

## Raymond's Story

Fr Tom Ryan SAC



This is a 'Thank You' to the priests and parishoners of St. Ann's, Shankill, Dublin for their generosity in contributing so well to enabling Raymond to have an operation in India and to bring you up to date on his progress.

Raymond is a little boy being cared for in the Rehabilitation Centre in Siuyu, Tanzania, who suffered from scoliosis – a curvature of the spine. When he was about three years of age he suffered from meningitis that was never treated in hospital. Whether this was the beginning of his scoliosis or not even his sister doesn't know. It wasn't noticeable when he was small. I knew him when he started here in Primary 1. At that time he could walk to school but for the last number of years he has had to resort to a wheelchair.

More than three years ago the then head of Orthopedic Surgery, Professor Mallya, in KCMC hospital in Moshi (one of the three big referral hospitals in Tanzania) after seeing him a number of times over the years wrote that he must have an operation for his progressive scoliosis. Otherwise his lifespan would be no more than a few years as his frame



was leaning on his lungs more and more and as it progressed he would suffer lung failure. This was apart from the benefits the operation would have for the boy. Unfortunately, such an operation was not possible in Tanzania or in any nearby country. It needed at least one or two spinal surgeons. Thus it was decided that India was the place nearest and most competent. Prof. Mallya wrote a letter requesting funds from the Government but after waiting in vain for a year for any response (at that time without a large bribe nothing happened) we decided for the life of the boy to take matters into our own hands.

The total cost of one week in the hospital plus the operation was \$20,000. This was not counting fares, visa, etc. One lady in Italy collected €11,000 from friends and wellwishers. The rest we collected through the Pallottines and from good and generous people like you. Your contribution was enormous and contributed greatly to making a new life possible for this boy.

Raymond went to India with his older sister Monica, who has been like a mother to him for many many years. He finished 7th Standard last September. He is very bright and wants to be a doctor and specialist.

The doctor who operated on him in New Dehli in India gave him his doctor's coat for a picture one day! We hope that after some months of physiotherapy from Sr. Rosy, the Occupational Therapist here, he will be able to go on with his education in secondary school.

Many thanks again and May God Bless You All for your great generosity.



**Please Help the Pallottines.**

Please cut out this form and return it with your donation.  
Please remember the Pallottines in your will. Thank you.

*Dear Fr. Martin,*

*I enclose an offering of € ..... to help the Pallottines' mission to assist, educate and empower the people they minister to.*

**PLEASE USE BLOCK CAPITALS.**

**Name** .....

**Address** .....

Send to: **Fr. Martin Mareja, SAC**  
**Pallottine Fathers Missions**  
**Thurles, Co. Tipperary, Ireland E41A271**  
Email: palmissions@gmail.com

If you would like us to acknowledge your donation, please tick this box.

**Registered Charity Number: 20011826**

# Pallottine Voices

The Society of the Catholic Apostolate

Easter

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### An Easter Reflection

Fr Brendan Walsh SAC

Before my mother died in October she spent some weeks in hospital in Galway. As she left home to go there for treatment we hadn't suspected that this might be her last time with us. As she was helped into my sister's car she gave a look around at everything, the house, the flower garden, and her home where she had lived all of her life. It was a look that seemed to say 'goodbye'.

She spent five weeks in hospital and we as a family came to realize that she was dying. She was at peace with it and she wanted us to be at peace with it too. At last a phone call from my sister broke the news that she was 'gone'. I was on my way in the car when I got the news.

Resurrection from the dead is central to the Christian message. The Church at this time calls us to prepare spiritually by fasting from Ash Wednesday till Easter and we remember the liberation of the Jewish people from their slavery in Egypt to their arrival in the Promised Land, a land of 'milk and honey'. We also recount the story of Jesus' Passion, Death and Resurrection.

This story which we relive prefigures our own personal story of being saved from eternal disaster. It takes on a whole new significance for my siblings and I as it is the first Easter without our mother. It takes the meaning and mystery of the Resurrection of Jesus to a whole new level. Christ resurrected from the dead and opened the doorway to eternal life for us. That's a mind-blowing mystery. Again from St Paul, this time to the Romans: 'If in union with Christ we have imitated Him in death, we shall also imitate Him in his Resurrection'.

My mother is more alive now than ever before. The body which I personally blessed with holy water and incensed at her funeral is not my mother any longer, merely her remains. In 1 Corinthians 15:14 St Paul tells us: 'If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching has been in vain and your faith is in vain'.

If, as many say in our increasingly materialist culture, there is no Resurrection then there is nothing at the end of the road for us. Death is merely a tragedy devoid of any meaning, any purpose. Sure, it is not easy to grasp the idea of life after death with our finite rational minds.

It cannot be quantified, measured or tested in a laboratory. Science itself cannot answer the ultimate question: 'what lies beyond the passage from this life in death?' Sure, some feel confident that science may one day enable us to live substantially longer lives, but that merely defers the final question. When celebrities die, rarely is the question asked in the news media, 'where are they now?' We reminisce about their accomplishments and fame but rarely deal with that awkward question.

In our Easter ceremonies we muster our best liturgical efforts to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ. His legacy is unlike any other left by an historical figure. So it is fitting that we honour Him individually in our heart of hearts, and collectively as Church at this time.

My mother believed in heaven. Her discomfort and pain never interrupted her nightly rosary and devotion to the Holy Face of Jesus before she retired to her bed at night. Souls in purgatory, neighbours, friends or family, everyone was covered. Her loss to us at this time is obviously traumatic. It would be unnatural for it not to be. But my personal sense is that we as a family are blessed to be mysteriously closer to heaven than ever before. My mother knew that everything she cherished was being taken from her in her final days. Or more correctly she was being asked to let go of them. She could only do so because she was being offered an infinitely greater gift. There was no doubt in her mind. This is why we join with her in singing 'Alleluia' this Easter.



## A Proud Day in Tanzania

*Fr Tom Ryan SAC writes*

On the 20th of October 2016 a big celebration was held for the Golden Jubilee of St. Patrick's Seminary, Dungunyi, in the Diocese of Singida in Tanzania.

The Seminary was founded by Bishop Patrick Winters and many Irish Pallottines taught there, especially in the earlier years, and the Pallottine contribution is very much appreciated. It is a minor seminary which offers secondary school education while the candidates are discerning their vocation. More than 60 priests of the Singida Diocese studied there, along with a number from Mbulu diocese and a few from other Dioceses.



The celebrations started with Mass at 10.00 am. led by Bishop Edward Mapunda of Singida, himself a past pupil of the Seminary, and ended close to 6.00 pm. Not for the faint hearted! The contribution of the Pallottines was highlighted many times during the course of the day.

A large picture was presented to Bishop Mapunda with a copy to have a prominent place in the Seminary itself. This was a greatly enlarged picture of the late Bishop Winters with many Irish Pallottines and a number of Diocesan priests taken in 1966 in Dareda during the annual retreat.

We can see that the contribution of the Pallottines has borne great fruit.

*Fr Ollie O'Brien SAC remembers*

Early in January 1973 I travelled to Tanzania with my classmate Donal McCarthy to take up my first appointment as a teacher in Dungunyi Seminary. Along the way Donal had acquired the results of the National Form Four Examinations there and he felt they were 'fairly good' and was happy enough with them. I wondered how he could feel so happy because I thought they were just 'awful'. But it was an opinion that didn't last very long.

There was no running water (when I left after six years there still wasn't any) and only an occasional three hours of electricity from a dodgy generator. We started classes with three teachers, John Marki, Donal and myself. But we did have chalk which would have amounted to 50% of the teaching equipment in those days – and there were 13 hours of daylight every day!

But in fairness, it has to be said that there were 'some' textbooks which might not have even been the case in other schools. The bottom line was then, as it is even now, the best utilization of available resources while attempting to acquire what was really needed to do a proper job.

In the 1970s (not much different from the 1960s) the Seminary struggled just to exist and to improve – which it did. But two issues stand out. Funding was extremely tight and limited. At one point there was a dramatic increase in recurring expenditure, associated with a massive spike in oil prices. It caused the Rector of the time, Fr. Sylvester Lulu, a lot of grief, basically not knowing what to do as the situation threatened to go completely out of control.

Staffing was at critically low levels most of the time because neither the Pallottines nor the Dioceses were in a position to meet the needs. This is where the excellent contribution of volunteer teachers has to be acknowledged: people like Joe Koachil, Patricia Conboy, Kathleen Fahy, Bill Russel and Kevin O'Leary just to mention those whom I knew. From the early 1980s onwards there was a great improvement when more priests from the Diocese of Singida were ordained and qualified for appointment to the Seminary. It was an indication also that the Diocesan Administration was actually serious about making Dungunyi a top class educational institution.

Dungunyi was always a safe place. And the people of the area identified with, and took pride in, their Seminary. They still do and there is no great evidence of high walls or chain fences, and long may it remain so. Nowadays the seminary is a centre of academic excellence which, though somewhat slow in being achieved, was always the ultimate goal. It continues to contribute considerably to the development of Tanzania and to make better the lives of many.

At the 50th Jubilee Celebrations I was particularly pleased to hear about the very great contribution of the Pallottine Fathers and Brothers to further develop the infrastructure of the Seminary. It shows that our continued collaboration is not limited to nostalgia. But nostalgia there was, as we enjoyed the moment, turning over the page in anticipation of the next chapter in the life of St. Patrick's Seminary,



## Dear Friends

*Fr Martin Mareja SAC*



As I look forward to celebrating my 5th Easter in Ireland, I take the opportunity to thank all of you, friends, helpers, associates and benefactors, for your continued prayers, sacrifice and support, both spiritual and financial, to help us in our work in the missions.

Tanzania, one of the countries we have been serving for over 75 years, will this year celebrate 150 years of evangelisation and 100 years since the first four native Tanzanians were ordained to the priesthood. As we join the Church in Tanzania in these celebrations, we can say also that the African Pallottines of the Irish province in East Africa have come of age.

We are proud of their achievements so far. To mention a few: there are 32 African Pallottines and 19 seminarians, of whom two will be ordained to the priesthood, with the help of God, in the summer of this year.

We are very grateful to God also here in Ireland because He continues to answer our prayers by sending more workers into His vineyard. There are four candidates in our formation house in Dundrum, of whom two deacons, Liam O'Donovan and Charles Lafferty, will be ordained to the priesthood in July.

With the number of members we have in East Africa, it is obvious that we will continue to send more priests to work here in Ireland and in the United States. And, in fact, the most recent member to go to work in America is Fr. James Amasi SAC, who has now joined Fr. Mathew Sanka SAC, in St. Brendan's Parish, Stephenville, Texas, on the 23rd of February this year.

The work of creating mission awareness here in Ireland this year began on the 4th of February. We are blessed to be able to visit the diocese of Ardagh and Clonmacnoise where two former confreres, Frs. Anthony and Patrick Canning, RIP, came from the parish of Drumlish.

Before we began, Brother Steve and I paid a visit to Most Rev. Bishop Francis Duffy of the diocese, who very kindly gave us permission and important advice on how to make our visit to the diocese both smooth and beneficial.

On behalf the mission promotion team I wish to sincerely thank the Bishop, parish priests, associate priests and the faithful of the diocese, for facilitating our visits and also for their kindness and generosity.

By the time this newsletter arrives on your doorstep it will be Easter. On behalf of the Pallottine missionaries I wish you all a very happy and blessed Easter.

Be assured of our prayers always.

## Invocations to God with St. Vincent Pallotti

St. Vincent, intercede for us with God...

That all Christians live fully in Christ and for Christ.

That all the baptised may be aware of their call to the apostolate and, with a sense of urgency, commit themselves to its fulfilment.

That all Christians, lay people and priests, men and women, may be open to the creative action of the Holy Spirit.

That all who belong to the Church may generously co-operate for the renewal of the Church in the world.

That all men and women, priests and lay people, may come to know their own specific call and help each other to a creative response.

That all of us, with the example of Mary Queen of Apostles, may be ever faithful in our daily lives to our apostolic task.

That each one of us may have a heartfelt concern for the poor and voluntarily share with them whatever we have.

That all of us may be attentive to the action of the Holy Spirit in the signs of the times.

### Let us pray

St. Vincent Pallotti, you who give us the example of a profound faith and a great love of God and of people, intercede for us with God, that imitating your example, we too may be strong in faith and true apostles of Jesus Christ.

**Amen**

## Did You Know

that less than half of all people have a Will?

Be one of those who have chosen to be good stewards, and take time to prepare a Will or other estate plan. *The Pallottines appreciate any consideration* for a gift to support our Missionary Work.