaign against the new heresy that would deprive men of what Vincent most wished to give them, the Sacraments of Penance and the Blessed Eucharist. He saw himself advanced to the inner Conseil de Conscience at the Court, where he was able to achieve unmeasured good by the rightful appointment of good prelates and by the firm assertion of the Church's teaching. He was in fact for ten years, a Minister of Public Morality, supervising books and plays, founding hospitals, arranging for the spiritual needs of prisons, watching over regular observance in the Abbeys. He was the Providence of God to every form of human suffering. Richelieu, for all his power and Mazarin for all his finesse, were less than children in the presence of this shabby little priest, who was so clear-sighted and so unafraid in the cause of Jesus Christ. In reward for his courage and zeal, he saw himself ridiculed and set aside by one whose unworthy intrigues had little in common with the teaching of the Gospel – Cardinal Mazarin. Cardinal de Bérulle could oppose his Congregation of the Mission at Rome; Cardinal Mazarin could succeed in closing the house of the Congregation in Rome. In the end, he was eliminated from the Council,

rejected by the capricious Queen Regent, ousted by the implacable Mazarin.

It is easy to realise, in the story of St Vincent, how the physical misfortunes of famine and small wars succeeded one another in Lorraine and Picardie, in Champagne and Ile de France. To one and all of the ravaged areas, Vincent brought the assistance of an organising genius and a surpassing charity.

It is not so easy for us to realise how humiliation and anguish and frustration succeeded one another from end to end of Vincent's life. To the sufferings inflicted in one way or another by his fellowmen, was added the struggle against his own depression. St Vincent openly admitted this tendency in himself. He was often ill; throughout life he was subject to very severe headaches. There was, further, the difficulty of his unlovable temperament. He had in him a severity that could be frightening. There was the effort to restrain his vivid Gascon tongue. There was the temptation to impatience that his very keen intelligence must have felt in dealing with the triflers and fools and villains who surrounded him in such abundance. There was the renewed pain of spiritual direction, as he strove to teach men and women how to give themselves to God. There was, not least, the appalling fatigue of his daily life, to which he would never allow the indulgence of even a half-hour's later rising – and his day began at four o'clock in the morning. At the end of his life he admitted that his one desire was to be allowed to retire to a little parish in his native country. We are very gravely mistaken, indeed, when we see in St Vincent de Paul only the serenity of a smiling charity.

What then is the explanation of this Saint, whose life so closely resembles our own in its daily struggles and its broken purposes, but who so far outstrips us in his effective love of God? St Vincent himself, gives us the answer: "We must rid ourselves of self-love and depend wholly on Jesus Christ." It might be thought that St. Vincent, in his many letters and instructions would chiefly speak of charity. It can be a surprise to learn that his emphasis is, first of all, set on humility. This is the word, not charity, that he wishes "to be the watchword of his Congregation."

For St Vincent de Paul, humility meant the acceptance before God of one's position as a creature who owes to God all that he is and has and who as a sinner has offended God and cost for his redemption the Precious Blood of God made man. Thus Vincent would have humility go further than we should care to follow; he would wish to accept, even with joy, humiliation and contempt as his proper wages. And more, he would gladly welcome every toil and contradiction, because in so suffering he would become the living image of Jesus Christ.

"Life of my life", he called Our Divine Lord, Jesus Christ. The Letters and Conferences prove that Vincent saw in Him the Son of God

who had taken upon Himself the nature of a slave, so that, in that nature, He might atone for sin and sanctify mankind. Vincent loved to think of Him in every aspect of His suffering life. He saw Him incessantly in His preaching, in His care of human wretchedness. "Ask yourself," he would say, "how Jesus Christ would act in these circumstances. How would he preach to this people? How would he comfort this poor creature?"

It is clear from his writings that St Vincent saw in Jesus Christ, the Son of God made man, who had come only to do the Will of His Father. And therefore Vincent allowed Divine Providence to guide him in the smallest details of his life. He would wait; he would not press; he would go forward bravely, only when the Will of God was manifest to him. Had not Jesus Christ said that His very food was to do the Will of Him who sent Him? That will required the Sacrifice of the Cross. "For those whom God has given me", said Jesus Christ, "I sacrifice myself." Therefore did Vincent at every moment of his day embrace his Cross. For forty years, moment by moment, in complete self-sacrifice, he spent his life as Jesus Christ had done, that he might succour and redeem those whom God had given him. "All human action" he had said, "becomes the act of God when done in Him and through Him." "My strength, my life", he said of Jesus Christ: "My strength, my life, as He is the strength and life of all who are nourished by His love." "Jesus Christ", he exclaimed, the eternal suavity of men and angels! We cannot better make certain of our eternal happiness than by living and dying in the arms of Providence in the genuine renouncement of ourselves, in the following of Jesus Christ."

In one other aspect St Vincent was a faithful follower of Jesus Christ. He loved the Mother of Jesus with an ardour that, in its measure, resembled the affection of the Sacred Heart. She was to him a perfect model of total submission to the Will of God. "When the Mother of God", he wrote, has been invoked and taken for patroness in every cause of any importance, it cannot be that all will not go well, that all will not redound to the glory of her loving Son, Jesus Christ." Can we then wonder that she should have chosen Vincent's Congregation to give to the world the Miraculous Medal and her Scapular? Through her humble, loving servant, she has poured, and at this moment still is pouring, a floodtide of redeeming grace upon her children, the sinners of the universe.

"To do the Will of God", wrote St Vincent, "is to have begun our paradise on earth." "Grant us, O Lord," he cried, "the grace to begin even now, at this moment, the blessed life that the Saints possess in Heaven, the life that is the union of our will with the Will of God alone."

And so, my brethren, we have read the secret of this Saint: to do the Will of God on earth, as it is done in Heaven, in obedience to God's

commands, in denial of our preferences, in constant imitation of our loving Saviour, Jesus Christ.

That alone is holiness before God. Lovingly, exactly, constantly to do God's Will in the duties of our daily life is heroic sanctity in the teaching of the Church.

"Let us give ourselves to God," wrote St Vincent "and may God grant us the grace to be constant."

It depends on us, through grace, to practise the virtues, without which our holiness is an illusion. It depends on God the Holy Ghost, through His gifts to perfect these virtues, till all our life be lived under the constant guidance of the Holy Ghost and thus become the living image of the life of Jesus Christ.

"When it is said," wrote St. Vincent, "that the Holy Ghost operates in any soul we mean that the Holy Ghost dwelling in that person, gives him the same inclinations and dispositions. as Jesus Christ had on earth and these inclinations and dispositions cause him to act in the same manner as Jesus Christ, not of course, with an equal perfection, but according to the measure of the Gifts of God the Holy Ghost."

"Let us give ourselves to God" in the exercise of the virtues and "may God the Holy Ghost grant us the grace to be constant" in the loving imitation of Jesus Christ.

That is the sum and lesson of the life of St Vincent de Paul whose humble, constant fidelity to God this year commemorates.

Recollections of an Ancient Vincentian

Desmond MacMorrow CM

“Lord for tomorrow and its needs I do not pray”.

It is fashionable to speak of advancing age as our declining years – a run down of physical, even if not mental possibilities. If it's the will of God that such is our current experience of life, it is so important that we have ready at hand, resources that help us to keep looking on the bright side. Important among those are memories.

The saints are often depicted with gestures implying prayerfulness and supplication. This is basic to our lives as Christians. And yet! Memory is one of those resources that help us look on the bright side. This is especially true of the priest who can look back on labour in the vineyard of the lord. For him surely memory tells how the good comes out on top of the stumbles, mistakes and sins. The Lord's prayer says it all.

As I look back, memory, even if fading, is a fruitful contribution to peace and thankfulness. My room here in Castleknock is festooned with photos and memorabilia. They speak to me a message of how wonderful is a priestly vocation to share in spreading the good news of salvation. It may not have seemed so then, but time brings a realisation of the goodness and mercy of God. I would now like to tell you of our Provincial efforts to attract vocations to the community, with special reference to Scotland and England.

Glasgow 1960

The year 1959 saw the celebration of the Centenary of St Mary's Lanark. This was a joyful three-day event. The parish priest was Fr John Carroll CM, to whom reference is made elsewhere as bringing about a seismic improvement in the ecumenical scene in Lanark. The year 1960 saw the celebration of the Tercentenary of the death of St Vincent de Paul. It was also the year of a Vocations exhibition in the Helvin Hall, Glasgow. Fr Carroll decided we should take part, so he asked the present writer to look to it.

Starting from scratch, and with a very small budget, we had one priceless advantage: a brilliant young commercial artist in the person of John McIlvanney, who later had a successful career in London. When asked to design a Vincentian stall for the exhibition his first question was; “what have you to show them about your Vincentian vocation?” On being told “very little”, he answered “we will plan accordingly”. What we had to exhibit was a statue of Our Lady of the Miraculous

Medal, and the two familiar black and white pictures depicting the cruel deaths of our Chinese martyrs, Francis Clet and John-Gabriel Perboyre. What he came up with was a twenty-foot long Vincentian Stall in sombre black with entrance at one end and exit at the other and "Vincentian Fathers" in bold white lettering.

Other orders had their stalls ranging from Eskimo Igloos to straw huts and suitably clad inmates from the Cameroons, all of which people found interesting as they patrolled by. By contrast, the Vincentian stall had a forty-yard queue of people meandering. It was a simple yet brilliant ploy, for there was universal sympathy for our two suffering martyrs. The leaflets describing their mission in China were in great demand.

The big question was were there any vocations resulting from the Exhibition? The answer was no; even in these early days before affluence and prosperity affected us all.

1967 Birmingham

In the year 1963 I had arrived as a member of the community at St Vincents, Sheffield. There I was variously occupied with parish missions, retreats, the parish music and with improving the technique of my golf swing. 1967 was announced as the date of the next Vocations Exhibition, the venue being the Bingley Hall, Birmingham. This time the call came from the then Provincial Fr James Cahalan CM. Fr O Hagan CM was to be my collaborator and the objective was to be a Vincentian stall in partnership with the Daughters of Charity. The planning for this was centred at the Sisters house in Blanford St, London, with Frs O Hagan and myself commuting from Sheffield.

The exhibition was the occasion of perhaps the major event in the life of the United Kingdom part of the province. The community at Ullathorne Grammar School, Coventry, agreed to host a coming-together from all the centres of Vincentian activity, in all some 250 were involved. Bus parties from Sheffield, the Sacred Heart parish Mill Hill, Our Lady's parish, Hereford, Catholic Church, Dunstable, Vincentian parish, Bristol, while St Mary's College, Twickenham, was represented by the Principal and the president of the Students Union. Lanark was represented by twelve altar boys and Fr John O Hare CM. All attended a Mass in Ullathorne Hall and were later entertained to a sit-down lunch courtesy of the Vincentians at Coventry and the school's catering staff. All then went to the Exhibition in Birmingham.

Again the obvious question arises as to whether there was any response. Again, as in Glasgow 1960, the answer was no. Not surprisingly, the idea of a vocations exhibition was abandoned. What was happening? The world was changing and the church would be changing,

even if not in essentials. For a believing Catholic, the Holy Spirit was taking a guiding hand amidst it all and so we had Vatican II. Where it goes from there time will tell.

Come Holy Spirit.

British Heroes of the Holocaust Awards

Joan Conway DC

On March 9th 2010 Sister Marie, Provincial, and I were invited to 10, Downing Street to receive the above award on behalf of Sister Agnes Walsh, one of our Sisters who, in 1944, helped a Jewish family in France to escape the attention of the Nazis.

Ada Valinda Walsh was born in Hull in 1896 and entered the Community of the Sisters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul. She was placed in the Orphanage in Mill Hill for a few months before being placed in Ireland (the British Province consisted of England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales until 1970 when Ireland became a separate Province). Sister Agnes was in Dunmanway from 1917-1924, and then Pelletstown from 1924-1932. Sister had volunteered for the foreign missions and in 1932 was sent to Jerusalem. As she went to Jerusalem from Ireland she was issued with an Irish passport. This was a lucky mistake.

In 1934 while showing some visitors around Bethlehem, Sister tripped on an Arab lady's dress and fell down some stairs, injuring her back. At first she was treated in the hospital in Bethlehem but in 1935 returned to France for further treatment. She remained in France in Paris and Andernos until 1940 when she was appointed assistant in Cadouin, in the Dordogne in southwest France, where it was felt she would be relatively safe. Sister Agnes always insisted that she had an Irish passport and as Ireland was neutral she would not be in any danger. Sister Agnes had only to open her mouth for anyone to know she was definitely English.

In Cadouin, the Sisters ran a school for girls from ten to fourteen. The girls "were taught all that was considered necessary for a good farmer's daughter and future wife: how to cook, to keep a budget to take care of children etc. Art was not forgotten and Sister Agnes taught the girls how to draw and paint" (extract from Alain Cremieux's letter Oct 1993). Sister Louise Granier was the Superior of the house which had twelve Sisters and between thirty and fifty students and staff. Feeding such numbers in wartime was quite demanding so Sister Louise got the Sisters to raise chickens, rabbits and pigs (which included the only boar in the village!) at a time when food was more important than money. Sister Louise insisted that the parents of the children paid part of the fees in kind, i.e. meat, fruit or vegetables rather than in francs, Although she was English, Sister Agnes' papers said she was Irish and once Ireland was neutral Sister received Red Cross parcels which were filled with fabrics and other goods which helped to keep the school going.

After the Germans occupied all of France in 1942, Sister Louise was afraid someone in the village would denounce Sister Agnes as it was common knowledge she was English, in spite of the Irish papers. Sister Louise asked "The greatest bandit of Cadouin" – a communist member of the Resistance – to be prepared to take Sister Agnes to safety, "on the back of his motor bike should danger arise". Fortunately, the Germans never came, but one imagines what a sight it would have been, to see a Sister in a big white headdress and long habit speeding down a country lane astride a motor bike!"

However, a Jewish family, the Cremieux, did come.

Fifteen months earlier, M Pierre Cremieux had met Sister Louise by chance at a railway station. Trains were very irregular and during the long waiting period, people began talking to one another. M Cremieux explained he was Jewish and had fled illegally, with his family, from occupied France to Villeneuve-sur-Lot, a town fifty miles north of Toulouse. He asked if things got dangerous could he come to the convent. Sister Louise replied "Eh bien venez" (Just come). This was no small matter for one should not forget that it was a crime to help a Jew. M Cremieux brought his wife and three children (Alain, aged seven, and Colette and Jean-Pierre, nine-month-old twins, to Cadouin, Sister Agnes took them under her wing declaring she had nothing to fear as she had an Irish passport. Only Sister Louise and Sister Agnes knew who the family really was. The Sisters were told that they were distant relatives of Sister Louise and the mother needed country air to recuperate after the birth of the twins. The mother was given a room above the laundry while Alain, a male, was sent to live with the parish priest. During his forced holiday, he took advantage of the books in the priest's library where he read predominantly the lives of the saints. He was given English lessons by Sister Agnes. The Cremieux family was in Cadouin from February to April 1944, when Sister Agnes received a phone call from Colonel Delluc, adjutant to the mayor and a friend of Sister Agnes, who warned her that her "friends from Paris" had better not be at the Convent when the Germans came for an inspection. According to Alain Cremieux, the family left immediately, though the threat never materialised. They spent the rest of the war hidden in Villeneuve-sur-Lot where M Cremieux had continued to live after he had brought his family to the safety of the convent.

Sister Agnes remained in Cadouin until 1950 when she was placed in Epinay-sur-Senart, a village near Paris, where she served as a member of staff in an Old Peoples' Home. In 1967, she returned to the British Province and was placed in Ladbroke Grove, 1967-1970 (a Nursing Home) then in Ealing, 1970-1980, and finally to the Priory, Mill Hill, where she died in 1993 aged 97.

Alain Cremieux's brother, Jean Pierre, and his sister, Colette, began the process to get Sister Louise and Sister Agnes recognised as "Righteous Among the Nations." A Jewish person must put the names forward. Thanks to the efforts of the Cremieux siblings, Sister Agnes and Sister Louise were awarded the title in 1990. This honour entitled the Sisters to a medal and a Certificate of Honour as well as the privilege of having their names inscribed on the wall in the Garden of the Righteous, Yad Vashem, Jerusalem. Sister Agnes, as a spritely 94 year old, was delighted with this award.

Sister Agnes died three years later and Alain Cremieux attended her funeral. He was asked to write about Sister Agnes' time in Cadouin and many of the details of this story are taken from Alain's letter. He concludes, "Sister Agnes and Sister Louise remain for me symbols of sweetness, candour, calm, and goodwill, unusually associated with courage and determination."

"Goodness, like evil, begins with small steps." (Rabbi David Blumenthal)

The Jewish authorities in England have been pressing for the 33 British men and women who helped the Jews and others to escape the Holocaust to be honoured in their own country. After a visit to Auschwitz, the Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, announced such an award. Unable to trace any of Sister Agnes' relatives, Sister Marie and I were invited to receive this award. We were invited to lunch in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office together with relatives of other recipients. There were just two people to receive the award in person, both men in their nineties. One had organised the kinder-trains which brought Jewish children out of Poland and Germany to live with foster parents in England, and the other was a British POW who was in a camp near a concentration camp and who exchanged places with a sick Jewish man so that he could get some good food and rest.

At the reception we met a lot of interesting people and learnt their stories. We had a delicious lunch in the Locarno Suite, a magnificent room with a painted ceiling and murals on the walls. We had no fixed places so we were joined by two ladies who worked in the Foreign Office and by a family representing an English lady who lived in Denmark during the War and hid Jewish people in her home.

After the meal we went over to No. 10 Downing Street where we waited in an ante-room ready to be called to receive the award in private. We received the medal from George Denham and Chadri Malik. Two men spoke to us about Sister Agnes and then we had our photograph taken with the two MPs. When all the medals had been presented, the Prime Minister came in and chatted with people as he made his way to the microphone. He welcomed everyone and said how pleased he

was to grant these awards as every person honoured, whether they had saved one life or several hundred lives, had risked their own life to help someone in need. He commented that this was one of the darkest periods in our history yet light shone through these people who willingly put themselves in danger to help others.

As we left Downing Street we passed down the corridor where the portraits of past Prime Ministers hang. We saw the recently installed portrait of Margaret Thatcher. We had our photo taken at the door of number 10, and so ended a memorable day.

Father Hugh Murnaghan CM

It was the month of July of 1963. I was a first year seminarist in St Joseph's, Blackrock. We were on our holidays and playing football in Castleknock College. The students of St Kevins, Glenart were pitted against their younger fellow Vincentians from Blackrock. These soccer matches were supposed to be all good fun, but not for nothing were they known as "blood" games!

As this particular match progressed, I could hardly not be aware of a middle-aged priest striding up and down the touchline shouting and waving his walking stick. He was not known to me and I found it difficult to work out why he was shouting support for both teams. I asked one of the other players who he was and was told: "That's Hugh Murnaghan over on holidays from Ullathorne School in Coventry!" I think that shouting "Come on Glenart – get the ball!" and "There's a man free, Blackrock – give him some support!" – summed up the man. He was an enthusiast whether in football, teaching or prayer.

Many years later when I lived with Fr Hugh, he often spoke of his family in Omagh, Co Tyrone. His mother died when he was quite young – his father married again and there were many brothers and sisters. Fr Hugh was educated by the Christian Brothers in Omagh and later when he felt a calling to the Vincentians, he finished his secondary education in St Patrick's in Armagh. He spoke with great affection of his teachers in both places. He was later – after ordination and further studies in Cork – to teach in Armagh.

The Murnaghans of Omagh were a highly principled, loyal and dedicated family. Fr. Hugh spoke of his father's concern for poor people and it was well known that, as a solicitor, Mr Murnaghan represented many people pro bono. It was obvious to me that Fr Hugh's real concern for our brothers and sisters who had been dealt a duff hand in life – that concern came from his parents.

As a science teacher both in Armagh and Coventry, Hugh influenced many generations, both boys and girls. He loved recounting stories of students he had – the boy who was cured of a stammer – the girl who was known in her family as "professor" because she took books home from school – the teams which won the Ulster colleges MacRory Cup.

It was not an easy task to build from scratch, a grammar school within the already existing Ullathorne Secondary Modern School. He spoke with great affection of Fr Tom Cashin, the leader of that little group of Vincentians. Fr Tom, he said, had to be extremely diplomatic in a difficult situation in Coventry. In his latter years in Ullathorne, Fr Hugh exchanged the Bunsen Burner for the Bible and was a talented catechetical teacher.

He enjoyed a short period Dunstable after he finished teaching. His time as superior and parish priest in Sundays Well, Cork, was not happiest, but he did his best. One hoped that in the large scheme of things the people of Sundays Well could see that he did do his best. He preached and celebrated the sacraments – he emptied bins and telephone boxes – he kept immaculate records – he played golf and after a game meticulously washed the rubber grips of the golf clubs – enthusiast!

For many years, he lived on the Ridgeway in Mill Hill. He was chaplain to the SVP in Westminster diocese. He loved helping with retreats and conferences – hearing confessions in a compassionate way was his delight. He spoke with enthusiasm of the Beginning Experience Movement – a weekend for divorced, separated and bereaved men and women – talking to them, listening to their stories in a gentle and loving way.

Fr Hugh loved people who were in need. He was an assiduous visitor of, and unofficial chaplain to, The Priory – the retirement home for the Daughters of Charity on the Ridgeway in Mill Hill. The first Friday of every month was his day for visiting all the Sisters in The Priory and spending time with those confined to their rooms. If they wished to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation that was fine – not that was OK too. In his book, everyone was valuable.

It was the evening of Christmas Day 1990. Fr Tom Lane CM had had a stroke some days previously and was in hospital in Cambridge. Hugh Murnaghan made sure that a rota was drawn up so that Tom had visitors each day. God help you if you failed to fulfil your place on the visiting list! There was no messing with him!

I think it was this attention to detail which was one of Hugh's strongest characteristics. Fr Hugh and myself drove to Cambridge to the hospital. There was no question of going empty handed and we sat around Fr Tom's bed and laughed and had Oxford baps and Stilton cheese and wished one and all "A very Happy Christmas."

His latter years were spent in the Sacred Heart Home in Raheny. I don't think he saw himself as "retired". I believe he still felt that he had a ministry to the other residents – lay and clerical. He was visited regularly and supported by his Vincentian community across the road in St Paul's. He occasionally joined them for feast day gatherings. He loved to receive visitors and talk of the days of yore.

What is my abiding single memory of Fr Hugh Murnahan? There are so many – but if I were to pick one – it is listening to him in the oratory of St Vincent's House on the Ridgeway in Mill Hill. He is on his own and saying Evening Prayer. In a good strong voice he sings the opening hymn, recites the psalms and then I hear him praying: "My soul glorifies the Lord – my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour ...!"

There was no question of his muttering or whispering or mumbling his prayers – you prayed with your full heart, mind and body. He was an enthusiast!

“Eternal rest grant unto him O Lord ...”

Fergus Kelly CM

Hugh Murnaghan CM

Born: Omagh, Co Tyrone, 18 March 1918
 Entered the CM: 13 October 1936
 Vows: 18 October 1938
 Ordained Priest: 30 May 1943 at Holy Cross College, Clonliffe, by
 Dr John Charles McQuaid, Archbishop of Dublin

APPOINTMENTS:

1943 – '46: St Vincent's, Sunday's Well, Cork
 1946 – '56: St Patrick's College, Armagh
 1956 – '78: St Vincent's, Coventry
 1978 – '79: St Mary's, Dunstable
 1979 – '85: St Vincent's, Sunday's Well, Cork
 1985 – '98: Damascus House, London
 1998 – '04: St Vincent's, Mill Hill
 2004 – '09: Sacred Heart Residence, Sybil Hill
 (attached to St Paul's, Raheny)

Died: 05 May 2009
 Buried: Glasnevin Cemetery

Father Eugene Sweeney CM

Homily given at Eugene's funeral Mass;

"I could have better spared a better man" [William Shakespeare]

"It depends what you mean by better" [Eugene Sweeney]

Eugene liked to have the last word.

It would not be possible to satisfactorily give a comprehensive treatment of Eugene's life, personality and character within the short confines of a funeral Homily. Nor is such a comprehensive account necessary. You all have your various memories of the man, and know the affection in which he was held. Your emphases may well be different from mine – "that's the way it goes" – to cite one of his favourite comments.

For me, first and foremost, Eugene was a realist – a flat-eyed realist *"A primrose by the river's brim, a yellow primrose was to him, and it was nothing more"* – Similarly a loose screw was a loose screw. Because he was a realist he hated everything that was false or phoney or affected. He asked me to give the homily at his funeral Mass in the expectation that this would be respected. He wanted warts and all. Indeed, especially warts. You might not like it – but it's what he asked for, and his remains aren't here to make us feel good. He particularly disliked ornate baroque ruminations posturing as the higher, would-be more-insightful spirituality. He would really have disliked a syrupy whitewash job – or anything emotional.

His flat-eyed, pragmatic realism extended to his vocation to priesthood. He was free enough to assert that he should never have been ordained to priesthood – some may feel uncomfortable with that, though I must say I admired his freedom in saying so. How many of us are comparably free? He felt no calling whatsoever to pastoral work such as preaching "giving a spiff" or hearing confessions as he would have called it. I'm sure he was right about this – he should never have been let near a pulpit, nor, I imagine, a Confessional. The talents the Lord gave him lay elsewhere.

His talents were practical. While very happy in belonging to the Vincentian community, he reckoned he should have been a Brother. I believe he could have had a wonderfully rich ministry as a Brother, say, in rural China when he was in his prime – say the 1930s, '40s and '50s – a true liberator making the water flow and bringing electricity, improving sanitation, fixing machinery and so on, and in such matters passing on skills to local people – and probably speaking the language like a native; "raising up the people" as the Chinese like to say. Better

doing that than moralising in a Church to them. He was the elemental “will-do” “hands-on” “mucker-in”. In fact, I believe he would have made a very successful field-surgeon on the missions. He had a great interest in medicine and knowledge of anatomy – he liked the versicle in the Psalm “we are fearfully and wonderfully constructed” [though that was usually invoked to account for any of his colleagues who weren’t the full shilling]. He had the temperament for dealing effectively with human ailments - being devoid of sentimentality or false sympathy. If you appeared in his presence with one of your limbs or head bandaged, his robust greeting was always – “have it off.”

Unfortunately, he had learned and appropriated pre-Vatican II theology and spirituality so thoroughly that he found it almost impossible to act outside of these, though he wasn’t without insight into their limitations.

Eugene had all the traditional qualities of discipline, hard work, common sense, fidelity and piety, and much more.

There was extraordinary discipline and regularity in his life – matter-of-factly never counting the cost. Down in the oratory in the morning for his meditation and prayer – long before the rest of us. A great man to have in community. Absolutely faithful to his Vincentian vocation. And being a man of faith there would have been no doubt in his mind that he’d be meeting us all again.

He had a great fear of the Final Particular Judgement – the *Dies Irae* (the Day of Wrath) was a daily living reality for him – an oft-quoted text being “*Liber Scriptus Proferetur*” – with the Recording Angel producing the Accounts book in which all his sins and transgressions had been recorded.

Though he feared the Recording Angel there was something about the image of the book being produced that appealed to him. Maybe he was looking forward to arguing the toss about a few entries.

A rare man no matter how you slice him; no doubt he could be a contrary little git – that’s why we are here to pray for him. I often told him he was irritating – he agreed of course. To quote himself: “I’d brain you if I knew where to hit you.” He gave me so many laughs – and I cherish his memory for that. When he was ninety years of age I heard him admonishing a nun-then in her seventies – for not wearing make-up – thus somehow making life a little bit harder for him.

I could have conversations with Eugene that I could not have with anyone else. I’ll miss that. The few happy hours I spent during my 30 years or so in All Hallows, were spent in Eugene’s company – especially when we enjoyed a leisurely late breakfast together, and I got him reminiscing about his young days and about Vincentians he had known long ago, with their idiosyncrasies – we loitered so long that eventually

Michael Daly – another rare man – would bring us in a fresh pot of tea and maybe a few horse-racing tips for myself. I do believe that on such occasions I was briefly happy in this attritional place.

Eugene is one of only two confreres I have grieved for – the other being Brian Doyle, though that was for other reasons.

I cannot think of Eugene without a smile coming to my heart – and I feel grateful for that. *“Take him all in all, I will never look upon his like again”*. We were all enriched by him. May the Lord reward him and may he rest in peace.

Jim McCormack CM

Eugene Stephen Sweeney CM

Born;	Burtonport, Co Donegal, 26 December 1910
Entered the CM;	7 September 1930
Final Vows;	8 September 1932
Ordained;	27 September 1936 in Holy Cross College, Clonliffe, by Bishop Wall, Auxillary Bishop of Dublin

APPOINTMENTS;

1937-'38;	St Vincent's, Castleknock
1938-'44;	St Patrick's College, Drumcondra
1944-'66;	St Mary's College, Strawberry Hill
1966-2009;	All Hallows College from 1966-'81, he was Provincial Bursar

Died;	27 April 2009 (in Rickard House)
Buried;	All Hallows College