

Ordinations 2017

Fr Derry Murphy SAC Provincial



Recently I was doing a bit of tidying up, as distinct from a proper spring cleaning, and while going through a shelf of printed material I happened upon a series of homilies prepared by the late Archbishop Joseph Cassidy, written when he was a teacher at St. Joseph's College, Garbally, Co. Galway.



Fr Charles Lafferty SAC

In a homily on the Transfiguration of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Fr. Cassidy drew a comparison between the wedding day of a young bride and the transfiguration of Jesus. Reflecting on the wedding day he painted a picture of 'older wives', heavy with the sleep of years, suddenly roused with the entrance of the bride into the church. I quote Fr. Cassidy "They straighten up! 'Here she comes' and with her the assurance that glory still survives... and the old wives subside again – comforted!"

The image painted here stayed with me and it came back to mind as I reflected on the two ordinations we had in Ireland in June. We are blessed, very blessed, this year with the ordination of Fr Liam O'Donovan in Slieverue, Co. Kilkenny, on 17 June, of Fr Charles Lafferty in Ardmore, Derry, on 29 June, and of Frs Norbert Mukabwa and Stephen Lwebuga in Queen of Apostles Church, Dagoretti Market, Nairobi, Kenya, on 8 July.

Those of us Pallottines who were present felt like the 'old wives' in the homily, participating in the ordinations roused us, it was as if we straightened up and received an injection of new life and hope through our participation in these most reverential and moving of ceremonies. It strengthens us to have other men responding to the invitation of God and making the same life choice. One of the priests present at an ordination remarked that the entire weekend was like a weekend retreat.



Fr Norbert Mukabwa SAC

Bishop Alphonus Cullinan, who ordained Liam O'Donovan, stressed that ordination is not a trophy; rather it is a giving of oneself in service of the people of God.

Bishop Donal McKeown, who ordained Charles, focused on the apostolic life of the Pallottine, and the commitment

to be an apostle and to do all possible so that each non-ordained person have and exercise an apostolate within the missionary people of God.

In Nairobi Bishop David Kamau reminded Norbert and Stephen that they are ordained to serve the people of God and to proclaim the Good News. He warned then of the dangers of materialism and of pride which tends to go with it.

We are, and always have been, a missionary province with members working in 9 countries, and the newly ordained priests this year will share in this missionary nature of our lives.



Fr Liam O'Donovan SAC

Liam will work in Greenford in the Westminster Archdiocese; Charles is going further afield, to Argentina and will work in a parish in Castelar, Buenos Aires; Norbert, who is Kenyan, will work in Makiungu, Tanzania; and Stephen, who is Ugandan, will work in Sacred Heart Parish, Nairobi, Kenya.

Congratulations to each of them, and Ad multos annos.

A sincere word of gratitude to all our associates, collaborators and UAC members who support our work and our formation programmes with their prayers, encouragement and financial contributions.

Please keep the four newly ordained men in your prayers.



Fr Stephen Lwebuga SAC

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Dear Fr. Martin,

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

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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.



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Pallottine Voices

The Society of the Catholic Apostolate

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Under the Argentine Sky

Peggy Sweeney

It would be impossible to encapsulate in a few short paragraphs the spirit of the parishioners of Parroquia San Patricio Mercedes, in Argentina. My husband Paud, Anita and I had the pleasure of visiting

there in April and witnessed at first hand the friendship and generosity of these people and their love of, and loyalty to, their faith. They are justly proud of their church which was originally built with funding provided by Irish emigrants.

Fr Tom O'Donnell from Templeglantine has spent almost 41 years in Argentina and Fr Johnny Sweeney from Doon joined him in October 2015. Though the postal system used to be ineffective, at least now communication is easier through email, WhatsApp, and so on. One can only imagine what it must have been like for the Irish priests and their families in earlier times.

The priests are extremely busy – constant phone calls, visitors and religious duties all accommodated with good grace. Huge crowds attended the Easter ceremonies, confessions and masses and we saw at first hand their eagerness to be part of it all. Their devotion to St. Patrick would put us Irish people to shame, and on many occasions they said St. Patrick's breastplate after Holy Communion.

In 2011 they opened their first "out church" and are presently preparing to build a second one. We have been fundraising with help from our families, friends, neighbours, the people of Doon, Cappamore and beyond and Johnny's friends elsewhere, particularly in Thurles. All have been wonderful and so generous.

When it rains in Mercedes the side roads become a sea of mud and impassable for cars, so the people cannot come to the parish church and priests cannot go out to the outlying areas. The people in Altamira requested an "out church" of their own so they can have prayer services in the rainy season. It will also be used to wake their dead and hold meetings in the proposed smaller rooms which will be part of the building. They will also get to name their church.

While we were in Mercedes, we visited other Pallottine churches and saw and recognised the names of many priests whom we knew and loved. We remembered with gratitude their efforts in spreading the gospel. We thought of Fr Seán and Fr Liam, Johnny's uncles. Fr Seán died in

2008 having served in North America for 30 years and in Limerick Diocese for 14 years. Fr. Liam presently ministers in Braintree, Essex and this year marks the 40th anniversary of his ordination. We also remembered Johnny's wonderful friend Fr Seamus Stapleton SCA who died in October of last year but who, in his relatively short priestly ministry, did so much good.

Mercedes is very far away in spite of all the technology. I sometimes look out the window in Doon and see the moon. I think that Johnny sees the same moon in Argentina; his might be the Autumnal moon and mine the Spring one. I am reminded of a few lines from the song "The Moon Behind The Hill" which my mother used to sing.

"I watched last night the rising moon
Upon a foreign strand
Till memories came like flowers in June
Of home and fatherland"

Ah dear– the ties that bind us!

Argentina is a beautiful country with rolling plains and lush pastures and a magnificent capital city, Buenos Aires. We were fortunate that Br. Michael Lynch gave us a guided tour of it. We visited the cathedral – the last church Pope



Paud, Anita, Peggy and Fr John Sweeney

Francis served in in Argentina. While there we were guests of the Christian Brothers and among those we met was Br. Tommie O'Connell who received some of his early secondary Education in Doon.

In conclusion we would like to thank Fr Tom, Fr. Johnny, Carlitos. and the people of Mercedes for their wonderful hospitality. One of the lovely things about those people is the warmth of their welcome. Their generosity and friendship and the sharing of their time have to be seen to be believed. We would have forgiven the mosquitos if their welcome was less enthusiastic! To all the people who have contributed to the building fund we say 'Muchos Gracias' for their generosity.



My Vocation Story

John Regan SAC

I grew up on a farm just outside Westport in Co. Mayo with eight sisters and three brothers. We were a farming family. I was the second youngest, brought up in a home where I was shown great love.

The rosary was said on bended knees every night without fail. My mother cycled to mass every day on her bike and also attended the first Fridays and Saturdays. She also went to her weekly prayer meeting on a Thursday night. In the midst of rearing a family of twelve, washing clothes by hand, cooking meals and working on the farm, my mother always found time to put God first and was never afraid to stand up for her faith.

When I finished secondary school I did not know what to do and did not go on to college. I had worked for two summers previously in a pub and restaurant so I worked in the pub again for a year and also delivered sand, gravel and soil. I loved meeting and interacting with people. I then worked in a hotel as a bar manager for five years, which was enjoyable – meeting people in a social sphere where people were always in good form.

During that time, in 1998, my sister rang me and asked me if I would go with her to Medjugorje. She said it would be nice if we could go along with mum and dad. I said yes, and I had just dropped the phone when I said to myself “what have I put myself in for!” and I started thinking how I would say to my employers that I was going to Medjugorje. But go I did, and I had the week of a lifetime, the spirit was moving.

But having spent five years working in the hotel and enjoying myself outside the counter as well, doing what every young fella does, I was often left feeling empty.



Westport

Then I worked with the HSE for 7 years as a health care assistant/porter and got to experience the other side of life, where accidents and tragedy could change people's lives in

an instant. It was an immense privilege to share in people's sufferings and to give care and compassion.

On July 25th 2008 my mother died in a car accident and my sister was lucky to survive. I got a great sense of strength from my faith to cope but it did force me to ask myself about the meaning of life. I had thought about the priesthood but felt unworthy. I had met a Pallottine priest in Medjugorje around 2002/2003 and he had given me a flier and told me to come down to Thurles for a weekend sometime. So I did, and my first impressions were good as the food was excellent. (God really does know how to work on our weaknesses!).

Over the next few years I went down to spend more weekends in Thurles and I did a vocations weekend in Dundrum in 2005; the food again was superb. However, I



Medjugorje

didn't really think about seriously joining at that time as I was looking after both of my parents at home and felt that this was where God wanted me to be. I felt that I got the greatest degree in life looking after them and we always prayed together, whether it was going to a prayer meeting with my mother or going to a cattle mart with Dad. It was natural to pray together.

I joined the Pallottines in 2011 after years of dissembling. I made up my mind late that summer and I do believe that the Lord and His Blessed Mother were at work. God can draw straight through crooked lines. On the day that I made up my mind that I was definitely going to join, I came home to my house in Westport after talking to a priest about the decision I had made.

My brother was there and we were talking about the football reunion that he was going to the following Friday night. I said to him “Is it twenty years since ye won the county final?” to which he replied “Yes the time flies. If you are going to do something in life, now is the time” (He did not have a clue of my intentions). I felt the Holy Spirit was at work and I didn't need any more confirmation.

Many people had spoken to me about becoming a priest and I always did everything I could to dismiss it. I was in

Knock one summer's evening praying the rosary and was going through inner turmoil when I met a couple whom I had known earlier from a prayer meeting. The woman said to me, “I know what you are going through, but you won't be happy unless you give it a go”. I was cut to the heart and welled up with emotion.

I had worked at many different jobs and was known as a bit of a chancer or risk taker, but this time I said I would take a chance on the Lord, and so far the risk has been worth it. There have been challenges, struggles, trials, and why wouldn't there be, as this is real life with all its complexities. But thankfully, I am content. It is through all of these experiences that we grow, and being part of a community is a great means of support.

I can see first hand why our founder St. Vincent insisted on working together where much more is achieved. Having been with a good group of students has been great and we do take the corners off each other if needed, whether it is a good tackle on the football pitch or a game of pool. Having journeyed with the lads and getting to see them being ordained has been so joyful.

I have to say that I love the Pallottine Charism, and being out on pastoral work in our parishes has shown me that Pallottine priests bring Jesus to people in a different sort of



Knock

a way through their unique and individual personalities and gifts. A priest told me over the last number of years when I was having struggles and doubts to trust. Although the road can be difficult at times, by constantly placing a deep trust in Our Lord, persevering on and maintaining a strong devotion to Our Lady, I am filled with a deep rooted peace and ready for whatever God has in store.

Congratulations

Congratulations to our jubilarians 2017; to Frs Connie Ramirez, Lubbock, Texas, Bertie Flanagan, Suipacha, Argentina and John Casey, Wyandotte, Detroit, who this year celebrate the Golden Jubilee of their ordination to the priesthood; and also to Fr Pablo Bocca, San Patricio, Belgrano, Buenos Aires, Argentina, who celebrates the Silver Jubilee of his ordination. *Ad multos annos.*

Prayer to Mother Mary

Mother Mary be my guide,
Blessed Lady by my side.
Ever gentle, ever kind,
Ease and soothe my troubled mind.
If I fall, as oft I may,
Bring me home from where I stray.
Pour your peace on those I love,
Keep them, bless them, from above.
Be my hope, my joy, my light.
Hold me close from morn till night.
And when my time on earth is done,
Lead me to your precious Son.

*Cathy Desmond, member of UAC,
St. Ann Parish, Shankill, Dublin*

Cemetery Sunday 2017

The annual Pallottine Cemetery Sunday this year will be on Sunday 10th of September.

Concelebrated Mass for our deceased Pallottines will be celebrated at the Pallottine College, Thurles, at 3pm.

All are welcome.



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.