

COLLOQUE

Journal of the Irish Province of the
Congregation of the Mission

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Editorial

“Every scholar... knows how to bring both new things and old out of his treasure-house”, according to the Knox version of Mt 13:52. With this issue our Journal reaches the scripturally significant number of twelve and continues to blend the old and the new. It looks at the 1658 Common Rules and the 1980 Constitutions, at the 19th century ministry of St Justin and the 20th century ministry to the Travellers. It carries obituaries of recently deceased confreres and reflections by one of the seminarists of the 1984-85 seminaire which, for the first time in the Province, took place in London.

Even after the official establishment of the Congregation in Ireland in 1839 some Irishmen elected to join it elsewhere, either because they happened to be living abroad at the time, or because they wished to work on the foreign missions at a time when the Irish Province had not yet become involved in such work. A list of these confrères is given, believed to be complete, with very brief indications of their work. For some of them quite a lot of biographical detail is on record while for others hardly anything beyond the fact of their entry to the community.

St Vincent, Vatican II and our new Constitutions

Aidan McGing

*(Revised version of paper read to Vincentian Study Group,
11 October 1984)*

When I began this article it did not occur to me to consult the Constitutions, but as I went along I was irresistibly drawn to them, finding to my surprise that they answered most of the questions I was asking. I quote from the provisional text of 1980.

The Congregation a Religious Community

After much searching Vincent founded the Congregation of the Mission.¹ He insisted that we were not religious, as the term was understood at that time, but he gave us all the marks of a religious community: a motto, a logo (Christ evangelising), a purpose peculiar to ourselves, prayer in common, vows, a very strong sense of community, and, perhaps above all, a rule. We were in fact to become a model for most of the male religious communities established during the next three hundred years, more communal than the Jesuits, less monastic than the friars.

But, like most religious communities, we seem destined to pass through cycles of development and decay. The very success of a community as it develops, prospers and loses its first enthusiasm, brings about its decline. Then it either disappears or is renewed.² If the first cycle of the Congregation lasted from about 1640 to 1790— although the decline had already begun before 1790³ — the second cycle began in the 1830s, after the apparitions in the rue du Bac. It was then that our Province began, and after 150 years of existence it is now faced with decline.

The future is in God's hands: "The Spirit breathes where it wills ...; you do not know whence it comes or whither it goes" (Jn 3:8); but we have been given talents to trade with until the Master comes. Often the Spirit will come only if we first do what we can. Events will certainly overtake us, but we can prepare for them by open discussions in which nobody claims to be infallible.

The Second Vatican Council raised three key issues about religious communities: (a) Life in a religious community is a following of Christ based on faith; (b) Different founders had different aims and different spirits; one must if necessary, return to the original aim and spirit of the founder. Paul VI refined this idea further by referring to the “charism” of the founder; (c) Communities should examine the signs of the times — how are the original aims, in the spirit of the founder, to be adapted to a changing world?⁴

We are not going to be renewed by Roman documents so much as by charismatic figures perhaps already among us. In the meantime I would like to reflect on the above three issues which, incidentally, our new Constitutions take as foundational (§1 and §2).

Life in the Community a following of Christ in faith

Along with the other great founders Vincent had entered a world where human success, reputation and getting one’s way are less important than following Christ (Lk 9:57), and doing the Father’s will (Mt 7:21), so it is no accident that the longest chapter in the Common Rules is the second one, on the Maxims of the Gospel.

The problem is that one accepts the gospel, one is evangelised, only through faith, and this faith comes easy to none of us in the pluralist post-critical society. Already in Matthew and Luke even the apostles doubt in the presence of the risen Christ, while in Mark and John they are blamed by Jesus for not believing in his resurrection (Mt 28:17; Lk 24:33; Mk 16:11, 13-14; Jn ch 20).

The inner life even of Jesus himself was stormy and full of temptation from within and without; the tradition is eloquent on the desert temptation, his rejection by his own family, village and people, and on his terror before his passion. Paul speaks of the same inner drama in himself (Cf Rm 7:14-25; Phil 3:5-16; 2 Cor 12:7-10); and we know that Vincent spent several years of agonising doubt before he came to believe peacefully. Whatever mixed motives drew us into the community Vincent invites us to live increasingly from faith, a faith not to be taken for granted. That faith asks questions is a sign of life, as pain is a sign of life.

The Charism of the Founder

Vincent knew well that different communities followed Christ in different ways (IX, 582), and he was quite clear, for all his humility, that he was leaving something distinctive to both the Daughters and ourselves, what we would now call the charism of the founder. Speaking both to

the priests and the Daughters he is surprisingly categorical that their vocation is new and unique (XII, 79-80; IX, 18-19).

The ethos of the Congregation, as I remarked above, had a great influence on subsequent male communities, while the conception behind the Daughters was as original as that of St Francis of Assisi, and perhaps as influential. We underestimate ourselves.

The word “charism” appears fifteen times in the New Testament. It generally means a spiritual gift, such as prophecy or administration, given to individuals for the service of others. A charism accords with God’s revelation, it perfects the person who receives it, is consonant to his temperament and the needs he sees around him.⁵ “As each has received a gift (charism), employ it for one another, as good servants of God’s varied grace; whoever speaks, as one who utters oracles of God; whoever renders service, as one who renders by the strength which God supplies ...” (I Pet 4:10-11).⁶

The charism of a religious founder is some aspect of Christ which the founder appropriates and applies to the conditions he sees before him. If he is a great founder others will continue to apply his insights but may in time fall away from them. In this case the survival or renewal of the community means returning to the original insights and adapting them to the new conditions.

For instance, the founding charism of the Benedictines turns on two main points, devotion to liturgical prayer and sheer hard work — *laborare est orare*. In the chaos which surrounded him in the sixth century Benedict saw these two elements as central. But since then, wherever Benedictines have flourished, Cîteaux, Maria Laach, Collegette in Minnesota, these two constants recur, always different yet always the same.

Vincent’s charism is equally distinct. Stafford Poole remarks that “... in areas of daily living... St Vincent was heavily indebted to the Jesuits, but... in the major part of his rule — that which deals with the purpose, scope, breadth and nature of the Congregation — he has borrowed from his own experience and spirit”.⁷ The weakest parts of a religious rule are always those which reflect conditions during the founder’s lifetime, and this is where Vincent borrowed from others, for instance the injunction never to leave the house alone (CR IX 11). But the core of the Common Rules, the “possession for ever”, is quintessentially Vincent.

Nevertheless, this charism exists in a living tradition. If we wish to understand it today we have to turn to the Constitutions which have been brought to birth after seventeen years of co-operating work. If they reflect insights from Vatican II they also reflect the collective wisdom

of provinces all round the world. If ever the Spirit has spoken to us it is here. One has only to compare them with the old legalistic Constitutions of 1954; these meant nothing to us and they spoke of a world that has gone. The new Constitutions speak of a renewed Vincentian world yet to be built up, not indeed from the letter only, but from the Spirit: "...as you progress in the school of Christ (by prayer) he will give you insights that cannot be found in books; he will give you his Spirit" (IV 125).

I would like to consider two characteristics of Vincent's charism, evangelisation and willingness to help the neighbour. They are both clearly a participation in the spirit of Christ. Two of the high points of Matthew's gospel are the great judgement on what we have done for others (ch 25) and the final command "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations ..." (Mt 28:18). In Lk 9:2 Jesus sends the disciples out to evangelise *and* to heal.

Attending a seminar in the summer of 1984 in Damascus House I found myself alone at breakfast with a Nigerian sister. Making conversation I asked her whether she was a teacher, a nurse or a catechist. I did not know what I meant by "catechist" but thought vaguely it had something to do with evangelisation. To my horror, I suddenly realised that I was hoping she would say she was either a nurse or a teacher, because deep down I felt that these occupations had more status than the direct spreading of the gospel. I suddenly saw my real values as opposed to my proclaimed values. A nurse or a teacher did something tangible, had a place in society, was intelligent enough to get a degree, and so escaped the fate of having to announce the word of God directly, of being made a fool before angels and men. Should I have been surprised at my real values? Jesus himself, before he started to evangelise (Mk 1:15) struggled with himself to give up the more attractive goals of security, popularity and power (Mt 4:1-10; Lk 4:1-12). Vincent too would have been more comfortable in the De Gondi household rather than wandering round among the tenants of their estates. Karl Rahner writes:

Paul says that he is not ashamed of the gospel (*evangelium*, Rm 1:16), and the very fact that this has to be particularly emphasised implies that this attitude of boldly refusing to be ashamed must be intended as some kind of counter to an interior shrinking, a reluctance to speak out, a feeling that preaching the word or any other kind of coming out into the open with the hidden reality and truth of Christianity into the "world", which is uninterested and irritated by it, is out of place and inappropriate (Rahner: *Theological Investigations*, Vol 7, P 261).

And yet the end of the Congregation is to follow Christ the evangeliser (Constitutions §1). My encounter with the Nigerian sister showed what a deep conversion this part of our charism requires of me. I am at present spared the stress of being a “mere” evangeliser since I am placed in a prestigious institution.

A second part of Vincent’s charism, the one by which he is best known, is the way he helped others. But if the modern industrial state has taken over and developed the medical, welfare and educational services that Vincent sought to provide, are we to conclude that this part of his charism is now irrelevant? Napoleon wished to revive the Daughters of Charity to run his hospitals, but in our society such a thought would be an anachronism.

In his own time Vincent helped the distressed in the only way he could, by getting money from the rich for them, with the typical remark that “we should ask their forgiveness for humiliating them” (the poor) in the process. He said that Christ not only spoke to the crowds about his Father but he also had pity on them, he healed and fed them and re-integrated outcasts back into society. Christ was not just making rice Christians — he blamed those who followed him for bread — but he wished to help people because he liked them, and it was this aspect of the spirit of Christ which Vincent copied.

Today, with increased wealth, education, mobility and communication, the options have changed. If during the golden sixties, with the euphoria of the Council, the Church seemed to be reconciling itself with the contradictory ideologies of Marxism and liberalism, she is now steadily developing a social theory which avoids the excesses of both sides. Sometimes it is called the option for the poor, but it is more subtle than it sounds (cf *Gaudium et Spes* § §63-72). Suffice it to say for our present purpose that Paul VI, back in a long statement on the need for evangelisation today, devoted eleven paragraphs (§§29-39) to the close link between evangelisation and human development.⁸ What he elaborates in terms of today’s society Vincent was already doing 350 years ago. My point is that Vincent’s vision of the union between redemption and creation is still relevant today. Vincent’s missions left “charities” behind them; what will a mission or its equivalent leave behind it in thirty years time? Will it be something like Gamblers Anonymous, Overeaters Anonymous, a service for family counselling, or a renewed St Vincent de Paul Society conference?

Is Vincent's charism one of mediocrity?

It has sometimes been said that CM stands for Congregation of Mediocrity and, interestingly, Vincent himself wrote to Gaspard Stelle in 1659 that "mediocrity is enough" (VIII, 33). We are told also that Newman would not join the Vincentians (he was interested) because they did not give "... to theology and literature that place in their system which he wished".⁹ So, is there a great lacuna in our charism? Such a lacuna is possible. After all, St Bonaventure had to sort out the chaos which he had inherited from St Francis of Assisi, and St Francis of Borgia changed some of Ignatius' most cherished ideas, because he thought them impractical;¹⁰ yet the charisms of Francis and Ignatius are still around.

Concretely, if we aimed "in our system", as Newman put it, at the same sort of erudition as, let us say, the Dominicans or Benedictines, would we diminish the charism? The answer must be very nuanced.

Vincent himself, as his letters show, had a considerable formation both in theology and in the humanities. His correspondence in fact constitutes a minor classic of 17th century French prose. But it appears that before his conversion Vincent was an ecclesiastical careerist who saw knowledge as a way upwards. After his conversion, living in the intellectual centre of Europe, he saw knowledge being sought as a means of acquiring power and wealth in the Church; he saw endless disputes among theologians, and civil war was exacerbated by religious controversy. Everybody in Paris seemed to want either to read or to write religious books; in 1643-45 forty per cent of works published in Paris were to do with the Christian faith, while the dechristianised country people were being neglected.¹¹

We have always said that Vincent was a pragmatist. In the circumstances he simply wanted priests who would be willing to speak simply to illiterate peasants in a language they could understand; and priests who would give primitive seminary courses often lasting no longer than six months. Hence the recurring motif in his correspondence with the priests: you know enough, leave your books and get on with the work. And yet he was delighted with the progress of the students in their studies, he was glad to have learned priests, and he insisted that the missionaries should study and revise their sermons during the summer. Are we so insistent today on in-service training?

Indeed, reading between the lines, we will often sense that he is playing down the need for knowledge either to goad the laggard into action or to reassure the diffident. But in the end we get the impression that knowledge is a sort of necessary evil. Must we accept this verdict

today?

How could we? No matter what form our evangelisation takes, the people we communicate with today have been exposed to a range of ideas, education and experience unknown to Vincent's audiences. They are being assailed by a steady anti-Christian propaganda both from Marxists and (for lack of a better word) the liberals. The thinking behind "the little method" is correct; one must speak to people simply and concretely. But the person who can speak most simply and concretely, and relevantly to the preoccupations of his audience, all things being equal, is the person who has studied and reflected on the matter. People usually do not even realise why they think in the way they do; if the preacher understands what they think and why they think it he can reach them at a far deeper level.

My generation was taught a decadent theology and biblical fundamentalism. Catholic theology had been effectively shackled since the counter-reformation, and all the more so since the appearance of critical scholarship, but at present we are entering a golden age of theology when real questions are being asked and revelation is being related to a world as it is.

For those who feel drawn to deeper studies in theology or related bodies of knowledge, the field is wide open. To take a simple example: why is the family disintegrating before us? I suggest that there are many reasons which people do not fully understand. To know some of these reasons, even in a simplified form, would support many in their struggle. What has been the depersonalising effect of Marxism in this regard, the effect of a selfish liberalism, the effect of the media taking over from parents, and why exactly has sex so suddenly become divorced from both love and responsibility? How has Freud's work and the subsequent clinical discoveries disturbed our traditional understanding of the family? We are really talking about re-discovering the natural law in terms of our own age, which we must do if we are to be convincing.

The New Testament, which is all about evangelisation, reflects the ferment of thought which the first generations of Christians went through as they carved out a thought world amid the hostile culture of the day. The same ferment is at work again in our time.

Writing in 1646 Vincent remarked in an untranslatable sentence: "For a long time now I have been thinking how we can ensure that we are all open to all men and to all the works of the Congregation..."¹² Vincent's intuition, *on which he had long reflected*, that we should individually be open to all employments, is corroborated by recent findings. An experienced administrator, asking the question how can one ensure continuous

renewal in an organisation, replies: “The far-sighted administrator can and does take action to prevent excessive compartmentalisation. He re-organises to break down calcified organisational lines. He shifts personnel (perhaps even establishes a system of rotation) to eliminate unnecessary specialisation and to broaden perspectives. He redefines jobs to break them out of rigid categories”.¹³

By a stroke of genius Vincent had added a fourth vow of stability which did the opposite of the Benedictine vow of stability; instead of tying us down to a place it ensured that we were always open to new employment in the service of evangelisation. Ideally, as we move from one apostolic experience to another we become enriched ourselves and enrich each other mutually.

Paragraphs 34 and 37 n.2 of the Constitutions are to the point:

§34: We shall weigh all our personal affairs and matters touching ourselves in the light of our presence in community. Yet at the same time we shall duly respond to those matters which touch our private lives; we shall promote personal values. We shall discern the initiatives of confrères in the light of the end and the spirit of the mission. In this way the differences and the charisms of individual confrères can come together to increase communion (communion = *koinonia* of the New Testament: Un 1:3, Acts 4:32, etc.) and make the mission fruitful.

§37, n.2: The evangelisation of the poor gives to all our labours a unity which does not extinguish diverse talents and gifts, but directs them to the service of this mission.

Pace St Vincent, mediocrity is no longer enough. We develop what talents we have, human, organisational, intellectual, not just in the old mould of *études ecclésiastiques* (ecclesiastical studies). But granted personal interests, the Constitutions seem to believe it to be part of our charism to subordinate these to the overall apostolate of the Province.

Since St Vincent’s time we know that people are very different from each other, and should be allowed to develop in different ways, faced as they are with more specialised tasks. Still, this personalism can become selfish and damaging both to one’s self and to others; and so the Common Rules, the Constitutions, the gospel itself, set us limits, paradoxically turn us all, even the most gifted, out from ourselves and towards an end which transcends ourselves.

The Signs of the Times

The charismatic founder is always a prophet who in one way, like Christ, moves against the world; but in another way, also like Christ, he works through the roles, the needs and the expectations of contemporary society.

Vincent read the signs of his time very accurately. To take an example: in the early 1600s the ideal of organising relief for poor people was in the air. It was the one topic which united humanists, Catholics and Reformers. Lyons in particular had the most sophisticated welfare system in France, based on new methods of census-taking, record-keeping, and estimating supply and demand.¹⁴ Vincent established his first “charity” at Châtillon, which is close to Lyons. Before moving out to Châtillon he had spent a month in Lyons where he saw the system at work. He guessed correctly that the people in Châtillon were ready for it, and so he started his enterprise. It was a classic example of reading the signs of the times in the light of the gospel. While the burghers of Lyons helped the poor because they were afraid of social unrest Vincent helped them because it was a Christian thing to do.

Out of the signs of the times for our Province I would like to point to the development of teamwork among us. For years I had been hearing about “teams” without giving the matter much thought, until last Easter I read the memoirs of a General Balck.¹⁵ Balck emerged as a sinister figure, an apologist for Hitler, but a highly intelligent man. One of his major themes, drawn from a lifetime’s experience, was the absolute necessity of teamwork, in a world which has grown so complex that we can know how to act only by combining the knowledge and insights of different people. In the end, of course, there must be an authority who decides. Balck’s exposition drew many things together in my mind, and for the first time I suddenly glimpsed what “team” was all about. I saw that medical people were supposed to be working in teams. I had heard that good management involved systematic communication between the managers, so that each contributed from his expertise and responsibility. Armies were increasingly organised around small teams emotionally bonded. I even realised that in my last year in St Patrick’s the Religion Department had developed into a team, where the members generously undertook administrative tasks according to their talents, where we held regular meetings at which we discussed the real issues, exchanged information, and even asked awkward questions of each other. Like the man who had spoken prose without knowing it, I had been on a team without knowing it.

I suddenly saw that a team is not a group of individuals who happened

to be working together, but a group who supported each other (“built each other up” was Paul’s way of putting it), listened to each other with an open mind, contributing differently to a common venture with different talents, and were prepared to submit to the discipline of real meetings where the truth, sometimes painful, but usually supportive, was brought out into the open.¹⁶

There is no perfect system, no perfect people, no panacea. We are all changing all the time. In the end, no matter how we organise ourselves, we have made a vow of obedience, ultimately based on faith and not on managerial expediency. I believe that it is this obedience working out of faith which has held our Province together over the years. But even a religious organisation should reflect its surrounding culture, and our culture has forms of social control very different from those of Vincent’s time.

By our standards the regime described in the Common Rules was very strange. Any letters coming in and out of the house were read by the superior;¹⁷ confrères could not enter each other’s rooms or speak to outsiders without his permission. No one could leave the house alone; if he did go out he had to explain to the superior where he was going and why; and on his return give an account of all that had happened. Personal problems might be discussed with the superior or director, but not with any of the others. It was a regime of divide and conquer.

Vincent, like the rest of us, was a child of his time. From about 1600 till well into the following century the power of the French *paterfamilias* over his wife and family had grown steadily both in accepted attitudes and in legal enactments; it appears to have reflected the growing powers of the king.¹⁸ The problem grew so serious that patricide became a grave social evil in France even into the 19th century.¹⁹ It was from such a society that Vincent drew his methods of government.

I mentioned above that time-conditioned sections of religious rules are always the weakest and this is a case in point. But though we may have dropped Vincent’s methods of government they left us with an unfortunate legacy, the inability to say to each other what we really think. Hence those dreary community meetings we have all known, long filibusters where we stretched out the discussion of unimportant matters to ensure that nothing important came up. The system had ended by stunting us.

The system worked in the past, it may work in the future, but it will not work now. One of the key words of Trent was *potestas*, the power of the priest: one of the key words of Vatican II was *dialogue*, which it used about 150 times. But dialogue will remain another cliché until

we find the courage to sit down with each other and say, like adults, what we really think. If this new frankness is accompanied by prayer then teamwork will be a reality, different of course in different houses. “Rather speaking the truth in love we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ...” (Eph 4:15). Conversely, “Have I then become your enemy by telling you the truth?” (Gal 4:16).

The Constitutions put it well: §36:1. We will strive to live in harmony to fulfil our mission by supporting one another, especially in difficulties, and by sharing our joy in simplicity of heart.

2. We will become co-responsible, helped by the necessary service of authority, and along with the superior, in seeking the will of God in our life and works, thus engaging in active obedience. Also, we will foster mutual dialogue, thereby overcoming an excessively individual way of living.

3. We will pay close attention to the opinions and needs of each confrère humbly and fraternally ...

§55:1 To participate in the mystery of the obedient Christ requires us all to seek the will of the Father as community. We do this through mutual sharing of experience, open and responsible dialogue, in which differences of age and outlook interact, so that common directions may surface and develop, and lead to making decisions.

2. Confrères will strive to obey superiors in a spirit of co-responsibility, promptly, joyfully and perseveringly, according to the words of St Vincent.

Like most other communities we are not yet altogether ready for this way of life, which in the coming decades will indicate the path ahead. It should help to promote among us Vincent’s essential charism of kindness and compassion, in a manner impossible in the rigid society in which he himself lived; as the logic of Christianity should have abolished slavery, but could not until the social structures had first changed.

There is no perfect system, but we do seem to be moving towards a new dominant image of community life, breaking away from the Renaissance individualism of Ignatius and Vincent, and returning to older images, like that of St Dominic, more democratic but requiring their own discipline. Nearly 1500 years ago St Benedict remarked (Rule, ch. 3): “We feel that *all* should meet, for the Lord often reveals the best course to a younger monk”. In his patriarchal age Benedict assumed that the meetings would address real issues, and the younger monks would as a matter of course say what they thought. He even assumed that they would be listened to.

A Lesson from the Past

In regard to the CM home missions there were two crucial periods of growth in the past: the decades during St Vincent's lifetime, and the decades immediately after 1830. Now both periods had this in common, that they helped people to re-integrate their lives after a time of confusion. During Vincent's lifetime France gradually stabilised after a long period of unrest. Similarly, the period after 1830 was one of restoration, a time when large sections of the population wanted peace after the revolutionary and Napoleonic wars. In Ireland after 1830 the missions corresponded to a new integration.

But to return to France: the seventeenth century missions probably supported the throne (indirectly) too much, witness the favour of Richelieu, Anne of Austria, Louis XIII, and Louis XIV's transfer of the royal parishes of Versailles and Fontainebleau, and also the royal military hospital of Les Invalides in Paris, to the Congregation. After 1830 the mission crosses set up after the missions were commonly interpreted as anti-republican symbols; not indeed that we should take this interpretation too tragically, for any excuse that comes to hand can be used against Christianity.

Still, however one interprets the overtones of these missions, they clearly corresponded to deep human needs. Natural law, properly understood, is also about deep human needs and how to discern them in changing circumstances. To underline the point I may say that it is here that we part company with Luther. He regarded man as intrinsically depraved,²⁰ and salvation as a sort of thunderbolt which comes to the individual from without. Catholicism insists that man is not so depraved, and that human institutions and conduct are somehow continuous with the plan of salvation. "That the earthly and heavenly city penetrate one another is a fact open only to the eyes of faith;... not only does the Church communicate divine life to men but in a certain sense it casts the reflected light of that divine life over all the earth, *notably in the way it heals and elevates the dignity of the human person*, in the way it consolidates society, and endows the daily activity of men with a deeper sense and meaning" (*Gaudium et Spes*, §40).

Hence in the wide sense, as Paul VI insisted above, evangelisation includes both the Word of God and development. What is the development, the human integration, required of us today to under-gird faith? I suggest: how to meet unemployment, how to cope with the stress of city life, the loneliness of the nuclear family, physical and mental ill-health — all clichés, until you actually meet or experience them. It is in these areas that we will find the deep human needs of the moment. Field work

and research in these areas will help us to apply revelation to people's felt needs, if we work in a spirit of faith. Probably somewhere in here, and not in any paternalism, we will see Vincent's charism of evangelisation plus help in the third millennium. In these matters we have a lot to learn from North and South America, from Africa and from further afield. Europe with its Mediterranean origins is no longer the centre of the world.

Conclusion

Larence Cada, basing himself on Elizabeth Kuebler-Ross, outlines the dynamic whereby members of a religious community reconcile themselves with its decline:

1. Denial — not us!
2. Anger — why us?
3. Bargaining — if we changed a little, could we survive?
4. Depression — we are losing something precious.
5. Acceptance — willingness to accept a new passover journey, to enter the desert.²¹

The first temple in Jerusalem had to be destroyed, and Jeremiah had to ask his terrible questions, before it could be revealed to second Isaiah that there was a new way forward (Jer 8:18-23, 12: 1-3, 14:1-9, 20:7-8, etc. Is chs 40-55). We too must face more destruction in the Province, not of our own making, and ask ourselves terrible questions before the new way forward opens up to us. The cycles of other communities show that a lot of the old must be abandoned before the new comes to life. Then, new wine-skins must be found for new wine.

Our purification, if I may use the word, will be all the deeper because both priesthood and society are going through a crisis which we must share with them; crises which will add to our perplexity.

For his understanding of priests Vincent drew from the counter-reformation model, which we know had been preceded by a long historical development. We can now see more calmly the point the Reformers were making, that the priest had acquired too high a profile. Indeed already by 80 AD (?) Matthew seems to have been attacking incipient clericalism: nobody in the Church is to be called teacher, father or lord (Mt 23:8-10). Matthew's reasoning was simple: "You are all brothers" (23:8), and "He who is greatest among you shall be your servant" (23:11). Having lost our historical and sociological innocence how do we reconcile service with leadership? If there is a new model of what a

priest is, how does that affect the Vincentian priest?

Society, too, has its problems. Suffice it to say here that in the richest and most rational society the world has ever known the arts generally show a lack of form, an inner chaos of soul un-parallelled in western history. At a less sophisticated level, why these relentlessly bleak TV dramas? I have sufficient faith in the writers to believe that they and most of their viewers find life just so sour and confusing. If we are to live in the world we must share this inner chaos before we can rise above it, and this too must darken our counsels, perhaps more than we understand. And then there is the cataclysm in our own country; how will that affect our future?

Our previous stay in the desert (1790-1830) lasted the biblical forty years. This time, let us hope that the days will be shortened. Meanwhile, it is asked of us that we be faithful servants, that we pray, reflect — and listen to each other with our various gifts, graces and experiences.

To take a wider perspective, societies which begin with enthusiasm end as power structures. Irish people who from the 1830s began enthusiastically to welcome their religion now feel it less and less a support, and more an oppressive institution. The alienation has proceeded even faster in French Canada and Catholic Holland, societies with a history very like our own. If our contemporaries are to own their religion and find it a support, then an enormous work of evangelisation has to begin all over again. But such an evangelisation will be very different from the 1830s, and indeed from the 1980s. The great changes will make us suffer as the old wine-skins burst. "...you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy. When a woman is in travail she has sorrow, because her hour has come; but when she is delivered of the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a child is born into the world" (Jn 16:20-21).

Postscript

From the many points raised during the discussion after the above paper, two may be mentioned here. Firstly, it was objected that the paper had painted Vincent's regime too starkly: surely the reality must have been milder? This was a fair comment, but the point at issue is whether the old attitudes had left us unable to say what we think, and listen clearly to each other. The present writer believes that we cannot yet do these things.

Secondly, a confrère synthesised the difference between the past and the future of the Congregation as follows:

CM in the Past

Patriarchal
Individualism
Law & Order;
Royalism

CM Regime
CM Work Method
Human Support offered by
CM Apostolate

CM in the Future

Dialogue
Teamwork
Helping to cope with the
Innovating Society

This is a very schematic synthesis, but a constructive one, for it sees a new order for us. Working through dialogue and teamwork (and the four vows) we may find where men and women in the next millennium are in pain, and then under God and with the same methods, we help them to be reconciled to themselves, to each other, and to God, (Mt 22:36-40). While remaining true to Vincent's original vision this is innovation on the same grand scale that Vincent himself was accustomed to.

NOTES

1. Vincent's hesitations about founding a community and his search for the will of God in the matter have been documented by Pdraig Regan in COLLOQUE No. 11.
2. One may question how far individual communities have declined, or why, or what exceptions there are, but the general rule that they go through cycles of growth and decay cannot be disputed. See, for instance, Gannon & Traub: *The Desert and the City*, New York 1969; Hostie: *The Life and Death of Religious Orders*, Washington 1983 (French original 1972); Cada and others: *Shaping the Future Age of Religious Life*, New York 1979. I have so far been unable to obtain Hostie's work but Diarmuid Ó Murchú has given an abbreviated version of it in *Religious Life, Survival or Extinction*, Dublin 1980.
3. Poole: *A History of the CM*, pp 98-100.
4. See especially *Perfectae Caritatis* (October 28, 1965) §2; also *Evangelica Testificatio* (Paul VI, 1971), §§3, 11, 12.
5. It is true, as far as I know, that we have no direct evidence of NT charisms agreeing with the temperament of the recipients, but the evidence of later charisms suggests as much.
6. Cada et al., *op. cit.*, pp 163-183, give a convincing account of the founder's charism in the growth and decay of a religious community.
7. *Op. Cit.*, p 57.
8. *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 8 December 1975. Cf also an article by Gregory Baum: "The Canadian Bishops on the Economic Crisis" in *The Furrow*, August 1984; and Charles and Maclaren: *The Social Teaching of Vatican II*, San Francisco, 1982.
9. Quoted from *Newman the Oralorian*, edited by P. Murray, Dublin 1969, p 81.
10. Poole: *Op. Cit.*, p86.
11. Jean Delumeau: *Catholicism between Luther and Voltaire*, London, 1977.
12. II, 557; letter to René Sauvage. 19 January 1646: "Il y a longtemps que je pense aux moyens de faire que nous soyons tous a tous et à tous les emplois de la compagnie..."
13. John W Gardner: *Self-renewal*, New York, 1971.
14. Details of the system in Lyons, and of contemporary welfare trends in Europe, can be found in N Z Davies: *Society and Culture in Early Modern France*, New York,

- n.d., chapter I.
15. Hermann Balck: *Ordnungim Chaos: Erinnerungen 1893-1948*, Mainz, 1980.
 16. A simple introduction to team-work can be found in T Gordan: *Leadership Effectiveness Training*, London, 1979.
 17. Except those to or from Superior General.
 18. Davies, *op. cit.*, passim.
 19. *Lumière et Vie*, avril-juin 1981, p 26.
 20. This is an outrageous over-simplification, but not too far from the truth. We have to remember that nominalism, the philosophy which Luther knew best, denied in effect that man can know reality, and hence was incapable of working out a natural law corresponding to his needs. Starting from this pessimistic view of man Luther darkened it further by projecting his own terrible guilt-feelings on to mankind in general. He then saw God more as one who forgives the depraved than as one who loves men and women whom he makes lovable because they and their institutions are potentially good though vitiated by original sin. Vincent may have been a pessimist by temperament but, unlike Luther, he linked firmly the visible and invisible order of things, remembering that the Lord both forgave sin and healed sickness.
 21. *Op. cit.*, p 100.

“This little company, which occupies the last place and is the poorest of all”

Noel Travers

(Paper read to Vincentian Study Group, 11 March 1985)

I was recently asked “What order do you belong to?”. When I said “Vincentians”, the reply was “St Vincent — he was a great saint — he had great charity”. I think the person was commenting on the charity that Vincent had for the neighbour, for the poor. This reply has stayed with me. It is so obvious. Yet it took an outsider to stress the obvious. Vincent had a great love for the poor. As a boy he shared what he had with a beggar. His father did not scold Vincent for his generosity. We know that he was ordained in 1600. The years 1605-1607 were probably spent in captivity in North Africa. In 1608 he was wrongly accused of stealing money from the judge in the lodging house in Paris. From 1611-1616 he took on the temptation of the theologian, according to Fr Román. These three incidents show that Vincent had a great love for people in need. He was freed from the terrible temptation against the faith by dedicating his life to the evangelisation of the poor. From being a young priest with an ecclesiastical career in mind he got involved in serving the poor.

Yet he did not take the initiative in going to the poor. Rather it was God who set the scene for Vincent. When he had heard the dying man’s confession at Cannes near Folleville the man was so overjoyed that he told everybody of his joy and peace of mind. Madame de Gondi invited Vincent to preach the following Sunday in Folleville. God blessed his words and many people were reconciled to God. Madame de Gondi then offered a sum of money to any group of priests who would preach on her estates. Vincent did this with the help of Fr Belin and Fr Callon. Later that year at Châtillon-les-Dombes when some parishioners informed him of the plight of a needy family, Vincent organised the Ladies of Charity there and helped, in November of that year, to draw up their rules. He was blessed by God in the Spiritual Directors that he had. Cardinal de Bérulle and St Francis de Sales guided him on his journey towards the poor.

Because he was chaplain to Madame de Gondi and her household he had ready access to her estates. He took the opportunity to preach missions and set up the Ladies of Charity as a back-up and continuing source of help for the needy in these places. M. de Gondi was in charge of the galley-slaves and so Vincent had entry to the galley-slaves in Bordeaux in 1623. The following year he took possession of the Bons Enfants, his future retreat house.

The next year the Community was founded and the same year Vincent met Louise de Marillac. Fr Román tells us in his book on St Vincent (page 186) that 140 Missions were preached in the first six years of its history. The mission team numbered seven. They worked for 290 days in the year.

In 1628 Vincent was invited by the Bishop of Beauvais to preach a retreat for the ordinands. Vincent later developed this work at the Bons Enfants. While Vincent said it was the bishop who took the initiative Fr Román suggests that Vincent is perhaps speaking modestly. In any case this was to be one of the great contributions of Vincent to the Church of France.

Meanwhile Louise met Vincent. During her retreat in May 1623 Louise had serious doubts about her vocation as a wife and mother. Perhaps she should have been a Capuchin nun instead? She also had serious doubts about the immortality of the soul and wondered if she should change her director. During her retreat she had a vision of her director. She had an aversion for him! All her doubts went. The feast of Pentecost was a big feast for her for the rest of her life.

In her vision she also realised that she would be living in community but there would be a lot of coming and going — which she failed to understand; (there still is a lot of coming and going in community life!). Vincent helped her to get on her feet by asking her to do a tour of the Ladies of Charity that had been established—to see if the rules were being followed, if the poor were being cared for and to help train young girls to be catechists. She also took into her house in Paris any girl that Vincent recommended to her. Some of these girls found employment in the homes of good Christian women and some of them were to become the first Daughters of Charity. Notice again that the great founder of the Daughters of Charity, like her Director, found her vocation and release from temptation against the faith in her work for the poor.

In 1631 Vincent began his work for the ordinands in the Bons Enfants. The following year he was eventually persuaded after a delay of at least six months to take on St Lazare with its resident community and handicapped patients. This was to be a great scene for retreats for lay people

as well as for priests. These retreats were given free if the people were not able to pay something. Vincent told the protesting bursar that God would provide (Dodin: *Entretiens Spirituels de Saint Vincent de Paul*, p 993). During these retreats Vincent asked the community to support those on retreat by giving them good example. He told his confrères that their example was more important than what the retreatants heard in the conferences, as some retreatants knew more theology than Vincent or the confrère who was giving the conferences. Yet God used them all in this great work. Above all, there was to be no hijacking of retreatants into the community. Vincent was adamant that other communities sent young men to his community for a retreat in preparation for the priesthood precisely because the Vincentians were not in the business of touting for vocations. If a young man expressed a desire to join the Vincentians, Vincent would discuss the business with him.

In 1633 the Tuesday Conferences for ecclesiastics began. A glance at the rules shows that Vincent had some of the ideas that we find in the Vatican II document on priestly life. The idea of a regular meeting to discuss some theological point, the order of day, the interest and care of one another — these are things that are important today as they were in Vincent's day. This was the year that the community received papal approval for its establishment. We know that Vincent had tried twice before, in 1628, to get approval in Rome. This was also the year that the Daughters were organised into a community. Cardinal de Retz officially approved them in 1655.

I have selected these incidents from Vincent's life as a backdrop for some reflections. Firstly the poor were the focus of Vincent's apostolate. He found release from his difficulties about the faith when he dedicated himself to the service of the poor, as Abelly tells us. Dodin in his book paints a grim picture of life in France in Vincent's day. (Cf *St. Vincent de Paul et la charité* pp 1-9). Three-quarters of the men and nine-tenths of the women were illiterate. The people were badly fed and they were very ignorant of the Faith.

Our constitutions tell us in the opening paragraph of the chapter on vocation that "we follow Christ the evangeliser of the poor, that we work at evangelising the poor, especially the more abandoned, that we help in the formation of clergy and laity and lead them to a fuller participation in the evangelisation of the poor".

This paragraph sums up the life and work of Vincent. As I have tried to show in my earlier comments, this is precisely what Vincent did. His great gift was to organise and stimulate people to help the poor. He had a passion for the poor. They were his masters. I see the opening paragraph

of our constitutions as a call to conversion — as a call to serve the poor, to have that passion for them, to serve Christ in them. If I have not got that love for the poor then I can hardly call myself a son of St Vincent. I can take comfort in realising that Vincent needed a conversion. Until I undergo a similar conversion I won't have that love for the poor. Until as a community we try to live that paragraph in our constitutions with the help of God we are not giving the witness that Vincent gave in his life. He kept up contact with the exiled Bishop of Cork in France and sent him money to assist him in his need. We can, most of us, remember, especially the over 40s, the Latin phrase in philosophy “Nemo dat quod non habet” — if I don't live our motto “Evangelizare pauperibus misit me” I will never fire others with the zeal that Vincent inspired in people who were weak and sinful as we are. My first duty is to my fellow Vincentians. We live in community to support one another in the faith. I am a scandal to my confrères if I don't try to live as a poor man. One way of helping one another is the implementation of our community plan — especially the headings — the use of goods, and our lifestyle.

The conferences that Vincent gave on poverty, and his repetition of prayer on March 16th 1656, show us what he thought about poverty. The confrères used to send back reports to him of the needs of the poor in regions of Lorraine. Vincent used these reports to get money from rich people. Recently in a news programme on the BBC Michael Burke's report on Ethiopia had a wonderful response in Britain and Ireland. His programme was educational and prophetic. If we as a community and province respond to the poor it will be a response in faith. The question is “Have I the faith to see Christ in the poor?” A real poverty of spirit is needed to see how lacking I am in poverty and spirit. God expects us to have this poverty of spirit and he will give it to us if we want it. But do I want it? One of the ways of growing in the spirit of poverty is by ministering to poor people. Vincent's spirituality was forged out of his own experience of poor people. He was not an armchair theorist of the troubles of the poor. He got involved with them. In that way he was evangelised by them. I miss out on this means of growing in the spirit of poverty by not meeting poor people. Fr Richardson, the ex-Superior General, once said to me and other confrères that we should make sure that we meet at least one poor person every week. The way they live will influence the way I live. I have heard Mother Teresa say on tape that her sisters get more from the poor than they give to the poor. She gave an example of the generosity of the poor. May God in his mercy give us grace to be generous in His service and in the service of his poor.

Vincent communicated to others his love for the poor. He discovered

ways of helping the poor. It is easy to overlook the fact that he was a pioneer in these matters. With the help of others Vincent broke new ground in the type of apostolate in his country. In our situation things are different. We have inherited a tradition. The meeting of the Provincials at Bogotá and the guidance of the Superior General there give us a simple message — we must concentrate on our original apostolates—missions for the poor and the formation of the clergy. The challenge for us is to break new ground. We need courage to do this, despite our falling numbers. God blessed Vincent and his confrères and the Daughters and the Ladies of Charity. Vincent's charism lay in the missions for the poor and the work for the clergy. If we don't use the charism that we have inherited then we run the risk of losing the blessing of God. Vincent in his day appealed to the confrères that they would never give up the work for the retreatants through laziness or lack of zeal (Dodin: *Entretiens Spirituels de Saint Vincent de Paul*, p 875). Thank God we have great confrères who are doing great work. The recent *Bulletin CM* gives us a glimpse at the zeal of our confrères and the way the Lord is blessing their work. We need however, to concentrate on our two foundational works. These are our "portion and cup". Vincent did his work in times of great poverty and political unrest. Our times are strange times. The drop in vocations and the Godless atmosphere can choke us. But it need not. Our very hopelessness might be God's trump card. "If today you would listen to his voice harden not your hearts".

Vincent was a great communicator. I am amazed at the way he managed to keep all the different apostolates going at the same time. Few can match him, yet we can learn from him. He saw the potential in people and he built on it. Look at the way he helped Louise to have confidence and trust in God. He had to tell her that her son Michel was as dear to God as he was to her. He continually tells her to be simple and happy and to have full confidence in God. Despite her poor health and poor self-image she did a lot of travelling and I suspect a lot of the organising for Vincent with the Ladies of Charity. He saw the steel that lay under the diffident anxious mother. He tells her that "I can't tell you how the poor people have need that you live for a long time, and I have never seen this so clearly as I do at the present" (I, 314). In 1623 Vincent got permission from the King and from the Aldermen of Paris to take over an old square tower and he fitted it out for the care of the sick galley-slaves. Louise and her daughters were involved in this work along with others, notably the clergy of the parish of St Nicholas. We see Vincent the Spiritual Director in action in his letters to Louise. His humanity, simplicity and humour stand out so clearly. The same care

and love and firmness appear in his letters to Jean de Horgny concerning Jansenism (III, pp 318ff, and 362; these are on pp 236ff, and pp 245ff, of *Letters of St. Vincent*, translated by Leonard).

These two letters are marvellous examples of a scholarly wise pastor dealing line by line with the issues raised by his confrères. The cut and thrust of the argument is exhilarating. Yet the stakes are high: for Vincent, nothing less than the teaching of the Church and the salvation of the laity.

This sort of talking is what we need to do to keep us on our theological toes and to keep the people of God on the straight and narrow road to God. Remember the warning of Vincent about the priests and the damage that they have done to the Church. All we need to do is to take seriously the words of the Constitutions dealing with the Community Plan. We will benefit from the communal confronting of ideas and values when we start talking about what really matters — the points mentioned in the Community Plan. This is a ready-made tool for our use. If we don't use it — if we don't challenge one another about our witness to Christ — we fail each other in charity.

One of my first puzzles that I met in the community was — did Vincent really mean that he was a wretched sinner etc? At first I thought he was overdoing it. Now I think he really meant what he said. He also said that we were a wretched company made up of poor people etc. He believed this. Yet at the same time this realisation did not depress him. Quite the contrary. He had unlimited confidence in God who uses “unprofitable servants” to do his work. Hence Vincent's insistence that we seek first the kingdom of God. An older confrère has often said to me the trouble with us is that we interpreted the “little company” the wrong way. We have picked up an inferiority complex. This older confrère is right. We need to pray for the gift of humility; “the essential thing in the spiritual life” as Vincent said. Fr Maurice Kavanagh told us as students to “take a good laugh at yourselves from time to time” so that we would learn not to take ourselves too seriously, and then we might take God more seriously. We forget that our sense of humour is also a gift of God. Maybe he had a wry sense of humour. The Spaniards have their phrase “God writes straight with crooked lines”. So because we are a little company rather than even if we were a little company we can hope for great things from God.

This year we celebrate 150 years in Castleknock, 100 years of the Daughters of Charity in Britain and 100 years of our confrères in Australia. We think of the 32 confrères who died in Australia and of our Australian-born confrères living and dead; we must include also the

Daughters of Charity of the British and Irish Provinces living and dead and the All Hallows priests who have worked and still work in Australia. And all this started with a group of seven in Maynooth in 1832.

We can surely echo the words of Vincent. “Let us have confidence in God, but let it be full and complete, and let us hold for certain that having started his work in us he will complete it; for, I ask you, who was it who established the Company?” (XI, 38). The little group in 1833 had faith in God and in themselves. They wanted to live in the community and yet they did not join any of the other communities then in Ireland. It was in 1839 that Frs Dowley and Kickham went to Paris to begin their novitiate — the former confrère was 52 and the latter 32. They were brave men. They were not afraid to adapt, to take risks. We have eight students preparing for the priesthood in Celbridge and Folleville, and thirty-eight in Nigeria. Either we put our trust in God and be prepared to accept difficult appointments from our Provincial or we will die.

In the same instruction, in *Coste Vol XI*, Vincent said “Do you want to know why we don’t succeed in any work? It is because we rely on ourselves. This preacher, this superior, this confessor relies too much on his prudence, his knowledge and on his own mind. What does God do? He withdraws from him, he leaves him there; and whatever he does will produce no fruit until he recognises his uselessness and learns by his own experience that no matter what gift he may have, he can do nothing without God”.

It seems to me that we are at a crossroads in the history of our province. Our faith in God and in ourselves is being tested. Vincent and Louise, and the founders of our province gave themselves to the poor unreservedly. Being conscious of our confusion and helplessness is the beginning of our renewal as a province, if we turn to God and to the poor. Although we are poor and unprofitable servants God used us to do his work. He has done great things for us as a province and individually. The greater our spirit of poverty, and the simplicity of our lifestyle, the greater things we will do for God. We have the charism of St Vincent; let us use it, and ask God to fill us to the full with confidence in him and with joy in his service.

“Father of Love, hear our prayers. Help us to know Your will and to do it with courage and faith”. (Prayer for the First Sunday of the year).

St Vincent, the Common Rules and the Individual Confrère

Thomas Davitt

*(Revised version of paper read to Vincentian Study Group,
3 October 1983)*

Much effort has gone into research, discussion and writing about Vincent's thinking on the evangelisation of the poor and on the formation of the clergy. A proportionate amount of effort does not seem to have gone into research, discussion and writing about his thinking on the spiritual life of the individual confrère who is to implement these, and allied, ministries. Yet he told the community in St Lazare on 21 February 1659: "The spiritual life is essential; it must be our goal; if we fail there we fail in everything" (XII 131). His well-known phrase about Carthusians at home, when put back into its context, is seen to be much more than a mere aphorism:

Men in pastoral ministries have a special need to make up for the damage sustained in their everyday activity by being careful about their interior recollection. In this context Fr Vincent used to say sometimes that the life of a missionary should be like that of a Carthusian when in the house and like that of an apostle when down the country, and that his ministry and work for the spiritual welfare of others will be either more or less successful in proportion to the care with which he looks after his own spiritual life (Abelly 2:1:1:3).

An undervaluing of Vincent's teaching on the spiritual life of the individual confrère stems from two characteristics of the Common Rules. The first is the fact that they suffer from a not-too-successful attempt to put together in one book guidelines on spirituality for the individual and guidelines on administration for the community. Many of the administrative guidelines are now recognised as having been conditioned by social and other factors of 17th century France and are rightly set aside today. But setting these aside has somehow tended to give the

impression that the entire book, including the guidelines on spirituality, is out of date; it is not.

The second characteristic of the Common Rules which has contributed to an undervaluing of Vincent's teaching on the spiritual life of the individual confrère is the fact that the book contains merely concentrated encapsulations of his thinking; by 1658 he himself, in this matter, had become "a sovereign extractor of quintessences". These encapsulations must therefore be seen as the arrival-point of Vincent's thinking; to understand this thinking we must go back and see the wider material which he is summarising. Sometimes confrères at retreats or conferences have tended to take a paragraph from the Common Rules and use it as a departure-point for an exposition of *their own* interpretation of it, instead of taking it as the arrival-point of Vincent's thinking and unpacking what he had compacted.

The Common Rules were not the only set of rules which Vincent composed, and before describing how the final version evolved it is worth briefly looking at his approach to the rules of the various confraternities of charity and to those of the Daughters of Charity.

Rules of the confraternities of charity

Vincent arrived in Châtillon-les-Dombes at the end of July 1617 and was installed as Parish Priest on 1 August. The incident about the sick family and the disorganised help for them seems to have taken place on Sunday 20 August. To obviate such lack of organisation on any subsequent occasion Vincent drew up a set of rules (XIII 423ff). It is undated but it must have been drawn up early on because it had been in use for some time when it was decided that for practical reasons some items needed to be modified; the changes are dated 12 December of the same year.

Vincent resigned the parish of Châtillon on 31 January 1618 and returned to the De Gondi household, but on a new footing; he was no longer just tutor to the children but also chaplain to the tenantry on the various family estates. There were about 8,000 tenants. He set up confraternities on the Châtillon model in place after place and gave each of them a set of rules. These rules have, for the most part, survived (XIII417-537). In 1618 he gave rules to the women's confraternities in Joigny and Montmirail; in 1620 to Folleville; in 1621 to the mixed confraternity in Joigny and to Mâcon; 1622 Courboin; 1627 Montreuil; 1629 Paris, St Sauveur; 1630 Paris, St Nicolas du Chardonnet; 1634 Argenteuil. Vincent drew up rules for each of these groups almost immediately after its foundation.

Rules of the Daughters of Charity

The first group of girls started living in community with Louise on 28 November 1633 and preliminary rules were drawn up very soon (*Genèse de la Compagnie*, 1968, p 5). The earliest preserved conference of Vincent to the Daughters is dated 31 July 1634 and it is on the rules. As with confraternities Vincent had given the Daughters a set of rules very early on in their existence.

Rules for the Congregation of the Mission

When it came to the question of rules for his own Congregation Vincent took a different approach; he did not give it a set of rules right at the start.

The act of foundation of the Congregation is dated 17 April 1625 and it contains the following clause:

That those who hereafter shall be admitted to the aforementioned work shall be obliged to have the intention of serving God in it in the abovementioned manner and to observe the rule which shall for this purpose be drawn up among them (XIII 201).

The foundation was approved by the archbishop of Paris on 24 April 1626, which was Vincent's forty-fifth birthday; there is no mention of a rule in this document (XIII 202). On 4 September of the same year Vincent, Antoine Portail, François du Coudray and Jean de la Salle signed a notarised Act of Association in which they promise to "observe the aforementioned foundation and the special rule which shall be drawn up to suit the work" (XIII 204). A year and five months after the foundation the rule was still to be drawn up, a significant departure on the part of Vincent from his way of acting with regard to previous rules.

On 22 August 1628 Vincent petitioned the Sacred Congregation *de propaganda fide* about several matters, including the drawing up of statutes and constitutions and the right to alter them. Whoever dealt with this in Rome made a note that "the Mission of the Count and Countess of Joigny" should be limited to twenty or twenty-five priests and should not be permanent, because once missions have been preached around the estates there will be no further need for the Congregation (XIII 222-224).

It should be noted at this stage that in many of the references to rules in connection with the Congregation one has to understand not just the Common Rules but also what are now called the Constitutions and Statutes; this is particularly so in much of Vincent's correspondence

with his man in Rome. He sent Francois du Coudray there in 1631 and he remained till 1635. In 1639 a house was founded in the city and was always headed by one of the outstanding early confrères. In his first year in Rome du Coudray received a letter from Vincent in which he was told that the wording of the rules was not the most important thing provided the substance remained unchanged (1116).

Although nothing formal had been promulgated by 1632 there was some sort of rule being followed, because a confrère noted that during the community retreat in St Lazare that year Vincent told them that they “should have great affection for all the regulations, looking on them as the means which God gives us so that we can perfect ourselves in our vocation...” (XI 101). That last bit could be taken as Vincent’s basic point about the Common Rules: they are a God-given means for the individual confrère to perfect himself in his vocation.

Papal approval of the Congregation of the Mission came with Urban VIII’s bull *Salvatoris nostri* on 12 January 1633. (It should be noted that the date on the bull itself is 1632, but in the usage of the time that referred to the Year of Our Lord which did not end till 24 March 1633; the year started on 25 March). A paragraph in this bull gives the basic rules of the spiritual life of the members: daily mass, weekly confession and communion for students and lay-brothers, a full hour’s mental prayer each day for everyone, and examination of conscience (XIII 261).

By 1635 there were still no definitive rules. Abelly quotes part of a letter written by Vincent to an un-named confrère:

Two or three days ago I fell dangerously ill, which made me think of death. By God’s grace I adore his will and submit to it with all my heart, and on examining myself about what would trouble me somewhat I found that there was not anything apart from the fact that we have not yet drawn up our rules (1291).

In the following year, 1636, Vincent drew up some rules for confrères who were acting as army chaplains. They are to “observe as fully as possible the little regulations of the Congregation, especially with regard to the hours of rising and going to bed, prayer, the divine office, spiritual reading and examens” (XIII 281).

In 1642 the first General Assembly of the Congregation met. starting on 13 October. Vincent told the Assembly that the most important task before it was to draw up the rules for the Congregation. The rules were necessary, he said, if the Congregation was to achieve its purpose. He

gave to each confrère present (there were only ten besides himself) copies of the proposed rules and asked each to read them and to “note what needed to be corrected, shortened or completely removed”; the comments of each confrère were to be studied afterwards. The next day, the 14th, they worked at this from 7 till 9 in the morning and from 4 till 6 in the afternoon; on the 15th and 16th they continued, for the same periods, though on the 16th they did not end till 10. On the 17th they met at 8 in the morning and decided that since there were so many suggestions about the rules it would be impossible to discuss them all in the Assembly. So a commission was appointed to study the matter and to report back to the Superior General. Antoine Portail and Jean Dehorgny were the permanent members and Francois du Coudray and Lambert aux Couteaux were to work with them as long as these two latter were in St Lazare; in their absence Rene Almeras would be a substitute.

It is not clear what rules were in question but it would seem most likely that it was an early draft of the Common Rules because after the decision to set up the commission the Assembly then went on to discuss the office of the Superior General, the vows, the division of the Congregation into provinces, triennial assemblies, the resignation of Vincent as Superior General and the election of two Assistants. Vincent’s resignation was not accepted and Portail and Dehorgny were elected Assistants. The Assembly closed on 23 October (XIII 287ff).

In May 1646 Boniface Nouelly and Jean Barreau, a lay-brother, were appointed to Algiers. Before their departure Vincent gave them some advice: they were to be faithful to the rules, customs and maxims of the Congregation, which were those of the gospel; they were to try to be always zealous, humble, mortified and obedient (XIII 306).

A letter to Antoine Portail dated 14 February 1648 deals with rules for the galley-slaves’ hospital in Marseille and in it Vincent remarks that a good maxim for those called by God to establish new works is to put off as long as possible the drawing up of rules “because experience shows that what is feasible at the start is counter-productive later on or brings about annoying complications”. The Carthusians, he said, did not draw up their rules for a hundred years and St Ignatius drew up merely a sketch of his; Francis de Sales drew up the Visitation rules in too much of a hurry and so he had to issue an interpretative guide to them later on (III 272).

Later that year he wrote to Almeras in Rome that he was to start trying to have the rules approved by the Holy See, especially those about the vows and that the Superior General was to be elected for life; if there were problems the others could be reduced to headings but those

two points must stay (III 381).

On 1 July 1651 the second General Assembly began and it went until 11 August; this time there were thirteen confrères as well as Vincent. There was much discussion about the rules and when towards the end it was asked whether the agreed draft was to be revised the reply was that only two or three confrères would make the revision “*Quia* with rules it is as with hands the more you wash them the more they need to be washed, or it is like hens which always find something to peck at in a spot they have already been over a hundred times”. The final *acta* of the Assembly say that the rules are in conformity with the Congregation’s actual way of living, with its purpose and with its foundation aim, and they meet everything demanded by *Salvatoris nostri* and are, in fact, what had been done for the previous twenty-five years or so (XIII 326ff).

Two years later, in 1653, Jean le Vacher and Martin Husson, a lay lawyer, were leaving for Tunis and Vincent gave them some advice: They (sic) were to keep the rules of the Congregation, they were to try to practise the same virtues listed for those going to Algiers seven years earlier, namely zeal, humility, mortification and obedience; simplicity, which had not been in the previous list, is also added (XIII 363).

Two years later again, in 1655, Vincent wrote to Charles Ozenne in Warsaw that the Common Rules had at last been printed but that they had had so many mis-prints that they would have to be reprinted (V 337)

In the following year, 1656, Antoine Durand, aged twenty-seven, was appointed superior of the seminary in Agde. Vincent usually took new appointees to his room for a private session on the eve of their departure. The notes which Durand made of this session have survived (XI 342-351). It is very interesting to note the order in which Vincent made his points:

1. Durand is going to a seminary as superior; *ars artium regimen animarum* and this is the work of the Son of God;
2. Therefore he must empty himself of himself so that our Lord can make his mark on him;
3. Therefore prayer is essential;
4. So is humility, and especially the elimination of foolish self-congratulation;
5. His speaking is to be based on the New Testament;
6. In carrying out his work as superior he is to take Jesus Christ as his model;

7. In carrying out his work he is not to aim at making a personal reputation for himself, but to carry out the rules and customs of the Congregation.

In July of the following year, 1657, he wrote to Edme Jolly in Rome that he had seen the latter's letter to Portail with suggestions about the rules, and he said that far from its being wrong to make suggestions it would have been wrong to have kept silent about the ideas which God had given him on the matter. Jolly was to think about Portail's reply and to report back to Vincent on it (VI 364); on 5 October Vincent thanks him for his suggestions, but we do not have Jolly's letter (VI 507).

On 17 May the next year, 1658, Vincent distributed copies of the newly-printed Latin version of the Common Rules to the community in St Lazare during the weekly conference. This was to have been the final and definitive version but at a conference on 7 March 1659 he referred to the necessity of one further change. He said that in chapter II, §3, "a printer's error had slipped in" (XII 151). An intriguing point arises here. Is it likely that a printer, even in 17th century Paris, would set up in type the words *aequaliter grata vel non grata* if the copy in front of him had the words *quae nee sunt grata nee ingrata*? The more likely explanation would seem to be that Vincent wrote the former phrase but when he saw it in print realised that it did not catch the nuance he intended. It is refreshing to think that even in his 78th year Vincent could fall into that human failing of putting the blame on someone else! Coste too seems to have adverted to this; in his *Monsieur Vincent*, when he recounts this incident, he says merely that "an error slipped into the text" (Vol. II, p 13).

On 3 June 1658 Vincent wrote to Louis Rivet, superior in Saintes, that he would be sending on copies of the Common Rules "in which we find our complete sanctification, in so far as they contain what our Lord did and what he wants us to do" (VIII 168).

In August of the following year, 1659, he wrote to Jacques Pesnelle, superior in Genoa: "We have not included in the rules many little things which are done in the Company and which one should do" (VIII 71).

Most of the quotations cited have been about getting the rules drawn up and approved, but scattered among them are some insights into Vincent's thinking on what the rules were supposed to mean for the individual confrère, and also his indications of what were the really fundamental elements in the rules.

In the notes of the anonymous confrère about the 1632 retreat Vincent spoke of the rules as means given by God to the individual confrère to enable him to reach spiritual perfection. Twenty-six years later, in a

letter announcing that the rules had at last been printed and would be sent on, he wrote: "In them we find our complete sanctification in so far as they contain what our Lord did and what he wants us to do" (VIII 71). The perfection, or sanctification, of the individual confrère is the main purpose of the rules.

In the above-cited extracts from letters and other sources certain points are picked out for emphasis: In *Salvatoris nostri* (1633), mass, weekly confession and communion for those who are not priests, a full hour of mental prayer each day for everyone, and examination of conscience.

In the guidelines for army chaplains (1636) the points mentioned are prayer, the divine office, spiritual reading and examination of conscience.

In the guidelines for those going to Algiers (1646) the points are the keeping of the rules, customs and maxims of the Congregation because they are those of the gospel, and the practice of the virtues of zeal, humility, mortification and obedience. The confrères going to Tunis (1653) were given the same advice, with the addition of simplicity.

The advice to Antoine Durand (1656) contained the following points, and in this order: prayer, humility, what Durand says is to be grounded in the New Testament, Jesus Christ is to be his model and he is to follow the rules of the Congregation.

Conclusions from the above

Two points stand out very clearly: first, Vincent never said that the rules were to be kept just for the sake of keeping them; with him it is never a question of "This is what the rule says, therefore you must do it", or even "This is what the leader says, therefore you must do it". What Vincent puts before us is "These rules are the means of developing and deepening your spiritual life"; that, therefore, is the meaning of the expression in the introductory letter to the rules "If you keep them they will keep you". At first sight this could seem to indicate a sort of mechanical cause-and-effect situation but, as in other cases in this overall context, when we go back and trace out the thinking which led to the wording we see that such an initial impression is wrong.

The second point which stands out is that not everything in the rules was regarded as being of equal importance; that perhaps does not really need saying, except that the obvious sometimes tends to get overlooked. When for any reason Vincent had to pick out some points for emphasis he picked ones which have always been regarded as basic to a person's spiritual life: prayer, the New Testament, Jesus as a model, spiritual

reading, examination of conscience, and certain key virtues. He never singled out what what might be called the regulation-type of rule, the ones which dealt with the administrative running of the community.

What Vincent meant by “perfection”

In the 1632 retreat Vincent spoke of the rules as God-given means to help a confrère towards perfection. This is a word frequently used by Vincent. In the first paragraph of the first chapter of the Common Rules he put *propriae perfectioni studere* as the first end of the Congregation. In the Chambers-Murray Latin Dictionary (1976) *studere* is translated as “To be eager, keen or zealous; to busy oneself with; to take pains with; to apply oneself to”. Now if Vincent put as the first end of the Congregation, and therefore of the individual confrère, “to busy oneself with, to apply oneself to” something, it is important that we know exactly what that something is. The expression was used by Vincent, therefore it is to him that we must go for its meaning and not fall into the trap of giving it our own meaning.

He dealt with this in a conference on 6 December 1658. He quoted Mt 5:48: “Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect”, and then said “That’s aiming high!” and went on to explain what he meant.

Perfection consists in doing well everything we do: First, as reasonable men we get on well with others and respect their rights; second, as Christians we practise the virtues of which our Lord has given us examples; finally, as members of the Congregation we do well the work which he did and in the same spirit as far as our weakness, which God knows, will allow; that’s what we have to set our sights on” (XII 76-78).

At a conference on 14 February 1659 he said:

Up to now you have been told about the end of the Company, which is to work first and foremost for one’s own perfection, for one’s own perfection, and we do this by imitating the virtues which Jesus Christ taught us by his example and his words. We must therefore keep this divine image before our eyes (XII 114).

The confrère who kept notes of this conference noted that Vincent repeated “for one’s own perfection” and said it in a grave and solemn tone of voice in order to emphasise it.

At a conference a week later, on the 21st, he was dealing with the expression “seek first the kingdom of God” and said that although “seek” was only a single word it conveyed a multitude of ideas:

Seek, seek; that indicates activity. Seek God within yourself for St Augustine admits that when he sought him outside himself he failed to find him. Seek him in your soul, which is where he is pleased to dwell. That's the base on which his servants ground the virtues which they are trying to put into practice (XII 131).

Further on he said:

Our Lord wants us above all else to seek his glory, his kingdom, his justice, and that in order to achieve this we must subordinate everything else to our spiritual life ... (XII 132).

And a bit further on again:

When we read the rule we find that it recommends us first of all to strive for our own perfection; that means to bring it about that God reigns in you and in me; in the second place, to co-operate with him in the extension of his kingdom (XII 138).

The 1984 Constitutions

When explaining what he meant by perfection Vincent mentioned the practice of virtues of which Jesus had given examples. In the Common Rules, chapter II §14, he refers to five virtues which are "more suitable for us". In the Constitutions approved in 1984 §§7 and 8 read:

The Congregation, furthermore, seeks to express its spirit by five virtues which are drawn from its special way of looking at Christ, namely simplicity, humility, meekness, mortification and zeal for souls. Speaking of these five virtues St Vincent said: "The Congregation shall apply itself most diligently to the cultivation and practice of them so that these five virtues may become, so to speak, the faculties of the soul of the whole Congregation, and so that all the actions of each of its members may always be animated by them".

Each confrère will aim at a continually developing understanding of this spirit by re-examining the gospel, St. Vincent's teaching and his example, remembering that our spirit and our ministry should each strengthen the other.

So, one result of all the self-examination which the Congregation has undergone since Vatican II is the re-discovery of the enduring worth of the basic points of Vincent's teaching on the spiritual life of the individual confrère.

The Ecumenical Implications of the Ministry of St Justin De Jacobis in Ethiopia, 1839-1860

(Part II)

William Clarke

(e) Reflections and dialogues on Ethiopian history and religious development

When Justin gave his first address at Adwa, which I have already quoted at some length, there were some priests present among the ten members of his audience. With these particularly he began to enter into dialogue, or exposition of the Catholic position, with exhortations to union with Rome. There is a slight apologetic strand running through one of these early dialogues of Justin, but following the Vincentian principle I outlined in Part 1, Section (b), he never attacks or blames the Ethiopians for being out of communion with Rome or for teaching wrong doctrines. Again, he skips over the doctrinal controversies of christology. He concentrates instead on the ecclesial problem of communion with Rome. Here is an excerpt:

The only faith of Jesus Christ conserved for us by his Vicar, the Bishop of Rome, the only love which Jesus Christ teaches in the Gospel, that is what I come to preach. And it is not for gain. Bind me, if you wish; throw me into the most severe prison; load me with chains; send me to the flesh-eating beasts; put my head under your sword and then say to me “Why did you come here?” ...I will reply to you always and without fear, helped by the strength of Jesus Christ, “I have come to tell you that the Christians of Rome want to unite themselves to the Christians of Abyssinia, they want to love them and be their brothers. Ask me again: “What did you come here to seek?” I will reply to you “Your friendship, your love, the health of your souls”. If this reply of mine pleases, for what more do we wait to be united? I call myself a Christian, a Roman, a Catholic; call me this also yourselves; and all together let us preach one faith, one Church, one love...”⁷⁸

Love, friendship, unity of the Churches — does it all seem a little simplistic? Why did he not enter into the vexed question of the anointing of Christ? No doubt he judged that the ecclesiological question lay at the heart of the matter and so he entered into that question in a very personal way. A letter he wrote to Father Etienne in Paris on April 26 of his first year in Ethiopia, 1840, shows that despite various protestations of ignorance De Jacobis had studied some serious authors to help him in his task:

I propose to follow more than any others, Saint Augustine, Saint Francis de Sales, Bossuet, who are undoubtedly the controversialists most suited to convince and convert...⁷⁹

I have already noted the influence of St Francis de Sales on St Vincent's teachings, especially about friendship. I am not qualified to comment on Bossuet, but as regards Augustine the personal tone of Justin's early discourses seems to echo that of the bishop of Hippo. Justin seems to me to have adopted the style of making a personal *Confession* of faith to the Ethiopians and, as his later career showed, they were extremely impressed indeed. Whatever the rights and wrongs about mission policy none of the other missionaries won such lasting affection and fidelity as De Jacobis. Perhaps this resulted from his honest, simple sharing of his faith and love with the Ethiopian people.

Although he did concentrate on the ecclesiological issue Justin also understood the christological disputes in their history and development, as he shows in a letter of November 1844 to Father Sturchi in Paris. He says that everything he could gather from the chronicles of Abyssinia led to the belief that the followers of the great medieval monastic founder St Tekle-Haimanot always held for two natures in Christ against the monophysite Copts. He mentions the importance of the book called *Haimanot-Abaw* (Faith of the Fathers) in which many of the passages taken from the Fathers of the Church have been corrupted by the Jacobites (monophysites). But this book also contains six or seven truths in conformity with Catholic teaching on the two natures, and this can be used to advantage by Catholic preachers since the book is regarded as the faith gospel in Ethiopia. The members of the delegation recently returned from Rome are able to use this book now in a Catholic sense. "The missionaries today, therefore, draw from the *Haimanot-Abaw* arms to combat heresy".⁸⁰

To speak of combating heresy seems to put De Jacobis back into the 16th century. But the actual "arms" he used were love, friend-

ship, willingness to suffer personally, and in this case, using the book *Haimanot-Abaw* to expound Catholic teachings. He regarded the Ethiopian priests as best at this work because of their better understanding of the languages, history and prejudices of their fellow-nationals, and also because they followed the liturgy and disciplines of the east.⁸¹ These were all points of unity rather than separation, thereby demonstrating what lay at the basis of De Jacobis' judgement: to seek what would unite rather than what would divide.

In a letter to Father Sturchi, written on January 2, 1854, De Jacobis describes how he used the Ethiopian book called *Geth-Neghest* to show the ancient tradition of acceptance of the See of Peter as the supreme authority in the Church. This he did on the occasion of what amounted more to a dispute than a dialogue with some learned but hostile members of the Ethiopian Church. Justin quoted as follows:

Just as a father has authority and jurisdiction over his son, the Patriarch over his suffragans, in the same way too the Patriarch of Rome in his quality as successor of St Peter, prince of the apostles, has sovereign authority and jurisdiction over all the patriarchs of the universal Church, over all human societies, holding among Christians in the whole Church the same place as Jesus Christ.

While this demonstrates Justin's knowledge of the Ethiopian texts the effect it produced was to rally his own people to his side, but also to humiliate his adversaries to such a degree that they resorted immediately to pronouncing excommunications against Catholics and to reciting all the bad history of the relationship with the Catholics from the imprisonment of Dioscoros onwards.⁸² So the holy man was not above an occasional lapse into controversialist tactics, but then he was faced with very serious problems of hostility and persecution, with which I shall deal in Part III, (Section a).

Evidence that other Lazarists also took an interest in the religious history of Ethiopia comes in a letter from Father Stella to Father Sturchi, June 20, 1852. Stella gives an account of the various heresies and then remarks:

If the heresy could keep one unique and continuing form it would be easier to know it and to destroy it; but, a strange thing! It dies only to revive, and from the bottom of the tomb where one believed it would never rise up it comes back one day with new seductions. This is why the historians of the Abyssinian religion from the Jesuits to the

present are not always in agreement when they want to determine the religious belief of this country.⁸³

Justin's usual response to this complexity was to offer a rescuing hand while at the same time understanding the theological difficulties from which the Ethiopian Church suffered. In fact, from the very beginning he, Sapeto and Montuori had agreed on a plan of action which Sapeto described as the "tactics of Fr Paez" (the Portuguese Jesuit considered the best adapted of all his confrères at that time). The second point in this plan was "to present a simple and solid Catholic doctrine while avoiding all controversy and inconclusive discussions".⁸⁴ This was the route De Jacobis generally followed. At the same time he knew quite a lot about Ethiopian history, religion and culture.

(f) His friendship with Protestants — William Schimper

Since he had grown up and worked in Southern Italy for the whole period before his departure for Ethiopia we can safely presume that Justin had little or no first-hand knowledge of Protestantism, and that he can have met very few Protestants in his life. It comes as a surprise therefore when we read in his letter to Sturchi of November 1844 that he had in fact long since taken the situation of Protestantism very much to heart:

For fear of being ridiculed I have always kept hidden in the depths of my heart a lively sympathy and an irresistible penchant for the conversion of Protestants... Perhaps God sends them to me now to satisfy that burning desire with which he himself has inspired me?⁸⁵

Then he speaks of the recent events that have led him into this unforeseen contact with those of the Reformed Church:

While on the one hand M. Isambert, head of the Protestant Missions in Southern Africa, expelled by the civil authorities of Abyssinia, made his exit accompanied by his doctors, on the other hand the scholar Bek and Messrs Bell, Plauden and Parkyns, very amiable young men, fairly erudite and all Protestants, made their entry. As soon as I saw them arrive I said to myself "Perhaps I give these people to believe that a priest, and more, a Catholic missionary, is nothing but an absurd antiquity from the Middle Ages?" To make that test I had to invite them to dinner... They entered my house, it is true, with nerves on edge as if they had to pit themselves against

the phantoms of the strong castles of feudal times. But it turned out like this, that when they didn't meet anything in their path that could frighten them they left me laughing, joyful and in friendship. In fact, with every fear banished we are today at such a point of intimacy that M. Bek on returning to Europe has formally promised me to make known to his nation the true cause of the two successive expulsions of the Protestant missionaries from Abyssinia.⁸⁶

He goes on to mention as a sign of this friendship how the Protestants permitted one of their most faithful domestics to become a Catholic on renouncing the Islamic faith. Justin is not sure what story the expelled Protestants will tell in Europe, but one of them on arrival at Aden saved a Catholic missionary from the death penalty.

Making a particular note of the completely fraternal charity of the Protestants he goes on to speculate about the future:

As for myself, I'm deeply convinced that when the Protestant missionaries will be capable of such generous conduct towards the Catholics, no Protestantism will be possible in the world any more...

He sees in the recent events a proof that

the missionaries of the Reformation attach great importance to doing well towards the Catholics. It seems, then, that we are not very far from the happy moment when a reconciliation with our brothers could take place. May God will that we will not be kept a long time waiting for this day of consolation.⁸⁷

Justin wrote this at a time when the Oxford Movement had reached a profound crisis in its attempts to bring the Anglican Church into a closer relationship with Rome. In the year after Justin's letter John Henry Newman took the personal step of converting to the Roman Church, and some others followed him.⁸⁸ I do not possess any evidence that Justin knew about this movement, but whether he did or did not, he shows himself here to be fully in the spirit of those early ecumenists, and indeed in the spirit of Vatican II also.

While he hoped and prayed for Church Unity Justin showed no hesitation about receiving individual converts into the Catholic Church, and indeed in the case of the Ethiopians he saw that as a means to bring the unity about. In the case of the Protestants the one convert was William Schimper, about whom he writes as follows:

The hand of Providence had elevated the influence of Catholicism to such a degree that Herr Schimper, a German Protestant naturalist, has been so struck by it that he has abjured his errors in order to enter the Church.

Married to an Ethiopian Catholic woman Schimper was showing great zeal and piety, and

his conversion has been truly remarkable and has disappointed the Protestant ministers recently arrived in the country.⁸⁹

De Jacobis encloses with this same letter Schimper's dissertation on why he became a Catholic. He also explains what price Schimper has had to pay — the loss of friends and possibly the loss of support from the History Society of Wurtemberg. Justin hopes that perhaps a French Catholic society might help to fund Schimper's studies. If this were done it would help

to destroy the old accusation which proud Protestantism had made against Catholics, that they neglect the progress of the sciences.

Added to this Justin adduces the good example of Schimper's marriage in a country where the Christian law of marriage is so largely neglected.⁹⁰

This concludes my survey of the ecumenical elements of De Jacobis' ministry. In general, we have seen a very positive attitude issuing in very positive action, but there were also some tangled human problems to be faced which sometimes pushed De Jacobis into responses which are at least questionable from the ecumenical point of view. To these I now turn my attention.

ILL PROBLEM AREAS

Persecution: the continuous hostility of Salama

Abuna Salama, the Orthodox bishop who came to Ethiopia as a result of De Jacobis' embassy of 1841-42 found the presence of the Catholic mission a severe threat to his rather weak position. He decided to stand especially firm on the issue of Catholics taking over Orthodox churches, whether temporarily or permanently. On one occasion he defended his policy thus:

I have no intention ... of preventing you from entering the churches; I wished only to prevent, in the future, a priest who is not of our

communion consecrating on our altars. I will not allow them to mix themselves up in our religious government.

The occasion of this statement was his closure of the church at Adwa because Sapeto had celebrated Mass there.⁹¹

As I already noted in Part II, Section (d), the people of the two villages of Alitiena and Guala handed over their existing church buildings to Jacobis who simply treated them from then on as Catholic churches. On the face of it this looks a rather debonair approach, out of keeping with his earlier words and actions. But De Jacobis faced a real dilemma. He had failed, as we saw, to get permission from the Patriarch of Alexandria to build churches in Ethiopia. So what was he to do when a whole village came and said they wanted the Catholic religion to be the religion of their village? Did the village church belong to them or to Salama? Was it reasonable to expect them to leave the village church practically empty in order to hold a Catholic celebration under a tree?

What might have seemed a dispute between some particular villagers and their Orthodox bishop became in fact a serious point of conflict between Salama and the Catholic clergy. Salama even went so far as to write to Queen Victoria on April 6, 1854:

“Up to this moment the Roman Catholics have proved themselves my enemies. They desire to take possession of our churches...”⁹²

Crummey regards Salama’s stand as “a reasonable line”⁹³ but he does not say how De Jacobis was to cater for his flock without having any church buildings or halls in which to hold liturgical celebrations, nor whether the villagers had the right to use their church as they decided best. In the lifetime of De Jacobis this thorny problem was never solved and it played its part in causing the persecution of Catholics during this period.

In the early 1840s it looked as if peaceful relationships could be established with a mutual exchange of gifts between the two Church leaders.⁹⁴ But news of Catholic successes in Guala sparked off a violent reaction from Salama in April 1845. He issued a decree of excommunication declaring that anyone who gave food and water to the missionaries, or who accepted money from them, was to be excommunicated.⁹⁵ The prospect of dialogue and gradually finding a way towards unity of the Churches thus received a shattering blow. This was followed in June 1848 by an even more hostile proclamation by Salama:

Kill *Abba Yakob* (De Jacobis) with all his companions. If you put to death even one of his converts you will have seven crowns in heaven; but if you refuse to obey me in this matter you will be excommunicated.

The most severe persecution took place in 1855 when Salama at last received support from a strong ruler called Kasa, who was to become Emperor Tewodros. In this persecution *Abba Ghebre-Michael* was tortured in a most cruel manner which contributed to his death, and all the Lazarist missionaries were expelled to the coastal area of the Red Sea.⁹⁷ As the power of Tewodros grew so did that of Salama, because Tewodros regarded the Orthodox Church “as the backbone of the nation”.⁹⁸ Thus the last five years of De Jacobis’ life (1855-1860) must have caused him severe disappointment as he saw all his ecumenical dreams shattered by the new order of Church and State that had taken control of Ethiopia’s destinies.

(b) The need for protection; Schimper’s enclave; political activity

Closely related to the problem of persecution is a plan De Jacobis conceived quite early in his ministry. He gives the first inklings of it in a letter to Father Etienne from Adwa on June 18, 1843:

At the moment I am writing to you people are working here on every side and each in his own way to drive out the heretical *Abuna* (Salama). May it please God to let this happen and to turn it for his greater glory! At the beginning of the good season we will gather together as many as we can of the Abyssinian Catholics to form a Christianity on the model of those *Reductions* made so famous in the history of Paraguay. Whilst the good dispositions towards Catholicism are general we believe it opportune to place our little flock in shelter from the changes which come so easily in a changeable nation like Ethiopia.⁹⁹

In his next letter to Father Etienne from Adwa, April 29, 1844, he describes how his dream has been fulfilled:

The prince, Webé has given a territory to M. Schimper, of whom I have had the honour to speak to you many times, so that the Catholics can have a place to settle. He has caused it to be published in his name in the public markets that Antitchio, the most beautiful part of Tigré, (now becoming the Eden of the Catholics in the midst

of Abyssinia), will be exempt from all taxes, from all passage of troops and from all domination except his own. Its extent is a good day's journey in circumference; it has thirteen small governments under its jurisdiction and about 4,000 inhabitants. In a few days time our Catholic colony will set out to establish itself there.¹⁰⁰

This does seem like withdrawal from normal society into a Catholic ghetto, though at least the land did not belong officially to the Catholic mission.¹⁰¹ He writes further on the results of this initiative:

The good God having willed that this celebrated naturalist (Schimper) should also be a very zealous missionary, the village, of which he is now the owner, without belonging to the mission by right belongs to it in fact. Here we can build churches and place the residence of the missionaries who can, without any obstacle, give full rein to their zeal ... I have breathed here the air of modesty and peace which one breathed in the fortunate times of the primitive Church.

He goes on to describe all the normal activities of an active mission: catechesis, confessions, discussion of points of teaching, etc. And again he refers to the hostility of *Abuna Salama*, "the greatest enemy".¹⁰²

I suppose in the stress of such a difficult mission it is difficult to blame De Jacobis for seeking at least one place where normal Catholic life could be lived, even though the danger remains of the Catholics generally adopting a ghetto mentality and cutting themselves off from their Orthodox brothers and sisters. However, De Jacobis probably thought this danger safeguarded by the work of the priests, Ethiopian and European, in the midst of the surrounding society.

The existence of Schimper's village probably had only a small effect on ecumenical relationships, but political tensions played a very large part in separating the Catholics from the Orthodox. In 1845 *Dajámách Webé*, De Jacobis' great friend and protector, requested protection from the French government. The person who actually wrote the letter for him was De Jacobis. For this act he received a rebuke from the French Foreign Minister, that "missionaries were best occupied with the affairs of religion". De Jacobis felt the rebuke keenly, as he wrote to Fr Etienne:

It is a very remarkable thing, most honoured Father, that I who do not at all like politics, I who always read the rule of our Holy Founder which forbids us to concern ourselves with politics, ... should find myself by necessity mixed up in just such an affair!

Crummey casts doubt on this “necessity”. Rubenson states that “it was not Webé but Schimper and De Jacobis who sought protection in the first place”. They hoped this would strengthen the position of the Catholic mission, particularly against the hostility of *Abuna Salama*.¹⁰⁴ So here we have De Jacobis, the reluctant politician, working against those ecumenical principles he used so creatively in the pastoral field. I believe the reason for this is that he had become anxious about protecting his Ethiopian Catholics, which was also the reason for creating Schimper’s village.

Although the French rejected De Jacobis’ letter of 1845, by the early 1850s they had begun to give much more definite support to Catholicism, while the English had become more involved with Salama through Plowden who had been appointed consul in 1848. In 1853 Plowden was writing to England:

From his great influence in Abyssinia the frienship of Aboona Salama is, to me, absolutely necessary, and that friendship has hitherto never wavered, serving me well in maintaining a delicate and critical post...

Salama appealed to Queen Victoria “to take me under your protection”, and he received the assurance “that Her Majesty’s Government are watching over his interests”.¹⁰⁵ Thus Catholic and Orthodox interests became lined up behind the two greatest colonial competitors of the 19th century, Britain and France. The inevitable drift was towards confrontation rather than dialogue and reconciliation.

In 1858 De Jacobis again entered the political arena in favour of a chief called Neguse who challenged the power of Tewodros and looked desperately for French help. De Jacobis wrote an important memorandum to the French Government and they replied by sending an embassy, but to no good effect as Neguse was crushed by Tewodros in a decisive battle.¹⁰⁶ In spite of this, however, Crummey concludes that Catholicism gained from its association with the French:

Its usefulness to the Ethiopian elite lay precisely here, and won it toleration. Between 1840 and 1855 on this basis the foundation of indigenisation were laid, while from 1855 to 1860 a position of strength was built up in Bogos.¹⁰⁷

(Bogos is a northern area near the Red Sea where the mission station of Emqulo had been established by the Lazarist Stella, who worked there

for many years). No doubt some political involvement proved necessary in order to gain permission of rulers such as Webé to carry on the work of evangelisation, but the pity of the thing was that Catholic and Orthodox became polarised behind the two great powers of Britain and France, thus adding political to doctrinal and ecclesial tension, a potent mixture indeed.

IV DE JACOBIS' MINISTRY IN THE LIGHT OF MODERN ECUMENICAL DEVELOPMENTS

(a) *The Church as a communion*

The most significant modern development in the ecumenical field as far as the Catholic Church is concerned has been the Second Vatican Council. Here the best developments of the previous century and a half were summed up and given official approval. From the teaching of this council, therefore, we are able to assess the ecumenical implications of the ministry of St Justin De Jacobis.

The Council's decree on ecumenism, *Unitatis redintegratio*, was promulgated on November 21, 1964, and in its very first paragraph uses the word "communions" to describe the different Christian bodies which "present themselves to men as the true inheritors of Jesus Christ" (§1). There exists, however, only one Church of God but from the beginning serious rifts appeared and as time went on "large communities became separated from full communion with the Catholic Church, for which, often enough, men of both sides were to blame". People, born into such communities cannot be charged with the sin of separation and are accepted with respect and affection by the Catholic Church as brothers. Why? "For men who believe in Christ and have been properly baptised are put in some, though imperfect, communion with the Catholic Church" (§3).

The basis of this communion, then, is the sacrament of baptism by which people are "justified by faith" and "incorporated into Christ". Other ecclesial elements and endowments strengthen this initial communion and must belong to the one Church of Christ, though they be found outside the visible boundaries of the Catholic Church. Such elements are "the written Word of God, the life of grace, faith, hope and charity, with the other interior gifts of the Holy Spirit as well as visible elements" (§3). The liturgical life of such communities or Churches is accepted as of the Christian religion, grace-giving and "giving access to the communion of salvation" (§3). So the life of these communions

has a great significance for the mystery of salvation but still lacks the fullness of unity promised by Christ to his Church centred on the college of apostles with Peter at its head (§2).

The Council Fathers then go on to outline some means by which the breaches in communion may be repaired. "First, every effort to avoid expressions, judgements and actions which do not represent the condition of our separated brethren with truth and fairness and so make mutual relations with them more difficult. Then 'dialogue' between competent experts from different Churches and communities; in their meetings, which are organised with a religious spirit, each explains the teaching of his communion in greater depth and brings out clearly its distinctive features" (§4). Working together for the common good of humanity, common prayer and examining one's own fidelity to the will of Christ are also recommended for each Christian communion. This programme of action will promote "justice and truth, concord and collaboration, as well as the spirit of brotherly love and unity. The results will be that, little by little, as the obstacles to perfect ecclesiastical communion are overcome, all Christians will be gathered, in a common celebration of the Eucharist, into the unity of the one and only Church" (§4).

Preparation and reconciliation of "those individuals who wish for full Catholic communion" is a work distinct from ecumenism but "there is no opposition between the two since both proceed from the marvellous works of God". The Catholic Church, of course needs to renew herself, and every member must aim at Christian perfection, while recognising that the work of the Holy Spirit in other communions can contribute to our edification. At the end of the first chapter this decree "commends this (ecumenical) work to the bishops everywhere in the world for their diligent promotion and prudent guidance". (§4).

Looking at Justin De Jacobis, then, in the light of this document we can see immediately that he did use the language of controversy, he spoke of heresy and heretics and of using the Ethiopian book *Haimanot-Abaw* to combat heresy.¹⁰⁸ He clearly regarded *Abuna* Salama as an enemy and hoped he would be driven out of Ethiopia.¹⁰⁹ He also engaged in political activity which gradually heightened the breach between Catholic and Orthodox communions in Ethiopia and therefore enters in as a theological factor in so far as it lessens the degree of love and communion between the Christians of the two different Churches. The Catholics are backed by French influence and the Orthodox by British. The setting-up of the Schimper village also contains some of the elements of the siege mentality common in the pre-Vatican II era.

I have already discussed in Part III the difficulties which led De

Jacobis into these attitudes and actions. Suffice it to say that even a modern bishop, or leader of a mission, armed with the *Documents of Vatican II*, his Flannery (2 vols) ready in his briefcase, might find it just as difficult to dialogue with his opposite number of another communion if the latter felt as threatened by the Catholic presence as Salama did, and acted continually on this feeling. Catholic bishops in the North of Ireland experience just this difficulty in establishing any meaningful relationship with such as Rev. Ian Paisley, let alone actually entering into dialogue with him. The comparison is fairly exact as Paisley stays as closely allied to the British Government as Salama did to Tewodros, with the British giving support in the background. In the alliance with a political power Salama, like Paisley, found protection from both temporal and spiritual power of the Catholic Church. Noticeably it was when Tewodros came to power that Salama carried out, with his connivance, his most severe persecution of the Catholics.¹¹¹

On the other hand, it seems extraordinary to me that so much of the positive teaching of this decree on ecumenism can actually be seen in De Jacobis' ministry. I have commented already on how his opening sermon seems to presume a very great degree of already existing communion, while establishing that he himself is a Roman Christian in union with the See of Peter.¹¹² In this, as in the early discourse from which I quoted in Part II, Section (a), he presumes so many elements of communion with Rome to be already present in his Orthodox listeners that the only real step to be taken is to accept the primacy of the See of Peter and then they could together "preach one faith, one Church, one love".¹¹³ His proclamation of friendship and brotherly love for the Ethiopians is clearly echoed in the Vatican II decree as I have already shown. What are sometimes called non-theological factors all touch very closely on this very theological reality, that the love God asks of us and commands us to show should be expressed for whatever neighbour we happen to meet. In this the Good Samaritan had a sounder grasp of theological reality than the priest or the Levite who journeyed nastily onwards (Lk 10:25-37).

I believe that friendship as an expression of Christian communion can be seen in the way that Jesus built up his friendship with his own apostles through the sharing of the same way of life with them, through sharing all his own beliefs, hopes, fears, teachings and works with them. When this friendship had sufficiently matured he shared with them the Last Supper, the communion of his own body and blood. It is in this setting that St John's gospel gives us the key to friendship as communion with the Lord:

This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you (Jn 15:12-15; RSV).

St Thomas Aquinas follows the above Scripture in placing friendship as a description of the virtue of charity, “a kind of friendship of man for God in which He shares with us his own blessedness”. This is based on participation in the Spirit (first received in baptism) as the Bond of Love between Father and Son. This is fellowship, *consociatio*, founded on a common share in the divine life.¹¹⁴ St Thomas describes this as a state of peace because of the union of inclinations in wanting the same things that God wants, since “friends always want and don’t want in unison”.¹¹⁵ Schism is precisely opposed to this state because to go into schism is “to separate oneself from the unity which charity creates”.¹¹⁶ Vatican II obviously follows this teaching in placing the emphasis on the common sacrament of baptism which creates the fellowship, but of course it goes further to discuss the situation of imperfect communion in those *born* into a schismatic ecclesial situation.

Friendship as communion with God and with one another in love — this is exactly what we see in St Francis de Sales’ *Introduction to the Devout Life*:

But if your mutual and reciprocal communication is about charity, devotion, Christian perfection, oh, how precious will be your friendship! It will be excellent because it comes from God; excellent because it returns to God; excellent because God is its binding-force; excellent because in God it will live eternally. Oh, how beautiful it is to love on earth as one is loved in heaven, and to love while living in this world as we will in the next, eternally.¹¹⁷

I have already shown how St Vincent de Paul was so strongly influenced by de Sales and how he gave great importance to friendship, both in word and in action.¹¹⁸ St Justin De Jacobis extended this in practice to the Ethiopian Christians, and mentioned St Francis de Sales as one of his guides.¹¹⁹ When I was a Lazarist novice myself in 1958-59 one of the standard works was de Sales’ *Introduction to the Devout Life*. I would therefore take it as certain that De Jacobis read this book also during the time of his formation as a Lazarist novice.

De Jacobis also took another means to repair this damaged communion, generally following the principle of St Vincent de Paul, endorsed by Vatican II, by presenting Catholic teaching rather than attacking the teachings of other Churches. This is to be seen in the sermon and the discourses I have already quoted and follows the principle agreed by the first three Catholic missionaries in Ethiopia “to present a simple and solid Catholic doctrine while avoiding controversy and inconclusive discussions”.¹²⁰ On a more gigantic panorama the visit to Rome by the Ethiopian embassy can be seen as an act of genuine dialogue where Catholic life was presented, and particularly liturgical and social life, while all attempts at proselytism were strictly avoided.¹²¹ This surely resembles the invitation to non-Catholic observers to attend the sessions of Vatican II. Added to the above we must mention his study of Ethiopian languages, literature, history and religious development, all of which led him to a deeper understanding and dialogue with those of the Orthodox communion.¹²²

Other expressions of De Jacobis’ understanding of the theology of the Church as a communion can be seen in his approach to the liturgy, devotional life and priesthood of the Ethiopian Church, but I prefer to deal with these in the next section. I believe that what we have already seen puts De Jacobis into the central stream of the thinking of Vatican II — more than a century before the event — and that he drew his inspiration from the theological sources of the gospel, St Francis de Sales and St Vincent de Paul. St Thomas Aquinas comes in as a corroborating witness who presents the matter in a more systematic manner than the others.

(b) The special position of the Eastern Churches

1. The above heading is that from the decree on ecumenism from Vatican II. The Fathers of the Council went to great pains to point out the rich heritage of faith preserved in the Eastern Churches, for which these Churches have suffered and still suffer much (§14). This heritage of faith is expressed in the liturgy, and especially the Holy Eucharist by which they “enter into communion with the most holy Trinity”. Through this celebration the Church of God is built up and “through concelebration, their (the local Churches’) communion with one another is made manifest” (§15).

2. The decree also praises the devotion of the Eastern Churches to Mary, Mother of God, and to the saints. It recognises the validity of the sacraments of these Churches and adds “therefore some worship in common (*communicatio in sacris*), given suitable circumstances and the

approval of Church authority, is not merely possible but is encouraged". In view of all this "everyone should recognise that it is of supreme importance to understand, venerate, preserve and foster the rich liturgical and spiritual heritage of the Eastern Churches in order faithfully to preserve the fullness of Christian tradition, and bring about reconciliation between Eastern and Western Christians" (§15).

3. The Fathers recognise the particular discipline of the Eastern Churches and "while keeping in mind the unity of the whole Church (they) have the power to govern themselves according to their own disciplines, since these are better suited to the character of their faithful and better adapted to foster the good of souls. The perfect observance of this traditional principle — which indeed has not always been observed — is a pre-requisite for any restoration of union" (§16).

4. As well as disciplinary diversity the diversity of different theological formulations comes in for positive treatment: "It is hardly surprising then if sometimes one tradition has come nearer to a full appreciation of some aspects of a mystery of revelation than the other, or has expressed them better in such cases, these various theological formulations are often to be considered complementary rather than conflicting". These traditions are rooted in the Scriptures, the Fathers of the Church and spiritual writers of the East and they lead to a full contemplation of Christian truth and a right ordering of life. All of this heritage "belongs to the full Catholic and apostolic character of the Church" (§17).

The Fathers then invoke the principle stated in the Acts of the Apostles, 15:9, that one must "impose no burden beyond what is indispensable". This paves the way to communion and unity which is an "urgent desire" of the Council. "If this task is carried on wholeheartedly, the Council hopes that with the removal of the wall dividing the Eastern and Western Church at last there may be but one dwelling, firmly established on the cornerstone, Christ Jesus, who will make both one" (§18).

Taking these points in turn we see:

1. Justin De Jacobis took great pains to learn the Ethiopian languages so that he could enter more fully into the life of the people and appreciate better the tradition and the liturgy of Ethiopia.¹²³ To facilitate the concelebration required by the Gi'iz rite he was prepared to allow Ethiopian convert priests to celebrate with a priest in Catholic orders even though serious doubts existed about the validity of orders in the Ethiopian Church because of the custom of mass ordinations.¹²⁴ In this De Jacobis clearly expressed the communion already existing between eastern and western Christianity.

2. His devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, which earned him the

name *Abuna* Yakob Mariam, and his use of the medal of the Immaculate Conception, revealed not long previously to Catherine Labouré, a novice in the community of the Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul in Paris. This helped him to establish a devotional communion with the Ethiopian Christians.¹²⁵ But De Jacobis did not let matters lie at the devotional level only. He actively worked on the texts of the Ethiopian liturgy, language, grammar and devotional life so that these might be produced at the highest possible standard and be recognised as such in both Europe and Ethiopia. In this he was helped by the Ethiopians themselves, particularly by *Abba* Ghebre-Michael.¹²⁶

3. In the matter of discipline he ordained both married and single men to the priesthood.¹²⁷ But what seems to me his most fruitful exercise of discipline of life itself was his participation in the community life at Guala and, even before that foundation was established, his sharing of an itinerant community life with his Ethiopian followers.¹²⁸

4. His respect for theological diversity might be judged extreme in the sense that he seemed quite happy to let them retain their own theology and become Catholics by simply accepting the Pope as head of the Church. His two early discourses from which I quoted certainly proceed on those lines and nothing I have discovered after that shows a different approach.¹²⁹

Likewise his initiative in bringing the group of clerics and professors to Rome must be judged as giving the priority to allowing the Ethiopian Christians to experience the unity they already possessed with Rome in spite of theological diversity. In these and other ways he worked to break down the “wall dividing the Eastern and Western Church” so that “at last there (might) be one dwelling, firmly established on the cornerstone, Christ Jesus, who will make both one” (§18).

(c) An Ethiopian Catholic Church

In view of what has been said above about breaking down the wall dividing East and West I think it necessary to discuss the theological meaning of establishing an Ethiopian Catholic Church. How is this to be seen? Does it conflict with the ecumenical drive? We see that De Jacobis helped to establish such a Church which has endured to this day. How are we to evaluate this action in the light of modern ecumenical developments?

First, it seems to me important to note that individual conversions are recognised in Vatican IPs decree on ecumenism as not opposed to the work of ecumenism “as both proceed from the marvellous ways of God” (§4). By means of such conversions DeJacobis hoped to bring

the whole of Ethiopian Christianity into union with Rome, and this was one of the motives for his journey to the See of Peter with the Ethiopian embassy of 1841-42.¹³⁰

This motive corresponds exactly to the challenge given to the Eastern Catholic Churches in the decree *Orientalium ecclesiarum* of Vatican II:

The Eastern Churches in communion with the Apostolic See of Rome have the special duty of fostering the unity of all Christians, in particular of Eastern Christians ... by prayer above all, by their example, by their scrupulous fidelity to the ancient traditions of the East, by better knowledge of each other, by working together, and by a brotherly attitude towards persons and things" (§24).

Undoubtedly De Jacobis recognised this function of his converts in that he preferred Ethiopian to European priests because they could relate much more immediately to the culture and religious traditions of their people.¹³¹ The Church that he actually established was rooted in the hearts and the traditions of the Ethiopian Christians and it survived the test of persecution and the expulsion of the missionaries in 1855.¹³² In recognising the ecumenical vocation of his converts De Jacobis reconciled the missionary and the ecumenical strands of his apostolate in that he never ceased to be the Neapolitan missionary of his early days, bringing fellow-Catholics personally into full communion by means of repentance of their sins and reception of the Eucharist. He taught the Ethiopian priests to work in the same way for the salvation of their brothers and sisters. That they were gradually prevented more and more from doing so was due to political events and to the opposition of *Abuna Salama* more than to any lack of teaching and example on De Jacobis' part.

(d) Ecumenical trends in Ethiopia today

The situation of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church has changed in two important respects since De Jacobis' time: firstly, the Marxist military government has broken the link between Church and State since 1975 and, secondly, Ethiopia now has its own bishops, independent of Egypt.¹³³ These events have given the Church greater freedom of action and the possibility of carrying on ecumenical dialogue as an autonomous body.

Dialogue had already begun in the reign of Emperor Haile Sellassie when the Ethiopian Church became a founder member of the World Council of Churches in 1948. This trend continued in the unofficial

meeting at Arhus, Denmark, 11-15 August 1964 when the Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian participants agreed “that their main difference was terminological rather than dogmatic”. The precise area of discussion was the christological teaching of Chalcedon.¹³⁴ A further meeting in Bristol spelt out the agreement more exactly: “Both affirmed and agreed upon the dynamic presence of the Godhead and of the manhood with all their material properties and faculties, in the one Christ. Those who speak in terms of two do not thereby divide or separate. Those who speak in terms of one do not thereby commingle or confuse”.¹³⁵

These were not official dialogues, but from other sources also the growth of a Chalcedonian christology can be seen. When *Abuna* Theophilos was enthroned as bishop in Addis Ababa on May 9, 1971, he made a public profession of faith which included the following:

(Jesus is) perfect man, consubstantial with us, unchangeably and inseparably, unconfusedly and indivisibly... All the divine properties on the one hand, and the human properties on the other, are in him without confusion or division. Therefore all the words he spoke, all the deeds he performed, were expressions of his one Person formed of a union of Godhead and manhood. In him Godhead and manhood came to their ultimate union, and in this union he lives eternally with the Father and the Holy Spirit as the mediator between God and man.¹³⁶

In the year previously a handbook of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church was published which mentioned that three schools of christology exist in the Church but that the official belief is in the two natures of Christ, “the Church which believes that Christ is perfect man and perfect God”.¹³⁷

All of this confirms the astuteness of De Jacobis’ judgement that it was better to begin by loving people than by arguing about christology, and that the ecclesiological factor maintained the division of the Churches more than any other. This remains true today and I have not succeeded in finding any information about dialogues with the Catholic Church, but if the non-Chalcedonians draw closer in agreement about accepting the teaching of Chalcedon then that brings them closer, *ipso facto*, to the Catholic Church also.

In this as in the other ways I mentioned already some of the obstacles which De Jacobis encountered have been removed or reduced. Perhaps the greatest obstacle now lies in the internal disputes and divisions within the Ethiopian Church. But, finally, the work of re-unification of the Churches is a work of God alone who can inspire such men as

Justin De Jacobis and *Abba* Ghebre-Michael to make his kingdom come among us with great power.

NOTES

78. Pane, *op. cit.*, pp 307-310.
79. *Ibid*, p311.
80. A.M., vol. 10, 1845, pp 179-182.
81. Betta, *op. cit.*, pp 31-32.
82. A.M. vol. 20, 1855, pp 492-493.
83. A.M., vol. 17, 1852, p 227.
84. O'Mahoney, *op. cit.*, pp 20-21.
85. A.M., vol. 10, 1845, p 171.
86. *Ibid*, p 172; the "Plauden" referred to is the British Consul, William Plowden.
87. *Ibid*, pp 172-174.
88. Piolanti: "Newman, John Henry" in *Encyclopedia Cattolica*, vol. VIII, p 1800.
89. A.M., vol. 10, 1845, pp 149-150: De Jacobis to Etienne from Adwa 18 June 1843.
90. *Ibid*, pp 171-174.
91. Crummey, *op. cit.*, p 87.
92. *Ibid*, p 87.
93. *Ibid*, p 87.
94. *Ibid*, p 88.
95. O'Mahoney, *op. cit.*, p 47.
96. *Ibid*, p 65.
97. Crummey, *op. cit.*, pp 95-99.
98. *Ibid*, p 110.
99. A.M., vol. 10, 1845, p 167.
100. *Ibid*, pp 166-167.
101. *Ibid*, p 166.
102. *Ibid*, pp 186-190.
103. Crummey, *op. cit.*, 68-69.
104. Rubenson, *op. cit.*, pp 110-111.
105. Crummey, *op. cit.*, pp 90-91.
106. *Ibid*, pp 104-108.
107. *Ibid*, p 109.
108. A.M., vol. 20, 1855, pp492-493.
109. *Ibid*, vol. 10, 1845, p 167.
110. Crummey, *op. cit.*, pp 97-98.
111. *Ibid*, pp 97-98.
112. Pane, *op. cit.*, pp 303-307.
113. *Ibid*, pp 307-310.
114. *Summa Theologica*, IIa IIae, qq 23-28.
115. *Ibid*, q 29.
116. *Ibid*, q 39.
117. *Op. cit.*, pp 213-214.
118. Cf Part I, section (b), of this text.
119. Cf Part II, section (e), of this text.
120. O'Mahoney, *op. cit.*, pp 20-21.
121. Cf Part II, section (c), of this text.

122. Cf Part II, section (e), of this text.
123. Cf Part II, sections (a) and (b), of this text.
124. Crummey, *op. cit.*, pp 82-83.
125. Cf Part II, section (b), of this text.
126. Cf Part II, section (b), of this text. See also A.M., vol. 23, 1858, p 447: "A grammar and a dictionary in Gi'iz or Ethiopian, composed by our martyr *Abba* Ghebre-Michael, helped by some missionaries".
127. O'Mahoney, *op. cit.*, Appendix II.
128. Cf Lucatello & Betta, *op. cit.*, pp 117-123.
129. Pane, *op. cit.*, pp 303-310.
130. Cf Part II, section (c), of this text.
131. Cf Part II, section (d), of this text.
132. Crummey, *op. cit.*, p91.
133. Lucatello & Betta, *op. cit.*, pp 238-239.
134. Uqbit, *op. cit.*, p 11.
135. *Ibid*, p 12.
136. *Ibid*, pp 185-186.
137. *Ibid*, pp81-82.

(Quotations from Vatican II documents are taken from *Vatican Council II: the Conciliar and Post-conciliar Documents*, Dominican Publications, Dublin, 1975. General Editor Austin Flannery OP, and are used with the publishers' permission.)

Forum

THE PARISH OF THE TRAVELLING PEOPLE

Origin

At the Provincial Assembly of January 1979 a mandate was given to set up a commission with the following brief: A radical re-orientation to the poor. The commission reported in 1979 and was to have personal implications for me when in that same year the late Archbishop Ryan wrote to our then Provincial Fr McCullen, as he did to all the Provincials of the male religious communities in the archdiocese of Dublin, asking him to propose a priest between the ages of 35 and 40 who would act in a pastoral role with the travelling people within the diocese. The Provincial was faced with a dilemma; manpower was scarce. However, it was, as he said, the four hundredth anniversary of the birth of St Vincent and it was also, where possible, the tradition of the community to respond to the requests of the local bishops.

I was appointed to the position the following August. The job description was to be personal Parish Priest of the travelling people within the Dublin diocese. It was to be very much a pastoral and spiritual role, and the appointment was to be reviewed after a period of three years.

How or where to begin?

Very few guidelines could be given, as this was a completely new and unique appointment. Fr Tom Fehily had been on the Dublin Committee and the National Council for Travelling People since the early 1960s. The committee and the council had as their objective the general housing, welfare and educational needs of the travellers. Fr Michael O'Donohue, now Administrator in the Pro-Cathedral, had been responsible for the pastoral care of marriages and had left behind him a truly excellent group of people who specialised exclusively in organising pre-marriage courses, on a couple-to-couple basis, for the travelling couples. He also, as far as was possible, established norms and guidelines for the couples entering marriage, and also a minimum marriage age.

For the first two months I sought out those already working with travellers. This has always remained a principle of mine. Where possible I always had a local worker, well known to the travellers, bring me along

to a family grouping or clan previously unknown to me. This was in deference to travellers, who have so many people enter the privacy of their lives and culture.

During this time I also began to discover many special classes, pre-schools, schools and training centres (junior and senior) throughout the diocese, catering for children from the age of four up to eighteen-plus. This was a significant development from the years 1964-66 when, as a student in St Patrick's College, Drumcondra, I was involved in a volunteer scheme to educate young children bussed in from various centres for night classes in a city-centre school. Yet while great progress had been made there were still only 450 children out of 1800 receiving regular schooling.

A parish office

The previous summer the diocese had given the former presbytery of the parish of Saints Michael and John, Lower Exchange Street, as a night shelter and rehabilitation work-centre for those travellers whose special needs caused them to gravitate to the city-centre. Through Mgr Williams of the Catholic Social Service Conference a parish office with a fulltime secretary was established in Exchange House. In time this became a very busy place. It was a night shelter and drop-in centre for fifteen to twenty young children and teenagers who were continually glue-sniffing. It contained workshops for travelling men who still had the traditional crafts of metal and brass work, together with woodwork and other applied sciences for young adults. It also provided employment for those in various work-schemes such as car maintenance, scrap-metal collection and house decorating. Finally, it housed offices for the Dublin Committee for Travelling People and the Parish Office.

The Parish Office became a co-ordinating centre. Here all the information regarding families, sites, schools and services was collated, and on one day a week couples and their families come for pre-nuptial enquiries and guidance on pre-marriage courses. The Parish Office also became an information centre for those interested in working with travellers, and a drop-in centre for those already in the work.

Very soon it became evident that there was need for a team apostolate and so by September 1981 we had a team of four: myself, Adrian Eastwood as curate, Sr Mairead O'Donovan DC as cate-chist, and the secretary. Today the team has two fulltime workers in our parish offices, two catechists and three priests; Seamus O'Neill, who has always maintained an interest in the work, was appointed in 1985.

Shared vision

From time to time the team has been facilitated by agencies like AVEC, the Catholic Social Service Conference and many others with a view to working out a shared vision. In broad terms our shared vision is that the travellers would become integrated into their local community while still retaining their distinct culture and a right to accommodation, education and travel as befits that culture. Since all of our travelling parishioners are Catholics we would wish above all that they would be encouraged and facilitated in becoming part of their local worshipping community, where such exists. Where possible all sacraments are received in the parish churches except when requests are made to the contrary. For the present the parish team looks after all marriages, organising pre-marriage courses with our team of couples and counsellors specialised in this area. However, now that norms for marriage are established on a national basis, and the importance of adequate preparation is understood, it is desirable that the local clergy be given a greater role to play with those couples who will ultimately become their parishioners.

Our vision is best implemented in the field of education. The ideal is the existence of special classes in the local school, and the possibility of integration from those into the local classes when the children feel adequate and, more importantly, accepted, for them. We now have special classes in local schools and special classes in special schools catering for 40% of travelling children. In almost all cases the children join the parish First Communions and Confirmations. Their parents come for penance services and various instructions and practices before the reception of the sacraments, and it should be noted that we have seen marvellous strides in this area over the past few years.

Evangelisation

When the parish was first established it was given the clear goals of pastoral and spiritual care of its parishioners; other agencies were involved in housing and welfare. However, as time passed and with the strong emphasis on justice today one could not overlook the fact that in our parish of five thousand people four hundred and thirty families still had to live on the roadside without even the basic facility of running water. Even in the space of five years families who had spent in the region of ten to fifteen years in one area were moved on to make way for new housing schemes. Looking at Dublin diocese at present you will find the travellers on the margins of the satellite towns.

How then does one preach the gospel? In the early days civil authori-

ties contacted us to co-operate with them. Very soon we discovered that they wanted us to preach a gospel which would make the people change their social behaviour, namely keep their homes tidier, respect the property of others, respect civil authorities and generally be more civic-minded. We were seen as “the church”, an agency of control and indeed almost of coercion. When it came to our annual mission (this year brings the fifth given by our confrères) similar such pressure was put on the missionaries. Naturally they resisted. Yet all of us know it is not just enough to tell the people that they are the Lord’s privileged, that he has a preferential option for them. However, movements for rights must be handled with great care. Justice without mercy will be an expression of anger and will inevitably lead to violence. The Lord loves the oppressor and oppressed alike. So, the work of evangelisation is authentic only when one is in total solidarity with the poor, feeling their pain, sharing their shame, experiencing their fears and living helpless among them, while all the time trying to understand their plight in the light of the gospel. The poor accept their lot, often thinking there is one God for the rich and another for themselves. They are so concerned with survival that they seldom allow themselves the luxury of resentment or anger. We encourage them to drink from their own wells, sources of life hidden from the settled community. They drink in solidarity and in compassion with all the poor, the suffering and the oppressed. It is only when we, the powerful and influential, become poor and insecure with them and dare to drink from their wells that we can invite them to drink from ours.

Educational facilities for Travellers in the Dublin diocese

There are six pre-schools. At primary level there are fourteen schools with an average of two special classes in each, and there are two special schools catering exclusively for Travellers. There are nine senior and junior Training Centres for boys and girls aged between 12 and 18 years of age, and there is a Youth Leadership Course catering for twenty young adults.

Michael McCullagh

THE 1984-85 SEMINAIRE IN “FOLLEVILLE”

The following is a two-tier presentation of the seminaire. First, an objective description of the seminaire regime including an hour by hour account of one day: then anything out of the ordinary not in the

day described: then the placements where we went during the year; and finally how I felt about everything and my reaction to it.

“Folleville” is situated at the back of Damascus House, Mill Hill; it is a separate building. There were six of us living there: Fr Padraig Regan, Fr Noel Travers, Michael Hazelton, Stephen Monaghan, Scan Hennessy and myself. Scan had already done two years of his studies and Michael one; Scan and I were new. The part of the house we lived in just fitted us; it had its own oratory, kitchen, washroom and one main room. This latter had the library, TV and stereo, and was both classroom and recreation room.

The goal of the seminaire was “To help the seminarist to break with his former life, to leave all in order to become a disciple of Jesus Christ according to the spiritual vision of Vincent de Paul”.

On a typical Monday we had prayer from 7 till 8, then breakfast in silence with some classical music on records. Then study in rooms till 9.30 when we had class with Fr Regan on “Human and spiritual development” till 10.20, followed by an “advent period” till Mass at 10.30. Then a coffee break and back to Fr Regan’s class till about 12.15 after which we were free to do as we pleased, within reason. Whoever was “on” that week started to prepare lunch for 1.00. After lunch and Mid-day Prayer we started manual work, about 2.00: cutting grass, weeding flower-beds, painting and general maintenance work. At 4.00 we had a coffee break for half an hour, followed by singing practice with Frs Regan and Travers. We had study at 5.00 and Rosary and a visit to the Blessed Sacrament at 6.00. At 6.30 we all went up to join the Damascus House community for tea. After tea we had Evening Prayer in the main chapel with the Damascus House and Langdale House communities. We were then free till 9.00, with usually TV or records in the winter and football when the evenings were brighter. We usually all came together for the News on TV, with coffee or tea, followed by preparation of the scripture readings for the next day’s Mass. Then Night Prayer, after which there was silence.

On other days we had classes in scripture, Vincentiana, St Vincent’s conferences, the Constitutions and the Common Rules, and Church models. On Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays we had half-days.

On Wednesdays we had work away from “Folleville”. Stephen and Sean went to Barnet General Hospital to work in the wards and in the geriatric section. Michael and I went to Perryfields, a home for old folk in West Hendon. On Sundays each of us went to a different parish for Mass to help in whatever way we could and to meet people: Fr Eamon Raftery was in charge of our apostolic work.

On Saturday evenings we had what was called a “colloque”, a session for sharing in which we all took part. We were given sheets called “New Testament way to community living” which gave pointers on what to share and guided the direction of the colloque.

We made our community plan at the beginning of the year and reviewed it a couple of times during the year. We had two six-day retreats, one just before we were formally accepted into the community and the other after Easter. There were also a number of “Days of Recollection”. Occasionally we had meetings to discuss how things were going for us, such as prayer and community life. We also had “binge” days, days off, when we went off somewhere together; we went to Whipsnade Zoo, Oxford and Leigh-on-Sea. Once a week each of us would meet with Fr Regan for “communication”, lasting about an hour. We also would meet Fr Travers to discuss with him how things were going; these were a good deal less than those with Fr Regan. On feast-days we had the whole day off, and on the more important ones we went up to Damascus House for the meal.

Around Christmas our parents were invited over; mine came before Christmas and Stephen’s after. Class continued until just a few days before Christmas. We spent Christmas morning in our parishes and later had the Christmas Dinner with the Damascus House community.

On a couple of occasions we cooked a big meal for the communities of Damascus House and Langdale House and invited them down to “Folleville”; we did the same for the Daughters of Charity novices. These meals were all returned!

Our placements for the year

In October we went to Loyola Hall in Liverpool where there was a course for novices from religious communities; about forty participated; directors of novitiates came as well. The majority of those attending were women. The course lasted about ten days. For the first four days lectures were about communication and involved a good deal of group work. Then there was a free day, and the second course of lectures was on the person of Christ.

In December we went in to London to work in the “Crisis for Christmas”. This was a huge old bus garage to which down-and-outs from all over London could come and stay for Christmas. There was a lot of work as mattresses had to be stacked, food and clothing handed out, and most of all we had to give as much company as possible to the people there. We lived in London while we were working there; Frs Regan and Travers joined us for part of the time.

In early February we returned to Liverpool for another course in Loyola Hall on "Psychology of the vows" and "Theology of the vows". Shortly after this we went to Peckham Rye in south London to help Frs Eamon Raftery and John Concannon on a mission. We spent the week before the mission visiting houses and schools speaking about the mission; we did not remain for the actual week of the mission.

We came over to Celbridge for Easter to celebrate it with the students and priests in De Paul House, and went home for the day on Easter Monday. On Tuesday we were back in "Folleville" to start a six-day retreat. At the end of April we started our month-long placements. Sean and Michael went to the Passage in Carlisle Place in London, run by the Daughters of Charity for down-and-outs. Stephen and I went up to Manchester to work and live in a hostel for down-and-outs. The kind of work we did there was very varied. In the mornings we made the men's beds and changed any wet sheets, swept and mopped the floors, helped with the meals and cleared up afterwards. We gave out clothing, cleaned the toilets, gave the men showers or baths and were there when men came in drunk so that we could defuse the situation. There were about forty men there in all. A big part of the work was just chatting to them and getting to know them.

In June we were back in Liverpool for the remaining lectures; the numbers were very much less than before as many had left their communities. The lectures were on "Passion for the inner city" and the second part was more of a workshop than lectures. We had to talk about our own communities and founders, works, and what we saw the future as holding. The course was shorter than the previous two and at the end we were asked to make resolutions for the future.

Summer

July finally arrived. By this time Michael had left us. We joined with the Celbridge students for the holidays. Sean, Jay and Eugene went to Waterford; Eamon, Sean Farrell, Stephen and myself went to Mullaghmore, Co. Sligo. We were away for about two weeks and it was, a welcome break from the seminaire. Afterwards we seminarists went home for two weeks and then returned to "Folleville"; by this time Sean also had left.

Next came the thirty-day retreat in Dalgan Park, Navan, which ended on 9 September; we joined twelve Columbans and one novice nun. A well-earned rest followed, even though I say so myself. We had a week at home, and then to Celbridge to finish out our seminaire.

My reactions to the year

The thing I found hardest was the enclosed environment in which we lived. As I said earlier, the house just fitted us and no more. The fact that there was only one main room for lots of different purposes caused problems, as not everybody wanted to watch TV at certain times or listen to the stereo, and sometimes some would like it quiet and others wanted music. The alternative was to go to your room, but this wasn't very attractive as we had already spent a good deal of time in our rooms during the day. We were always together; this I found difficult because of the small numbers. It would have been nice to have been able to go off into a different room and listen to some music by myself sometimes.

There was a problem with Damascus House, as we were not allowed to go up there without permission; this was difficult, as so much goes on up there and we simply had to pretend that it didn't exist. The good thing was that this was talked about among the six of us and we all said what we thought and felt. Although it didn't really change anything it was good to know that I was being heard and listened to. This made it a little easier to do what was being asked of me.

Another problem was that we had no pocket-money, so that any money we had was given us by home. This didn't really fit in with the goal of the seminaire "to help the seminarist break with his former life". This was another thing talked about and at the end of the year Fr Regan said that if he were to do another seminaire pocket-money would be given; it would give the seminarist some sort of responsibility as regards handling money.

Something which happened during the year impressed me a great deal. I asked to go home in March to my sister's wedding; I was refused. This I accepted and got used to it after a while. Then out of the blue, during a communication with Fr Regan, I was told that the vocation team had re-considered it and that I could go home. Needless to say I was delighted, but the point was that the first "no" wasn't stuck to just because a decision had been taken and we'd better stick to it.

The days I generally found quite long. There went a great deal of work from both sides into them — classes and work for them, manual work, sharing. By the time 10 p.m. came I was definitely ready for bed. The classes we had I found very beneficial, especially the ones on human development, St Vincent, and scripture.

The fact that we were a small community living very much cheek by jowl led to tension between us which in turn led to people challenging others in a brotherly manner. This was something quite new to me and something I found, and still find, very difficult, this question of brotherly

correction. The “colloque” on Saturday evenings was a great help in that all of us shared and talked on quite a personal level; this helped to know somebody a bit deeper than on the surface when brotherly correction or challenging came along.

The small rules I sometimes found the more difficult, for example only one stamp per week; this nearly drove me crazy. Also the fact that unless I really and truly needed something I didn't get it. When I thought I needed a new pair of trousers I was told to manage on the three pairs I had; I found that difficult.

Now it looks like a very negative view so far, but the point that I want to make is that unless it had been like that I would not have grown in the way that I have. I found myself being able to question Fr Regan and Fr Travers in a sincere way about things like stamps and going to Damascus House. If the seminaire had been very easy I would not have experienced half of the feelings and emotions which I have experienced during the year and I would not have known how to cope with a number of them. Although I found it difficult at the time I am very glad of it now. I find I have learnt in a very small way what I should do and what I am capable of doing in certain situations. Now it remains to be seen whether I can grow in this.

I have learnt a great deal about prayer over the year. At first I had no method or really any idea about prayer other than reciting Our Fathers and Hail Marys. Needless to say all this changed over the year and we were introduced to a number of different methods of prayer. One class we had was with Fr Pat Collins and this has left a big impression on me; it was all about bringing feelings into prayer, telling the Lord “exactly” what I feel and what is going on; this was something totally new for me as I used to be afraid of being cheeky in prayer. I used to find the hour's prayer very difficult when I started and this hasn't really changed. I find myself very tired getting up and the last thing I want to do is pray for an hour. But, as I found out, prayer isn't just about feelings; it goes a good deal deeper. Prayer has now become a part of my life; please God it will stay that way whether or not I am to stay in the community.

I am not going to say much about the placements because I could go on for ages. Any placement certainly wasn't a holiday but I looked forward to them very much for the sheer sake of getting away to somewhere new. Life in “Folleville” was very monotonous and tedious at times and a break from it was very welcome indeed; they were also a break from each other. All the placements were beneficial but I think the one in Peckham Rye was the most so, and of course the thirty-day retreat. In Peckham we wore clerical collars as the people there were

sometimes afraid to open their doors because there is so much violence in the area; the collars were to put them at their ease. This was the first time I had worn one and it brought home to me the sort of life I could be leading in ten years time. This was the first “Vincentian” work I had done and I enjoyed it very much. It was great to experience at first hand what a mission is like. It was extremely sobering to climb twenty floors in some huge dark filthy block of flats and see actual economical poverty; I had never seen it as bad before; it was a real eye-opener. The saying of St Vincent that we should be Carthusians at home and apostles abroad was certainly brought home very forcefully.

Finally, the high point of the year was the thirty-day retreat in Dalgan Park. I did not think about it much before it started for the simple reason that if I had done so I would probably have begun to get worried. It really came home to me what I was letting myself in for only when we drove through the gates of Dalgan. During the retreat we did five hours of prayer each day, one being at 2.00 in the morning. There was complete silence, and no books, newspapers or TV. At the beginning I was at a loss to know what to do with my spare time but as the retreat progressed I soon found my feet. Our director was Fr Frank Murphy and we saw him once a day for communication. I experienced feelings right across the spectrum, very high to very low. I was able to put into practice what I had learnt in “Folleville”. I had thought that I would never be able for five hours of prayer a day, but once it is put into the context of a retreat it is not so bad; but really it was through God’s goodness that I was able to keep going. I learned a huge amount during it, about myself, my choice of life and about prayer; it reinforced what I had learnt during the year but built on a good deal more. If I had not done the seminaire I don’t think I would have got so much out of it; the two go together and complement each other.

Overall I would say the year has been a successful one; I have learnt a great deal about God, prayer, St Vincent and myself. It remains for me only to thank those involved: Frs Padraig Regan and Noel Travers, the Damascus House and Langdale communities, and all who prayed for us. Thanks.

Daniel O’Connell

“SO KNIT THOU OUR FRIENDSHIP UP”

Some of us can remember the time when it was the custom in the Province during the annual retreat for a confrère to say a “dry mass”

before the community. The object of this exercise was to examine the rubrics and to remind each of us of the need to be faithful to them. There was something important about this practice because it showed that in some quarters at least there was a genuine concern that the Mass should be well celebrated. The character of our retreats has changed much since those days and the “dry mass” has long since disappeared, yet something to remind us constantly of the centrality of the Mass is still needed.

The opening paragraph of chapter I of the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* says about the celebration of Mass:

For both the universal and the local Church, and for each person, it is the centre of the whole Christian life... During the course of the year the mysteries of redemption are recalled at Mass so that they are in some way made present. All other actions and works of the Christian life are related to the eucharistic celebration, leading up to it and flowing from it.

When we assemble the community Sunday by Sunday the effectiveness of the Mass may be greater or less according to the manner in which the celebration is conducted. The celebration of the liturgy is no easy task. He who thinks that celebration is easy is celebrating only himself and not the liturgy.

Let us look for a moment at a few aspects of our liturgical celebration. The priest is president. The word “president”, like the word “assembly”, is new. It is often used instead of “celebrant” because in the most real way all present are celebrants of the liturgy. Presiding, it should be remembered, involves serving, not ruling over, the people. The priest-celebrant is to be the focus for the community’s prayer. He is to know the liturgy thoroughly so that he can give the assembly confidence and inspiration from his presence. The way he gives the greeting, keeps the silences, listens to the scriptures, as well as his manner in leading the prayers, all point to a ministry which enables the assembly, musicians, servers and all others to make this prayer. Presiding is in no way limited to the spoken parts. The breaking of bread and sharing of communion are vital elements in the president’s role.

The qualities that make for a good president include the following:

1. A sense that he is a member of the assembly.
2. Grace in movement, reverence in gesture. No movement of the president can be neutral. The manner does matter. All his actions can build up, or destroy, prayer. Let us look for a moment at our Sunday

eucharist where most of us are generally involved in a celebration with the People of God. Do our people see on Sunday that “we are an Easter people and Alleluia is our song” (Augustine)? Do we bring to our Sunday celebrations that joy which bearers of the good news ought to radiate? Can we ask people to lift up their hearts if our own heart is in our boots? Alexander Schmemmann, the great Orthodox theologian, said “When the Church lost her joy she lost the world” (*The World as Sacrament*, p 26). The “losing” goes on even today. When husbands and wives lose their joy they lose each other. When convent communities lose their joy they lose their postulants. When priests lose their joy they lose the hearts of the young men who might have followed them into the priesthood. “Be joyful always on Sunday” was the cry of the early Christians echoed in the *Didascalia Apostolorum* of the 3rd century. The same work claimed that to do penance on a Sunday was a sin, so out of keeping would it be with the joy of the Sunday assembly.

3. A voice for prayer and a sense of pace. Tone, volume, pace are important here. Timing can be everything, not because liturgy is entertainment but because it is human. A sense of pace is something some have to work hard to obtain. At prayer it means a feeling, a sensitivity for the involvement of the community. Knowing the right moment to begin and end each element in the ritual is important.

The president, or the deacon, has the task of sharing reflections on the day’s scriptures. The homily is not a “time out” from the liturgy; (so you do not therefore bless yourself either before or after it). It is to be as much a part of the liturgy as everything else. The ways in which the story is truly ours are opened up here. The homily is a kind of dialogue with the story, the scriptures of the day.

It should be remembered that liturgical preaching springs not so much from a carefully assembled corpus of doctrine as from the celebration and proclamation of the living word in community. Aidan Kavanagh OSB states in *Elements of Rite* that “the homily is always on the Gospel of the day and no one ever preaches unless one has something to say”. All this demands hard work in preparation and delivery on the part of the homilist.

The function of the liturgical homily is not to “educate” the people. Being like a feast, an end in itself, the liturgy inevitably forms its participants, but does not educate them in the modern sense of the word. Other media and contexts are available for education. The liturgy exists not to “educate” but to “seduce” people into participating in common activity of the highest order where one is free to learn things which cannot be taught.

The liturgical timetable in most of our parishes is at odds with the vision of Church and Christian life which parishes, awakened by the second Vatican Council, are seeking to promote. Our Sunday Mass timetable, for instance, is counter-productive and a concession to bad habits. It could be argued that the greatest service urban parishes could offer their members would be to reduce the number of Sunday Masses until a correspondence between the worship-space and the assembly of the people is reached.

We cannot seem to make up our minds whether our timetable of Sunday Masses is going to be determined by the practices of the supermarket or by a vision of the covenant community's worship-assembly which we find in scriptural and liturgical tradition, in sacramental theology and in the whole new approach to the sacraments of initiation.

I think, on the whole, that instead of gathering our people together on Sundays we disperse them. Instead of having a few celebrations into which we pour our time, energy, money, talents, artists and care, with a memorable and inspiring effect, we prefer half a dozen or more perfunctory, dutiful and depressing rites. It is very important that we look at this problem, discuss it thoroughly and do something about it. This needless multiplication of eucharistic celebrations on the one day that "celebration" is most appropriate is one of the serious obstacles which continues to subvert or stifle the Church at its primary source.

"So knit thou our friendship up". Until this kind of phrase, this idea, springs to mind whenever we think of Sunday Mass we are only playing, giving only lip-service to renewal. Its bits and pieces have not welded together to reveal the truth.

Donal Gallagher

VINCENTIAN STUDY GROUP

Four meetings were held, in October and November 1984 and in January and March 1985; a meeting scheduled for February had to be postponed until November 1985.

October — Aidan McGing: "St Vincent, Vatican II and ourselves", in Celbridge. A revised and enlarged version of this paper is printed in this issue.

November — Frank Murphy: "St Vincent and spiritual direction — some personal reflections", in Castleknock.

January — Brian Nolan: “The truths for which I am ready to lay down my life’ — St Vincent, Jansenism and the God of love”, in All Hallows College.

March — Noel Travers: “This little company which occupies the last place and is the poorest of all”, in All Hallows Renewal Centre. This paper is printed in this issue.

Thirty different confrères participated, the average attendance at a meeting being fifteen. Both these figures show a slight increase over those of the previous year.

Five further meetings have been arranged for the period from October 1985 to March 1986.

Tom Davitt

Miscellanea

EXPATRIATE IRISH CONFRÈRES 1839-1927

In the last issue there was a list of Irishmen who joined the Congregation before it was formally established in Ireland in 1839. After that date quite a number of men born in Ireland joined the congregation outside Ireland and spent their lives elsewhere as members of other provinces. Excluded from the list of these below are the names of two classes of Irish confrères:

(a) Those who later in life transferred to the Irish Province;

(b) Those who joined in the United States. Between 1820 and 1888, when the US was divided into two provinces, about one hundred and eighty men born in Ireland joined the Congregation in the US, about two thirds as clerics and one third as brothers.

Particulars of confrères who fall into either of the above categories are easily obtainable. Particulars of other Irish-born confrères are not so easily come by; the main facts are given below. For some of them the facts given are all that is known of them; for others very much more detailed information is known and has been collected for our archives.

N.B.: *Each entry is in the following order – Year of entry; Place of entry; Name; Docese of origin; Remarks.*

1842, Rome, HENNESSY, Richard, Waterford.

Died in Cape Girardeau, Missouri, in 1853 aged 37, where he was superior.

1842, Rome, ANTHONY, Mark, Waterford.

Died in La Salle, Illinois, in 1859 aged 49, where he was superior.

1842, Rome, O'REILLY, John, Kilmore.

Was superior in La Salle, St Louis and Niagara; Provincial Consular; died in St Louis in 1862 aged 60.

1844, Paris, FLYNN, John, Cashel & Emly.

Back in Ireland in 1845 where he died in January 1846 aged 27, before vows.

1844, Rome, HENNESSY, Edmund, Waterford.
Died in Maison-mère, Paris, in 1887 aged 64.

1849, Paris, MURPHY, Andrew, Waterford.
Entered in December 1849 in minor orders with three or four years
theology completed; left after less than three months.

1850, Paris, MCGILL, James, Ardagh & Clonmacnois.
Entered with one year of theology completed. Became Vice-Provincial
of the US. Died in Germantown, Philadelphia, in 1911 aged 84.

1852, Paris, FITZPATRICK, John Michael, Dublin.
From Chapelizod. Entered already a priest, aged 42; left after a few
months and returned to Ireland.

1853, Paris, SCANLAN, Bartholomew, (Munster).
Entered in November 1853; was back in Ireland in May 1854; left in
1855 before vows.

1855, Paris, KING, Michael, Tuam(?).
Entered in May 1855, aged 24; was back in Ireland in April 1856;
left before vows.

1855, Paris, SHEPHEARD, John, Dublin.
Left the year of his entry.

1858, Paris, McENERNEY, Michael, Cloyne.
Entered already a priest, aged 39; left for reasons of health after six
weeks.

1858, Paris, O'FARRELL, William, Kildare & Leighlin.
Entered at age of 26, possibly already a priest; appointed to minor
seminary in Soissons two years after entry; left CM exactly a year later
but remained as extern professor in Soissons; later on was Vicar General
of Mauritius. He does not seem to have taken vows.

1862, Paris CASEY, Daniel, Waterford(?).
Entered four years after ordination, aged 32; left before vows. Died in
Dungarvan 10 February 1865. The Nation of 18 February had a short
obituary in which CM is appended to his name. He is buried in the
church in Garranbawn.

1863, Paris, HOGAN, Richard, Ossory.

Entered at age of 23. Appointed to St Joseph's College, Antoura, Lebanon in September 1868, where he was ordained. Apart from an exile enforced by the Turks during the First World War he remained there until his death in 1924 aged 84.

1866, Paris, O'KEEFFE, Daniel, Kerry.

Ordained sub-deacon in the Maison-mere in May 1866; entered the following month; returned to Ireland where he later left without having taken vows.

1867, Paris, MADDEN, William, Cork.

Ordained deacon in the Maison-mère in December 1866; entered in April 1867; ordained priest in Maison-mère in March 1868; sent to the US in May of same year; later left.

1868, Paris, CAHILL, Charles, Armagh.

From Dundalk; entered aged 19, tonsured and with one year of philosophy completed; after eight months sent back to Ireland for reasons of health. Left later.

1869, Paris, CANMER, John, Down & Connor.

Ordained in the Maison-mere in June 1874 and appointed to major seminary in Constantine, Algeria; recalled to Maison-mere as professor of Scripture 1876; dispensed from vows February 1878.

1869, Paris, MacNAMARA, Anthony, Tuam.

Entered in December 1869 aged 37; ordained priest in July 1870; in August 1870 sent to Buenos Aires, Argentine, where he had formerly been a teacher in the minor seminary; left the same year before vows.

1872, Paris, CANTON, Joseph, Tuam.

Entered at age 22 after completing one year of theology in the ICP; seems to have left soon afterwards.

1876, Paris, McCARTHY, Michael, Kerry.

Entered already a priest, aged 31; returned to Ireland and left before vows.

1904, Panningen, JUDGE, Richard, Killaloe.

Appointed to Antoura, Lebanon, in 1910. Was superior in Alexandria, Egypt, during the war and again later. Was also superior in Beyrouth for a period. He died in 1960 aged 77.

1908, Panningen, McKIERNAN, Michael, Ardagh and Clonmacnois.

Went to China in 1915 and was appointed to the Ning-po area where he worked both on the mainland and in the Chusan archipelago. He died in Ting-hai, the main town on Chusan island, in November 1951, aged 62.

1927, Dax, RYAN, Joseph (Brother), Cashel & Emly.

He spent most of his life in the Maison-mere, one early short appointment and the last twenty-seven years of his life. He had short periods in Dax and in the Casa Internazionale in Rome. He spent the war years in Spain. He died in Paris in June 1977 aged 73.

(There are at least three Irish-born confrères still alive who were never members of the Irish Province).

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ADDENDA

In addition to the articles by Patrick Boyle listed in the last issue he contributed three to *Archiviwn Hibernicwn*:

Vol. I (1912): The Irish Seminary at Toulouse.

Vol. V (1916): Dr Michael Moore, sometime Provost of Trinity College and Rector of the University of Paris (AD 1640-1726).

Vol. VIII (1918-21): Documents relative to the appointment of an Archbishop to the See of Cashel in 1791 and Coadjutor Bishop of Waterford in 1801.

OBITUARY

Fr James Crowley, C.M.

It is easy to sketch the outline of his career. From his family home in Dunmanway he went to Mount Melleray for his philosophical studies. Then he joined the Vincentian Community and completed his seminaire and theology course in St Joseph's, Blackrock. After a year attached to St Joseph's after his ordination in 1939 he spent eleven years in St Peter's, Phibsboro, and some thirty-four years in St Paul's College, Raheny. To recapture the style of the man and his personality is quite a different matter. He was a reserved and private man. In later years especially his life-style was characterised by a withdrawal into himself.

Ill-health affected the pattern of his life. Severe illness in his student days and in the first years after ordination sapped his energy. Additional illness in the early 1970s added to his permanent burden of ill health. Not that he talked of his health a great deal; it was something to be accepted, his own private domain.

Health notwithstanding he was a successful and thorough pastor. His time in Phibsboro has left its mark on the membership of the Irish Province. The mass-servers of his time were selected with care, well trained and instructed. A noticeable number entered the Vincentian Community. To me, who knew him in his later years when he was sombre in spirit rather than outgoing, the success of the musical society in Phibsboro under his patronage, and the warmth of his relationship with the young people who belonged to it, come in some way as a surprise. Yet as a student in Blackrock I went to those musicals; they were warm and happy events.

If he were asked to pick out the years when he was happiest he would probably have picked out the first decade or so of his time in St Paul's. For the boys in St Paul's in those years he was a major figure in their landscape. He ruled the junior school when it was first established. The school chapel, which moved several times with the development of the school, was a special preserve of his. He was meticulous, orderly, demanding. On Sports Day the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament on the lawn was planned and executed with a military regard for detail. He enjoyed the planning and equipping of the school which went on in those years. The high regard of the boys for him was shown in later years by faithful visitors, boys he had taught.

He did not understand nor appreciate the changes which took place from the mid-sixties onwards. The ethos of Vatican II hurt him. Since he could not adapt himself with ease to new ways and attitudes he built up around himself a wall of reserve. He performed his duties with fidelity but one sensed his pain over the rejection of a world that he valued and standards he wished to promote.

The pastor in him still continued strong. For years each Sunday he offered Mass in the Holy Faith orphanage in Eccles Street. Each year he preached the appeal for the orphanage on RTE radio. Each Saturday he drove by car to St Anne's Hospital, Northbrook Road, to say Mass and visit the patients. The closure of the orphanage and lack of energy to face the weekly trek across town to the hospital marked the wind-down of his life.

Characteristically he taught, and taught well, until within two years of his death. He did not teach full-time in the later years but at the age of seventy he still carried a half-load of classes. His teaching was of the firm, solid, no-nonsense variety. Whatever he taught he taught well.

For some thirty years he occupied the same room in St Paul's. He was very careful about the tidiness of his clothes, but he possessed very few things. In his later years he spent long hours in that rather cramped room, his rosary and breviary as constant companions. They were symbols of his regular devotional life. May he rest in peace.

Philip Walshe, CM

JAMES CROWLEY. CM

Born: Dunmanway, Co. Cork, 8 April 1912.

Entered the Congregation: 29 October 1934.

Final vows: 1 November 1936.

Ordained a priest in Carlow cathedral by Dr Kehoe, bishop of Kildare & Leighlin, 23 September 1939.

APPOINTMENTS

1939-40 St Joseph's, Blackrock.

1940-51 St Peter's, Phibsboro. 1951-85 St Paul's, Raheny.

Died 3 February 1985.

Fr Patrick Doherty, C.M.

“Jammed as I was in th’ crowd, I listened to th’ speeches patterin’ on th’ people’s head, like rain fallin’ on th’ corn; every derogatory thought went out o’ me mind, an’ I said to meself, ‘You can die now, Fluther, for you’ve seen the shadow-dhreams of th’ past leppin’ to life in th’ bodies of livin’ men that show, if we were without a titther o’ courage for centuries, we’re vice versa now!’ Looka here... th’ blood was BOILIN’ in me veins”.

About ten years ago I heard these words being spoken in an emphatic Dublin accent as I passed the open seminar door of the 2nd Year BA Modern English Literature group in Strawberry Hill. Curiosity stirred, I looked in and there was Pat Doherty, a Cyril Cusack lookalike, regaling the class with the authorised and authentic language of *The Plough and the Stars*. Maybe if you pressed me I couldn’t swear that it was those particular words of Fluther’s he was reading, though he had a high regard for the expressiveness of Fluther’s language and some respect for his philosophy; it could have been “It’ud be a nice derogatory thing on me conscience, an’ me dyin’, to look back in rememberin’ shame of talkin’ to a word-weavin’ little ignorant yahoo of a red flag socialist”, which he always quoted with such relish, or Mrs Madigan’s “The Polis as Polis in this town is Null an’ Void”, another favourite. It was the English Department’s experience of hearing him coming out with quotations like this that led them to invite him to give readings of O’Casey and of Joyce to the degree students. This appealed very much to Pat because he always liked to be sure everything was done in the best possible way, exactly and precisely; where language was concerned he had a sense of its majesty and a respect for idiomatic usage. He had a regular cycle of authors whom he quoted liberally, especially in Community company, one of his favourites being Damon Runyan and the exploits of Nick the Greek, Harry the Horse and the Lemon Drop Kid. His taste was nothing if not catholic.

My first encounter with Pat was as a second year in St Patrick’s College, Armagh, when he came to teach us Latin and Greek after the war. In his first year I think it was, a major event in the small enclosed world of a secondary boys’ boarding school was an attack by one boy on another, causing what we then thought was a serious injury. From what we boys knew there was no doubt that the college authorities would find the attacker guilty and he would be expelled. The President held a council (how we heard all this I do not know) and Pat spoke so strongly in defence of the accused that as far as I recall he got off with

a warning. He was immediately installed in our consciousness as the protector of the underdog. We felt just that bit less insecure now that we knew all was not stacked against us if we got into trouble.

When we found out that he was also a first-class handball player it only confirmed our view that providence had endowed him with every good quality. We admired his smooth stroke and the precision, always his trademark, with which he hit a “dead root”, as we called it. It was confidently asserted that he had got to the All-Ireland final in handball, or would have one day, but had sacrificed it all to join the Little Company and educate us. In those first few years in Armagh he used to disappear to Dublin on the Friday afternoon train when he had finished class for the week to attend his MA tutorial session. We knew his main field of research was concerned with the recent excavations in the Athenian Agora and we were certain he knew every inch of that famous marketplace — so much so that if he brought us there he could tell us exactly what historical events had happened and where. Years later in Strawberry Hill I asked him whether he had ever visited Athens and he said he had not and had no desire to do so. I think somehow he felt that the present-day reality would fall far short of the vision he had constructed in his mind’s eye and he didn’t want to face the disappointment of it.

In teaching us he took the view that examinations, while not entirely incompatible with education, should not be allowed to get in the way of it. This admirable view, while acceptable in the abstract, caused us some concern when we found out a few weeks before our Senior Certificate examinations from a pupil in the Christian Brothers School that only half the poems in Horace’s First Book of Odes were set for the examination. We had studied all the poems because he felt that, as the A class, we would be better educated and so there was no point in knowing which were “on” and which were not. A brief discussion among us saw the virtues of education per se coming a distant second to the need to revise and pass the examination. We eventually, to Pat’s chagrin, persuaded John Kenny to provide us with the relevant information. At a later stage in Strawberry Hill I remember him being very exasperated because students had not handed in written work on time. We said to him “Well, it probably means they are giving their minds to the job” and he replied “You mean their alleged minds”. I think our pragmatism about the examination disappointed him in the same way — he expected better of us.

When he came to Strawberry Hill after twenty years in Armagh, he was well prepared to join the Classical Studies Department which had

just opened and despite the fact that it was a Civilisation and Culture course and not a language course, which in his view was less than ideal, he threw himself wholeheartedly into the work. At the same time he took on the job of Warden of one of the new men's hostels, being responsible for forty to fifty students. Sometimes they would get a bit on his nerves when they returned to the hostels late at night in a noisy, boisterous mood. He would try to catch the leader of the group and after a while a kind of contest developed in which the students tried to outwit him. It was around this time that the age of majority was reduced from 21 to 18 and students were very conscious of their citizenship and their rights. When he remonstrated with some of them on one occasion they said to him, "Sorry, Father, you are no longer 'in loco parentis'," to which Pat replied, "I may not be 'in loco parentis' but you are certainly 'in statu pupillari'." However, there was a more enjoyable side to his involvement with student life, particularly where music was concerned. He was a regular member of the College country dance band, playing the fiddle for them every Sunday night for a couple of hours. In the more formal orchestral concerts he used to play the double bass.

As time went by he spread his academic wings and began to work also in the Education Department where he built on his knowledge of the classical philosophers to move into the Philosophy of Education. As part of his preparation for this he followed an Advanced Diploma in Philosophy of Education at London University under Professor Peters. He became an enthusiastic convert to the somewhat arid rigours of linguistic analysis so much so that for a year or two any conversation with him recalled Professor Joad it all depends on what you mean by...". He brought this rigour very much into his seminars and essay marking, as many of his former students testify with some awe. He was convinced that one of the greatest things he could do for his students was to develop their sense of accuracy and help them eliminate sloppy thinking and loose writing in their work. In all of this there was a consistent thread from his Armagh days and, I gather, from his days in the Rock. It reflected a deep sense of the correct order of things strongly based in the Christian classical tradition. In later years it led him to his idealistic vision of an Island University where students and staff could form a self-supporting academic community concerned only with the fundamentals of living, knowing and believing.

Pat was a reticent man about his personal life and his beliefs but he was a great protagonist of the idea that only the best will do where the worship of God is concerned. He was dismayed, to put it mildly, at the quality of the English translation of the liturgical texts and he felt

that most, if not all, church music after Bach could best be forgotten. I visited him a few months before he died, in his rooms at St Leonard's-on-Sea. I arrived late in the evening and we spent three or four hours looking at various studies he was engaged in on translations of the texts. One of the most objectionable translations he found was the night prayer verse about the devil "prowling around like a lion looking for someone to eat". He thought it sounded "too much like a hippie looking for a McDonald's". It was noticeable, too, that he had a fine collection of classical and medieval texts and that he felt the external form of the book, the quality of the binding, should express the quality of the thought, and so used beautifully bound Latin texts of the Breviary and the Missal for his daily worship as far as possible. In regard to the Latin he said, "At least you can be sure that the doctrine is not heretical in the Latin, which is more than can be said for the English".

Pat's message to his students, indeed to all who knew him, is very aptly summed up in the words of Qoheleth: "The sayings of the wise are like goads, and like nails firmly fixed are the collected sayings which are given by one Shepherd. My son, beware of anything beyond these." Like Qoheleth, "... besides being wise he also taught the people knowledge, weighing and studying and arranging proverbs with great care. He sought to find pleasing words and uprightly he taught words of truth."

I pray that Pat now enjoys the vision of the truth to which he dedicated his life, that Truth which is, in the words of one of his favourite poets in the last line of *Il Paradiso*,

L'amor che muove il sole e l'altre stelle.

Desmond A. Beirne, CM

PATRICK DOHERTY, CM

Born: Charlestown, Co. Mayo, 21 February 1921.

Entered the Congregation 7 September 1939.

Final vows: 8 September 1941.

Ordained a priest in Clonliffe College by Dr McQuaid, Archbishop of Dublin, 31 May 1947.

APPOINTMENTS

1947-1964 St Patrick's, Armagh.

1964-1978 St Mary's, Strawberry Hill.

1978-1985 St Vincent's, Mill Hill (St Leonard's-on-Sea).

Died 17 February 1985.

Fr Diarmuid Moran, C.M.

I. Homily preached at the funeral Mass

“This life can never be compared with the glory that awaits us. The whole creation is eagerly waiting for God to reveal his Son; and not only creation but we ourselves *wait* for our bodies to be set free” (Rm8:18).

This is a powerful statement reflecting a truth of life, reflecting the incompleteness, the imperfections, the frustration, the weakness in our lives. We instinctively know we’re made for higher and better things; and we are right. There is a glory, a fulfilment, that awaits us.

But so much of our life is *waiting*, waiting especially in times of sickness and of loneliness. “The Lord waits to be gracious to you. Blessed are all those who *wait* for him” (Is 30:18). We *do* wait for our bodies to be set free.

The words of Jesus ring loud and clear: “I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, even if he dies, shall live” (Jn 11:25) — he might have said “*especially* when he dies”. Jesus is here pointing to a truth, a triumphant truth: death is the consummation, the final triumph of what it means to be human. It is not that we depart at death into another sphere, another world. Death is a terrific awakening. We enter our inheritance, we become truly ourselves, for the first time in our lives truly free; a wonderful realisation that at last we are now totally present to our God.

From the Christian point of view eternal life is not just “immortality of the soul”. It would be much simpler if we said “the real true person we knew lives on; more than that, lives on not in the reduced state of weakness we saw them in, but lives on with a new and vibrant life.” Whatever has been achieved, whatever is of value, in a person’s life, will last for ever — relationship with God, relationship with community, family and friends; all this will have an eternal value and significance.

And so the Diarmuid Moran whom we knew and loved now lives on. On Sunday 29 June for him there was a great awakening, for the first time really free, truly himself. We who loved him couldn’t but feel that the last eighteen months were his final phase of waiting and, I suppose, of his purification: “Even though he die, yet shall he live”.

What manner of man was he in life? Some men inspire fear, some respect, some awe. Diarmuid Moran quite simply inspired affection and love. He was ordained in 1936 and served in Gateacre and St Patrick’s College, Armagh, but St Paul’s, Raheny from 1950 to 1959 was his finest hour, or so any of us would aver who soldiered with him there. Theologians used to define creation as making or building

something out of nothing. Diarmuid did that in St Paul's, and the rest of us watched. With all due allowances for looking at the past with rose-tinted spectacles those were very happy days because of the genial and gracious presence of Diarmuid Moran.

What was the secret of his success in the school? — a great capacity for the quality of waiting. “The Lord waits to be gracious to you. Blessed are those who wait for him”. Diarmuid had that capacity, like the Lord himself, slow to anger but rich in compassion and understanding,

His personal life was marked by deep prayer and faith, and devotion to our community. Even after a career spanning forty years in teaching he once confided to me his secret hope that sometime before his death he would be accorded the privilege, as he put it, of helping in the formation and training of our students for the priesthood. That wish of his was destined to be fulfilled in a most felicitous way during six years in De Paul House, Celbridge.

Such is the man who now lives on. For him, we say, life is changed, not ended; not only is it not ended, it has only now come into its own. Now he is larger than he was in life, more winning, more lovable.

Presumably the Lord doesn't steamroll us into a uniform kind of holy state, but may allow some endearing traits of character, even quirks and foibles, to remain; and we all have our memories of such in Diarmuid — a way of keeping his options open (often half a dozen at a time), and whatever about his left hand not knowing what his right was doing we in his community certainly did not always know what he was up to. Certain branches of knowledge he believed had best not be shared, and so it was a brave man indeed who would dare to tamper with the heating system or with Diarmuid's latest joy in the shape of a new mechanical lawn mower!

For all of us who knew him so well memories now keep crowding in, all of them happy ones. Today we commend his great soul to the Lord in the words of Psalm 15:

Let his body rest in safety; do not leave his soul among the dead.
Show him the path of life, the fullness of joy in your presence; at
your right hand, happiness for ever.

Francis Mullan, CM

II. At Richard House, December 1983-June 1985

Diarmuid Moran spent the last year and a half of his life in Rickard House totally paralysed on his right side and with very little capacity for speech. His active vocabulary was, in practice, limited to the words “yes”, “no” and “thing”; either of the first two could be, as a result of his stroke, an attempt to convey exactly the opposite. As for the third, it was up to the hearer to do his best to interpret it. I had him out for a drive one day, around Dun Laoghaire, Sandycove and Killiney. While passing along the sea-front near Dun Laoghaire Baths he made a rotating movement with his left hand and said “thing”. I asked if he wanted the window wound down. This evoked an emphatic negative and a repetition of the word and gesture. I made a few more suggestions, all with the same result. I then told him I couldn’t get his meaning and we left it at that. On arriving back I put the problem to Sister Gertrude and she interpreted it as a request for a whipped ice-cream cone from Teddy’s, opposite the Baths; she remembered that I had got him one on a previous trip. I checked this with him afterwards and his face at once lit up with a smile and he said “yes” in the peculiar long-drawn-out way which he had adopted for indicating total agreement. (There was also a similar lengthened vowel, with rising inflection and increasing volume, when total negation was needed!).

If his speech was limited and liable to mis-interpretation there could be no mistake about his smile. This lit up his face on many occasions, especially when visitors showed up, particularly anyone from Celbridge or someone who had been associated with him in St Paul’s as colleague or pupil. It also registered interest and delight in items of community news, but it most frequently appeared as a sign of his deep appreciation of the loving care given to him by the Sisters and nurses.

At times he made brave attempts to articulate other words but success seemed always to be in inverse proportion to conscious effort; formulae which he knew by heart sometimes came out clearly, almost automatically, as, for example, the last half of the Hail Mary at the Angelus.

To give his morale a bit of a boost one of the doctors suggested early in 1984 that he be differentiated from the Sisters at Mass by having his wheelchair moved from the front row with the others and placed in the sanctuary, and that he should wear a stole and receive communion under both kinds, by intinction. This was done and it had the desired effect. It was also suggested that I should hold out to him the possibility of future concelebration. I eventually put this to him on Palm Sunday, pointing out to him that as his mind was quite clear he could form the intention of consecrating, and that whatever approximation of the words

he could manage would be adequate. I told him I would pronounce the words extremely slowly, syllable by syllable, so that he could take his time at each one. I suggested that he think it over for a few days and that Holy Thursday would be a very suitable day on which to start. He was obviously thrilled at the idea, but he showed that his independence of mind was not lost. Instead of waiting till Thursday he started on Monday; perhaps he regarded this as a rehearsal, because he did not join me on Tuesday or Wednesday, but did on Thursday. From then on he concelebrated each day when he was up for Mass; the last time was a week before his death. The degree of clarity with which he managed the words of consecration seemed to vary with his mood and, as with other attempts at speech, over-deliberation seemed always to impede success.

His old independence of thought and action came out in other ways too. He had his own ideas on clothes and headgear for various occasions and weathers. If he were being pushed in his wheelchair and a turn was taken with which he disagreed his left hand would latch on to some convenient protruding object and arrest all forward movement; that hand had lost none of its strength.

After some time he evolved his own method of propulsion; instead of using his left hand on the ring attached to the large wheel he would extend his left leg to its fullest (and it seemed to be enormously long) and pull the chair forward. In the good summer weather of 1984 he liked to venture further afield. I once saw him over near the original Durardagh house, beyond the chapel. For such a longer journey he found it easier to go in reverse, pushing the chair backwards with great shoves of his long left leg.

A few months before his death he underwent an obvious change, some sort of depression apparently. On St Patrick's Day, and some other feastdays, he was found crying in his room after dinner. Was he contrasting his present situation with his memory of how he used to celebrate such feasts? Or was he, perhaps, disappointed that his courses of speech therapy and physiotherapy had not produced much greater improvement?

By the end of May it was clear that he had gone downhill, and from then on deterioration was obvious; it accelerated during the last week, and particularly during the last twenty-four hours. The end was quiet and peaceful.

Thomas Davitt, CM

DIARMUID MORAN, CM

Born: Dublin, 11 October 1911.

Entered the Congregation: 7 September 1930.

Final vows: 8 September 1932.

Ordained a priest in Clonliffe College by Dr Wall, Auxiliary Bishop of Dublin, 27 September 1936.

APPOINTMENTS

1936-1937 St Joseph's, Blackrock.

1937-1939 St Vincent's, Gateacre.

1939-1950 St Patrick's, Armagh.

1950-1959 St Paul's, Raheny.

1959-1977 St Vincent's, Coventry.

1977-1985 De Paul, Celbridge.

Died 29 June 1985.

